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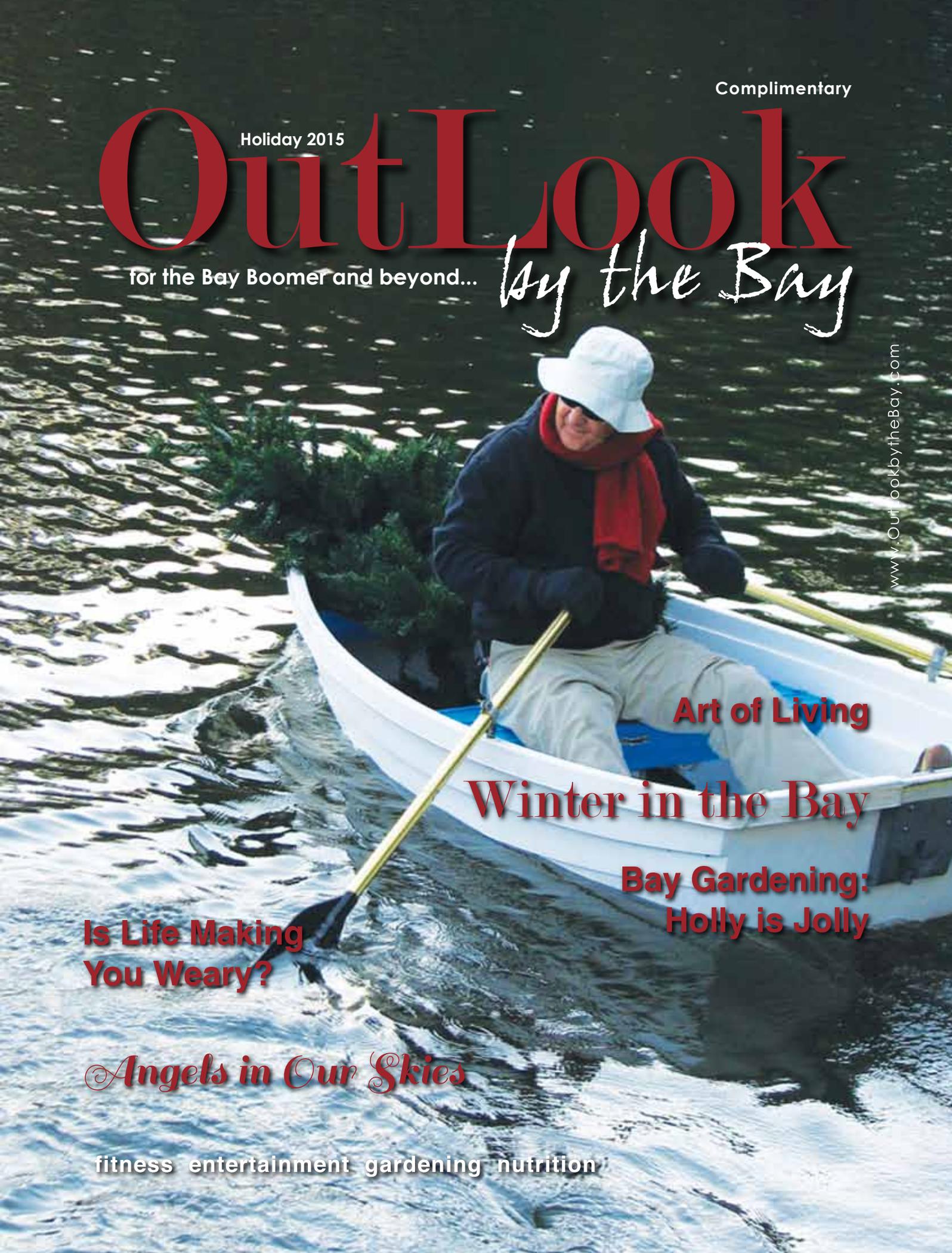
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Winter in the Bay

**Bay Gardening:
Holly is Jolly**



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FROM THE DESK

Walk away. Recently I was asked how we keep the peace in such a widely diverse family and friends group. Like most families, no two members are alike. We're made up of artists, executives, homemakers, students, small-business owners, sports figures and everything in between. Their interests range from travel, to getting kids properly educated, to staying active in their communities, to sports, volunteer groups and, all too often, just getting through the week. There are little kids and old people and many nonrelated sorta' family who may as well be related. We give them chores to do and errands to run and gentle corrections: no throwing peas at the table and you have to wear shoes and shirt to dinner. They're all part of this burgeoning family and we're interested in their thoughts and opinions. We work hard at hearing them out.

So what is the answer to keeping the peace? After polling various members of this tribe, the overall consensus is to walk away. For this group anyway, it seems to work. We all misspeak, we all do things we shouldn't do, we all have diverse and sometimes crazy opinions and very often, we disagree. But is that the time to confront? Usually not. There are, of course, exceptions - occasions when there is a need to speak up. Even then, it can be done gently and without threatening. Often, a 24-hour cooling off period cures it.

Interestingly, back in the '60s and '70s we were taught confrontation is good: Speak your piece if you're not happy with something said or done. Now in hindsight, I am not so sure that works. I've seen long and warm friendships end because one or both parties felt it necessary to speak out. If one of them had only held their tongue, perhaps these "friends" would still be seeking out each other's company.

With our extended family, we come very close to living in each other's pocket and it often takes some doing to walk away from some conceived insult, misspoken word or an opinion we just can't abide. But walk away we do. Over the years many of us have learned, sometimes the hard way, to temper your remarks, bite your tongue and very often just let it go. Think of it this way: Is this going to matter two years from now?

My good friend, who shall remain nameless, uses the "bobblehead" technique with her expanding family. She gives an attentive nod and keeps her opinions to herself, even, by the way, if she is specifically asked. She is quite firm in her belief that asking for someone's opinion doesn't necessarily mean one actually wants it! This is not a revelation. You've run into this too I'm sure, when you tread lightly when asked for views on a particular issue.

Mothers learn early on to choose their battles. They're confronted daily and sometimes hourly by possible confrontations, but they learn quickly that you don't need to see or address everything that their young ones are into. My friend Jan's rule was: Fire, flood or blood, much of the rest of it can be ignored. She was right.

With the holidays fast approaching, when we'll be thrown together with family and friends we don't see often enough, maybe it's a good time to practice the walk-away technique. Life seems to go so much more smoothly by keeping many thoughts and opinions to ourselves.

From where I sit, it appears that the belaboring of a perceived insult or an opinion that you don't agree with is a waste of your precious time. At this advanced age anyway, it's a real chore to remember who said what, when and why. Maybe during what should be fun-packed holidays with lots of catching up to do with people you love, why not practice the *bobblehead* or the walk-away technique and just enjoy!



Tecla

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Bay Bytes

To check out the validity of a charity you're considering, log onto www.CharityNavigator.org where it lists administrative costs and the percentage of funds that actually end up being spent on the cause at hand.

Letters to the editor

FIRE EDITORIAL

Read the fire experience editorial. How scary for everyone! How lucky for all that you were there.

My friend had a similar experience. She was at home, smelled the smoke, tried to put it out, screamed and neighbors came to the rescue. It was for a very short period of time, but there was amazing damage. I quickly bought fire extinguishers and signs for my new home.

The editorial was right on target and sent an important message out to all.

Joan V., Crownsville

NEA BIG READ

You've done it again! The cover photo is right on and perfect. Enjoyed every article and will be passing my copy on to others. Especially appreciated the Ellen Moyer article on NEA Big Read. One of the book groups I'm in is reading *Finn*, fiction about Huck's father, and I'm also reading *Huck Finn* and now I'll add *Tom Sawyer* and see about getting involved in the project.

Terry S., Annapolis

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Protect Your Teeth from Holiday Treats!

By Janelle Jackson

If it seems like everywhere you turn there are sweet treats being offered this holiday season, it's a painful reminder if you suffer from tooth sensitivity.

Dentinal sensitivity is defined as the short, exaggerated and painful response when dentin is subjected to certain stimuli including those holiday sweets. Dentin can become exposed in a number of ways, including gingival recession, erosion, abrasion and defective restorations.

An estimated 20 to 30 percent of American adults suffer from dentinal sensitivity. While the level of discomfort varies from person to person, fluoride varnish is an easy and cost-effective way to combat tooth sensitivity.

Varnish contains 5 percent sodium fluoride, as well as calcium and phosphate, to help protect and maintain healthy teeth and protect from tooth sensitivity and decay. Fluoride varnish is approved by the Food and Drug Administration as a treatment for dentinal sensitivity and for use as a cavity liner.

Many dentists and hygienists feel strongly that all patients can benefit from the regular application of fluoride varnish. They note that varnish has both short- and long-term benefits, and that it has a cumulative effect for long-term strengthening of tooth structure.

Most of us remember visiting the dentist as children and the dread of having to wear the tray containing fluoride foam or gel for what seemed like an eternity. Fluoride varnish actually contains more fluoride than these treatments and there is no tray involved.

When administering fluoride varnish, your dental professional will simply paint the varnish onto your teeth, often in less than a minute's time and most commonly as the last step during your routine hygiene visit.

Most fluoride varnish has a white tooth color and is therefore virtually invisible and can't be seen by the patient or others. While it is flavorless, most patients will notice a thin coating on the

teeth. For best results, it is recommended that patients refrain from brushing their teeth for four to six hours after application. The varnish will wear off naturally after 24 hours.

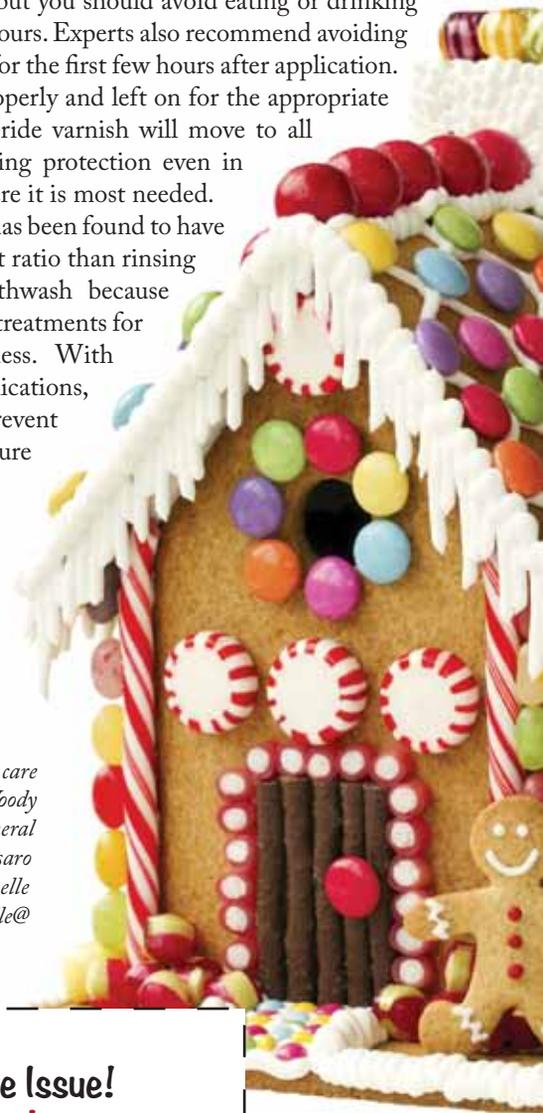
You can eat and drink immediately after varnish has been applied to your teeth, but you should avoid eating or drinking anything hot for two hours. Experts also recommend avoiding hard and sticky foods for the first few hours after application.

When applied properly and left on for the appropriate number of hours, fluoride varnish will move to all tooth surfaces, providing protection even in between the teeth where it is most needed.

Fluoride varnish has been found to have a better benefit-to-cost ratio than rinsing with a fluoride mouthwash because varnish requires fewer treatments for measurable effectiveness. With regular varnish applications, one may help to prevent the need for future restorations.

And best of all, fluoride varnish treatment may help you say yes the next time you're offered sweet treats during the holiday season.

Janelle is the patient care coordinator for Dr. Woody Wooddell who practices general dentistry with Dr. Joe Passaro in Davidsonville. Janelle can be reached at janelle@wpdentalgroup.com



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Christmas Tips, Tricks, Timesavers and Troubleshooters

By Louise Whiteside

"I love the holiday season, but the same old rituals get a little monotonous: putting up, trimming and taking down the tree; hanging the outdoor lights; decorating the house; ordering flowers for the table centerpiece; baking cookies. All delightful exercises, but I'd love a few fresh ideas, just to quell the humdrum!"

Does this sound like you? Well, seek no more. Here are a few nifty schemes to make your holiday planning a little more interesting, more innovative, more relaxed and maybe, even a little more economical. So fix yourself a cup of eggnog or cider, sit back, and read on.

The Tree

Cover it in "snow." Use pieces of baby's breath to fill in gaps in your tree, wreaths, and garlands. Everything will appear to be covered in snowflakes.

Create a Winter Landscape. Buy quilt batting and cut it to fit your display area. Then arrange your miniature village on the "snow." Nestle a small mirror in the snow to create a pond.

Spice up your tree. Cut netting into squares and place handfuls of pine scent or apple cinnamon spice potpourri in the center of each square. Bring the corners together, tie them tightly with gold or silver ribbon, and hang them on the tree.

Enjoy the best of both worlds. If you have an artificial tree, but you'd like the scent of fresh pine, visit a local tree seller and ask to collect greenery off the ground. Place these pieces in baskets around the house, on the mantel, or tie them together for a garland.

Create a button garland. Knot large, shiny buttons together on a length of string or dental floss for a lovely, old-fashioned garland.

Make watering easier. If your Christmas tree base is hard to reach with a watering can, try tossing a few ice cubes into its container. Watering done!

Remove that tree sap from your hands easily. Rub some shortening on your sticky fingers, wipe them with a paper towel, and wash your hands with soap and water.

Make tree disposal a snap. After removing decorations, wrap an old sheet around the tree, so you can carry or pull it outside without dropping pine needles. Alternatively, place a large garbage bag over the top and pull it down.

Use your tree after the holidays. Cut up its branches and use them to protect plants in your garden. Sprinkle the pine needles on your compost pile. Saw the trunk into pieces to create logs for a cold day around the fireplace.

Christmas Lights

Save the hassle of tangled lights. Wrap each strand in heavy-duty aluminum foil before storing them. Squeeze the foil around the bulbs to protect them against breakage.

Entertaining Your Guests

Serve a punch with a "punch." Buy or borrow a fancy punch bowl and ladle. Mix up your favorite punch recipe. Next, fill muffin tins with the punch, place a maraschino cherry into each section and freeze. Your punch will be beautiful and, better yet, those little cubes will keep it cold without diluting it.

Create unusual centerpieces.

1. Core several apples and insert candles of different heights. Add a bit of greenery for a charming, rustic look.
2. Fill four wine goblets halfway with red or green dry gelatin. Place short red votive candles in each glass. Use transparent tape to secure holly cuttings around the glass stems. Then light the candles for a beautiful yuletide look.

Christmas Around the House

Recycle old holiday tins. That attractive tin that was once filled with popcorn is likely to be decorated in a holiday theme. It just might make a pretty and easy-to-find storage box for your ornaments.

Make holiday baking easier. Starting in the early Fall, freeze a half-dozen cookies every time you bake. Do the same with candies. By the time your holiday guests arrive, you'll have plenty of goodies to serve them while saving yourself that last-minute stress.

Recycle fancy gift bows. Those lovely-but-used bows from last year might be a little squashed if they've been in storage. Use a hair dryer on high heat to perk them up.

REFERENCES:

Easy Does It! Cheap and Simple Ways to Solve Common Household Problems By Gayle K. Wood, FC&A, Peachtree City, GA (2004)
Extraordinary Uses for Ordinary Things The Readers Digest Association, Inc., Pleasantville, NY (2005)

There is no perfect time for anything. So why not start today.

Save and Savor Your Stories

By Maureen Smith

Every week our mailbox has some invitations from retirement communities to “come for lunch and a tour of our facilities.” We haven’t accepted one of these invites yet, but we’re starting to think we should at least give them a look. They have attractive living areas, interesting people and many have golf courses, tennis courts, swimming pools, libraries, community meals and a staff planning activities and group trips. Along with no lawn care worries and making housecleaning services available, it’s beginning to resemble my concept of heaven.

So what is holding us back? Giving this more thought, I think it is the stuff we have accumulated through our many years of marriage. That is, all the trophies, picture albums, high school and college annuals, travel mementos, family treasures, even those wonderful bargains found at garage sales. Can these come along with us? Right now they all have a comfortable place, but it is unrealistic to think that they could all come along. We’re talking about some heavy-duty choices to be made.

...the belongings that become tricky are the ones with a story.

It does seem a bit refreshing to tell the children that it is time for them to claim what they want and strip ourselves down to what we really use and really love. It would not be hard to give up the silver wedding presents that haven’t been used in years; my entertaining has become much more casual. I’ve already divided up pictures of our children growing up and distributed them in the required acid-free boxes – a few to each child. But the belongings that become tricky are the ones with a story.

Already I regret the questions I failed to ask my parents and now it is too late. I have decided to write down the stories that I remember and my children can decide for themselves if they feel the importance of passing them down to their own children.

As an example, there is the cast iron pot now holding flowers on our back deck. They now have plastic imitations you can buy, but this one is the real thing. Imagine, as a child at my grandmother’s farm in East Texas, seeing a fire built under it to heat water for washing clothes or to make soap with lye. It later became a barbeque grill for my parents.

Then there is the dough board, which you see in antique stores occasionally. This one was used to knead dough by my father’s Aunt Virgie, again in East Texas.

Many a roux was made by my Louisiana grandmother in an iron skillet that I cherish. In fact the recipes themselves have their stories to tell.

But one of the best stories we have is in our living room. Tucked inside a lovely green Wedgewood piece is a dried lemon. Now who would keep that? There’s a story: My husband’s mother was one of 10 children who grew up on a farm at the base of Mount Magazine in Arkansas. One child died at age three and she was holding this lemon during her illness. Luckily, her granddaughter, named for her great-grandmother, has decided she will be the keeper.

Now may be the perfect time to begin jotting down some of your own stories. With the holidays so rapidly descending on us, perhaps it would be a good time to begin recording those stories. Who knows, perhaps even a rough draft would be a much-appreciated gift to find tucked under the Christmas tree.

Maureen can be reached at rsmith0636@verizon.net



Warding Off Alzheimer's With Crossword Puzzles and Word Games

By Leah Lancione

You probably grew up watching your mom and dad, and even grandparents, doing crossword puzzles in the newspaper. What you thought was simply a meaningless hobby, one that you may have now adopted, has been shown in research studies to be linked to a lower risk of Alzheimer's disease. According to Fisher Center for Alzheimer's Research Foundation, a study performed at the University of California, Berkeley, used brain scans and an imaging agent to see just how mental stimulation may protect the brain (www.alzinfo.org/articles/crossword-puzzles-alzheimers/). In essence, the brains of seniors who engaged in activities like reading, writing, doing crossword puzzles and solving challenging puzzles were similar to those of the young participants in the control group. The results published in the Archives of Neurology also reveal that "older people with the least cognitive stimulation, on the other hand, had brains that more closely resembled those of people with Alzheimer's."

The Alzheimer's Association (www.alz.org) also notes research that shows keeping the brain active can not only "increase its vitality" and "build its reserves of brain cells and connections," but also produce new brain cells. Alz.org recommends keeping the brain active every day by being a lifelong learner, playing games, doing memory exercises, reading, writing and ... doing those crosswords and other puzzles.

Now that times have changed since the days of just the one puzzle in the Sunday paper, there are opportunities to tickle your crossword fancy any time, any day. Some of the top, best-selling crossword puzzle books include: the *Simon & Schuster Mega Crossword Puzzle Book #15* featuring 300 new crossword puzzles, *USA Today Crossword 2: 200 Puzzles from the Nation's No. 1 Newspaper*, *The New York Times Monday Through Friday Easy to Tough Crossword*

Puzzles: 50 Puzzles from the Pages of the New York Times and more. Not to mention, there are large-print editions, easy or light versions, pocket-sized or travel varieties and even "red-eye" or challenging options.

In addition to crossword books, there are online crossword puzzles and even apps for your android or smartphone, iPad or Kindle. For example, **Amazon.com** offers a free downloadable crossword puzzle for your android device and newspapers like *The Washington Post* (<http://games.washingtonpost.com/gamedetails/daily-crossword/>) and *USA Today* (<http://puzzles.usatoday.com/>) offer free daily crossword puzzles you can download to your computer.

If you prefer to have a portable version to fit in your pocket or purse, there are crossword puzzle apps for your phone. If you own an iPhone, just visit the App Store to pick out the crossword puzzle of your choice and download it to your phone in a few

simple steps. Some apps are free, while others cost but a few dollars to download. **App Picker.com** picked the following best crossword puzzle apps for an iPhone: Daily Celebrity Crossword (free), Guess

Crosswords (free) and other mind-stimulating games like Words With Friends (free) and Word to Word – a fun and addictive word-association brain game (free). Now you can exercise your brain anywhere—the doctor's office waiting room, during half-time at your grandchild's game, before a nap on the couch or even during dinner if the conversation starts to lag.

If you want to challenge yourself beyond crossword puzzles, Sudoku (www.websudoku.com), Scrabble or other word games, invest in a book like Nancy Linde's best-seller *399 Games, Puzzles & Trivia Challenges Specially Designed to Keep Your Brain Young*, available for under \$10 from Amazon or the *Brain Games: Lower Your Brain Age in Minutes a Day* series (#1-9), also available for under \$10. These types of mentally-stimulating activities are meant to challenge different cognitive functions and keep your memory sharp while also providing hours of fun.

Now you can exercise your brain anywhere



Unique and Welcome Gifts for the Homebound

By Penelope Folsom

Most of us draw a blank when we try to find just the right gift for a friend who is homebound. But there are lots of interesting and different gifts available that would be welcome over the holidays for those who don't get out very often. Even your more mobile friends would enjoy finding some of these treasures tucked under their Christmas tree.

- Daily newspaper or special interest magazine subscription, which can be found at any of these websites: **WSJ.com** (*Wall Street Journal*) or **WashingtonPost.com** or **Capital.com** or for a wide variety of magazine subscriptions, log onto **Amazon.com**
- If the gift is intended for the visually impaired, large-print books and crossword puzzles are always welcome. They can be found locally or at **www.Amazon.com** Mechanical pencils with erasers would make a nice accompaniment.
- Postage stamps are available at **www.shop.usps.com** Pens and stationery also make a welcome gift. An assortment of greeting cards that can be sent to commemorate various occasions such as birthdays would be ideal. Any local paper store would carry a wide selection.
- A warm washable throw or small blanket found at **www.thecompanystore.com**
- A gift delivered once each month for a year such as a gourmet treat, interesting game, grooming products, something for

a pet or a child or a box of fresh fruits. Log on to **www.monthclubstore.com** or Google *gift of the month clubs* and different sites will pop up presenting lots of creative ideas.

- Exercise equipment that can be used while sitting. A good selection can be found at **www.activeforever.com**
- Solo games and jigsaw puzzles found at Wal-Mart or Barnes and Noble are always a hit. Solitaire can also be played online at **www.worldofsolitaire.com** Careful, it's addictive.
- Audio book subscriptions are available free at **www.librivox.org** Also **www.audiobooks.org** which charges a small fee, but carries an extensive list.
- A lap desk for letter writing and to hold a computer could be the best gift ever and can be found at **www.levenger.com**
- And to truly get into the holiday spirit, a decorated, tabletop Christmas tree delivered to the door. Purchase online at **www.llbean.com** Delivery is usually free.

Perhaps the most welcome gift would be a visit. Bring along a basket of goodies with such things as Christmas cookies, a couple of paperback books, a good magazine, a DVD or CD if electronic equipment is available, a Christmas candle and a sprig of holiday greens.

Smile like a kid again.

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Read our article "Protect Your Teeth From Holiday Treats" in this edition of *OutLook!*

Holly is Jolly

By Melissa Conroy

As you haul out the garlands and untangle Christmas lights this year, your holiday decorations will likely include some live holly. The glossy green leaves tipped with stiff points and bright red berries are ubiquitous at Christmas. They find their way into wreaths and other decorations. Holly has long been a favorite and important Winter holiday plant. Decorating with holly during the cold months is a tradition that is more than 2,000 years old.

Holly is a genus of 400 to 600 species of flowering plants that belong to the family *Aquifoliaceae*. Plants in this genus have glossy leaves that are typically pointed or serrated as well as four-petal flowers. The berries of holly plants are actually drupes (a fleshy fruit with a stone in the middle). Holly thrives throughout temperate and subtropical climates and can be found in many countries. Most hollies are dioecious, meaning that the individual plant will produce either male or female flowers. Only female holly plants will produce drupes and their leaves are smoother. Male plants have prickly, rough leaves and their flowers do not develop into drupes.

People often put the leaves and branches around their houses, believing that fairies would use them as shelter.

Holly was important in Roman times when the people often offered it to the god Saturn during the festival of Saturnalia. This festival happened on Dec. 25, which marked the Winter solstice, the shortest day of the Winter. At this time of year, most plants had died and cold gripped the land. Holly, however, was still green. Saturnalia celebrated the power of the sun over the Winter and the hope of Summer ahead. This evergreen plant was a good symbol of this hope.

Holly was also an important plant in Europe. Druids believed it to be holy and wore sprigs in their hair during important rituals. The plant was said to keep away evil spirits and protect people from witches. People often put the leaves and branches around their houses, believing that fairies would use them as shelter. Holly was sometimes used in spells to help promote sleep or

ease someone's passage into the next life.

Celtic faiths place special symbolism on trees such as the holly and oak tree. Legend states that at the end of every Summer, the Holly King and the Oak King battle for power. The Holly King wins and rules over the Winter. At the end of the season, he fights again with the Oak King. This time, the Oak King wins and rules over the Summer months.

The "boughs of holly" we sing about every Christmas originated in the Middle Ages. Medieval people wove boughs of holly together and used these boughs during the holidays to represent good will and celebration. The Victorians resurrected this tradition and adapted it into a "kissing ball": a potato or apple decorated with a collection of greenery and symbolic herbs such as mistletoe (for fertility) and rosemary (for devotion). Today, we hang up mistletoe in hopes of stealing a Christmas kiss, but the mistletoe tradition descended from the Victorian kissing ball.

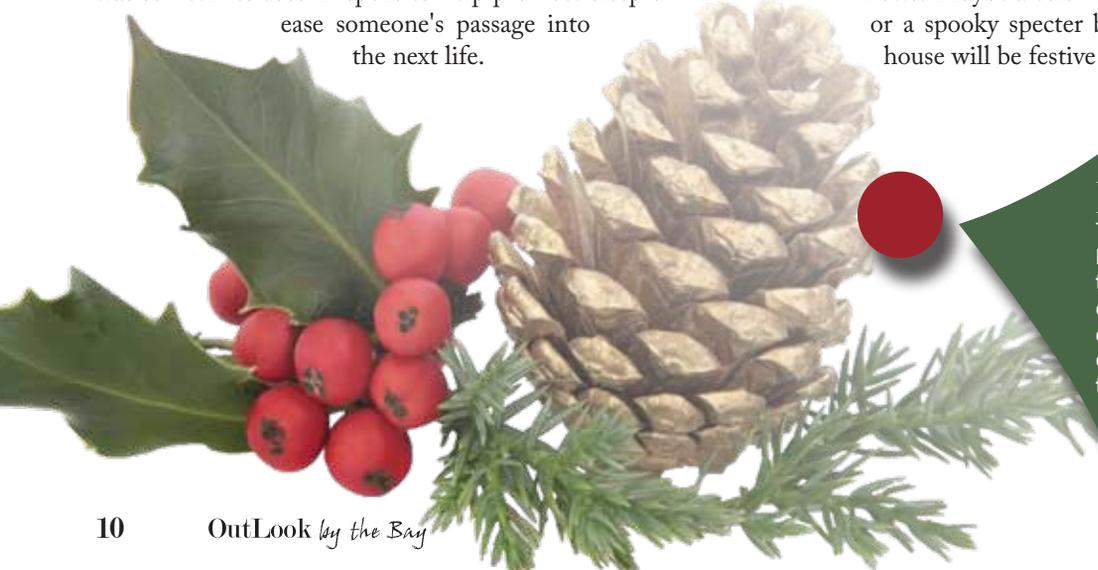
Christians adapted holly to their rituals as well. They often made boughs of holly and added three balls or figurines to represent Jesus, Mary and Joseph. A wreath was seen as a symbol of Christ's crown of thorns: the sharp points of the leaves were the thorns and the red berries were Christ's blood. Legend states that Christ's cross was made out of holly wood. Holly's evergreen nature came to symbolize eternal life and the promise of resurrection after death, important

features in Christian faith.

Most people today don't attach any spiritual or cultural significance to this shiny evergreen; it is simply a well-loved holiday decoration. Yet, Christmas decorations don't feel quite complete without a few sprigs around.

If you decide on real holly to decorate your house this year, be sure to keep inquisitive pets and children away from it. Children are often attracted to the bright red berries and some animals love chewing on plants. The plant is toxic, and consuming a few holly berries can make a child or pet sick. Imitation holly is a safe option. Otherwise, make sure all real holly is safely out of reach.

When you hang it this Christmas, you are participating in an ancient tradition shared by many cultures and people. Who knows? Maybe a cold forest fairy will shelter under your holly or a spooky specter be warded off by it. Either way, your house will be festive and cheerful this holiday season.



Bay Bytes

Teachers of English as a foreign language can log onto www.tefl.net to find all the details for employment in a country of your choice. Other options for overseas employment can be found at www.transitionsAbroad.com

Celebrating 28 Years Of Beautiful Music

By Kathryn Marchi

Folks who love to sing can always find a chorale or chorus to sing with in their area. It's a very satisfying experience to be able to perform good music in front of appreciative audiences.

One such musical organization is the **Queen Anne's Chorale**, located in the town of Centreville, on Maryland's Eastern Shore. The chorale is a 60-plus-voice community chorus that has presented quality music to audiences in Queen Anne's, Talbot, Kent and Anne Arundel counties. Mr. Robert Huntington, the artistic director, is in his 14th year with the group. The accompanist is Cynthia Bidinotto-Slate.

Since its founding in 1988, the chorale has presented such great classical works as the Brahms *Requiem* and Bach's *Christmas Oratorio*, among many others. The chorale has also presented music from Broadway, folk music, jazz, spirituals, gospel, pop, blues and ballads along with seasonal favorites.

Two major concerts have been planned for 2015-2016:

Dec. 12 at 7 p.m. they will present "*Feliz Navidad*," a celebration of the rich cultural heritage of Spanish and Caribbean Christmas music. Instrumentalists, soloists, the chorale's select ensemble and traditional audience participation will round out this fun and lively program. Location: The Todd Performing Arts Center at Chesapeake College, Wye Mills.

April 23 at 7 p.m. the chorale will present its traditional gala entitled, "*Old American Songs*." The singers, along with renowned soloist Thomas Beard, will explore songs, ballads, hymns and patriotic music of the 19th century. Audience participation will also be included. Location: The Todd Performing Arts Center, Chesapeake College, Wye Mills.

In keeping with the chorale's mission statement of "presenting quality music to the community at large," community outreach concerts are planned throughout the year.

General admission tickets for adults are \$15 at the door. Children through high school and accompanied by an adult are admitted free of charge. Call 240.650.5540 or visit www.qachorale.org

If you love to sing, the following is a list of choruses and choirs that you might be interested in joining:

- Annapolis Chorale, Annapolis www.annapolischorale.org
- Easton Choral Arts Society, Easton www.eastonchoralarts.com
- Chester River Chorale, Chestertown www.chesterriverchorale.org
- Encore, Anne Arundel Community College, Arnold www.encorecreativity.org
- Central Maryland Chorale, Laurel www.centralmarylandchorale.com
- Sweet Adelines International, barbershop harmony for women, state of Maryland listings. www.region19sai.org



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LOWER IMPACT GIFT-GIVING FOR THE HOLIDAYS

By Kater Leatherman

America is the most wasteful society in the world, either squandering or accumulating more than we need. Forty percent of our food ends up in the trash. We waste time, money and gasoline. And now we're heading into the holiday season, that time of year that fuels overconsumption, especially when it can soothe the scourges of modern life - loneliness, depression and anxiety.

We waste for many reasons, but one of them is because we're in the habit of doing so. That doesn't mean that we can't make some modifications. We can be more mindful about what we buy. We can create balance by remembering the gold standard of gift-giving, which comprises things that money can't buy.

For adults, many are downsizing anyway, so things that don't need to be dusted are often appreciated. Give something edible, a gift card for a pedicure or massage, or an orchid, which can last for weeks. Tickets to concerts, movies, shows or sports events are usually a hit. Or consider paying for a membership to a yoga studio or fitness center.

Kids should get to enjoy all the holiday festivities, but you can still think "less stuff, better stuff." Quality gifts are stimulating, fun and send a positive message. Remember, more things won't make them happier once the holidays are over.

If you are on a budget, give your time - babysitting, preparing a meal, detailing a car, a foot or hand massage or dog walking. Share your talents, like helping with organization, handyman services and whatever else you are good at. Something for the person who has everything might be a handmade card with a note that says what you love about them. These are spiritual gifts that not only bring meaning, pleasure and satisfaction, but will long be remembered and cherished.

Recycling gifts is another way to reduce your footprint on our planet. Some people do it all the time. Others don't want to pass off stuff that they don't like. Still others might only consider true re-giving when it is something that they cherish, i.e., one that is hard for them to let go of. A good rule of thumb is to notice how it makes you feel about yourself to re-give an item.

**...NOW WE'RE HEADING
INTO THE HOLIDAY
SEASON, THAT TIME
OF YEAR THAT FUELS
OVERCONSUMPTION**

To avoid overspending and more waste, pull out all of your holiday paraphernalia to see what you have. Things stored out of sight are often forgotten so before you shop, check your inventory for wrapping paper, unused boxes of tree lights and candles. While you're rifling through those boxes, ask yourself, "Do I really need more garlands, another tree topper or an angel figurine?"

Maybe reaching the summit this holiday is letting go of another form of waste: self-imposed guilt, duty and "rightness." As an example, if you attend a party, event or activity this season and feel drawn to bring a hostess gift, change it up. Instead of giving them something that will take up valuable space, send a handwritten thank-you note. We no longer live "stationery" lives and in our paperless, less-mannered society, most likely it will be the only one your hostess receives. The same goes for those preprinted holiday cards; at least personalize them by adding a handwritten message. Or why not skip it altogether and send a Mother's Day card to all the moms you know? It will be more recognized and valued, especially during a time of year when life isn't so hectic.

And finally, in the spirit of giving back to the community, think about spending your money with independent retailers, local businesses and family-owned restaurants. Generally speaking, they not only have a lower impact on the environment, but are run by heart-driven, hard-working people who are out there swimming with the sharks. Even if something costs you an extra dollar, it's a small price to pay for the opportunity to support them.

Kater, a professional organizer, home stager, yoga teacher and self-published author, can be contacted at katerleatherman@gmail.com

Bay Bytes

Looking for a housesitter while you're off vacation? Log onto Caretaker.org There are also listings that you may be interested in if you would like to housesit yourself.

Permission to Grieve

By Elyzabeth Marcussen

With all the shopping, baking, writing cards, hosting parties, school and community functions, the holiday season can be a stressful time for anyone. Many will say it is all worth it, though, to spend a joyous time with family and friends.

But imagine being caught in that whirlwind when you have lost someone close to you. The woman whose husband would hide a gift on a pine bough can't bear the thought of decorating a tree this year. The man whose mother made the best latkes struggles to set up a menorah for his children.

"There are expectations of tradition at this time of year, even when we are grieving," Chesapeake Life Center grief counselor Becky Sheckelhoff says. "We don't realize how much energy grieving takes."

That is why Chesapeake Life Center offers its annual Hope Full Holidays seminar. Led by hospice grief counselors, adults ages 18 and older are given the opportunity to participate in small and large group activities that help them find a way to honor the memory of their loved ones while still granting themselves permission to grieve.

One of the activities is actually called, "I give myself permission to _____." Sheckelhoff says that during this activity, many participants begin to open up as they hear others around them confess they don't want to participate in holiday traditions, and are comforted to hear it is OK to make concessions such as, "I give myself permission to use paper plates instead of the fine china," or to even bowing out of celebrations completely.

"A gift from your loved one" is another activity that takes place in the seminar. Participants are asked to take a moment to reflect on one gift their loved one gave them in their

lives. Then, they are given a scroll upon which they write down their gift. They roll up the scroll, wrap a ribbon around and take it with them when they leave.

"You are remembering that your loved one is still a part of you and that their legacy is a gift that is always with you," Sheckelhoff says.

Sheckelhoff says many people come expecting to find practical ways to get through the holidays. They leave with something greater than that, she says. They come away feeling lighter and not so alone, knowing that there are others that feel just like they do.

"Hope Full Holidays is a safe place to quietly honor their loved ones away from the noise and traffic of the

Hope Full Holidays seminar offers those mourning the loss of a loved one a safe space away from the noise and traffic of the season.

holidays," Sheckelhoff says.

Hope Full Holidays seminars will be held from 10 a.m. to 1 p.m., Saturday, Nov. 21, at the Chesapeake Life Center's Prince George's County location at 9500 Arena Drive, Suite 250 in Largo; and from 9:30 a.m. to 12:30 p.m. Saturday, Dec. 5, at the Chesapeake Life Center's Anne Arundel County location on the John & Cathy Belcher Campus at 90 Ritchie Highway in Pasadena.

The fee is \$10 per person, with preregistration requested.

For more information or to register, call Chesapeake Life Center at 888.501.7077 or visit www.chesapeakelifecenter.org

Elyzabeth is the communications specialist for media at Hospice of the Chesapeake at the John & Cathy Belcher Campus in Pasadena. She can be reached at 443.837.1559 or emarcussen@hospicechesapeake.org



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The Backyard Ornithologist: Project Feeder Watch Empowers and Educates Citizen Scientists

By David Davis

The wind picks up a bit, and a man standing beneath a large white pine flips up the collar of his leather coat. He brushes snowflakes from his notebook, blows warm air through his hand, and records his observations. He's quietly thrilled to have spotted a house wren, a sneaky little sprite that might have thought it had gone unnoticed. He's also made out the ember-beaks of four cardinals who landed for a moment in his observing area. While not a researcher himself, he's collecting real data that will contribute to long-running scientific inquiry. He's a citizen scientist.

Each year since the mid-1980s, Cornell's Lab of Ornithology has organized Project FeederWatch, a survey of birds that spans North America. Coinciding with Winter -- Winter as the birds recognize it -- Project FeederWatch enlists tens of thousands of volunteers to observe birds visiting feeders in backyards, community centers, schools and many other locales. These volunteer citizen scientists then provide their counts to professional scientists through a website.

From there a variety of tools screen the volunteers' counts and related data. This large, decades-old data set fuels research on bird ecology. Among other issues, scientists use the data to investigate and understand the current range and abundance of various bird species. The data also paints a picture of changes in the distribution of bird species over time, and how changes to habitat affect different species.

Getting Started

Volunteers don't need any prior experience with bird watching to get involved and ultimately to contribute to the science. To participate, you'll need a bird feeder (or access to any place that maintains one), a little time to observe and identify birds and access to the Web to report your observations. You'll also need to pay a small fee that covers the costs of running the citizen science program.

Bird feeders are available in a few general forms, with significant variation among those forms. All types have their proponents and detractors, and what works for a particular yard or community center depends somewhat on the site and personal preference. Tube feeders are typically made from a clear plastic tube with a removable bottom for cleaning, a capped opening on top for loading seed and a few small openings and perches to let birds access the seed. Tube feeders *may* hold up better against repeated squirrel assaults than some other hanging feeders (like hoppers) because they have few parts and a small loading area.

Hoppers tend to offer more aesthetic options, often crafted to look like little houses. Platform or tray feeders can be more or less squirrel-proofed by mounting them on a free-standing post with a baffle. Suet cages may also be used to attract woodpeckers and their ilk, nuthatches, titmice, jays and wrens.

The National Wildlife Federation offers details on feeder types and seed choices at <http://goo.gl/3K3rmj>

Where to Observe

If you have a clear view of a feeder from inside, there's no reason you can't make your count from indoors. Particularly for beginners, this may make it easier to consult a field guide to help identify birds while watching the feeder.



If you had to give up everything – what would you miss the most?

Some may prefer to face the elements, observing outside with the aid of some binoculars. Somehow birding becomes more appealing to men when you throw in braving the cold, the use of some gadgets and the promise of a little Woodford Reserve when you get back inside.

How to Participate

Between Nov. 14 and April 8, volunteers observe a feeder on two consecutive days, for as much or as little time on each day as they want. During their observations, citizen scientists count and record the maximum number of each species visible at any one time. They then report their findings through the project website. Cornell's Lab of Ornithology provides more specifics at <http://feederwatch.org/about/how-to-participate/>

Resources

The Project FeederWatch website <http://feederwatch.org/> is the best way to learn more about the program. The site offers all of the information necessary to participate, from getting started to reporting data.

The project also maintains a blog that provides periodic articles on research, information about various species and stories

about the project and its participants at <http://feederwatch.org/blog/>

The Peterson Field Guide to Birds of Eastern and Central North America provides a fairly exhaustive reference on birds in the Chesapeake Bay watershed and beyond. Sibley also publishes a respected field guide on eastern birds.

Alternatively, the *National Audubon Society Field Guide to the Mid-Atlantic States* is a jack-of-all-trades book with a solid section on birds, along with good material on trees and other plants, insects, amphibians, mammals and even the night sky. For the novice looking for a field guide to help with the bird count, Audubon may be more approachable, and offers content on a variety of wildlife and plants.

For those interested in learning more about citizen science projects, what they do and how they work, the book *Citizen Science: Public Participation in Environmental Research* offers a broad primer.

The man beneath the pine takes his final notes for the day, and starts walking back to the house. As he leaves a line of footprints in fresh snow, he wonders how long it will be before the gray catbirds return, and why he hasn't seen a snowy owl this season. He'll look for some articles later. For now, it's time to enjoy the fire and a cup of coffee and send today's data to the lab.

David can be reached at da5id.da5is@gmail.com

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When Family Needs Care

By Steve Fleming

One of the realities we face planning for or living in retirement is the fact that we may also be caring for an aging parent or relative. A 2012 Alzheimer's Association study revealed 43.5 million adult family members care for someone over age 50. Of those, 14.9 million are caring for a person with Alzheimer's disease or another form of dementia. Here's what my experience tells me about moving a relative of mine from assisted to independent living in a retirement community.

The key question was if it was safe for her to return home and resume living alone (including driving)? Her physician's assessment was, while physically able to go home, her mental sharpness and short-term memory had begun to diminish. Safety at home was a significant issue. Driving was not an option, at least for the time being, and she would be isolated as public transit and taxi service are limited.

Being a "parent" to an older relative is a strange place to be.

Given those realities, we decided together to explore other options. If at all possible, it was important to keep her in the area in which she had spent most of her life. Her friends, church, medical providers, volunteer activities and much more were there. These made life rich for her. To move her away from those important aspects of life would be a significant loss. Thus we looked at options locally, which would provide maximum independence, but within the safety of a retirement community.

It quickly became apparent that we had only a couple of options. One was moving her back home, but with paid caregivers (such as Visiting Angels) providing a certain level of help, safety and transportation. Her doctor recommended coverage at least 12 hours a day, seven days a week. Not only was that expensive (a minimum of \$240 per day), but my relative was uncomfortable having strangers in her home for that long every day.

The other option, and the one ultimately chosen, was independent living in a retirement community. We were surprised to find that most local independent living meant renting or buying a "cottage." While located on a retirement community campus, cottage living meant going outside in any kind of weather for mail, meals, activities and other needs. While an option, especially for couples wanting to use the facilities of the retirement community, it was not what my relative wanted.

One local retirement community, however, offered independent living "apartments." These provided one's own personal space in studio, one- and two-bedroom apartments furnished to your liking, but with neighbors next door and across

the hallway. All apartments were in buildings that connected directly through inside, secure, climate-controlled passages to the dining, activity, medical, banking, exercise, post office and administrative facilities. Most interior and exterior maintenance (including lawn care and snow removal) was provided, as was water and sewer. Electric, telephone and cable TV were billed to the resident. At that time, there was no waiting list for one-bedroom apartments, so she actually had a choice of units.

Significantly, they offered a straight "rental" agreement with no large upfront payment or "buy in" other than a one-month rent deposit. She could rent on a month-to-month basis with a 30-day notice clause. She was required to spend at least \$100 per month in the dining room. This arrangement allowed trying the apartment and retirement community without significant financial investment. After passing an assessment by the facilities doctor, and providing the necessary financial information to show her ability to pay, she moved in with furniture and familiar items she chose from her home.

So what can you learn from this experience? If you have an aging parent or relative, begin thinking about what they will need to maintain their health. It will be better to discuss this before that time comes, even if you have to push the subject. If they won't discuss this now, begin doing your own research and planning for when that day may come.

Second, be sure you have the appropriate legal documents for the range of medical, legal and financial matters you may have to handle if they become incompetent. Be sure you know where financial resources are held (banks, brokers, trusts). Where are Medicare, prescription drug plan and Medicare supplement plan ID cards located? You will need these when dealing with any facility or provider.

Third, be willing to explore all the housing options available. Some may quickly be rejected, but don't make assumptions about cost, facilities, waiting lists and similar issues.

Finally, be good to yourself. Being a "parent" to an older relative is a strange place to be. Sometimes you have to take charge and say something or make decisions they don't like for their own safety or in their best interest. Find a support group. Read up about being a caregiver. *How to Care for Aging Parents, 3rd Edition: A One-Stop Resource for All Your Medical, Financial, Housing, and Emotional Issues* by Virginia Morris comes highly recommended.

Steven grew up in Maryland and has spent his life working with people in their life journeys. For more information or free resources, go to www.SRFLifeRetirementCoach.com

CONNECTIONS: ARE YOURS MORE LATERAL OR VERTICAL?

By Kater Leatherman

It's a real departure from the way things used to be. But make no mistake, social media will never replace the real deal when it comes to connecting with another human being.

Basically, there are two ways to connect—laterally and vertically. If you visualize a cross, the lateral line represents a false sense of connection while the vertical line represents genuine connection. Vertical because it requires going within and interfacing with another human being; looking them in the eyes, noticing how they react to your vulnerabilities, their body language, their empathy and joy. Lateral connections are more surface. They are void of emotion, often alienating us from our family, facilitating laziness and causing distractions.

There's no question that social media is here to stay. It's long-view benefits remain to be seen and eventually, we may grow tired of it. But, in the meantime, reading text messages, looking at Facebook, composing tweets, surfing the Internet and checking emails seems to be the preferred way to stay in touch.

My brother-in-law recently observed that while standing in line at the post office, eight people in front of him were all looking at their smartphones. People choose this because they no longer know what to do without being entertained. But they also know that lateral connections are easier—even safer—than vertical ones. Think about it; initiating a conversation with someone face to face requires effort, courage and self-confidence. Yet, sometimes the payoff is an unexpected interaction that can change your life.

According to a series of recent Gallop polls, almost half of Americans who have smartphones can't imagine life without them. While my family likes to make fun of me for not having one yet, my teenage nephew said he actually wished he had his flip phone back, that his smartphone is like a drug. He told me that not being able to put it down has become an out-of-control habit that he wants to change.

Madisyn Taylor, author of *Daily OM*, writes, "Our gadgets can be useful tools for our journey in the material world, but we must not forget that we are spiritual beings having a human experience and that means interacting with people on a personal level. Choices that enliven us and help us feel connected to our world and our loved ones always deserve our full attention and presence of mind, body and spirit."

While it may not seem like it at times, we are social creatures. That means we need people. There's a story about the student who asks his teacher, "What is my soul looking for?" to which the teacher replied, "It's always looking to connect."

Lateral connections are providing a way to stay connected at any time and in any place, but it's also important to find balance ... to slow down from time to time, soak in some green energy from the outdoors and to make time to interact with others on a speaking level. Because no matter what we're facing in life, nothing replaces a vertical connection.

Kater is a professional organizer and home stager, yoga teacher and self-published author. Visit her website at www.katerleatherman.com or email katerleatherman@gmail.com

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Five Easy Steps To Less Stressful Entertaining

By Leah Lancione

For some, the word “entertaining” immediately causes anxiety. My neck feels stiff just thinking about the first time I hosted a dinner party with my in-laws. It all started when I volunteered to help a professor throw a holiday party for her husband’s colleagues. Even though I merely served as a hostess and waitress along with other classmates responsible for preparing and presenting platters of hors d’oeuvres and cocktails, it was one of the most stressful days of my life. The tasks of making sure food didn’t overcook while also serving from a tray without dropping it was nerve-wracking. Beyond that, the professor wanted us to be cordial, but not too chatty, friendly but not meddling, meticulous and professional, but not boring. That was too much! By the end of the evening my head throbbed, my feet were sore and my jaw actually ached from all the smiling that was necessary to play the part.

Now, decades later, as it is for most people, entertaining is still stressful. Therefore, the task is often left to someone else. Well, the time has come to finally take a turn and see what tips I can learn to make entertaining less stressful and actually fun! Yes, there are “Martha Stewart types” out there laughing or even rolling their eyes because, to them, entertaining is an enjoyable art form. We’ve all been to parties where everyone seems to have fun, the food is delicious, the social time is meaningful or at least pleasurable, the host isn’t stuck in the kitchen all night, and everyone leaves happy ... even the youngsters. This may be entertaining at its best—and a pipe dream for me—but at least I can shoot for the goal of a low-stress soiree with good friends and family.

First step: Plan ahead.

Cooking and dinner party guru Ina Garten, who wrote the popular *Barefoot Contessa Parties!* and more recently, *Make It Ahead*, says to “create a timeline for cooking—if you plan it out carefully, you’ll be able to address problems in advance.” This includes developing a “balanced menu” that features a dish that’s done in the oven, something that can simmer on the stovetop and what she calls “easy-to-assemble” items like cheese trays or a salad (www.tastingtable.com). Instead of waiting until the day of the party to do all the chopping (say for a veggie or cheese platter) do it in advance and store it properly. Sauces for pasta dishes can also be made in advance and then brought out to simmer right before the party. Some dishes also taste better after a day or two; maybe a soup or stew that benefits from slow cooking. And there isn’t a rule that you can’t supplement with a purchased goodie such as calling ahead to one of the local restaurants or caterers to have them prepare the boeuf Bourguignon to be picked up that day. A purchased ice cream cake or some local delicacy for dessert is also not a crime and does take some of the pressure off the hostess.

Second step: Choose simple dishes you know.

Resist the temptation to try something new or exotic because you saw it done on a cooking show. This is not the time to experiment. If you want to try something new, why not ask guests to bring a dish to share? Not only is some of the stress to cook everything diminished, this is a way that there will be at least one item each guest will want to eat. It also gives them the opportunity to show off their cooking expertise, which can provide lots of interesting dinner conversation. If you want to have some control over the menu so it’s balanced or cohesive, tell guests there’s a theme, like Mexican or Italian.

Third step: Dodge surprises.

To avoid unexpected requests when inviting guests, you could let them know what’s being served, leaving it to them to decide if that’s what they’d enjoy. My friend Leslie, who has many restrictions, very quietly brings and heats up her own food and serves it as the other guests are being served. Few notice what she’s doing and it takes a huge amount of pressure off the hostess. Also, if you know grandchildren will be present, try to have a few universally kid-friendly dishes—even if it’s just an appetizer or two like fruit kabobs or veggies with hummus. Kids love dipping and will not starve if they don’t care for any of the main meal options.



Bay Bytes

For volunteer opportunities or to donate your time or cash over the holidays, log onto www.aacvc.org for Anne Arundel County. For the Eastern Shore www.chesapeake.edu/volunteer/

Fourth step: Enlist family help.

Make it a group effort by having family members chip in with the preparations. Ask your spouse to create a play list of songs for the evening. Enlist the help of younger grandkids in setting the table or creating an ambiance. Speaking of kids, if youngsters are invited, consider setting up an area specifically for them whether it's an appropriate movie in a bedroom or a fun craft (especially if it's a holiday party) like making ornaments. Stores like Michaels and AC Moore offer plenty of inexpensive and fun do-it-yourself crafts to keep kids having a ball while you and your company chat over dessert and coffee.

Fifth step: Make cleanup a more streamlined, stress-free process.

Don't let guests get involved in the cleanup—unless they're related. It's actually less bothersome to do it on your own or with your spouse's help. The cleanup process goes a lot quicker and smoother if you don't have to stop every two minutes to tell someone where the plates, glasses and other dinnerware go.

Besides do you want your guests seeing your ratty scrub brushes or the mess you made preparing dinner? It's better to leave the party on a high note and say your goodbyes after dessert and good conversation. Besides, it's easier if you transfer all the leftover foods into containers, and get it all properly stored. Not to mention, everything will be ready for reheating tomorrow. Just think, you get to reward yourself for all the cooking and cleaning with a day off.

These five simple steps should make entertaining less daunting. Remember, you are also invited to the party, so don't get so hung up on everything being perfect that you never leave the kitchen or don't sit down to mingle with your guests. Happy entertaining!



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GOOD HEALTH IS NOT ALWAYS A VITAMIN AWAY



By Mick Rood

You reach for your prescribed medicines in a daily ritual you hope will improve your health or protect you from diseases, but right next to them or nearby are the multivitamins, mineral supplements, herbal remedies or nutrition drinks that you take to accomplish the same goals. But do they?

A growing number of government health officials, academics and other experts without a financial stake in the booming multivitamin business think not. They argue that if you are a reasonably healthy person, you have no need for these added pills and potions. You might think, at the very least, that these supplements couldn't be harmful, but many scientists are convinced that even well-known vitamins taken at high dosages can indeed endanger your health.

This vitamin backlash reached a crescendo of sorts almost two years ago, when five physicians, three of them professors at Johns Hopkins University, wrote an editorial in *Annals of Internal Medicine* advising most people to literally save their money and throw most vitamins out.

"Most supplements do not prevent chronic disease or death, their use is not justified, and they should be avoided," the doctors said in language that is as strong as any you will read in a professional medical journal.

A review of the literature, professional articles and media reports indicate that nothing much has changed since then. The supplement industry continues to vigorously defend its products and by all accounts, Americans are continuing to buy them. Numbers are sketchy, but the vitamin, mineral and herbal supplement industry appears to be at minimum a \$25 to \$30 billion annual sales juggernaut being fed by a majority of Americans who use its products.

Still, news coverage about studies doubting the usefulness of vitamins and supplements have taken their toll. Euromonitor International, a marketing firm whose business is advising clients on the health of the industry, noted last Summer that such negative attention apparently slowed the sales growth of vitamins and dietary supplements to 3 percent in 2014 after sales had grown by substantially more in recent years. Still, Euromonitor predicts such products will continue "experiencing strong growth" in the years ahead.

So what are health-conscious people to do, particularly the elderly who are bombarded with supposed fixes for their maladies?

Add to that concerns that the supplement industry is much more lightly regulated for safety than are your prescription drugs. Here are some approaches you might take:

Eat your way to better health. It's old, boring advice, but the best counsel is to get your vitamins and minerals from a good diet. As you have read in these pages dozens of times, a balanced diet usually has all the nutrition you need. Less and leaner meat. More fish. Fresh fruits and vegetables daily. A drastic cutback in processed foods. Plenty of liquids.

Simply put, "supplements cannot take the place of the variety of foods that are important to a healthy diet." So says the National Institutes of Health Office of Dietary Supplements in the latest version of its Health Professional Fact Sheet. The office says "nutrients should come primarily from foods. Foods in nutrient-dense, mostly intact forms contain not only the essential vitamins and minerals that are often contained in nutrient supplements, but also dietary fiber and other naturally occurring substances that may have positive health effects ..."

Consult your doctor. Before trying the elixir of self-treatment, talk to your physician. Bring evidence of symptoms, predispositions to disease in your family or even your suspicions that your diet should be augmented. You can be tested specifically for vitamin and mineral deficiencies that a supplement could help. In other words, there are exceptions to the admonitions not to take vitamins, exceptions that involve very specific conditions. A few of those from the Office of Vitamin Supplements and others:

- Calcium and vitamin D to increase bone density on post-menopausal women who might then suffer less severe injuries in falls.
- Vitamin B12 for vegans and people over 50 who may have difficulty absorbing the naturally-occurring protein. Again, don't just take it; there's a test for this deficiency.
- As **Smithsonian.com** reported last year, vitamin C has been debunked as a cure-all for the common cold, but a zinc supplement has been shown in studies to help shorten a cold's duration and relieve its symptoms.
- At least two large clinical trials have shown that glucosamine chondroitin does little to hope osteoarthritic joint pain. But a subset of patients in one trial was helped. So be pragmatic and discuss with your physician trying this supplement for three or four months to see if it helps you.

Self-treatment is uncertain. If you insist on going it alone, be aware that what you want may not be what you get. In the 1990s, as support grew for beta carotenes a means of preventing cancer and other diseases, researchers went to work on well-designed clinical trials. Now, as the Memorial Sloan Kettering Cancer Center advises, taking beta carotene supplements does not prevent cancer, according to the results of clinical trials.

“In fact, high-beta carotene intake has been linked to higher risk of lung cancer in male smokers and aggressive prostate cancer,” the center says, noting this does not apply to beta carotene-rich foods in your diet.

Be a critical reader. If you see reports of the latest study claiming health benefits from certain vitamins and minerals, be skeptical. Most such claims are made on the basis of observational studies that can only provide an hypothesis, not a final answer to or a direct cause of a disease. Observational studies compare two groups of people, some of whom took a supplement and some who did not. If those who did not take the supplement show up later with more disease, it might be assumed taking the supplement made the difference. There are many other causes of disease that this kind of smaller study with few controls would miss.

Physician-blogger Michael R. Eades has cited a study published in the *American Journal of Epidemiology* that observed that men who shaved daily were less likely to have a heart attack than men who shaved every two or three days. The authors, Eades noted, weren't “so stupid” as to think that the act of shaving had anything to do with risk of heart disease. Other variables were more likely responsible and the researchers noted some of those.

A recent study reported in the American Medical Association journal *Neurology* that suggested people with low vitamin D levels showed a more rapid mental decline than those with adequate vitamin D levels. But if you read further in articles describing the subject, the study's author cautioned that more sophisticated studies were needed to confirm the vitamin's effectiveness against dementia. One reason more such larger double-blind, randomized, placebo-controlled trials aren't done, the author said, is because big drug companies typically don't make much money on vitamin supplements. Other scientists have said that only a succession of time-consuming, very expensive clinical trials can settle some of these questions – and the National Institutes of Health can fit only so many of those sorts of trials in its budget.

This is why the medical community is anxiously awaiting results from studies like a Harvard clinical trial funded by \$22 million from NIH to follow other indications for vitamin D use. Researchers are checking on incidence of cancer and heart disease among 25,000 people – some taking vitamin D and some not – over the course of five years. Results are expected in 2017.

For more thorough explanations of supplements and your diet, you can Google *AgePage dietary supplements* on the site of the National Institute of Aging. If you follow the AgePage logo elsewhere on institute's site, there are similar discussions of other questions facing older Americans.

Mick writes from California where he enjoys a healthy lifestyle of year-round sunshine and fresh foods. He can be reached at mickrood@aol.com



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Christmas in The Big Apple

By Kathryn Marchi

Who doesn't enjoy visiting New York City? But during the Christmas holidays, your visit can be even more exciting and memorable. The city becomes more alive and vibrant with colorful lights, decorations and holiday music wafting from stores out to the sidewalks. It seems to be pure magic!

Spending a day or two in the city gives you the opportunity to see the Christmas decorations, attend a show or do a little gift shopping along the way. One year, my husband and I took his mother to the Radio City Christmas Spectacular as her present from us. Why not make this a Christmas gift to yourself as well?

There is so much to see and do in New York that most folks are not surprisingly hard-pressed to see it all in a short visit, no matter what the season. Here are just a few of the places that represent the holiday season in the Big Apple:

Radio City Music Hall (www.radiocity.com) features the Radio City Christmas Spectacular with the renowned Rockettes. There is also a backstage tour where you'll meet a Rockette and learn how the stage mechanisms work.

- Rockefeller Plaza (www.rockefellercenter.com) is world-famous for its 65-foot Christmas tree, ice skating rink where skates can be rented and a dining concourse below for "fun food." With holiday music and the beautiful and colorful decorations, the Christmas spirit envelops you. Visitors can also go to the observatory on the 68th floor at the "Top of the Rock" building. There are closed observation decks for a great panoramic view of the city in cold weather. It might be worthwhile just for a view of NYC bathed in holiday lights.
- Around the corner from Rockefeller Plaza are stores with fantastic animated window decorations to capture the child in all of us: Saks 5th Avenue, Tiffany's and Cartier, to name just a few.
- St Patrick's Cathedral (<http://saintpatrickscathedral.org>) makes a beautiful place to stop and reflect during the holiday season.
- The Metropolitan Museum of Art (www.metmuseum.org) has been a Yuletide tradition for many years featuring a Christmas tree, known as the Angel Tree, decorated with silk-robed angels seemingly floating above an 18th century Baroque Crèche of some 200 figures displayed around the base. Music and lighting enhance the scene. Their gift shop is a good place to purchase Christmas cards and ornaments.
- Empire State Building (www.tickets@esbayc.com) may be too cold to go out on the observatory area, but this does provide a magnificent panoramic view of the city. It might be worth it

to go outside for another brief glimpse of the beautiful holiday colors. Keep in mind that tickets and reservations are required. While in that area, it's fun to look at the Christmas decorations in Macy's Department Store windows.

Broadway plays and musicals (www.ticketmaster.com or www.telecharge.com) are ready with holiday-themed plays and concerts. Here are some planned for this year:

- Carnegie Hall (www.carnegiehall.org) and the New York Pops: "A Charley Brown Christmas"
- Lunt-Fontanne Theatre (<http://luntfontannetheatre.com>) "A Christmas Story"
- David Koch Theatre (www.davidkochtheater.com) "The Nutcracker"
- St. Luke's Theater (<http://stluketheatre.com>) "The Prince of Christmas"

Tickets and reservations can be made online.

There are many convenient ways to get to New York City during the holidays. Community recreation centers, churches, senior centers, travel agencies and the like have bus tours that can take passengers right into Broadway and Rockefeller Center for the day. It's a fixed price and sometimes includes tickets to a play or the Christmas show at Radio City Music Hall. Check your local publications for opportunities.

Another independent mode of travel is called the Chinatown Bus (www.chinatown-Bus.org) or (<https://nydcexpress.com>) which provides one-way or round-trip service from DC/ Baltimore to New York City. Folks tell me that this bus is inexpensive so it's worth exploring. Another bus service, Wanderu, can be found at www.wanderu.cheap-bus/baltimore-md-to-new-york-ny.com

If you prefer to travel by train, Amtrak (www.amtrak.com) can take you from the DC area or Maryland right into New York's Penn Station. It's about a four-hour trip and you can find a bus or taxi in front of the station that will take you into the city. BWI is a good station to board the train in this area.

If you plan to stay over night, you can also take your car and drive into the city. When you research available hotels near your primary destination, make certain that you have access to either your hotel parking lot or a reasonable lot nearby. Parking can be very expensive in the city. Hotels can also direct you to the Christmas activities downtown.

Kathryn and her husband enjoy visiting New York City, especially at Christmas. She can be reached at marchi-wre@mrisc.com

Grandparents Volunteering at School

By Joanne R. Alloway

Can you remember volunteering at your children's elementary or middle school? Chances are you juggled your schedule, maybe even a career, to be part of their everyday lives, doing whatever was needed at the school. Perhaps you can recall how happy or proud your child was to have you there. Well today, grandparents are stepping in to help in that role, too. They have much to offer – not just their great life experiences, but their time and diverse talents. Grandparents love sharing these things, schools appreciate receiving their help and kids of all ages benefit from them.

Historically, grandparents were relied on for making great family dinners and holiday celebrations. For girls, needlecrafts, cooking, sewing and reading were paramount. For boys, fishing, woodworking, sports and yardwork were looked forward to. Children love and always remember these pastimes. The grandparents were not called upon for help with homework, to create a science project, learn a new technology, go on field trips or help organize fundraisers at school. We've come a long way and much has changed. Today's grandparents can provide many different roles in our schools, depending on the grades of their grandchildren and their interests.

First, it might help if you do a little research on the school. Check its website to determine what's going on inside and read the school board's minutes. Sometimes local papers have school information, but your best bet is to talk with your grandchildren about what they are learning and enjoying in school. What are their favorite subjects? Who are their friends? Do they like the lunch foods? Ask them about their teachers. Then contact the school, say you'd like to be a volunteer and give the principal some idea what you might like to do. Here are a few ideas:

- Reading and math tutoring.
- Being a guest lecturer on a topic that coincides with a class.
- Helping to organize a holiday party or special event.
- Bringing your talent to the classroom (music, poetry reading, gardening, etc.).
- Showing slides related to geography or history class.
- Chaperoning field trips.
- Baking for monthly birthday celebrations in lower grades.
- Helping with teachers' administrative work.
- Monitoring lunchrooms or recess.
- Join the PTA if your children don't have time.
- Volunteering for after-school enrichment activities.

Ask the principal at your grandchild's school to start a Grandparent Club. This is becoming a national trend. According to Jan Damene, president of the national PTA and a grandmother of five in California, "I call the grandparents our legacy leaders.

They've been down this road," and know what these organizations can accomplish. Her group is recruiting grandparents nationwide this year.

Why is it important for grandparents to volunteer in schools? In an online report in Hayidion, *The Ravsak Journal*, entitled "Grandparents: An Untapped Resource." (www.Ravsak.org) reasons cited include: families in which both parents work and need grandparents to pick up or drop off and fill in for them. A recent large-scale survey of 11- to 16-year-old adolescents showed a strong connection with involved grandparents and well-being. Less recreational drug use was reported among those in the survey who had daily contact with one grandparent. It is



also noted that children who have their grandparents as school volunteers tend to do better and build good social skills. Most children are proud to have their grandparent volunteering.

Some grandparents don't want to be a weekly volunteer, but would like to help in some way. A grandfather in Jackson, Tenn., dresses up as Santa at a fundraiser for the school. Other grandparents solicited items for a silent auction. Another grandmother works in the library, restocking books whenever she can. Two sisters from Middleburg, Va., offer tutoring for tests, and a grandfather from Sioux Falls, S.D., is an usher for school concerts or plays.

The possibilities are endless if you have the time, the interest and the desire to spend time at your grandchildren's school. It is an investment in everyone's future.

Joanne can be contacted at jrwrite@aol.com

IS LIFE MAKING YOU WEARY? OUTSOURCE!

By Kater Leatherman

It's the secret weapon to making our lives easier: outsourcing. Most likely you are already outsourcing things like haircuts, car maintenance and dog grooming. The key is to balance the chores that you like while delegating the ones that you don't.

While outsourcing may seem counterintuitive if you are financially strapped, there are ways to modify. Take cleaning. Why not hire someone to do just the bathrooms and kitchen. Then you tackle the areas that are easier and more relaxing, such as folding laundry, dusting or puttering around the house to tidy up.

How about cooking? Start a co-op where you team up with others to prepare meals and then swap them. You choose the number of individuals or families who will each make one meal per week. A few good guidelines would be to choose people who have similar tastes in food and live nearby. And remember, whether you cook for four or 20, you still have to plan, shop and prepare so you might as well cook for a crowd.

Bartering is another option. Some people find it unsatisfactory because they don't know how to negotiate an equal exchange. Since everyone's skills and time are valuable, keep it simple by exchanging services on an hour-for-hour basis.

Outsource jobs to your kids. Or hire a neighborhood teen to walk the dog or do some yard work. They don't charge much, and it gives them work experience and a good reference for when they are older. Have them do the stuff you dread so you can do what you're good at, including things that bring more pleasure to your life.

Some people trim their pets between grooming appointments, the cost of which is going up like almost everything else. However, if you can find a groomer who moonlights at home, you can save a bundle.

Paying a personal assistant may seem extravagant, but it will save you time to do the things that will grow your business and eventually generate more income.

Various online sites such as www.TaskRabbit.com can be found where all sorts of help is available including painters, housecleaners, errand runners, writers or just about any task, most for a negotiable fee.

If getting organized is not your strong suit, hire an expert to get you motivated. A one-hour consultation may be all you need to tame the chaos and reduce stress. If you can't stay organized, hire a professional organizer to come in once a week for a couple of hours to keep you on track. Some organizers also provide housesitting, grocery shopping and pickup and delivery services.

Selling your home? Hire a home stager who can neutralize it in a way that buyers will remember it as the one that feels like coming home. You can rejuvenate your home by having a budget decorator come in and rearrange furniture, move wall hangings and suggest paint colors.

In a perfect world, every drawer would be organized, your tax records neatly filed away and your photos placed in albums. But it's not a perfect world and sometimes the best things in life cost money. So think about outsourcing as a good investment, especially if it gives you more time to do the things that really matter.

Kater is a professional organizer/home stager, yoga teacher and self-published author who helps people rejuvenate their homes. Visit her website at www.katerleatherman.com or email her at katerleatherman@gmail.com

To get what you've never had, you have to do what you've never done.

HOW IS AN OPHTHALMOLOGIST TRAINED?

By Michael J. Dodd, MD

You may not know how your ophthalmologist becomes your ophthalmologist. Here's how it works.

The first step to become an ophthalmologist is to gain admission to a medical school. The basic requirement is four years of undergraduate college. Although not required, a major in biology or chemistry is helpful. One required college course is organic chemistry. This is a particularly difficult undergrad course and may cause some students to reconsider their desires to attend medical school.

With good undergrad grades, letters of recommendation and a good score on the MCAT (Medical College Admission Test), about 40 percent of applicants may gain admission to a medical school.

Once accepted, the "fun" begins. The first two years of medical school are focused on the "basic sciences" including gross anatomy, biochemistry, biophysics, neuroscience, pathology and many other interesting courses. The last two years of medical school are the "clinical years" when you work in the hospital to learn clinical medicine and patient care.

After medical school graduation your next training program is a one-year internship where long days and nights are spent as a medical officer in a busy hospital. In my case, I worked in an inner city hospital with a very hectic emergency room. We saw everything from urgent C-sections to gunshot wounds to mental breakdowns and attempted suicides to every type of medical emergency. The education and experience is broad and fascinating and incredibly demanding.

Once a doctor passes through this challenging year the next decision is to choose a specialty. For those who choose to go into the specialty of ophthalmology, the next three years are spent in a residency, which includes an intense training program in an eye department at a busy hospital. During the training program, you learn to perform an eye exam, to diagnose and treat eye diseases and to perform eye surgery of all types. During training you are closely monitored by full-time faculty and outside private ophthalmologists who may

volunteer to assist in the training program. Some residents may choose to take one or two additional years of training to gain expertise in a specialized area of ophthalmology. An example is the retinal subspecialty in which the doctor concentrates on learning different types of retinal surgery.

After all these years of training, the young ophthalmologist can hang a shingle and go into private practice or join an existing group. But there is one more step: getting board certification. This is the final crowning achievement. To become board-certified, the young ophthalmologist must take a three-hour written exam that requires a year of private practice as a prerequisite. If the written test is passed, several months later there is an oral examination at which six pairs of senior ophthalmologists personally question the candidate over a long day. If this last hurdle is passed, the young ophthalmologist has now achieved the highest goal of the profession: board certification.

In principle, the long training assures that the best candidates end up in private practice.

An ophthalmologist has the initials "MD" after his or her name. Be sure to get regular eye examinations from these MDs.

Dr. Dodd, an ophthalmologist, practices at Maryland Eye Associates located in Annapolis and Prince Frederick. He also is an instructor at the University of Maryland Department of Ophthalmology. He can be reached at 410.224.4550 or mjdm1@gmail.com

Bay Bytes

To raise guide dogs from puppyhood log onto IGDF.org.uk and click "Closest Guide Dog Providers" or AssistanceDogsInternational.org/members/programs-search

New Plants for the Holiday Season

By Neil Moran

Holiday traditions are great, but sometimes we need to shake things up a little. Take for instance poinsettias and Christmas. Poinsettias have been a holiday favorite since about the turn of the century when the Paul Ecke Ranch started mass-producing and distributing them. Poinsettias are pretty, however, there are some other plants that are gaining the attention of those who love to have live plants during the holidays. The added bonus with these plants is that unlike poinsettias, which are usually tossed out by the end of January, these plants double as a permanent houseplant and can even be set out on your patio or, in warmer climates, planted in a garden.

Tropicals. Anthurium is starting to become popular as a holiday plant. It has a bright, deep-red blossom that will display well in your home, or you can take one to a party during the holidays and offer it as a gift. Anthurium also comes in white and pink. *Anthurium* 'Smalltalk' is a compact variety sporting glossy red flowers. Anthurium and some of the other potted plants mentioned below can be obtained at local stores or by mail order at **Oglesby.com** or **Logees.com**

Another tropical plant worth having around during the holidays is *Guzmania bromeliads*. Like a poinsettia, guzmania produces bright red bracts. They're also suitable as a holiday gift and can be grown indoors during the Winter months and set outside during the Summer. This particular variety is taller and brighter than other bromeliads, making it the perfect pick for holiday floral décor.

Succulents. I'm sure you've noticed succulents hogging the display cases in supermarkets and garden centers. People love them and would love them even more if they received one as a gift at an office party or afternoon tea. One succulent you should be able to find this holiday season is *Aloe vera* 'Christmas Carol.' If the name doesn't say it all, the brightly colored foliage will. This is another petite plant that won't take up much space. Like anthurium, it may not make it through a Bay Area Winter, but can be kept inside as a houseplant. If you don't see one in the store you can buy

it online at **karacactus.com**

Echeveria gibbiflora Red Ruffles and *Echeveria* Christmas are two succulents that are sure to brighten up the holidays. Red Ruffles sports a bright red rosette as big around as a soup bowl. Display it in a conspicuous location during the holiday season; add it to your houseplant collection after the new year. *Echeveria* doesn't require a lot of water and can be set out on the patio during the Summer months.

As the old saying goes "dynamite comes in small packages." *Crassula capitella* 'Campfire' is one dynamo for the holidays. The leaves of this succulent are fiery red and it only grows to about six inches tall, making it easy to carry into a Christmas party as a gift.

Perennials. You might say that a holiday perennial plant is a gift that keeps on giving. Christmas fern, *Polystichum acrostichoides*, is an easy-to-grow, evergreen-type plant that will nicely accent your Christmas decor. These actually have a neat growth habit, compared to some ferns you buy at the garden centers. The fronds of Christmas ferns can be used in holiday arrangements and the whole plant can be kept so you can enjoy it for Christmases to come.

Lenten rose, *Helleborus* spp., are attracting attention as a holiday plant. Be the first one around the Bay to use Lenten rose as a part of your holiday decor. They're just starting to gain in popularity. Plant it out in the garden when the weather warms in the Spring so you can enjoy it nearly year round.

Edibles. I didn't think anyone could get excited over a citrus plant until I bought my wife a lemon tree from Jung Seed. These are more of a gift item than a Christmas plant. *Citrus x meyeri* Improved Meyer lemon (White Flower Farm) is one citrus plant that will do well indoors and can be kept outdoors in a protected area during the frost-free days of the season.

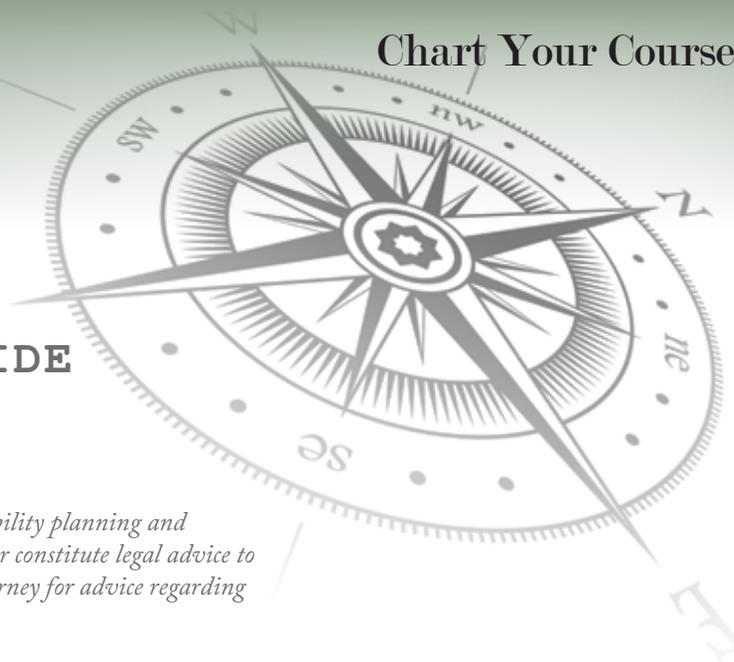
So this Christmas, with all these choices, why not think out of the pot, poinsettia pot, that is, and try some new plants for the holiday season?

CHART YOUR COURSE

A LEGAL NAVIGATION GUIDE

Continuing Care

Retirement Communities



This column presents general information regarding estate and disability planning and probate. It is not intended to create an attorney-client relationship or constitute legal advice to readers. Individuals with legal concerns should consult with an attorney for advice regarding their specific circumstances.

By Jessica L. Estes

It has been my experience that most people, as they get older, want to stay at home and age in place. If you are healthy and do not require long-term care, you can do just that. But the vast majority of individuals aged 65 or older will, at some point, require long-term care. The cost for such care can exceed \$100,000 annually. And, the majority of you probably do not have long-term care insurance.

So, unless you are wealthy, or you have family members willing to help pay for your care, there is a good chance that you may end up somewhere other than your home. Are you willing to take that chance?

One option you may want to consider is moving to a continuing care retirement community (CCRC). A CCRC is a community offering independent living, assisted living and nursing home services all on one campus. Ideally, one would enter a CCRC while still able to live independently and move, only if the need arose, to the assisted living or nursing home portion of the community.

In other words, a CCRC enables you to live in that community for the remainder of your life. Not only do these communities offer a safe environment for seniors, with access to medical and nursing services, but they also promote socialization and an active lifestyle, both of which lead to a healthier and better quality of life.

If you are considering a CCRC as an option, it is imperative that you understand both the costs and the benefits.

What are the costs associated with CCRCs?

First, most CCRCs will have a processing fee that is a one-time, nonrefundable payment used to determine the financial, mental and physical eligibility of an individual seeking admission to the community.

Second, the CCRC will charge an entrance fee. The entrance fee is an amount of money paid to the CCRC to assure a resident continuing care for life. Often, this amount is based on the type of living accommodation the resident will occupy. Most entrance fees exceed \$100,000 and can be substantially more.

Third, the CCRC will have a monthly charge that is similar to rent, and again, will be based on the type of living accommodation the resident will occupy. Generally, the monthly charge covers all

utilities including water, heat, electricity and air conditioning, but not telephone, cable, or Internet. Also, the monthly charge usually includes at least one meal per day and light housekeeping weekly or every other week. The CCRC will also provide the resident with a list of other services that are available for an additional charge.

Am I entitled to a refund if I terminate the contract or die?

It depends. Many CCRCs offer several refund options. Some will offer a full refund and others may only offer a partially declining or fully declining refund. Often, under a partially declining refund option, if you terminate the contract or die during the first 25 months, you will be entitled to a refund of the entrance fee less 2 percent per month of residency. Then, after 25 months of residency, if the contract is terminated, you would be entitled to a 50 percent refund of the entrance fee. A fully declining refund option, however, generally continues to decrease each month by 2 percent and after 50 months, you are not entitled to any refund.

But, a buyer should beware! Even if you are entitled to a refund, many CCRC contracts provide that no refund will be due to you until the CCRC has entered into a contract with a new resident who has paid the entrance fee for the unit formerly assigned to you. And, usually there is no requirement that the CCRC assign your unit to the next new resident. Thus, if you do decide to move from the community and you are entitled to a refund, it could be many months or more before you actually receive that refund.

The Maryland Department of Aging provides a comprehensive consumer information packet for persons interested in learning more about these communities, and the law and the regulations governing them. To request a packet, go to www.aging.maryland.gov/CCRC.html As Benjamin Franklin so eloquently articulated, "If you fail to plan, you are planning to fail."

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ANGELS IN OUR SKIES

~ other than the heavenly kind ~

By Joanne R. Alloway

This is a true story. Last year before Thanksgiving, Jake Thompson was a normal six-year old boy when he began getting sick with massive headaches, slurred speech and balance problems. After numerous tests and scans, his parents learned that he had a rare type of childhood cancer, Medulloblastoma. Jake had to be treated quickly as this cancer spreads rapidly. The Thompsons have two other children, ages three and 10; they live on an Iowa corn and cattle farm. It was recommended that Jake be taken to the Children's Cancer Hospital at MD Anderson in Houston, Texas, an impossibility for the Thompsons. But then they heard of the services of the nonprofit organizations such as Air Care Alliance (ACA), Corporate Angel Network (CAN), Angel Flight Network (AFN) as well as others. Thanks to free travel provided by CAN, Jake's cancer treatments are ongoing at the Children's Cancer Hospital in Houston.

Hence, our angels. These nonprofit organizations are made up of corporations that own business jets, or businesses that operate executive jet services. The mission at CAN, for example, is to help cancer patients and family members get access to the best treatment for their specific type of cancer by arranging free travel – across the country if necessary. CAN has more than 500 corporate partners who have business jets. These corporate partners have teamed up with CAN to provide free travel when they have empty seats and are going where the patients need their treatment. Executives of these companies believe that since the seats are empty anyway, why not do something good for the community at large by assisting these patients?

Locally, GrandView Aviation, an executive jet service based at Martin State Airport in Middle River, has partnered with CAN. According to Jessica Bowling, sales and marketing director, every two weeks a flight schedule is sent to CAN, where the matches for patients and flights are made. And Bowling says, "Another important aspect is in taking patients with compromised immune systems, who shouldn't fly commercially. It also puts vacant seats to really good use."

Corporate Angel Network was founded in 1981, and is based in White Plains, N.Y., at the Westchester County Airport in donated office space. There are only five paid staff and 60 volunteers who work the phones 24/7 matching a patient's needs with a corporate jet's schedule, empty seats and itinerary. The volunteers work with hospitals, physicians, corporate flight departments and treatment centers. Arranging 3,000-plus flights each year for cancer patients – young and old – CAN celebrated reaching 48,000 patient flights this year. In the words of its founder, Leonard Green, "CAN is providing a wonderful community service by merging business activities with corporate social responsibility."

To set up a CAN flight for someone, anywhere, call 914.328.1313 or log onto www.corpangelnetwork.org

Financial need is not questioned at CAN, but in other, smaller organizations it may be a determinant. Other important facts to know about "angel" flights from any organization include:

-Patients must be ambulatory and not need medical attention during flight. Oxygen is permitted, but patients must bring their own.

-Patients must be able to sit up for the duration of the flight, in a nonpressurized cabin. Some aircraft have no lavatory.

-Backup travel plans should be made in case of weather, etc.

-Ground transportation from the destination airport to medical facility is the patient's responsibility.

There are Air Ambulance Services for bedridden patients who need transportation to other facilities. The ride is not free, however and it comes in a more complex package, but can be arranged more quickly. Air Ambulances are often converted executive jets – with seats removed for the patient's bed. A medical staff that has been familiarized with the patient's history and needed equipment or medication during the flight is ensured. Family members may also ride. The medical staff stays with the patient until checked into the new facility. For more information, log onto www.ped-onc.org/resources/airlineflights.html

This shows the broad range of wonderful volunteer pilots and companies that give selflessly of their time and talents so that others in difficult situations may benefit. Owners of small aircraft, spend their own resources on these trips. If not for these pilots and businesses, children like Jake wouldn't be able to travel hundreds of miles for life-saving treatments.

For a listing of these organizations, which provide free transportation for kids and adults for medically necessary, life-saving procedures, to recognized medical facilities, log onto www.ped-onc.org/resources/airlineflights.html

Joanne is an author of two nonfiction books and a freelance writer in Annapolis who can be contacted at jrwrite@aol.com

Bay Bytes

BeMyDD.com is a good site to log onto after too much holiday cheer. A designated driver will pick you up, deliver you to your destination and even get your car home safely.

Holiday Memories

The holiday season is upon us. Time for distant relatives, exchanging gifts with close friends and family, and, of course, an excuse for us all to overeat. It is typically a happy time, filled with laughter and sharing of memories from the years past. While it may be perceived that the majority of the population is experiencing joy, it could be just the opposite for others. Although we know grief is heavy enough after a loss of a loved one, if you tack on the holiday season when we are expected to be joyous, grief can be an unbearable emotion. That's why as friends, we should try to step in and lend a shoulder and let them know we are there to help.

First we must understand that grief is simply a form of love. It is a blend of almost every strong emotion one can experience, all at one given moment. It is very common for individuals to cry, scream and laugh all at one time while grieving. Grief is often times magnified during the holiday season due to the songs playing on the radio and the holiday love viewed in nearly every commercial on the television. It often creates a reminder of the times we had with those who have died and perhaps even exemplifies this feeling of grief. But friends should not shy away from those who are grieving. Understand that all one may want is a simple moment to chat or an email saying you are thinking of them. One mother who lost her child very suddenly said to me that her own friends avoided her during the holidays because they didn't know what to say, while the friends of the child she lost still reach out to her. There is no right or wrong way to respond to a grieving friend. Just remember that they are walking through a difficult time. I often advise friends to ask questions about the deceased, which can help open up dialogue. You can talk about times enjoyed with that person, stories that will always be remembered and yes, it is even OK to joke around just a bit.

If you are grieving this holiday season, try to remove the word "should" from your holiday list. Rather, change it to, "If I feel up to it, I might ...". This time of year we often feel pressured to send out holiday cards, have Thanksgiving dinner with our brother in Ohio or even fix the main feast for the family. It is OK to take

a holiday break and make time for yourself. Call a friend and let them know you have changed your mind on a common tradition and ask them to help you create a new one, perhaps to even honor the one who had passed.

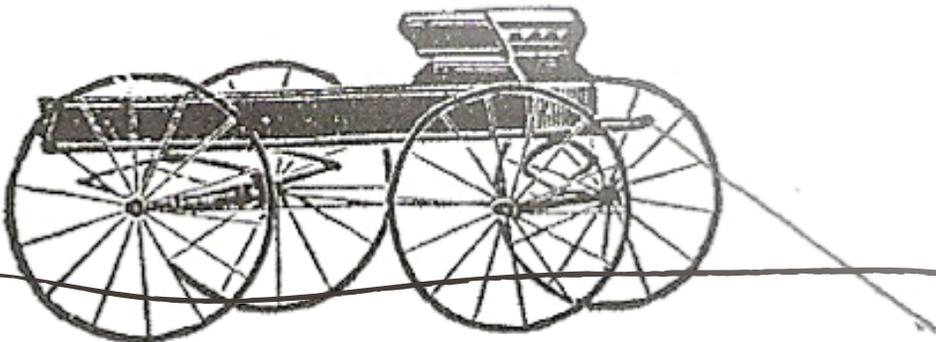
Remembering the ones who we have lost this holiday season is the key to helping yourself as well as a friend. Donate to a charity in memory of them or even give a present to someone who is less fortunate. A few years back a family died in a plane accident in Arizona. During the funeral services, it was requested that all attendees bring a gift to be given to those less fortunate in memory of their children who were lost. This provided an ongoing memory for the surviving family members.

Or perhaps simply invoke the memory of the one who was lost at the holiday feast this year. You could set a place setting where they always sat and after the meal, go around the table sharing fond memories and stories. Again, remember, it is OK to be funny because laughter is a key ingredient to helping through a loss.

One question frequently asked is how to help small children grieve throughout the holiday season. A few tips would be to have them draw or write about the one they lost and place it under the tree to express their feelings. Help them create ornaments with old photos and memorabilia that remind them of the one they lost. The key to all of this with children is to keep Christmas traditions alive. Try to make it a joyous season, with an emphasis on allowing them to release their feelings and grief, while remembering the one they lost. Young children need to know it is OK to talk about their feelings and share in the stories they remember.

During this holiday season maybe take a moment and reflect on the year. Think for just a moment of a family you may be close to that lost a loved one. A phone call or maybe just a pat on the back as you walk by them one afternoon is all it may take for them to know that your thoughts and prayers are with them during this 2015 holiday season.

Ryan, owner, supervising mortician and preplanning counselor at Lasting Tributes on Bestgate Road in Annapolis, offers solutions to high-cost funerals. He can be reached at 410.897.4852 or Ryan@LastingTributesFuneralCare.com



Start the day with "I can do this"

THE ART OF LIVING

By Leslie Basil Payne

"Have you heard the one about the widow who lived alone? People asked her if she got lonely." My father-in-law smiled and took a breath, his cereal spoon shaking slightly in his hand. "She answered no, she was always in good company with Arthur-itis and Ben-gay." My husband, father-in-law and I laughed until dad turned his attention back to the morning newspaper. As they finished their coffee, the two men discussed the latest headlines. Later that day I waved to dad as I left the house. He paused his workout long enough to wave from his recumbent bicycle. None of this behavior is particularly impressive until you learn that in early January my father-in-law will be 104 years old.

Almost two years ago Rev. A. Lewis Payne decided he was tired of living alone in the country home he helped build as a young man. His heart wanted to stay in the mountains of New York, but his head said it was time to have a little help. Using impressive logic and determination, he left all he'd grown accustomed to on the family homestead and moved to another state to start over at 102.

He handled the transition with tremendous grace and dignity. Although I'm certain he grieved about the changes, Lewis never complained. Almost two years later he has settled into his new home, new routine and made new friends. Who says you can't teach an old dog new tricks?

Lewis Payne has taught many people about the art of living through his gentle demeanor, consistent example, and good humor. I hope you are encouraged by this sampling of what I've learned living with my father-in-law. Join me in the honor of learning from a man who was born before the sinking of the *Titanic*.

Prepare for the Day

Lewis wakes early, shaves and dresses. By the time he sits down for breakfast he's ready for the day. After breakfast it's time for the newspaper headlines and an entry in his daily journal. According to *Psychology Today* magazine, routines free a person "from a lot of small decisions that could slow you down or capture valuable brain space that you'd prefer to use for something else." The morning routines also provide structure and better prepare you for the day ahead.

Feed the Body, Soul, and Spirit

When asked what he likes to eat the answer is, "Food." Every meal Lewis perseveres until his plate is clean. After a lifetime in the ministry he also knows feeding the spirit is paramount. He listens to his audio Bible and sings favorite hymns daily. Every Sunday he's in church even though he no longer hears much of what's said. It's long been believed a life of faith has positive impacts on physical health. In 2010 a study published in the *Oxford Journals of Gerontology* concluded "men with very high levels of organizational religious involvement tend to have much higher levels of mental health than all other men." That's one more reason for each of us to find, and plug into a worship community.

Exercise

Dr. Henry S. Lodge of Columbia University Medical Center said recently in an article "How to Live to 100: Best Ways to Add Healthy Years to Your Life" that it's a myth just a little exercise is enough. We need to stress muscles, bones and blood vessels regularly and reach 60 to 65 percent of maximum heart rates. Lewis would agree. He was 96 when he began to feel fatigued going up and down stairs, so he put himself on a weight lifting routine. Using old milk cartons filled with water as weights, he did bicep curls and leg lunges. At 103 he still exercises three times a week. On pleasant days he walks around the neighborhood with a caregiver by his side. Otherwise he uses his recumbent bicycle, stretchy bands and hand weights.

Bay Bytes

Respite care is available while the caregiver takes some time off. Log onto www.seniorhomes.com/s/Maryland/respice-care/ for a listing of the many different options available for some needed time off.

Build and Maintain Friendships

The Center for Ageing Studies at Flinders University, Australia studied 1,500 older people for 10 years. They discovered the people with the largest network of friends outlived those with the fewest friends by 22 percent. Though family ties and relationships are important, they seemed to have little impact on survival. It's all about the friendships. Lewis appreciates living with his son and daughter-in-law, but it's his friends who keep him busy. When he moved away from Windsor, New York, he didn't leave the relationships behind. Letter writing is a high priority task and most days the postman delivers at least one letter in return. Phone calls are often made and received. Friendships in a new area have been a bit harder for Lewis to start up because he's legally blind and hard of hearing. Even so, he's quick with handshakes and hugs. One new acquaintance said, "He made me feel like I've always known him."

Have a Hobby

For more than half a century, painting has been one of Lewis' passions. His art can be found in homes across New York. Recently his shaking hands have made difficult the detailed painting style he's accustomed to. Rather than give up art, he's changed his style, focusing more on color and brushstrokes. The results are lovely. Studies have shown having a hobby is good for your health. It doesn't matter what you do so long as you enjoy it. While engaging in a hobby a person's stress and depression decrease, as happiness and a sense of calm increase. The effect lasts for hours after the fact, and if you paint, the artwork will last for years.

Never Stop Learning

Lewis' zeal for learning continues as he watches the news every day, reads the headlines and occasionally amazes you with dinnertime questions. With his head down there's no conversation as he concentrates on chewing with a full set of dentures. When he raises his head he might ask for more vegetables. Or he might inquire, "What exactly are those holes in space they've discovered and how did they find them?" Learning new things keeps our minds active, makes us stimulating company, and keeps life interesting. Whether through books, television,

Rev. A. Lewis Payne was the child of his father's second marriage to a much younger wife. When Lewis was born in 1912, his father was 72-years old. Born in 1840, the first time Lewis' father voted in an election he cast his ballot for the re-election of President Abraham Lincoln.

radio or conversation, remember you don't know it all. There's always something new to learn.

Count Your Blessings

It's hard to tell when Lewis is sad or happy, because on both occasions he'll sing the old hymn, "Count your blessings, count them one by one ..." He starts singing when he's sad and ends up glad. His positive attitude is evident as he cheers whenever dinner is served or admires the fire in the fireplace on chilly mornings. Mayo Clinic researchers say an optimistic outlook can increase life span, lower depression and distress, help resist the common cold, improve physical and emotional well-being and foster better coping skills during hardships. Perhaps they are onto something. Lewis hasn't had a cold in years.

You can reach Leslie at www.LeslieBasilPayne.com

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FOR THE LOVE OF QUILTS

By Barbara Aiken

Many of us recall the snug and cozy feeling of being wrapped up in a soft, kaleidoscopic quilt. Possibly this delectable creation was handmade by a grandmother, aunt or someone from the distant past. Now that Winter is setting in and it's time for an extra cocoon of warmth, a quilt can be a tangible reminder of our ancestors, our heritage and the love and many hours of work that went into crafting this practical and beautiful piece of art.

Quilts and the art of quilting are an integral part of our American heritage with roots going back to ancient times. Beginning with the first settlers, quilts were an important part of everyday life. The process of quilting brought women together; they would sit for hours working hard on the task at hand and chatting about their daily lives. Perhaps they spoke of the best way to braise rabbit or the rumblings of an emerging Colonial government. I'm sure they spoke of ideas for the next quilt they would create together. Remnants of old worn out clothing and other items were recycled into a patchwork fantasy where they gained new life. Sometimes new fabric was used. The resulting quilt was important for the warmth it brought to cold Winter nights and the sense of community it represented.

Aside from the utilitarian purpose of a warm coverlet, quilts were designed and crafted for many reasons. They were made to celebrate engagements, the birth of babies, coming of age, anniversaries and political victories. When a young man reached the age of 21 he would be presented with a freedom quilt made especially for him. This represented his independence from living under the rule of his father. The unmarried women in his community and those in his family often made this quilt. It usually displayed symbols such as horses, eagles or the flag. Would any young men today be excited to receive a quilt on their 21st birthday?

Similarly, a bride's quilt was made by a young woman on her engagement. Girls were expected to master quilting and began learning at an early age. In many communities a girl was expected to have completed a dozen quilts before she married. The 13th quilt would be her bride's quilt and would represent the very best of her skill. In some locales the 13th quilt would be made by a group of women to dispel the bad luck commonly associated with the number 13. The bride's quilt would only be displayed on special occasions.

Think of long chilly evenings sitting by a blazing fire creating an heirloom for generations to come.

Quilts were made from whole cloth, pieces of fabric and appliquéd cutouts. Whole cloth quilts obtained their decorative quality from intricate quilting stitches in a variety of patterns across the plain fabric. Pieced quilts were put together using many fabric remnants mostly from worn out garments or other items and embellished further with decorative quilting stitches and perhaps embroidery. Appliquéd quilts used the technique of cutting out decorative shapes such as flowers and animals and applying them to a solid piece of fabric with careful stitches. These appliquéd quilts would also be quilted to hold them together and add another layer of decoration. Some quilts incorporate all three methods.

A quilt is comprised of three layers, a backing, a warm middle lining and a top decorative layer. The middle layer of many old quilts was wool. Today batting is usually selected for that purpose. Traditionally, the entire quilt is sewn by hand and mastering the tiny quilting stitches takes many years of practice. These tiny stitches hold the three layers of the quilt together, preventing them from shifting while providing another means of embellishment. Many quilts today are totally machine-stitched and some are a combination of machine and handwork.

If you are interested in learning more about quilts and quilting, take a field trip and visit a museum displaying some of the finest examples of the quilter's art. If you want to try quilting,

a good place to begin is with the basic four-patch pattern. Find a good book on the subject, perhaps from your local library or take a class.

The Winter season is a great time to start a project. Think of those long chilly evenings sitting by a blazing fire creating an heirloom for generations to come. Give quilting a try; you just might get addicted as so many have to this creative and historical outlet.

Barbara is a quilter and was accepted as a juried exhibitor to the Waterford Foundation. She can be reached at barbara.s.aiken@gmail.com.

Museums to visit:

- National Museum of American History
www.ahm.si.edu
- The Maryland Historical Society
www.mdhs.org
- Baltimore Museum of Art
www.artbma.org
- Historical Society of Kent County
www.kentcountyhistory.org

Classes available:

- Cottonseed Glory
www.cottonseedglory.com
- Quilt Vine
www.quiltvine.com
- Prints Charming
www.printscharmingqs.com
- Covenant Quilting
www.covenantquilting.com

Vehicle Donation Program Is Out of the Garage and Running

By Bill Fine

The word is out - four vehicles have been donated already! This is Rotary's way of helping Melwood (www.Melwood.org) with their great training programs for disabled people, as well as a way to raise money for Rotary. Owners of donated vehicles also benefit, receiving a tax deduction pursuant to IRS rules.

Donating a car is easy. Melwood picks up the vehicle, provides the IRS paperwork for the deduction and sells the vehicle at auction. The sales proceeds are divided 35 percent to Melwood and 65 percent to Rotary. Here's the best part: 60 percent of the Rotary take goes to the club identified as the donor, 40 percent directly to the Rotary International Annual Fund and Polio Plus. So the program supports local clubs as a *no-cost* fundraiser and supports the RI Foundation Annual Fund, which brings more grant money back to the local district.

The four vehicles donated so far are:

- 1994 Dodge
- 1995 Chrysler
- 1999 Toyota
- 1998 Mercury

These are older vehicles and to date only the 1995 Chrysler has been sold at auction for \$400 netting Columbia Patuxent \$156 and \$104 to the RI Foundation Annual Fund, but this is just the beginning.

It is simple and easy to donate. You can do it online at: <http://goo.gl/dL3Pji> or call **844.686.7620**.

For more information on the Melwood program (Melwood/Rotary District 7620) or for information on joining a Rotary Club, contact local Rotarian Bill Fine at Wfine46@verizon.net or 410.493.8467.

Look at this way:

Win! Donor gets rid of a car and gets a tax deduction.

Win! Melwood gets support for their great programs.

Win! Rotary International Foundation Annual Fund donations increase.

Win! Club identified by the donor gets a portion of the sales proceeds.



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Best Gifts for Grandkids

By Leah Lancione

It's that time of year when the grandkids are making their Christmas wish lists and hoping their grandparents are checking it twice before heading to the mall. So what to get the young ones this year? Well, for kids 5 and under—no matter the gender—the choices are pretty much the same every year, things that are safe, age-appropriate and timeless. For example, wooden toy trains, blocks, kitchenettes with play food, costumes for dress-up and make-believe play, dolls, puzzles, pop-up books or those with textures and/or sounds. There isn't a 3- to 5-year-old out there who won't like *Thomas the Tank Engine*, Matchbox cars, Doc McStuffins or Play-Doh and its many accessories!

If your grandkids are older it gets a little harder to fulfill their very specific wishes. Gender and age usually play a big part in determining what's considered "cool" or a desirable gift. With the existence of iPods, iPads and a plethora of gaming entertainment systems, gift options go way beyond a simple toy. To make my research more authentic, I enlisted the help of my nephews (ages 8, 13 and 14) and my nieces (age 6, 11 and 15). Most items, unless specifically noted otherwise, can be found at major name stores like Toys R Us, Wal-Mart, Kmart or Target. Unfortunately, the top toy or gift choices are not always so affordable! The following is a list, including their picks, of gift options for grandkids:

Age 6-8

BOY:

1. Lego Dimensions (\$15-\$100), depending on what pack you choose.
2. Wii U (\$299) and games like Super Mario Maker (\$59).
3. Skylanders (must have a Nintendo 3DS, Xbox 360, Sony PS4 or Wii U) SuperChargers Legendary Sky or Sea Racing Pack (\$35) or Trap Team Starter Pack (\$49).
4. Star Wars Episode VII action figures (\$8-\$20).
5. Star Wars Episode VII light sabers (\$13-\$30), depending on the character.
6. Lego Star Wars Millennium Falcon (\$150).
7. iTunes gift cards for games and music (\$15-\$50-plus).
8. Zippy Sack at www.zippysack.com (\$30), plus shipping and handling.
9. Pie Face! Game, (\$20).
10. Star Wars Episode VII Remote Control BB-8 (\$80 at Target).

GIRL:

1. Frozen dolls by Mattel or Disney, Ice Skating Elsa or Anna (\$19 each), also a Disney Frozen Ice Rink (\$23).
2. Disney Frozen bike by Huffy with matching helmet (\$89-\$109), depending on the size and features.
3. American Girl Doll (\$115) with a pet (\$18-\$98), depending on the animal.
4. Barbie Air Brush Designer (\$25).
5. Barbie Saddle 'N Ride Horse and Doll (\$45).
6. Little Live Pets Clever Keet (\$60).
7. Calico Critters (\$10-\$25) and Seaside Cruiser Houseboat (\$80).
8. Zippy Sack at www.zippysack.com (\$30), plus shipping and handling.
9. Pie Face! Game, (\$20).
10. Lego Frozen Disney Princess Elsa's Sparkling Ice Castle (\$40) or Lego Disney Princess Cinderella's Romantic Castle (\$60).

Age 9-13

BOY:

1. Wii U Wii U (\$299) and games like Super Mario Maker (\$59).
2. Star Wars Episode VII Nerf Chewbacca Bowcaster (\$27).
3. Razor Scooter E100 Electric (\$117), nonelectric (\$35-\$100), depending on the model.
4. Lego Minecraft Crafting Box set (\$42).
5. Lego Dimensions Starter Pack with appropriate gaming console (\$100).
6. Razor Ripstik Ripster (\$50).
7. Playmation Marvel Avengers action figures (\$15-40), depending on the character.
8. Sky Viper Streaming Drone (\$99).
9. Star Wars Remote-Controlled Lightsaber Room Light on Amazon (\$27).
10. HoverTech Battle FX (\$35).

Teenager

GIRL:

1. Jewelry as in birthstone or diamond stud earrings at J.C. Penney (\$49) or Etsy (\$8-\$100), depending on size and metal.
2. Clothes from Justice.
3. Easy Bake Ultimate Oven (\$45).
4. Beginner Art Set like Crayola's 200-Piece Masterworks Art Case (\$42).
5. Razor Scooter E100 Electric (\$117), nonelectric (\$35-\$100) depending on the model.
6. Qixels Glow in the Dark Fuse N Dry Combo Pack (\$30).
7. Secret Voice-Activated Journal from Justice (\$46).
8. Script Monogram Wall Jewelry Storage at Pottery Barn Teen (\$149).
9. Girl Scouts Cookie Oven (\$60).
10. Orbeez Ultimate Soothing Spa (\$36).

BOY:

1. Xbox One (\$350).
2. Call of Duty Black Ops 3 video game with appropriate gaming console (\$50-\$60).
3. NBA Live 16 video game with appropriate gaming console (\$60).
4. Nike Jordan shoes from the Air Jordan 1 Low Shadow (\$130) to the Air Jordan 11 Retro 72-10 (\$220).
5. iPhone 6S in silver, space gray, gold and rose gold (\$300).
6. iPhone gel cases from Amazon.com (\$7-\$15).
7. Gift Cards: iTunes (\$15-\$100) or GameStop (\$50-plus) for a video game.
8. Clothes: popular brands include Under Armor, Adidas, or apparel from PacSun.
9. Beats by Dre headphones, (\$119-plus) or earbuds (\$35-\$100).
10. Money -- you'd be surprised how many teens just want cash.

GIRL:

1. Makeup as in Marc Jacobs Beauty Style Eye-Con No. 20-Plush Eye Shadow, Sephora (\$99), Urban Decay Vice 4, Sephora (\$60), Bobbi Brown University Lip Palette, Sephora (\$60), Greatest Glitz Collector's Set & Portable Palettes Ultra (\$49).
2. Clothes: Apparel from PacSun, Hollister or Forever 21.
3. Shoes as in print sneakers by Airwalks (\$25), animal print or plain flats from Forever 21 (\$18), or Lace-up Combat Boots from Forever 21 (\$28) or H&M (\$35).
4. iPhone 6S in silver, space gray, gold and rose gold (\$300).
5. iPhone gel cases from Amazon.com (\$7-\$15).
6. Gift cards: iTunes, Starbucks, Sephora or Ulta.
7. Perfume as in Marc Jacobs Decadence, Sephora (\$95) or Elizabeth & James Nirvana Mini Rollerball Set Sephora (\$25).
8. Nail Varnish Kit Formula X Infinite Ombré Nail Design Set Sephora (\$29).
9. Olloclip 4-in-1 camera phone lens fits all iPhones and smartphones at www.thegrommit.com (\$80).
10. Handcrafted jewelry from Etsy.com as in an initial or name necklace.

So there you have it -- the top gift choices for the upcoming holiday season based on true field research! Since many of the items are pretty pricey, just opt for one special item as opposed to a few gifts this year. And, of course, the best idea is to check with parents to be sure the gift is appropriate and that it's not already in Santa's sack.

GO NUTS THIS HOLIDAY SEASON

By Barbara Aiken

It's that time of year again—so much to do and so little time. You may think you're going nuts. So this is the season to get creative in the kitchen and conjure up some delicious nuts to serve with drinks or give as a thoughtful gift. It doesn't take much effort to prepare these tasty treats and your home will resonate with a delectable aroma.

I have prepared these three recipes for family and friends over the years. You can package them in small or medium cellophane bags adorned with festive ribbons and labels or tags and give them as gifts to friends and neighbors. Add a bag or two to a gift basket for an extra homemade touch. They make excellent party favors and serve as a reminder of your holiday hospitality well after the celebration is over. Serve them with drinks at a cocktail party for the perfect nibble.

Each Christmas holiday my husband's staff asks him if he will be bringing bags of the Sweet Pecans to the office. I prepare six pounds of the Sweet Pecans each Fall and freeze them for that purpose. These simple recipes don't take a lot of time and can be prepared well in advance of an event, saving you last-minute jitters. There are no exotic ingredients to purchase and everything can be found in your basic grocery store.

SPICED NUTS

Makes about 4 cups of nuts.

- 1 egg white
- 1 tsp. water
- 1 (8 oz.) jar dry roasted peanuts
- 1/2 cup unblanched whole almonds
- 1/2 cup walnut or pecan halves
- 3/4 cup sugar
- 1 Tbs. pumpkin pie spice
- 3/4 tsp. kosher or sea salt

In a large bowl, beat together egg white and water. Add nuts and stir well until nuts are coated with egg white mixture. Combine remaining ingredients, mixing well; add to nut mixture and toss until nuts are well-coated with sugar mixture. Spread nut mixture in a single layer in a lightly greased jellyroll pan. Bake at 300 degrees for 22 minutes.

Cover a large baking sheet with a double thickness of parchment paper; lightly grease the top layer. At the end of 22 minutes, immediately scrape nuts in a single layer onto parchment paper to dry. Cool completely; break large chunks into smaller pieces. These can be made ahead and frozen.

CHIPOTLE AND ROSEMARY ROASTED NUTS

Serves 8 to 10.

- 3 cups whole roasted unsalted cashews (14 oz.)
- Vegetable oil
- 2 cups whole walnut halves (7 oz.)
- 2 cups whole pecan halves (7 oz.)
- 1/2 cup whole almonds (3 oz.)
- 1/3 cup pure maple syrup
- 1/4 cup light brown sugar, lightly packed
- 3 Tbs. freshly squeezed orange juice
- 2 tsp. ground chipotle powder
- 4 Tbs. minced fresh rosemary leaves, divided
- Kosher salt

Preheat the oven to 350 degrees. Brush a sheet pan generously with vegetable oil. Combine the cashews, walnuts, pecans, almonds, 2 tablespoons of vegetable oil, the maple syrup, brown sugar, orange juice and chipotle powder on the sheet pan. Toss to coat the nuts evenly. Add 2 tablespoons of the rosemary and 2 teaspoons of salt and toss again.

Spread the nuts in one layer. Roast the nuts for 25 minutes, stirring twice with a large metal spatula, until the nuts are glazed and golden brown. Remove from the oven and sprinkle with 2 more teaspoons of salt and the remaining 2 tablespoons of rosemary. Toss well and set aside at room temperature, stirring occasionally to prevent sticking as they cool. Taste for seasoning. Serve warm or cool completely and store in airtight containers at room temperature.

SWEET PECANS

- 1 pound unsalted pecan halves
- 1 stick margarine
- 1 cup sugar
- 2 unbeaten egg whites
- Pinch of kosher or sea salt

Melt the margarine in a jelly roll pan in a 325-degree oven. In a medium-size mixing bowl, stir together the egg whites, sugar and salt. Stir in the pecans until well-coated. Spread evenly into the melted margarine. Bake for 45 minutes, stirring every 15 minutes. Remove to a platter and cool. Store in an airtight container in the refrigerator or these can be made ahead and frozen.

Which recipe appeals to you the most? I'm sure you won't be disappointed in any one of these scrumptious treats.

Source for Chipotle and Rosemary Roasted Nuts:

By Ina Garten, *How Easy Is That?* Clarkson Potter/Publishers, New York. (2010)

Barbara has been delighting friends and family with her cooking and baking skills for more than 40 years. She can be reached at barbara.s.aiken@gmail.com

Holidays

By Joseph S. Pagano

Holidays are times blessedly set apart. The word “holiday” comes from the two words “holy” and “day,” and something is holy when it has been set apart from the ordinary run of things. Holy days or holidays have a different weight and feel in human experience, and become the fixed points around which we orient our lives. For religious believers, holidays are times to experience once again the founding mysteries of one’s faith: Jews, for example, observe Passover as a time to remember the liberation of God’s people from their bondage in Egypt. But for religious believers these holidays are more than simply remembering past events. They are ways for the faithful to reconnect to the power and the presence of God who has acted for the life and redemption of God’s people, to draw near to the place of blessing and healing. Holidays are times to share sacred stories, to rejoice in the gift of community, to know that one has a place in a good and generous world.

Even if one isn’t traditionally religious, I think we know the difference between the unvarying passing of ordinary time and the richness and excitement of extraordinary times set apart to remember the founding events in our lives. Ordinary time is routine time: We get up, brush our teeth, go to work, come home from work, eat our vegetables, brush our teeth, go to bed. Extraordinary time is meaningful time: our birthdays, the day we met our beloved, when our baseball team won the World Series, births of children and grandchildren, the anniversary of the loss of our spouse. We mark these times differently. Ask somebody to tell us his or her story, to tell us something so that we can get to know them, and I doubt they will tell you how many times a day they brush their teeth. I bet they tell you about the sacred times in their lives.

Holidays are times set apart so that we can connect to the sacred events in our individual and collective lives. Thanksgiving has traditionally been a time set aside to give thanks for the harvest and the blessings of the previous year. Our individual and communal well-being are tied to the rhythmic changes of nature, and it is wise to give thanks to the God who created the seasons of Winter, Spring, Summer and Fall, and has so abundantly provided for our life and sustenance. Hanukkah is an eight-day festival of light celebrated in the Winter, symbolizing the light of hope. It recalls the reopening of the temple in Jerusalem that was reclaimed in a Jewish revolt. The temple was cleansed and the temple menorah needed to be relighted. However, there was only enough oil to burn for one day. Miraculously, the oil lasted eight days, until further oil could be supplied, keeping the fire and hope in God’s love and protection alive. Christmas celebrates

the birth of Christ, in whom Christians believe God has met us in a flesh-and-blood human being, proclaiming the good news that God has overcome everything that separates human beings from God, uniting in his own person heaven and earth. People who celebrate the holidays of Thanksgiving, Hanukkah and Christmas will set these times apart from the ordinary passing of time with the sharing of festive meals, the giving and receiving of gifts, the telling of stories. These holidays break the humdrum of our ordinary lives, with special times set aside for thanksgiving, hope and healing.

Whether you like turkey or not the holidays offer us a blessed break from the ordinary passing of time.

Many people will spend the holidays differently. But whether you are a religious believer or not, whether you like turkey or not, the holidays offer us a blessed break from the ordinary passing of time. Whatever you do during this holiday season, receive the setting aside of this special time as a gift. It is an opportunity to reconnect to who and what you find most important in your life. Take the time to draw near to those sacred places that provide healing and blessing. Take time to recall the special times in your life that have given shape to the beloved person that you are and that you are called to be. Take time to give thanks to the awesome power that has given you life and to the amazing people who have supported you along the way. Enjoy a good meal, good stories and good company. Then choose to live as if holidays are the most important days in the world. Give thanks, have hope and love your neighbor as yourself.

The Rev. Dr. Pagano is associate rector of St. Anne’s Episcopal Parish in Annapolis and is the co-author with Amy E. Richter of Love in Flesh and Bone: Exploring the Christmas Mystery. He can be reached at jpagano@stannes-annapolis.org



Age is just a number – go live your life.

What's in a Name?

By Ellen Moyer

Have you ever wondered when you are driving around and your GPS pops up with a name of the road you are on where that name came from?

For instance, Maryland's Route 2. At 79 miles, it's the state's longest highway, extending from Baltimore to Solomon's Island, but it isn't only called Route 2. Constructed as a gravel road heading south from Annapolis in 1910, it was called the Solomon's Island Road, and 100 years later still carries that name.

Solomon's Island was first named for early settlers Bourne in 1680 and Somerveil in 1740. Finally in the 1860s, Baltimore businessman Isaac Solomon established a canning factory among the schooner and bugeye ship builders on the island. True to form, the island took the name of its newest prominent settler, Solomon. During World War II the two-square-mile, southern-most tip of Calvert County on the north side of the Patuxent River on the Chesapeake Bay was an important amphibious training site and later a home for the University of Maryland Bay Research Institute. There were new settlers, but no name change occurred.

Route 2 ends at Solomon's though some might think it continues across the Patuxent River into St Mary's County. True to its Colonial heritage, the bridge constructed in 1977 is named after Maryland's first governor, Thomas Johnson, who took office 200 years earlier in 1777. Johnson was a supporter of the War for Independence, drafted the declaration of rights of Maryland's first constitution and was appointed to the Supreme Court by George Washington.

North of Annapolis, Route 2 becomes Ritchie Highway. Originally conceived as a landscaped boulevard from Baltimore to the capital, the only place it achieves that design is between Annapolis and College Parkway. Originally called the Baltimore-Annapolis Blvd., Ritchie Highway was the most traveled road to Baltimore until 1995 when I-97 was opened.

The highway is named after Gov. Albert Ritchie, one of Maryland's longest serving

governors. Ritchie was credited during his terms from 1920 to 1935 with establishing one of the nation's best road and educational systems. Ritchie was an interesting guy. He married in 1907, but four years later his wife, Elizabeth Baker of Catonsville, filed for divorce claiming abandonment when Albert left her to live with his mother. He never remarried and spent his time immersed in the political arena, even twice pursuing bids for president. In a closely contested election against Harry Nice in 1919, he was elected to his first term as governor.

On his fourth bid for reelection, he was again challenged by Harry Nice of Baltimore City. In an upset, Nice defeated him by a slim vote, running on a slogan of "right the wrong of 1919." A Republican, Nice didn't last long. He was ousted in 1939. Nevertheless, the 1.7-mile Potomac River Bridge from Charles County, Maryland, to King George County in Virginia carries his name. A popular route, in 2014 6.4 million vehicles crossed the Governor Harry Nice Bridge.

Annapolis has a King George, too. It is a street that connects the Severn River Bridge to Ritchie Highway, presumably named after King George I. There were four of them. The first George followed Queen Anne, the namesake of Annapolis. The five-block road also provides access to Rowe Blvd.

Rosco Rowe is not a Colonial figure. He was a city solicitor who testified before the Supreme Court, and was a mayor of Annapolis from 1949 until his unexpected death in 1952. He was considered a genius at making friends, and his election was regarded as a triumph of personality over politics. Under his leadership, the city grew through annexation by election to include Eastport and Parole and West Annapolis in 1950. Buried in Cedar Bluff, pallbearers included Gov. McKelden, Sen. Louis Phipps and Vice Adm. Harry Hill.

Rowe Blvd carries his name as a tribute to his influence in making it a reality. In 1968, Sen. Roy Staten from Baltimore recommended changing the name to Heritage Boulevard. Citizens of Annapolis were enraged. So was the editor of the local paper. The senator's effort was defeated and Rowe's name is carried on the two-mile boulevard that "Roscoe" built.

Ellen, a former mayor of Annapolis, can be reached at EllenMoyer@yahoo.com

HOLIDAY QUIZ-ACROSTIC

Manonettes have existed for thousands of years. Rudimentary manonettes have been found in Egyptian tombs. The Christian Church used manonettes as characters in morality plays and passion plays. The word *manonette* may refer to the Virgin Mary. What is the meaning of the French word *manonette*?

HISTORY OF PUPPETS: LITTLE MARY

A.	Hans Christian Andersen
B.	Ivory tower
C.	Shimmer
D.	Tantrum
E.	Oberramsgau
F.	Richard Hudson
G.	Yes man
H.	Cats
I.	Ennis
J.	Perfect fifth
K.	Urethitis
L.	Finocchio
M.	Postbox
N.	Emmanate
O.	Thurnis
P.	Safety
Q.	Lemmas
R.	In the now
S.	The Ohio State
T.	Thursly
U.	Leibel
V.	Ennis
W.	March of the Wooden Soldiers
X.	Andy Pandly
Y.	Ragedy Ann
Z.	Yarn

There's never been a better time to get involved.

FIVE FAVORITE WINTER WALKS

By Penelope Folsom

Is there a better way to enjoy the quietness of a Winter's day than an early-morning or late-day walk through the stillness of the woods? Here are five of our favorites that are close by and offer quiet meandering walks, through the trees that offer occasional glimpses of wildlife such as deer and foxes.

1. **Quiet Waters Park** offers a paved trail almost five miles in length that travels around the periphery of the park. A great destination for an early-morning or late-day walk when there aren't quite so many people. Closed on Tuesdays, but parking is available across from the entrance in the lot along Hillsmere Drive. The trail winds through the woods to the South River. There are picnic tables available in covered shelters or just settle on a bench and enjoy. Leashed dogs and bikes are welcome and there's a seasonal concession stand. Senior citizen pass (410.222.1777) allows free entry. For hours, special events and other information, log onto www.aacounty.org/RecParks/parks/quietwaters/
2. **Cross Island Trail** is one of the most pleasant and under-used trails in the Bay area. The trailhead is tucked back off Love Point Road in the Terrapin Nature Park, which offers parking. There may be a parking fee. A dirt trail leads to the beach or a paved trail winds through the woods and past creeks all the way to Kent Narrows, a distance of about six miles. No need to pack a lunch as there are four or five excellent restaurants located on Kent Narrows. Enjoy a snack or a meal and then head for the under-used trail behind the Chesapeake Exploration

Center that goes out to a spit of tranquil land. For more information and a map, log onto www.dnr.state.md.us/publiclands/crossisland.html

3. **Calvert Cliffs State Park** has six different trails of about three miles each of which will take the hiker down to a quiet beach on the Bay. With a bit of intense scrutiny it's almost guaranteed that you'll find a shark's tooth or fossil washed up in the sand. The park is open from sunup to sundown and the fee is \$5 per car. Backpack a picnic to enjoy down at the water's edge. Learn more at www.calvert-county.com/stateprk.htm
4. **Severn River Run** provides a quiet walk through the trees along the headwaters of the Severn so try this little-known trail. It has a few minor hills and can be slippery after a rain, but it's a delightful out-of-the-way treat on a quiet Winter day. It has few amenities, but the stillness and views along the water make it all worthwhile. To find the access point, travel along Indian Landing Road to just past Larue Road and park on the right and look for the trailhead a few yards down on the left. Another access point is on Veteran's Highway where it parallels Route 97. Pull into driveway at 8737 Veteran's Highway, Millersville, and park on the left side. Access to trail is easily visible.

Why not bring a few friends, backpack a picnic and a thermos of hot chocolate and enjoy the quiet and crispness of a walk in the woods?

Bay Bytes

Should you return home with a pocketful of foreign currency, it can be donated to UNICEF (www.Unicef.org) Place coins or folding money in a sturdy envelope and mail off to UNICEF, Attn: Change for Good Program, 125 Maiden Lane, New York, N.Y. 10038. If you include your name and address, you'll receive an acknowledgement.

Our Capital City

By Ellen Moyer

Annapolis, our capital city, is unique among all the state capitals. Having said that, I can see the hackles rise from loyalists of the "other places." Annapolis, however, has bragging rights - Revolutionary War bragging rights. We have stories to tell about how the upstart Colonies became a thriving new nation. We are silent about this city's past contribution.

The money guys in Baltimore, in years past, coveted being the state capital. Having lost that fight, Annapolis, the ancient town so familiar to our founding fathers, was shunned, its role in our nation's history invisible. For years, information on the state's capital city was hidden in the visitor centers that dotted our highways buried in the central Maryland region, not in the Capital region that was defined, of course, as Washington, D.C. Yup! We marketed the nation's capital and ignored our own. Only recently have the visitor centers featured Annapolis.

The State Department of Business and Economic Development markets the Civil War battlefields on the road to Gettysburg (though South Mountain is generally ignored) and market the forgotten War of 1812. The extraordinary actions of the War for Independence are still passed on to Philadelphia or Virginia or somewhere other than our capital city. Despite the neglect, four million visitors find their way to Annapolis each year, in large part because this is the home of the United States Naval Academy and a football team that regularly beats Army (in recent years) and performs in a New Year's bowl game.

No other capital can boast a state capital building in continuous use for 250 years with a lightning rod designed by Benjamin Franklin. No other state capital can boast being the first national capital of a new emerging nation.

...established a civil democratic government of by and for the people...this had never been done before

Actions that took place in our State House in 1783-84 established the path an emerging nation would follow. There was a fork in the road and the course of this nation could have been different. We could have remained a confederation like the European model. While citizens clamored to crown him king, George Washington eschewed monarchy, resigned his commission from the Continental Army and forever established a civil democratic government of, by and for the people. This had never, in global history, been done before and it happened here in Maryland's capital city in our State House in the restored senate chamber.

The Treaty of Paris, ending the Revolutionary War, was signed in that same State House. This treaty, generally ignored by historians, did two things that framed our future. It recognized America as an independent nation and it set a new boundary west to the Mississippi River that, with the sweep of a pen in our State House, made this new land larger than the world's leading nations of England, France and Spain combined.

In this chamber, Thomas Jefferson drafted the Ordinance of 1784 that spelled out how this new territory could be settled and new states created. The cry to settle the frontier set the path for nationhood that would occur in 1787 with a proposed new Constitution.

On these momentous occasions our state's marketers are silent. Yet what this nation would become unfolded here.

A local resident and adjunct professor, Mark Grobani, has singularly promoted activities to commemorate the Treaty of Paris and the years between the battle of Yorktown in 1781 and the 1789 Constitution. The walls of the Maryland Inn, a political rendezvous spot in the 1700s, holds copies of original letters signed by presidents of the Continental Congress the governing body during the war years. Grobani is proposing an historical marker on the site of the Mann's Tavern that housed the Convention of 1786 that called for the Constitutional Convention in 1787 and was the site of a rip-roaring party on the eve of Washington's resignation in 1783. He has an idea for a new building that can tell the story of this significant time in our nation's history, which started to unfold here, in our state capital, not in Philadelphia, D.C. or Boston or anywhere else.

Oh, the stories we could tell to engage a young generation with what it means to be an American. It happened here, yet we are silent.

Ellen, a former mayor of Annapolis, can be reached at EllenMoyer@yahoo.com

Bay Bytes

To market your special talent or expertise online, log onto **Fiverr.com**. There are also extensive listings if you need assistance with just about anything such as designing a holiday card or writing your memoir, it's all there. Name your task and then review the offers.

Farewell Party

By Ellen Moyer

On Dec. 17, the Maryland Inn will be the scene of a dinner with 13 toasts to the father of our nation, George Washington.

In some sense this evening event is a reenactment of the farewell parties given for Gen. George Washington on the eve of his resignation as commander-in-chief of the Continental Army on Dec. 23, 1783, in the State House.

However, the party on the 17th is not quite a true reenactment of the events in 1783. Back then the ultimate farewell party for Washington was an all day and evening affair far exceeding the three hours posted for the Maryland Inn.

On Dec 22, 1783, 200 guests were invited to an afternoon dinner in the community room in what is now City Hall. Wine flowed -- \$644 worth from the special reserves of Mann's Tavern the go-to lodging quarters for the founders of our new nation.

Mann's Tavern facing on Main Street (Church Street then) had been the elegant home of the Woodwards in 1750 and in the 1760s of loyalist Lloyd Dulaney who ensured its confiscation by the government and subsequent sale to George Mann.

History was made at Mann's. On Nov 21, 1783, when the Society of Cincinnati was founded here, as was the Annapolis Convention of 1786 that led to the Constitutional Convention in 1787 in Philadelphia. For years the tavern was known as the City Hotel and a stunning theater before it burned to the ground in 1919 never to be resurrected.

Yes, George Washington, Thomas Jefferson and the Adams cousins and a

host of other Colonial leaders (but not Ben Franklin, who never visited Annapolis) slept here.

On Dec 22, 1783, the tavern supplied the wine for the farewell celebration planned by Thomas Jefferson, but not the venue. The afternoon dinner was held at 160 Duke of Gloucester, today's City Hall. Rumor has it that Washington played cards in this community ballroom.

Food, drink and 13 toasts later, the guests moved to the State House for an evening of dancing. Washington has been described as an elegant dancer. And so the story goes he danced the night away, never refusing an invitation from any of the ladies present.

A whole day filled with ribaldry and fun and food and drink into the wee hours makes me wonder how the commander-in-chief and all the other dignitaries arrived standing at the solemn morning ceremony of the general's resignation, an act that stunned aristocratic Europe, but set America on a new path of civil government of, by and for the people.

By noon, the retired general was on his horse galloping off to his beloved Mount Vernon in time for Christmas, the first in eight years, and what he thought would be a new quieter life. In four years, history would prove otherwise.

Maryland Inn
6:30 P.M. DEC. 17

THE TREATY OF PARIS CENTER
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GEORGE WASHINGTON'S RESIGNATION
AS COMMANDER-IN-CHIEF
OF THE CONTINENTAL ARMY
BEFORE PRESIDENT THOMAS MIFFLIN
AND CONGRESS, IN ANNAPOLIS
ON DEC. 23, 1783.

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SPEAKING WITHOUT OFFENDING

By Dr. Jim David

Have you ever hesitated to speak up due to fear of offending the other person or of being rejected or humiliated? I certainly have. Most of us have probably done this. Sometimes it is the wise and prudent path but mostly it isn't.

I chuckled the other day when my canoe partner of many years, cautiously shared that I made rather loud, slurping, smacking sounds when I eat apples or other fruit. It brought to mind my sweet granddaughter telling me similar news. This also sparked memories of my dear paternal grandfather's eating noises. Aging has some inevitable drawbacks, if not indignities. Thankfully, some people give us feedback.

On the other hand, as human beings, we occasionally may explode or we may witness someone exploding. Emotional explosions generally have devastating impact upon the recipient, whether a child or an adult.

PURPOSE

So the question for many of us is how to avoid the two extremes of being passive (not expressing ourselves) and being aggressive (exploding)? When we are passive we are generally fearful and insufficiently self-valuing. For many people, the inability to speak up originates in childhood trauma, causing a state of paralysis or frozenness. So there are varying degrees of being unable to speak up.

On the aggressive side of the ledger, we may have a short fuse because we have collected so much emotional wounding that we finally erupt. When we unload on someone, the recipient either gets flattened or retaliates in kind. Either way, it's not a pretty picture.

If we have a short fuse, we are probably carrying around a heavy load of hurt or trauma, which we haven't addressed and resolved, so we explode. Think of road rage.

A third possibility is for us to be covertly aggressive. This is where we communicate our anger, alienation, hurt, resentment, etc., indirectly, where we can reasonably deny our negative motivation. Examples would be being late, forgetting, sabotaging. This is labeled passive-aggressive. It is manifestly unhealthy. It is generally discernible as a reprehensible pattern of behavior.

In summary, when we are passive we don't value ourselves sufficiently. When we are aggressive we don't value the other person sufficiently. Both stances are unhealthy. The purpose here is to address the healthy stance of asserting ourselves when we balance valuing ourselves and valuing the other person.

OTHER CONSIDERATIONS

Many people hesitate to speak up because they are afraid that they will emotionally hurt the other person if they do. People afflicted with this dilemma are generally what we call "people persons." They care about people. They love people, but they are uncomfortable with conflict and they may suffer from the imbalance of valuing the other person much more than they value themselves. They are sometimes labeled as "people pleasers" or worse, "doormats."

Perhaps you will be uncomfortable with how we achieve the healthy stance of being assertive. We use sentences beginning with the pronoun "I" to assume an assertive stance. Unfortunately, many of us were taught to avoid "I" messages because they were deemed to be egotistical, self-centered, narcissistic, etc. Many of us have been well trained to avoid "I" messages.

Step out of your comfort zone and discover something new.

Before explaining “I” messages, let’s explore the phrasing we typically use. We frequently begin sentences with the pronoun “you.” These sentences may be perceived as negative, positive or neutral. For example, “You were very caring” (positive), “You were never kind to me” (negative), “You were here before” (neutral).

The problem with sentences beginning with “you” is that they are judgments of the other person. We human beings instinctively dislike being judged. The guideline to follow is to only use a “you” message when doing active listening or mirroring. An example is, “You felt anxious when your friend was driving so fast and recklessly.”

BEING ASSERTIVE

Being assertive entails balancing self-valuing or self-respect with valuing and respecting the other person. It’s like saying, “I’m important and you’re important too!”

The twin prerequisites are self-awareness and self-valuing or self-confidence. The essence is the ability to say “I feel” or “I am” followed by a one-word labeling of the feeling state. The nexus is that how I feel equals who I am at that point. If you don’t tune into and respect my feelings, I don’t feel valued.

In our society, many of us routinely fail to differentiate between thoughts and feelings, which is necessary for optimum communication and mental health.

We say, “I feel that this sofa is too soft,” equals, “I think this sofa is too soft.” Or, “I feel like we need to stop,” equals, “I think we need to stop.” The important issues are not to confuse thoughts and feelings, but to balance thoughts and feelings. For example, “I feel uncomfortable on this sofa. I think the cushions are too soft.” Or, “I feel hesitant to continue. I think we’ve exhausted this issue.”

As a small digression, saying “I feel” or “I am” followed by one word is also the essence of emotional intimacy. When I tell my friend or my spouse how I feel, I’m telling them who I am. Are they accepting and supportive or unaccepting and indifferent? The bottom line is that in a healthy relationship, we can share our deepest feelings in safety. We feel safe in sharing ourselves. We feel confident about the other person’s ability to hear us and support us. (See *The Transparent Self* by Sidney Jourard.)

ABC MESSAGE

A full and effective “I” message is an ABC message. It looks like this:

Affect: *I feel or I am, followed by one word. I feel lonely equals I am lonely.*

Behavior: *A non-blameful description of the other’s objectionable behavior, e.g., When you spend so much time on the Internet.*

Change Request: *I’d like you to work out an amount of time on the Internet that is genuinely acceptable to each of us.*

The ABC message is also the most powerful way to affirm another person. For example, “I feel close to you when you look at me when I talk to you. I really like it when I feel connected with you.” Having an open heart with a soothing, pleasant tone of voice is essential.

Initially, using “I” messages or ABC messages may seem awkward, artificial or mechanical. But with time and persistence, they will feel authentic, powerful and intimate. Keep in mind that in being passive, we could be hurting ourselves; in being aggressive, we could hurt the other person. When we are assertive, we treasure ourselves and the other person.

Dr. David is a licensed clinical social worker and a licensed marriage and family therapist practicing in Silver Spring. Visit his website at www.askdrdavidnow.com or email at james519@comcast.net

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For the ultimate in holiday decorations and fun in Maryland, log onto www.visitmaryland.org/list/winning-winter-events for a list of all the best sites.

BOOKS:

Old, New and Obscure

ORPHAN TRAIN

By Christina Baker Kline
Harper Collins, New York (2013)

Orphan Train is a fictionalized story of a mostly unknown part of American history. Between 1854 and 1929, so-called "orphan trains" took thousands of abandoned children from New York to the Midwest where their futures would be determined by chance or luck.

The lucky children found good, loving homes where they would thrive and live a happy life. Unfortunately, many others were chosen to be maids, servants or field workers and received little if any kindness.

This novel, by the experienced, award-winning author, Christina Baker Kline, builds a page-turning story of a 91-year-old woman who was on one of the "orphan trains" as a child and a teenager with a troubled past who has one chance for a life out of juvenile hall or the prison system. These two women, who seem to have nothing in common, find a bond and friendship that changes both their lives.

The older woman, Vivian Daly, had a troubled childhood after riding the "orphan train." Her name was even changed three times. She now lives a tranquil life on the coast of Maine. But in her attic are boxes and trunks from her past life.

The younger woman, Molly Ayer, a 17-year-old Penobscot Indian who had been in and out of foster homes, is hired to help go through and clean out the attic and the items stored there. As they sort through Vivian's possessions they find they have a great deal in common and an unusual friendship develops.

The depiction of the foster homes where Molly spent her childhood seemed a little harsh and unrealistic. Everyone of them had a mean, vindictive wife who was unkind to Molly and a mild-mannered, "wimpy" husband who seemed unable to stop the abuse. This probably added to the plot, but to me seemed not the norm in so many foster families.

Orphan Train seesaws back and forth between present-day Maine and Depression era-Minnesota, but does it in a way that is not confusing.

This novel is well-written and powerful in its message of resilience, courage and unexpected friendship. It probably will introduce many readers to an unknown segment of American history that has been buried in obscurity. Most of the "orphan train" riders are gone or quite old, but Christina Baker Kline interviewed some of them and has included some interesting pictures from this time.

~ Peggy Kiefer

CHRISTMAS KEEPSAKES

By Donna VanLiere
St. Martin's Press, New York (2013)

In *Christmas Keepsakes* you get two Christmas stories in one book. Both *The Christmas Shoes* and *The Christmas Blessing* have been made into movies, and are sentimental tearjerkers.

Christmas Shoes tells the parallel stories of Nathan, an eight-year-old boy whose mother is dying of cancer at Christmas time and Robert, a successful attorney, who is such a workaholic that he has forgotten about the emotional needs of his wife and two daughters, and thinks that money can bring them happiness.

Their lives intersect when they meet, not knowing the other, in a department store on Christmas Eve. Nathan wants to buy his mother a pair of sparkly shoes so she will be beautiful and Robert has no idea what to get his family as he has distanced himself from them and really doesn't know them.

What happens that Christmas Eve changes both their lives forever, luckily and because it is a Christmas story, for the better.

In *The Christmas Blessings*, fast-forward 15 years and Nathan is a third-year medical student. He has decided to become a doctor of oncology so he can honor his mother who died of cancer on Christmas Day 15 years earlier, and also so he can help other cancer patients.

Robert has turned his life around because of his encounter with Nathan on that Christmas Eve 15 years earlier and is now able to help him with his career and personal life, even though at first he doesn't realize it is the same young boy he helped many years earlier and who helped turn his life around.

Nathan is now learning his own lessons about love and faith from a young woman he meets through his medical internship and a young boy who teaches him about courage.

The story weaves its way through sickness, love, tragedy and triumph, as a Christmas story often does.

This book is quite heavy on religion, God, blessings and faith. It could be a difficult read for someone who has experienced a tragedy at Christmas time, but the outcome is positive and uplifting, which makes it an inspiring story to read in the holiday season.

~ Peggy Kiefer

It's not worth winning every argument. Agree to disagree.



Dear Vicki,

My wife has been diagnosed with Alzheimer's. She is in the early stages of the disease and is aware of and disturbed by her memory lapses and changes to her routine. We have a large, extended family that we enjoy entertaining and visiting over the holidays. Many of them do not know of her diagnosis and I'd prefer to keep it that way, for now. How can I help both of us to survive this season and maybe find a little joy too?

Dear Vicki

Dear Vicki,

The holidays are here and I can't seem to stop buying things for my granddaughter. I'm not sure that her mother appreciates the overindulgence though. Is this a problem that I should worry about?

ALZHEIMER'S DIAGNOSIS AND THE HOLIDAYS

The holidays pose extra stress for those who are caring for loved ones with Alzheimer's disease and for those afflicted by dementia themselves. Kudos to you for giving this some advance consideration. With a little bit of planning, you and your wife will be better positioned to reduce unnecessary stress and maximize your enjoyment of the season.

Start by encouraging your wife to participate in those holiday traditions that have been meaningful to your family. Wrapping presents, decorating the tree or baking cookies will make your wife feel productive and useful. These activities also stimulate long-term memories and can foster feelings of well-being.

If possible, visit with your relatives at home where your wife is most comfortable. Host a potluck, hire a caterer or bring in prepared food. You don't need any extra stress, so keep it very simple. Soup and sandwiches are just fine for a quick holiday supper. Serving just desert and coffee is another option. Instead of a large party, consider several time-limited and more intimate get-togethers. Crowds can be confusing and overwhelming for those who suffer from memory loss. Shortly before your guests arrive, review who is coming to refresh your wife's memory.

Ask for help. While you may not want your family at large to know the diagnosis, you may wish to share it with a few key people. These folks can ride shotgun for you, head off any nosy queries, and rescue either of you should your energy and resources flag. As far as those who may ask intrusive questions? A simple and pleasant, "We've had some challenges but are coping well," should suffice. If pressed, do not hesitate to simply change the subject.

Monitor your own level of fatigue and stress. Build in some breaks where you take a nap, go for a walk or see a movie with a friend. By taking care of yourself first, you are better able to care for your spouse.

OVERINDULGED GRANDCHILDREN

Popular opinion seems to be that it is a grandparent's right to spoil their grandchildren. As tempting as that is, and I am as guilty as anyone on this, we need to temper our generosity with the parents' wishes and with what is best for our grandchild. Fostering greediness is never a good idea. Instead of claiming a misguided right to spoil, we need to recognize that it is our job to support our children to raise *their* children to become well-adjusted and caring adults.

If you think your overindulgence may be an issue, ask the parents for guidelines on giving. My bet is that they have an opinion and will be happy to share. Also, consider some of these ideas to put the brakes on your spending and spoiling:

- Limit giving to one thing they want, one thing they need, one thing to wear and one thing to read. Use restraint on these individual items and ask for input from the parents.
- With the exception of one or two small gifts, put the money you would otherwise spend into an education account. Someday, they'll thank you.
- Divide the number of gifts you usually give into two categories. Give half to your grandchild. Let him or her help you pick out the others to give to "Toys for Tots" or a similar charity. Make giving the donation a fun event by going out for hot chocolate together first!
- Give the gift of an experience. Plan a special outing for the two of you, write it down or draw a picture of it and wrap it up.

Vicki is a licensed professional counselor and welcomes your questions. She can be reached at Victoria2write@aol.com

WINTER IN THE BAY

By Henry S. Parker

As November surrenders to December, a chilly torpor grips the Chesapeake. Ospreys and sailboats are long gone, headed south or cocooned in shrink-wrap. Migratory waterfowl have flown to warmer climes. Like snowbirds, bluefish take up Winter residence in Florida. Other fish species move out of the Bay into the more stable waters of the Atlantic Ocean. As the days grow shorter and ice creeps into the shallows, the Bay seems to seize up. To the casual observer the estuary has entered a state of suspended animation. But look closer. The waters still teem with life.

If you've made the Bay your year-round home, Winter is not an easy time. Then again, living in an estuary is a challenge in every season. Even in the Summer, water temperature and salinity can fluctuate dramatically with changing weather or over a tidal cycle. Oxygen can drop to unsustainable concentrations. Runoff from land can cloud the water, deliver gill-clogging silt, or introduce toxic pollutants. Inhabitants of estuaries have to be well adapted to survive, especially in the Winter.

And well adapted they are. Life forms that stick around here for the Winter employ a variety of survival strategies to deal with colder temperatures. With the notable exception of marine mammals, most animals in the sea are "cold-blooded." (OK, since you asked, the technical term is *poikilothermic*.) This means that they can't regulate their internal temperature. They're at the mercy of the external environment. In polar oceans, some fish have an antifreeze-like compound in their blood that allows them to survive in sub-freezing waters. Lacking such a mechanism, Chesapeake resident species have to move locally, cope or shelter in place when water temperature drops to life-threatening levels. Some even capitalize on the season. Overwintering Bay creatures employ all of these strategies.

The *local movers* include striped bass and white perch, many of which spend the cold months in deeper parts of the Bay where water temperatures stay warmer. Among the *copers* are blue crabs, which stop growing and molting and enter a physiological state where activity and metabolism slow significantly. Other motile species may migrate up and down the estuary in response to changing tides, remaining within a water mass of relatively constant temperature. Species that *shelter in place* include bivalve mollusks. Oysters remain cemented to hard surfaces, their bodies sealed tightly inside their impermeable shells. Mud-dwelling clams burrow deeper into the insulating sediments.

The *capitalizers* seem to thrive when the temperature drops. Populations of mute swans, resident Canada geese, snow geese and a number of overwintering duck species, including mallards, have been steadily increasing—sometimes problematically—as they have displaced migratory species from preferred habitats. In other cases, Winter conditions actually favor growth and survival.

Sexually mature striped bass feast on overwintering menhaden, when there is less competition for this favorite prey. And phytoplankton, the microscopic, floating marine plants at the base of the Bay's food web, reproduce explosively in late Winter when nutrient concentrations are high and sunlight begins to increase. In addition to more nutrients, Winter Bay waters also hold more life-sustaining oxygen than in the Summer, and many predators are scarcer or slower.

Life forms that stick around here for the Winter employ a variety of survival strategies to deal with colder temperatures.

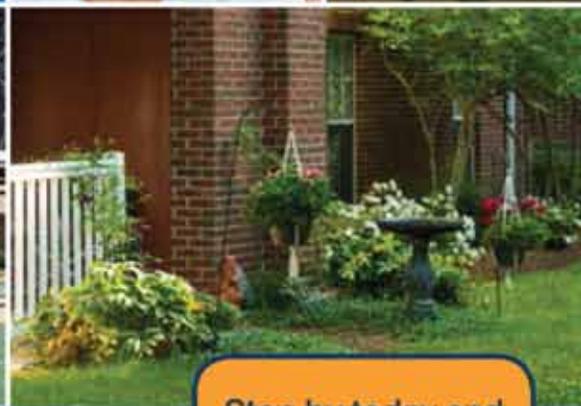
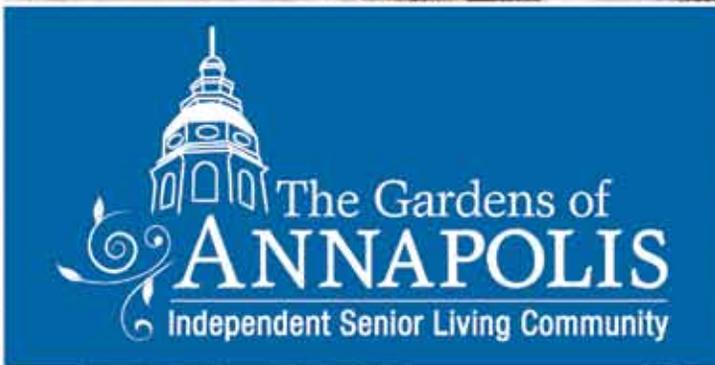
Finally, some species, like the Northern Gannet, move into the Bay in Winter, finding that the chilly waters here are far more tolerable than the North Atlantic seas they left behind.

But even the best adapted species can be tested beyond their limits. An especially harsh Winter or a sudden cold snap can have devastating effects on blue crab populations. An ice-locked Bay could spell doom for resident waterfowl. A prolonged northerly could blow enough water out of the estuary to expose even protected mud-dwellers to freezing temperatures.

Humans may present the biggest threat. Bay species already stressed by cold temperatures could find it impossible to cope with environmental insults like exposure to toxic pollutants. Overfishing can reduce populations of healthy, breeding adult crabs, fish and shellfish to unsustainable levels. Habitat destruction and the human-induced decline of Bay grasses hasten the displacement of iconic Chesapeake waterfowl species like black ducks, by more resilient species like mallards and Canada geese. And global climate change will result in even greater temperature extremes, further challenging the coping strategies of overwintering species.

We can take heart in one irrefutable prospect: Change is inevitable, especially in a vulnerable environment like Chesapeake Bay. As it has for eons, the Bay will adapt and thrive. The dominant species of the future may not be the ones we know so well today, but as long as the system survives as an estuary, its fertile waters will teem with life.

Henry is an adjunct associate professor at Georgetown University. He previously directed research programs at the U.S. Department of Agriculture and taught marine sciences at the University of Massachusetts Dartmouth. He can be reached at hspshp@gmail.com



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