

Complimentary

Holiday 2016

# Outlook

by the Bay

for the Bay Boomer and beyond...

## HAPPY HOLIDAYS

Here's to Your Health, Happiness and Prosperity ...

### Feeling Good

by Taking Medications Safely

### The Freezing Bay

### Tips for Creating And Keeping Traditions

When Someone's Missing from Your Holiday Picture:

### 6 Tips for Surviving the Season

www.OutLookbytheBay.com

# Letters to the editor

## REFURBISHING INSTRUMENTS

Wanted to let Vicki know how much I enjoyed her article in *Outlook by the Bay*. It was excellent – a fun read and chock full of thoughtful information. She was so kind to mention the instrument collection program. So far we have 55 instruments in hand and more coming. We are going to continue the program throughout the year. David Kauffman, music coordinator for the Anne Arundel County Public Schools, called it a “game changer.” We are hoping we will also be able to help raise some money to help refurbish instruments, as I am sure the school system doesn’t have much to work with. Suspect that teachers try to supplement that as they do with everything else!

Anyway, many thanks for your kind encouragement,  
*Florence C., Annapolis*

## HAPPY TO BE RE-RETIRED

I enjoyed your “From the Desk” column about our harvest time. I can relate to this time in my life. I have just recently resigned and re-retired.

I began my career in 1994 working at the Maryland Welcome Center as a nationally certified travel counselor. I worked there as a part-time contractual employee for 12 years and learned a lot about the state of Maryland. I then went to QAC Visitor Center and worked there for eight years with health insurance benefits and retired two years ago in September 2014. I enjoyed over 20 years in tourism, but I am so happy to be retired again.

I love to have my extra energy back to spend time with my family, granddaughters and enjoy our home and yard and many hobbies and projects and maybe even some day, trips or rides in the country and enjoying our shorelines and sunsets.

Thank you for your publication.  
*Judy S., Centreville*

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### *Bay Bytes*

Here's a fun site just in time for the holidays: [www.Photo.Stamps.com](http://www.Photo.Stamps.com) Load your favorite photo and they'll turn it into holiday postage stamp.

### *On the Cover:*

*Cmdr Greg Futch, USN, has retired after 23 years. Now taking it slow, he's embarking on his next adventure. His wife, Liz Posoli, practices locally as a physician's assistant.*

*A small step in the right direction could be the biggest step of your life.*

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 \$24.95 per year (bimonthly - 6 issues)

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 Annapolis, MD 21401  
 410.849.3000

ISSN#1948-044X

OutLook by the Bay is distributed throughout Anne Arundel County, in sections of the Eastern Shore and Baltimore. It is available free of charge in seniors centers, county libraries, hotels, coffee shops, doctor offices, supermarkets, senior communities, book stores, restaurants, private clubs, real estate offices, health clubs, hospitals and at all of our advertisers and is mailed to select homes in the Bay area.

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## FROM THE DESK

"Our harvest being gotten in, our governor sent four men on fowling so we might, after a special manner rejoice together after we had gathered the fruit of our labors." So wrote Gov. Edward Winslow so long ago, kicking off one of the world's best-known harvest celebrations. Centuries later, something still compels us to gather together and celebrate, not only with family and close friends, but often with others we've met along the way who we think could use some holiday cheer or a day to share in the festivities.

When we look at this annual practice more closely, it may make us wonder exactly what calls us to put so much effort into this celebration. Most of us grew up in a family environment with some type of get-together, sometimes with bittersweet memories, but more often than not, there's still a warm fuzzy feeling that we connect to the holidays.

Few of us remember "Leave It to Beaver" childhoods and many of us experienced upheavals and complicated upbringings on our way to adulthood. However, no matter the difficulties, most families persisted in gathering to toast the holidays as they did their best to create an atmosphere filled with meaning and gratitude.

The Pilgrims worked for a week to prepare their feast of Thanksgiving for themselves and their neighbors. Today's hosts can easily chalk up that much time and more attempting to create the perfect party, what with shopping, preparation, storing, cleaning, making room, etc.

Just try to imagine that first harvest celebration in the New World, with apologies to Jamestown, St. Augustine and even Phippsburg, Maine, all of which would like to claim that distinction. History favors the Pilgrims when we talk about the first Thanksgiving, so we'll go with that. But imagine if you will those 53 surviving settlers, and of those, only four were women. Those four intrepid Pilgrim mothers pulled together a harvest celebration of thanks that's admired and copied to this day. And to add to the drama, it sounds as if it was a bit impromptu. Those few remaining souls who had numbered over 100 just a few short months before, invited 90 Wampanoag neighbors in to celebrate and to share in their gratitude for an almost bountiful harvest. And, yes, they brought a dish to share.

Of course, their celebration took place earlier in the Fall, or so say most of the researchers who have studied the early Colonial period. One would think that President Abraham Lincoln, coming from Illinois, would know that the fourth Thursday in November that he set aside to commemorate one of history's most memorable observances, was not appropriately timed. The harvest had been gotten in weeks before and any true New Englander knows that you don't throw outdoor parties at the end of November. However, to this day, we attempt to re-create our interpretation of the original feast with turkey, corn and pumpkins. The Pilgrim mothers probably didn't prepare this, but legend chose to go with it. Research suggests it was probably more like venison, lobster, partridge, seal, swan, plums, acorns, chestnuts, crane berries and parsnips, much of it thanks to Massasoit and his people.

Putting together a meal of this magnitude must have been staggering, but they did it and we're still at it today. Think of the life challenges they faced in 1621 and then try to compare that to the difficulties we face today. Perhaps it puts it all in perspective. Through all the upheavals, uncertainties, disappointments and turbulence, those 53 hardy souls were still grateful. And here we are nearly 400 years later and we still have challenges, disappointments and uncertainties. Perhaps not on the level of our forefathers, yet we still make the effort to come together for a day of celebration and thanks.

So why, indeed, do we keep up an almost four-century old tradition, even in the toughest of times? Winslow may have said it best as he related it in his own eye-witness account: "And although it be not always so plentiful as it was this time with us, yet by the goodness of God, we are so far from want that we often wish you partakers of our plenty."

So, as we prepare for our holiday celebrations, it's good to remember those who came before us and give thanks for all of their sacrifices, while at the same time we count our blessings in the midst of today's challenges.



*Tecla*

# Structuring Time for the Holidays

By Dr. Jim David

For many of us, the holiday season is often filled with frantic activity. No matter our spiritual or religious posture, the holidays can be a bit too much. We end up exhausted and dreading the holidays rather than being renewed and fulfilled by them.

Remember Eric Berne, the father of transactional analysis? Back in the early '60s he challenged us to consider how we structure or fill up our time. We have many "forks in the road" every day. Which path will we follow? Frantic holiday activity or a more leisurely, balanced approach? Here are some possibilities to enrich your holiday season.

**Sitting Alone** Take five minutes each day to sit alone in silence. Quiet your mind. Look around. Be still. Tune into your body. Observe what is happening with your mind. Allow your thoughts to float on by like clouds in the sky. Be totally in the now. Be still and know. Read *The Power of Now* and *A New Earth* by Eckhardt Tolle.

**Drive in Quiet** How do we structure our time while driving our vehicles? Very likely we listen to talk radio, audio books, music or talk on our blue tooth phones. Try driving in silence. Focus on your breathing. Be 100 percent present for your driving. Stay observational. Calm yourself. Renew yourself by staying outside the insane behaviors we witness from other drivers. Arrive refreshed. Avoid stress. Enjoy! Remember the words of Hamilton Wright Mabie, "Blessed is the season which engages the whole world in a conspiracy of love."

**Remembering** Take time to be still, remembering pleasant holiday memories. Generally, our being still is a necessary prerequisite for the memories to float up into conscious awareness. If you are flooded with unpleasant memories, rather than fleeing from them, take the time to face them, come to terms with them and be finished with them.

Remember that before Christ, Buddha or Moses, humans have employed the Winter months as a time to renew their spirits. We are wise to continue that tradition by savoring our memories of holiday pageants and concerts, going caroling and sledding, gathering with family before a fireplace or a Christmas tree on Christmas Eve. What would our lives be without the lights, sights, sounds and traditions of our holiday season?

**Visualizing** Start now to plan and visualize this holiday season. Write down on your calendar time to rest and

remember. Balance activities and times to restore yourself. Take time to tune into yourself and be a friend to yourself. Without planning and committing yourself to scheduling time for renewal, it probably will not happen.

Visualize creating holiday memories and traditions with your grandkids, nieces and nephews. Baking cookies together. Sawing down a live Christmas tree. Remembering where each ornament came from while decorating the tree together. Attending a holiday concert. Seeing Dickens' "A Christmas Carol" again or "The Nutcracker Suite." My favorite is listening to peaceful Christmas music while gazing at our lighted Christmas tree with the other house lights off.

**Joy in Giving** Some say that the surest route to soothing our own pain is to help out someone else. During the holidays the therapeutic benefits of giving to others seem to be heightened. We see children's faces light up when they receive toys that spark unbridled joy. Delivering meals to the homebound or serving the homeless in a soup kitchen brings solid fulfillment. I remember Bob Hope saying, "If you haven't got charity in your heart, you have the worst kind of heart trouble." My dentist told me once that, "Tomorrow isn't promised to us."

**Relationships** We all seem to have some level of ambivalence about intimacy, whether it's intimacy with ourselves or with others. Too often we are running away from ourselves and others. Yet, at the same time, we find incredible, wonderful solace in being OK with ourselves and others. In *The Art of Loving*, Erik Fromm says we are all saddled with separateness, yet we yearn to overcome it, to overcome our aloneness.

Let's use this holiday season to structure our time so we develop soothing, enriching relationships with ourselves and with each other. Being frantic and overwhelmed is draining and deadening.

*P.S. A special thanks to dear friends, Jack and Susan Christensen, who provided wisdom, content and inspiration for this article.*

*Dr. Jim David is a practicing psychotherapist in Silver Spring who adheres to positivity in all areas of life. Visit his website at [www.askdrdavidnow.com](http://www.askdrdavidnow.com) or email at [james519@comcast.net](mailto:james519@comcast.net)*

Forgive yourself for your mistakes. Chances are you're the only one who remembers them.

# CHART YOUR COURSE: A LEGAL NAVIGATION GUIDE

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## FOR SPECIAL NEEDS PLANNING

*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

As an elder law attorney, a big part of my practice is devoted to special needs planning. However, most of my clients, although disabled, do not consider themselves to have “special needs.” Rather, when most of them think of special needs, they think of children who have autism, Down syndrome, cystic fibrosis or some other disease that requires specialized education, attention and treatment. Although my clients are correct in that these children do have special needs, so do disabled adults. For me, “special needs” is a term used to describe individuals – not only children, but adults, too -- who require assistance for disabilities that are medical, mental or psychological.

Moreover, according to the 2010 census and a recent study by the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, one out of every five adults is disabled. Most health care professionals would agree that this number is rising and will continue to rise as the baby boomer population ages. As a result, if you have not incorporated special needs planning into your estate plan already, you may want to reconsider.

For example, there are programs available through the government and certain nonprofit organizations that can help address a variety of needs, including, but not limited to, assistance with housing and energy bills, health care costs and rent. Many of these programs are needs-based, meaning that they have income and asset limitations. Probably the most popular of these programs is Medicaid.

Medicaid has been stigmatized as a program for low-income individuals that provides substandard care, but this simply is not true. More accurately, it is one of the most beneficial programs, not only for low-income individuals, but for the majority of the population – the middle class – that can help pay for medical costs associated with long-term care.

Medicaid has a five-year “look-back period” during which the government has the right to look at all of your

financial information (tax records, bank or other financial account statements, etc.) to see if you have given away assets during this period of time. This five-year period begins the first of the month in which you apply for benefits and goes back five years. If you have given any assets or money, the state will presume that it was for purposes of qualifying for Medicaid and you will be under penalty for a number of months based on the amount of the gift. During these penalty months, Medicaid will not pay benefits and you will have to pay from your own funds until the penalty period has expired. So, it is imperative that you incorporate special needs considerations into your estate plan in the event you or someone you love needs to apply for benefits in the future.

Depending on your particular situation, whether you currently are disabled and need to qualify for benefits now, or whether you are planning for a future time when you might require long-term care benefits, there are a variety of trusts that can be set up to protect your assets while at the same time allowing you to qualify for these needs-based benefits.

Self-settled trusts, or first-party special needs trusts, are funded with assets owned by the special needs beneficiary, usually derived from litigation proceeds or other assets owned by the individual. Often, these trusts are used as a supplement to any government benefits the beneficiary may be receiving for support and maintenance. However, there are special rules as to who can fund these trusts and some require a payback provision upon death to reimburse the state for any benefits paid out while the beneficiary was alive.

There are also third-party trusts that are funded with assets of a person other than the beneficiary (a parent or sibling) and irrevocable asset protection trusts that can be funded by anyone, including the beneficiary, but where only the beneficiary has direct access to the income, not the principal, and which do not require a payback provision. Also, everyone should consider having a provision in their will to protect their beneficiaries in the event any of them have special needs at the time of your death even though they may not be disabled now.

Ultimately, the purpose of an estate plan is to provide for you and your loved ones while you are alive and for your loved ones after your death. Be prepared, as you never know what might happen.

*Jessica L. Estes is an elder law and estate planning attorney at Byrd & Byrd, LLC in Bowie. She can be reached at 301.464.7448 or on the website at [byrdandbyrd.com](http://byrdandbyrd.com)*





# Wreaths Across America

By Jill Harris

There are so many ways to honor our military. We try to let them know that we appreciate their service and sacrifices. We greet them at the airport, send them care packages, buy them Girl Scout cookies while they are deployed and applaud them in parades. It takes a special person to leave their home, often at a young age, to stand up for what they believe and to defend our freedoms. Our nation values their service in such high esteem that land has been set aside to bury them with their comrades in arms.

Veterans cemeteries are often adorned with flags on Memorial Day as we remember their service, but the rest of the year these gardens of remembrance are quiet places of reflection and loneliness. Holidays are a hard time for vets and their family members. Families often cannot be together or are often missing a member. We would like to think that holidays are always happy, but they can also be filled with sad memories that need to be honored.

Twenty-five years ago, a wreath maker from Maine, Morrill Worcester, had a surplus of wreaths with no home. He had won a boyhood trip to Arlington that made an impact on him and he decided to take the wreaths to Arlington National Cemetery. Morrill contacted Sen. Olympia Snowe for help getting the wreaths placed at Arlington National Cemetery. As the idea spread, he found a trucking company that volunteered delivery, arranged for volunteers to help distribute the wreaths and they solemnly placed wreaths in an older section of the cemetery. His annual tribute went on quietly until a single photo changed everything in 2005 and Wreaths Across America took flight. That photo gained so much attention that this amazing program has grown to full coverage of 250,000-plus grave stones at Arlington and over 2,000 United States Veterans Cemeteries participating worldwide. In 2015, Wreaths Across America placed just shy of a billion wreaths on veterans' graves.

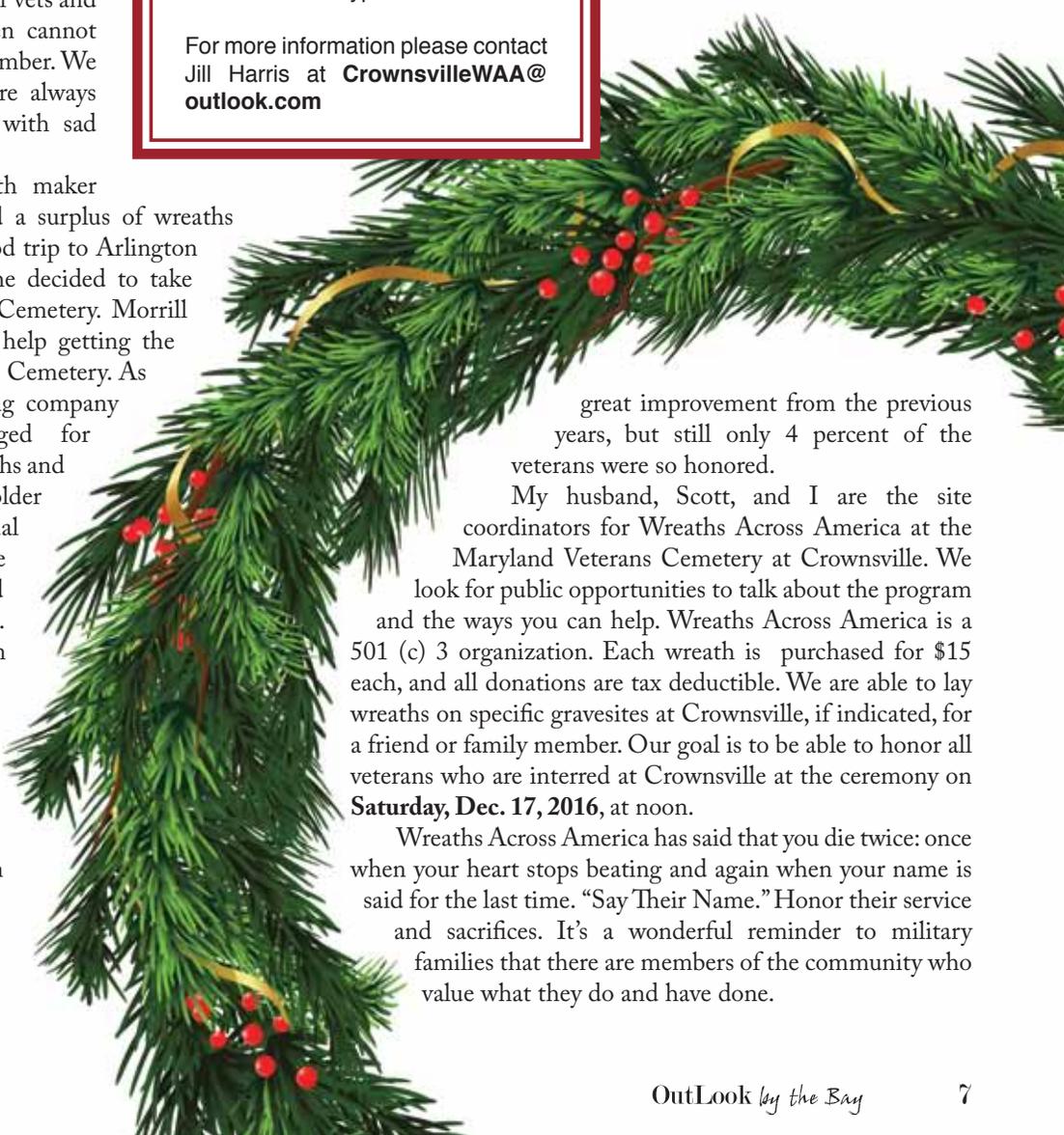
Anne Arundel County has three veterans cemeteries, the largest in Crownsville, that participate with

Wreaths Across America. There are more than 21,000 interred and an additional 1,000 a year are adding their names to an esteemed roll call. Since 2002, the Civil Air Patrol members of the Arundel Composite Squadron have quietly sold wreaths, held the ceremony and placed about 300 wreaths around the cemetery each December to honor all who served.

Once Arlington was able to place a wreath on all eligible headstones, the decision was made to increase the knowledge about placing wreaths at Crownsville. In 2015 approximately 500 volunteers came out for the ceremony and placed 1,238 wreaths. This was a

To donate or volunteer, log on to [www.wreathscrossamerica.org/locations/](http://www.wreathscrossamerica.org/locations/) and type in Crownsville.

For more information please contact Jill Harris at [CrownsvilleWAA@outlook.com](mailto:CrownsvilleWAA@outlook.com)



great improvement from the previous years, but still only 4 percent of the veterans were so honored.

My husband, Scott, and I are the site coordinators for Wreaths Across America at the Maryland Veterans Cemetery at Crownsville. We look for public opportunities to talk about the program and the ways you can help. Wreaths Across America is a 501 (c) 3 organization. Each wreath is purchased for \$15 each, and all donations are tax deductible. We are able to lay wreaths on specific gravesites at Crownsville, if indicated, for a friend or family member. Our goal is to be able to honor all veterans who are interred at Crownsville at the ceremony on **Saturday, Dec. 17, 2016**, at noon.

Wreaths Across America has said that you die twice: once when your heart stops beating and again when your name is said for the last time. "Say Their Name." Honor their service and sacrifices. It's a wonderful reminder to military families that there are members of the community who value what they do and have done.

# The FREEZING BAY

By Ellen Moyer

Yikes it was cold. For days the East Coast shivered with temperatures below zero. It was the Winter of the "little ice age," the Winter of the frozen Chesapeake Bay, the Winter of 1976.

Smith Island was frozen in for nine weeks. Nothing moved except the helicopters sent by Gov. Marvin Mandel to deliver food supplies. On the upper Bay people flocked to Sandy Point to walk on ice near the Bay Bridge and gawk at flow bergs, great mountains of ice smushed together by wind and tides. On Smith Island, flow burgs ringed the shore 40 feet high.

On the day the Bay froze over, Eastporters could ice skate around Horn Point from Back Creek to Spa where bonfires warmed hot cider and the hands of spectators. It was a glorious Winter fest time reminiscent of the past when the Bay froze

regularly and people rigged skates to sails to glide across the ice. Like Hans Brinker of Dutch fame, one could skate for miles along the Bay's waterways.

It wasn't all fun. In 1976, pipes froze and 25,000 homes lost their water supply. Businesses closed. The big freeze of '76 was a Winter some of those over age 50 will remember. The Bay hasn't frozen again since.

To be sure, there have been freezing weather days since then, usually accompanied with high winds. February blizzards have dumped up to three feet of snow on our homes. In the super storm of 1993, a rare March event, winds formed 35-foot snowdrifts in parts of Maryland and 5 feet of snow that claimed 368 lives in the Appalachian region.

In 1922 heavy snow collapsed the roof of Washington's Knickerbocker Theater killing 98 people and injuring another 133.

Though not the biggest blizzard, a Spring snowstorm in the 1940s collapsed another roof, the one sheltering the original America's Cup boat being restored at 222 Severn Ave., later to become Trumpy's Boat Yard, splintering the historic vessel beyond repair.

The great Arctic outbreak from the Atlantic Coast to the Gulf of Mexico on Feb. 12-14 in 1899, was cold enough to send ice flowing to the mouth of the Mississippi River. Almost 100 years later rapid melting and 50 mph winds following the blizzard of 1996 would flood the Potomac River to its highest level recorded since Hurricane Agnes in 1972.

In February of 2003, 2010, and again in 2016, Annapolitans teamed with neighbors in frivolity and a sense of community to shovel walking paths through three feet of snow. The city front end loaders eventually scooped up the white stuff and created new mountains in Truxton Park that wouldn't melt until Summer. In a 1979 storm, Mayor Apostle didn't bother with the snowplows. The lord brought it and the lord can take it away, he said. And the sun shone and did its magic.

*The Farmers Almanac* suggests that a smaller-than-average solar cycle will pull down temperatures everywhere this Winter. Some are calling it a "teeth chattering" Winter. It will also be very wet with above-average snowfall along the Appalachians. But we are further east and on a line between cold and wet and cold and dry.

It doesn't look like there will be a repeat of the December 18-19 holiday storm of 2009 when 1,200 workers were hired to shovel 25 million pounds of snow off Fed Ex Field so the Washington Redskins game could go on Dec. 20.

However, February predictions suggest the month will be unforgettable with another big snowstorm around mid-February. Since 1899, February has been the month with the greatest number of record-breaking snowstorms. No reason to expect that it will let us down this Winter.

*Ellen, a former Mayor of Annapolis, can be reached at [ellenmoyer@yahoo.com](mailto:ellenmoyer@yahoo.com)*



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# IN SEARCH OF A SOLITARY PURSUIT? TRY PUTTERING

By Kater Leatherman

What inspires you on those dreary, dimly lit days? Is it the kind of day when you want to stay indoors, decompress and do less? If it's one of those rare occasions when you are alone in a normally busy household, solitude may be calling. More aptly called "soulitude." It is one of life's greatest pleasures because it offers time for reflection, self-discovery and the freedom to be whatever and whoever you want to be.

Enter the art of *puttering*. Puttering is not about being busy. Neither is it goal-oriented. You don't need a "to do" list and there are no "shoulds." The only requirement is a desire to move about in a relaxed, pleasant state without concentrating on anything in particular. In other words, ride the horse in the direction it is going instead of forcing it to go the way you want.

You may begin in one place and not know how you ended up in another. With puttering, you can lose yourself. Worries diminish. The cobwebs of your mind begin to clear. Perhaps for the first time in weeks, you are feeling more at ease, peaceful and settled. You may find yourself in the utterly delightful place of fully experiencing each moment.

Sound good? If so, begin by turning off the technology to avoid disruption. Then, if you like, put on your favorite music. If you only have a limited amount of time, set a timer. But remember that the beauty of puttering is that it's not hurried. So, don't bother to do it on days when you are pressed for time.

A few suggestions on where to start: Rearrange a bookshelf, organize your junk drawer, sew a missing button on your favorite sweater, rotate the pictures on your refrigerator, put things away, polish something. Puttering is about small tasks, so avoid tackling big projects, although handling a step toward a big project could be included in the mix.

Puttering is not so much about what you are doing, but how you are doing it. Consider it an act of self-love when you are content and happy and enjoying yourself, in which case nothing you are doing is wasted time.

"We live in a world so full of distractions," Erica Jong writes, "that it seems unlikely that solitary pursuits can survive. Airports, gyms, banks, diners, manicure parlors, TV news all assault you. On the telephone you are obliged to listen to music you would never choose. Cellphone junkies tell you details of their dinners, dynastic complications and medical disorders you don't want to know. All your senses scream for serenity."

In our hectic lives, puttering can feel like a sacred ritual, one that your soul so appreciates that it will pull you back by the hair for more. It's very nature is quiet and private, which makes it fertile ground for cultivating mindfulness, thus revealing what is important and what attracts the most meaning to your life.

Kater recently published her third book, *The Paper Diet: What you gain by reducing excess paper*. Visit her website at [www.katerleatherman.com](http://www.katerleatherman.com) or email [katerleatherman@gmail.com](mailto:katerleatherman@gmail.com)



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# SHOULD ALEXA BE IN YOUR HOME? A VERSATILE, HANDS-FREE AUDIO ASSISTANT

By Joanne R. Alloway

Imagine this scenario: You are with a group of friends, watching the Olympics, and some are arguing about who won events in the 2008 games. Everyone seems to have a different recollection of those events. Then the host rises and says, “Alexa, which gymnast ...” the answer comes back loud and clear, without anyone reaching for an iPhone or a tablet. We began bombarding Alexa with questions about the weather in Rio, the Zika problem, the number of athletes banned from the games, etc. We were quite amazed at how simple it was! Our hosts have had Alexa for three months; they find her most helpful in the mornings while getting ready to begin their day.

Alexa is the voice component of the Amazon Echo, which became available to the general public in June 2015. The Echo is a 9 1/4-inch 7-cylinder upright, hands-free, voice-controlled speaker that can be placed anywhere in your home. The Echo connects to the Alexa voice. All the information Alexa so easily spits out is stored in the cloud, as is everything new she learns. Her predecessor is Siri, who is in many smart phones today, but you need your hands to access her. Alexa’s voice separates her most from other robotic voices. Hers is life-like, created through a sophisticated natural language processing algorithms formula. Alexa is often referred to as the “Trojan Horse” because it offers a quick interface between your home’s features, known as the smart home interface.

## THE ECHO COMES WITH ITS OWN POWER CORD. HERE'S WHAT YOU NEED TO MAKE IT OPERATIONAL:

- A functional WiFi network for Echo to connect to.
- A smart phone or tablet to control Echo through the connection process.

Amazon’s Echo costs \$179. Once you’ve purchased that, there are other devices you can buy for less than that to add to the system, such as the Echo Dot. Dot is a round speaker, the same diameter as the Echo, with the top chopped off. It has the same qualities as the Echo, but it won’t stream music like the Echo. It is still an amazing virtual assistant. The Echo Dot is \$89, but you can only purchase it if you already have an Echo. There are numerous Alexa-compatible devices for your home that will do many things, as described below. [www.amazon.com/alexasmarthome](http://www.amazon.com/alexasmarthome)



## WHAT FEATURES DOES THE AMAZON ECHO OFFER THAT YOU MIGHT WANT?

- **News and sports features** You can program the Echo to the news stations and types of stories you prefer, asking Alexa to read the morning and evening news while you’re busy doing other things.
- **Weather updates** Local or worldwide weather is available for the asking.
- **Build and control a Smart Home** Once Alexa is synced with other smart home devices, you can control your thermostat, dim or turn off lights, etc. Alexa is also part of Amazon’s new foray into partnering with other companies. One is Nucleus – a smart intercom system with a touch screen that uses Alexa’s music, weather, etc.
- **Listen to a book or an article** Anything you have in your smart devices, Alexa can connect to and read.
- **Kitchen assistant** While working, tell Alexa to make a grocery list, ask for recipe conversions or read a recipe from a stored book.

## PROS AND CONS OF OWNING THE ECHO WITH ALEXA:

**Pros** include a life-like voice, easy-to-set-up system, completely hands-free, and no remote needed. It can connect to tablets and phones with Bluetooth to hear and stream music. It’s good speaker quality for a nine-inch speaker, has immediate responses from Alexa, features ease of use and saving time.

**Cons** include the one-time cost of \$179 for the Echo, while there is none with Siri. This is not recommended yet for small businesses, though it should complement them. Apparently, it gets stumped at times. It doesn’t have access to email or messages yet and there is no speakerphone capability.

While Alexa is popular now, it has a brighter future. Amazon has a lot in the pipeline with other companies to utilize Alexa Voice Service. Ford is already contracted to use Alexa in new cars to control smart home features. More than 10,000 developers have registered to integrate Alexa into new products. Learn more at [www.nytimes.com/2016/08/08/technology/amazon](http://www.nytimes.com/2016/08/08/technology/amazon)

I didn’t think I’d be so impressed with Alexa’s capabilities. There are times we don’t want to use another electronic device after being on the computer all day. But this is a real hands-free treat!

*Joanne is the author of two nonfiction books available on Amazon. She lives in Annapolis. Reach her at [jrwrite@aol.com](mailto:jrwrite@aol.com)*

Every day is a fresh start.

# GINGERBREAD MEN MAKE TASTY ORNAMENTS

Here's a yummy recipe to make with grandkids on a freezing December day.

These cookies keep well and can be made right after Thanksgiving to hang on the Christmas tree. They'll stay crisp right through the holidays, but make enough so that the Christmas elves can snatch one or two! And pay attention to pets – dogs enjoy the tasty treat as much as the kids.

- ½ cup unsalted butter, softened
- ½ cup dark brown sugar packed
- 1 egg
- ¾ cup dark unsulfured molasses
- 3 cups all-purpose flour
- ½ tsp. baking soda
- ¼ tsp. baking powder
- 2 tsp. ground ginger
- 3 tsp. cinnamon
- 1 scant tsp. ground cloves
- ½ tsp. nutmeg
- ¾ tsp. salt

Cream butter and sugar until fluffy. Beat in the egg and molasses. Sift together dry ingredients and slowly add to butter mixture. Chill dough for an hour. Roll out to a thickness of 1/8 inch on floured surface. Cut into desired shapes. Place on cookie sheet and decorate with raisins or leave plain. Bake 10 minutes until crisp. Cool on wire racks. We double this recipe as we have many cookie cutters that we like to use.

After they've cooled they can be decorated with a simple white icing. After decorating, tie a thin piece of red ribbon around the neck, attach a hook and hang them on the tree.

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# SHARING DAISY, JASPER, DAPHNE, BAILEY AND QUINCY

By Glenn Roe

Back in September of 1990 my daughter Danielle, who had just become a senior at Old Mill High School, learned that she would be required to perform a number of volunteer hours before she could graduate. Searching for ideas, we ran across an article in the *Annapolis Capital* that described a program called Pets On Wheels (POW), a part of the Anne Arundel County Department of Aging. POW was seeking volunteers with outgoing personalities and gentle pets or toddlers to visit residents in nursing homes and assisted living facilities. We owned two gentle dogs, Daisy (dachshund mix) and Jasper (standard poodle), and decided to investigate.

Starting with a one-hour orientation meeting we learned how it had been organized by volunteers to provide comfort and companionship to residents in facilities through the use of pet therapy and volunteer interactions. Volunteers were asked to visit a nearby facility once a week with their pets for one hour. Pets were required to be gentle, affectionate, well-behaved, clean, leash-trained, and vaccinated. It wasn't limited to dogs. There had been cats, a pot-bellied pig and a pony.

The next step was having our dogs evaluated by an experienced POW volunteer at the facilities we had selected. The evaluation included the animals' reactions to hugging, ear-pulling, paw-squeezing, loud noises and tail-pulling, all of which could occur during a visit. Then we participated in a supervised walk-through to meet and interact with the residents and staff. The evaluations and walk-throughs went well, so then we met with the facilities' activity directors to set up visitation schedules. Danielle took the dogs to visit the Fairfield Assisted Living in Crownsville while I took them to visit the Crofton Convalescent Center.

After Danielle graduated in 1991 she left POW and went off to college. I, on the other hand, decided to remain active in POW, visiting the Crofton center until 2000. Daisy died before that and was succeeded by Daphne (a Samoyed/golden mix). In 2000, Jasper, Daphne and I decided to switch our visits to the Regency Park Assisted Living Center in Gambrills, as it was closer to home.

Since 2003, when I retired, we have added the Pascal Senior Center and the Baltimore Washington Medical Center, both in Glen Burnie, to our weekly visits. By then, Jasper, our faithful companion of many years, had died. He was succeeded by Bailey (standard poodle), and when Daphne followed Jasper to her great reward, she was succeeded by Quincy, another standard poodle. Bailey died last year, so currently I am visiting only with Quincy. My wife and I have always had two dogs. When one passed on, we would get another, usually within a year. And when the new pup became a one-year-old, it could be brought into POW and learn the "visitation routine" from its older sibling.

We try to visit as many people as possible on each trip and I have always taken dog treats with me on visits to keep the dogs focused and to allow residents to reward them.

What rewards have my dogs received from POW? Socialization with people, love, affection and most importantly, a job to do each week. What rewards have I received from POW? Connecting with people from my parents' generation, getting to know facilities' staff and observing how hard they work and

how much they care. We also enjoy meeting other volunteers and their pets at pet parades. As an aside, we receive discounts from our vet (Bay Country) for vaccinations and exams because of POW.

My plan is to stay in the program as long as I have good health and a qualified dog and to continue to working with the activity directors and the volunteer coordinators. How about you? Do you have a teen who needs volunteer hours or do you have some extra time and a pet who'd like a job? Please contact P.A.W.S. at 410.222.0738 or visit [www.aacounty.org/services-and-programs/people-and-animals-who-serve](http://www.aacounty.org/services-and-programs/people-and-animals-who-serve) or [www.pawsaac.org](http://www.pawsaac.org)

*Glenn retired after 32 years as a biology teacher in Baltimore City and Prince Georges County. He can be reached at [huskeroos@yahoo.com](mailto:huskeroos@yahoo.com)*

Several years ago POW became P.A.W.S. (People and Animals Who Serve) and is still part of the Anne Arundel County Department of Aging. Currently P.A.W.S. is approaching a financial crisis. Through fiscal year 2016 it has received at least \$15,000 or more per year from Anne Arundel County grants. The grant amount will drop to \$7,500 for fiscal year 2017 and then be eliminated after that. This is happening to an organization that performed an estimated \$300,000 worth of volunteer services for the county during 2015. P.A.W.S. has searched for donors and grants, but none have come forward.



# When Someone's Missing From Your Holiday Picture: 6 TIPS FOR SURVIVING THE SEASON

By Elyzabeth Marcussen

Holiday traditions often come with name tags. Bob's mulled cider. Jason's family menorah. Sue's Christmas newsletter. These are special people, and the roles they fill make these seasonal traditions an integral part of family gatherings and memory-making.

When that person has died, these once-joyful traditions can become painful reminders of their absence, especially in the first year. You have only just begun the grieving process when suddenly you're faced with something that triggers deep sorrow – a slow cooker of cider, the first lighting of a menorah, Christmas cards in your mailbox. Now that Bob, Jason or Sue are no longer there to share in them, each of these simple things is so different.

Grief does not close up shop for the holidays. But there are ways to cope this time of year. Bereavement counselors from Chesapeake Life Center offer these tips for surviving the season.

- 1. Skip some traditions this year.** "Give yourself space and permission to do less during this time," says Becky Scheckelhoff, a licensed graduate social worker. "It is the best gift you can give yourself." For example, don't send out the annual card. Your friends will understand. "It is OK to skip a tradition," adds Sarah Montgomery, a certified licensed social worker. "It does not mean you are abandoning it, you are just putting it on hold. You can resume it any year."
- 2. Do the tradition in a new way.** There may be traditions you want to continue, but it's too painful or awkward. For example, maybe it is difficult to decide whether to hang your loved one's stocking or leave it in storage. Instead, do it differently. "You can hang the stocking and invite family and friends to write notes or memories to place in the stocking," Montgomery says. "Then, as a family, you can read the memories out loud and preserve them from year to year."
- 3. Make an escape plan.** Amy Stapleton, a licensed graduate professional counselor, suggests that if you do decide to attend a holiday activity, make an escape plan. That way, if you experience a wave of

grief, you can step away for a few minutes, or even leave. Rather than riding with someone, you may wish to drive yourself or use a ride service so that you can leave early if you need to.

- 4. Reevaluate your traditions.** "Grief has a unique way of giving us the permission to really evaluate nearly everything, including the holidays," Stapleton says. Consider what parts of the holidays you enjoy and what parts you don't. Let go of what doesn't serve you any longer.
- 5. Take time to reflect.** In this busy time of year, everyone expects us to be busy. It can sometimes feel like a competition to see who has baked the most cookies, mailed the most cards or attended the most parties. It can be tempting to join in as a way to avoid your feelings of missing your loved one. Instead, Susan Coale, a licensed clinical professional counselor, suggests that you set aside time to quietly reflect on your feelings, on memories of holidays with your loved one or even on things you would like to be sharing with them now. Write your loved one a letter, look at pictures or take a moment to shed a few tears. All of these are healthy ways to experience and reflect on your feelings.
- 6. Above all, communicate.** Communicate what you can handle comfortably during this time to your friends and family. "Let folks know that you might need to take a break from festivities after a while," says Roberta Rook, a

licensed clinical professional counselor, says. Let them know it's not because you don't want to be with them, but because you need the time to recharge and gather yourself. Tell them whether or not it's all right for them to talk about your loved one. Make them aware if you need to make changes in your role in family holiday responsibilities. "By relating your needs, you minimize the chances for misunderstandings and hurt feelings," Rook says.

There is no right or wrong way to handle grief, just like we each celebrate the holidays differently. Decide what is right for you and do it. You also have every right to change your mind – more than once.

## "HopeFull" Holidays

Join Chesapeake Life Center grief professionals at this workshop designed to help those grieving a loss get through the holiday season.

Pick from one of two Saturday sessions:

- 10 a.m. to 1 p.m. Nov. 19, at 9500 Arena Drive, Suite 250, Largo, Md.
- 9:30 a.m. to 12:30 p.m. Dec. 3, on the John & Cathy Belcher Campus, 90 Ritchie Highway, Pasadena, Md.

The cost is \$10. Registration is required and can be completed by calling 888.501.7077.

# AVOIDING THE ER

By Freedom Chevalier

Did you know that nearly 25 percent of older Americans will end up in the emergency room this year?

When someone says emergency room visit, your mind probably races and you think of things like heart attacks, strokes or major falls. And while these are legitimate crisis situations that require emergency care, the reality is that very few of emergency room visits are real emergencies. Many can be avoided. Let's look at the top ways to avoid the ER this year.

## SLIPS AND FALLS

Recently, the *U.S. National Safety Council* reported that the number of slips and falls reached nearly 28,000, annually.

The good news is the majority of these slips and falls can be avoided by wearing appropriate footwear. Not all shoes are suitable for every location, so choose them carefully, especially when you're heading out for a night on the town. An important tip: Those nonslip rubber-soled shoes you just bought can actually slip the first time you wear them. So "season" your new nonslip shoes by walking on uneven surfaces – such as gravel or concrete – for about 30 minutes to roughen up the soles to provide added traction.

## TRIPPING HAZARDS

Tripping is another common reason seniors end up in the ER. The best way to avoid trips is by making sure walkways are free and clear of debris or clutter. And don't forget to keep pathways and halls well-lit so you can see where you're going.

## ADVERSE DRUG REACTIONS

Not all drugs can be taken at the same time. It's important to discuss any potential adverse drug interactions with your doctor or pharmacist. Carefully create a schedule detailing what drugs you take and the appropriate times you should take them. It's also important to look at what supplements you take, and what foods you like to eat. For example, calcium can reduce the effectiveness of many drugs, including daily low-dose aspirin. And consuming grapefruit or its juice while taking drugs such as Lipitor can lead to liver or muscle damage.

## FOOD POISONING

We never plan on coming down with food poisoning, but it can happen if we aren't careful. Be mindful when choosing foods you eat, ensuring that it's been cooked properly to eliminate harmful salmonella bacteria. When in doubt, throw it out.

## URINARY TRACT INFECTION

The CDC reports that roughly 31 percent of all seniors are chronically dehydrated, and that can mean painful urinary tract infections. One of the simplest ways to avoid these infections is by

drinking plenty of water. The CDC recommends eight to 10 eight-ounce glasses a day.

## BACK PAIN

Sometimes back pain happens; it doesn't always follow an injury or accident. That's why maintaining a

healthy activity level is vital to spinal health and improved mobility. Mild stretches can go a long way to ensuring you keep moving. For optimal health, consider a regular exercise routine that includes cardio and weight-bearing exercising. Yoga is an excellent choice, especially if you have old injuries or joints that are stiff when you wake up.

## BROKEN BONES

Loss of bone density (osteoporosis) can lead to bone fractures. Get a bone density test and talk to your family physician to make sure you're doing all you can to maintain bone health. Eat plenty of calcium-rich foods, and consider dietary supplements to help strengthen your bones and keep you out of the ER.

## CHEST PAINS

Shortness of breath and chest pains are the first symptoms of undiagnosed cardiovascular disease for most older adults. But heart health doesn't have to be a mystery. Screening tests can mean early detection that could save your life.

## INFLUENZA

The flu can be difficult at any age, but if you're over 65, it can be fatal. Taking preventative measures like avoiding those who are actively sick, washing your hands frequently, getting plenty of sleep and getting vaccinated are all ways to stay healthy during the Winter months.

## THE INTERNET

No doubt you think this is a joke, but it's not! Researching symptoms on the web can cause undue stress and anxiety. There is so much information on the internet, and almost as much misinformation. It's so easy to misinterpret symptoms if you don't have medical training or knowledge. You may be convinced that your condition is more severe than it really is. Sometimes a headache is just a headache, but spend some time on the internet, and you may be thinking that your headache is a symptom of a brain tumor or a ruptured blood vessel. Self-diagnosing on the web can lead to unnecessary trips to the emergency room. When in doubt, check with your physician or hospital to see if an emergency room visit is required.

Sometimes a trip to the hospital is unavoidable, but by implementing these recommendations, you can improve your health and prevent unnecessary trips to the emergency room. You have more important things to do!

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*A diamond was once a piece of coal. It did well under pressure.*

# The Dreaded Holiday Letter

By Penelope Folsom

We've all gotten them and many of us have written them! The annual holiday letter. Often a treat to receive, but many fall short of the mark. Here are the top five suggestions collected over the years on how to compose the perfect greeting and annual update that people will actually enjoy reading:

1. Brief is better. Your faraway friends really aren't interested in a blow-by-blow of your disastrous trip to Katmandu or how Uncle Ralph spent four agonizing weeks with you this Summer. A quick overview usually covers it.

2. Careful about turning it into a brag sheet. Life just isn't all sunshine and roses with promotions, honor roll kids and new houses. And if there is a downside and it's necessary to convey it, try humor and brevity.

3. This isn't the time to make bad news the focus. If it's the only way to let people know of something unfortunate that's happened recently, try to follow it with something upbeat. Annie was divorced this year, but we're thrilled that she's decided to go back to graduate school. Or if the news is very grim, include a separate note.

4. If you're feeling creative, write your letter in the form of a well-known story or song: "It was the night before Christmas when all through the house all three children came home with all of their spouse. The stockings were hung by the chimney with care for Alice and Bob, John and Gale, etc."

5. Most importantly, keep it upbeat. Something lighthearted goes a long way and will be appreciated and enjoyed during the busiest time of the year.

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A young girl with blonde hair is sitting on a grey upholstered chair. She is wearing a blue and white striped dress and blue jeans. A small brown dog is sitting on her lap. The background is slightly blurred, showing other people and what appears to be an outdoor or semi-outdoor setting.

# Five Activities For Visiting Grandkids

By Freedom Chevalier

Sometimes visiting grandma and granddad can be a little intimidating, especially if you no longer live in a large family home. What might be new sights and sounds can be unfamiliar to young eyes and ears, but that that doesn't have to mean an uncomfortable visit. These five activities will have your little visitors feeling right at home and have you making long-lasting memories in no time:

## Read a Chapter from a Book

Yes, just a chapter. You can turn your grandkids' visit into a very special event by creating a mini-cliffhanger at the end of each get-together. It's family-time-meets-book-club, and it's an ideal bonding experience. Reading aloud to your grandkids is an excellent way to engage their imaginations and their interest.

Books you might try include *The Year of Billy Miller*, or any of Lemony Snicket's 13 children's books in *A Series of Unfortunate Events*, or *Matilda*. All are great choices. Spend some time in the children's section of your local library. Librarians will know what the "must-read" books are for children of the same age.

And if your grandkids simply can't stand to leave the story unfinished, consider calling them once a week, or even every night before bed, to read another chapter over the phone. Better yet, do a little face time via Skype!

## Hold a Treasure Hunt

Doesn't everyone love a treasure hunt? They're fun, puzzling and active for everyone involved. And the great thing is, there are so many ways to customize the experience to suit your lifestyle and location. Write tips or clues on sticky notes. Then place the notes in different spots around your home. Hide them in rooms or social areas, or even nearby parks. Make sure the clues are challenging by including riddles or rhymes. Each clue should lead to the next, with the ultimate goal of finding the *treasure*. That treasure can be something store-bought, such as a toy, or something you've made, like a plate of your homemade chocolate chip cookies.

Another fun way to build a treasure hunt is to create a list of items that your grandkids can come across while they're walking with you, through your building or neighborhood. Kids cross things off their list as they find them. A few ideas to get started might be a black dog, mailbox, red car, squirrel or bus.

Your treasure hunt is limited only by your imagination. Get creative!

And don't overlook your smartphone. It can be a great tool when it comes to treasure hunts. You can get your grandkids to take photos of items on their list, as an added element to the game. Or try a round of "alphabet soup." Get the kids to take a photo of something starting with each letter of the alphabet.

## Create a Movie Experience

Rather than plopping the kids in front of the television and let cable TV do the babysitting, create a movie experience. Discuss what films they'd like to see, and create a list, adding some of your favorites as well. Set aside a specific time during each visit to watch a film and be sure to have favorite snacks for munching. Homemade popcorn in small cardboard boxes or brown paper bags will provide a great movie cinema feel. Not sure which movies to start with? When in doubt I always suggest turning to Rob Reiner's classic fairy tale *The Princess Bride*. Or revisit Haley Mills as troublesome twins in *The Parent Trap*.

## Play Card Games

Children of the internet age have significant technological advancements, but they also miss out on some of the things we all enjoyed growing up, like card games. The only things you need are a deck of cards and a playing surface. Older kids will enjoy playing poker, blackjack, or even gin rummy. Younger ones will find great enjoyment in go fish, old maid and slapjack.

## Try Chef for a Day

Hit the pantry, fridge and cupboards and pull out a few ingredients. Next, try to come up with a dish without using a cookbook. Of course, you'll likely be working from your favorite memorized recipes, but by encouraging input from your helpers, they'll get a kick out of creating something new with you. And who knows, you might just create a new family classic.

When it comes to spending time with your grandkids, it's not about money, it's about time. Ideas of what you can do together are limitless, if you remember the two keys to successful visits:

- Keep the activity focused on your grandchild.
- Make it fun.

It's not about completing the task perfectly, it's about having a good time in the process.

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A year from now, you'll wish you'd started today.

# An Open Book

By Nancy Lincoln Reynolds

As a pastor, you can process all sorts of emotion and spiritual insight sitting in the pulpit area waiting for worship to begin: Watching people still walking down the hallway to the sanctuary, wondering about the people who had asked for prayer, rehearsing announcements to be made before worship starts and a sort of unconscious scanning for visitors and new faces. It is easy to be distracted. Even if God were trying to get my attention, God might have to take a place in line behind the sound guy checking microphones.

I hesitate to put a specific experience on a recent Sunday morning into writing. My clinical psychologist daughter is quick to point out the fine line between “spiritual inspiration” and hallucination, but either way, here’s how it went.

When you are involved in the life of a church and its people (or any organization for that matter), it is a given that you may come to know the people, their histories and their life stories. From the vantage point of the pulpit area on one Sunday morning, I looked out and saw not just a *sanctuary* of worshippers, but a *library* filled with people whose histories and stories, or rather whose “books,” I knew. Each person, couple or family represented a book filled with pages of life -- sometimes joyful, sometimes painful, always challenging. As I mentally thumbed through their pages, I noticed that there were several well-known and familiar ones, some whose pages I had only skimmed, and others whose covers I had never even cracked open. I realized that for those books I had read thoroughly, those with which I was most familiar, they had taken the initiative to invite me into their lives. They were books that had kind of “jumped off the shelf.”

In the world of real books, a strong title or known author usually catches the attention of potential readers. In a church or any setting where people gather for community, “books” are often read because of expressed need. In other words, people are reaching out for support. Those are the people we know best, ones with whom we may journey through life with sacred trust.

But what of those books that don’t shout out to be read? What happens to the people we don’t “see” as we pass by, who don’t “jump off the shelf?” Those whose covers or name recognition are uninviting at best.

I did a bit of investigating and learned that there are actually competitions for the least interesting and most boring book titles ever written. Titles like,

*Watching Paint Dry, the Second Coat* and *Chalk and A Look at Production and Effect on American Chalk Boards Between 1874 and 1901* were entered. One website, The Rumpus, suggested two winners: *When Mother Lets Us Make Paper Box Furniture* and *The Baking Powder Controversy*. Interesting that one contest’s author identified a top 16 list, 12 of which had to do with religion or the Bible.

Many felt that anything that would catch an engineer’s interest would be deadly, while others resisted single-name biographies and still others branded all titles from before the 20<sup>th</sup> century as sleepers.

Truth be told, interest is in the eye of the reader. (I know an engineer/mathematician who would revel in the value of pi to 750,000 decimal places and I myself would like to know more about a mother who gave permission to build paper box furniture.

The metaphor is entertaining perhaps, until the “boring book title” theory is applied to people and their stories. Sadly, I think we are inclined to dismiss out of hand some whose covers are dreary, unattractive and colorless. Each time we enter a meeting, a grocery store, a school or a gallery, for example, we are effectively entering a human library. In general, unless they jump out at us asking to be read, we may skim over those who are “employed” there, ignore those who we consider offensive, avoid those whose appearances threaten us, judge those who advocate ideologies with which we disagree or snub those with clearly identifiable ethnicities different from our own.

As we anticipate the holidays, we will buy many books as gifts, choosing titles that we believe will please or interest their recipients. We may not ever read those books ourselves,

satisfied with the cover and assumed content. I guess

that is all right, when the gift is a book. But when

the gift is a person, we really need to go

deeper. We need to take the

time to read, cover to cover,

because we will discover

that each one has a

story worth reading

and that each life is of

inestimable value. This is

the essence of the season we

are entering, is it not?

By the way, *The Diary of Anne*

*Frank* and *The Bible* are classified

nonfiction, single-named (originally)

and written pre-20<sup>th</sup> century. Maybe I’m

just suggesting, “Never judge a book by its

cover.”

*Nancy is the associate pastor of Woods Presbyterian Church in Severna Park and can be contacted at NReynolds@WoodsChurch.org*

# FOR DIABETICS, LOW-CARB DIETS MAKE SENSE

By Mick Rood

A growing chorus of health professionals are singing the praises of low-carbohydrate diets as a means of treating Americans with diabetes specifically and overweight problems generally.

One of the strongest of those voices is Sarah Hallberg, who wears many hats including that of medical director of a weight loss program at Indiana University. She and Osama Hamdy, medical director of obesity and diabetes programs at Harvard's Joslin Diabetes Center, presented their case recently in a *New York Times* op-ed. With as many as two-thirds of Americans overweight and more than 100 million people who either have diabetes or a condition called pre-diabetes, they say the medical establishment's answers to the epidemic emphasize expensive surgical procedures. You've probably heard of lap-band surgery, gastric bypasses, gastric balloon implants and gastric sleeve procedures.

Hallberg and Hamdy point out that 45 medical societies including the American Diabetes Association recently called for bariatric surgery to become standard treatment for diabetes. Your stomach is stapled, bound or part of it removed to the tune of \$15,000 to \$26,000. Complications from these procedures can ensue; insurance companies might not cover their costs.

They describe another procedure, called AspireAssist, which was recently approved by the Food and Drug Administration. It consists of a sort of stomach-draining system in which a thin tube is implanted in the stomach to eject food before most of the calories in it can be absorbed.

So Hallberg and Hamdy ask, why not first treat the root cause of diabetes by limiting the intake of glucose, which diabetics can't effectively process? Why not, indeed. They cite growing clinical results of low-carb diets improving diabetics' conditions and chide the diabetes association for claiming there is no "conclusive evidence" that this is so.

"Glucose," say Hallberg and Hamdy, "is the breakdown product of carbohydrates, which are found principally in wheat, rice, corn, potatoes fruit and sugars. Restricting these foods keeps blood glucose low. Moreover, replacing those carbohydrates with healthy protein and fats, the most naturally satiating of foods, often eliminates hunger. People can lose weight without starving themselves, or even counting calories."

If you buy the Hallberg-Hamdy premise, the rest is literally up to you – that is, unless you happen to be able to volunteer for nearby clinical trials being conducted on diabetes and weight loss, where you would get constant guidance. Try this website for a primer of eight popular weight-loss diets: <https://authoritynutrition.com/8-popular-ways-to-do-low-carb/> The list includes the once-faddish Adkins diet now making a resurgence, the fashionable Mediterranean diet and others.

Each of these diets have their own variations, but most emphasize meats, fish, eggs, nuts, seeds, vegetables, fruits and healthy fats. They minimize high-carb foods like grains, potatoes, sugary drinks and high-sugar junk foods.

No solution is without its complications. The overarching difficulty with older Americans in adjusting their diets is literally malnutrition. Seniors often eat poorly because of low income, infirmities that keep them from cooking and shopping and medications that impair appetite.

"For decades, officials have recognized malnutrition as a problem among older Americans. But with the eldest baby boomers turning 70 this year, there is a sense of urgency to find out just how bad the problem is," says Julie Flaherty, writing in the publication, *Tufts Nutrition Magazine*.

Also complicating the picture are existing conditions you may have that may not mix well with a low-carb diet. This brings back into play a constant: You should discuss any diet you embark upon with your physician or a licensed nutritionist.

*Mick Rood is a semiretired journalist now working in Southern California. He can be reached at mickrood@aol.com*



## Bay Bytes

Do you enjoy a walk or jog during these crisp days but are not sure of the route? Go to [www.alltrails.com/us/maryland](http://www.alltrails.com/us/maryland) to view detailed maps with their suggestions for routes and distance.

*It's never too late to begin again.*

## LOW-CARB DIET, HIGH DIFFICULTY

All right. If a low-carb diet is the simple answer to stemming the diabetes epidemic in this country, why haven't millions of Americans stepped up to protect their health? Perhaps it's because to many people, adhering is more daunting than undergoing surgery.

Scientists have found that when animals eat a meal, their brains release dopamine, a neurotransmitter that releases a pleasurable sensation to the brain. Researchers at Tufts University and elsewhere have found that those underweight animals' brains release less dopamine, meaning they are unsatisfied, still hungry. But what surprised Tufts researchers is that overweight animals can suffer from that same deficiency and they keep eating until enough dopamine has been released to satiate them. The same tendency has been found in humans.

"Even though they are mirror opposites, the undernourished and the obese share two things - an increased motivation to eat and a deficient dopamine system," says Emmanuel Pothos, an associate professor

of pharmacology and experimental therapeutics and neuroscience at the Department of Integrative Physiology and Pathobiology at Tufts School of Medicine.

There are many reasons for this odd pattern, Pothos has told a Tufts publication. "It's very difficult for the overweight animal or human patient to overcome."

Studies have found that those with Type 2 diabetes who get intensive counseling on weight loss and regular exercise over a period of time will lose weight and show improvement in other health measurements as compared to those who simply get occasional support and education.

Pothos is putting his money on the exercise component because there is evidence it and other interventions help restore dopamine neurotransmission to the brain. Nonetheless, when you are not in a clinical setting getting intensive guidance, he wonders, "What is in our biology that prevents us from following good advice on weight loss? That's what we are trying to understand."

For a treasure trove of information on nutrition and all things health, you can Google two Tufts publications, Tufts Nutrition Magazine and Tufts Nutrition Newsletter.



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Read our article "The Fuss Over Flossing: Should You Floss or Not?" in this edition of Outlook!

# Fun at the Opera

By Jacques Laperriere

The excitement of 700 elementary school children ripples through the auditorium at Maryland Hall for the Creative Arts as Cinderella steps on stage. There is scarcely an empty seat in the tightly packed room. All eyes strain forward as the evil sisters Prunella and Tisbe scream insults at Cinderella while she scrubs the floor. She brushes a lock of hair from her eyes, then bursts in to song.

The 700 elementary school students are totally absorbed in this fascinating new form of entertainment: *Opera!*

The Annapolis Opera is in its 44th year, the last 15 of which have also featured a children's opera. Either from the performance itself or the fun-filled instructional material prepared by the Towson University Music Department, the children learn the different voice types, the different parts of the opera, the life of the composer and how to behave at an opera.

The school day performances are reserved for school field trips. However, the performance on Saturday, Jan. 28, is open to the entire family. Lasting under an hour and moderately priced at \$15 per ticket, it offers a wonderful and economical excursion to take with the children and grandchildren. The 11 a.m. show time makes the children's opera the perfect entertainment to pair with a family brunch.

It is also one of the very few shows in January that doesn't require a drive home after dark.

## Plant a Seed for the Future

Opera is a pleasure that many people come to later in life, but it helps to have been exposed to opera as a child. Even though children in the United States do not grow up listening to a lot of opera, if the seed is planted early, in time it will flourish and your children and grandchildren will thank you for that, because opera has no equal in the arts for its ability to capture the joys and sorrows of human experience.

That is why opera has flourished since the 16<sup>th</sup> century and is still going strong.

## Upcoming Events

On Dec. 4, the Annapolis Opera will present a concert, *Arias and Encores*, at Calvary United Methodist Church in Annapolis. This performance, featuring five singers with a piano accompanist performing in the beautiful sanctuary, will be comprised of aria

favorites and popular Broadway tunes. This matinee performance is extremely popular, so those interested in attending are advised to get their ticket requests in to the Maryland Hall Box office as soon as possible.

In March, the Annapolis Opera will offer Puccini's *Madame Butterfly*, a perennial favorite. The opera will be fully staged, complete with an orchestra, costumes, a set and surtitles shown on a screen above the stage so that everyone can understand Puccini's tragic love story.

## What it Means

A fully staged opera at a regional opera company like the Annapolis Opera presents young professional singers with a wonderful opportunity to gain experience and to be noticed. Singers can't jump directly from music school to the Metropolitan Opera or any other major opera house. They have to succeed in smaller regional houses where they hone their craft, which is difficult because there are fewer and fewer smaller venues that are able to produce fully staged productions.

The Annapolis Opera is very proud of the fact that it has been able to maintain a fully staged professional production. In fact, this season, it is expanding its season to include two such productions.

"Running an opera company is not easy," explains Kathy Swekel, executive director of the Annapolis Opera, "But it is great fun!" This Fall the company performed a pop-up opera, "Dueling Divas, Dandies, and Daddies," along inner West Street in Annapolis and at Arundel Mills shopping mall. Over the Summer it performed "Concert in the Park," an outdoor concert of arias and musical theater songs in Quiet Waters Park in Annapolis. This is in addition to the two fully staged productions in Maryland Hall and two concerts elsewhere in the county.

Kathy's assistant, Victoria Brown, notes that ticket sales cover only one-third of the cost of producing an opera, so great resourcefulness and generosity are required of both patrons and board members. In addition to singers, a fully staged opera requires an orchestra, a set, costumes, a director and a conductor, and sometimes dancers. This is why opera is the most expensive of the performing arts.

But after you attend an opera, you will see that it is worth it.

Tickets to all Annapolis Opera performances may be purchased through the Maryland Hall box office by calling 410.280.5640 or online at [www.marylandhall.org/](http://www.marylandhall.org/)

Don't arrive at the end with your song unsung.

# The Fuss Over Flossing: Should You Floss or Not?

By Drs. Woody Wooddell and Joe Passaro

Since 1979, the federal government has recommended daily flossing in the *Dietary Guidelines for Americans* issued every five years. Under the law, the guidelines must be based on scientific evidence.

Last year, the Associated Press asked the Health and Human Services (HHS) and Agriculture departments for their evidence regarding flossing, and followed up with written requests under the Freedom of Information Act. When the federal government issued its latest dietary guidelines this year, the flossing recommendation had been removed, without notice. In a letter to the AP, the government acknowledged the effectiveness of flossing had never been researched, as required.

However, any qualified dental professional will confirm that using an interdental tool (like floss) is an essential part of taking care of your teeth and gums. HHS also reaffirmed flossing as "an important oral hygiene practice" in an August 2016 statement.

The American Dental Association (ADA) recommends cleaning between your teeth once a day to remove plaque, a sticky deposit on the teeth in which bacteria flourishes. Plaque that is not removed by brushing and flossing can cause an inflammatory infection and eventually harden into calculus or tartar, which can lead to cavities, gum disease and bone loss.

Flossing has to be done correctly. Many people floss ineffectively. The most common mistake people make is that they snap the floss between two teeth and think they're done — meaning, they get the floss in between the teeth, and pull it straight out. It's important to get the floss below the gum line and wrap it against the tooth to remove the bacteria that a toothbrush can't reach.

The ADA outlines five steps for proper flossing:

1. Break off about 18 inches of floss and wind most of it around one of your middle fingers. Wind the remaining floss around the same finger of the opposite hand. This finger will take up the floss as it becomes dirty.
2. Hold the floss tightly between your thumbs and forefingers.

3. Guide the floss between your teeth using a gentle rubbing motion. Never snap the floss into the gums.
4. When the floss reaches the gum line, curve it into a C shape against one tooth. Gently slide it into the space between the gum and the tooth.
5. Hold the floss tightly against the tooth. Gently rub the side of the tooth, moving the floss away from the gum with up-and-down motions. Repeat this method on the rest of your teeth. Don't forget the back side of your last tooth.

Each time you have your teeth cleaned, the dentist or hygienist should demonstrate to you how to floss properly. Also, be sure to talk to them about what types of floss and other dental care products will be most effective for you.

*Dr. Woody Wooddell and Dr. Joe Passaro opened the doors to their Davidsonville dental practice in 1981. In addition to caring for their patients' dental health by offering general dentistry services, Drs. Wooddell and Passaro provide expert restorative and esthetic dental solutions. Visit their website at [www.wp dentalgroup.com](http://www.wp dentalgroup.com) or call 410.956.5555 for information.*

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# “THE BEAT GOES ON”

By Carole Campbell Gallis

From the psychedelic '60s to the hair band '80s to today's pop, music of all kinds has been an integral part of my life. I am not a musician, I am a listener. Records, CDs and the radio are a part of my daily life. And the songs have often reflected my life.

In the '60s, music went from the simple yet shocking sounds of Elvis' "Heartbreak Hotel" to the Eagles' laid-back California rock with "Hotel California." We moved from "Hound Dog" to "Puff the Magic Dragon" with the arrival of folk music. The Vietnam War intensified and so did the protest songs and the harder-edged lyrics, but still people flocked to California and Haight-Ashbury singing "California Dreamin'" and "If You're Going to San Francisco, Be Sure to Wear a Flower in Your Hair." I was there then -- a remarkable experience and our first duty station as a married couple. Music was everywhere, rock and protest songs. People danced and sang and chanted, "Make Love, not War!" Oh yes, "The Times They Are A Changin'."

The '70s brought a softer side of music. The war still raged, protests lingered and often focused on freeing POWs. Music moved more toward folk rock and a focus on ourselves. People sang along with "Rocky Mountain High" and imagined how free, clear and peaceful that would be. There was still the hard-edged rock of the Rolling Stones and other groups and "Sympathy for the Devil" seemed widespread. Who "the devil" was remained unclear. There were bad boys like "Bad, Bad Leroy Brown" that caught our attention. America was still in the "Age of Aquarius" and a new generation was strongly emerging. Still, the sounds were pure, appropriate and "Gentle on My Mind." Occasionally, it was good to get away from rock and "Take Five" with Brubeck or enjoy Ramsey Lewis playing piano.

America was growing up quickly. The '80s brought heavy metal and hair bands and a generation that had embraced the

Beatles now watched as their children embraced these groups. Their rock was edgier, louder and drugs were abundant. The war was over and prosperity was driving the decade. Still, the music was all relative -- it reflected life.

The "Piano Man" played his songs while Harry Chapin talked about relationships in "The Cat's In the Cradle." Bruce was "Dancing in the Dark" and we all loved to slow dance to "Love Hurts." Optimism was there too as Tommy and Gina continued "Livin' on a Prayer" and we all took "Dream On" as good advice. The '80s rocked and rolled with our lives. Life was good.

The '90s brought us a more alternative style of music and we walked down "The Boulevard of Broken Dreams" with "Our Arms Wide Open" as we looked for a return to the more prosperous times we left behind. Neil Diamond and Fleetwood Mac kept us singing. We were eager to "Don't Stop Believing," but it seemed as if there were a "Landslide" of problems that came with the decade. There was a question of where exactly we were headed. We were like a "Gypsy" heading down a "Street With No Name." So we listened and waited for the "Sweet November Rain."

We welcomed a new century with "All Apologies" and lots of hope. The music continued to grow and change. Rap was still around (if that is truly music), but pop seems to rule the radio nowadays. Country has become more commercial, heavy metal rockers are all old men, alternative is scarce and we've said "Hello" to lots of new artists and learned "All About That Bass." Wishing "We can all be heroes for just one day," we live in a world that desperately needs a hero. The '80s seem "A Million Years Ago" and right now history is a "Blank Page" and who knows, this year we may "Set Fire to the Rain!"

Music is like "Pictures at an Exhibition." You can move from one genre to another and enjoy each one. It is relative to life. And so, "The Beat Goes On."

*Carole says some of the songs may not "exactly" match the decade, but reflect the idea presented. After all, aren't some songs ageless? She is a retired high school English teacher and avid music fan. She can be contacted at [cgallis@verizon.net](mailto:cgallis@verizon.net)*

## Bay Bytes

If you are called on to deliver the toast at the next family gathering and find yourself speechless -- log onto [thePerfectToast.com](http://thePerfectToast.com) where, for a minimal fee, they'll compose what you need.

# Holiday Remembrance

By Ryan Helfenbein

Each year during our holiday feasts my father says the blessing. He starts with the standard blessing of the food to our bodies, but then moves into something that is possibly unique to just a family of undertakers. He asks for a special blessing of healing to all the families we assisted that year. My father has always built his undertaking business around the fact that we help families heal. For the countless number of individuals my family has assisted through the years, we can't help but simply take a small moment to remember them -- members of the families left behind.

Memorializing a loss is something that we see each and every day. Statues, monuments and even lights are put in place today to help remember the loss we incur as a family or a nation. But when it comes to the holiday season, it also makes things that are different from years past very apparent, and memories are sometimes all we have. We need to explore how to memorialize the individual so that memories can be shared for future generations.

One concept we see families incorporate during the holiday season to memorialize someone is by simply keeping them as part of the event. For example, during the big Thanksgiving feast, set a place for the one who was lost that year. Have people share a story or memory about that individual regarding how they touched them. Place that memory on the plate where they would have been seated and continue to then reminisce about that person. Yes, it may bring tears, and also laughter, but each of these emotions is important to those around the table. If you find this is a bit uncomfortable to do, then at the very least mention the one who was lost during the time of prayer. Giving them thanks for their love and support to the family and stating how much they will be missed. The idea behind this is to not draw attention to the fact that they are no longer there, but rather to create an atmosphere allowing family members to feel comfortable sharing their emotions with each other and to acknowledge the one who has died. This has benefited many families and for some becomes an ongoing holiday tradition.

Perhaps a private remembrance would be more comforting, with only family present. For example, one family who had lost their child very suddenly has made a tradition to take their

immediate family on a trip during the holiday season. They want to be together, in a private place to reminisce about the one they lost. This has provided them not only a comforting and private atmosphere to emotionally connect, but a "memorial trip" that each of them looks forward to year after year. Ultimately, it has generated a positive outlook from a situation that is unbearable for most.

Cemeteries across the nation have actually begun incorporating areas to provide a place to memorialize at no cost.

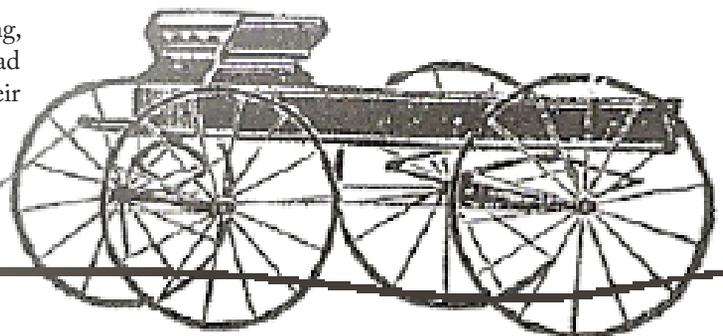
One concept is that of the "Christmas Angel." This is something my father has actually incorporated in Stevensville Cemetery located on Kent Island. It is an area where people who want to pay tribute to someone can come and put a rose or flower near the granite angel and sit in a quite area to reflect on that person's life. This was designed

to provide an atmosphere of comfort to those who wanted a place to memorialize a loved one during the holiday season and throughout the year. We find that many families whose loved one was cremated visit throughout the year.

The idea of memorialization is nothing new. It has been around for years. However, the comfort of doing it openly and freely is something that has become more of a challenge today. Technology allows us a place to hide and in a sense provide an emotional barrier when it comes to dealing with a loss. Let's challenge ourselves to open up to those around us so they might feel comfortable to open up as well. Perhaps a simple prayer this holiday season, the creation of a "memorial trip," or visiting a special place is something that will help a family heal. One thing that can be promised for those who have lost a loved one this year, know that my father will begin the Helfenbein feast with a prayer for you and your family.

*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*

*We need to explore  
how to memorialize  
the individual ...*



# TOP 10 HOLIDAY FAUX PAS THAT WILL NOT GO UNNOTICED

By Gwen Mayes

## 10. Not Thanking the Hostess When You Leave.

Unless you're in a room of hundreds and have no idea who picked up the tab, make sure to find your host, set your drink down, and say, "Thank you, it was a lovely party." This isn't too much to ask for someone who put fresh hand towels in the bathroom and cut out cookies to resemble sleighs, much less let you drink and eat liberally for the past three hours.

## 9. Giving the Right Gift to the Right Person.

Getting the names spelled correctly on your gift tags can be tricky if it's 3 in the morning and you've been wrapping presents under a dim light in the basement. Double-check you've got the right name on the right package and remove the old To and From tags from last year at the bottom of the bag.

## 8. Opting to RSVP an Hour before the Party ... Or Not at All.

When a carrier pigeon was our only option, you had to plan ahead. Today, last-minute texts or emails with, "OK if I bring date?" or, "Off to FL, sorry," are far too common. If it says RSVP, then RSVP. Get it on your calendar and be done with it. Then try to make it. If you can't, offer a sincere apology after the event.

## 7. Bringing Fresh Flowers without a Vase.

While bringing fresh fragrant flowers is a lovely gesture, showing up with a bundle of long-stem beauties requires more work on the part of the hostess than she has time to spare. If fresh flowers are on your list, bring them in a vase or better yet, opt for a small potted plant.

## 6. Showing Up Unannounced.

Sure, we've all made gratuitous offers to include the single man next door or recently divorced mother of three over for dinner, but do we *really* expect them to show up? No. If you get such an invitation, consider yourself blessed, but by all means call

before you show up. Bring a bottle of wine or plate of cookies with you and don't stay all night.

## 5. Re-gifting a Gift I Don't Want.

Re-gifting has become acceptable in today's world, like speaking in emoji. But somewhere we have to draw the line, and for me, it's receiving a gift that clearly has no value to me. "No," I do not want the sterling silver Tiffany bracelet with a diamond pave heart charm your ex-husband gave you on your anniversary. No, I don't want a Coach bag you've never carried just so you can make room in your closet. The unused bottle of Joe Malone, however, I will take. Please rethink before you re-gift – make sure it fits the person.

## 4. Serving Only Dishes with Kale, Beets or Seaweed.

The holidays are not the time to whip out the Mayo Clinic diet playbook. Sure, there are people legitimately allergic to nuts and dairy and OK, gluten. But for the most part, guests are expecting green beans with sliced almonds and whipped sweet potatoes, with those little toasted marshmallows on top. You don't have to get fancy and throw in steamed kale. We've all lived a long time without it.

## 3. Wearing a Hat During Dinner.

When the temperature drops below freezing, wearing a fur hoodie, tall Stetson or hand-knitted cap is clearly justified. But gentlemen, where are your manners? Hats come off at the door with your coat, gloves, boots and snow goggles, regardless of who's playing in the playoffs that day.

## 2. Failing to Introduce People You Drag Along.

If you take someone to a party, introduce them to your hostess and other guests. Don't just let them wander aimlessly up and down the halls. Now is not the time for your hostess to have to worry about who's eyeing her Limoges.

## 1. Trying to Outshine the Tree.

For some women, the holidays are a time to haul out the high heels, glittery tops with plunging necklines and skirts slit to places you don't want to go. At our age, this simply creates a glare. Keep it classy, but festive and simple. If you forget what that looks like, Google Coco Chanel.

You've all experienced these, or variations of them, over the holidays. Work to be the best guest possible so you're at the top of everyone's guest list. You'll appreciate it when it's your turn to throw a party!

*Gwen is an Eastport resident who writes about the small things in life that we often skip right by. She is a lawyer, sailor and founder of Words on Water writing group. More at [www.writingwithinsight.com](http://www.writingwithinsight.com)*

### Bay Bytes

What to do with all those toiletries you've accumulated from airplanes, hotels, etc. Donate them to a homeless shelter. To find one in Anne Arundel County log onto [www.aacounty.org/services-and-programs/homeless-shelters](http://www.aacounty.org/services-and-programs/homeless-shelters)

# HAPPILY REDUCING *Christmas* CLUTTER

By Penelope Folsom

Are you still holding on to those holiday treasures? Those charming little knickknacks that once a year need to be unpacked and then packed up again? Maybe it's time to start distributing some of that collection, which each year becomes more and more of a problem to store.

We had a lifetime of Christmas decorations at our house that filled 10 large bins. For the last five years we've been doling out our prized collection bit by bit. Our family members love receiving the different pieces that were used during their childhood. A fun benefit is that we all enjoy the telling of where a particular decoration came from as there is invariably a story that goes with it.

Not only do we have a fair share of holiday collectables, but over the years we've accumulated quite a nice assortment of holiday books. Many of these have been inscribed with a note from the gift giver, which makes them even more special. This year we're passing on *The Little Match Girl* that godmother Suzan inscribed with a nice Christmas message more than 30 years ago. *A Christmas Carol* from the children's grandmother will also be finding a new home this year. It will have to be taped as the pages are falling out.

Sorting through and passing these classics on to our children's homes will allow them to read and enjoy them with their children. And a real plus is that during our Christmas visits we get to read them to our grandkids. It's a win-win situation all around.

our Christmas visits we get to read them to our grandkids. It's a win-win situation all around.

As meaningful as some of the holiday collection has been and as much as we've enjoyed it all over the years, we have found that we're enjoying these treasures a lot more because others are now storing and loving them.



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# Happy Holidays,

## HERE'S TO YOUR HEALTH, HAPPINESS AND PROSPERITY

By Kathryn Marchi

Holiday customs such as Thanksgiving feasts, Christmas celebrations and New Year's parties are important parts of our culture. But afterward there is another "custom" that looms before us: the dreaded "New Year's Resolutions" list, followed by the self-imposed pressure to stick to each resolution and the feeling of failure as they are struck from the list, one by one. Why do we do it? The main reason for these broken resolutions is that we unknowingly set ourselves up for failure. Many are way above our capacity to attain and some are too vague or generic to nail down. Most resolutions are about losing weight, and when that doesn't happen right away, it's scratched off the list. Another might be about "exercising" regularly. What does that mean? Another combination resolution list might contain only three things: "Eat healthy meals, exercise daily and lose weight." Too vague and boring. Giving up chocolate, for example, only lasts until someone offers a Mrs. Sees' chocolate truffle. Sad to say, some folks no longer make any resolutions until Lent!

### So, what can we do to prepare an attainable list to ensure our "health, happiness and prosperity" in the New Year?

**1.** The first thing to do is write it all down and keep the list in a prominent place. I believe you'll be more inclined to work toward the resolutions once they've been "cast in ink!" Also think how you can make these resolutions easier on yourself. Maybe you want to enlist the help of a friend, spouse or grandchild. Their vigilance and enthusiasm may spur you on.

**2.** If you plan to lose weight, select a reasonable amount and mentally challenge yourself to take it slow and easy. For example, if you really want to lose 25 pounds, put

five pounds on the list and work toward that. Chances are when you set up a weight loss program, you'll begin a trend and you might even lose the 25 pounds.

**3.** Let's say you want to set up some kind of exercise program. Instead of vowing to "exercise daily" or "run two miles a day," choose the type of exercise you want to do such as water aerobics, biking, running or power walking. Then set a reasonable goal of doing this activity for 15 minutes, two or three times a week. Who knows? You might get started and work up to either exercising daily or even running the two miles a day. Certainly your energy level will greatly improve, which makes additional exercise more palatable. And, you might even help yourself achieve the No. 2 weight loss goal while you're busy exercising.

**4.** Most of us know the value of eating healthy foods despite our craving for sweets, sodas or Big Macs with fries and a milkshake. Instead of placing a generic "eating healthy foods" addition to your list, invest in a good cookbook and vow to prepare at least two healthy meals a week. Weekends could even be "off limits," which should make it easier to stick to this resolution. Setting up this doable routine might even extend to three or four well balanced meals a week. Here again, this works in tandem with losing weight.

**5.** So far I've only mentioned health resolutions, which can lead to happiness. But there are other resolutions you can make to achieve that goal as well. Suppose you want to broaden your horizons or your social circle? Instead of vowing to "join a club" or "meet new friends," get specific again. Decide what interests you and find a group that will meet that need. Let that group be your resolution. If you qualify, you might want to join the Junior League, the Rotary

Why do you look back? You're not going that way.

Club or a charitable organization, such as Habitat for Humanity, if you're talented in that way. If you like playing cards, you could join a bridge or Mah Jong group, or even form one of your own.

But what about the "prosperity" part of your goals for the New Year? What can you do to achieve that? It's possible that prosperity means simply meeting or paying off some bills. If so, select a specific (here's that word again) debt that can be cancelled or a worrisome bill you might want to "pay down." Be sure to make these payments according to what you can afford. Give yourself the right amount of time and set it up as a regular deduction on the computer or through your bank. You also might want to start a savings program. Again, be specific on an affordable amount. Start with a small savings program and then increase it as you can. You'll be in a better financial situation as time goes on and your resolution will be achieved.

## Bay Bytes

If you'd like to share your bounty this year, contact Holiday Sharing at [www.dhr.state.md.us/blog/?p=192](http://www.dhr.state.md.us/blog/?p=192) where you will be connected to families or seniors in need. Either deliver yourself or have Holiday Sharing deliver it.

By choosing thoughtful and specific goals, you are setting yourself up to achieve them. You might even be able to see how they all work in tandem with each other. The good habits you are forming, which you might not even realize at first, are helping you keep your resolutions. And in writing down those specific goals, you have become proactive in your own life.

Though I've only listed five possible resolutions, you might want to record more or less. It's entirely up to you. Just be specific and reasonable and you'll find it much easier to keep them throughout the year.

*Kathryn lives on Maryland's Eastern Shore with her husband, Dennis. She has finally come up with a New Year's resolution list that is attainable and empowering after years of disappointing results.*

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From left to right: Attorneys Nicole Livingston, Jon J. Gasior, Colleen Prosser, and Victor A. Lembo

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# NO GRANDKIDS? NO PROBLEM.

By Leah Lancione

In this day and age and economy, countless grandparents play a large role in taking care of their grandchildren, 2.7 million to be exact. According to the U.S. Census Bureau, “In 2012, 2.7 million grandparents in the U.S. were raising their grandchildren. About 39 percent of these grandparent caregivers have cared for their grandchildren for five years or more.” Though many find this involvement that goes above and beyond the normal grandparent-grandchild relationship to be challenging yet rewarding, there is another crop of baby boomers who don’t have grandchildren at all ... and they’re fine with that.

If you are a baby boomer who let Sept. 7 (Grandparents’ Day) come and go without fanfare, it’s likely you don’t have a grandchild! Don’t worry, although you’re in the minority, you are not alone. In fact, there are a few brave folks who’ve come out of the woodwork to confess their desire to never hold the title of grandparent! A 2015 article published in *Woman’s Day* magazine, “10 Reasons You Absolutely Don’t Want To Become A Grandmother,” proclaimed “there’s nothing grand about it.” One of the reasons given: having to give up an occasional weekend to babysit with payment in the form of a kiss or hug. Snarky as it may sound, it’s probably true. Other sentiments expressed were the distaste for the countless nicknames given like Nana or Glemma and the fact that grandkids often treat visits like mini-vacations, turning your home into a virtual Holiday Inn.

If you subscribe to the notion that grandparenthood is not for you, carry on feeling unashamed that you want to spend the “third chapter” of your life solely pursuing personal ambitions. You’re entitled to it.

On the other hand, if you don’t have a grandchild and find yourself pining away for one, take heart! You, too, are not alone. The *Wall Street Journal* asserts the number of wannabe grandparents is increasing as more of their

children are waiting until their 30s or beyond to have children. In the article “The Long (Long) Wait To Be A Grandparent,” the magazine says whatever the reason folks are choosing to postpone having children, it means their parents have to wait until their seventies to welcome the first grandchild.

Since simply knowing you’re not alone may not give you any solace, there are still ways to exercise your nurturing grandmotherly or grandfatherly proclivities. For example:

**Become a foster grandparent.** The Anne Arundel County Foster Grandparent program invites eligible candidates (55-plus) to “share love and experience” with youngsters who need the support, quality time and attention. Requirements include being income-eligible since there is a per hour stipend, able to devote 20-40 hours a week, and being in good physical and mental health. For more information, visit [www.aacounty.org/services-and-programs/foster-grandparents-program](http://www.aacounty.org/services-and-programs/foster-grandparents-program)

**Become a literacy tutor.** The Anne Arundel County Literacy Council seeks volunteers to help out-of-school youths and adults learn to read. Training is provided and hours are flexible. For more information, visit [icanread.org](http://icanread.org) call 410.269.4419 or email [programdirector@aaclc.org](mailto:programdirector@aaclc.org)

**Become a tutor to elementary school students.** [Volunteermatch.org](http://Volunteermatch.org) lists the Banner Neighborhoods Community Corp. as needing volunteers to tutor 1<sup>st</sup>-4<sup>th</sup> graders with their homework in all subjects two days a week in Baltimore. For more information, call 410.585.8810 or visit [volunteermatch.org](http://volunteermatch.org)

**Become a Girl Scout troop leader.** The Girl Scouts of Central Maryland seeks volunteers of all ages and backgrounds to be role models or scout leaders to “introduce girls to new experiences that show them they’re capable of more than they’ve imagined.” For more information, visit [www.gscm.org](http://www.gscm.org)

**Become a “baby cuddler” at a pediatric hospital.** Mt. Washington Pediatric Hospital, which offers inpatient and outpatient care for infants and children, offers volunteer positions that range from “hosting a hospitality cart to providing comfort, companionship and play” to young patients. Volunteers are asked to commit to at least two hours per week for one year and benefits (beyond getting to snuggle with precious little ones) include: free parking, free flu shots, a free lunch or dinner in the cafeteria and an annual volunteer dinner. For more information, email [awenman@mwph.org](mailto:awenman@mwph.org)

**Become a reader or art leader at Johns Hopkins.** Johns Hopkins Children’s Center welcomes volunteers to provide services that include reading to children, leading art activities, playing and, in general, delivering fun to kids who may be bored or stressed out by a lengthy stay in the hospital. For more information, visit [www.hopkinsmedicine.org/johns-hopkins-childrens-center/ways-to-give/volunteer/](http://www.hopkinsmedicine.org/johns-hopkins-childrens-center/ways-to-give/volunteer/)

The above opportunities for retiree wannabe grandparents to extend their arms to youngsters and fill the void caused by a lack of grandchildren are just a few examples. You can search the internet in your town for ways to help children or teenagers. The Volunteer Center of Anne Arundel County [www.aacvc.org](http://www.aacvc.org) Baltimore County (in partnership with United Way and Volunteer Solutions) can be reached at [www.baltimorecountymd.gov/Agencies/volunteers/terms.html](http://www.baltimorecountymd.gov/Agencies/volunteers/terms.html) Other county volunteer centers are ready and waiting to match eager volunteers with those in need.





# ARE YOU A GOOD LISTENER?

By Louise Whiteside

“If you think that’s funny, wait till you hear what I saw yesterday.”

“That’s too bad, but it’s nothing compared to what happened to me.”

“Boy, can I ever top your story!”

## DO THESE RESPONSES REMIND YOU OF SOMEONE IN YOUR LIFE?

Now, think of someone whose company you really enjoy. Is this a person with whom you’re comfortable sharing your feelings? Can you cry on this person’s shoulder when necessary? Can the two of you laugh together?

I’d be willing to bet that the person you’ve chosen has one essential trait: being a good listener.

To me, one of the most important attributes in a friend or family member is the ability to listen. I want to know, when I’m speaking, that this person really hears what I’m saying, really knows and cares how I feel, and is able to respond appropriately and sensitively.

A longtime friend, whom I recently re-encountered at a high school reunion, brought to mind the importance of being listened to. It may have been less evident to me in the days when we were both teens, but it’s quite clear to me now that this friend is a very poor listener. During our recent encounter, whenever I attempted to share something, I found that she was snatching the conversation away from me and making it all about her. My words seemed to whiz past her like lightening, the moment I spoke them, and I became her captive audience. It felt as though most of our visit was spent listening to her.

At this point in my life, this type of one-sided conversation is difficult to tolerate for long. It’s far more satisfying to walk away from an encounter with the feeling that I’ve been heard and cared about.

Are you able to let people know that you really hear what they are really saying? Or are you in too much of a hurry to say what’s of most concern to you? Can you allow someone’s communication, at the moment it’s delivered, to be your highest priority?

What follows are a few hints for developing good listening skills. Even the most empathetic of us can benefit from a little advice:

### BODY LANGUAGE

A sure-fire way to reveal your attention (or inattention) is with your nonverbal, or body language. For example:

Your facial expression says a lot. Let your face reflect what the speaker is saying: frown if she’s sad, smile if she’s happy.

Keep your eyes on your speaker. Eye contact lets the person know, not only that you’re listening, but that she has your full attention.

Nod your head. This shows that you’re attentive and empathizing with your speaker. Nodding doesn’t necessarily convey agreement; it merely says that you’re hearing and understanding.

Turn off the electronics. Your speaker knows that you’re less than concerned if you’re reading a text while she’s speaking. Start the conversation with, “Let me put this away while we talk.”

Lean forward. A forward-leaning position shows interest and sends the message, “You can trust me.”

Face the speaker. People are more apt to disclose things when you’re facing them. Even a slight turn away from your speaker communicates a lack of interest.

Remove barriers. Folded arms indicate a lack of concern. Unfold your arms and put down your book or coffee cup.

### VERBAL COMMUNICATION

A good listener also shows with her voice that she is attending to her speaker.

Give affirmation. Words like “Yes,” or “I hear you,” or even “Uh-huh,” at appropriate times, are distinct signals that you’re giving complete attention.

Relevant questioning, such as, “How did that make you feel?” or “What do you think about that?” gives your speaker the impression that her thoughts are important to you.

### PLAIN OLD SILENCE

Let your speaker finish her thoughts before you respond. Your intuition will tell you when she’s through speaking. Avoid interrupting. Breaking into someone’s discourse is not only rude, but is a red light to your speaker that you think something else is more important.

Finally, think of your good listening skills as a wonderful gift to your speaker. Good listening is the best way to instill trust. It also makes you lots more fun to be with!

### REFERENCE

Wood, Patti, MA. Snap: Making the Most of First Impressions, Body Language, and Charisma. New World Library (2012) Access at PattyWood.net

Remember – the expert in anything was once a beginner.



# MILESTONE BIRTHDAYS & EVENTS LET'S VIEW THEM WITH JOY!

By Joanne R. Alloway

If you thought turning 50 or 60 or even 70 hit you hard, you are not alone! Yes, it is just another number, but it does signify starting another decade and looking back at the last decade to see if we accomplished all of our hoped-for goals. On the practical side, however, if we don't have that milestone birthday, we aren't on this earth to worry about it! My dear friend stressed so much over her 70th birthday, I became interested in this idea -- reading blogs online and articles so I could cheer her up. I learned that we must accept these milestone birthdays, but we have alternatives to thinking "blue."

Birthdays are for *celebrating* the day we were born. People, families and cultures do this differently, so it's no surprise that someone from a family who had low-key birthdays wouldn't want a big fuss when observing a milestone. Conversely, a family that had birthdays, which included grand celebrations, might welcome a lot of fanfare for their milestone party. This doesn't mean they are at ease about the future or a not-so-perfect past decade.

Typically the milestone birthdays are: First Birthday, Sweet 16, 18, 21, 30, 40, 50, 60, 65, 70, 80, 90 and 100. I recall telling my friend that her age had nothing to do with how anyone values her, now or in the future.

There are also milestone wedding anniversaries at 25, 50 and 75 years. These are truly landmarks, and are often celebrated with as many of the same participants from the original wedding day as possible. Of course, all birthdays, anniversaries, graduations and important events in our lives are personal milestones. But as Rose Kennedy wisely said, "Life isn't a matter of milestones, but of moments."

In a *USA Today* article, Barb Beggoetz has written that most who are approaching milestone events think about how life is progressing -- or not progressing -- and it is that thought that causes them to become somewhat depressed. It's not so much about the new milestone, but about what has not been achieved and was hoped or planned for prior to it. Beggoetz says that as people reach those higher-numbered birthdays -- 70 or 80 -- it's good to celebrate with birthday cake, but also to extol one's accomplishments and plan to do or learn something new. This keeps the spirit up and the mind sharp. She stresses being happy with yourself at all ages. At older ages people gain wisdom, experience and the journey -- things younger people cannot learn online. Beggoetz highlights women's milestone birthday stories

-- from age 21 to over 65 -- at [www.usatoday.com/story/news/nation/2013/07/14/milestone-birthdays-worth-celebrating-not-lamenting/2514801](http://www.usatoday.com/story/news/nation/2013/07/14/milestone-birthdays-worth-celebrating-not-lamenting/2514801)

Here are some ideas for celebrating milestone events from writer Suzanne Hadley Gosselin:

- Get out of town
- Take on a new challenge
- Always be with others
- Reach out to help others
- Give thanks

She describes these in the blog, "Boundless," at [www.boundless.org/blog/5-celebrate-milestone-birthday/](http://www.boundless.org/blog/5-celebrate-milestone-birthday/)

Even after this, my friend was still blue; I'd never known her to be so quiet or withdrawn socially. Then I read Frederique Murphy's blog, "Mountain Moving Mindset." She believes these milestone birthday "blues" are no different than managing the blues from any other major event. The key to deal with "anticlimax" in your situation is not to avoid it, but to embrace it and therefore manage it. This makes good sense. If you've worked hard to get that promotion and finally you do -- there is a little let down. After all, it is just another position! But instead of letting the blues get you down, embrace it and tell yourself you've earned this position and you want it. Same with birthdays and other life events. Murphy says if you don't deal with your anticlimax, you'll hinder your future success. Her article offers practical ways to do this at <http://frederiquemurphy.com/how-to-manage-your-blues/>

The day before and the day after my friend's 70<sup>th</sup> birthday, I told her she'd still be the same person! She was numb. Finally, right before her party, I asked her to think about all the positive people, things and places in her life that she loves. There were many. She admitted they were gifts from God. I suggested she focus on these wonderful thoughts and not on something she could not control. We also chatted about others who were 70 and doing admirably. We should *celebrate* each birthday -- it is a gift.

*Joanne is a nonfiction writer who has published two books that are available on Amazon.com She can be reached at [jrwrite@aol.com](mailto:jrwrite@aol.com)*

Your story isn't over yet.

# THE IMPORTANCE OF AN EYE EXAMINATION TO DETECT OTHER HEALTH CONDITIONS

By Michael J. Dodd, MD

Can an eye examination detect general health disorders or disease? The short answer is, often. So here are some of the common health conditions which can be detected by an eye examination.

Diabetes mellitus is a metabolic disorder which is very common in the United States. At least three or four times a year, I diagnose diabetes in a patient who has no idea they have the condition. An examination of the retina of the eyes, after using dilating drops, will show small hemorrhages or tiny white spots known as exudates. These signs are most commonly seen in diabetic patients. A blood study of the blood glucose will confirm the diagnosis.

Another sign of diabetes is double vision (diplopia), usually horizontally. This is caused by poor circulation to the nerve which innervates one of the horizontal eye muscles. In adults, the sudden onset of diplopia is often caused by diabetes.

The inspection of the retina is one of the most important parts of an eye examination. It is the only place in the human body where the blood vessels can be inspected in their natural state. Patients with hypertension (high blood pressure) often exhibit signs in the retina. Typically there is narrowing of the retinal blood vessels, or exudates, and rarely, swelling of the optic nerve.

Evaluation of the side vision or visual field is an important part of a complete eye examination. Patients who have strokes can lose a part of their side vision. Different patterns of side vision loss can help locate the part of the brain affected by the stroke. For

example, a patient with a stroke which damaged the left side of the brain will lose the right half of the visual field in both eyes.

Evaluation of the pupils is also an important sign of diseases. Normally the pupils are equal in size and get smaller on exposure to light. A poor reaction to light can be a sign of a neurologic disorder. For example, a patient with multiple sclerosis may have a weak response to light in one pupil.

The slit lamp examination utilizes a narrow slit beam of light to allow the doctor to see an optical cross section of the eye tissues. It also magnifies the view by two or three times. Inspection of the cornea (the clear dome-like surface of the eye) can sometimes reveal rare metabolic disorders. Elevated calcium levels in the blood can result in calcium deposits in the cornea and aid in diagnosing the condition. There is a rare metabolic condition called cystinosis, which is characterized by many glistening deposits in the corneal tissue. Diabetic patients will often develop a particular type of cataract which may be the first sign of diabetes and can only be detected using a slit lamp.

All these examples reveal how important an eye examination can be, not only to determine eye health, but to detect other health conditions. If you are over 40, get an eye exam every two years; if over 60, get checked yearly.

*Dr. Dodd is a practicing ophthalmologist at Maryland Eye Associates located in Annapolis and Prince Frederick, as well as an instructor at the University of Maryland Department of Ophthalmology. He can be reached at 410.224.4550 or mjmdm1@gmail.com*

## Bay Bytes

There are options available for medical problems. For the latest in what's available, log onto [www.news-medical.net](http://www.news-medical.net)

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# Pet Safety Tips For the Holiday Season

By Barbara Aiken

The wonder and joy of a pet make your days more pleasurable and memorable. And during the holiday season, you should take extra care to keep your friend safe and healthy. Thanksgiving, Christmas and New Year's are holidays filled with rich food, gifts, noise and decorations. Any of these holiday traditions can be harmful to your pet. At a time when your focus is far flung, you need to keep both eyes on your family pet. Look at it as your seasonal gift to them.

If you are a new pet owner, you have a lot to learn. This time of year brings its own set of concerns, especially for a kitten or puppy. I would advise that no one bring a new animal into their home during this festive season. There's too much excitement, too many parties, too much of everything to properly integrate a new addition to your home. The mix of a new furry friend and the holidays can be lethal.

Here are a few suggestions for keeping your friend – new or old -- safe and healthy this holiday season.

## Food:

1. Beware of any food that may fall to the floor. Your pet will likely grab it up before you can intervene to avert a potential health crisis.
2. Don't feed your pet from the table—ever. This will cause begging which will become a nuisance. Ask your guests not to feed your pet.
3. Rich and unfamiliar foods can cause upset stomachs and even pancreatitis. Chocolate, raisins, grapes, onions, garlic, alcohol and walnuts are among the foods that may be toxic to your pet. There are many other potentially dangerous foods; a comprehensive list can be found on the Humane Society of the United States website at [www.humanesociety.org](http://www.humanesociety.org)
4. Watch those countertops and tabletops as well as trash cans. Easily accessible food is an irresistible temptation for your pet. Keep trash well covered and take out full trash bags regularly.

## Plants and Decorations:

1. The Christmas tree, poinsettias, mistletoe and holly, among other things, can pose a threat to your buddy. Some are poisonous to cats and dogs. Dry pine needles, if swallowed, can injure or pierce your pet's intestines.

2. Be sure your Christmas tree is well secured to prevent it being upended by a curious animal. Consider leaving ornaments off the lower limbs to avert enticement.
3. Keep watch on strings of lights and extension cords. Puppies and kittens in particular may find them an interesting chew toy with dire consequences.
4. Tinsel, artificial snow, edible decorations such as garlands of cranberries and popcorn, can cause intestinal blockages for your pet. No one wants to wind up in the emergency hospital.
5. Beware of candles placed on tabletops where Rover may inadvertently swish his tail or kitty may pounce, causing a catastrophe. Try battery-operated candles in areas that may not be pet-proof.

## Noise, Visitors and Quiet Time:

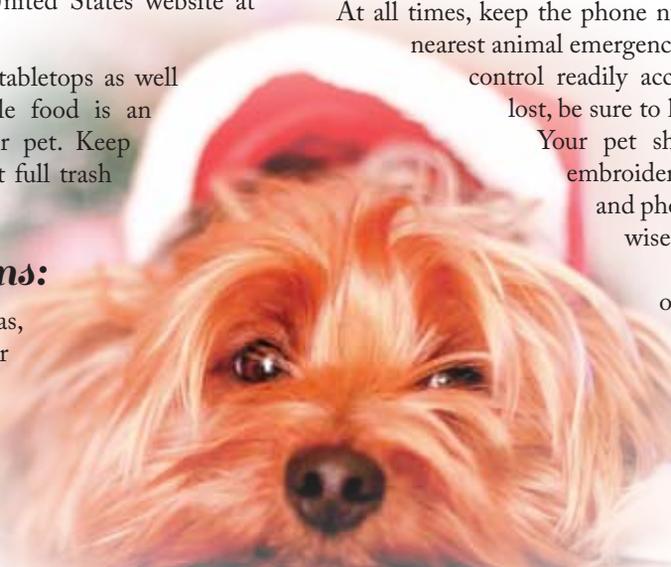
1. New Year's is often rung in with noisemakers, the pop of champagne corks and even the boom of fireworks. Your cat or dog may be alarmed by these unaccustomed sounds. Be sure there is a safe and quiet place for your pet to go when these audibles become unnerving.
2. Determine if your pet is comfortable around loud noises; if they're not, take the necessary precautions and secure your friend in a comfortable and familiar area until the excitement has waned. Some animals will bolt from fright. You don't want a lost friend at this or any other time of year.
3. Parties, visitors and house guests all can stress your pet. Try to keep their routine as normal as possible to help keep them calm.

At all times, keep the phone numbers of your veterinarian, nearest animal emergency hospital and animal poison control readily accessible. In case your pet is lost, be sure to have a recent photo on hand.

Your pet should always wear a collar embroidered or tagged with their name and phone number. A microchip is a wise addition to their safety.

During this festive time of year, look out for your best friend.

*Barbara has been around animals all her life, including horses, sheep, cattle, chickens, rabbits, dogs and cats. She can be reached at [barbara.s.aiken@gmail.com](mailto:barbara.s.aiken@gmail.com)*



# Staying Friends with Your Child's Ex

By Leah Lancione

Unfortunately, in this day and age, with close to 50 percent of marriages ending in divorce, it's very possible that you have an ex-daughter- or son-in-law. So, what do you do? Cut all ties or remain civil but detached? Some experts actually say it is OK, even healthy, if you continue your relationship with your ex-daughter or son-in-law, especially for the sake of your grandkids.

The American Grandparents Association (AGA) has suggested, "Just because your child's marriage didn't work, it doesn't mean you're out of the picture." The details of the divorce, i.e., who's idea it was, whether it was amicable or decided mutually, etc., will likely influence whether you *want* to be in the picture or not, or whether you have defined what the nature of your relationship will be. For instance, if you were close with your daughter-in-law before the divorce and the marriage was ended harmoniously, it may not be too difficult to remain supportive and friendly. On the other hand, if the divorce was a unilateral decision or necessary due to infidelity or another negative factor, your loyalty will surely be with your daughter or son and preclude you from wanting to be close with their former spouse.

"Divorce isn't easy on anyone in the family," AGA says, "and grandparents are no exception. The hurt feelings, sadness and anger that erupt can threaten—and potentially destroy—even the most harmonious and loving family relationships."

It is important, though, to remember that despite the fractured relationship between you and your child's ex, you want to preserve your bond with your grandkids. Therefore, you have to at least make an effort to be genial. That ex-daughter- or son-in-law will always be connected in some manner because they are still a parent to those grandkids. Not to mention, your grandkids need all the support and stability they can get during and after such a turbulent life change. Your daughter or son and their former spouse need to try to align with you, your spouse and the other set of grandparents to form a united front for the grandchildren. Everyone must agree to do what's best for the grandkids.

The AGA offers the following tips for "creating a more harmonious relationship" with children's exes:

- First check in with your child. Make sure your son or daughter approves of you contacting the former spouse.
- Make the first move. Regardless of who might be at fault or who initiated the divorce, the dissolution of a marriage is painful for everyone involved. A call, an email, or even hand written note, to admit you're sorry things didn't work out may go a long way in setting the stage for a future relationship.

- Make sure your ex-son or daughter-in-law knows you're not blaming anyone and that despite the divorce, you respect them as the parent of your grandchild.
- Provide practical help. Since the ex is now a single-parent, offer to make a meal, help with transportation for grandchildren, or anything that might lessen their load and make them feel you're there for support.
- Be patient and empathetic. Remember that new relationships take time and that there are hurt or angry feelings involved. Try not to hold a grudge yourself or be critical of one parent over the other, especially in front of the grandchildren.
- Get help. Instead of reprimanding or venting to your child or their former spouse, talk to a therapist, friend or someone who can help you sort out your frustration and disappointment.

The self-help book *Your Child's Divorce: What to Expect... What You Can Do* by Marsha Temlock is another good resource for navigating the stormy waters of divorce. Divided into three parts: "Accepting the Decision," "Dealing with Change" and "Strengthening Family Bonds," the book even has a chapter entitled: "Grandparents as Stabilizers." Temlock shares her shock, confusion and grief experienced after her son's divorce and the coping lessons she learned.

There are also countless resources online that can help grandparents be the role models and support system their grandkids need during and following a divorce. The website [www.divorcesource.com](http://www.divorcesource.com) outlines grandparents' rights and [www.divorcewizards.com](http://www.divorcewizards.com) also provides "Ten Ways to Help Your Grandchild Through a Divorce." During this time, even more than before, your grandchildren need you to be their confidant.

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# LOOKING FOR SOME MENTAL HEALTH? *Start Meditating*

By Kater Leatherman

It's quite possible that some people would rather pay taxes than meditate. This is probably because meditation requires stillness and being present, something we humans are just not hard-wired for.

So, what is meditation? Basically, it is a practice to help reduce mental chatter and rest the mind. A regular practice will also increase self-awareness, improve concentration and reduce stress. All good stuff. But maybe even more beneficial is that you are training your mind to be less reactive when faced with life's many challenges.

Many years ago, yoga poses were practiced before meditation so that the body could be limber enough to get into the lotus pose. Lotus pose elongates the spine to encourage proper breathing. If you are seated with your legs crossed and feet placed on the opposing thighs, you are in lotus pose. However, most of us can't do it.

Not to worry. If crossed legs hurt your knees or hips, then stretch your legs out with your back against a wall or sit in a chair that has sufficient back support. Find a quiet place where you can sit comfortably every day, even if it's for five minutes. Remember it's not a way of being until it is a developed skill.

Avoid expectations. Let go of your practice of it being another goal-driven exercise. Otherwise, your focus will be on waiting or wanting something to happen. For a while, nothing may happen.

Instead, let your practice be an exploration in stillness. Before settling down, reduce distractions by silencing your phone and any other noise. The busyness of the mind will be enough to deal with.

Begin to follow your breath. Thoughts are guaranteed because our minds have a natural tendency to disconnect from the moment. Keep coming back to your breath. Think of thoughts such as clouds moving through the sky of your mind. Just notice them without attachment. The present moment is always waiting for you, it's just a matter of stepping into it by returning to your breath.

Initially, when you begin to implement any kind of change, the mind will rebel; it doesn't want to be disciplined or controlled. Some days, meditation will be a "peace" of cake. Other days, it will be impossible to keep it quiet and still. Such is life.

It is only by paying attention in a relaxed and attended way that more will be revealed.

Give meditation a chance and keep it really simple. If it creates a more calm, clear and aware mind, then it is worth a few minutes of your time every day.

*Kater recently published her third book, [The Paper Diet: What you gain by reducing excess paper](#). Visit her website at [www.katerleatherman.com](http://www.katerleatherman.com) or email [katerleatherman@gmail.com](mailto:katerleatherman@gmail.com)*

## *Bay Bytes*

For a comprehensive list of all the holiday events that are taking place in Washington, D.C., log onto <https://washington.org/find-dc-listings/dc-events>

## *Bay Bytes*

Any last-minute questions on preparing your holiday bird? Log onto [www.butterball.com](http://www.butterball.com) **contact-us** or call 800.288.8372. They're available for questions even on the holidays.

# Change Up Your Holiday Bird Preparation

By Louise Whiteside

Can you count the number of times that you've eaten the same holiday dinner? For me, it was oven-roasted turkey with cornbread stuffing and giblet gravy. For you, it was oven-roasted turkey with a traditional stuffing and a traditional gravy. If you know how many times you've had that same Thanksgiving or Christmas dinner, my guess is your age was about the right number. Well, tradition is tradition, and you may still prefer to feast on the classic holiday bird, bursting with stuffing and roasted to perfection under a butter-soaked cheesecloth. Nothing wrong with that. However, if you're in the mood to try a few innovative cooking techniques and new taste experiences, here are some alternative suggestions for preparing that celebrated holiday fowl.

## Deep-frying

A technique that started in the South, it has now become immensely popular nationwide. Rather than producing a greasy turkey, the deep-frying process seals the outside, yielding a deliciously juicy bird with a crispy skin. Deep-frying equipment suitable for both indoor and outdoor cooking is available at local hardware and department stores. A few rules of thumb to keep in mind when deep-frying a turkey:

- A bird weighing no more than 14 pounds is best for deep-frying.
- Do not stuff the bird.
- Make sure the bird is completely dry before immersing it in hot oil.
- Many chefs recommend injecting a turkey with a seasoned marinade.
- Cooking times are very short for deep frying, about three minutes per pound.
- Keep a fire extinguisher handy for either indoor or outdoor deep-frying.
- Be careful to follow the manufacturer's directions for the equipment you use.

## Slow-cooking

For a tasty, juicy turkey this holiday season, and to save oven space and time, cook your holiday bird in your slow cooker. In most cases you'll need either a small turkey or a large Crock-Pot. A slow-cooked turkey may be stuffed before cooking. Rub a layer of olive oil on the bird; then dry-rub it inside and out with your favorite seasonings, including salt and pepper. For the best flavor, season a bird 24 hours in advance of cooking. Place vegetables around the bird, if desired, and begin cooking at the high setting. Internal temperature of a fully cooked bird should be 180 degrees. No basting is necessary, but if you wish to have a crisp top, baste once or twice with whole cream or egg whites.

## Grilling

Your bird on a gas or charcoal grill will keep it moist and flavorful, giving it that wonderful taste

of charcoal or wood chips. Before grilling, inject the bird with the marinade of your choice or mix together:

- 6 Tbs. chicken stock
- 1 Tbs. bourbon
- 1 Tbs. Cajun seasoning

Season the inside of both cavities with Cajun seasoning or salt and pepper. Set up your grill for indirect grilling, with the heat source off to one side, rather than directly under the food. Place the bird breast side up, with a drip pan underneath, cover the grill and cook until the skin is nicely browned and the internal temperature is 180 degrees. Cover with aluminum foil if the

bird is browning too quickly. Let it rest 10 minutes before carving.

Other alternatives you may want to explore include rotisserie cooking, smoking and pit cooking.

If you're experimenting with a new cooking method – and you have the time – give it a trial run: Deep-fry a chicken or a smaller piece of meat in advance, and let your family test it out before the big day.

Try out some unusual rubs or marinades. Have fun and be creative; your holiday dinner may never be the same.

## Helpful Websites

- [www.gumbopages.com/food/poultry/fried-turk.html](http://www.gumbopages.com/food/poultry/fried-turk.html)
- [www.eatturkey.com/consumer/cookinfo/fryturk.html](http://www.eatturkey.com/consumer/cookinfo/fryturk.html)
- [www.ehow.com/how\\_2110201\\_cook-turkey-crock-pot.html](http://www.ehow.com/how_2110201_cook-turkey-crock-pot.html)
- <http://recipes.howstuffworks.com/how-to-cook-a-turkey2.htm>

## References

Raichlen, Steven. Steven Raichlen's BBQ USA: 425 Fiery Recipes from All Across America. New York: Workman Publishing Co., Inc. (2003)



# BLUE CHRISTMAS

By Leslie Basil Payne

As children the holiday season of Christmas and Hanukkah were absolute magic, weren't they? It was probably all the anticipation as much as the actual events, but the possibilities of things to celebrate seemed endless. No school, special worship services, menorahs and dreidels, Christmas-themed television specials, visiting relatives, gifts, sweets and maybe even snow!

Even now several items on that list still bring a sense of hopeful expectation, yet this most wonderful time of year can also give us the blues. The most obvious case of the blues is Elvis Presley's infamous "Blue Christmas." I need only hear the musical intro and in my mind I'm back in college. Whenever the song came on the radio, Carol and I sang the octave jumping "Ew-Ew-ew-Oh-ohs" while our other roommate Mary used her hairbrush as a microphone and sang the lead. We'd sing at the top of our lungs until the song ended and we collapsed into giggles. Whoever heard of feeling blue at Christmas anyway?

Decades later that thought is not so amusing. Over the years, parents, friends and other relatives have departed this earth and left us behind. Sometimes feeling blue and missing loved ones during the holidays is reality. Often, grief increases during the holidays as advertisers insist this should be the hap-happiest season of all. Not so.

There are ways to deal with this inconvenient grief. One method is the "stay in bed until next year" style of grief management. While it will protect you from constant in-your-face holiday happiness, you might end up with a dreadful case of bed head. Perhaps there's a better plan.

Hospice organizations and some local churches offer special events for those of us grieving during the holidays. After my father's death weeks before the holidays, I discovered grief care at the Hospice of the Chesapeake. Through a support group, I learned I wasn't alone in my journey. I made new friends, felt a sense of support and community. Besides not being alone I learned a few other things when dealing with grief during the holiday season:

- Take care of yourself. Get plenty of sleep; this season can be physically and emotionally draining. Intentionally eat healthy foods. Exercise daily. Be sure to have some time alone, yet don't isolate yourself.
- Avoid additional stress. Don't feel obligated to do things just because you did them in the past. Ask for help and

support in specific ways from friends and family. Avoid people who drain you.

- Be kind to yourself, give yourself grace when you're having a difficult time. And at other times, don't be afraid to laugh and enjoy the holidays. Every day is a gift.
- More recently I discovered another way to take care of grief during the holidays. College Parkway Baptist Church offers a "Blue Christmas" service for anyone experiencing a loss. It's a beautifully designed service offering a safe place for holiday grief.

"Christmas is full of spiritual richness, cherished traditions and meaningful family memories," says CPB's pastor, the Rev. Dr. Patrick DeVane. "Yet the holidays can also hold hurt and loneliness remembering loved ones who have died. Blue Christmas services provide a safe place to pause and grieve during a season associated with activity and joy. The service allows time and space to be sad during the happiest time of the year."

In past years the service, which is less than an hour long, has included soothing music, candles, scripture reading, a time for personal reflection and a brief homily. There was also a unique gift for each participant, such as an ornament or bell – a tangible reminder of the time spent to quietly honor the one you miss so much. Attending a Blue Christmas service doesn't remove your loss, but it does affirm what's most important in life and the reason for the season. Though it's a different sort of holiday magic from when you were a child, if a *Blue Christmas* service is what you need now, give yourself the gift of attending. Arrive anticipating a peaceful service, and leave hope for the days ahead.

*Leslie's novel The Legacy of Nobody Smith partially set in Annapolis and Severna Park, is now available. Contact her at [www.LeslieBasilPayne.com](http://www.LeslieBasilPayne.com)*

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301 COLLEGE PARKWAY,  
ARNOLD, MD 21012

FOR INFORMATION, GO TO  
[COLLEGEPARKWAYBAPTIST.NET](http://COLLEGEPARKWAYBAPTIST.NET)

410.647.5594

## RECOMMENDED BOOKS ON GRIEF:

*Don't Take My Grief Away: What To Do When You Lose A Loved One*, by Doug W. Manning  
*How To Survive The Loss Of A Parent: A Guide For Adults*, by Lois F. Akner  
*A Tearful Celebration: Finding God in the Midst of Loss*, by James Means

# Tips for Creating & Keeping Traditions

By Leah Lancione

Baking and decorating sugar cookies during the Christmas season, dyeing eggs at Easter, Sunday family brunches, father-and-son fishing trips or annual reunions are all traditions that unite families. These special moments allow close family members and extended family members, both young and old, to reconnect, which is important in today's fast-paced world.

You may have already instituted family traditions passed down from your parents, but want to initiate new ones to accommodate, and maybe even energize, what now makes up your family. Maybe the grandkids are becoming more distant with age and their own demanding social, academic and recreation schedules. Maybe your grown kids or extended family have become so preoccupied with their careers that visits are few and far between. Or maybe now that you're retired and able to ponder your past (and all its life lessons), you want to link it to the present and future. Traditions are a great way to do just that.

Some experts confirm the importance of family traditions and recommend when introducing a new one that all members take part in the planning process. For example, says psychiatrist Abigail Brenner in a *Psychology Today* article, if the new tradition is a family road trip once a year, "what's important is that each family member has an opportunity to weigh in on where the family should go. Family trips can also have themes, such as ecology, learning about the environment, working on a farm or ranch, or 'service trips' such as helping a community at home or abroad."

Recurring family meetings create a forum for communication and unity. Letting everyone have a chance to express their feelings, compare schedules, discuss current events, or just "shoot the breeze," keeps families up to date and in tune with everybody's needs, Brenner says. "Family traditions are part of the 'language' of a family, a short-hand, symbolic way of relating that everyone understands," she says.

Not to mention, the inner-workings of a family, how the individual members get along, relate to and care for each other, serve as a model for all other relationships beyond the home. A family that provides the proper respect, love and support, establishes the security and stability everyone needs. Traditions can help reaffirm this necessary support and harmony.

Family traditions can and often center on holidays when individuals either have the time to, or naturally want to spend time with each other. For instance, my grandmother always prepared a special Christmas Eve dinner for everyone that represented the



**What may have been strange to us as youngsters now carries tremendous significance.**

12 apostles. What may have been strange to us as youngsters now carries tremendous significance. We anxiously awaited the meal that was prepared and served with great attention to detail and love.

Jodie, a 60-something office manager, admits longing for the weekly family dinners she spent at her grandparents' house growing up. "It was the same meal every week: fried chicken, lumpy mashed potatoes, gravy, corn and the best chef salad with homemade dressing. I wish I had that recipe. I dream about that

dressing!" she confesses. Decades have gone by and yet those memories are fresh in her mind. "Family gatherings in today's world just don't happen as often because people don't have the time," laments Jodie, who says she tries her best just to get her kids and grandkids together on a regular basis.

The traditions can be as simple as a weekly meal or elaborate gatherings. Some of the most special traditions, however, are unique and quirky. The more peculiar probably the better, since youngsters these days tend to appreciate anything slightly bizarre. For example, my grandfather used to have my father and my two aunts wash their hands in old money (silver dollars to be exact) every New Year's Day to represent health and wealth for the year to come.

Not so out of the ordinary, but a tradition cherished by my kids and their grandparents is something called "way back ice-cream." This daily or thrice-weekly tradition involves grandpa loading all the sandy kiddos into his SUV after a day at the beach to order soft-serve ice cream cones at a drive-through using his 10 percent off senior discount. Without fail, as soon as the surfboards, boogie boards or sand toys are loaded into the trunk, the grandkids yell, "WAY BACK ICE CREAM!"

Whatever the tradition is that you hope to start, take a good look at your family, what each member is interested in, as well as ages and personalities so the new ritual can be an activity that defines your special clan. Dr. Susan Coady of **Genealogy.com** says "traditions are family-specific" and encourages folks to put their own stamp on the way they celebrate occasions or family events. So, have fun, get everyone involved, and don't be afraid to try something different and unique.

# RELIEVING STRESS: Mindful Meditation and a Labyrinth

By Nancy J. Schaaf

Today's world is hectic. Although living in the beautiful Chesapeake Bay area, with its sunshine, warm temperatures and water views, we cannot escape stress in our lives. In addition to our daily life stressors, there are hurricanes, the economy, road rage, mass shootings and terrorism, all of which contribute to our stress levels. If stress becomes overpowering, it is detrimental to our well-being.

Research on mindful meditation indicates that it has the potential to make positive differences in the lives of seniors. It is a way of viewing life and of being in the present. People who practice mindful meditation say that they feel happier and experience less stress.

Meditation has helped many seniors and others ease chronic pain, anxiety, stress, improve heart health and boost mood and immunity. "Any condition that is caused by stress can be alleviated through meditation," says cardiologist Herbert Benson, MD, the founder of the Mind/Body Institute at Harvard Medical School's Beth Israel Deaconess Medical Center. In his book, *Relaxation Revolution* (1984), he says "more than 30 years of research shows that the relaxation response brings slower breathing, a slower heart rate, and lower blood pressure. Any practice that can evoke the relaxation response is of benefit, be it meditation, yoga, breathing or repetitive prayer. There is no reason to believe that one is better than the other. The key is repetition, but the repetition can be a word, sound, mantra, prayer, breathing or movement."

Medical science has long known the benefits of physical activity. A

daily walk can help us live a healthier life because it improves coordination and balance by building strong bones and muscles and helps maintain a desirable weight. Our mood improves due to the release of natural endorphins. Walking improves our sleep and can prevent or manage such conditions as heart disease, high blood pressure and type 2 diabetes.

Meditation has been practiced for thousands of years and is commonly used for relaxation and stress reduction. While meditating, we focus our mind and eliminate the jumbled thoughts often referred to as "monkey mind." There are several emotional benefits to meditation. By achieving this calm inner peace, we can build skills to manage stress, can focus more on the present and can reduce negative emotions.

In his research at the Harvard institute, Benson has found "that focused walking meditations are highly efficient at reducing anxiety and eliciting the 'relaxation response,' which has significant long-term health benefits." These benefits include lowering blood pressure and breathing rates, reduced incidents of

chronic pain, reduction of insomnia, and with regular meditative practice, an increase in concentration abilities.

A walking meditation involving a labyrinth can provide mental, physical and spiritual comfort. The labyrinth is a centuries-old art that has roots in the ancient cultures of the Mayans, Celts, Greeks and Native Americans. A labyrinth is a sacred path that follows a specific design. It is a powerful means of engaging our spirits while offering a period of time for reflection. Each individual's walk is a personal experience. The reasons one walks can be to clear the mind, to reflect or to enter with a question or a problem for which you seek a solution. By walking these ancient sacred pathways that follow a spiritual design, we meditate and focus on the present. We become enlightened as we focus on this calming journey.

## How to Walk a Labyrinth

1. The first part is called purgation. During this step, think of what is causing stress as you begin the walk.
2. The second phase is called illumination. This occurs at the center of the labyrinth. Stop and listen and breathe.
3. The third phase is called union. This is when you return to the entrance refreshed and perhaps with the answers you seek.

### Bay Bytes

To check out any of the charities that you donate to, log onto: [www.givewell.org](http://www.givewell.org) or [www.charitynavigator.com](http://www.charitynavigator.com)

Labyrinths, which are regaining popularity, are found in spas, retreats, museums, churches, hospitals and in public parks. It is a remarkable tool allowing a person to quiet the mind, find balance and encourage meditation and insight into one's soul.

Why utilize a labyrinth when perhaps a walk around the neighborhood will offer the same physical health benefits? When walking in a neighborhood, there are many distractions including neighbors, the uneven sidewalk and animals, which can take away our focus and causing us to return to the "monkey mind" of muddled thoughts. By using a labyrinth, we follow a distinct path, not bothered with distractions and can focus our thoughts more easily.

There are studies and research on the benefits of the labyrinth walk. Many anecdotal stories attest to people feeling calmer and more at peace and less stressed after completing a labyrinth walk. By walking, we relieve some of the physical stresses and the meditation is a means of calming our inner spirits. *Veriditas*, the prominent authority regarding labyrinths, explains on the organization's website, "Labyrinths are currently being used worldwide as a way to quiet the mind, recover

a balance in life and encourage meditation, insight, self-reflection, stress reduction and to discover innovation and celebration."

Those in the Chesapeake Bay area are fortunate to have several labyrinths available for a walking meditation. A walking meditation using a labyrinth is an exceptional method to combine the benefits of physical exercise with the calming, stress-reducing effects of meditation. It presents a tool for us to seek peace, to bring a sense of calm by walking its circular pathways. Numerous people are on a quest seeking ways to augment their spirituality. Many have found the

**Labyrinths in the Annapolis Area**

- Trinitas, Annapolis [www.trinitasvoce.com](http://www.trinitasvoce.com)
- Maryland Hall for the Creative Arts [www.marylandhall.org](http://www.marylandhall.org)
- St. Luke's Episcopal Church, Annapolis [www.stlukeseastport.org](http://www.stlukeseastport.org)
- Our Anchor Presbyterian Church, Annapolis [www.christouranchorpc.org](http://www.christouranchorpc.org)

labyrinth. It is a sacred place for one to experience a oneness with the universe. For more information log onto [www.veriditas.org](http://www.veriditas.org) or [www.labyrinthociety.org](http://www.labyrinthociety.org)

*Nancy is a retired registered nurse, educator and writer. She can be reached at [nanjan30@hotmail.com](mailto:nanjan30@hotmail.com)*



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A woman in a red shirt is holding a book, with her hands visible on the pages. The background is softly blurred, showing a wooden table and a vase with flowers.

# BOOKS:

## *Old, New and Obscure*

### **TATTOOS ON THE HEART: THE POWER OF BOUNDLESS COMPASSION**

By Gregory Boyle  
Simon & Schuster (2010)

In *Tattoos on the Heart: The Power of Boundless Compassion*, Father Gregory Boyle recounts his experiences running Homeboy Industries, “one of the largest, most comprehensive and most successful gang intervention, rehabilitation and reentry programs in the country.” Through his retelling of interchanges with former Los Angeles gang members—some incarcerated, some not, but all struggling to survive—readers can realize the significance of spreading compassion to everyone. He describes the “expansive heart of God” that sees everyone’s mistakes, forgives and gives second chances.

The second chances afforded by Homeboy Industries were jobs. What started out as “Jobs for a Future” in 1988, a program through Dolores Mission Church, the poorest parish in Los Angeles where Boyle served as a Jesuit priest (1982-1992), evolved into Homeboy Industries. Homeboy Industries now offers services ranging from tattoo removal, job training, job seeker workshops, mental health and legal aid, anger management and parenting classes, to full-time employment in the form of landscaping, baking, silkscreen and embroidery, catering, etc. For many, these opportunities give former gang members or formerly incarcerated men and women the chance to become “contributing members of the community ([www.homeboyindustries.org](http://www.homeboyindustries.org)).”

Account after account in the book reinforce Boyle’s declaration that “God is just too busy loving us to have any time left for disappointment.” No, he doesn’t advocate being “soft” on crime. Boyle recites a verse from the Gospel of Matthew that says, “How narrow is the gate that leads to life” and explains that people often take the wrong perspective after reading it and think it’s about restriction. Instead, he writes, “Our choice is not to focus on the narrow, but to narrow our focus. The gate that leads to life is ... about an entry into the expansive.”

Perhaps Boyle is encouraging people to embrace like-minded thinking that extends a hand to, instead of discounting, certain individuals such as former drug dealers, gangbangers, felons and other criminals. It can foster change and healing, first at an individual and at the societal level. His premise, based on years of experience ministering to, counseling and employing these individuals, is that they desperately need a sense of self-worth. One of many poignant “parables” recounts how a former gang member, Cesar, after finishing a four-year stint in prison, decides to change his course. Following a trip to the mall to get clothes for job interviews, Cesar calls Father

Greg (G-dog as they call him) in the dead of night to inquire if he viewed him as his son since he always considered G-dog his father since he was a kid. When he answers, “Yes,” Cesar sobs. In that instant, Cesar felt worthy of being loved and called a son.

Throughout the book, “homies” with names like Looney, Sniper, Speedy and Chico ... are representative of the countless men and women who need to encounter what Boyle calls the “no matter whatness” of God that “dissolves the toxicity of shame and fills us with tender mercy.” These people need those of us more fortunate to imitate a God who sees past our imperfections and offers mercy.

As we embark on a season of thanksgiving and togetherness with family, whether you ascribe to the Christian faith or not, there’s no doubt the world could be a better place if everyone opened their eyes to see those in need. The world is full of people who Father Boyle so aptly states, “seem to live in the zip code of the eternally disappointing and need a change of address.” If everybody decides to see beyond their own lives and chooses to adopt a heart of service and benevolence, maybe, just maybe, we can “widen the circle of compassion.”

~ Leah Lancione

### **LISETTE'S LIST**

By Susan Vreeland  
Random House (2014)

Cezanne, Pissarro, Picasso, Chagall. If these names pique your interest, *Lisette's List*, the latest novel by Susan Vreeland, a love story to France and some of the artists of Paris, may be a must-read.

Vreeland is thought to have made her reputation writing novels about famous artists, such as Vermeer in *Girl in Hyacinth Blue*, Renoir in *Luncheon of the Boating Party* and Gentileschi in *The Passion of Artemisia*.

Lisette is a rather spoiled, self-absorbed young woman who is convinced to move to the Provencal village of Roussillon by her beloved husband, Andre. His argument for the move was to be with Pascal, his elderly grandfather, who helped raise him and who wanted to be with his small family in his final days.

The principal characters in the novel are not artists themselves, but art is an important part of all their lives. Andre carves elaborate picture frames. An artistic nun raised Lisette in an orphanage. Lisette has a good eye for art and hoped to work in an art gallery before she moved to Roussillon with her husband. The grandfather, Pascal, has mined ochre, a major pigment in artists' paint and has also made frames for some famous French artists. He was given seven paintings

by Cezanne, Pissarro and Picasso and they now hang in his Roussillon home. (A note here: Susan Vreeland combines real paintings with fictitious works.) Pascal describes to Lisette the conversations he had with each artist so she will appreciate the paintings as much as he does.

Roussillon is a hard town to adjust to for Lisette after life in Paris. There are no flush toilets, the single cafe is reserved for men and there are very few cultural pursuits. Her husband tries to help by building an outhouse with a scenic view for her!

War is on the way in Europe, Pascal dies and Andre goes off to war and leaves Lisette behind. But before he goes, he hides the paintings to protect them from the destructive Nazis.

Here is where the list enters the story. Lisette writes a list, which she calls "Lisette's List of Hungers and Vows." One of the items on the list is to find the missing paintings.

Of course you can guess that Andre, a rather dull character, dies in the war, leaving Lisette to go native, raising a goat and chickens and adopting many of the town's customs. But Paris is always on her mind as the place to which she will return.

One of the main enticements of this novel is Vreeland's beautiful description of the Provence countryside. Lisette and her friend Maxime spend much time exploring it while searching for the pictures. During this time Lisette meets the artist Marc Chagall and his wife, Bella. Since they are Jewish, she smuggles food to them and they reward her with a painting that is created just for her. The Chagalls do manage to escape to Paris.

It is up to the reader to discover if Lisette chooses life in Roussillon or Paris after the war, if she finds the paintings, and if she finds a new love and work in an art gallery. The descriptions of the artists, the paintings and the countryside help make up for the rather bland heroine.

~ Peggy Kiefer

## **THE QUARTET: ORCHESTRATING THE SECOND AMERICAN REVOLUTION, 1783-1789**

By Joseph J. Ellis

Knopf (2015)

A master of American history, Joseph J. Ellis, has produced another thoughtful and thorough analysis of seminal events in the American past. Moving forward from his work, *Founding Brothers, the Revolutionary Generation*, which focused on Adams, Jefferson, Madison, Franklin and Hamilton. *The Quartet* delves into the creation of the United States Constitution, primarily the effort of George Washington, Alexander Hamilton, John Jay and James Madison.

The discussion unfolds with an interlacing of the portraits of each of the principals. For example, Washington had to be coaxed, nay coerced, into agreeing to participate in this most uncertain Congress, which was called to revise—not revoke by replacing—the Articles of Confederation. It was by dint of personal pressure and a promise of success that Madison finally persuaded him. Washington didn't want to squander his time or his reputation on anything other than a success. Although he was convinced that a strong central government held the key to national survival, he questioned whether the time for such an effort had arrived.

John Jay comes to light in this book as a masterful leader. He was respected for honesty and fairness -- liked for his relaxed demeanor. He wrote the New York state constitution and subsequently served as president of the Continental Congress. Ten months in that position convinced him that only a strong central government could enable the country to prosper. As minister to Spain, he helped broker the Treaty of Paris that concluded the Revolutionary War. Fresh from

those efforts abroad, he joined causes with his Southern counterparts to shape the Constitution.

The lives of Madison and Hamilton are equally discussed as Ellis takes us through the daily struggle to formulate the document and then to propagandize for its passage. Once written, it had to be ratified by a minimum of nine states. Timing was critical because the more states that ratified, the greater the pressure was on those remaining. Ellis' account is gripping as the New England states fell into line while the South and New York delayed. Virginia and New York were among six states that offered amendments in the attempt to tailor the document to their particular needs. Massachusetts and Rhode Island had the closest ratification votes, but in 2 1/2 years, from 1787 to 1790, the Constitution was adopted.

The lesson of *The Quartet* is that there truly were two revolutions. The first freed us from monarchy; the second empowered us to function effectively as a democratic nation state. The tale of those who took us there is quietly thrilling.

~ Tricia Herban

## **WAR! WHAT IS IT GOOD FOR?: CONFLICT AND THE PROGRESS OF CIVILIZATION FROM PRIMATES TO ROBOTS**

By Ian Morris

Picador, reprint edition (2015)

This dense and stimulating book will be useful, although not definitive, in helping people concerned about today's world situation to develop a personal vantage point. Morris begins with the dawn of life and continues through the development of speech—a distinguishing feature of humans—and the domestication of grains. He references Jared Diamond's book, *Guns Germs and Steel*, as well as countless others to build his thesis.

Extensive footnotes and bibliographic citations assure the reader that this is a serious work. Nevertheless, pacifists will contest his premise that war is good because it creates safer societies within the boundaries of the extended nation state. Similarly, those who believe in the right self-determination, and those to whom the abuses of war—rape and slavery, for example—will find this premise reprehensible.

One of Morris's other intriguing premises—and there are many—is that countries continue to extend their reach until they overextend and then fail. Ancient Rome is a prime example, but others include the Ottoman Empire, France under Napoleon and Germany under Hitler. He refers to these nations as “globocops.” The United States comes to mind as we fight in far-flung locations for unclear goals using limited weaponry. There is much to ponder.

Statistics Morris uses show that the individual today as an aggregate lives longer, is richer and many times safer than before the advent of the modern era. He describes the “productive wars” that evolved when conquerors allowed their captives to live and become assimilated rather than being slaughtered. Taking this argument one step further, he alleges that nuclear weapons of mass destruction have made the world safer because neither side is willing to risk the destruction of the world.

Clearly, some of these positions are more tenuous than others and for this reason, Morris' book deserves a read. In his concluding paragraph, he quotes a Roman proverb: “Si vis pacem, para bellum.” If you want peace, prepare for war. He continues: “War has made the planet peaceful and prosperous; so peaceful and prosperous, in fact, that war has almost, but not quite, put itself out of business.” Therein lies the rub.

~ Tricia Herban

# Birds in Your Winter Garden

By Leah Lancione

Like every other state, Maryland has birds that migrate to warmer locales for Winter, as well as many that remain and tough out the cold, snow and ice storms. According to *The Backyard Bird Lovers Ultimate How-To Guide*, ice storms are the most dangerous for our fine-feathered friends because the ice cover and frozen ground make it challenging for them to find insects and seeds for food. Starvation is a real threat so it's important to do our part. We can help birds to survive by making our backyards habitable throughout the Winter. In addition to helping the migrating birds that stop along the Atlantic Flyway, bird watchers in Maryland can look forward to year-round residents including northern cardinals, mourning doves, chickadees, wrens, finches, blackbirds, robins, sparrows and even blue jays.

Tips to care for birds during Winter weather include dusting off snow-laden feeders as often as possible and even scattering seed along the ground and anywhere else accessible. Try putting stashes in evergreen or other trees if bird feeders get iced over or snowpacked. In addition, keep your feeders stocked with the food suited to the birds that frequent your backyard. Though the *Starting with Nature Bird Book* acknowledges that birds are experts at keeping warm despite plunging temperatures, early and unexpected snow or ice storms can be dangerous to those that are midway through their migratory journey. Not to mention, some birds may not have fully "fattened" up by the time an early storm hits.

*Bird Watcher's Digest* [www.birdwatchersdigest.com/bwdsite/](http://www.birdwatchersdigest.com/bwdsite/) also suggests using tube feeders to keep seed from getting wet and keeping an extra large dry feeder on hand in the shed or garage to bring out during inclement weather.

Bird food can be found at any grocery store or farm supply stores. The Humane Society ([www.humanesociety.org](http://www.humanesociety.org)) recommends black-oil sunflower seeds that are high in fat and provide significant energy, millet due to its protein content, peanuts for metal mesh tube feeders, suet cakes (vegetarian or nonvegetarian), Nyjer seeds and medium-sized cracked corn. Wild Bird Centers located in the area claim to only sell field-tested and filler-free birdseed.

For those of you who want to nurture your bird-watching proclivities beyond your homestead, consider checking out some of the spots CBS Baltimore (<http://baltimore.cbslocal.com/top-lists/top-winter-bird-watching-spots/>) has selected as "top spots" for doing so in Maryland:

- Eastern Neck Wildlife Refuge (1730 Eastern Neck Road in Rock Hall, [www.fws.gov/refuge/eastern\\_neck/](http://www.fws.gov/refuge/eastern_neck/))

boasts more than 243 bird species and a new "Tubby Cove" boardwalk through the refuge and three trails for visiting bird habitats. Here bird watchers can see tundra swans that migrate from the Arctic to the marshes of the Chesapeake.

- Conowingo Dam (Route 1 crossing of the Susquehanna River, 8 miles north of Havre de Grace in Harford County, [www.harfordbirdclub.org/conowingo.html](http://www.harfordbirdclub.org/conowingo.html)), also an electricity generation plant, features gulls and bald eagles from mid-October through mid-March. This is also home to great blue herons as there is an active heronry on site.
- **Blackwater Wildlife Refuge** (2145 Key Wallace Drive in Cambridge, [www.fws.gov/refuge/Blackwater/](http://www.fws.gov/refuge/Blackwater/)) is 27,000 plus acres of forest, tidal marsh and freshwater ponds. The refuge is acclaimed as "the largest breeding population of bald eagles on the East Coast north of Florida." Visitors will have the opportunity to view nesting and migrant birds including geese, ducks, northern loons, snowy egrets, osprey, great blue herons and the migrant peregrine falcon. A bonus is the option for visitors to check on the osprey and bald eagle nests online from the comfort of their home.
- **Assateague Island National Seashore** (Route 611, eight miles south of Ocean City, [www.nps.gov/asis/index.htm](http://www.nps.gov/asis/index.htm)) is a perfect habitat for migrating and nesting birds including pelicans, gannets, gulls, ducks, wading birds, shore birds and geese. The park offers a variety of ranger-guided programs along the marshes, dunes, forests and bays.

And as a final note, the Department of Natural Resources in Maryland has an excellent site on everything you need to know about birds and other wildlife in Maryland. Log onto [www.dnr.state.md.us/wildlife/Plants\\_Wildlife/birdingmd.asp](http://www.dnr.state.md.us/wildlife/Plants_Wildlife/birdingmd.asp)



Dear Vicki

Dear Vicki

Put it this way: My partner likes a big Christmas. The works. Fancy decorating, cookies, presents coming out of the woodwork. It's fine, but doesn't matter to me that much. Usually she does everything and I figure that's OK since it's important to her. But last year, I retired and she still works. We argued all through last December about me not helping enough. Can't face that again. How do I get her to see that this is not my thing?

Dear Vicki,

This is a sticky situation. My daughter just got through rehab for substance abuse. Her ex-husband is remarried with a stepdaughter and also has custody of my granddaughter. He's a nice guy and I've maintained a good relationship with him. I'm not sure what to do about holiday gifts. We see his stepdaughter (who does not have involved grandparents) from time to time and it doesn't seem right to exclude her. However, our daughter is resentful of his new family and I don't want to give her any reason to relapse. Any advice?

### CHRISTMAS CHORE CONFRONTATION

If you want peace in your household and you want to participate in the celebration, even if it is just to eat a big dinner, you better figure out what you are willing to contribute to the holiday. OK, maybe it's not that important to you, but it is clearly important to your lady. I assume you love her and your relationship is important to you. So you have to decide if you want to be right, (it's not your thing so you shouldn't have to do any work) or if you want to be happy.

That said though, you don't have to agree to turn into Mr. Martha Stewart either. Decide what is in your comfort zone. Come on, give a little on this! Can you wrap presents as you watch the game on television? Let her do the fancy bows while you do the paper. Offer to carry in the groceries, peel the potatoes, take out the trash. Pick a night to go holiday shopping together and reward yourself afterward with dinner at your favorite restaurant. Address and stamp the Christmas cards.

My friend, it is all about compromise. Before the two of you get all tied up in tinsel, decide who is going to do what and see if you can agree to downscale the prep or choose to hire some things out. You don't have to participate in everything, but you do need to contribute something. Otherwise, Santa might have to put you on his naughty list!

*Vicki is a licensed professional counselor and welcomes your questions. She can be reached at Victoria2Write@aol.com*

### HOLIDAY GIFT CONUNDRUM

First I commend you on being a good grandparent and trying to be fair and considerate of all parties. It is a bit of a dance with blended families and too often gift-giving tends to divide and create jealousy rather than bring loved ones closer together.

As far as your daughter goes, part of her recovery from substance abuse will be to deal with her resentment and to forgive both herself and others for past mistakes. She will need to deal with her feelings in an appropriate way through the support systems that I hope she now has in place, i.e., AA and a substance abuse counselor. If she isn't doing that, please encourage her to do so. You are also free to give anyone any gifts without explanation or apology.

Perhaps you might consider giving a gift that all of your former son-in-law's family would enjoy, such as a membership to one of the museums in Baltimore or Washington, D.C., or tickets to a special event. Even a gift certificate for a movie theater would work. I always think that giving gifts that encourage families to do something together is a good choice, but it works particularly well when there is the question of leaving someone feeling left out. If your daughter's custody arrangement allows, you might do a similar thing for her to enjoy with her daughter and perhaps you might join them for additional support. Another inclusive idea is a gift basket full of treats that the whole family can enjoy.

Again, kudos to you for your thoughtfulness!

**HOLIDAY QUIZ-ACROSTIC**  
 Shakespeare is credited with having coined or popularized thousands of words and phrases in common usage today. You will hear "redance" in King Lear, "addition" in Othello, "it was Greek to me" in Julius Caesar, and "one fell swoop" in Macbeth. In what play will you hear "wild-geese chase"?

**ETymology: ROMEO AND JULIET**

A. English sonnet  
 L. Mocha  
 B. Take a cold shower  
 M. Eucalyptus  
 C. Tuppity  
 N. Oedipostemonous  
 D. Michael Rodgrave  
 O. Arne Hathaway  
 E. Oats  
 F. Likelihood  
 Q. Duke of Athens  
 G. Osgami  
 R. Judicial decision  
 S. Upward  
 T. Lovish  
 U. Ila  
 V. Each  
 W. Tows  
 K. Operation  
 Dead

# Feeling Good by Taking Medications Safely

By Kathleen McCarthy

“My arms ached too much, they felt too heavy to lift,” said Mrs. Barker, (a name I have given her to protect her privacy). She was back home, explaining to a longtime friend how she knew that she was having a heart attack when she called 911. Mrs. Barker had heard heart attack symptoms for women were different from men’s. She figured that she’d rather be safe than sorry, so called the paramedics. Once at the hospital, the cardiologist had explained that the blockages similar to the one in Mrs. Barker’s 79-year-old left coronary artery were often fatal. Fortunately this one wasn’t. She didn’t have any complications. Her recovery went well.

Mrs. Barker was grateful to be getting healthy again and wanted to learn about her new medications. Before the heart attack, she had been taking only two medications. Two were easy to remember; the six she was taking now were too many to manage from memory. She wanted a system of knowing when to take her pills and in what quantity. One medication was prescribed to be taken one hour before breakfast, others at breakfast, lunch and dinner, with the last one at bedtime – that’s five times a day.

To explain, Mrs. Barker is my neighbor. I’m a registered nurse who worked in medication research at a university so I knew the importance of taking medications at the correct dose and at the right time. In my experience medication mistakes happened most often from taking pills at the wrong dose (say the doctor changed the dose to half tablet but label still says one tablet), or doses were skipped because the day goes by too fast to fit in all the doses. Just as we were reading her new medication information and organizing her daily medication schedule, we heard on the news that the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention had found that 700,000 people end up in the emergency room each year because of medication mistakes. Mrs. Barker didn’t want to be one of them.

To help her stay on track, we wrote a medication list. We drew a table of columns and rows on the sheet of paper: six columns across and 10 rows down. In the first column, we kept the first box blank. In the second box we wrote in the first medication. It was to be taken one hour before breakfast. We continued down

the column, one by one, to write a medication in each box – six medications in the first column. Bedtime pills were listed last. We used the first row, from left to right, for the times of the day that pills were to be taken. Mrs. Barker told me what times worked for her to take the pills. We started with the earliest time of the day in the first row and ended with the last time for her hour of sleep. We filled in five boxes in the first row – across the paper from left to right with the five times of the day each in their own box. Mrs. Barker chose 6 a.m. for her early morning pills, 8 a.m. for breakfast, noon for lunch, 5 p.m. for dinner and 8 p.m. for bedtime.

From this list we had filled her pillboxes. We had decided to use three pillboxes that held a week’s supply of medications.

Mrs. Barker liked the idea of having the pillboxes located in the rooms where she’d probably be at certain times of the day.

Pillbox No. 1 was used only for the early morning pill. It had only one compartment for each day of the week. This pillbox was placed at Mrs. Barker’s

bedside so she could take that early morning pill that needed to be taken an hour before eating breakfast. She liked this because she could stay in bed for an hour without having to go to the kitchen to get it.

Pillbox No. 2 was used for medications that are taken with meals. It had three compartments for each day. We filled her breakfast, lunch and dinner compartments with pills. It stays in the kitchen.

Pillbox No. 3 had only one compartment, like the early morning pillbox. It’s used for nighttime medications. Placing her bedtime pillbox in the bathroom saved her a few steps right before going to bed.

Once a week, we worked together to fill the pillboxes. It’s always good to have family members or friends who can act as backup and know Mrs. Barker’s medication schedule. In Mrs. Barker’s case, her husband was her backup. And her son wanted to learn the medications and the system of refilling the pillboxes. “Good to know,” he said. Mother, husband and son took turns

**700,000 people end up in the emergency room each year because of medication mistakes.**

## Information on Medication Safety:

- Centers for Disease Control and Prevention. Medication Safety Program [www.cdc.gov/medicationsafety](http://www.cdc.gov/medicationsafety)
- General Advice on Safe Medications [www.consumermedsafety.org](http://www.consumermedsafety.org)
- Food and Drug Administration 4 Medication Safety Tips for Older Adults. [www.fda.gov](http://www.fda.gov)
- Institute for Safe Medication Practices. [www.ismp.org](http://www.ismp.org)

telling each other the names of the medications, the doses and the time to take them. They double-checked each other's work as they filled the compartments.

We understood that learning new medication information would take some time. Each day Mrs. Barker memorized one more fact about each medication – the name, the color, the shape of the tablet, whether the dose was measured in milligrams (mg) or in International Units (IU), the reason for taking the medication and the name of the doctor who prescribed it.

She wanted to know as much as she could about her medications. As it turned out, memorizing what the medications looked like and why they were taken helped relieve a lot of stress. After a while, all of this information became routine. She felt good knowing that she was taking the right pill at the right time.

It took three weeks for Mrs. Barker to know her pills like clockwork. The weeks flew by.

She was glad that she was taking the right pills at the right time and that she wouldn't be one of the 700,000 people who end up in the emergency room.

*Kathleen is a health writer based in Southern California. She can be reached at [kmccarthy@dslextrreme.com](mailto:kmccarthy@dslextrreme.com)*

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# HOLIDAY QUIZ-ACROSTIC

				1	J	2	A	3	L	4	B	5	D	6	E	7	K	8	M	9	O	10	G	11	F		12	U	13	I		14	D	15	S	16	N							
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36	R	37	D			38	N	39	J			40	C	41	E	42	I	43	N	44	M	45	D	46	K	47	A	48	J	49	Q	50	B		51	K	52	Q	53	W	54	S		
55	H	56	O	57	I	58	J	59	T			60	B	61	Q			62	P	63	R	64	D	65	J	66	B			67	I	68	O	69	R			70	N	71	M	72	B	
73	U	74	A	75	Q	76	H			77	K	78	J			79	L	80	F	81	G	82	N	83	K	84	J			85	J	86	N	87	V	88	G	89	P			90	O	
91	N	92	R	93	J	94	I			95	C	96	F	97	Q			98	O	99	G	100	F	101	D			102	V	103	J	104	B	105	H			106	J	107	K	108	P	
109	N	110	G	111	P	112	R	113	B			114	D	115	J			116	F	117	I	118	Q	119	D			120	T	121	J	122	H	123	D			124	D	125	N	126	S	
127	R	128	V	129	J	130	I	131	G	132	K			133	R	134	A			135	L	136	W	137	B	138	J	139	U	140	E	141	Q			142	R	143	J			144	B	
145	S	146	Q			147	J	148	P	149	A	150	V	151	Q			152	B	153	M			154	L	155	J			156	P	157	J			158	R	159	C	160	J	161	R	
162	M	163	W			164	R	165	B	166	A	167	N	168	M	169	J			170	J	171	A	172	Q			173	J	174	N	175	P			176	C	177	K	178	R	179	N	
		180	J	181	T	182	B	183	A	184	C			185	F	186	R			187	D	188	R	189	B	190	N	191	J	192	I	193	O			194	G	195	O			196	W	
197	O	198	J	199	N			200	S	201	B	202	J	203	C			204	S	205	J	206	F	207	A			208	O	209	N	210	R			211	T	212	D	213	Q	214	J	
		215	P	216	F	217	I	218	J			219	H	220	K	221	T	222	R	223	B			224	M	225	L	226	O	227	A	228	D											

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## Directions

- Read the definitions and supply the correct words over the numbered blanks.
- Transfer the letters to the corresponding squares in the diagram.
- Reading left to right, the completed diagram poses a trivia question. Words are separated by black squares.
- Reading down, the first letters on the numbered blanks give the subject category followed by the answer to the trivia question.

- Poem with rhyme scheme abab/cdcd/efef/gg (2 wds.)
- Cool down the libido (4 wds.)
- Make a neighborhood more upscale
- Knighted English actor, 1908-1985 (2 wds.)
- Extreme head-turners
- Probability
- Paper-folding technique
- Pot
- Site of Eastern Michigan University
- Tom Stoppard's Tony-winning tragicomedy (5 wds.)
- \_\_\_\_\_ *Petticoat*, 1959 Cary Grant movie
- Coffeehouse favorite
- Normal state of the bile
- Having 2 sets of stamens in alternating whorls
- The Bard's wife (2 wds.)
- Modern literary genre: The \_\_\_\_\_ (2 wds.)
- Theseus in *A Midsummer Night's Dream* (3 wds.)
- Ruling (2 wds.)
- Toward a higher position
- Not high
- Mother of Romulus and Remus (Var.)
- Every one
- Tugs

166	134	31	207	47	227	2	74	183	35	171	149	24			
152	104	4	113	165	189	60	201	50	66	137	182	144	223	72	
203	159	40	184	29	176	95									
187	114	14	25	45	228	101	123	5	37	119	64	124	28	212	
41	22	140	6												
100	185	116	11	206	216	26	96	80	17						
131	10	194	88	110	81	99									
219	105	122	76	55											
94	42	13	130	217	67	57	192	117							
39	173	180	138	115	32	169	198	78	129	48	170	84	218	147	85
205	160	65	103	30	1	143	121	214	157	202	106	155	21	191	
93	58														
83	7	177	46	107	51	77	220	132							
154	135	79	225	3											
8	162	224	71	153	44	23	168								
209	190	125	109	70	179	33	86	199	16	82	91	174	38	43	167
27	68	195	20	197	226	90	193	56	98	9	208				
111	175	215	62	89	156	148	108								
172	97	151	49	141	61	213	19	52	75	118	146				
158	210	69	127	112	133	188	178	92	36	164	161	222	142	63	186
54	200	204	145	15	126										
120	221	181	34	59	211										
18	139	12	73												
150	87	128	102												
182	58	187	128												

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# WILD-CAUGHT OR FARM-RAISED: WHICH SEAFOOD SHOULD YOU CHOOSE?

By Henry S. Parker

With the holidays coming, it's time to plan those menus. What will it be this year? Turkey with all the trimmings? A spiral ham with a medley of garden vegetables? A juicy roast with Yorkshire pudding and scalloped potatoes? Fine options, but a bit conventional. Ready to try something different? What about seafood?

Holidays or not, you won't find a better choice than seafood. It's not only delicious, but (you know this) it's also good for you—think low in fat, high in protein and full of those healthful omega-3 fatty acids. Dietary guidelines recommend that Americans double their seafood consumption. And what better way to support the Chesapeake Bay?

Imagine the following holiday meal: a creamy oyster stew, steamed mussels in an herb-enhanced white wine sauce, fresh, chilled shrimp cocktail, succulent Atlantic salmon fillets and, of course, Maryland lump crab cakes. Wash it down with a nice selection of chardonnays, Sauvignon blancs and pinot noirs. Or maybe you'll want to substitute lobster, scallops, haddock, halibut, swordfish or striped bass -- or even rainbow trout.

Whatever you choose, you'll face one fundamental decision: Should you buy farm-raised products or stick to wild-caught choices? The short answer: *It depends.*

First a little background. Half the seafood eaten in the world is farm-raised. Some 90 percent of fish and shellfish consumed in the U.S. comes from other countries, and much of that derives from aquaculture. Many major retail species can be raised on farms. And most of the world's commercial wild fish stocks are either fished out, in decline or at maximum sustainable yield. So, you're thinking, it's a no-brainer: Buy farm-raised.

But it's not that simple. There are several things to think about when choosing between farm-raised and wild-caught seafood. These include:

- **The Environment:** With most ocean fisheries in decline, aquaculture is a sustainable alternative, taking pressure off the wild catch. But there could be significant damage to ecosystems if seafood farms are constructed in sensitive environments, placed in areas without adequate water exchange to flush away wastes, if they use harmful chemicals or if they don't have adequate safeguards to prevent escapes of farmed fish. Fortunately, the United States has strict laws governing its aquaculture practices and seafood safety. That's not necessarily true for other nations.
- **Seafood Safety:** U.S. aquaculture operations tend to be well managed, as fish farmers carefully monitor the health, well-being and quality of their charges through the entire production cycle to maximize safety, appeal to consumers and to gain economic returns. The U.S. also bans the use of hormones and antibiotics in farmed fish. In contrast, it's virtually impossible to monitor the history of wild-caught fish, to know where they've been and what they've been eating. And the U.S. can't closely inspect all imported seafood.

- **Product Quality:** Here, aquaculture can have an edge, as farmers can apply traditional selective breeding techniques and good management practices to develop and raise fish and shellfish that grow well, are disease-resistant and are of uniformly high quality. And, in case you were wondering, there is no GMO seafood for sale in the U.S.
- **Economics:** Depending on the season, availability and location, seafood can be expensive. That applies to both wild-caught and farm-raised options. But aquaculture has brought down the price of some species, including salmon, trout, shrimp and catfish. Expanded consumption of U.S. aquaculture products will also reduce our dependence on expensive imports, improving our balance of trade.
- **Nutrition and Taste:** Both farm-raised and wild-caught seafood are low in fat and high in protein, so discussion about comparative nutritional advantage has centered on long-chain omega-3 fatty acids, especially in salmon. According to the Washington State Department of Health, farmed and wild-salmon have similar levels of these healthful nutrients. And taste? That seems to be in the tongue of the taster. Some people (notably Julia Child) have sworn that wild salmon taste better. Others don't detect a difference. But you are what you eat: Wild salmon consume other marine creatures while farmed salmon are fed prepared diets comprised of grains, plants and fish meal.
- **Product Availability:** Sometimes, the consumer has no choice. Today almost all retail trout, catfish and tilapia are farm-raised, as are much of the supply of mussels, shrimp and oysters. On the other hand, lobsters, crabs and tuna are difficult to farm.

So many choices, so much to think about. What's a consumer to do? Here are a few simple do's and don'ts:

**Do** try to eat seafood low in the food chain. Fish that eat other fish—or large concentrations of fishmeal—contribute to depletion of wild fish stocks and can concentrate toxic substances. These include tuna and swordfish. Species that eat mostly plants (including microscopic phytoplankton), like tilapia, catfish and virtually all mollusks, are far more sustainable.

**Don't** buy seafood the origin and history of which are not well documented.

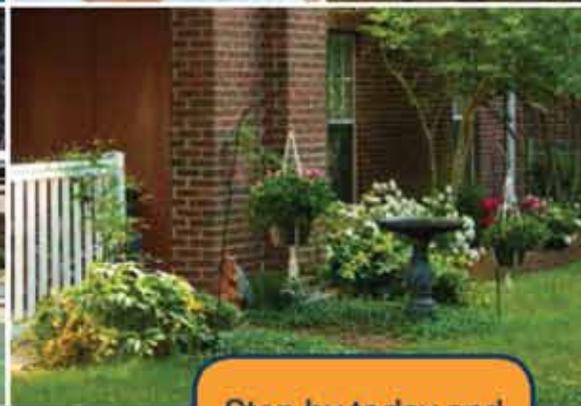
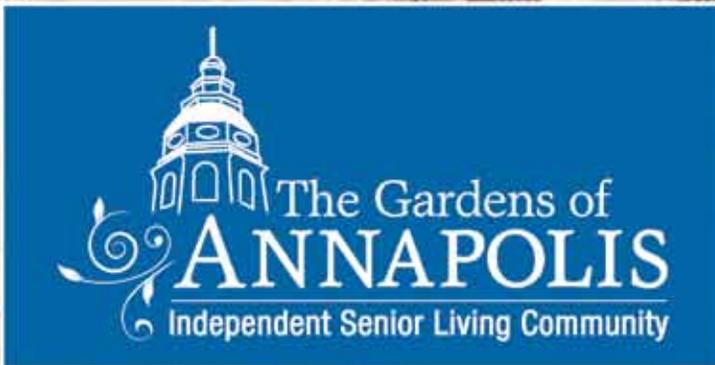
**Do** buy at stores that set high standards for product quality, like Whole Foods, Wegmans and Annapolis Seafood.

**Do** ask questions of seafood retailers; know what you're buying.

**Do** educate yourself about seafood quality, safety and product choices. The Monterey Bay Aquarium's Seafood Watch is an excellent resource at [www.seafoodwatch.org](http://www.seafoodwatch.org)

And, most important, **do** eat more seafood. It's good for mind, body and soul.

*Henry S. Parker is an adjunct associate professor at Georgetown University. He can be reached at [hspshp@gmail.com](mailto:hspshp@gmail.com)*



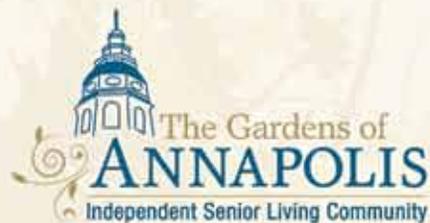
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