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Holiday 2017

Outlook

for the Bay Boomer and beyond...

by the Bay

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**TRADITIONS:
KEEP THE OLD OR
TIME TO CREATE NEW**

Lighting Up the Night

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YOUR FINANCIAL LIFE?
Make Your Own Economy

**Don't Give Clutter
For the Holidays**

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FEATURING LOCAL PRODUCE

fitness • entertainment • gardening • nutrition

Letters to the editor

WHEN IT'S OK TO SHED A TEAR

I really enjoyed the column in the Summer issue by the Rev. Chandler Whitman. I volunteer at a Title 1 school in Eastport and always pick books like *Wonder* or Ben Carson's *Gift of Hands* to read to the children because both have such a strong message. And I always have trouble not tearing up at certain parts even though I know they are coming. But it has been interesting to me that the children pat my shoulder and try to comfort me. How sweet is that? As the article said, these books carry some of the world's biggest truths. And I hope the children get a message from me that sometimes it is OK to shed a tear.

Thanks for your nice article,
Maureen S., Annapolis

TENTH ANNIVERSARY

Congratulations on the 10th anniversary of *Outlook!* It is a very proud moment and strong accomplishment for a publication to have the staying power for a decade. Best wishes for many more.

K. McCarthy, Pasadena, CA



Bay Bytes

For tips on the safe preparation of your holiday turkey, explore www.foodsafety.gov/keep/types/turkey/index.html Should problems arise on that day, call 1.800.288.8372 to speak with a "live" expert.

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On the Cover:

The mantel on the cover, which my family gathers around at Christmas, is the very one my late grandfather, William "Pop" McKay, gathered his children around decades ago. While Pop's absence will surely be felt, we are so thankful for the traditions he left with us. I hope you are able to celebrate this wonderful season with your own traditions!

Emma Stultz
Art Director

Publisher and Editor-in-Chief Tecla Emerson Murphy
Editor@OutLookbytheBay.com

Managing Editor Mick Rood
MickRood@aol.com

Marketing Representative Cynthia Rott
Cindy@OutLookbytheBay.com

Art Director Emma Stultz
Emma.Stultz@gmail.com

Distribution Manager Marguerite Guare
MDGuare@aol.com

Columnists Dr. Jim David
James519@comcast.net

Victoria Duncan
Victoria2Write@aol.com

Jessica L. Estes
jestes@ByrdandByrd.com

Ryan Helfenbein
Ryan@LastingTributesFuneralCare.com

Elyzabeth Marcussen
EMarcussen@HospiceChesapeake.org

Henry S. Parker
HspSbp@gmail.com

Drs. Passaro and Wooddell
www.WPDentalGroup.com

Contributing Writers Barbara Aiken
barbara.s.aiken@gmail.com

Kerry Dunnington
kerrydunnington@verizon.net

Charles Green
cgreen2066@aol.com

Reverend Matthew Hanisian
hanisian@stmartinsinthefield.org

Tricia Herban
ritherban3@gmail.com

Peggy Kiefer
kinseykief@aol.com

Leah Lancione
LeahLancione@gmail.com

Kater Leatherman
KaterLeatherman@gmail.com

Kathryn Marchi
johnmarchi1@gmail.com

Kathleen A. McCarthy
KMccarthy@dslextreme.com

Ellen Moyer
ellenmoyer@yahoo.net

Kari Maltz
kari.maltz@verizon.net

Nancy J. Schaaf
nanjans3@hotmail.com

Maureen Smith
rsmith0636@verizon.net

Louise Whiteside
louisemw@wispartel.net

Circulation Jack Hovey
OutLookbytheBay@aol.com

Photographer R.C. Murphy
OutLookbytheBay@aol.com

Subscriptions S. Hill
OutLookbytheBay@aol.com
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Contact OutLook by the Bay
210 Legion Ave. #6805
Annapolis, MD 21401
410.849.3000

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FROM THE DESK

Way back in 1621, Edward Winslow, one of the early governors of Plymouth Colony, wrote, "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." Winslow thus kicked off one of the world's greatest 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 bounty.

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. Perhaps, while most of us grew up in a family environment with some type of festivity, often with bittersweet memories, there's still a warm fuzzy feeling that we connect to the holidays. Few of us remember "Leave It to Beaver" childhoods and most of us experienced upheavals and complicated upbringings on our way to adulthood. No matter what the difficulties, our families persisted in gathering to toast the good times, doing their best to create a holiday atmosphere filled with meaning and gratitude.

If we examine it realistically, we may find ourselves rethinking our motivation for spending so much effort on our holiday preparations. 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 and all of it.

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. Imagine if you will the 53 surviving settlers, and of those, only four were women who were busy managing households. Those four intrepid Pilgrim mothers pulled together a harvest celebration of thanks that's admired and copied to this day. There were no microwaves, dishwashers, hired help or engraved invitations. Adding to the drama, it sounds like it was a bit impromptu. Those 53 remaining souls, who had numbered more than 100 just a few short months before, invited their 90 Wampanoag neighbors in to celebrate and to share in their gratitude for an almost bountiful harvest. 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 Lincoln, coming from Illinois, would have known that the last 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 try to copy that original feast with turkey, corn and pumpkins. This may not be what the Pilgrim housewife served, but legend chose to go with it. Research suggests it was probably more like venison, lobster, partridge, seal, swan, plums, acorns, chestnuts, cranberries and parsnips, much of it thanks to Massasoit and his people. Putting together a meal of this magnitude must have been mind-boggling, 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.

This editorial was originally printed in 2009. We're running it again as the message remains as valuable now as it was then.




Caring Collection is 35

By Marion Kay

It was in 1982 when Bobbie Burnett learned that friend and neighbor, Susie Lyttle, had been diagnosed with leukemia. Bobbie, a talented artist, created a stained glass angel as an expression of support for Susie. The beautiful angel attracted a lot of interest. Those who had seen the blue and gold angel wanted one just like it. As a result, Bobbie a true leader, recruited volunteers to come to her home and help produce more angels. The sale of these angels provided funds to help Susie's family with health care expenses. Although Susie didn't survive, a new organization called Caring Collection Inc. was born.

In December Caring Collection will celebrate its 35th anniversary. Bobbie continues to lead the group and design the

creations, now numbering more than 45,000 angels. Every year they were redesigned to be slightly different in terms of style, color and size. In addition, a group of stained glass *suncatchers* (small-themed pieces that represent animals, birds and seasonal holidays) were added to the inventory. Recent additions are small angel magnets, large sculptures of birds, flowers and children, as well as wall plaques featuring birds and tropical fish. For many years Bobbie also designed special suncatchers that were presented to the campers at Camp Sunshine where childhood cancers are addressed.

A vital part of the Caring Collection is its dedicated volunteers. Without them, this organization couldn't exist. Meeting on Tuesdays and Thursdays at Bobbie's home studio, they perform many tasks such as cutting, tracing, pasting, grinding, foiling, packing, mailing, answering phones and keeping track of orders. In March, the group votes on grants (funds accumulated from the sales) to Anne Arundel and Johns Hopkins Medical Centers, which will be used to purchase equipment for the care and treatment of cancer patients. Over time the two hospitals have equally shared over a million dollars in grants.

To learn more about Caring Collection, go to the website at www.caringcollection.org and also on Facebook. Making a donation, volunteering or purchasing one of the products will make a difference in the life of a cancer patient.

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NO SPOUSE, NO KIDS, NO WORRIES?



In an article entitled “Elder Orphans Hiding in Plain Sight: A Growing Vulnerable Population,” researchers coined the term “elder orphans” to signify “aged, community-dwelling individuals who are socially and/or physically isolated, without an available known family member or designated surrogate or caregiver.” Sounds a little clinical, but

the paper published last year by the journal *Current Gerontology and Geriatric Research* describes a demographic that is growing as our population continues to age. With more chronic diseases and a health care system in need of major reform, it’s no wonder many baby boomers and seniors worry about aging alone. So, what is there to do? Can someone with no spouse or children do it on their own? Though this demographic is “high risk,” the answer is, yes, it can be done.

Before getting into some of the opportunities boomers have living alone, it’s important to note that for those of you who are “going it solo,” you are not alone. Sociologist and author Eric Klinenberg reports that in 1950, “only 22 percent of American adults were single. Today, more than 50 percent of American adults are single, and 31 million—roughly one out of every seven adults—live alone.” In his book, *Going Solo*, Klinenberg sheds light on the “other side of the coin,” that baby boomers and seniors who live alone are often active in their community, engage in extracurricular activities, stay connected to others through the internet, exercise more, are independent and self-sufficient, and even live more environmentally sustainable lives than their married counterparts.

In addition to dodging isolation and loneliness through social and civic involvement, Klinenberg reports some scientific evidence shows that a pet companion can provide physical and psychological benefits. “For some, pets increase the opportunities to meet people, while for others, pets can permit them to be alone without being lonely.”

So, while remaining active physically and mentally is an obvious tool for everyone, in his book *Aging Wisely*, Robert A. Levine, MD, provides strategies for baby boomers and seniors that include “knowing your enemies,” i.e., diseases and disorders that are common in aging. He recommends that since “people do not die of old age,” but rather from diseases that strike as we get older, we should be knowledgeable about them and even be able to “modify our responses to these changes.” He offers possible strategies for preventing or confronting debilitating diseases like heart disease, cancer, dementia, diabetes, pneumonia and more.

Some of the usual examples: proper nutrition, exercise, regular checkups, self-examination, maximizing cognitive abilities and even maintaining your physical appearance.

Along with tackling the changes, and potential diseases associated with aging head on, for those who do not have a family support system available for future

care, it’s important to realize that “where there is no family, or the family is out of the loop, society has to assume responsibility for care through various governmental agencies or private charitable organizations that have been given this assignment,” Dr. Levine says. Instead of waiting for decisions to be made for you, he recommends “empowering yourself” by assuming control over your choices of living in a nursing home, assisted living or having a home caregiver, when you can no longer live independently or drive.

You may not be thinking that far down the line, but the reality is “69 percent of Americans will need long-term care, even though only 37 percent think they will,” according to **SeniorCare.com**

Experts say it’s never too early to plan for the finale. If you have cultivated strong social ties with friends, consider designating someone to be your power of attorney, in the event, you’re unable to make health care decisions. This person, or an attorney, if you prefer, should also know where to reference personal information like your Social Security number, list of medications and where to locate your insurance card and other legal documents. This individual should be able to identify “the whole list of things somebody needs to know if they’re going to help you,” says Dr. Robert Kane, director of the University of Minnesota’s Center on Aging.

In truth, whether you’re doing it alone or with family support, we’re all aging together. It’s up to us to be proactive. Those of us who are middle-aged or on the younger-end of the baby boomer spectrum must join forces in urging the government and health care industry to better address the needs of the elderly for the present and future. In his book *Alone and Invisible No More: How Grassroots Community Action and 21st Century Technologies Can Empower Elders to Stay in Their Homes and Lead Healthier Lives*, Allan S. Teel, MD, uncovers the inadequacies of nursing homes, assisted living and residential care. He highlights the reforms that need to take place and an alternative eldercare approach called the “Full Circle America Approach.” For more information, visit **www.fullcircleamerica.com**

Today is a gift. Don't waste it.

LIGHTING UP THE NIGHT

By Arlene Kaye Berlin

Mark your calendars now for the Maryland premiere event of the holiday season, the Eastport Lights Parade on Dec. 9 from 6 to 8 p.m. Now in its 35th year, this water spectacular, which has spawned many imitators, features anywhere from 40 to 60 illuminated yachts (and boats, to be nautically correct), drawing thousands of people who come to City Dock, waterfront area restaurants, watering holes, hotels and Eastport's many street end parks to watch this dazzling water display.

Created, hosted and arranged by the Eastport Yacht Club, its origins, which date back to the 1980s, are now part of Eastport lore and much debate. Some credit lights parade co-chair, Pete Chambliss and his wife Jane, who began decorating and parading their boat around Spa Creek on dead-cold December nights when Annapolis was tourist-free and only locals ventured onto the waters. The Chamblisses went on to win many awards for their angel design mounted on their Morgan 34, Dream Chaser, when the event was formalized and award categories set.

Others attribute the start to the Langers, live-aboards on Wild Duck at the Annapolis City Marina, who began parading around in Spa Creek in December, to ease the seasonal yachting boredom that strikes those who don't head south for the season. And there are other origin stories circulating among the old timers at Eastport Yacht Club. But it doesn't matter how it began.

What matters is how successful it has become and how it is now part of the fabric of Annapolis with the Eastport Yacht Club holding the founding rights.

For over three decades, daring yachtsmen and women from all over the Bay have assembled at the invitation of the Eastport Yacht Club in Spa Creek to light up dark December nights with holiday splendor. Undaunted by snow, sleet, hail or heavy winds, the show has gone on. Only once, when the Annapolis Yacht Club on Spa Creek suffered a fire on lights parade night, was the show cancelled.

The lights parade, sponsored this year by Koons of Annapolis, has come a long way from the early days when photographers and press releases were the only means of communication and standing out in the cold was the only way of viewing. Co-chairman Babak Rajaei, a management consultant, says he was snookered into it this year by Pete Chambliss after a few friendly drinks at the Eastport Yacht club. The event is now live-streamed to viewers as far away as Australia and New Zealand. Lots of other high-tech ways of "being there" are now in the planning stages.

For up-to-date information on this year's coverage, which may include streaming to local restaurants, and everything you need to know about parking, views and participation, Google Eastport Lights Parade 2017.



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Frequently people come to me for help in resolving interpersonal conflicts. A mother unable to evict a daughter and her family to make room for her new husband. Siblings exhausted from futile efforts to appease a manipulative parent. Or a sibling totally lacking in caring or empathy. A spouse powerless to withdraw from a seemingly helpless partner. Most of us know about cases like this.

Typical solutions revolve around some aspect of assertiveness. Speak up! Call a spade a spade! Be assertive! Just do it! (Nike commercial.) Unfortunately, these common sense solutions have not worked for many years. It is easy to judge the powerless party as deficient or defective in some way. The truth is that they have been doing their very best, and if they could do better, they would do better.

While cognitive approaches, such as those outlined in *Changing to Thrive: Using the Stages of Change to Overcome the Top Threats to Your Health and Happiness* by James O. Prochaska and Janice M. Prochaska, will be effective in some cases, a more in-depth process is usually required.

Here is a condensed version of strategies that need not be sequential, but do require considerable time and commitment. You may succeed on your own or you may need to enlist the help of a therapist.

Begin with strengthening your self-awareness. This is done through prayer and meditation of your choice. Without a strong observing ego, all your efforts will be futile. As you strengthen your observing ego through daily meditation you will eventually notice negative or limiting thoughts. For example, "No matter what I try, nothing works!" This seems objectively true, but it retains your powerless stance. Our brains believe our self-talk, whether positive or negative. Change to, "Every day I become more self-aware, more self-valuing and more self-assertive."

This might be the most intractable step. It is stopping the *blame game*. All of us do it. We do it so smoothly, so effortlessly, that regardless how formidable or unchanging your spouse, parent, sibling or boss may be, nothing really works. That is, until you become self-responsible. Change yourself, not your toxic tormentor.

Becoming self-responsible requires connecting with the real issue, the underlying issue that has you so completely helpless. We must recognize that our truth, our answer, is inside of us, and that our truth is the only valid truth. Your therapist or friends may have opinions, guesses or working hypotheses, but their chances of hitting the bull's eye are very slim.

We may be able to connect with or identify the real issue by doing a brain search like a computer search with our conscious mind. If not successful, we must access our unconscious mind by relaxing deeply. People have varying abilities to access their unconscious due to the impermeability of the boundary or wall protecting their trauma from surfacing.

If a person has been traumatized by an angry father, that person may be totally frozen by an angry spouse. If a person grew up in a family with chronic marital infidelity, that person may choose an uncaring spouse and be too anxious and fearful to rectify the situation. Until the underlying trauma is identified and resolved, the helplessness will continue.

Another approach is "parts theory." A part of me wants the toxic situation resolved, but another part of me wants to keep it for some positive purpose. For example, no one has ever been divorced in our family so I remain virtuous by not getting divorced even though the marriage is irreconcilable. How can I accomplish this positive purpose, i.e., being virtuous in another way so I am free to divorce? The critical dimension is that we will not change until we have absolute clarity that this change is absolutely, positively what we want.

Goal-setting with absolute adherence to timeliness is part of this process. If we miss the timeline, are we really, truly committed? Again, what is the real issue?

As you understand and accept yourself more deeply, strive to strengthen your understanding and acceptance of "the toxic other." "There but for the grace of God go I." (John Bradford, 1510-1555). Toxic others generally cannot help themselves because their childhood trauma erases their observing ego, resulting in a diagnosable personality disorder such as borderline narcissistic.

It takes time and practice to use these strategies. Be patient with yourself, but be steadfast. Practice assertiveness with less scary people. If necessary, see an eye movement, desensitization and reprocessing (EMDR) therapist to heal the trauma activated by the seemingly impossible other. (Visit www.emdria.org to locate a certified therapist.)

Remember, when you over-function, you enable the manipulative other to under-function. (Aren't we kind, generous, virtuous, etc.? Groan!). Life is too short to be miserable for even one second. Let go of your anger, hate and resentment. If not, your body keeps score. Your mind can deceive you, your body does not know how to lie. Be at peace with yourself, with everyone and everything.

Dr. Jim David is a practicing psychotherapist in Silver Spring. Visit his website at www.AskDrDavidNow.com or email at jimsue63@gmail.com

TOXIC PEOPLE

By Dr. Jim David

Bay Bytes

To find the best rates for airport, hotel and long-term parking deals, search www.stay123.com. Most even offer shuttle service to and from the airport.

YOUR LEGAL COMPASS

WHAT YOU DON'T KNOW CAN HURT YOU

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

Inherent in the institution of marriage is the idea that from the wedding day on, each spouse shares in both the joys and hardships of the other. And, for most, it means that either spouse can act for the benefit of the other simply because they are married.

Unfortunately, this is not necessarily the case. If you have separate bank accounts, investments, individual retirement accounts, etc., and one of you becomes incompetent, the other does not have the right to access the money unless there is a power of attorney in place authorizing it. So, if your spouse's income is being deposited into an account separate from yours and your spouse becomes incompetent, you will not be able to use that money to pay bills or for any other purpose. Only a power of attorney or legal guardian would be authorized to access those funds. Thus, it is imperative that both spouses have financial powers of attorney in the event either becomes incompetent. If not, the only alternative is for the competent spouse to seek guardianship of the other and that can be costly.

Similarly, if you are married and you die without a will, your spouse does not automatically get everything. Instead, it depends on several factors. First, if you have any joint accounts, those accounts will pass automatically to the joint account holder. Second, if you have a named beneficiary on any account or asset, that account or asset will pass automatically to the designated beneficiary. This could include retirement accounts, life insurance, annuities, bank accounts, investments, stocks and bonds that specifically list a beneficiary or that is designated as "pay on death" or "transfer on death." Hopefully, you do not have any former spouses named as beneficiaries on retirement accounts or life insurance policies unless, of course, that is what you specifically intended. This happens more than you may realize.

Next, your family situation has an impact. Do you have

children? If so, and if you die without a will, your spouse will not get everything. Further, the amount he or she gets is dependent on whether you have minor children. If you have minor children, your spouse will receive one-half of whatever passes through probate (nonjoint or beneficiary-designated assets). If you have adult children, then your spouse will receive one-half plus \$15,000. Even if you do not have any children, your spouse still may not get everything. Might you have a surviving parent? If so, and if you die without a will, then your spouse will receive one-half plus \$15,000. Only if you do not have any surviving children or parents will your spouse get everything if you die without a will. Is this what you intended?

Conversely, another common misconception is that if you are married and have a will that names only your children, your children will get everything. Perhaps you are in a second, third or fourth marriage and you want to make sure your children inherit everything, so you write a will leaving everything to them.

Unfortunately, Maryland law does not allow you to disinherit a spouse. Regardless of what your will says, your spouse will have the right to elect a statutory share. In fact, even if you leave your spouse a portion of your estate, he or she can always elect to take a statutory share. The amount of that statutory share is dependent on whether you have what is called a surviving issue. If you have surviving issue (children, grandchildren, etc.), your spouse will receive a one-third share of your net estate. If you do not have surviving issue, then your spouse will receive one-half of your net estate. And, if you think putting your assets into a trust to avoid probate and thus, your spouse's election of a statutory share, think again. Maryland courts have ruled that if you put your assets into a trust, it is subject to your spouse's statutory share election.

And finally, to set the record straight, there is no such thing as common law marriage in Maryland. Just because you and your significant other lived together for a time, that does not give you the same legal rights as a spouse would have upon the other's death. In fact, couples living together and who have joint accounts, but are not married, could face significant tax consequences upon their partner's death. Be smart and be prepared.

Jessica L. Estes is an elder law and estate planning attorney at ERA Law Group, LLC in Annapolis. She can be reached at 410.919.1790 or via email at jestes@eralawgroup.com

If you want the fruit you're going to have to go out on a limb.



TRADITIONS: KEEP THE **OLD** OR TIME TO CREATE **NEW**

By Leah Lancione

Many view traditions as being part of a family's identity; holidays, milestone celebrations, even everyday customs can unify those closest to you. Traditions passed down from generation to generation also connect the present to the past and can provide reassurance about what the future may hold. People tend to crave familiarity and continuity. The busyness of life can pull everyone in different directions like a tree, but the roots of a family run deep.

Whether traditions center on holidays or not, they should be meaningful. A few special ideas cited in *The Book of New Family Traditions: How to Create Great Rituals for Holidays and Every Day* by Meg Cox, include hosting an annual "Summer Olympics" or special monthly "Kids Cook Nights" if your grandkids live close by.

Cox says daily, weekly and monthly rituals "accumulate a quiet power and make a deep impression over the years, but they are like the pop songs of life," whereas holidays are "more on the scale of an opera: monumental, bold, and unforgettable." Since holidays are so momentous, they are either eagerly anticipated or intensely dreaded. As such, you should treat them with great attention to detail to make sure they're enjoyed by all.

If a family tradition has become stale, there is no rule that keeps you from spicing it up or scrapping it altogether for a new one.

For example, my Grandma Chris, who was an amazing cook, grocery store owner, mom to three and grandmother of six, made holidays meaningful. Holiday gatherings, often attended by all her children and grandchildren, siblings and their families, as well as neighbors, church friends and priests, were not simply a time to showcase her culinary skills, but to carry out age-old and sacred Ukrainian traditions.

Ukrainian tradition dictates that for Christmas Eve, 12 dishes must be prepared and served, representing the twelve Apostles. These "Lenten" dishes are made without any animal meat, dairy products or eggs, because it is part of a fast recognizing the hardships Mary endured traveling to Bethlehem.

These Ukrainian Christmas Eve dishes can include: kolach (a slightly sweet and often braided bread), meatless holopchi/holubtsi (cabbage rolls), perogies/pierogies/varenyky (dumplings with potato, sauerkraut or prunes sauerkraut and peas), meatless borscht (beet soup), salmon or fried filets, pickled herring, broad or mashed beans, fruit compote and pampushky (bread with garlic).

My Aunt Cindy honors her parents by keeping these Ukrainian traditions alive with her children and grandchildren. She says her Christmas Eve menu always contains the 12 meatless foods her mother served, using

the ingredients available.

Whether you want to follow your ancestors' cultural traditions to a "T" or vary them to suit your lifestyle and proclivities, there's a lot of history that can be shared with younger members of the family. My Aunt Cindy's grandchildren have not only been exposed to foods from other countries, but they learn about what each tradition signifies.

For example, after the Christmas Eve meal, the grandkids await the arrival of Santa Claus (whom they haven't discovered yet is Uncle Rick in costume) who brings one gift for each of them—a tradition started by his father. The next day, they also know their Christmas stocking will contain an orange at the bottom—an homage to a popular legend of St. Nicholas.

The oranges represent the three gold balls St. Nick placed in the stockings of three poor girls being raised by their father after their mother died. Thanks to the gold in the stockings drying above the fireplace, the girls had a dowry and could marry.

Aunt Cindy says her grandkids have come to understand that the oranges in their stockings symbolize the reality that there are many who are less fortunate and deserving of charity and compassion.

A few years ago, my mother started a new tradition for our family that involves hosting a Passover Seder. We all—grandkids included—gather around grandma's dining room table as she tells the story of the Israelites' exodus from slavery in Egypt. Following the story and sampling of items from the Seder meal that includes bitter herbs, parsley that is dipped into salt water to symbolize tears and a few other ceremonial foods, Grandpa hides the afikoman (piece of matzah set aside) and the grandkids try to find it for a prize.

Kids will learn to embrace new traditions such as these while still following the customs they've adhered to their whole lives. It's fun and interesting to delve into the reasons behind your family's holiday traditions and to learn what shaped family customs.

Messiah:

A MASTERPIECE WRITTEN IN 24 DAYS

By Jessica Kuperavage

What are your favorite traditions during the Christmas season? If you're like many Americans, you probably have attended a performance of *Messiah*. Each year, orchestras and choirs resurrect this uplifting piece for enthusiastic audiences. Its best-known movement, the *Hallelujah Chorus*, is so beloved that it has entered American pop culture, appearing regularly in commercials, television and movies.

For composer George Frideric Handel, *Messiah* was a turn away from the operas that he had been composing since he was a teen. It marked a new stage in his work. The text was developed by his friend and patron, Charles Jennens, who compiled it from Bible verses. *Messiah* begins with Old Testament prophecies of Jesus' birth, followed by the retelling of his death and resurrection.

Handel composed *Messiah* over the course of only 24 days in August and September of 1741. Miles Hoffman, music commentator for NPR's Morning Edition, estimates that if Handel spent 10 hours each day composing, he would have written at the feverish pace of 15 notes per minute.

Seven months later, *Messiah* debuted to a packed house at the Musick Hall in Dublin, Ireland. The audience was so large that

women were asked to leave their hoopskirts at home and men were told not to bring their swords. Following the performance, *The Dublin Journal's* reviewer wrote that "words are wanting to express the exquisite delight it afforded." Although the origin of the tradition of standing during the *Hallelujah Chorus* is uncertain, it was in practice by 1750.

Composers, too, found *Messiah* powerful. Ludwig van Beethoven cited *Messiah* when he claimed that Handel was "the greatest composer that ever lived." When Wolfgang Amadeus Mozart altered *Messiah* in 1789 to make it sound more modern to his era, he did so with the caveat that Handel was the true master of dramatic music.

During his lifetime, Handel's music became synonymous with acts of charity, and *Messiah* was no exception. The composer's work was popular and he accumulated a fortune through stock market investments. He donated his share of the proceeds of *Messiah's* debut to a hospital, a charitable infirmary and to assist people in debtor's prison. In his later years, Handel gave annual benefit concerts featuring the *Hallelujah Chorus* to support the London Foundling Hospital, a home for orphaned children.

In this way, *Messiah* had an outsized impact on the communities in which it was performed.

Today, performances of *Messiah* are a beloved Christmas tradition. In fact, it is the most famous piece of sacred music performed in English. The impulse that people at 18th century performances felt – to stand during the *Hallelujah Chorus* – will be repeated around the world this holiday season.

On Dec. 2, at 7 p.m., Queen Anne's Chorale will be performing "Hallelujah! A Christmas Concert Featuring Messiah" at Chesapeake College in Wye Mills. Attendees are invited to bring or purchase copies of Messiah and sing along if they choose to do so. Tickets are \$20 and available for purchase from singers or at the door. For more information, visit QACHorale.org

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The first step to maintaining or improving your health is not to swing into a jazzercise routine, climb a mountain or try the Pilates regimen. The first step is to get off your duff.

Research evidence mounts that sitting too much is a seemingly benign way to shorten your life. The key: Even if you already have a carefully considered daily exercise regimen or plan to get one started, that exercise may not be enough to offset the damage done by sitting six or more hours a day watching TV, in front of the computer or driving. The simple act of sitting too much brings on the whole cascade of health problems we don't want to hear about: high blood pressure, diabetes, heart attacks, cancer, bulging waist lines and joint dysfunction.

"Take a Stand Against Sitting," as the headline in the *Harvard Men's Health Watch* newsletter advised recently. A 2015 study in the *Annals of Internal Medicine* found that the average person spends about half of his waking hours in the act of sitting. All that relaxation "keeps you from healthier activity," Dr. I-Min Lee of Harvard's T.H. Chan School of Public Health, told the newsletter.

Scientists say with growing confidence that the answer is to limit sitting by interspersing it with on-your-feet routines. Before we review the grim evidence that over-sitting damages your health, how can you adjust your daily life to avoid your sedentary sins? Here's a list based on advice culled from researchers who have studied the problem:

Walk the dog. If you aren't allergic and wouldn't mind some companionship anyway, get a dog. If you have a backyard dog, don't just leave your pet there, get him, and you, out to walk. (Personal disclosure: I walk our pug mix four times a day. These strolls last from five to 20 minutes each.)

Take computer, TV breaks. If you spend considerable time at the computer or watching television, take time-outs at least every 30 minutes. Water the plants, do some dishes, climb some stairs, do some of your regular exercises or take a lap around the house.

Walk with the phone. Make phone conversations a moving experience. Get up when you answer the phone. Adopt walking back and forth around the house while you are talking as a new routine.

Invigorate your errands. If you're going to the mall, don't park right next to your store. Park across the lot and enjoy the stroll. If you have an option, take steps or climb the escalator instead of taking the elevator.

Buy a pedometer. Not to get obsessive about it, but these devices will tell you how many steps you are actually taking, letting

you research how many steps you should be taking. There's nothing like an actual measurement to give you a concrete goal. While 10,000 steps a day is a standard, Dr. Lee says about 7,000 might be enough. Find out how you are doing.

Still need motivation? Know that an August 2016 study in the *Journal of Preventive Medicine* found after tracking 433,000 people in 54 countries, that a 50 percent reduction in sitting would represent three times fewer deaths. An observational study in April 2015 published by the *Clinical Journal of the American Society of Nephrology* found that two minutes of light-intensity activity (such as

walking) for each hour of sitting was associated with a 33 percent lower risk of dying early.

From the Mayo Clinic, Dr. James A. Levine cites a study comparing adults who spent less than two hours a day using screen-based entertainment to those logging more than four hours a day. The heavier users had almost a 50 percent increased risk of dying from any cause and a 125 percent increased risk of events associated with cardiovascular disease – chest pain or heart attack.

There's more evidence, but you get the picture. Researchers are continuing to explore the right balance between sitting and exercising. *The Lancet* published a study last year that concluded 60 to 75 minutes of exercise daily could eliminate increased risk of early death because of long periods of sitting. While scientists sort out that equation, you can take more modest steps of your own.

Mick Rood, a writer and editor for more than 50 years, tries to take breaks from sitting in front of the computer screen as often as he can. He can be reached at mickrood@aol.com

GET OFF YOUR DUFF

By Mick Rood

A Veteran Caring For Veterans: 'This Is My Thing!'

By Elyzabeth Marcussen

Though many, perhaps even a majority, of Hospice of the Chesapeake volunteers who choose to serve do so because the organization cares for a loved one, there are a number of people who end up serving because of *kismet*. Such is the case of retired Air Force Lt. Col. Gayle Bremer.

At the beginning of 2014, the Severna Park resident was looking for ways to give back to the community and found herself clicking through the Anne Arundel County Volunteer Center's online opportunities. She was immediately drawn to the hospice organization's posting for Veteran-to-Veteran volunteers.

After serving 20 years in the Air Force, where she also met her husband, Bremer didn't bother looking any further. Her decision to volunteer with Hospice of the Chesapeake was confirmed many times over, starting with the first time she cared for a patient. "You know when you find your thing, and you feel as if you are floating on a cloud? It just feels so right." She paused, and then exclaimed, "This is my thing!"

Lucky for the nonprofit, because once someone finds their thing, they want more of it. Bremer is a patient care volunteer and vigil volunteer to both veterans and non-veterans, actively serves on our We Honor Veterans Committee, represents Hospice of the Chesapeake in the community at outreach events and helps plan its veteran events.

But perhaps one of her favorite ways to serve is by participating in Honor Salutes. These brief but poignant ceremonies were created by the nonprofit in 2010 to recognize veterans for their service to our country and to acknowledge the many personal sacrifices each of them made to ensure our freedom. The ceremony includes a formal salute and pinning of an American flag by active duty military or Naval

Academy midshipmen. Also part of the ceremony is the presentation of a certificate of appreciation, a handmade

quilt sewn by a volunteer and thank-you notes written by local schoolchildren.

There is so much emotion that comes with the acknowledgement of their service to the nation, the colorful gratitude created by local kids and the pride of the family who preserve their loved one's legacy with this one simple act. "They're over the top," she said. "I tear up every time."

"She is a joy to work with behind the scenes in volunteer services, but even more so enjoyed by our patients," said Nicole Malatesta, the volunteer services coordinator who handles the organization's veterans' initiatives. "As a veteran, she is able to form a deep connection with other veterans."

Hospice of the Chesapeake volunteers always say they get back more than they give. That seems difficult to achieve in Bremer's case, seeing how much she invests. However, her mother recently was admitted to hospice care. She credits her experience as a patient care volunteer for not only preparing herself to care for her mother, but also to help her father in his new role as caregiver. "I know I'm walking through this differently because of Hospice of the Chesapeake."

Elyzabeth can be reached at EMarcussen@HospiceChesapeake.org

Bay Bytes

Found pills or not sure if you have the right prescription? Log on to reference.medscape.com/pill-identifier or www.healthline.com/pill-identifier to discover what you are taking.

Bay Bytes

To check the legitimacy of any of the charities where you send your hard-earned dollars, navigate to www.givewell.org or www.charitynavigator.com

The romantic vision of the white-tailed deer, first cousin to Comet, Cupid, Donner and Blitzen is skewed, as he has become a most unwelcome visitor. This light-footed, wide-eyed creature can be seen at all hours of the day or night traipsing through the woods and fields. The sight of this beautiful animal that has the grace and symmetry of a prima ballerina causes most of us to stop and stare in fascination. What is it that makes us so often speechless at the beauty of what is now an all-too-familiar pest? The *Odocoileus virginianus* tiptoeing through our forests and yards is now a common sight as man's habitat encroaches ever closer to their homes. Once hunted extensively for both food and pelts, deer provided clothing, shelter and food, basics to the survival of America's first inhabitants.

No longer appreciated for sustenance by Native Americans and settlers, we now find ourselves using unusual methods to keep deer off our properties. Human hair, urine, garlic and bars of soap hanging from the trees are just a few of the methods that are used to discourage their insatiable appetites. The feeding habits of this graceful creature can drive homeowners wild! As voracious herbivores, they have a penchant for the most expensive ornamentals – they consider hostas and day lilies dessert. Having a fondness for saplings and branches and newly emerged shoots, their grazing gives tender young plants little chance to survive and thrive, depleting our forests and tipping the environmental balance. In the past their natural enemies were bears, wolves and humans – the first two rarely seen in the Bay area anymore and the last long ago restricted from much of his hunting instinct.

In the early 20th century there were protective measures in place so that the species wouldn't become extinct. Now with a purported population of upwards of 200,000, white-tailed deer are commonly seen in every corner of Maryland. They have nearly lost their fear of humans -- encounters often taking place as their endless grazing brings them ever closer to houses and civilization.

With a life span of up to 10 years, very few predators, and the arrival of twins or often triplets each Spring, their numbers continue to increase. Their fragile appearance is deceptive. Fawns are capable of traveling up to 35 mph within a week of their birth. Within a year the bucks have grown their first set of antlers, which

they can effectively use as a defensive weapon. Having the ability to jump 20 feet into the air, with the smooth acrobatic style of an Olympian, they are also capable of swimming great distances, allowing them to also populate islands. Larger than the does, bucks can weigh up to 300 pounds with a shoulder height of 3 1/2 feet. Should a pack of dogs or the occasional coyote threaten a deer,

they have sharp and powerful hooves that can do much damage. And Bambi, that sweet fawn beloved by children everywhere, causes numerous traffic accidents. Deer also host the tick responsible for spreading Lyme disease – a difficult-to-diagnose

degenerative condition that is increasing at an alarming rate in the Bay area.

So how to control what has become an ever-increasing nuisance? There is no easy answer to managing their burgeoning numbers. Fencing a yard or farmland can be expensive, and inviting hunters on to your property in a congested area is a bit iffy. There are noxious repellents sold at the local farm stores, but their effectiveness lasts only a short time. One of the better plans would be to plant shrubbery that the deer find less than palatable such as holly. There are closely managed deer hunting programs that have been set up in an attempt to control the population, but this

hardly makes a dent in their ever-increasing numbers. The impact of all this on our woodlands, which in turn affects other wildlife that seek food and shelter from the forests, requires us to raise our awareness. Our woodlands are vital and without the regeneration there will be further issues with the already fragile ecological balance. Keeping in mind that it is we who have imposed upon them and are now occupying what was exclusively their territory – a humane method of control should be developed. Those could include a change in our hunting policies, better land management, or development of an anti-fertility agent, such as the one introduced on Assateague Island to control the wild horse population. The hope is that someday we will get back to living in harmony with nature and all that it provides.

On Donner, On Blitzen...

By Penelope Folsom



WANT TO SIMPLIFY YOUR FINANCIAL LIFE? MAKE YOUR OWN ECONOMY

By Kater Leatherman

Do you ever feel like you are you being pushed forward in a great rush to spend money you don't have? For things that you don't need? To keep the economy going? If so, perhaps it's time to make your own economy.

Making your own economy is about simplifying your finances. And that means clearing the clutter such as debt, sloppy spending and overconsumption. If you are a compulsive shopper, get professional help. Think about using up what you have before buying more. Don't spend money you don't have. The more you can simplify your finances, the easier it will be to control them.

When you look around your home, how many "bargains" do you see that have never been used, consumed or worn? What drives you to buy more paper towels when you already have 30 rolls? Are you guilty of duplicate spending because you can't find something at home?

Many of us spend way too much money on stuff that we don't need, often to fill the emptiness we feel in our heart. What if you could begin to make your internal needs a little more important than your external wants? What if you turned your mess into a message to your children and grandchildren, one that shows them the value and meaning of money? What if you chose financial serenity over financial security?

Financial serenity affords us the opportunity to get in touch with what matters. Are you buying a lifestyle that aligns with your values? Most people want more time just as much as they want more money. Money doesn't bring happiness, but happiness brings money. In other

words, if you are content with what you have, you will not only attract more abundance, but feel it too.

Perhaps there's a shift in consciousness that needs to happen. What would it take to wake up in the morning and say, "I have enough" or "I have everything I need." If you are wanting, consider this. The feeling of wanting comes from the thought that you don't have enough. Therefore, according to the law of attraction, you continue to create not having enough.

Financial wellness is having an understanding of your financial situation and then taking charge. Empower yourself by working with what you have. Surely there is something you can sell (that you no longer need, want or use) to help reduce the debt. Then, vow to live within your means. There's a saying that goes something like this: "If you're looking to invest in your future, the best way to double your money is to fold it over and put it back in your pocket."

Simplify, simplify, simplify. Become your own role model so you can model the change you want to see. Remember, it isn't money that complicates our lives, but what we believe it will do for us. See if you can live better for less, with less. Often, too much of anything is too little in the end anyway.

Kater is a professional organizer, real estate stager, yoga teacher and the author of four books. For more information, go to www.katerleatherman.com

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

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We Are Thankful for Well-Mannered Children: HOW TO CREATE MORE OF THEM

By Margery Sinclair

Along with holiday joy, many of us unfortunately also anticipate a good helping of family friction in the season ahead. As a professional etiquette coach—better read today as “social skills”—I’ve come to understand that generational differences contribute to many misunderstandings. We are particularly tempted to complain about children and teenagers whose behavior fails to meet our own standards. If you have such concerns, they are legitimate.

Social skills are necessary on the playground, in the classroom and in the workplace. Mutual respect is the basis of good manners. How can we help our young people build their social skills, or at least meet the older generation half way? This is an important role that grandparents are well-equipped to fill—tactfully.

You already know the Golden Rule, and so do most children—treat others the way you want to be treated. But help them move on to the Platinum Rule: Treat other people the way they want to be treated. This is more difficult because not everyone wants to be treated the same.

Teach them the Platinum Rule and how to watch other people for cues on how they like to be treated. What is too casual for one person may be too formal for another. Pay attention; they give hints. In case of doubt, suggest starting out more formally. After you have said, “Hey Mandy, what’s up?” it’s hard to go back to, “How are you, Mrs. Daniels?”

Here are seven specific teaching techniques to improve young people’s understanding. You have the power to help them build better relationships, better futures and the social graces that will make you happier to enjoy their company.

1. Teach by Example. Keeping your word demonstrates trustworthiness. Write thank-you notes to children, who rarely get anything in the mail. This is how they learn that it feels good to be appreciated. When gratitude is expressed, people want to keep on doing nice things for you.

2. Teach with Reasons. It’s easier to remember reasons than to memorize rules. “Sit up straight at the table.” Why? Because good posture shows self-respect, confidence and makes you look like a high-energy, wide-awake person.

“Thank them twice.” After you have thanked the giver in person for the favor, gift or hospitality, thanking them a second time shows that you really mean it. This can be handwritten, via email or text, or in person the next time you see them.

“Have a firm handshake.” People form an opinion about you based partly on your handshake. A weak handshake can indicate a weak personality.

“Chew quietly and with your mouth closed.” The mouth has two functions. Alternate them.

3. Teach Children How to Find Their Own Answers. Google topics as specific as, “What does the R stand for in RSVP,” or as vast as sports etiquette.

4. Teach Tactfully. Tact is the pleasant side of truth. We should always tell the truth, but some people are blatantly blunt. After feelings have been hurt, they say, “Hey, I was only being honest!” It’s better to be kind in the first place.

5. Teach Your Expectations and Reminders. Tell children what manners are expected at each time and place. “Now we’re going inside. Please remember to say hello to Mr. Frost and look at his face.” It’s not the rules that are difficult; it’s the exceptions to the rules in different situations.

6. Teach the Corrections in Private. No one learns well through embarrassment. “Please use the napkin,” gets better results than, “Don’t wipe your hands on the table cloth!” Select good behavior to praise rather than bad behavior to criticize.

7. Teach with Honest Feedback. Kids need to know how their behavior affects others. “When you ask me in that tone of voice, I feel angry and don’t want to give you anything.” Other people have feelings too.

Teaching manners to children is the kindest thing you can do for them, and it’s a long-term project. Start when they are toddlers, and you will have lovely teenagers. Good manners are a good legacy.

Margery lives in Annapolis and teaches social skills at colleges, corporations and for children. She is the author of “A Year of Good Manners.” Visit her website at www.MargerySinclair.com

Q. Does a socially graceful person have both “company” and “every day” manners?

A. Be careful, this is a trick question. The way it’s worded sounds like the answer should be yes, it’s important to know both. But no, you should not have two separate sets of manners. Life will be easier if you only know one way to behave, and you treat everyone with kindness and respect.

Holiday Remembrance

By E. Hovey

Each year at the beginning of December two holiday traditions commemorate the lives of America's fallen heroes. If you participate in one or both of these memorable events, you will find it worth the trip.

At dusk on Saturday, Dec. 2, the graves of the more than 23,000 soldiers who were killed, wounded or missing at the Battle of Antietam are illuminated. Candles are lit by volunteers in cooperation with the American Business Women's Association and the Washington County Convention and Visitors' Bureau in preparation for the hundreds of cars that will drive through the graveyard at the Antietam National Battle Field. At 6 p.m., cars with only parking lights lit will wind their way through five miles of road, meandering between and around the tombstones. Each flame flickers for just a few hours, commemorating the life of a casualty from that horrific 1862 battle. Plan to arrive early to join the line of cars that can take as long as two hours to reach the entrance. The battlefield is accessible on Richardson Avenue, which is located off Route 34 in Sharpsburg. Pedestrians are not permitted. The rain date is Saturday, Dec. 9. For a map and other details, log onto www.nps.gov/anti/planyourvisit/luminary.htm

Another memorable event takes place in Arlington National

Cemetery where the public is invited to either join the volunteers to help distribute wreaths to be placed against each tombstone or to come as an observer. Morrill Worcester, the president of Worcester Wreath Co., of Harrington, Maine, started Wreaths Across America in 1992 by delivering 5,000 handmade Christmas wreaths to Arlington. His company has created this tradition and continues to donate and arrange delivery each December. This year, the event will take place at noon Saturday, Dec. 13, and in commemoration of the 150th anniversary of Arlington National Cemetery. The goal is to cover all of the 230,000 gravesites with a fresh green wreath.

This tradition of wreath placement has spread throughout the nation and this Dec. 16, thousands of wreaths will be distributed for gravesites at more than 1,200 locations throughout the United States. Your group or organization can get involved with a donation, by serving as a fund-raiser or by volunteering to place the wreaths. Wreaths can be purchased through the website for \$15 for one, \$75 for five and in larger orders. Acknowledgement is then sent either in memory of or in honor of a veteran. More information can be found online at www.wreathscrossamerica.org/ which includes a list of local cemeteries such as the National Cemetery in Crownsville.



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Read our article "Options for a Whiter, Brighter Smile" in this edition of Outlook!

All I Want for Christmas

Fall has just begun and already ads for Christmas are popping up. Can't we at least get through the beauty of the Autumn leaves? Each Christmas I'm determined to focus on the real meaning of the season, but it seems to get more and more difficult. Am I the only one who would like it to suddenly be Jan. 1 and have it all back to real peace on earth? I remember a friend about to go on a big trip saying, "I wish I had already been and had a good time."

Somehow I will drag out all the decorations from the basement: the kitchen Santa I won at a cookie contest, the little table tree decorated with angels collected from trips over the years, the 'new to me' crèche scene I found in a thrift shop to replace the one we had from our early married years (Joseph's head was taped on), the big stuffed bear I found at a garage sale, the front door wreath I won on a trip to New Orleans, and so on. OK, when these things are finally placed around the house, I admit to experiencing some warm, fuzzy feelings.

Then it is time to bake the traditional cookies and write the cards to far away friends. Some of these friends have had a hard year due to the hurricane season -- one lost a home in the Texas floods, another in the California fires. How can I possibly complain about anything?

My family will always remember one Christmas because we all felt it captured the true spirit of the season. Our three children were home from college and much to their chagrin, we were up early on Christmas morning to pile in our station wagon for a trip to a soup kitchen at Catholic University.

By Maureen Smith

At the kitchen some of us ladled out the traditional fare of turkey and trimmings to feed the people lined up to receive their hot meal of the day. Others delivered these meals to the homebound. It was an eye-opener for the entire family, including me. And it made our Christmas.

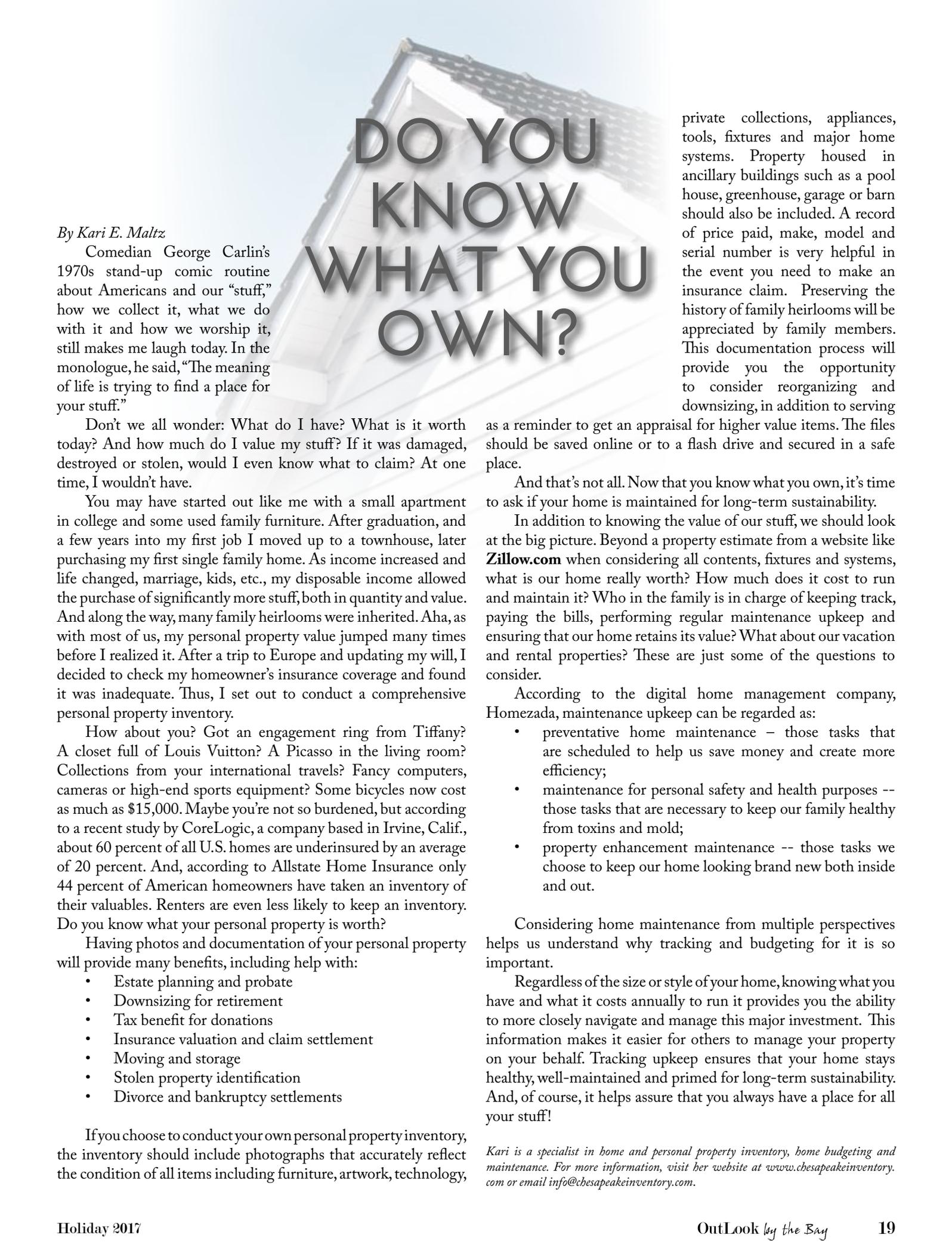
Other Christmases we have taken names from the many wish trees around town and filled a box with clothes, toys, games and even things as simple as a toothbrush. Whatever your choice,

giving to those less fortunate is one good solution to finding that meaningful way to celebrate the birthday of the reason for the season!

Listed in the sidebar are just a few of the organizations that could use your help during the holiday season. This can get you started and hopefully we can all be inspired to reach out to the needy at other times of the year. The need is always there.

You could decide to donate a tree to a local church or school, or try calling these venues for holiday giving:

- Volunteer Center for Anne Arundel County, Inc. 410.897.9207
- Our Daily Bread Hot Meal Program in Baltimore 443.986.9031
- Giving Back www.homelessdrive.org
- Holiday Sharing 410.269.4462
- Happy Helpers www.happyhelpersforthehomeless.com/



DO YOU KNOW WHAT YOU OWN?

By Kari E. Maltz

Comedian George Carlin's 1970s stand-up comic routine about Americans and our "stuff," how we collect it, what we do with it and how we worship it, still makes me laugh today. In the monologue, he said, "The meaning of life is trying to find a place for your stuff."

Don't we all wonder: What do I have? What is it worth today? And how much do I value my stuff? If it was damaged, destroyed or stolen, would I even know what to claim? At one time, I wouldn't have.

You may have started out like me with a small apartment in college and some used family furniture. After graduation, and a few years into my first job I moved up to a townhouse, later purchasing my first single family home. As income increased and life changed, marriage, kids, etc., my disposable income allowed the purchase of significantly more stuff, both in quantity and value. And along the way, many family heirlooms were inherited. Aha, as with most of us, my personal property value jumped many times before I realized it. After a trip to Europe and updating my will, I decided to check my homeowner's insurance coverage and found it was inadequate. Thus, I set out to conduct a comprehensive personal property inventory.

How about you? Got an engagement ring from Tiffany? A closet full of Louis Vuitton? A Picasso in the living room? Collections from your international travels? Fancy computers, cameras or high-end sports equipment? Some bicycles now cost as much as \$15,000. Maybe you're not so burdened, but according to a recent study by CoreLogic, a company based in Irvine, Calif., about 60 percent of all U.S. homes are underinsured by an average of 20 percent. And, according to Allstate Home Insurance only 44 percent of American homeowners have taken an inventory of their valuables. Renters are even less likely to keep an inventory. Do you know what your personal property is worth?

Having photos and documentation of your personal property will provide many benefits, including help with:

- Estate planning and probate
- Downsizing for retirement
- Tax benefit for donations
- Insurance valuation and claim settlement
- Moving and storage
- Stolen property identification
- Divorce and bankruptcy settlements

If you choose to conduct your own personal property inventory, the inventory should include photographs that accurately reflect the condition of all items including furniture, artwork, technology,

private collections, appliances, tools, fixtures and major home systems. Property housed in ancillary buildings such as a pool house, greenhouse, garage or barn should also be included. A record of price paid, make, model and serial number is very helpful in the event you need to make an insurance claim. Preserving the history of family heirlooms will be appreciated by family members. This documentation process will provide you the opportunity to consider reorganizing and downsizing, in addition to serving

as a reminder to get an appraisal for higher value items. The files should be saved online or to a flash drive and secured in a safe place.

And that's not all. Now that you know what you own, it's time to ask if your home is maintained for long-term sustainability.

In addition to knowing the value of our stuff, we should look at the big picture. Beyond a property estimate from a website like **Zillow.com** when considering all contents, fixtures and systems, what is our home really worth? How much does it cost to run and maintain it? Who in the family is in charge of keeping track, paying the bills, performing regular maintenance upkeep and ensuring that our home retains its value? What about our vacation and rental properties? These are just some of the questions to consider.

According to the digital home management company, Homezada, maintenance upkeep can be regarded as:

- preventative home maintenance – those tasks that are scheduled to help us save money and create more efficiency;
- maintenance for personal safety and health purposes -- those tasks that are necessary to keep our family healthy from toxins and mold;
- property enhancement maintenance -- those tasks we choose to keep our home looking brand new both inside and out.

Considering home maintenance from multiple perspectives helps us understand why tracking and budgeting for it is so important.

Regardless of the size or style of your home, knowing what you have and what it costs annually to run it provides you the ability to more closely navigate and manage this major investment. This information makes it easier for others to manage your property on your behalf. Tracking upkeep ensures that your home stays healthy, well-maintained and primed for long-term sustainability. And, of course, it helps assure that you always have a place for all your stuff!

Kari is a specialist in home and personal property inventory, home budgeting and maintenance. For more information, visit her website at www.chesapeakeinventory.com or email info@chesapeakeinventory.com.

SEASONAL TREATS FEATURING LOCAL PRODUCE

By Kerry Dunnington

As we begin to settle into the colder months of the year, it's a good idea to keep nutrient-rich, seasonal vegetables in the forefront of meal planning. Here are two simple and colorful salads—with lots of complementing textures—that are a great representation of the season, complete with many ingredients that are popular now. They are delicious on their own or when they accompany chicken, fish, beef or pork entrees.

GOLDEN BEET, ARUGULA, POMEGRANATE AND FETA SALAD WITH BLOOD ORANGE DRESSING

For a unique presentation, I like to serve this beautiful cold weather salad in savoy cabbage leaves. If you don't want to serve it this way, serve just as you would any other salad. Extra dressing will keep for several days in the refrigerator and can be tossed with other leafy greens. If you can't get blood orange juice, regular orange juice can be substituted with the same results.

Serves 6

4 medium golden beets, quartered
1 tsp. salt
1 tsp. Dijon-style mustard
Several grindings of freshly ground black pepper
1/4 cup blood orange juice, freshly squeezed
3/4 cup canola oil
6 generous handfuls of baby arugula
6 savoy cabbage leaves, if desired
1/2 cup pomegranate seeds
1/2 cup feta cheese, crumbled
1/4 cup toasted sunflower seeds
Micro greens (garnish)

1. Bring a large pot of water to a boil. Cook the beets until fork-tender, about 15 to 20 minutes, depending on size. When the beets are cool enough to handle, pinch off the skin.
2. Julienne-cut the beets and place them in a medium bowl.
3. In a two-cup capacity jar with a tight-fitting lid, combine the salt, Dijon mustard, pepper and blood orange juice. Shake the mixture vigorously. Add the oil and shake well.
4. Lightly coat the beets with the dressing.
5. Toss the arugula with enough dressing to coat the leaves. Divide the arugula among six savoy cabbage leaves or serving plates. Top each with the beets, pomegranate seeds, feta and sunflower seeds. Garnish with micro greens. Serve immediately.

CELERY SEED DRESSING

Extra dressing will keep for several days in the refrigerator and can be tossed with other leafy greens.

Makes about 1 1/2 cups

1/3 cup sugar
1 tsp. salt
1 tsp. dry mustard
1 tsp. freshly minced onion
1/4 cup apple cider vinegar
1 cup canola or neutral oil
1 tsp. celery seeds

1. In a medium bowl, combine sugar, salt and dry mustard. Add onion and apple cider vinegar and whisk until sugar has dissolved.
2. Slowly add oil and whisk until dressing thickens. Add celery seeds and whisk until well blended.
3. Transfer to a two-cup jar with a tight-fitting lid and serve immediately or refrigerate until serving time. Allow the dressing to come to room temperature before using. Shake well prior to serving.

RED CABBAGE, CRANBERRY, WALNUT AND ROQUEFORT SALAD WITH CELERY SEED DRESSING

4 to 6 servings

5 cups shredded red cabbage
1/3 cup dried cranberries
1/3 cup coarsely chopped walnuts, toasted
1/3 cup thinly sliced scallions (green onions)
1/2 cup crumbled Roquefort cheese

In a large bowl, combine cabbage, cranberries, walnuts, scallions and Roquefort. Toss with just enough dressing to coat the ingredients. Season with salt and pepper. Serve immediately.

Kerry is a national award-winning author of three cookbooks. She can be contacted at kerrydunnington@verizon.net or for more information, log on to www.kerrydunnington.com

OPTIONS FOR A WHITER, BRIGHTER SMILE

By Drs. Woody Wooddell and Joe Passaro

When your teeth are not as white as you would like them to be, or if they have staining or obvious discoloration, tooth whitening is a great way to bring them back to a more pleasing esthetic. But what makes teeth white? Enamel, the outermost layer of a tooth comprised of microscopic crystalline rods, is responsible for keeping the tooth safe and white. It does this by providing an extremely hard and durable layer to the outside of the tooth and keeping it safe from the effects of chewing, gnashing, trauma and acid attacks caused by sugar.

Extrinsic stains are those that appear on the surface of teeth as a result of exposure to dark-colored beverages, foods and tobacco. During routine chewing, millions of micro-cracks occur in the enamel. It is these cracks, as well as the spaces between the crystalline rods, that gradually fill up with stains and debris. Teeth-whitening products work on the tooth's enamel the same way bleach works on white fabric, by removing the discoloration and foreign particles. So what are the options for achieving a whiter, brighter smile?

Whitening toothpaste is everywhere now. It is a tempting solution to the problem of discolored teeth. You are already brushing your teeth, right? Why not whiten them while brushing? The problem with tooth whitening toothpastes is they don't work terribly well. After many months you may notice the difference of a shade or two, but rarely do the results stand out. Plus, whitening toothpastes tend to be very abrasive, which can be damaging to your enamel in the long run.

Whitening mouthwashes typically use peroxide-based whitening agents to whiten your teeth. The problem is that reasonably you can only be expected to rinse your mouth for a minute or two before spitting out the mouthwash. A minute or two a day isn't sufficient to whiten teeth by more than a few shades over the course of several months.

Whitening strips have improved a lot over the years and now offer a reasonable

tooth-whitening solution when compared with the other two home remedies mentioned earlier. Whitening strips now come in a variety of offerings, some are short application, some long. All of them allow you to whiten your teeth at least a few shades over a couple weeks or months.

Professional teeth-whitening solutions are by far the most effective and fast-acting solution available. There are a number of at-home and in-office whitening solutions available. Ask your dental office which options are provided.

Drs. Wooddell and Passaro opened the doors to their dental practice in Davidsonville in 1981. Offering general dentistry services and expert restorative and esthetic dental solutions, they can be reached at 410.956.5555, or visit their website at www.wp dentalgroup.com



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Sing Stress Away This Season

By Nancy J. Schaaf

Despite the festivities and cheer, Christmas is often the most stressful time of year. Shopping for gifts and standing in long lines at the checkout, decorating the inside and outside of our homes and cooking the holiday dinner and baking cookies can add stress to our already stressful lives. One excellent way to celebrate the season and relieve stress is through music, which has a profound effect on how we think and feel.

Research suggests that singing affects us physically, emotionally and mentally. Music enchants and boasts of the power to heal. Numerous studies demonstrate singing and listening to music can boost the immune system, reduce anxiety and stress levels, and contribute to general health maintenance and happiness.

The physical benefits of singing are abundant. A study conducted at the University of Frankfurt concluded that the immune system receives a boost from singing because it increases the number of antibodies, which enhances the system and helps to fight bad bacteria. Singing is also an aerobic activity as more oxygen is inhaled for better circulation, promoting a good mood. And singing necessitates deep breathing, which is vital to meditation and other relaxation techniques. For seniors, singing is a form of exercise because lungs receive a good workout. The diaphragm is fortified, blood flow is better circulated and endorphins are released due to the increased oxygen from inhaling deeply. Throat muscles are strengthened, which can improve sleep that is otherwise interrupted by sleep apnea or snoring. Lastly, posture is improved by standing up straight with shoulders held back.

Not only are there physical benefits, but music heals the spirit, according to a study conducted by German and British researchers that was published in *Frontiers in Human Neuroscience*. It confirmed that singing is a powerful way to fight stress. Studies show that singing

significantly lowers the stress hormone cortisol. Singing has a calming, yet energizing effect on people as it soothes nerves and elevates spirits. The elation may come from endorphins as it stimulates the release of dopamine, the brain neurochemical responsible for pleasure. Group singing has many benefits because of the release of oxytocin, the hormone associated with

love, trust and bonding that promotes harmonious relationships. Oxytocin has been found to alleviate anxiety and stress; studies have also found that singing reduces feelings of depression and loneliness.

Depending upon its rhythm, songs promote different responses. For example, *Jingle Bells* and *Rockin' Around the Christmas Tree* are upbeat tunes, which increase positive energy and cheery feelings. We feel good and when others notice, they respond appropriately.

Conversely, singing or humming *What Child is This* or *Silent Night* slows down our energy levels, creating serenity. These hymns

help us decelerate and breathe deeply, reducing the stress and negative emotions associated with Christmas obligations.

The holidays can contribute to anxiety and music can be a great stress management tool during this hectic time of year. In a review of more than 400 research papers conducted by a team at McGill University, it was determined that playing and listening to music has a clear effect on improving immune system function, mood management and anxiety.

During this season of cheer, it might not hurt to create quieter musical moments throughout the day. Sing or listen to your favorite carols and concentrate on the lyrics to experience a spiritual lift amidst all the holiday stress. Listening to your favorite holiday albums, attending a candle-lit church service, joining a caroling group or singing with friends are all great ways to relieve stress, improve the immune system, bond with others and really enjoy the season. And for the best of local holiday entertainment, log onto www.visitmaryland.org/list/holiday-performances

Nancy is a retired registered nurse and educator. She may be reached at nanjan30@hotmail.com

Enjoy the holiday season by attending live performances such as *The Nutcracker* and *Handel's Messiah* or attend a chorale or orchestra concert.

Bay Bytes

To locate a Christmas tree farm near you where you can cut your own or pick up one freshly cut, log onto www.pickyourownchristmastree.org/MDxmastrees.php

THE SUBTLETIES OF STRENGTH: CHECK YOUR MUSCLE POWER

By Kathleen McCarthy

There are plenty of ways to measure health. Many of us are too familiar with blood tests at the lab, ultrasounds at the imaging center and wellness checks at our doctors' offices. These tests give us an idea of our health conditions whether we have diabetes, high blood pressure or arthritis. They don't tell us anything about our strength, how robust we are or our level of physical fitness.

Most of us are physically fit. Movement for many of us is a major part of our day. We walk, climb stairs, help others, golf, garden, run errands – any number of activities to keep us on our feet. So is this enough? Do we have strength in all the right places to be able to walk safely on uneven ground? When we're in crowded places or cluttered spaces, can we move fast enough on our feet and not sway into a fall?

How well we can move around physically is an early detection sign of how we'll do in the future. Specifically, the muscle power that we have in our lower body indicates how we'll be able to take care of ourselves independently, if we're at risk of falling, and how much our health conditions affect our functioning. If we know where we stand with our lower body strength, then we can do something about it.

Sometimes we don't notice that we're getting weaker. Perhaps we've developed a habit using nearby supports for safety reasons, but now we rely on them. What we aren't supposed to do is put all of our weight on arm rests to get up from a chair, depend heavily on handrails to pull ourselves up a flight of stairs or fully lean on a car door to get in and out of a car. When we don't use our leg, hip and trunk muscles enough to keep them limber and toned, we lose strength. These muscles require a lot of frequent movement to stay strong. Of course, if back or hip problems are an issue, by all means continue to depend on supports like these.

One test that tells us a lot about our muscle power is the "sit to stand" test. It's a quick test that physical therapists use to get a baseline of a person's lower body strength. Getting up and down from a chair sounds simple, but it's actually a complex, mechanical motion. You'll be surprised how taxing this up-and-down motion feels in such a short time.

To find out where you stand, do the "sit to stand test." Use a chair without arm rests and place it against a wall for stability. Ask another person to be on standby in case you're wobbly. Have a seat. Fold your arms over your chest. On your own power rise up from the chair then sit down again. Repeat as many times as you can within 30 seconds.

In the box below is the scoring for the 30-second sit to stand test promoted by the fall prevention initiative called STEADI at the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention. You'll see the expected scores by age group for women and men. If you can score the number of repetitions listed for your age range, then you're strong on your feet. Any numbers lower than those listed below indicate that you might need strength training. See where you fit in:

| Age | Women | Men |
|-------|-------|-----|
| 60-64 | 12 | 14 |
| 65-69 | 11 | 12 |
| 70-74 | 10 | 12 |
| 75-79 | 10 | 11 |
| 80-84 | 9 | 10 |
| 85-89 | 8 | 8 |
| 90-94 | 4 | 7 |

In any case, all of us can improve our muscle power rather quickly. Before you get up from your seat, take a moment to consciously shift your full bodyweight on your feet. Then as we push forward, we'll engage our thigh and abdominal muscles to stand. This deliberate action will strengthen and build muscle mass. The idea is to maintain muscle mass so that bones and joints are protected if one should fall.

Researchers who study the biology of aging see the benefits of strength training for seniors whether at home, at a senior center or in a gym. Even a small amount of weight training can substantially improve muscle mass. Although we don't develop new muscle fibers as younger people do, we can always increase our muscle tone and strength to keep us healthy.

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Thirty-Second Chair Stand. www.cdc.gov/steadi/pdf/30_second_chair_stand_test-a.pdf

Do you have a goal? If not why not?

KNIT OR CROCHET, A GROWING TREND

By Joanne R. Alloway

Until recently, all I knew about needlecraft was that it involved yarn and needles. Two talented women, who recently opened yarn shops in Annapolis, were kind enough to share their knowledge with me on just how it's done. How surprising and rewarding to see and feel a skein of yarn become something fabulous!

There are many places to buy yarn, but two new yarn shops stand out: Woolwinders, 709 Skippers Lane, owned by Janet Tate, and Knits and Pieces, 626 Admiral Drive, owned by Karen Santa. Both stores have a large stock of beautiful yarns – of all weights, colors and prices -- including hand-dyed and handmade fibers as well as lots of helpful information. There are knit and crocheted wearables and accessories in both shops as well as yarns, needles, patterns and whatever else a beginning or experienced knitter would find useful.

Since opening Woolwinders, Ms. Tate has developed a class schedule offering learning projects for beginning through advanced knitters for \$45 plus materials. Some are popular and sell out quickly. To access the new schedule and more, log onto www.woolwinders.com Beautiful shawls and scarves that class members are making are displayed. The shop is loaded with accessories and is active on social media.

At Knits and Pieces, I met Ms. Santa on a Monday, when the shop was closed, but customers still came. She thinks the public's response has been so good as yarns are varied and easy to work with. Needle arts are trending because the yarns not only vary in content, but unlike prior yarns, most can be easily washed. Both shop owners agreed that projects can now be completed more quickly with the new patterns and materials. This keeps crafters interested in knitting or crocheting for not only personal projects, but for charitable reasons, especially for the holidays. If you're looking to learn, to perfect your technique or dust off a former skill, classes are ongoing and can be found at www.facebook.com/Knitsandpiecesannapolis/

The Craft Yarn Council (CYC) has conducted annual surveys since 1994 to gather intelligence on yarn trends and about those who have knit, crocheted or purchased yarn. The most recent (2014) online survey was completed by 3,178 crafters. It was designed to discover where and how crafters get inspired, their ideas, motivation and what they create. Explore at www.craftyarncouncil.com

Respondents revealed that 28 percent were from the Midwest, followed by the Southeast (24 percent), Northeast (22 percent), West (11 percent), Southwest (8 percent) and Northwest (7 percent). Most were in the 55- to 64-year-old bracket. As for motivation,

65 percent enjoyed the creative outlet, 51 percent liked making things for

others and 44 percent were enriched by a sense of accomplishment.

Between 56 and 93 percent of fiber artists believe they garner benefits, in addition to that sense of accomplishment, of reduced stress and anxiety and increased confidence. Most enjoy the social benefit of crafting together and the camaraderie or sense of community.

It's apparent from both the CYC survey and our shop owners, that this sense of community includes making things for those less fortunate or those in need. Both Knits and Pieces and Woolwinders owners belong to the South River Knitting Guild, which meets monthly and accepts and distributes knitted items and donated yarn. Items are designated for patients and others in need in the community. They make infant hats and blankets, chemo caps, shawls and breast pillows for cancer patients. Both shops ensure that if you bring in your items, they will be passed on to the guild for distribution. Knitters may also email the president at leeturowski@gmail.com

Other local knitting groups focused on charitable giving include:

- St. Margaret's Episcopal Church – prayer shawl mission, contact Jane at star2d@aol.com
- Quiet Waters Park Charity Knitting Group – creating items for infants, call Visitor Center Desk, 410.222.1777 or email, rpabdu90@aacounty.org
- Anne Arundel County Libraries -- “Knitting Nights” for knit goods to be donated or just for fun at several locations. Log onto www.aacpl.net/content/knitting-nights
- International organizations also welcome knit items and serve the underprivileged both here and abroad. Knitting4Peace has delivered knitted items to people in more than 70 countries, including hats, scarves, mittens, socks, blankets, bibs, booties, mats and dolls. Contact at www.knitting4peace.org
- Pioneers of Peace has photos of items made for charity at www.picaram.org/tag/pioneersofpeace
- All Free Knitting has links to charity knitting by states and specialty at www.allfreeknitting.com/knitting-for-charity

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

Why not just live for today and let tomorrow take care of itself?

CAMARADERIE

AN ELIXIR OF LIFE

By Phil Ferrara

How would you define a lucky person? Is it that neighbor who always seems to come home from the casino with money winnings? Or your friend whose golf shot regularly stops close to the pin, or who seems to win the bid at the bridge table every time? Perhaps it's your relative who invariably makes the right selections in the stock market.

Well, if we return to the fabulous music recording year of 1964, Barbra Streisand would tell us differently! Barbra would say, "People who need people are the luckiest people in the world."

Our small hiking club was formed 12 years ago to enjoy a sport that can be done nearly anywhere, anytime, at almost no cost save a good pair of boots. Since the beginning, camaraderie has been a hallmark of its existence. Hiking, or even just walking together, provides health and psychological benefits galore. Personal energy levels rise, and a positive mental attitude results. Experts insist that this type of activity benefits all by fending off depression, stress and loneliness.

On a club hike in September that attracted 21 participants, many of whom didn't know each other, it was fascinating to observe their social interactions and the bonding that took place. During our traditional "lunch on a log" along the forest trail, the group's laughter and conversation continued unabated. It was a great timeout to enjoy the peacefulness of the forest and new friends. A hiking friend, Janet, had recently commented following a Saturday hike in August at Quiet Waters Park that "the hike, the tailgate and the concert were great, but the camaraderie was the best!"

Working in concert with camaraderie are two benefits gained by hiking on forest trails. One occurs during photosynthesis when a small portion of the color spectrum can't be absorbed and reflects back to your eyes. That is the color green. It turns out that this rejected segment of light has a very calming influence on humans, enhancing health with hiking. Susan, another hiking friend, points out the value of the green of trees, noting that on her return home to Whitehall Creek, she senses her blood pressure dropping when going east on the greenway of Route 50 from the Washington, DC, Beltway.

Another benefit occurs in the forest when the leaves of the trees filter out noxious elements of the atmosphere and generate newly created oxygen. Studies show that your presence in that forest's fresh oxygen atmosphere further reduces blood pressure and improves vascular flexibility.

Here are a few ideas for enjoyable, nearby hikes at some of our favorite sites. Opportunities will present themselves over the holidays to gather your friends and visit the parks.

1. **Wincopin-Savage Park.** A forested wonderland with four miles of trails, frequent Patuxent River views from cliffs and along shoreline trails. From Route 32, take Exit 12-B, Route 1 South. Take immediate right onto Howard St., then fork left onto Baltimore St. In one-half mile turn right on Savage-Guilford St. Go one mile, turn left on Vollmerhausen St. Go one more mile to parking lot on the left.
2. **Tuckahoe State Park.** Lakes, rivers, marshes and arboretums with 15 miles of trails in a huge 4,000-acre wilderness park. www.stateparks.com/tuckahoe_state_park_in_maryland.html!
3. **Cosca Regional Park.** Trails for six miles over low hills, around a lake and a nature center for all ages. www.mncppc.org/Facilities/Facility/Details/Cosca-Regional-Park-118
4. **American Chestnut Land Trust, North side.** Pristine wilderness with both easy and challenging trails for eight miles to rivers, overlooks and a remarkable beaver dam. www.acltweb.org/index.php/the-land/maps-and-trails/
5. **Downs Park.** Six miles of easy trails, natural and paved surfaces, through forests and along Chesapeake Bay shore. An aviary and visitors center to enjoy. www.aacounty.org/departments/recreation-parks/parks/downs/

Our hiking group has found that relationships are important and among the best weapons against life's vagaries. Be one of the lucky people. Join a hiking club or just gather a group of friends and go for a walk. As Barbra might say today, "Be one of the luckiest people in the world."

Phil is an avid biker and traveler and operates the Piedmont Trekkers hiking club. Interested hikers and outdoor enthusiasts with questions may reach him at pferrara65@comcast.net

The seasons have changed. The bugs have disappeared and the sudden squalls of Summer are past. Birds and butterflies have winged their way south. Geese from northern climes now populate our cornfields and rivers. Bundle up. It is a great time to explore the old highways of Maryland and the 42 rivers that crisscross the state – all with stories to tell.

On the Eastern Shore the Chester River forms the northern boundary of Kent Island. At 31 square miles, it's the largest Island in the Chesapeake Bay. It is the site of Maryland's first settlement (1631) and it is the new nation's third permanent settlement, preceded by Jamestown and Plymouth.

Winding its way from the small farming town of Millington, population 650, the 43 miles of the Chester River had been one of the busiest in Colonial times. By the 1670s a courthouse had been built at Grays Inn along one of the Chester's 30 creeks and at a new town, New Yarmouth, on the Eastern Neck. New Yarmouth moved in 1679 to New Town on the Chester. Today Eastern Neck is a National Wildlife Refuge, a sanctuary for migratory birds with public walking trails for viewing and New Town on the Chester is now called Chestertown.

Designated a port of entry in 1706, one of the oldest in the mid-Atlantic, serving Cecil, Queen Anne's and Kent counties, Chestertown thrived as a center of activity for the planter-merchant families of the Eastern Shore. Sloops and schooners built along its shores carried flour, pork and tobacco to Spain and the West Indies, returning with fruit, wine, cloth and furniture to the new cultural center between Annapolis and Philadelphia.

Leaders of the Revolution from Virginia followed the safest and shortest route to Philadelphia by ferry from Annapolis up the Chester River to their first night's lodging in Chestertown or Rockhall. Within 50 years the Chester would be one of the earliest rivers

to carry steamboat service. This service provided daily service to Baltimore for nearly 100 years. Steamboats carried not only farm supplies, but passengers who enjoyed good dining service.

Henry Slaughter, a Crumpton peach farmer, started a steamship company with two ships, which provided daily service, one going east and another west. After his death, the leading steamship company continued under one of his captains, Budd S. Ford, who had the fastest boat on the Bay. The largest boat to travel the Chester was the Dreamland, which carried 4,000 passengers on excursions to Crumpton, Baltimore and Bay resorts. All of this ended in 1923.

But ferry boat service continued to Love Point, located at the mouth of the Chester, where passengers connected to train service for travel to Ocean City. Myth has it that Love Point was

named for the tragic death of two lovers, a tale that goes back to the late 1600s. Others say the name was changed from Luff. Luff is in the action of sails when entering the Chester to meet the northwest winds. Either way, Love Point -- its lighthouse and hotel now gone -- was a busy point on the Chester River. Its history is told in the town park in Stevensville where the settlement of Maryland began.

Today the Chester River is a designated water trail. For 100 miles kayakers can meander along the river through a variety of ecosystems in the headwater creeks in Delaware and on through

Millington, passing waterfront farms. Along the way, you can see the Chester River Research Station, which is restoring 5,000 acres of farmland to its natural diverse wildlife habitat.

Whether by canoe, kayak, small water craft, foot, bike or car, the scenic Chester River provides a unique journey through history. Cooler weather is an invitation to explore.

A Chester River Journey

By Ellen Moyer

Bay Bytes

Do you have a brilliant idea for a business, but not sure how to get it off the ground? For lots of understandable help, there's **Entrepreneur.com**. The site provides a wealth of information on the how to's.

SHARING THE MEMORIES

By Ryan Helfenbein

The other day my son and I went on a fishing trip. On the way back home I pointed at an old dock. With a bit of emotion in my voice, I shared with him that it was a place where my grandfather always took me to fish when I was a young boy. Without a skip of a beat, my 11-year-old son began to ask questions: “How often did you and he fish together dad?” “What kind of fish did you catch there?” “How often did you get out fishing with him and what kind of boat did he have?”

The questions kept coming and it only opened up more memories to share about the times with my grandfather. For 20 minutes I answered his open-ended questions with funny stories to scary moments and the times I’ll never forget with my grandfather on the waters of the Chesapeake.

The holiday season can be a very emotional time, especially for those who have recently lost a loved one. It can be hard to know how to offer comfort to someone who is grieving through what is usually a joyful time. Just think back to the last time you had a close friend or relative who lost a loved one. When that person mentioned the one who had died, how did you respond? If the answer is awkwardly, you’re not alone. When we find ourselves in a stressful situation, it’s natural to want to find an exit strategy, but when it comes to a grieving friend, we must realize that the friend may simply be trying to reach out.

So how do we help someone to cope with a loss during the holiday season? Take it from an 11-year-old, use open-ended questions to generate memories. Memories are the key to helping someone through their emotional grief. Through memories, we find ourselves right back at that moment in time reliving every moment. Some say that they can even smell the air of where they were, sense the touch of their recently departed next to them, and most importantly, feel the emotion they felt during that time in personal history. There is a saying in the funeral industry that holds true – every visitor to a funeral home should leave laughing

and crying within seconds of each other when coping with a loss. This is done through the power of sharing memories and providing opportunities to share stories.

So you ask, when I use this tactic of open-ended questions, my friend seems to fall apart even more emotionally. What should I do? Yes, loss can create deep emotion and therefore you might find your friend almost falling to their knees in what appears to be pain when the departed is mentioned. Dare I say it? Don’t stop. Tears are good. They show we are progressing through our grief and not bottling it up or sweeping it under a rug. Now don’t keep

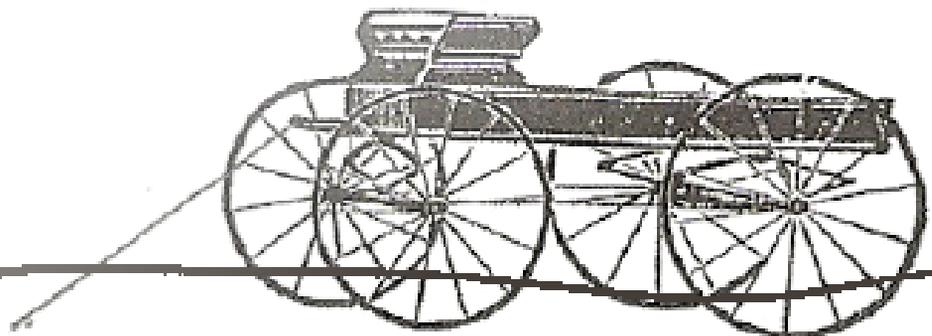
throwing questions at the person as they continue to fall apart. Perhaps break up your sharing of memories with a hug, or even a simple pat on the shoulder, letting them know you are there for them. You could also share a memory you had with the recently departed and the emotion you felt during that time. All in all, don’t be shy to continue to open time up for the sharing of memories with your friend. Remember, it’s not just the memories, but your willingness to talk about the recently departed,

that can provide comfort to someone who is grieving, especially during the holiday season.

It was enjoyable talking to my son about the fishing days with my grandfather. Without knowing it, he opened up so many old memories that I continue to think of while writing this article. As a matter of fact, I had to pause halfway through to laugh about the fact that my grandfather went less than a one-third of a mile to reach the fishing grounds every time we went out. But as a young boy, it felt like we were on the open waters of the ocean, fishing with the greatest fisherman around.

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

How do we help people when they are coping with a loss during the holiday season?



FASHION RULES MADE TO BE BROKEN

By Louise Whiteside

“You shouldn’t wear white after Labor Day!”

“Navy and black don’t go together!”

“Never mix gold and silver jewelry!”

“Your bag and heels must always match!”

“Sequins are only for after hours!”

“Never mix patterns or prints!”

“Tunics are for tall people, not for petites!”

No doubt you’ve heard the above “rules” from your mother, a fashion-conscious aunt or, perhaps, you’ve even read these, or similar, “rules” in your favorite style magazine. Well, it’s now time to put these old edicts in an antique trunk and store them away in the attic! The reason: In today’s fashion world, nearly anything goes. That is, you now have the freedom to develop your own personal style and wear what looks and feels best on you.

For example, let’s take a brief look at the hackneyed fashion myths we started with:

1. No white after Labor Day. Nonsense! The department stores display Winter white trousers, jackets and bulky sweaters throughout the Fall and Winter season. You can experiment by pairing two textures, or try mixing a ruffly white blouse with a tailored white skirt. Dazzling any time of the year.

2. Navy and black don’t go together. You may have learned that these colors are too closely related to each other, and that the combination may look as though you made a mistake while dressing in the dark. The truth is, both navy and black are neutral colors, and neutral colors go nicely together. One good trick is to wear the combination with something white or a contrasting, lighter color. Try mixing textures: For example, a silky navy blouse with a black wool blazer. Perk it up with a gold or silver necklace.

3. Never mix gold and silver jewelry. Another myth to discard! Mix your rose gold with silver; your yellow gold with rose gold; your silver with yellow gold! Wear them on your wrists, fingers or neckline. Pair a gold clutch with silver pumps for an *elegant fashion statement*.

4. Your bag and heels must always match. No longer! Mix it up: Choose prints, solid colors, or both (including animal prints).

5. Sequins are only for after hours. Maybe at one time, but not now. The secret is balance: For daytime, pair a glittery top with a simple blazer or jeans. Let the sparkles shine against a basic piece.

6. Never mix patterns or prints. It’s done all the time. Examine the pages of *Vogue*

and *Harper’s Bazaar*. If the concept isn’t yet comfortable for you, ease in gradually: Begin with a print in an otherwise solid outfit, and make the second print an accessory, such as a bag. Later, when you feel more adventuresome, try mixing a bold print with a more subtle pattern, and look for prints with the same undertones. Again, combine different textures.

7. Tunics are for tall people, not for petites. False! However, be careful not to let your tunic overwhelm your small frame: Wear a long tunic as a dress with matching hosiery. Cinch your waist with a belt. To look your most beautiful, create an hourglass figure.

Mix patterns. Colors. Textures. High-end and low-end pieces. The old with the new. Retrieve a piece of clothing from your closet that you’d forgotten about, and pair it in a new way. The secret is to choose combinations that flatter your size, coloration and body type, and that emphasize those parts of you that you like best and de-emphasize those you like least, respectively.

Now more than ever, your look can be your own creation. You will likely discover that the fashion rules of yesteryear no longer apply, and that your look can be essentially your own.

Litmus test: Dress for an occasion. Now, stand in front of a full-length mirror. Give yourself a critical look, from head to toe. Your inner voice will give you your answer:

If you get a “yes,” you’re out the door and on your way.

If you get a “no,” try on something else.

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GETTING YOUR GREENS?

By Molly Laurysens

Now that most of the Fall harvest is past, have you noticed the challenge of getting in your fruits and vegetables? Well, we've got good news. Getting fruits and vegetables in your diet can be as simple as 1-2-3.

Try drinking them! Juicing is nothing new. We are sure that you have noticed the proliferation of the fancy juice bars -- they aren't just for the gym anymore. And you have probably seen the deep, dark green juice roaming around in other people's cups and wondering what it was.

In spite of its rich, dark color and healthy benefits, green juice doesn't have to be painful to swallow. In fact, green juice can be downright tasty.

Spinach detractors, we're looking at you here. If you throw in a few handfuls of organic spinach with a couple of oranges, you can't even taste the spinach. It is so yummy. Plus, you get most all of the benefits of said superfood. Another leafy green powerhouse, kale, which has a stronger taste than spinach, can be used with some fruit to reap all its luscious benefits.

Benefits are not only scrumptious, but your immune system will probably thank you.

Depending on your needs, a good rule of thumb is to use a base of three fruits and three veggies. Or maybe you just need a ratio of two and two. No matter, just focus more on the greens as this will help with sugar intake. For instance, orange, mango and kiwi blend well with spinach, celery and cucumber. Another one might include a cored apple and pear to go with green pepper and kale. Don't be afraid to experiment and go with combinations you like.

Want to turn any juice into a smoothie? No problem. You can use a frozen (peeled) banana, ice cubes or even some plain yogurt to go with that juice. Throw it all in a blender and you have a sweet cup of delicious and nutritious juice.

Gone are the days where you have to spend your precious time researching the best juicer, since there are so many on the market. Some of them can be quite expensive as well. A simple blender can usually do the trick. You will just need to prepare food first by peeling and coring. Also, the blender will be thicker so you should consider straining.

If you are looking for something fast and easy, remember grocery stores have even gotten in the act. Some will even make the juice right in front of you. If that isn't offered at your local store then you can just go to the refrigerated section, usually stocked near the organic vegetables, and check out

a host of juices. They sell them in single servings as well as in larger varieties.

Green is not the only vibrant color you will see there. There is a rainbow of colors in the juice section, from velvety red to orange and even blue. There are smoothies and protein drinks. You can use

them to replace an entire meal or a snack, or even just as a sweet, new way to take a supplement. The benefits are not only scrumptious, but your immune system will probably thank you.

As always, be sure to check with your doctor before doing a lot of juicing. According to WebMD, some foods like spinach and kale have a lot of vitamin K, which can affect the way certain medications work.

Another point to consider when you are adding something different to your diet, especially a variety of juiced fruits and vegetables, you may need to see how your digestive system reacts. As you might imagine, horror stories abound in bathrooms across the world attesting to the magnificent power of juicing!

But don't let that scare you. The benefits of drinking your fruits and veggies can easily outweigh the downside.

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The ancient streams of Annapolis are coming back to life. Buried for decades under building construction debris and funneled through what was once thought an innovative form of storm water control, the bubbling brooks of the past are finding new life, thanks to the efforts of St Luke's parishioners in Eastport and The Spa Creek Conservancy.

Four hundred years ago, Captain John Smith found the land along the world's largest estuary we call the Chesapeake Bay. It was dense with forests and marshes. The Native American residents lived off the bounty of the land with its fresh water springs.

And then came the new people. Over time the forests, suppliers of wood for home and hearth, and land providing meadows for cattle, horses, tobacco and corn were gone. The land no longer acted as a sponge to absorb rain. The springs stopped bubbling and the streams that fed the creeks that fed the rivers that fed the Bay disappeared too. Some fish died, wildlife scattered, birds went hungry and bees and butterflies, important to the regeneration of our natural environment, were depleted. Clean water and clean air became a thing of the past.

In the West they looked for ways to replenish the land and restore habitat and clean water after the denuding assaults by loggers. The National Park Service in 1978 pioneered land watershed restoration in the 280-square-mile watershed of Redwood Creek in California. Their work identified the best practices for watershed land restoration and inspired the creation of watershed efforts like the Watershed Academy. In 2009, the city of Annapolis completed the state's first municipal watershed study that is a tool for the new city projects underway to restore our native habitat. Anne Arundel County trains so-called Stewards of the Land.

Betsy Love is a watershed steward and chairs the Environmental Commission at St Luke's Church in Eastport. Church parishioners cut the ribbon on Aug. 30 for a major restoration of an original stream valley. When it is

completed under the management of Keith Underwood, the four-acre site, long coveted by developers for housing, will gather the storm water from 28 surrounding acres in a series of features that include a rain garden, multiple bio swale, catchment areas of storm water along Monroe and Fairfax streets, a year-round stream, a wetland, a tidal marsh and a living shoreline.

Ancient CREEKS Restored

By Ellen Moyer

of things to come as walking trails are developed in the woods and along the new waterways. Who knows, as ground water is enhanced, a spring or two may reappear.

The Spa Creek Conservancy, chaired by Amy Clements, settled on a mission to re-create the historic flood plain of the headwaters of Spa Creek early in its 12-year history. The rapid discharge of water from storm drains had created steep banks with deposits of silt into Spa Creek near the cove at the Children's Museum. Restoration is broadening the stream valley, slowing the speed of water runoff. Some will remember the beaver along this stream that tried to lend a helping hand. In the protected area upstream, neighborhood residents along the waterway are enhancing impervious driveways to improve ground water absorption. Neither of these watershed protection projects could have happened without the collaboration and support of many volunteers, agencies, community groups and professionals. There is also the financial support of the Maryland DNR and the Chesapeake and Atlantic Coastal Trust Fund, the Episcopal Church Foundation Fund and a host of sponsors. Their enthusiasm, dedication and commitment to the restoration of our natural habitat enhances the air and water around us and serves our good health.

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

Bay Bytes

Respite care is available while the caregiver takes some time off. Log onto www.seniorhomes.com/s/maryland/respice-care/ or <http://dhr.maryland.gov/office-of-adult-services/respice-care-program/> for a listing of the many different options available for some needed time off.

New Year's Eve Has So Much More To Offer Beyond Resolutions!

The *Old Farmer's Almanac* has been around since 1792, forecasting the weather and tides and more, so it's fitting that the publication shares info on the authenticity and distinctiveness of New Year's traditions. Recommending folks "ring out the old and ring in the new with a New Year tradition," the almanac says the idea of turning over a new leaf with a resolution reportedly began with the Babylonians as early as 2600 B.C. Honoring tradition by starting the new year with a goal is a positive any way you look at it, but don't ignore the value of maintaining a fun—even meaningful—tradition.

In the United States and in other English-speaking countries, it's customary to toast champagne at midnight as "Auld Lang Syne" is played. According to Wikipedia, Auld Lang Syne is a poem "written by Robert Burns in 1788 and set to the tune of a traditional folk song (Roud #6294)." The song, which translates to "times long passed" or "for the sake of old times," is a nostalgic ditty that summons people to preserve their oldest, dearest friendships. In that spirit, make a point to share the holiday with good friends or take the time on Jan. 1 to write a letter, send an email or make a phone call to a longtime friend.

Though Christmas and Hanukkah precede New Year's Eve, the holiday was once a time to exchange gifts. In Rome, Italians gave coins and gilded nuts, whereas in Scotland, presents of coal, shortbread and silverware were given for good luck in the New Year. This year, you might consider offering a gift to a neighbor or someone who may not have made it onto your Christmas list. With so much thought placed on New Year's resolutions (which, let's face it, often include exercising more or eating better), why not resolve to think of others more. A quote by author John Holmes says it best: "There is no exercise better for the heart than reaching down and lifting people up."

In the spirit of ringing in the New Year with champagne toasts and caviar dreams ... Oh wait, that's something entirely different. Don't settle for just bubbly on New Year's Eve, adopt a custom from a faraway land that involves some yummy grub (especially if your diet starts the next day!) **Foodrepublic.com** says that in Spain, eating 12 grapes at midnight on New Year's Eve is a tradition and superstition. "Rare is the Spaniard who will risk poisoning their fate for the coming year by skipping the grapes, one for each stroke of midnight."

In the Netherlands, **DutchNews.nl** tells folks to "forget the diet until

Jan. 2" because tradition calls for munching on *oliebollen* (deep-fried dough balls covered in icing sugar) and *appelflappen* (deep-fried apple dough balls).

If you want something more substantial than a dessert or appetizer, in some places in

Asia and Europe it's believed that eating fish for the New Year symbolizes "swimming ahead and never moving backward." As such, the Food Network offers a recipe for poached salmon with champagne sauce (www.foodnetwork.com/recipes/poached-salmon-with-champagne-sauce-recipe).

The Food Network also explains that the southern U.S. maintains a New Year's Eve tradition of serving black-eyed-peas and collard greens as a wish for prosperity. In essence, the legumes represent coins and collards represent dollars.

In Mexico, a Rosca de Reyes (Three Kings Bread), a ring-shaped cake, is made with a trinket or two baked in. Decorated with candied fruit, the person who partakes of the piece of cake with the prize inside is said to have good luck coming his way. Whether you're of Mexican descent or not, this cake sounds like it would be a fun addition to any New Year's Eve celebration.

If you want to spice things up this New Year's Eve and do something outlandish, take a cue from the people of Ecuador who do a "Suitcase Walk" with the hope of achieving their dream holiday in the coming year. This bizarre ritual involves walking around the block with an empty suitcase. Or, do like some Romanians do and dance from house to house in the neighborhood wearing bear costumes to keep evil at bay. Maybe the most peculiar—and even unnerving—is the New Year's Eve tradition in Talca, Chile. These Chileans camp out in the local cemetery to ring in the holiday with dead loved ones.

No matter what you decide to do this New Year's Eve, remember that the holiday is not just about making resolutions, but giving yourself another chance to start anew.

By Leah Lancione

You've Always Said You Wouldn't Be
Caught Dead In That Dress.

You'd Better
Tell Them Now!


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HOMEOPATHY. WHAT'S THAT?

By Peggy Kiefer

Carol was suffering from what was diagnosed as mononucleosis. She was miserable, with a bad sore throat, no energy and generally feeling terrible. It was her first week at college and she was far from home. Advice at the college health center was mostly to take aspirin and wait it out. Eventually, a homeopathic practitioner was called. After talking to Carol and getting a detailed description of all her symptoms, a homeopathic remedy was recommended, to be picked up at a Whole Foods market and started right away. The next day Carol awoke feeling 95 percent better and by the second day, her symptoms were gone.

This might sound far-fetched and almost unbelievable, but homeopathy has helped many patients with remarkable results treating many ailments. The remedies are prepared by homeopathic pharmacies under Food and Drug Administration (FDA) guidelines and can be found in several potencies, known as 6x, 30C, 10M, etc. The strength of the remedy depends on the number of times it has been diluted or made more potent; the X, C and M, etc., refer to the method of dilution.

So, what is homeopathy, this so-called miracle treatment? To quote from the National Center for Homeopathy magazine, it is a "safe, effective system of natural medicine used by millions of people worldwide for more than 200 years to achieve wellness. Homeopathic medicines (also called remedies) are prepared from natural sources, are used in extremely small amounts and are recognized by the FDA. They are nontoxic, and when properly administered, can be safely used with infants children, adults and animals."

The principle of "like cures like" is at the core of this alternative medicine. For instance, if you have a runny nose and weepy eyes, a remedy called *Allium Cepa* would probably

be recommended. It is actually a tiny dose of red onion, which would cause the same symptoms that the sufferer is experiencing. A practicing homeopath would pick a remedy that is similar to the symptoms rather than suppressing them, as conventional medicine would do. Think of it as having a smallpox vaccination consisting of the killed or diluted smallpox virus in order to protect the patient against the actual disease.

Two people with the same symptoms will probably not receive the same remedy, as each person has different symptoms, which present themselves in unique ways. That is why a patient who might ask a friend who received a remedy for a similar medical problem for some of the same remedy, might find it would not work the same way for them. People's constitutions are different.

The German physician Samuel Hahnemann developed this unique alternative medicine in the early 1800s and it has been used in Europe and

Asia for hundreds of years. Even Queen Elizabeth has been known to use homeopathy. Homeopaths Without Borders has been working in impoverished nations, such as Haiti, to treat patients and train local natives in the basics of this method. Many so-called "miracles" have been reported from this program.

This might sound like snake oil medicine, but 200 years of clinical experience and hundreds of peer-reviewed basic science, clinical and preclinical trials confirm the effectiveness of homeopathy. Also, many happy, satisfied patients can attest to its success.

I am not a homeopathic physician, but have used this alternative medicine successfully many times. It saved my trip to Egypt from being ruined when I pulled out my homeopathic kit, took a remedy that matched my digestive symptoms and was one of the few travelers ready to continue the scheduled activities the next day.

Many books and articles have been written about this alternative medicine. If you are interested in learning more about homeopathy, the National Center for Homeopathy has a wealth of information to share.

Many so-called "miracles" have been reported from this program.

National Center for Homeopathy

7918 Jones Branch Road, Suite 300,
McLean, VA, 22102
Phone: 703-506-7667
Fax: 703 506-3266
www.HomeopathyCenter.org

Do you have a dream or special want? What's keeping you from getting started?

Ending the Search for His Ideal Gift

By Mrs. S. Claus

How often have you heard the men in your life commenting on the difficulty of finding just the right gift for women? Interestingly, it's usually the other way round. Year after year, most women I know have been stumped in the search for something different and wonderful for their most significant other. Seems men have everything they need and if not, they go out and buy it. It's a dilemma, but with the help of other perplexed women, we've come up with a short list of items we think he didn't know he wanted, that he'd enjoy and that he wouldn't typically buy for himself. Here goes:

1. A lap desk that extends over the arms of his favorite chair to hold his laptop, iPad or book, which can be found at www.Levenger.com/
2. Subscription to a magazine featuring his favorite pastime: sailing, skiing, travel, hunting, politics, etc. Log onto www.Magazines.com/ for lots of ideas.
3. A key finder or a locator of other lost items including the family dog. Yes, there is such a thing at www.theTileApp.com/
4. Coffee table book featuring a favorite subject of his such as an historical event, favorite sport or hobby. Try www.Amazon.com for options.

5. If he enjoys time in the kitchen, how about a garlic press, food processor, vegetable chopper or other kitchen toy to assist in his culinary pursuits that are available at www.Williams-Sonoma.com

6. Fill a food basket or find one filled at www.harryanddavid.com/GiftBaskets where goodies might include his secret passion such as peanut butter, wines, cheeses, gourmet coffee, etc.

7. Scholarship to a workshop or camp for adults on sports, academics, music or boat building. Log onto www.ShawGuides.com for a comprehensive list of more than 6,000 possibilities offered year round.

8. A different food treat delivered to his door each month featuring such things as coffee, cheese or a unique gourmet mix. Check out www.DeanandDeluca.com or for something sweet, try www.DavidsCookies.com

9. TV headphones so only he gets to listen to his favorite game or war flick at www.brookstone.com

10. A nook or book light for bedtime reading available at www.BarnesandNoble.com

11. Charging station for phone, iPad and computer or other useful electronic

wizardry can be found at Staples.com or houzz.com

12. Indoor-outdoor thermometer or weather station featured at www.LacrosseTechnology.com/ws.php

And last, although not terribly imaginative, there are gift certificates that can be purchased online for shops such as Brooks Brothers, Home Depot, West Marine, or theaters, restaurants, a local gym or sports event featuring his favorite team.



HOLIDAY QUIZ: ACROSTIC
Blonde bombshell and glamorous Hollywood star, Marilyn Monroe was Ripley's sweetheart of the month in the first issue of the magazine. Buried at Westwood Memorial Park in Los Angeles, who owns the crypt next to hers?

FAMOUS BURIALS: HUGH HEFNER

A. Fair hawk
B. Hissled
C. Memorization
D. "Only the Lonely"
E. Unkrent
F. Showboat
G. Billy Wilder
H. Urtsin
I. Urtsin
J. Howdy
K. Abbot
L. Loter at Sea

M. Stammers
N. Hardly
O. Unkrent
P. Compers
Q. Hoopster
R. Hoggen
S. Elmwood
T. Few and far between
U. Noma
V. Extol
W. Roman



REPURPOSING *Your* Jewelry

By Kathryn Marchi

Jewelry boxes are filled with unworn pieces of jewelry. One tends to forget about them and wear the same pieces over and over. Some may even be broken or mismatched. Many times jewelry that you inherited from a grandmother or great aunt Susie is outdated, so it ends up in the bottom of a box in your dresser.

There is a way to repurpose some of these treasured pins, necklaces, bracelets or rings so that they can be modernized or repaired to be worn proudly again. The sentiment stays with the piece ... if that is your concern.

At this holiday season, especially, these repurposed pieces can be memorable gifts to family members:

A smaller cross can be soldered onto a larger one to create a three dimensional pendant. Any design can be preserved if this smaller cross is placed on the backside.

Broken gold or sterling silver chains and bracelets, mismatched earrings, ring mountings and many other items can be melted down and made into a lovely bangle bracelet or solid choker necklace. Ask your jeweler. Several friends of mine have had this done and the results are stunning and original.

- Semi-precious stones can be set on an existing ring mount. They can also be added to a solitaire stone for a lovely embellishment.
- Sentimental pieces such as the wedding rings of deceased parents can be combined with the engagement stone set in the middle and made into a beautiful pendant. One woman had her own engagement diamond reset on her husband's wedding band that she now wears with her original band.
- Pearls are often worn only for more formal occasions and besides that, the clasp usually falls to the front of the neckline. One woman had her pearls restrung and fastened with a decorative clasp made from a special

charm so that it became the centerpiece of her pearls and consistently adorned the front of her outfit. The resulting necklace wasn't as formal and she wears her pearls more often.

- A small pendant can be made to appear larger by soldering it onto a larger, plain gold disc. If there is engraving on the disk, it can be reversed so the symbols can be preserved.
- Pretty pins or pendants can always be transformed into charms for your charm bracelet.

It just takes a little imagination and a good jeweler to help repurpose jewelry. Old pieces become new again and combining some of them ensures that you will wear them more often. Another hint is to make a conscious effort to wear a different piece of jewelry each day or week. This way your lovely trinkets will not get lost in the bottom of your dresser drawer. Talk with your jeweler today for more ideas.

Bay Bytes

For volunteer opportunities or to donate your time or cash over the holidays, log onto www.AACVC.org for Anne Arundel County. Easy-to-navigate site, with lots of different suggestions to fit your interests and time.

Your Purse Says a Lot

Men: You're Not Exempt

By Kater Leatherman

Sometimes, it's the darndest things in life that can reveal the most about us. The way we handle conflict is one. So is our attitude about money. Our habits and how we take care of ourselves. But our purse?

Yes!

Notice if it is crammed with stuff. If so, are your closets, attic and basement overloaded as well? How about the weight of your purse? Energetically, you may be so used to carrying the weight of the world around on your shoulders that a heavy purse feels normal.

Obviously the style and color say something about your personality and taste, but what about the contents? Dump everything out. You may be in awe at the sight of how much stuff can go into a purse. Even if you are a minimalist, you might be surprised by what you keep tucked away in all those compartments *because you might need them someday*.

Consider the size of your purse. Bigger is not always better; neither is smaller. You want the right-size purse for what you need to function out in the world. Whatever you choose, if it is organized and you use everything in it, then living with balance and ease is probably important to you.

If, on the other hand, there's loose change at the bottom, a month's worth of receipts, outdated ID cards, candy wrappers and everything but what you might need like a pen that works, then are you overwhelmed, stressed and burdened in life? Think about this: If you are always rifling through your purse, then you are probably wasting time at home looking for things too. Sorry, but the way you do anything is the way you do everything.

Men, you are not exempt. Does your wallet look like it needs to go on a diet? Are your bills in one pocket and your change in another? Do you hoard jars of change around the house? If so, what other tiresome, time-consuming habits are you holding on to?

If you want to practice ways to maintain order in your life, start by going through your purse or wallet at the end of each day. Pull out the trash. Cull the day's receipts, which can go in a file or be tossed

out. Straighten up your money so it doesn't look like a jumbled mess. Are your finances in shambles? Remove miscellaneous things that you only needed for that day. Practice this, and the habit will begin to seep into other areas of your life.

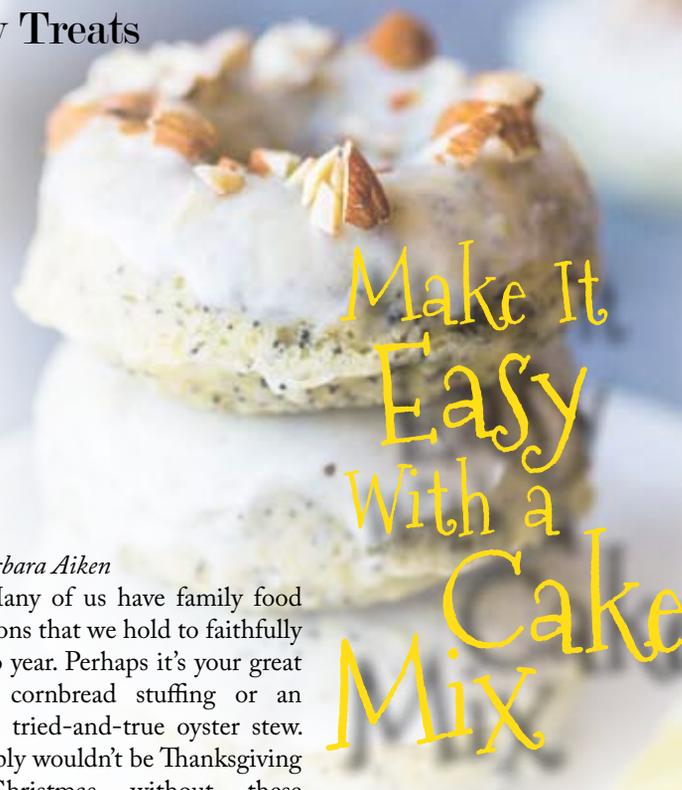
How we live, what we attach ourselves to -- even our fears -- can all be revealed to us by observing what we are unwilling to let go of. So, find a trusted friend and have fun helping each other purge and then organize your purses. Do it as much to see what you can learn about yourself as to lighten your load.

Kater is a happy minimalist who models for others how to live with less stress. For more information about her work, go to www.katerleatherman.com

...the way you
do anything is
the way you do
everything.



Bay Treats



By Barbara Aiken

Many of us have family food traditions that we hold to faithfully year to year. Perhaps it's your great aunt's cornbread stuffing or an uncle's tried-and-true oyster stew. It simply wouldn't be Thanksgiving or Christmas without these tantalizing sensations, but from time to time we need to shake things up. Sometimes it's good to tinker around with an old recipe, add a new tradition or find a simple recipe that takes some of the work out of cooking or baking during busy times.

Many years ago I tried these easy, box cake mix recipes with a twist. These Bundt cakes are so moist and "more-ish" you'll probably make several over the Fall and Winter holiday season. Bundt cakes are an excellent choice for gift-giving or pot luck as they pack well and stay fresh and decadent over time. I'm sure these rum and poppy seed cakes will become family favorites or perhaps traditions in your holiday repertoire.

Rum Bundt Cake

Serves about 12

For the cake:

1 cup finely chopped pecans
1/2 cup dark rum
1 box yellow cake mix
1/2 cup water
1, 3-1/2 oz. package instant vanilla pudding mix
1/2 cup vegetable oil
4 large eggs

For the glaze:

1 cup sugar
1/4 cup water
4 oz. sweet butter (1/2 stick)
1/4 cup dark rum

Preheat oven to 350 degrees. Grease and flour a 12-cup Bundt pan. For a Bundt pan with a dark interior, lower the oven temperature by 25 degrees. Add chopped pecans to the Bundt pan and shake the pan to distribute evenly on the bottom and sides. In a large mixing bowl, add the remaining ingredients in the order given and mix on low for 1/2 minute. Increase the speed to medium and mix for 2 more minutes, scraping down the sides of the bowl occasionally.

Pour the mixture into the prepared pan and bake for 50-60 minutes or until a skewer inserted into the cake comes out clean. While still warm, poke holes over the top of the cake with a fork to allow the glaze to penetrate.

To prepare the glaze, heat the sugar, water and butter in a small saucepan. Boil for 2-3 minutes until the sugar is dissolved. Remove from the heat and add the rum. Pour the hot glaze over the cake. Cool in the pan for 30 minutes and then turn out carefully onto a plate to serve.

If you don't have pecans, use walnuts. If you don't have any rum, use sweet sherry. Alternatively, spray the interior of the pan with Pam instead of using butter and flour.

This cake is moist and delectable and will keep for over a week if stored in an airtight container or under a cake dome.

I've been making this recipe for over 25 years. It all happened when my son was little and studying about Poland in school. An international festival ensued, and some of the class moms made this cake to sell as a fundraiser at the event. Folks pester me to make this cake. I'm sure it will be a "keeper" for you, too.

Poppy Seed Cake

Serves about 12

1 box yellow cake mix
1/2 cup vegetable oil
1, 3-1/2 oz. package instant vanilla pudding mix
1/2 cup sweet sherry
4 eggs
cup sour cream
1/3 cup poppy seeds

Preheat oven to 350 degrees. Grease and flour a 12-cup Bundt pan or 2, 9-1/4" x 5-1/4" 2-3/4" loaf pans. For a Bundt or loaf pan with a dark interior, lower the oven temperature by 25 degrees. In a large mixing bowl, add the ingredients in the order given and mix on low for 1/2 minute. Increase the speed to medium or high and beat 5 more minutes, scraping down the sides of the bowl occasionally.

Pour the mixture into the prepared pan(s). If using a Bundt pan, bake for 1 hour. If using loaf pans, bake for 45 minutes or until a skewer inserted into the cake comes out clean.

Cool the cake for about 15 minutes before turning out. You may freeze the cake or sprinkle with powdered sugar and serve. Do not sprinkle with powdered sugar if the cake will be frozen; it will become gummy.

These easy Bundt cake recipes using a store-bought cake mix are wonderful additions to any holiday feast. They take little time or effort, store well for several weeks, are not a problem to transport and make super gifts. Make things easy on yourself with a cake mix creation this holiday season.

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

THE WORLD AROUND US

For two hours, 15 of us, a mix of adults and teenagers, had climbed our way up the steep, sandy smooth-rocked face of the mesa. The day was brutally hot, as it tends to be during mid-July in Oljato, Utah. By the time we finished our ascent we were hot and tired with sand under our fingernails and several of our party proudly wearing new scrapes on elbows, arms and legs from our scramble up the narrow passages and between the large boulders. As we collected ourselves on the flat table of the mesa, we noticed the view. Not all at once, but slowly people stopped talking until we were all silent, gazing out at the sea of red sand hills, dunes and other mesas that just kept rising up out of the desert in all directions to the horizon.

The bright sun was setting, adding its orange glow to the orangey-red of the terrain, as if someone had put an orange filter over a theater spotlight. We stood in silence and soaked it all in. There was no way to feel important amid the monumental size and scope of the scenery. In fact, I do not think I've ever felt so small and insignificant. We all did. In a moment our emotions ran from being elated by the accomplishment of scaling the mesa to being humbled by how large and vast creation can be in places. A group from the Cincinnati suburbs, few of us had experienced the true grandeur and scale in that corner of the desert Southwest.

Fast-forward a decade to the well-trodden sidewalk outside the Washington National Cathedral in northwest D.C. On a rather rainy and cold November afternoon, I was walking back to my office at St. Alban's Church after lunch with a colleague. The leaves had mostly fallen from the oak trees and had, thanks to a day-long steady rain, become a lot less crisp and crunchy than they were the day before. But among the soggy rumpled lumps of decaying brown and yellow, right at the seam that ran along the edge of the sidewalk and a stone retaining wall, was the bloom of a

By the Rev. Matthew Hanisian

miniscule bright pink flower. The stem of the plant arced gracefully upward from the dark green mound of leaves. The entire plant could have been covered by a quarter. Somehow, however, the sight caught my eye, forcing me to stop and take notice of this small bit of beauty that was defiantly growing and blossoming when all around it things were dead or dying. And, as I stood there, with the rain running over the collar of my jacket and onto my neck as I bent to examine this wee wonder, I was again marveling, not in curiosity, but in thanksgiving.

Our lives move at a pace that often doesn't give us the room, the space or the time to notice fully the world around us. We have a myriad of ways to manage our time, to be efficient with our

activities because there is always something that needs our attention or demands that we are on to the next thing on the list. But how often do we stop to notice the monumental if miniscule beauty that surrounds us, or the nanoscale bits of artistry that abound all around us if we only were to examine our surroundings

Among the soggy
rumpled lumps of
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of a miniscule bright
pink flower

with fresh eyes? Perhaps even more importantly, how often, even if we do happen to notice, do we stop and give thanks for such things?

Move out of the natural world and think about the ways that we can give thanks for the unexpected moments of goodness that happen to us and that are given to us by the people we encounter. My guess is that those moments happen more than we realize, mostly because we are moving too quickly to appreciate them, if we notice them at all. There are dozens of examples of things both large and small: a satisfying meal, someone holding the door for you when your hands are full, someone remembering to say "God bless you" when you sneeze, or even the warm embrace of someone you love. All are opportunities to slow down and simply notice the good thing that has transpired in that moment and then be moved enough to offer your gratitude, appreciation and thanks in return.

The Reverend Matthew Hanisian is the rector at St. Martins in the Field, Severna Park, and can be reached at hanisian@smartinsinthefield.org



Bay Bytes

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Poinsettias: YOU DON'T HAVE TO SEE RED

By Neil Moran

When it comes to buying poinsettias it seems like everyone is seeing red. That's understandable. After all, it was the red bracts on the native Mexican *euphorbia pulcherrima*, later named poinsettia after Joel Roberts Poinsett, that was equated with the Christmas season. Thus began a long courtship with the holiday plant by the Ecke family of Encinitas, California, which lasted from 1909 all the way up to 2015 when they sold the business to Dummen Orange.

Every holiday season retailers sell more red poinsettias than any other type of poinsettia. This isn't by coincidence. Retailers, hoping to draw customers in for Black Friday sales, sell these popular plants at cost or perhaps slightly above to draw people into the store so they'll buy pricier items, like widescreen TVs.

"Reds are most dominant," says Gary Vollmer, product and technical manager for Selecta, North America. He says about 80 percent of the poinsettias grown are, in fact, red.

Meanwhile, a small number of dedicated plant breeders from all over the world have been working diligently to come up with some really interesting poinsettia crosses: absolutely gorgeous plants that come in various colors to complement the decor of your home, including more intense reds, white, cream, pink and yellow-gold. While they were at it they made sure they are easy to grow for commercial growers and will look good for the consumer well into the new year.

"Growers are looking for something that is easy to grow and has really big bracts," says Karl Trellinger, technical services manager for Syngenta. Trellinger is based in Boulder, Colorado, and works extensively with breeders. Adds veteran poinsettia breeder Steve Reinhart, "The days when a poinsettia only lasted until after Christmas are over."

This has all resulted in more choices for folks like us who love poinsettias, but would like to break from tradition a little and have more decorating choices.

Thanks to these clever breeders, you can start including poinsettias in your holiday decorating scheme before Thanksgiving. About the same time stores are stocking up on turkeys, look for beautiful late Fall-themed poinsettias with names like Green Envy, Autumn Leaves,

Gold Rush and Peppermint Ruffles, all introduced by Dummen Orange.

For the week of Thanksgiving, start looking for Dummen's "cheerful" red varieties, like Ferrara and Burning Ember. Both varieties are significant improvements on the standard red poinsettias, with bigger bracts and deeper colors. Starting the week right after Thanksgiving, look for these novelty types: Jingle Bell Rock, Ice Punch, Ice Crystal Marbles and Glitters, all bred by Dummen Orange.

Not to be upstaged by the competition, Syngenta, a company based in Basel, Switzerland, has added some great-looking poinsettias to the mix. Breeder Ronald Snijder, Ph.D., has come up with some crosses that also break from tradition, including his signature "Titan White" that could be mixed in with some red poinsettias for a stunning display. Also look for their Mars series poinsettias, including Mars Marble, a light pink, cream-colored poinsettia and Mars Pink.

If you're looking for something a little different than the typical red, bushy poinsettia this holiday, there're a couple of game-changing poinsettias you may want to check out.

Princettia, bred by Suntory, and Luv U Pink, introduced a few years ago by Ecke Ranch, are examples of plants that have been crossed with other poinsettia or euphorbia varieties to come up with something a little different for the consumer. The Princettia, which comes in different colors, is a compact variety which is less likely to have stem breakage. Luv U Pink has numerous bracts that are smaller than typical poinsettias and are a brilliant pink.

Poinsettias, and most plants for that matter, go through an extensive trialing period before being sold to commercial growers who then sell them to retailers. The trials focus on consumer appeal, how well it will perform for the growers and how well it will ship and hold up in the stores before it lands in your shopping cart.

Plant Peddlers is a company that assists in these trials. They act as a third party, evaluating these plants in different growing conditions so they can make recommendations to growers. Mike Gooder is the go-to guy for these breeders and you might say at the crossroads of the floral industry in general.

"We're kind of the feed-through that establishes new selections and get them into the hands of growers," says Gooder. "We've trialed over 120 poinsettias this year and up to 2,000 total."

There's no doubt that red poinsettias will continue to dominate the market in the coming years. However, if you want to break from tradition a little, are looking to mix and match with some red poinsettias or just looking for something that more closely complements your decorating scheme, take a look at these new varieties.

Is boredom part of your life? Then do something - anything. There aren't that many tomorrows.



Don't Give CLUTTER for the Holidays

By Kater Leatherman

There's no denying that America is a wasteful society. We're either squandering or accumulating stuff. Forty percent of our food ends up in the trash. We waste time, money and gasoline. And now we're heading into the holiday season, that time of year that fuels even more overconsumption.

This holiday, consider lower impact gift-giving. Of course, it helps to know what people want and right now many baby boomers are downsizing. So, give them edibles and gift cards from their favorite coffee shop, bakery or wine store. Consider services for a

pedicure, facial or massage, a package of yoga classes or a one-year membership to a fitness center. Tickets to concerts, movies, shows or sporting events are also an option.

Kids deserve all the festivities around the holidays, but you can at least think "less stuff, better stuff." Quality gifts are stimulating, fun and send a positive message. Be a mindful Santa and remember that more things won't make them happier once the holidays are over.

Gifts for teens are a bit trickier. They want stuff that is specific, so it's probably best to put your cold hard cash into buying them a gift card and letting them get what they want.

On a romantic note, why not plan a weekend getaway with your partner. Choose an activity or place that you have both been considering. Homemade coupon books are also great fun to give. Ideas include a foot and hand massage, a date night out or cooking your partner's favorite meal.

What about the person who has everything? How about a handmade card with a note that says what you love and appreciate about them, a donation to their favorite charity or a gift certificate to a special restaurant.

Maybe reaching the summit this holiday is letting go of another form of clutter -- mental clutter such as self-imposed guilt, duty and "rightness." As an example, if you attend a party, event or activity this season, and feel drawn to bring a hostess gift, change it up. Instead of giving something that needs to be dusted, send a handwritten thank-you note instead. We no longer live "stationery" lives and in our paperless, less-mannered society, most likely it will be the only note they receive.

This holiday, don't add to other people's clutter and don't add to your own. Tell others that you don't want anything that has to be dusted, washed or hung either in a closet or on a wall. Ask for and give gifts that not only protect our natural resources, but bring meaning, pleasure and satisfaction.

Kater is a professional organizer, home stager, yoga teacher and the author of four books. She can be reached at katerleatherman@gmail.com

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WHERE WERE YOU THE DAY JFK WAS SHOT?

By Leah Lacione

“Where were you the day President John F. Kennedy got assassinated?” is a question that still provokes an emotional response -- like reopening an old wound. Here are the responses from baby boomers across the country who remember Nov. 22, 1963, as if it was yesterday.

Grace Quinn, Virginia. I was in the 10th grade at Washington & Lee High School in Arlington. I was in Mrs. Hunsicker’s geometry class when the announcement came over the loud speaker that President Kennedy had been shot. My best friend Alexis was sitting right behind me, and we were both huge fans of JFK, even though we weren’t really into politics. I thought he was going to save America and change the world. Mrs. Hunsicker let us chat about it among ourselves because we were all in shock. I didn’t cry until later when reality finally sank in.

When he spoke, everyone just listened; he was young and charismatic. We all knew he got us through the missile crisis and was pro-space program. He stirred hope in people.

Candy Schwadron, Michigan. I was in elementary school (fourth grade) and my class was at a book fair in the gym. They sent us back to our classroom and we went home from school early. I remember watching the funeral procession, which was the day after my birthday, Nov. 25. I was mesmerized by the riderless horse who was in the procession with the boots facing backward in the stirrups. The horse’s name was Black Jack. It’s something I will never forget.

Michael Smith, North Carolina. I was taking a math test in Mrs. Pittman’s seventh grade class at Northboro Jr. High in West Palm Beach, Florida. I still remember her coming in crying and telling the class to always remember where we were.

Linda Rosatelli, Baltimore. I was sitting in eighth grade. Against school rules, I had a small transistor radio playing on my desk when I heard the news bulletin. My outburst disrupted

the class. It was so unreal and sad. The days that followed were so difficult on the Kennedy family and all Americans.

The following are excerpts from the book *November 22, 1963: Ordinary and Extraordinary People Recall Their Reactions When They Heard the News* by Jodie Elliott Hansen and Laura Hansen.

Senator and former astronaut John Glenn. I was still in the Mercury Space Program then, and I heard the news on my car radio as I drove through Dallas. I was deeply shocked and saddened, and when I learned that America had lost a president, I knew that I had also lost a friend. After Nov. 22, 1963, I felt that America had lost her innocence, and that in some ways we would never be quite so young again.

Syndicated cartoonist Bill Keane. On that morning in peaceful Paradise Valley, Arizona, I was as usual at the drawing board in my home studio drawing a “Family Circus” cartoon. My wife opened the door and said they had interrupted “Password” on TV with a news bulletin that President Kennedy had been shot in Dallas. I switched on the television set in my studio and was launched into the nightmare of progressive reports that built to the unbelievable climax: John F. Kennedy was dead.

Concentrating on drawing a humorous, light-hearted portrayal of typical American family life was almost impossible. Work was put aside. The single topic of the assassination pervaded every thought, every conversation from that moment on, reaching a bizarre peak a few days later when I witnessed the only “live” killing in my life when Lee Harvey Oswald was shot by Jack Ruby in front of the TV cameras.

Actor Walter Matthau. A friend of mine called me with the news that President Kennedy had been shot. I then turned on the television set and just stared at it until the news came that he was dead. My friend showed up at the house and we drank three quarts of 100 proof vodka in the next six hours and I don’t drink!

When a moment of inspiration comes along, what do you do with it?

White House reporter Sarah McClendon. I remember vividly the phone call from a blind friend that interrupted my work in my office to tell me the shocking news of Kennedy's death. I was on the White House porch when he turned around and waved to the reporters when he left for Dallas. I immediately left for the airport to await the arrival of the casket. Jackie in her blood-stained suit and Evelyn Lincoln immaculate in her white gloves. I was touched to see Jackie get into the front seat of the hearse that carried the body.

Later I remembered the press corps walking behind the casket all the way from the White House to the Capitol where he laid in state. It was such a sad occasion for all of us.

Professional football player Roger Staubach. I was attending the Naval Academy at the time and was in my dorm when I heard the news that President Kennedy had been shot. There was a lot of commotion in the halls and a feeling of total disbelief. It was later when we went to class that we knew the injuries had been fatal.

Later, I reported to football practice and we all knelt in prayer. Of course, we did not have practice that day, but all stayed around for a while, talking about our shock and disbelief of the situation.

President Kennedy was very special to us at the Naval Academy and since he was such a football fan, we had the opportunity to meet him. So this felt even more like a personal loss. We were scheduled to play Army that weekend, but postponed it a week out of respect for the Kennedy family.

The following is an excerpt from *Seven Seconds: Memories of the JFK Assassination, the Tragedy that Changed America* by Holly Millea.

Singer Mary Wilson. I didn't watch TV a lot, but I was home that day for some reason, because normally we were running down to Motown Recording. We (the Supremes) had our first sort-of hit that month, "When the Lovelight Starts Shining Through His Eyes." We were very excited, because we were still young and trying to get a record and all that kind of stuff.

I recall being at home and still living in the projects, mind you. In Detroit, Michigan—The Brewster-Douglass projects. My mother had the TV on. She was watching her daytime soaps and then, of course, the news came on and interrupted it. Of course, hearing that, it was like, *whoa* ... We still were in the time when blacks weren't as acceptable as being bona fide citizens. So, to have that feeling, those emotions for (Kennedy), in those days was, I guess you could say, the beginning of being black really something special; that you were becoming part of America in a real way. In many ways, we became aware that we had a right or say in what was going on.

Though writer Leah Lancione would not be born for another 15 years, she supposes that Nov. 22, 1963, was to her mother's generation what Sept. 11, 2001, was to hers: a day you will never forget. The tremendous horror, fear and devastation left the nation shell-shocked. We were dumbfounded and heartbroken. The America of the '70s, '80s and '90s was no more. The naïve belief that we were safe was shattered. And tragically, the war on terror rages on.



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BOOKS:

Old, New and Obscure

THE HIDDEN LIFE OF TREES

By Peter Wohlleben
Gemstone Books (2015)

The largest and longest living organisms on earth secretly communicate with each other, unheard by human ears. They have populated this earth nearly everywhere and have done so for hundreds of millions of years. They procreate their young constantly and often nurture them to adulthood for 100 years or more. They adapt, evolve and migrate their species regularly and do so while living in a broadly diverse community setting.

Is this some successful, heretofore unknown, human culture? Or an ancient, recently discovered animal species? No. Author Peter Wohlleben is introducing us to the secret lives of trees.

He unlocks for us the mysteries of life in the great forests and the small woodlands of earth. We learn that trees really do have feelings, and that they communicate via senses of smell and subsurface impulses.

Wohlleben explains the essential role played by trees in preserving and sustaining all forms of life on earth. Through his career as a professional forester in Germany he is uniquely qualified to share with us his knowledge of the ecology of the world's forests. He does that in a conversational fashion, describing the wonders of trees taking place in your neighborhood or your town park's forests.

Why does an oak tree leaf turn so brown? What is a nurse log reproduction? How many gallons of water might a tree absorb in a day? Why does an aspen grow faster than a birch? Are forest fires important? The author demystifies such enigmas, even as we learn that trees have their own "www".

One thing is for certain after you read this book. The next time that you walk down a forest trail, you will see the trees through the forest and will see them more clearly as individuals and appreciate and understand the secrets of their hidden lives.

~ *Phil Ferrara*

HERO OF THE EMPIRE: THE BOER WAR, A DARING ESCAPE, AND THE MAKING OF WINSTON CHURCHILL

By Candice Millard
Anchor Books (2017)

Hero of the Empire tells two stories, both well. The first story is that of the settling of South Africa from the original natives, to the Dutch and then the British. That is a tale of bitter conquest and enslavement. The second tale depends upon the first, for Winston Churchill was in South Africa as a reporter covering the Boer War.

From his early years, Churchill was convinced that he was going to become prime minister of England. His challenge was to earn the right and the recognition that would take him there. After participating in two wars, he had no ribbons or medals to show for his fearlessness and his pains. The Boer War offered him the opportunity he sought -- only he couldn't get a military position. The closest he could come was that of being a reporter for a British newspaper.

In the course of the story, the reader learns about Churchill's schooling and the friends he made, as well as about his relationship with Jennie, his wealthy and beautiful mother. These glimpses into his past illuminate his determination to make something of himself in his own right. Yet he is not shy about asking his mother to appear on the stage with him as he campaigns for Parliament. And he is equally willing to ask for help from his friends.

The satisfaction in reading this book comes from seeing Churchill move beyond relatives and acquaintances and come into his own as a man. Forced to rely on his own resources, he begins to shape his own destiny and had the remarkable good fortune to escape from captivity when the British were desperate for good news from the front. This after the Boers handed them a string of humiliating defeats. As soon as Churchill announced himself at the British consulate in Portuguese East Africa, he was a celebrated hero. He went on to liberate those who had been his fellow prisoners and the rest is history and another story. This carefully crafted tale is a rousing read, thoroughly documented and vigorously presented.

~ *Tricia Herban*

Difficulties are part of everyone's life. The only difference is how you handle them.

THE INVENTION OF WINGS

By Sue Monk Kidd

Penguin/Random House (2014)

Having written a best-seller that was out of the ordinary, *The Secret Life of Bees*, Sue Monk Kidd has written an historical fiction that has also reached the top of the *New York Times* best-seller list. *The Invention of Wings* is based on the true story of a forward-thinking young woman, Sarah Grimke, who at the age of 11 is given a 10-year-old slave named Handful, also called Hetty. Sarah is opposed to slavery and tries to decline the slave. But she is from a wealthy slaveholding Charleston family and is told she must have this slave. Secretly the two young girls form a type of friendship that lasts from 1803-1838, the timeline of the novel.

The theme is Sarah trying to break the shackles of being a suppressed woman. She had dreams of becoming a lawyer like her brother but was told that was not a suitable choice for a woman. So she and her younger sister, Angelina, aka Nina, become advocates not only for the abolition of slavery but for equal rights for women.

This is not a book for the squeamish, as the punishment and degradation of slaves is vividly described throughout the book. Handful's mother, Charlotte, has told her that her relatives soared over the hills and clouds of Africa on their wings, which they lost when they came to America as slaves. After stealing some green silk for a quilt she is making, she is punished by having her leg bent and tied to her body so that she has to stand for hours on one leg. There are many instances of slave whippings, one of which that so traumatized Sarah that she developed a stutter that stayed with her for most of her life.

But there are also several interesting descriptions of African myths and rituals that the slaves retain to preserve their culture. A quilt documenting her life that is started by Charlotte, an expert seamstress, and finished by her daughter Handful, is described in detail by the author.

There are several subplots in the novel, such as the incipient slave rebellion in Charleston, which was discovered, leading to the lynching of its leaders. This is also based on a true incident. Interested? You will need to read this engrossing novel to get the full effect of this era.

Sarah and Nina continue their quest for the freedom of slaves and rights of women, leading to their banishment from Charleston. They write pamphlets and give speeches in the North where many slaves have been freed. Meanwhile, Handful, having discovered how much she is worth, as if she were a household good, is trying to save money to buy her freedom, with Sarah's help.

There are two unfortunate romantic interludes in Sarah's life, leading her to announce she would never marry. But her sister Nina marries a forward-thinking, liberal minister, who joins the women in their crusades.

The slave, Handful, is fictional, but the two Grimke sisters are documented as being one of the first to fight for women's rights and the freeing of slaves. This activity by women was unheard of in the early 1800s so the sisters were fighting the customs of the times as well as their family. Several of the slave

uprisings, whippings and lynchings are based on true events, but Sue Monk Kidd adds her own unique touch to the plot to make the characters come to life.

This is a fascinating story of slavery in the United States in the early 1800s. There have been many such novels, but *The Invention of Wings* gives the reader an enhanced perspective since at least the Grimke sisters were based on real people.

~ Peggy Kiefer

THE LIGHT BETWEEN OCEANS

By M.L. Stedman

Scribner, New York (2012)

If you have ever had to make a "gut-wrenching" decision that could destroy a person you love, but do the right thing for someone else, *The Light Between Oceans* should resonate with you.

When this very absorbing novel begins, Tom Sherbourne has left military service in World War I, accepting a position of temporary lighthouse keeper on the tiny island of Janus Rock, which is nearly a half-day journey off the coast of Australia, and to which a supply boat only arrives once a season.

When visiting the mainland, Tom meets a vivacious, beautiful young woman named Isabel Graysmark. They fall in love and she moves with him to the remote island, where for a short time they live an idyllic and isolated life. Unfortunately, Isabel suffers three miscarriages, which leave her depressed and withdrawn.

This is where the novel takes a rather strange turn, which might seem a little too coincidental to the reader. One day the couple discovers a small shipwrecked boat on the shore. In the boat are a dead man and a screaming baby girl. When Tom takes the baby inside, Isabel takes charge as if she has given birth to her. She convinces Tom to tell everyone that the baby is theirs and they name her Lucy. Against his conscience and better judgment, Tom buries the dead man, who they assume is her father. Everyone on the mainland receives the good news that Isabel has given birth to a baby girl and the grandparents are thrilled.

Fast-forward two years, when Lucy has grown into a precocious, loving two-year-old, the family makes a trip to the mainland. Tom discovers a local woman, Hannah Rosenfeldt, is still mourning the loss of her husband and infant daughter two years earlier. They were forced to leave town during an attack. Tom is convinced that Lucy is her daughter and is torn as to what to do. Isabel convinces him that it is has been too long a time to return the child as it would be devastating for her.

Two more years pass and Lucy is now four years old when they return to the mainland. This time they come face to face with the tormented Hannah and a conscience-stricken Tom leaves her a note that her child is alive. Of course, this causes everyone to conduct a massive search for the child. I won't reveal how they discover where she is, but the story spirals downward from there.

What would you do, keep the child who has known no other parents but Tom and Isabel, or return her to her birth mother? It is quite a dilemma, which very strongly affects many people.

The final part of the novel answers the question of what happened and how it affected the child, Isabel, Tom and Hannah.

~ Peggy Kiefer



Gifts for the Gardener

By Neil Moran

If you're wondering what to get the gardener in your life for Christmas or are looking for a good Winter read while the garden tools are tucked away in the shed, consider these great gardening books from author-gardeners who really know their stuff.

Have you ever looked at a space under a tree, a mailbox or in front of a deck and wondered, now what the heck do I do here? Well, wonder no more! *The Beginner's Guide to Starting a Garden*, by Sally Roth (Timber Press) will spell it out and give you suggestions for 323 projects.

At first I thought this book was going to be kind of an overly simplified manual on gardening. I was pleasantly surprised to find out it's a whole lot more. The book offers practical advice we gardeners need to take on different locations in our yard and dress them up with beautiful plants while perhaps adding some rocks, stones and other natural features.

Roth shares decades of her love and experience gardening, having lived and gardened in several different states around the country, but mostly out West. Perhaps that's one reason she has so many projects to share.

Surely a garden can be whatever the gardener wishes it to be, but to really stand out, it requires the right mix of colors, texture, form, height, etc. Otherwise, it may turn out to be nothing more than a hodgepodge of plants, or what some have dubbed "the toy soldier effect." To achieve the right look requires a bit of an artistic flare coupled with plant knowledge. If you need help with either or both, this book is definitely for you.

A NEW TAKE ON HOUSEPLANTS

Lisa Eldred Steinkopf, the "Houseplant Guru," has a book fresh off the press: *Houseplants: The Complete Guide to Choosing, Growing and Caring for Indoor Plants*. Complete is the operative word in this title. Steinkopf leaves no stone unturned in this tome on houseplants. In the first pages of the book she debunks the myth that you have to have a "green thumb" to be successful

growing houseplants, insisting that it's really about acquiring the knowledge needed to be successful. Steinkopf's book will give you all the information you need, in a conversational way, to be successful at this endeavor.

"Houseplants," says Steinkopf, "ask for so little yet add so much life to a home." Houseplants should really be viewed as a good friend or a pet that doesn't need potty training. Indeed, indoor plants do offer so much, including the ability to rid the air of harmful toxins. Their very presence will bring a certain peace to the home.

Steinkopf cares for more than 1,000 houseplants in her Detroit area home, in addition to managing Steinkopf Nursery, where, you guessed it, she sells some beautiful houseplants.

FUN-TO-READ GARDEN ESSAYS

I don't normally read gardening essays, perhaps because they usually contain lofty views by folks who take gardening a little too seriously, or perhaps they're just smarter than I am. You won't have that problem when you read Carol J. Michel's new book, *Potted and Pruned, Living a Gardener's Life* (Garden Angelist Books). This book of essays is pure fun to read and will certainly help you get through the Winter.

The essays are from Michel's award-winning blog MayDreamsGardens.com. They're fairly short, mostly amusing stories that also make a point. For example, in one essay she talks about the buying habits of gardeners shopping for shrubs. She identifies five different types of shrub shoppers: The Researchers, The Grabbers, The Rescuers, The Experimenters and The Gardeners. I'll let you read the book and decide which category fits you.

Reading *Potted and Pruned* is as easy and enjoyable as ambling through another person's garden, one you don't have to actually tend. You'll see yourself in many of the passages.

Do you remember how hard you worked to get to this point? Why not enjoy it?



- Divert or suspend the conversation when necessary: If the conversation veers toward defensiveness, re-focus upon what might be the next step to take in order to solve the issues at hand or simply get out of the way. That may be the best help of all. Maybe consulting a third-party who is unrelated and objective would be best.
- End on a high note: Affirm whatever is positive and can be a source of strength. It's well-known that, in general, millennials struggle with finding jobs and meeting the demands of employers. Identify the good, encourage always, and be prepared to have your advice ignored and to graciously accept that your son-in-law will make his own mistakes and learn from them---just as all of us did.

When handled with great delicacy and maybe some light and appropriate humor, such a discussion can bring us closer to our adult children. When bungled, and it is easy to make a misstep, it can drive us apart. Tread carefully and have a happy holiday!

GIVING CAREER ADVICE TO MILLENNIALS

When it comes to giving the spouses of our children advice, my position is simply don't do it. Even when advice is solicited, there are minefields in the lay of that treacherous land. Too often, well-meaning advice runs amok causing defensiveness, anger and lasting resentment. At the holidays? Oh, don't even go there. Emotions are already running at a fast clip and you don't want unnecessary conflict at this time of year.

However, if your husband can't be dissuaded, he might approach this through your daughter. A sample script might go like this: "Suzie, I know that John is struggling with some work issues. My experience with these problems might be helpful if John wants to run anything by me. I don't want to interfere, but I'm available if he needs a friendly ear."

A seed has been planted. If John wants to take advantage of your husband's experience, it is up to him. Otherwise, a hands-off approach is best. If advice is solicited, here are some points to remember:

- Listen and question: John may just want to vent and may be unready to hear the benefit of experience. Curiosity and nonthreatening questions will help to define the problems and help him find his own solutions.
- Define: Directly ask what assistance is desired. For example, does he need suggestions on how to negotiate a raise, deal with a hard-to-please boss? Get specifics and avoid blurting out opinions.
- Strive for a collegial tone rather than a superior attitude: Acknowledge your own career mistakes. Own that today is a different business climate than the one in which our generation entered the workforce. Share what works and admit what you don't know and what he may know better.

*Dear Vicki,
I'm a new bride and read your magazine at my mother-in-law's house. I know this is a little problem, but I don't know how to address her. It's totally awkward to continue to call her "Mrs. Smith" so most of the time, I avoid addressing her at all. That, in itself, is awkward! The holidays are coming and I'd like to be more at ease with my in-laws. Suggestions please?*

WHAT TO CALL MOTHER-IN-LAW?

Why not just ask her how she prefers to be addressed? For example, "Mrs. Smith seems so formal. Is that OK with you or would you like me to call you by your first name?"

To the older generation out there: Please deal with this issue as soon as possible when your son or daughter are about to be married---or even before. Using whatever designation you like, take it upon yourself to simply say: "I'd like you to call me Mary---as long as you are comfortable with that." Your children will appreciate you taking the initiative in this matter.

Be prepared though, if you want to be called "Mother" or "Mom," that might be treading on the other side of the family's toes. Probably best to stick with your first name. Use humor to ease awkwardness. When my own soon-to-be daughter-in-law hesitated over calling me by my first name, I asked my husband, son and daughter-in-law together to repeat together, "Vicki, Vicki, Vicki." It worked and made life much more comfortable for all of us!

Vicki Duncan is a licensed professional counselor and welcomes our questions. She can be contacted at Victoria2write@aol.com

Exploring the Bay: The Salt Marsh

By Henry S. Parker

Late Autumn is a nice time for a kayak journey on the Bay. Think of what you'll avoid: steamy heat, biting insects, noisy speedboats, slaloming water skiers and stinging sea nettles. In their place, you'll get crisp days with a hint of frost, flocks of migratory waterfowl and a satisfying feeling that you're experiencing the last ripe days before Winter sets in.

Let's start our journey at Blackwater National Wildlife Refuge on Maryland's Eastern Shore. The refuge and surrounding areas contain more than 77,000 acres of tidal marshes, one-third of Maryland's total and one of the largest expanses of coastal wetlands in the eastern U.S. We'll pick a cool, quiet day with binoculars and field guide close at hand. We'll glide through a salt marsh, along a narrow, meandering creek, flushing egrets and herons, and threading through meadows of wind-rippled marsh grasses, now golden-brown in the closing days of Autumn.

There would be no salt marsh without these grasses—and a lot less dry land as well. They trap and anchor the sediments that twice-daily tides would otherwise sweep away. They sieve out nutrients (and pollutants) and create habitats for the hundreds of estuarine species that depend on the marsh for shelter, sustenance and nursery grounds. They shield the shoreline from eroding waves. Early European explorers, drawn to their protective, fertile features and navigable creeks, built settlements just inshore, family compounds that soon grew into towns, then busy cities.

The Dominant Spartinas - Two species of grasses comprise the salt marsh meadows. The tidally-inundated creek banks support dense stands of tall, coarse-leaved saltmarsh cordgrass, *Spartina alterniflora*. Its shorter, fine-leaved cousin, salt marsh hay (*Spartina patens*), forms thick swirly mats higher up where it is less frequently bathed by the sea. Both species occupy a narrow tidal range. Too little seawater and land plants would take over; too much and they'd suffocate.

Like their terrestrial relatives the Spartina grasses are flowering plants. While land grasses would die in salt water, Spartina is uniquely adapted to the sea because it can manage the salts while still absorbing and retaining sufficient water for existence. This has to do with principles of water flow across cell membranes.

In all life forms water moves across cell membranes from lower to higher concentrations of dissolved substances (solutes) through a process called osmosis. The liquid in the cells of a land plant contains solutes in higher concentration than in surrounding fresh water. So water tends to flow into the plant and the plant stays hydrated.

In a marine environment, the flow would be reversed because the solutes concentration in the surrounding salty sea would be higher than in the plant cells. Water would constantly flow out of the plant, causing it to dry out. But Spartina cells contain solutes in even higher concentration than in the seawater so that vital water still moves into the plant. To prevent cells from getting too salty, Spartina roots block most of the salt in seawater and its leaves excrete the excess salt that does come in.

Spartina also tolerates the anaerobic pudding of marsh mud through a complex set of adaptations including air spaces in its roots. These chambers store and supply oxygen to surrounding cells when soil oxygen is lacking.

Dominated by the Spartinas, but including a variety of other maritime plants all with their own specializations and unique roles, salt marshes support dense concentrations of insects and substantial numbers of birds and other marine and terrestrial animals. All comprise vital, interlocking components of the marsh ecosystem and ultimately depend on decomposing marsh grasses and other vegetation for their sustenance. But we'll focus on those species on a Springtime trip, when they'll be more abundant (yes, that includes annoying insects).

The Salt Marsh Under Siege - For centuries humans have assaulted salt marshes as burgeoning coastal populations exploited them for livestock grazing and feed, allowed runoff of wastes and silt, slaughtered their bird life, overharvested their fish and shellfish, and dredged and filled their shallows to expand land for development. More than half of Americans now live in coastal counties, much of that adjacent to current and former salt marshes. Not surprisingly, more than 60 percent of the Bay's coastal wetlands have been lost since the 1700s, though community awareness and regulations have slowed the loss in recent decades.

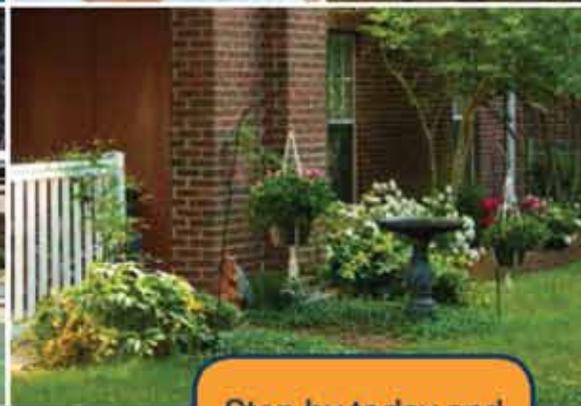
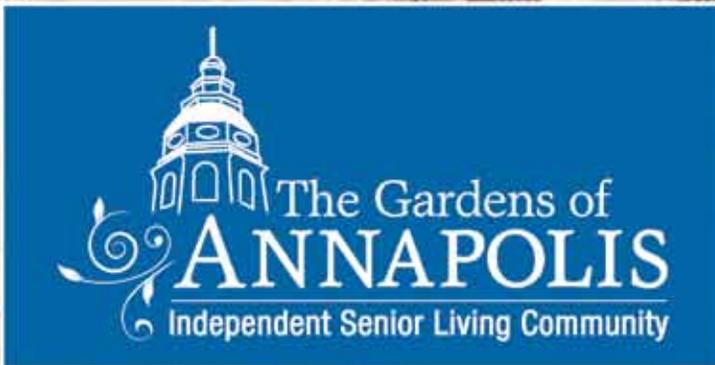
Rising sea levels also threaten salt marshes. Some of this is natural and some of it is due to human-caused climate change. Sea levels in Maryland rose about a foot over the past century, and are predicted to rise nearly four feet more by 2100. The rising flood has drowned tidal marshland. Blackwater lost over 5,000 acres between 1938 and 2006.

But it's not all doom and gloom. If waters rise slowly, the salt marsh creeps inland in response. Blackwater gained nearly 3,000 acres of new marsh between 1938 and 2006. Still a net loss, but offset by the migrating marsh. And recent studies show that salt marshes are more resilient than once thought; they may be able to regenerate even faster than the projected rise in sea level.

Whatever the predicted outcome, we must learn more about these special, vital ecosystems and do what we can to protect them. A good start: *Life and Death of the Salt Marsh*, a classic book by John and Mildred Teal.

Henry S. Parker is an adjunct associate professor at Georgetown University. He can be reached at hspshp@gmail.com

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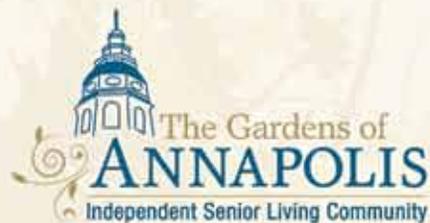
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