

Complimentary

Winter 2018

Outlook

January

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SNOW**

**LAUGH
YOURSELF
HEALTHY**

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You Get Moving
With a New Fitness Regime

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Letters to the editor

GETTING TO THE POINT

One of the beauties of *Outlook* is the frequent appearance of articles that are intriguing, brief and deliver information that can be easily put to work in one's life. Phil Ferrara's Bay Connections piece, "Camaraderie, an elixir of life" is a perfect example of that sort of valuable article. It's a five-minute read, getting down to business gracefully and quickly and concluding with information that allows the reader to act. Human beings need exercise and companionship. Both of those needs are often more difficult to meet when one is "of a certain age." Thanks to Phil for pointing us toward hiking together.

Doug N., Annapolis

BRINGING HISTORY ALIVE

I was recently cannibalizing the latest edition of *OutLook* for my out-of-state son. I realized every article I set aside for him was Ellen's. She makes our history so interesting and thus brings it to life for everyone. Thank you!

Mindy B., Annapolis

SEWING ANGELS

How wonderful to read the recent article in *Outlook by the Bay* magazine this week on "Knit or Crochet." I look forward to sharing this article with our South County Sew Time as we have lots of knitters and crocheters who I think would enjoy it. Our

sew angels love knitting and crocheting for our community using the large donation of yarn that we regularly receive. Thanks again for such an insightful article.

Barbara H. by email

A GROWING TREND

Delighted to see your publication spotlight a growing trend in my adopted home of Annapolis and the surrounding areas.

Wanted to mention a knit shop that wasn't covered in the recent article, which may be of interest to your readers. Located in Hampden, Lovelyarns can be found at 3610 Falls Road. An interesting and active shop, it would be worth a visit. For hours of operation, more information can be found at lovelyarns.com or by calling 410.662.9276.

Donna V. by email

JOINING THE TREKKERS*

I just finished reading Phil's article in the *Outlook by the Bay*. Enjoyed the article and am interested in joining the Piedmont Trekkers hiking club. What do I need to do to get on your email list for future hiking ventures?

Thanks, *Sue A., Annapolis*

**Editor's note: The Piedmont Trekkers can be contacted at pferrara65*

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On the Cover:

The McHughs, avid skiers while living in the Northeast, returned to Annapolis in 2002 after 30 years of living in states along the Northeast Corridor. Bob, a retired businessman and Duffy, a retired social worker, now enjoy a life of travel interspersed with long visits with their grandkids.



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FROM THE DESK

Here's a nice treat that gave 2018 a positive kickoff -- an unexpected email from a fan. And as all those authors and writers out there know, it's always a thrill to receive fan mail. As the author of a few chapter books for kids, this was sent to me recently:



Hi, my name is Maddy. I recently ordered one of your books on Amazon. It was the book about Jennie Wade. All of the fourth grade in my school is doing the wax museum this year. We are all super excited! Anyway, the reason I got the book, was because I am studying Jennie Wade for the wax museum. I just got the book, and I have been reading bits and pieces of it. I love to read. I love BIG chapter books! Jennie Wade really inspires me to a lot of things. So far, I have donated to a homeless family --\$173 -- Baltimore County Police helped me adopt them. And I donated to St. Judes hospital for children -- about \$360. Your book has a lot of detail, and it really helps me understand what happened to Jennie Wade. But the reason I am writing to you, is because I thought it would be cool to write to an author. (This is my first time.) Well, I hope you get this message, and I hope you write back. Goodbye! Sincerely, Madison

Well, of course I wrote back. Who could resist? But how exciting to know that one of the first books that I'd written had had an influence on a young person, and the kind of influence that inspired a giving and generous spirit.

Jenny Wade, the focus of the book that Maddy mentioned, tells the tale of the only civilian killed at the Battle of Gettysburg. After lots of research into the life of this young woman, it was an interesting task to pull together a chapter book for kids. The book conveyed Jenny's very giving and generous spirit and it appears that my letter writer Maddy has fashioned herself somewhat after this heroine with that same generosity of spirit.

As a former bookstore owner, I observed that what was offered to kids in the line of historical novels was abysmal at best. My goal was to change that and turn some of history's characters into everyday people who kids could emulate. This isn't easy. As adults it's easier to lecture, rather than to try to sneak life's lessons in sideways.

Writing these books for kids has overall been a rewarding and gratifying experience. Another huge benefit of becoming a prolific writer is the late-in-life discovery that there is the opportunity to find a totally different path, just for the sheer pleasure of it. It has been more than gratifying to be the publisher of *OutLook*, but just as inspiring is trying to get into the heads of our young people by introducing them to our history in a painless and interesting way.

Each of the seven books currently in print features an historical character who is faced with various difficulties. In the book *Antietam*, Molly, at 15, is undecided as to which side she should sympathize with during the Civil War. Another title, *The Letter*, is based on a document that is held by the National Society of the Colonial Dames, which tells the tale of Bitsy. In 1756 she landed in Baltimore as an indentured servant. As the story unfolds, the mystery is solved as to why the father of this literate young girl sold her into servitude.

There's not enough space here to describe all the reasons for writing these books, but you can find a fuller explanation online at TeclaEmerson.com. (Emerson is a nom de plume to differentiate between the writer and the publisher.)

Perhaps one of the most enriching aspects of finding this so late in life is that it's so satisfying to see something that can be left behind, something that might positively influence our young people and improve their understanding of their heritage.

So thanks, Maddy. I think your letter is an inspiration to all of us. You've confirmed that it's not too late to try something new and maybe even to have a positive impact.

As the Earth continues its inexorable orbit around the sun, you and I are just passengers along for the ride. With the tilt of the Earth's axis we are now in that long, cold season following the December solstice. The sun angle is low, so daylight times are shorter, the weather colder. We are denied the full warming benefits of the sun's radiation.

Then what are we to do when dawn breaks late in the Winter? You can take full advantage of every day. Rise early with the sun's rays just clipping the treetops! For those of us lucky enough to live around the shores and in the region of the Chesapeake Bay, Winter brings many exciting opportunities for outdoor activities.

The brisk, enervating, fresh air when combined with the exhilaration of physical exercise is a powerful force on behalf of good health. Add those elements to the power of camaraderie, and you will have discovered one of the great elixirs of life.

What are those opportunities presented around the Chesapeake Bay region?

One of them is ice-skating, a perfect activity for Winter and for enjoying with friends. Locations to take advantage of the sport are plentiful in our region. [Quiet Waters Park](#) at 600 Quiet Waters Park Road in Annapolis is a perfect venue with an idyllic setting and music. Fees and skate rentals are less than \$10 per person. Similar conditions can be found at numerous other venues. Go further afield to the [Pentagon Row Skating Rink](#) on South Joyce Street in Arlington, Virginia. Perhaps combine that adventure with lunch or dinner in [Old Town Alexandria](#) or even a tour of [Mount Vernon](#) just a few miles further down the Potomac. Also nearby is the [Glen Burnie Outdoor Ice-skating Rink](#) at 103 Crain Highway or the [Piney Orchard Ice Arena](#) on Piney Orchard Parkway in Odenton. And not to be missed is the [Mount Pleasant Ice Arena](#) in Baltimore and the [Columbia Ice Rink](#) at 5876 Thunder Hill Road in Columbia.

Don't like the ice? Then snowshoe trekking or just walking is another Winter pastime to consider. Try the [National Mall](#), especially on a weekday. Crowds are smaller during the Winter months, allowing you to more comfortably view the gorgeous monuments and buildings of Washington, D.C., and reflect upon their meaning and the history they represent. At the same time, take the opportunity to explore one of the many museums that

surround the Mall. The numerous [Smithsonian Museum](#) sites are free and absolutely an American national treasure.

Another great place to snowshoe or Winter walk is [Terrapin Park](#) on Kent Island. Beautiful Chesapeake Bay views, duck ponds and three miles of quiet paths through pine forests and along sandy beaches are yours to enjoy during the Winter. Or visit the forests and shores and marshes of the [Smithsonian Environmental Research Center](#) off Muddy Creek Road in Anne Arundel County. It is truly a jewel of serenity! Want more challenge and adventure? Try one of the many park segments of the [Patapsco Valley State Park](#). For example, the [Hilton Area](#) of that park will give you several miles of challenging Winter trails, with or without snow. Views, overlooks and tumbling creeks abound.

A marvelous aerobic exercise is cross-country skiing. When there is snow on the ground, this is a sport of great tranquility. It is even more pleasurable and beautiful when the snow adorns the branches of our region's ubiquitous holly and pine trees. Try the open fields and the hidden trails of [Kinder Farm Park](#) in Anne Arundel County or ski along the many miles of trails that weave through the forests and marshlands of [Patuxent River Park](#) in Prince Georges County.

When your outdoor urges are fully satiated, there is another option. The cultural one, the indoor one!

Again our region is blessed with a myriad of opportunities. Attend performances at the [Colonial Players Theatre](#) at 103 East St. or the [Shakespeare Theatre](#) at 1804 West Street, both in Annapolis. Or explore the many famed cultural venues of the two great cities nearby. Perhaps visit the [Ford Theater](#) or the [Arena Stage](#) in Washington, D.C., or the [Hippodrome Theatre](#) or the [Joseph Meyerhoff Symphony Hall](#) in Baltimore.

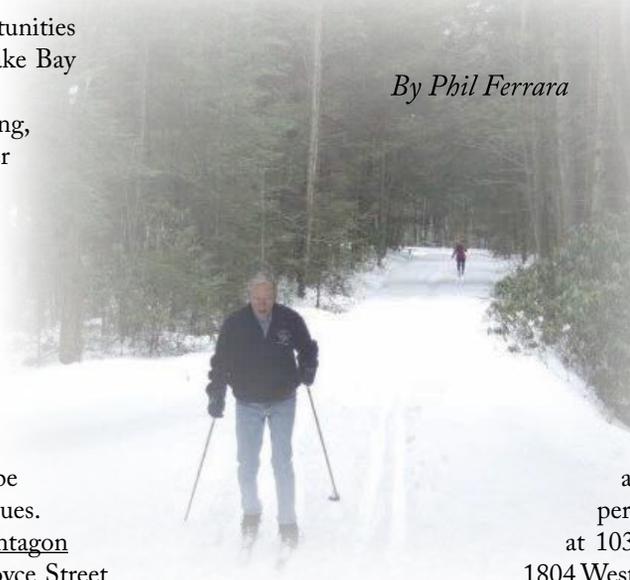
Directions, times of operation, fees and schedules for the parks, venues and theaters mentioned here are readily available in websites by using the names as indicated above.

And finally, when all else fails, and all of your local activities have been exhausted, there is a nuclear option! [BWI-Thurgood Marshall Airport](#) is located at the heart of our region, just minutes away. From there it is a mere three or four hours flying time to countless tropical islands with sandy beaches, warm sunshine and exotic beverages!

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

Let it SNOW, Let it SNOW!

By Phil Ferrara





LET
2018
BE THE YEAR
YOU **GET**
MOVING
New WITH A
FITNESS
REGIME

By Leah Lancione

It's officially 2018. A new year, another opportunity to improve your health and fitness. If you're a baby boomer or beyond, you're not too old, and it's not too late, to join the hordes of men and women who hit the gym, hire a trainer, join an exercise class or begin working out on their own in January. Call it New Year's resolutions or not, experts say the fitness industry is evolving to meet the needs of exercisers over 50. The American College of Sports Medicine (ACSM) published its "Top Ten Fitness Trends for 2018" with fitness programs for older adults ranking No. 9 (www.acsm.org/about-acsm/media-room/news-releases/2017/10/26/). "Many health and fitness professionals are taking the time to create age-appropriate fitness programs to keep older adults healthy and active," the group said.

Accordingly, gyms, senior living facilities and health clubs are expanding their repertoire to cater to these baby boomers who helped make trends like jazzercise, calisthenics, the Thigh Master and at-home workout videos hosted by celebrities like Jane Fonda and Richard Simmons, popular. New programs for the older set range from gentle yoga, gentle stretch and body weight training to tai chi, Pilates and the SilverSneakers. Here are brief descriptions of current fitness trends energizing boomers:

SilverSneakers: This is a free fitness program for seniors who are eligible through Medicare. It includes unlimited access to participating gyms and fitness centers in the network. Weights, treadmills, pools and other amenities are also included, along with fitness classes led by certified instructors. Visit www.silversneakers.com to see if you're eligible.

Gentle yoga: Gentle yoga is often described as less intense, non-strenuous, minimalistic, meditative or restorative. It can be applied to various styles of yoga taught by instructors or through an at-home video. Gentle yoga classes are appropriate for people with an injury, movement limitations, disabilities or chronic

conditions. Yoga International (<https://yogainternational.com>) says classes vary; they can be done seated, have a therapeutic focus, employ a restorative component or be in a "flow" of postures. So you can figure out what you need, most health clubs offer a free introductory course. If you prefer to exercise at home, Yoga International offers 30 days of free online classes and yoga anytime (www.yogaanytime.com). There are at-home videos on Amazon as well as at other online or brick-and-mortar retailers.

Gentle stretch: Gentle stretch classes may be centered on yoga breathing techniques, moderate body movements and poses to encourage proper alignment, strengthen muscles and improve balance.

Pilates: Joseph Pilates created his fitness methodology in the early 20th century and practiced it well into old age. Pilates is popular and suitable for seniors since exercises can be tailored to meet individuals' specific needs, and its benefits include "increased levels of strength, balance, flexibility, muscle tone, stamina, and well-being." (www.verywell.com/is-pilates-good-exercise-for-seniors-2704632) Many gyms, health clubs, senior centers, YMCAs and other recreation centers offer Pilates classes designed to be "boomer-friendly."

Alicia Reese, owner and head teacher of the The Pilates Perspective (www.thepilatesperspective.com), clarifies that Pilates is good for everyone, "at any movement level, at any age." Pilates, she says, is less about aggressiveness as it is about being "inclusive of the mind/body as part of the 'whole' which is spirit. It allows you to delve deeper into yourself through the meditative movement practiced to the timing of one's breath."

Is it imperative to visit a Pilates studio? Reese says that while there are some good Pilates channels online, anyone looking to embark on an understanding of the Pilates method should start with a trained professional at a studio. "A well-seasoned teacher will evaluate your movement patterns, teach you the best way to connect with yourself, and direct you toward achieving your highest level of health. At-home practice, however, is a great way to supplement your sessions at the studio."

Why not try something new. Maybe you'll end up liking it.

Ballet Barre: Sadie Lincoln, founder of Barre3 Fitness, describes workouts as being “a combination of postures inspired by ballet and other disciplines like yoga and Pilates. The barre is used as a prop to balance while doing exercises that focus on isometric strength training -- holding your body still while you contract a specific set of muscles) combined with high reps of small range-of-motion movements.” She also says that barre results include improved posture, flexibility, and muscle definition, as well as weight loss and reduced stress.

Tai Chi: According to Wikipedia, tai chi is an internal Chinese martial art practiced for both its defense training and its health benefits. The term refers to a philosophy of the forces of yin and yang, related to the moves. The website Medical News Today says tai chi is beneficial for older people since it blends gentle stretching and mild physical exercise. It has also been shown to “improve balance control, fitness, and flexibility, and to reduce the risk of falls in older people.” “Often described as meditation in motion, tai chi promotes serenity through gentle, flowing movements,” the Mayo Clinic adds. Many YMCAs, recreation centers and senior centers, like Annapolis Senior Center, offer various levels of tai chi.

No matter what discipline you choose, Christine Matson, activity director at The Gardens of Annapolis, encourages folks to always “keep moving!” She says, “physical activity improves mobility and strength. Paired with stretching and balancing, it reduces the risk of falls. Strengthening bones helps with lowering the risk of fractures.”

Matson says it’s important to keep exercising fun so you’ll be more eager to maintain a regular routine, even if it’s something simple like walking. Even “chair yoga” is an excellent exercise for upper body strength.

The Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) recommends that people 65 or over who don’t have limiting health conditions complete 150 minutes of moderate-intensity aerobic activity a week (www.cdc.gov/physicalactivity/basics/older_adults/index.htm). That means, roughly 20 minutes a day, or 30 minutes five times a week. The CDC also suggests having at least two days devoted to muscle-strengthening activities for all major muscle groups.

Whatever form of exercise you choose to try out, make sure to check with a doctor first! Here’s to being fitter and happier in 2018!

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HOW'S YOUR MEMORY? OR, WHERE ARE MY CAR KEYS?

By Louise Whiteside

“Let’s go see that movie starring what’s-his-name, you know, the tall guy with the blond hair.”

“How did that song go, the one we used to dance to -- something about flowers and moonlight?”

Do you ever walk into a room and ask yourself, “Why did I come in here?” Do you sometimes picture the face of the person you met last night, but struggle to recall his or her name?

Simple absent-mindedness can occur at any age. But, if you’re like me, those so-called “senior moments” become more frequent. As we progress toward middle age and beyond, changes occur in the way our brains store and retrieve information, making it more difficult to recall facts, names and details of everyday life. In the vast majority of cases our memory lapses, although annoying, are nothing to be alarmed about. Age-related memory loss is not only common, but normal and universal.

Note that Alzheimer’s disease also causes memory problems, but the symptoms are much more severe than those present in normal age-related memory loss. So, how do you know if your memory problems are serious? You should see your doctor if: (1) you feel that your memory has gotten significantly worse in the past six months; (2) you have trouble remembering how to do things you’ve done many times before; (3) you can’t remember how to get to a familiar place; or (4) you have trouble accomplishing things that involve step-by-step instructions, such as following a recipe. These symptoms may indicate a more severe form of memory loss, and may require medical treatment.

If, on the other hand, you only occasionally experience one of those familiar, yet exasperating, memory tune-outs, here are some boosters and do-it-yourself remedies that may help:

1. **Essential oils:** Rosemary or basil essential oil, when inhaled, can increase the brain’s production of beta waves and heighten awareness. Put some of the oil on your skin or clothing, where you can easily inhale some of the scent.
2. **Caffeine:** Caffeinated beverages can give you a short-term boost in your ability to concentrate.
3. **Exercise:** There is some evidence that regular exercise (especially the aerobic kind, like walking) may increase the nerve activity in the brain.
4. **Blood sugar maintenance:** New research has shown that even mild, non-diabetic glucose intolerance can reduce short-term memory in middle-aged and elderly people. Eating a fiber-rich diet of whole grains and vegetables, and fewer “white” carbohydrates, such as white pasta and white bread, may reduce age-related memory loss.
5. **Water intake:** The brain is 85 per cent water. At least

eight 8-ounce glasses of water per day will prevent dehydration, which can adversely affect brain function. And some research now indicates much less than eight glasses will do.

6. **B Vitamins:** Vitamins B-6, B-12, niacin and thiamin help make and repair brain tissue. Good sources of B vitamins are bananas, chickpeas, turkey, whole grains, meat, nuts, seeds, wheat germ and fortified breakfast cereals.
7. **Cutting down on foods high in saturated fats:** Just as these fats can clog the arteries that feed the heart, so can they block those that feed the brain.
8. **Multivitamin a day:** Make sure it contains folic acid and B-12.
9. **Listening to music:** Music improves ability to concentrate.
10. **Challenging your brain:** Learn to play a musical instrument, master a foreign language, do crossword puzzles, play Scrabble, try chess and other challenging games.
11. **Reducing stress in your life:** Stress hormones can affect the hippocampus, that part of the brain that affects memory. Do things that are fun and relaxing like take a stroll in the park, paint, read, keep a journal, enjoy a cup of herbal tea.
12. **Herbal remedies:** Consider taking the following herbs (available at your health food store), which are believed to heighten mental acuity, including Siberian ginseng, gotu kola and ginkgo biloba.

For any of these supplemental remedies, always consult a health care practitioner or nutritionist for guidance in proper dosage and frequency.

In addition, there are many memory “ticklers” (called mnemonics), which can improve recall, such as visualization and word association. Check your local book store or library for the multitude of books on memory improvement.

Finally, some advice from a seasoned veteran: Keep it simple. Write it down. Stick notes on the refrigerator door. And remember the age-old appeal: “I’m sorry, but I can’t remember your name. Would you please tell me again?”

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Life Extension Foundation, Ft. Lauderdale, Fla. www.lef.org

DIABETES AND YOUR DENTAL HEALTH

By Drs. Woody Wooddell & Joe Passaro

About 29 million people living in the United States have diabetes. That's nearly 9.5 percent of the population. Diabetes takes a toll on your entire body, but it can also increase your risk of dental disease and tooth loss. In fact, one in five cases of total tooth loss is linked to diabetes.

While managing diabetes requires vigilance, the good news is you can take charge of your health. Controlling your blood sugar, brushing, flossing and visiting your dentist regularly can go a long way to help limit the likelihood of developing these diabetes-related mouth issues:

Gum Disease. Bleeding when you brush or floss may be an early sign of gum disease. If it becomes severe, the bone that supports your teeth can break down and lead to tooth loss. Periodontal disease is the most common dental disease affecting those living with diabetes. Especially with increasing age, poor blood sugar control increases the risk for gum problems. Early gum disease can be reversed with proper brushing, flossing and diet.

Dry Mouth. Studies confirm that people with diabetes have less saliva, so you might find yourself feeling parched or extra thirsty. Fight dry mouth by drinking water. You can also chew sugarless gum and eat healthy, crunchy foods to get saliva flowing. This is especially important because extra sugar in your saliva, combined with less saliva to wash away leftover food, can lead to cavities.

Change in Taste. When you have diabetes your favorite

foods might not taste as rich as they used to. It can be disappointing, but take the opportunity to experiment with different tastes, textures and spices. Just be sure not to add too much sugar to your food in an effort to add flavor.

Infections. Diabetes affects your immune system, leaving you more vulnerable to infection. A common infection experienced by people with diabetes is a yeast infection called oral thrush (candidiasis). The yeast thrives on the higher amount of sugar found in your saliva. Thrush looks like a white layer coating your tongue and the insides of your cheeks and can often leave a bad taste in your mouth. See your dentist if you think you have thrush or any other mouth infection.

Slow Healing. If you have ever had a cold sore or a cut in your mouth that doesn't quite seem to go away, this can be another sign that diabetes is affecting your mouth. Poor control of blood sugar can keep injuries from healing quickly and properly. If you have something in your mouth that you feel isn't healing as it should, see your dentist.

Good home care practices in conjunction with regular professional dental care will be beneficial in keeping your smile healthy, as well as potentially slowing the progression of diabetes.

Dr. Woody Wooddell and Dr. Joe Passaro opened the doors to their dental practice in Davidsonville in 1981. In addition to caring for their patients' dental health, Drs. Wooddell and Passaro provide expert restorative and esthetic dental solutions. Visit their website at www.wp dentalgroup.com or call 410.956.5555 for more information.



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Marital Science:

A Letter To Friends

Dear John and Jane,

I am replying to your request for research-based and empirically validated information that will enable you to rekindle the love, delight, passion and excitement that you had in the early years of your committed relationship.

Fortunately, after 70 years of marital science research, we now have the beginnings of techniques and strategies that actually work. This is largely due to the pioneering research of John and Julie Gottman. They observe couples in “love laboratories,” i.e., actual living quarters, to identify what works and what does not work in keeping the fire alive.

FIRST STEPS

Let's begin with a basic reality. If we are not happy with ourselves, we will not be happy with our spouse or significant other. For couples' therapy to succeed, individual complicating variables or co-morbidities such as mental illness, addictions, domestic violence, extramarital affairs and trauma must be resolved.

Another basic issue is to understand and accept that marital conflict is healthy and inevitable when both spouses are relatively healthy. The critical dimension is sticking with a conflict until it is resolved in a win-win manner, where both parties feel heard, loved and respected.

Research reveals that when the ratio of positive to negative emotions expressed during a conflict, as detected by trained observers, is 5 to 1 or higher, a healthy relationship is present. If the ratio is 1 to 1 or less, divorce or intense chronic discord results. As most of us know from bitter experience, we readily slide into a negative ratio and it is extremely difficult to change the pattern. When the emotionally negative interactions become pervasive, the Gottmans' term is “The Quicksand Effect.”

REPAIR EFFORTS

Effective repair efforts should be timely. The longer the disconnect, the more severe the estrangement. Repair efforts will most likely be very emotional as we share our frailty and vulnerability. The Gottmans suggest beginning the repair conversation with a gentle voice and the giant step of claiming responsibility for some part of the conflict.

By Dr. Jim David

Hopefully, John and Jane, you will then be able to move out of the “attack-defend” mode and assume a collaborative stance. Research shows that an attitude of mutual interest rather than self-interest must prevail for positive effect to return. In the same vein, rather than a “quid pro quo” or give-to-get attitude, people in fulfilling relationships experience mutual giving without measuring what they each contribute.

Another critical skill is to understand that behind every negative emotion there is a positive need or emotion.

I call it “the real issue.” For example, I show you my anger and resentment, but I hide my deeper feelings of being unloved, disrespected, unheard, unimportant or abandoned. What do we need to do to get connected and stay connected?

GOTTMANS' MAGIC TRIO

John and Jane, I could tell you that marriage is like a house built on sand that has to be rebuilt every day. That idea might motivate some people, but it might be empty words for others. A more measurable and researchable approach is to develop the ability to stay physiologically calm in the midst of conflict and to help your partner to stay calm. This is step one of the Magic Trio. When our heart rate is above 100 beats a minute and our oxygen level is below 95 percent, our ability to emphasize, listen, embrace humor or think well disappears. We are flooded with adrenaline and cortisol. Rational responses cease. Being a safe haven for one another ends.

Staying physiologically calm while in conflict requires **the ability to self-soothe**. Avenues to self-soothe are countless and include meditation, prayer, exercise, therapeutic resolution of the origins of the intense emotional reactivity and visualizing.

The second part of the Magic Trio is **building trust by tuning into one another**. This means sharing and caring about our own feelings and our partner's feelings. In marriage, feelings are more important than facts or opinions. How I feel equals who I am. I feel lonely or afraid equals I am lonely or afraid. If you do not tune in to or care about how I feel, you will not be tuning in to or caring about me. Then I will not trust you.

The third ingredient is **being committed to the relationship**. How do we build and strengthen commitment? We do it by being responsive to our spouse in each and every interaction each day. This is the Gottmans' "Bid System." Each time we say something to our spouse it is a "bid" for a response. Three possible responses are (1) *Turning Toward* resulting in a deepening commitment; (2) *Turning Away* causing unfulfillment or (3) *Turning Against* creating hurt, pain, frustration, anger or disgust. Research has revealed that couples who eventually divorce turn toward their spouses at a rate of 33 percent; still-married couples did so 86 percent of the time.

Another research finding that strengthens commitment is comparing your spouse in a positive manner to others. If negative comparisons prevail, divorce ensues.

FINAL THOUGHTS

John and Jane, I hope these brief thoughts are meaningful to you. I like the Gottman approach because it is clear, straightforward and very much in each moment of each day. Our ageless wisdom said, "Never go to sleep at night angry with your spouse." Our modern marital science says, "Unhappy couples get stuck in negative emotions due to failure of repair attempts." Remember marital conflict is healthy and inevitable. Be sure to get it resolved in a mutually satisfying manner before bedtime.

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

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Read our article "Diabetes & Your Dental Health" in this edition of Outlook!

Nothing quenches thirst like a glass of cold water. The sips. The gulps. The long swallows. A simply refreshing feeling from a clear, colorless liquid. In seconds, this wondrous water revives us. But do we reach for one often enough?

When we're not adequately hydrated, electrolytes like sodium and potassium get out of balance, urinary tract troubles start and the digestive system slows down. Every cell in our body needs water. We are 60 percent water. Our brain, kidneys and muscles need a steady supply of water so that hormones, carbohydrates and protein are delivered to all the right places. At the same time, water flushes harmful substances from the bloodstream.

Often we aren't thirsty. That's because over time our sense of thirst doesn't kick in as often as it should. We could be on the dry side, slightly dehydrated, without knowing it. Maybe all that we'll notice is a tired, low-energy feeling. Being severely dehydrated is something more serious, requiring medical attention. Some of these symptoms are unclear thinking, profound weakness, fever, flushed skin and dark urine.

Scientists suggest that we shouldn't rely on feeling thirsty as a signal for needing fluids. Instead, we ought to make it a habit to drink four to six eight-ounce glasses of water each day. The four to six, by the way, has replaced the longstanding recommendation of eight a day. Phew! What's more, it's not a hard and fast rule. Four to six a day might not be for everyone. Experts say that we're to decide for ourselves how much water we need on a daily basis to avoid the dehydration symptoms. Some of us are on medications that require a lot of water in order to do their job, such as antibiotics and pain medication. Others may have a heart or kidney condition that limits how much water they can drink. In both situations, we can stay hydrated by eating fruits and vegetables that have a high water content like tomatoes, celery, bell peppers, lettuce, melons and berries. Along with providing water, these foods are nutrient-rich as opposed to foods like chips, cookies and cake that are nutrient-poor.

Water has to compete with many beverages on the market that are designed to be our favorite pick-me-ups. It's easy to overlook water in favor of delicious coffees, energy drinks and flavored beverages. They tantalize our taste buds. Water, not so much. What water has to offer is no calories. If we want to control our weight, then water can help with that. Researchers have found that those who

OUR INNER LUBRICATION: WATER

By Kathleen A. McCarthy

drink water as their main beverage lose more weight than others who turn to soda, fruit drinks, energy drinks or sweetened bottled waters. Deciding on water over other beverages can lower calorie intake as much as 200 calories a day. Over time, this can add up to a significant weight loss.

Staying hydrated also has a mechanical benefit. Water protects every system in the body, acting as a shock absorber. People with arthritis report less pain when they're well hydrated. Our joints, muscles and ligaments no longer produce their own natural oils for gliding back and forth, so water is a good replacement. It cushions our joints. Knees, in particular, need water. Think of the knee as a hinge, with water

oiling all of its parts. Many areas of our body work the same way. Taking in enough water means our cells can fill to capacity, then continue into deep tissues and joints. Plenty of water plumps up and smooths out our inner body so movements are more fluid. The opposite is also true, if we don't take in enough water. Then joints dry out, ligaments lose their elasticity and muscles feel stiff. That's why you'll always see fitness instructors and athletes with a water bottle close by. So whatever your magic number is for the day, whether its four or six, be a water drinker.

For more information log onto:

- Cleveland Clinic. Avoiding Dehydration, Proper Hydration. My.clevelandclinic.org/health/articles/avoiding-dehydration?view=print
- Harvard Health Publishing. Harvard Medical School. How much water should you drink? (September 2016)
- Mayo Clinic. Healthy Lifestyle. Nutrition and healthy eating. www.mayoclinic.org/healthy-lifestyle/nutrition-and-healthy-eating/in-depth/water/
- National Institute on Aging. Getting Enough Fluids. www.nia.nih.gov/health/getting-enough-fluids
- National Institute on Aging. 13 Tips to Keep Your Bladder Healthy. www.nia.nih.gov/health/13-tips-keep-your-bladder-healthy

YOUR LEGAL COMPASS

ESTATE PLANNING 101: HOW TO PROTECT YOUR “STUFF”

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

Congratulations! You survived the holidays and are off to a great start on your New Year's resolutions, which may include a review of your current estate plan. Do not put it off. Now is a great time, while you still have the energy and enthusiasm to follow through with your resolutions, to assure your estate plan meets your goals and protects you and your family. It is so easy, in fact, that all it takes are three simple steps. First, know the rules. Second, know your predators. Third, know your options.

There are two sets of rules: rules that apply during your lifetime and rules that apply after your death. During your lifetime, who has the authority to act for you when you cannot act for yourself? If you have financial and health care powers of attorney, your named agent will be able to act for you with respect to your finances and medical/end-of-life decisions. And if you have not delegated these powers of attorney, your loved ones will have to apply for legal guardianship of you. This requires certificates of incompetency from two doctors, as well as a hearing or trial, if contested. Not only can this be costly, but the court will be involved in your finances and health care decisions until you die.

After your death, your last will and testament will take effect and your personal representative, or executor, will distribute your assets to your beneficiaries. But this requires probate, which is a legal process involving court oversight. Again, this can be costly, ranging from 5 to 20 percent of the total value of your estate, according to AARP, and the personal representative cannot distribute assets to the beneficiaries for a minimum of six months. Also, probate estates are available for public inspection.

So, it is important to know the distinction between documents and planning. Most people have documents, but not a plan. For instance, if you have a statutory form power of attorney, your named agent will have a blank check to do anything and everything you could do regarding certain assets covered by the

power of attorney, but without any instructions. And, the statutory form powers of attorney are not broad enough to allow your agent to do everything that may be necessary, such as giving, or creating and funding trusts for your benefit. Even if you add the missing provisions, your agent now has a super blank check because they can do everything, but still do not know what to do or how to act.

Similarly, if you have a health care power of attorney without a living will or advance directive, your agent will have a God proxy. Meaning, it will be up to your agent to decide whether you live or die. Instead, your document should have a plan that deals specifically with both non-end-of-life decisions as well as end-of-life decisions. A personal care plan, for example, would instruct your agent on how you would like to be treated, things you would like to do, eat and see. (For example, you could specify things like being taken outside once daily, foods you like or do not like to eat, and certain types of television or movies you would like to watch), and any other preferences you may have.

Now that you know the rules, you need to be aware of your predators, which would include the government, i.e. guardianship, probate and taxes, long-term care costs, including in-home care, assisted living and nursing homes, family, such as a spouse who requires long-term care or a child who is a spendthrift, and lawsuits, either yours or your beneficiaries.

Finally, your options are simple: Use the government's rules or make your own. By drafting your documents in a way that assures: 1) you are in control, 2) you decide who benefits from your estate plan and 3) you direct when and under what circumstances, that is while you are alive and well, incapacitated and deceased, you have created a proper estate plan that protects not only you, but your family as well, during your lifetime and after.

So, get out those documents and make sure they are up to date and meet your goals. And, if not, find a qualified estate planning attorney who can advise you about a proper plan. Happy New Year!

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're a music lover, but, like me, are not phone-savvy -- no worries. The following is a list of some of the best music apps for your iOS (iPhone Operating System) or Android device. According to Digital Trends webzine, "there are probably no fewer than a zillion different music apps between Google Play and the App Store." The webzine explains that though smartphone users have access to any of these music apps, phones have limited space available. For those of us without the time and proclivity to try out all of them, Digital Trends and other music experts have ranked their favorites. It must be noted, too, that apps listed here are free (or free for a time) for your music listening. There are numerous apps for tuning your guitar, learning an instrument, creating music and more. (Go to www.digitaltrends.com/m,obile/best-music-apps/)

HERE ARE SOME OPTIONS:

GOOGLE PLAY MUSIC

"Google Play Music provides free, ad-supported radio for what you're doing, how you're feeling or what you want to hear. Instantly start radio stations based on songs, artists or albums, or browse by genre, mood, activity, decade and more." Another nice feature: You can upload music (up to 50,000 songs) from your private collection. (That's at <https://play.google.com>)

Additional free features include subscribing to podcasts, receiving smart recommendations based on your taste and listening on your Android, iOS or the web.

Digital Trends describes the app as "clean, lined with handpicked playlists and custom radio stations, and even presents smart recommendations based on your individual taste and prior listening habits."

PANDORA

SeniorTV.com says Pandora is one of the best apps for seniors since its free, or pay to have a no-ad version of Pandora Plus, or even on-demand Pandora Premium "mostly due to the ability to choose any artist the user wants." Pandora enables listeners to pick an artist, song or genre and create a music station based on your tastes. Saying "every Pandora station evolves with

your tastes," the app or website (www.pandora.com) will play music related to your preferences.

Though Digital Trends says, "Pandora is a mainstay of the streaming realm, despite its dwindling user base" and it's still easy to use and fulfills its purpose. The idea of having your own custom radio station "utilizing advanced algorithms based on a specific track or artist," is glorious. What more could you want? Type in Frank Sinatra, for example, and your playlist will also feature songs by "Old Blue Eyes" as well as other hits by crooners in the "Rat Pack" or even more modern-day artists who sing in the genre, like Michael Bubl .

By Leah Lancione

AMAZON PRIME MUSIC

Digital Trends says though, "Amazon may have been late to the game, its streaming app is one of the best. It allows you to access your entire cloud player library, including uploaded songs and those you purchased on the site, and provides additional options for creating and editing playlists on the fly." Though this is available to anyone, it is only free to those who have an Amazon Prime subscription. If you're a Prime member, like me, Prime Music enables you to stream more than 2 million songs (ad-free).

If you're not a member, you can pay for an individual, family, or even a student plan. It's also possible to try it out for 99 cents for three months.

TUNEIN RADIO

If you long to listen to your hometown or college radio station, TuneIn Radio offers access to more than 120,000 live radio stations around the world. In addition to listening to music, TuneIn provides

you with sports and news broadcasts, as well as podcasts (5.7 million) and audiobooks. It's "original, live, and on-demand internet radio all in one place" at <https://tunein.com> It's available on your computer or virtually any device.

SPOTIFY

Spotify is a free streaming service that provides digital music, podcasts and videos. Users can access millions of songs and build a personalized collection of music. It can easily be upgraded to a premium account (three months for 99 cents) to get more services. Spotify is available on virtually any device—computers, phones, tablets, speakers, TVs and cars.

5 FREE MUSIC APPS WORTH CHECKING OUT

"MUSIC IS THE UNIVERSAL LANGUAGE OF MANKIND"

- HENRY WADSWORTH LONGFELLOW

WORKING UP A SWEAT IN THE WINTER

By Molly Lauryssens

Brrr, it's cold outside! But that doesn't mean you have to skip your regular workouts. You can still heat things up and reap the benefits that exercising offers.

Here, we are going beyond a basic gym membership and giving you seven ways to beat the cold and get your workouts in without too much added expense.

As always, please remember to consult with your physician before doing any new exercise regimen.

1. Take your walk indoors. Sounds crazy, but no, not really. Check out your local malls, which often open their doors earlier than the stores for this very reason: So walkers can beat that extra foot traffic!
2. Rather not go to the mall for a walk? Then check out your local library's DVD rentals. There are walking videos along with other low- to high-impact exercises

you can do in the comfort of your living room. There are so many options!

3. Get a workout buddy. Pair up with your favorite person to help keep you motivated. Decide on some activities that you two can enjoy together and go with it.
4. Speaking of working out DVDs, you and your workout partner can scour those library shelves and decide to finally give tai chi a chance.
5. Check your local recreation councils and community colleges. They often run different fitness programs through the Winter months for a nominal fee. Some even have indoor swimming pools where you can sign up for water aerobics or just get in some laps.
6. Try something new? How about a duckpin bowling league? Maybe you prefer regular bowling? Either way, activities like this keep you social in the cold Winter months when depression is more common.
7. Fresh-out-of-bed stretches can be the most magnificent way to start the day. Try out some yoga poses like a sun salutation or tree pose to start your mornings off right. Don't worry about the mechanics, just listen to your body and stretch it out. If you want to get the mechanics just right, check your local library where there are instructional DVDs.

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

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Does the term alumni college sound like an oxymoron, sort of? If so, I can assure you that such an experience is guaranteed to make you less of a mental midget and more of an engaged, stimulated, post-college, post-career adult.

An email from my alma mater, Middlebury College, introduced me to the concept. It came when I had a bit of leisure time and was in the mood to take on an intellectual challenge. There were other reasons:

- just a three-day commitment
- a chance to return to a campus I enjoyed
- a break from the routine and to focus on one thing
- possibility of making new friends with similar interests
- reasonable cost
- perhaps most of all, fascinating topics.

Before embarking on the specifics of my Summer experiences at Middlebury, let me explain that I Googled the term alumni colleges to do my homework. Schools with alumni college programs include Yale, Ohio University, Miami University, Washington and Lee University, Brandeis and Reed, to name a few. No doubt there are many others as well. Most programs are three days long, and although each has its own special qualities, it is safe to assume that all offer gifted faculty presenting topics in which they have expertise.

Returning to Middlebury's three-day offering, which I fondly describe as "Summer camp for adults with hors d'oeuvres and wine on the lawn each night before dinner," it is true that we stay in dorm rooms. But they don't resemble in the least the cinder block-walled spaces that I remember. Not only are there two clean sheets at once on a bed already made up, but the communal bathrooms have granite-topped sinks and fancy individual shower stalls with frosted glass doors.

The food is abundant and good. Breakfast and lunch are buffet style, offering choices for every food preference and requirement. Dinner is part buffet and part seated, with generous wine service at the table. Should you be the always-hungry type, bowls of fruit abound as well as mid-morning snacks of coffee cake, scones, fruit and cookies. Meals are among the highlights and it is always fun to get to know others as seating is informal.

Lest you think I'm focusing on the frills, rest assured it's the nonthreatening intellectual workout that appeals the most. Choosing what to study is critical. A Spring email announces the session's dates, instructors and subjects. With five options, it is always a challenge to choose. Last year, the decision was between the library's holdings on the Underground Railroad and the topic

"War: What Good is It?" I settled on the latter and found myself in a room of about 50 alums of all ages who were listening, discussing and debating with vigor. I don't think anyone fell asleep, even though walkers and hearing aids were part of the daily dress for many.

This year, the choices were equally difficult: "What can I Say? Free Speech in the United States and Europe" and "Food Politics 2019: An Unfolding Story," "How We Think and Why it Matters," followed by "British Crime Drama" and "The Rich Geological History of Vermont," rounded it out. First I selected "Food Politics," and in preparation for the class, read an excellent book on the farm bill of 2014. It was an education, but once I learned that the focus was going to be on US

farm policy and not international food needs, I switched to the "Free Speech" course.

In retrospect, I cannot but applaud the timeliness and relevance of at least three of the five topics. And that seems to be the norm. The faculty knows that only committed, inquiring adults will be attending their classes. They relish the opportunity to engage with people whose life experience gives them unique perspectives. The classroom often spills out into the dining room as discussions are too engaging to end at the door after an hour.

My experience at alumni college has been entirely positive, including the undivided attention of the college president, Laurie Patton, for several hours. One of the highlights for a grad is her update on the state of the college. The lively question-and-answer session that follows provides provocative and personal answers to questions beyond the purview of her prepared comments.

This August, before putting the packed suitcase into my rental car, I had the fun of saying, "See you next year!" to several new friends. I had the thought of inviting a non-alumna friend to join me next year. Who knows, perhaps I might see you next year?

Tricia graduated from Middlebury College with a B.A. in English in 1964.

Back to School: Alumni College

By Tricia Herban



ALL IN: A VETERAN-TO-VETERAN HOSPICE VOLUNTEER

By Elyzabeth Marcussen

There are different levels of volunteering.

There is the “just show up” level. Calls need to be made, papers need to be filed, envelopes need stuffing. You feel good, knowing you have helped and the people you helped are appreciative. It’s a check mark on an important task list.

Then there is the “all in” volunteer. People depend on your comings and goings; it could be a commitment that lasts a week, or it could go on for months.

Being a hospice patient care volunteer is an “all in” position. You need to be trained for it. You need to be willing to stay with the patient and her or his family through the end. And it can be heartbreaking.

It can also be the most important thing you do in your life.

“It’s a very rewarding experience. It is very challenging, but it’s extremely meaningful,” Paul Mullenhoff said. Like many at Hospice of the Chesapeake, Mullenhoff became a patient care volunteer to give back. Unaware of hospice benefits, the Bowie man cared for his wife after she was stricken with cancer. After a friend suggested he contact Hospice of the Chesapeake, he not only was overwhelmed by the care his wife received, but also the care that he received. The most precious gift he got was being able to spend the final six weeks of his wife’s life more as a friend and husband, and less as a care provider.

“That’s why I always reach out to the caregiver,” he said. He understands firsthand what they are going through.

That connection is even more powerful for patients who are veterans. Mullenhoff, who served in the Navy from 1960 to 1963, and then later in the reserves until 1990, said there is an instant connection when a veteran patient learns he also served. “I feel that it makes a much stronger bond,” he said. “We’re related. We’ve done the same kinds of things.”

That common language and experience is an essential part of delivering quality hospice care. That is why the National Hospice and Palliative Care Organization

collaborated with the Department of Veterans Affairs to create the We Honor Veterans program, of which the Veteran-to-Veteran Volunteer program is a critical part. Program partners like Hospice of the Chesapeake use resources and education provided by the NHPCO and the VA to help veteran volunteers care for veteran patients and their families.

With more than 25 percent of Hospice of the Chesapeake patients having served in the military, the need for patient care volunteers who also are veterans is growing. When one considers the training and time commitment involved, becoming a vet-to-vet volunteer can be intimidating for many. But for those looking for a volunteer experience that can be life-changing, not only for the patient and the family but for the volunteer as well, Mullenhoff said it is well worth the effort. “There is a great deal of self-satisfaction when you are working with veterans,” he said.

Recently, he was pulled away from his role as a veteran patient care volunteer to help the Hospice of the Chesapeake’s We Honor Veterans Committee with the paperwork and planning required in achieving the highest level in the national We Honor Veterans program. With that complete, he was anxious to get back to his vet-to-vet volunteering duties.

“I told them (the volunteer department) that I want to be back with the patients,” he said. “It’s where I want to be.”

For more information about the We Honor Veterans program at Hospice of the Chesapeake, visit www.hospicechesapeake.org/hospice-palliative-care/care-for-veterans. To volunteer, call 410.987.2003.

Elyzabeth can be reached at EMarcussen@HospiceChesapeake.org

Bay Bytes

Looking for information on purchasing a franchise or just finding out what’s available? Log onto <http://franchise.org> for all the inside information.



TIPS FOR KEEPING YOUR HOME WARM THIS WINTER

By Leah Lancione

Winter is here and whether we'll be walloped with snow or ice this year or get off with a mild season, only Mother Nature knows. One thing is for sure, there are measures folks can take to keep themselves toasty. Here are a few tips for keeping your home warm:

ELIMINATE DRAFTS

A good way to save on energy bills while keeping your home cozy, is to find and then eliminate any cracks or crevices where cold air is leaking in from the outside. These spots where air penetrates are often around doorways and windows. Home improvement expert Brad Staggs, author of *Spend-A-Little Save-A-Lot Home Improvements*, says not to rip up all trim boards around doors and windows to apply spray foam to insulate cracks. Instead you can “use caulk to create a secondary barrier to air leakage.” He also suggests checking dryer vents, cable and electrical line openings in exterior walls, around outdoor spigots, and light fixtures, both inside and outside, for openings where cold air may be breaching.

Staggs says you can detect whether gaps are sealed or not by using a lit match near the window or doorframe or around cracks. If the flame flickers there is a draft. He says homeowners can also purchase a thermal leak detector to do the job. Walmart sells one by Black & Decker for \$27, Lowes offers a Digital Temperature Meter by General Tools & Instruments for \$20, and Amazon offers various brands ranging from \$12 to \$250-plus.

An easy do-it-yourself (DIY) project to help with drafts is to make your own draft stopper (a.k.a door snake). Visit www.youtube.com and type in “DIY Draft Stopper” into the search engine and pick the video that suits your fancy. For one that explains how to make one with a recycled sock, a 5-pound bag of rice and some heavy-duty thread, visit www.youtube.com/watch?v=W90tIWdjhlg

USE A SPACE HEATER

Experts from the *Reader's Digest 1001 Do-It-Yourself Hints & Tips* say space heaters can help warm a small area where you are temporarily—whether it's a living room, den or bathroom. It's important to remember to keep it situated “away from furniture and draperies” and to “avoid using an extension cord” since most don't have adequate capacity. The handy book full of useful advice also recommends using a vacuum cleaner brush attachment at the beginning of the cold season to clean the “heating element and reflector surface to remove any dust and debris that could ignite.”

RIG YOUR CEILING FAN

At the beginning of the Winter season, set your ceiling fan on reverse (clockwise) to redistribute hot air that naturally rises to the ceiling. Also use a slower speed to avoid creating a draft. This practice is good whether you're using central heating or have a fire going in the fireplace.

Isn't it time to do what you've always dreamed of doing?

ADD INSULATION

Experts at **Familyhandyman.com** say adding insulation in your attic or basement is a cost-effective way to keep your home warm Winter after Winter. Boosting the insulation in your home “will promote a more even temperature and eliminate cold spots.” The site also offers a step-by-step “Guide to Insulating Your House.”

CLOSE VENTS AND DOORS

If you want to reduce heating costs and keep rooms in your home toasty, close doors and vents in unused rooms.

MOVE FURNITURE

If you have furniture covering or blocking heat coming out of the vents, rearrange it so that warm air isn't trapped.

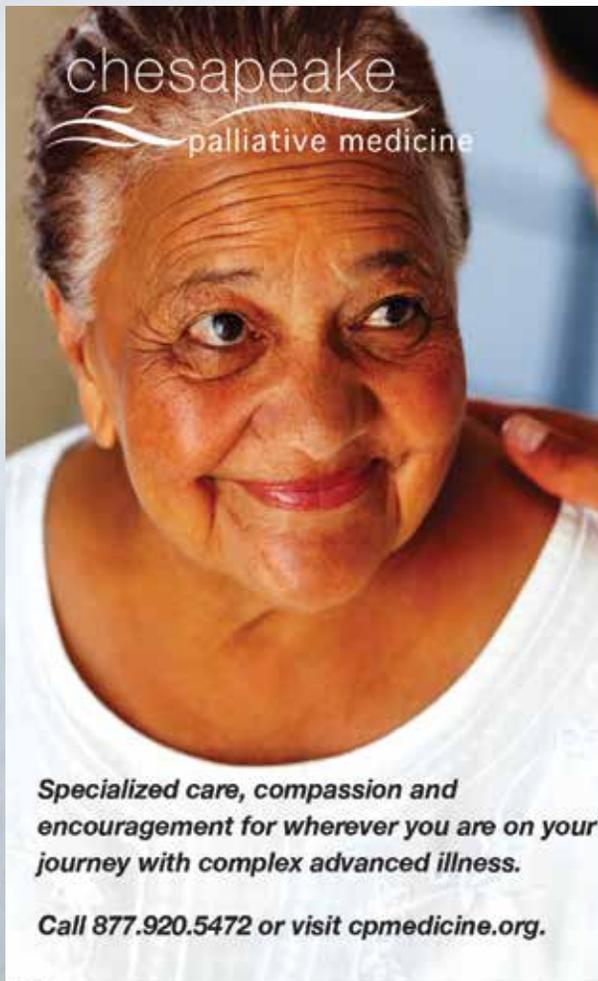
KEEP BLINDS OR CURTAINS OPEN DURING DAYLIGHT HOURS

Also, keep window blinds or curtains open during the day to

let the sunshine in and naturally heat up the space. Conversely, at night, keep the curtains or drapes closed to keep warm air from escaping through any cracks around windows. You may want to consider getting thermal curtains that have extra insulation to prevent heat loss and drafts. You can purchase thermal curtains online at **Overstock.com** on **Amazon.com** or in stores like Walmart, JC Penny and Bed, Bath and Beyond.

If tackling some of these repair projects or maintenance tasks, such as caulking windows and doors or replacing an old furnace or water heater, seems daunting, there are experts out there such as Kari Maltz of Chesapeake Inventory LLC (**www.ChesapeakeInventory.com**) who can come to the rescue. Services such as these provide home management assistance and recommendations.

Most homeowners find it worth the time and effort to get a full energy audit of their home. This is often subsidized by the local utility company. Finding a reliable and honest handyman can also work toward getting things done.



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ALMANAC:

GO WEST FOR A WINTER WONDERLAND

By Ellen Moyer

Remember the Winters with lots of sled riding and ice skating and artful snowmen? Recall the snow that brought the neighbors out dressed with furry hats and goose down coats? We had thick gloves to shovel the white stuff away from stranded cars and were then warmed with gifts of hot coffee or cocoa and friendly conversation. Well, it's not likely to happen this Winter on our home turf. So keep your sled tucked away.

The Old Farmers Almanac, that useful guide to the weather, says this Winter will be warmer than normal, interspersed with a few days of rain and snow, mostly in February. Predicting the weather since 1792, the *Old Farmers Almanac* boasted a 96 percent accuracy rate with predictions for 2015.

Originally published by Robert B. Thomas to meet the needs of farmers whose livelihoods depended on the weather, Thomas devised a secret formula still used to forecast tomorrow's weather. His formula, they say, is stored in a little black box. It is based on ideas Galileo conceived of in the 1600s, including the 11-year cycle of sunspot activity which influences our weather here on Earth.

According to old timers, the woolly bear caterpillar could also predict the severity of a Winter by the width of its brown center -- the wider the brown the less severe the cold. Fact or folklore, studies on this insect that survives frozen Winters by producing its own antifreeze before Spring conversion into the Isabella Tiger Moth are inconclusive. However, a spotting of blond woolly bears this year would confirm the almanac prediction of a warmer-than-normal Winter, at least here in the mid-Atlantic.

Whether it's sunspots, woolly bears, wind currents or any other predictors, the *Old Farmers Almanac* has outlasted all other weather predictors with a 51 to 96 percent accuracy, depending on who is counting. Its trademark cover was created in 1855 by Hammett Billings, Boston's famous artist. It includes a portrait of Benjamin Franklin whose *Poor Richard's Almanac* was a model for Thomas.

A rich (and humorous) reference book, the almanac was used by Abraham Lincoln to argue the innocence of his client on a murder charge when it was claimed to have been seen by "the light of the moon." But on the day in question, according to the almanac, there was no light from the moon.

In today's world, event planners and brides hoping for outdoor weddings consult the weather predictions of the *Old Farmers Almanac*. City public works was prepared for action by its accurate prediction of the storm Isabel in 2003 that flooded downtown Annapolis. The heavy snow that brought out neighbors with shovels that same year squared with the almanac's prediction.

Still hankering for a sight of snow in 2018? Go west, western Maryland, that is, for a scenic Winter wonderland. In February the almanac suggests the temperature and precipitation will be below normal in the Appalachians, and in Maryland's Allegany and Garrett counties.

For fun, the Wisp Resort in Garrett County, the heaviest snowfall area of Maryland, offers skiing, so break out your skis and head west. The Lodge at Wisp also offers spa amenities perfect after a rigorous day in the snowy fluff.

Prefer snow hiking, cross country skiing or gourmet food? Then don your fur-lined boots and head for your own cabin at the Savage River Lodge in the 700-acre Savage River State Forest. Be prepared to traverse narrow country roads to the lodge, which could be tricky to navigate in snow country.

Or if you prefer to just enjoy the white landscape view and roasting marshmallows over an open fire, you could try your luck at the slot machines at Rocky Gap State Park.

The sled riding and snowmen of yesterday may be a memory of the past here, but the 225-year-old almanac predicts you'll still be able to make snow angels in western Maryland this February.

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



OATMEAL:

It's a Healthy Close Call Between Steel-cut and Rolled

By Leah Lancione

It's not breaking news that oatmeal is a nutritious breakfast option. In fact, WebMD calls oatmeal a "whole grain powerhouse," thanks to its "proven ability to curb bad (LDL) cholesterol due to its type of soluble fiber called beta glucan." The latest twist on this old-fashioned breakfast staple is that many health-savvy stores and restaurants have upped their game by offering steel-cut oats (also known as Irish oats) in addition to the standard rolled oats. Though they are virtually the same "super food" with equal amounts of heart-healthy fiber, one is slightly better for you than the other.

The reason steel-cut oats are more advantageous than the old-fashioned rolled oats lies in how they are processed and their ranking on the glycemic index (GI). Dr. Andrew Weil, the popular physician, spokesperson and author, explains that steel-cut oats "digest more slowly than rolled ones. Like all other grains in whole or cracked form, steel-cut oats rank lower than rolled oats on the GI, which ranks carbohydrate foods based on how rapidly they affect blood sugar (glucose). The reason for this difference is that it takes longer for digestive enzymes to reach the starch inside the thicker pieces, slowing down their conversion to sugar."

Steel-cut oats are therefore less processed than rolled oats. Wikipedia reports that steel-cut oats are "groats (the inner kernel with the inedible hull removed) of whole oats which have been chopped into two or three pieces." The result of being cut with large steel blades is a "chewier and courser" texture than other oats. To make easier-to-cook rolled oats, the groats are husked and steamed "before being rolled into flat flakes under heavy rollers, and stabilized by being lightly toasted." Let's be clear here, although rolled outs are more processed than steel-cut oats, they are still a whole grain.

Research clearly shows both forms of oatmeal are heart-healthy and nutritious, thanks to the fiber content in 1/4 dry cup (5 grams each) that makes you feel satisfied longer, along with 5 grams of protein each, 10 percent of the recommended daily allowance (RDA) for iron, 2 percent RDA for calcium (more if you add milk or a dairy milk alternative), just 1 gram of sugar for rolled oats and no sugar for steel-cut, and low calorie contents with 160 for regular



oatmeal and 140 for steel-cut (www.prevention.com/content/whats-healthier-steel-cut-oats-or-rolled-oats). The verdict: Both are high quality meal choices.

Buying organic oatmeal—whether rolled or steel-cut—is a good idea to ensure the brand you choose hasn't added unnecessary sugars, artificial additives or preservatives that are often found in the instant oatmeal packets.

So the choice is yours. You can pick the slightly healthier version if you don't mind your breakfast taking a little longer to prepare -- it's 20-40 minutes on the stovetop for steel-cut oats. Or, you can opt for the easier-to-cook, old-fashioned rolled oats that only take about 10 minutes to prepare.

Dr. Weil also advises that due to oats' "higher fat content than other grains, they go rancid more easily." As such, he suggests buying smaller quantities and storing them in the refrigerator.

So, go grab a bowl and a spoon and join the many celebrities who love oatmeal for breakfast: Jennifer Aniston, Katie Couric, Ryan Reynolds, Dwayne (The Rock) Johnson, Hugh Jackman, and even Willie Nelson. They are cited at www.eatthis.com/celebrity-breakfasts/

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Happy Saint Valentine's Day BRUNCH

By Phil Ferrara

The manly art of cooking is an event seen more and more often in this modern era. That is a wonderful evolution in society! And by using the K.I.S.S. principle you can both please your "one and only" (OAO) and impress a few good friends at the same time.

This year Saint Valentine's Day falls in the middle of the week. Take this opportunity to bravely step forward and volunteer to prepare a special holiday brunch. Invite two favorite couples to join you for the celebration. What better way to display your love and affection to your OAO than by undertaking such a wonderful gathering of friends for good food and good cheer.

But you know the secret: the K.I.S.S. principle. **Keep It Simple, Sweetheart.** It is not a complicated recipe or the exotic ingredients that will count. It is the gathering of friends that will win the day. The camaraderie is what will be important! That ever-important elixir of life!

So, what do you need to get started? Begin by preparing a nicely set table, perhaps a few candles, soft music in the background and some flowers with a small box of candy as a gift. (Dark chocolate tops the charts with my OAO.) When your guests arrive, welcome them warmly. Offer them a cup of coffee, a bloody mary or a favorite beverage of the group.

When your guests are settled and enjoying themselves in the den, you can conveniently turn to the final food preparation in the kitchen. Much of it will already have been completed, or at least begun, prior to your guests' arrival. Here now are your simple-to-prepare recipes for the Valentine's brunch that will serve six people.

Start with a vanilla yogurt parfait followed by a cheese and vegetable omelet with English muffins coated with butter or raspberry jam. If you feel more courageous, add your favorite sausage or bacon to the menu.

YOGURT PARFAIT

32 oz. container of vanilla yogurt
one pint each of any three fruits of your choice (pick from

mandarin oranges, blueberries, raspberries, strawberries, bananas)

box of Granola cereal or a container of walnuts or favorite nuts

In each 12-ounce parfait glass or in a clear glass bowl or cup, intersperse a 6 oz. mix of fruit with 5 ozs. of vanilla yogurt. Top with a tablespoon or two of granola cereal or your favorite nuts or both. You might even add a splash of crème de menthe on top. Perhaps even a squirt of whipped cream!

CHEESE & VEGETABLE OMELET

10 extra large eggs

1/4 cup milk

3 Tbs. olive oil

2 cups diced vegetables (a mix of your choice of red onion, a pepper, carrots, tomatoes, etc.)

1 1/2 cups shredded cheese of your choice (Romano, cheddar, etc.) or a blend of several

3 generous Tbs. seasoning mixture of your choice preprepared (oregano, basil, Italian parsley).

Warm the oven to about 130 degrees. Grill the vegetables very lightly in an oiled skillet for about four minutes on the stovetop.

Mix the eggs, milk and olive oil in a bowl and warm in the microwave for two minutes on medium. Then mix in all the vegetables, cheeses and the seasoning.

For six people it is best to make three large omelet batches in a 13" oiled skillet, splitting each omelet for each couple. Use one-third of the above egg, vegetable, cheese, and seasoning quantities for each of the three omelet batches. Keep each completed omelet in the preheated oven until ready to serve all the guests simultaneously.

While you are doing that, the English muffins and bacon or sausage can be cooking in the toaster oven and a separate skillet. Have the soft butter and raspberry or other favorite jam ready to spread onto the muffins. Here's a tasty butter recipe to try:

ORANGE BLOSSOM BUTTER & HONEY SPREAD

1/2 stick butter

2 Tbs. pulp orange juice or 2 Tbs. hand-squeezed from a fresh orange

3 Tbs. honey

In a small pan just soften a half stick of butter, 2 tablespoons of pulp orange juice and 3 tablespoons of honey, or warm them in a creamer or mug in the microwave on medium for one minute.

Voila! Now summon your guests to the Feast of the Saint Valentine's Day Brunch, confidently knowing that you are the master chef. At the same moment you might even want to lead your Valentine sweetheart to the table and affectionately give her a real KISS!

When not occupied in the kitchen, Phil, an avid outdoor enthusiast, can be found leading hikes in various parts of the state. He can be contacted at pferrara65@comcast.net

It was not simply the image of one snowflake forecasting the coming of snow, but many snowflakes clumped together to indicate heavy snow showers were coming. Having traveled to Northern Virginia for a professional development conference, it looked as if I would not be traveling back on my flight scheduled for Saturday. And this time, the meteorologists got it right. Friday night came along with almost 12 inches of snow and another foot dropped on Saturday. Two feet in the District of Columbia did not bode well for any forms of transportation.

It was not until Monday that I was able to find my way onto a flight back to Memphis, Tennessee. And while being delayed over the weekend might simply be a gift to some, as a priest, my workweek begins on Sunday. The Sabbath came and went as I missed our regular services, as well as our annual meeting. Serving as an assistant priest at the time meant all was well. Everything went as planned for others while the pause button was pressed for me.

Relaxing with the unexpected extra time in my snow-covered part of the world evoked the story shared years ago by a colleague who serves at an academically rigorous school for girls.

In the face of their own upcoming forecast of snow, the leadership team gathered to plan for the looming snow days. There was talk of continuing the school day as usual, just from home. At St. Mary's each high school student is required to have a laptop. With the advances of technology, there was no longer a need to put a pause on the learning for an unscheduled snow day. Every teacher and every student could continue academically, classwork, homework, even group projects. But as the discussion continued encouraging the fast-paced routine that has become normal, the chaplain spoke up. She reminded them of the Sabbath Day, the day on which God rested after working very hard for six days. She posed these questions: Does God ever send us unexpected

Sabbath days? Might it be alright for us to pause in the face of this special gift?

These questions are bigger than just talking about snow days for school-aged students. They are questions that we can all ask ourselves. Are there experiences that cause us to slow down and pause? Are we able to see God in what may seem more like obstacles rather than gifts? Even when life is hectic, already asking us to be in more than one place at a time, are we able to see these unforeseen experiences as a gift?

My hope is yes. My hope lies in the decision a college-preparatory school made in the face of their own snowstorms. Even though the school had all of the resources to not be slowed down by inclement weather, they chose to take the pause that

comes along with a snowstorm, or in Memphis, maybe even a snow dusting.

I hope that we choose to take the snow days, too. But they won't only come this Winter. Snow days come in all shapes and sizes; they come when things happen that cause us to pause the regular routine. And when we pause, we celebrate our own unexpected Sabbath.

The Rev. Chandler Irwin is the assistant to the rector and chaplain of St. Martin's-in-the-Field Episcopal Church and School in Severna Park. She can be reached at cirwin@stmartinsinthefield.org

SNOW DAYS

By Rev. Chandler Irwin

SNOW DAYS COME
IN ALL SHAPES
AND SIZES; THEY
COME WHEN THINGS
HAPPEN THAT CAUSE
US TO PAUSE...



Touchstones Discussion Project: “Building Community Through Discussion Everywhere”

By Charles Green

If you live in the Annapolis area, you’ve probably heard of the unusual program at St. John’s College, the “Great Books School,” where students sit around a table and talk about classic works of the Western tradition. Well, there’s a nonprofit that brings this seminar style into all sorts of different settings, from retirement communities to elementary schools and even prisons. It’s known as Touchstones Discussion Project, and it’s been extremely successful. Founded in 1984 by three tutors from St. John’s, Touchstones programs are now in more than 42 countries, and more than five million people have participated in at least one.

Originally called the “Touchstones Project,” it was started by Howard Zeiderman, Geoffrey Comber and Nick Maistrellis, all tutors (or professors) at St. John’s College. They wanted to see if they could adapt the college’s unique discussion-based style to different educational settings, and allow “all students, regardless of their economic or educational background” to learn how to think and work together. After some tinkering, they came up with a method that, with a few changes depending on the location, is practiced in every Touchstones class.

Participants read edited and selected excerpts from works of philosophy, literature, history and art. A moderator – usually a teacher or volunteer who has prepared for this role – guides the group in a discussion of the work, asking questions that help them to understand it, and discussing how its themes might be relevant to their own lives. Toward the end of each session, participants spend time analyzing their role, pointing out if they dominated the conversation, if quieter folks felt comfortable speaking up, and ways to improve the discussion. They conclude whether the discussion was a good one or not. As Executive Director Stefanie Takacs recently explained in a speech, Touchstones “teaches people how to have a discussion.”

As its website states, “the goal in all Touchstones programs is to enable every participant to be both leaders and collaborators.” As each program progresses, participants become more comfortable engaging with the material, actively listening to each other, and sharing personal stories that help them understand the works’ themes. The moderator’s role becomes less important. This

different way of learning can take some getting used to. A teacher who uses Touchstones in his classroom remarked that he once told a student who had trouble seeing the goal that “the process is the destination.”

One of Touchstones’ more unusual programs has been working with prisoners. In the mid-’90s, a group of men serving life sentences at the Maryland House of Corrections asked the project to run a program with them, with the goal of helping the prisoners prepare for productive lives before and after their release. Since then, Touchstones has run a weekly program at the correctional institute in Jessup. In 2015, Touchstones also started two weekly programs at the Maryland Correctional Institute for Women, after being invited to work with the women at the prison school. More than 175 women have participated since then. Many of these women will be released, and the hope is that, in Stephanie Takacs’ words, participating in Touchstones helps them “see education not as a threat, but as a way of improving their lives.”

Another new program is working with veterans. *Completing the Odyssey: A Journey Home* is an eight-week course in which recent and older veterans discuss excerpts from Homer’s classic work *The Odyssey* and more contemporary military stories, such as soldiers’ letters home and their poetry. They are exploring the themes of leadership, courage and loyalty, as well as discussing the challenges of transitioning to civilian life. Funded by the National Endowment for the Humanities, they have had three sessions so far, and participants have found it incredibly meaningful.

Through talking about the tale of Odysseus’ journey home, they can share their own stories of homecoming, and hopefully help each other.

During these fractious times, when it seems people are more divided than ever, Touchstones may be one of the best ways of bringing people together. By reading classic texts, they learn how to listen to each other, and how to talk about important things, despite their differences. Perhaps this is a way to build community. To learn more, please visit www.touchstones.org

Charles received his M.A. from the Graduate Institute of St. John’s College and is a freelance writer and editor. He can be reached at cgreen2066@aol.com

Bay Bytes

Curious about the potability of the water that comes from your tap? For an analysis of the drinking water in your zip code, log onto EWG.org/tapwater

If life is boring you - why not resurrect the dreams you once had?

LAUGH YOURSELF HEALTHY: WHY LAUGHING ROCKS!

By Karen Susman

This is your certified laughter yoga leader here to encourage you to laugh for no reason. Sounds bizarre to laugh for no reason, or to laugh too much for a reason, for that matter. But there's science behind the notion of laughing, guffawing, chuckling, giggling, snickering, roaring and even snorting for no reason whatsoever. No jokes, comedians or whoopee cushions are needed.

Here are a few reasons to get your glee on with or without anything funny prompting it, because laughter:

1. reduces your stress response by interrupting your stressors, forcing you to breathe and revealing that in the midst of a bad situation, you can still laugh.
2. strengthens your immune system.
3. acts as an aerobic. Try laughing hard for five minutes. It's exhausting!
4. reduces pain. Studies have shown that patients who watch funny television programs for 30 minutes each day need less pain medication.
5. enriches the blood and brain with oxygen.
6. makes you smarter. College students who watched funny television programs before a math exam did better on the exam than those who didn't watch the programs.
7. fights depression and anxiety.
8. burns calories.
9. laughter puts you in the present moment.
10. builds relationships and community.
11. boosts creativity.
12. shows up all the time everywhere. Laughter is free and there are no side effects.

How can laughing affect your emotions and health? If you've ever watched a scary or sad movie, you may have covered your eyes, cried, or been frightened or distressed even though you know it's just a movie. An actor who is required to cry may be instructed to think of a sad event such as the loss of a pet. Why? Your brain doesn't know the difference between something real that is frightening or sad and the story on the screen. Your brain also doesn't know the difference between laughing for no reason and laughing for a reason. The good endorphins and other physical and mental benefits are available to you 24/7.

We all know that laughter is contagious. That's why I encourage you to find a laughter yoga group in your community. There are thousands of groups in many countries. There is even a laughter yoga Skype group. Check it out at <https://laughteryoga.org/ly-on-skype/> Just in case you're too grumpy to laugh with others, here are some laughter yoga exercises to do by yourself. Weird, but the results are powerful.

1. First thing in the morning, face yourself in the mirror and laugh. Laugh right out loud. No titters. Make it hearty.
2. Laugh in the bathroom. It's private, unless you have little kids or two dogs who like to check up on you. You can get as goofy as you wish. Flush and laugh.
3. Walk and laugh. Especially if you're walking on the beach or the woods, you can ha-ha and ho-ho. When you find a really isolated place, laugh out loud at the top of your lungs. Feel free. Get rid of toxins.
4. Laugh in your car. Use laughter yoga exercises when traffic stresses you out or you're tired. Road rage will dissipate and you'll be energized. Laugh in different ways. Do ho-ho, ha-ha-ha over and over. Laugh high. Laugh low.
5. When you are taking yourself too seriously, laugh. Be silly.
6. Laugh when you're cleaning your home. Laugh with each chore. Give a giggle when facing a toilet bowl and brush. Separating the whites from the colors? Ha-Ha. Laugh at each new mundane activity and you'll get through them with ease and speed.
7. When anxiety, fear, sadness or depression engulf you, laugh for no reason. Your ha-has will lift your mood and keep you from going into a downward spiral.

These are just a few of the many ways I've learned to use laughter yoga. We're in serious, scary times. Many of us are feeling down. I feel -- no, I know -- that humor is everywhere. We can laugh for no reason. Try it. It'll make you feel better.

Sugar addiction. Even typing those words is difficult. “I am a sugar addict.” Happily, I am in recovery.

For most of us, eating sweets for much of our lives was just something we did. Some people eat yogurt every day. Some people eat bread every day. But many of us ate cookies and other desserts, and often candy, every single day. Once upon a time, many of us were actually skinny. However, what happens to us at a particular age is that our metabolism switches into low gear. No one ever told us this could happen, but we probably would not have believed them anyway. Not us. We’re the skinny ones.

For many of us, our dental bills should have tipped us off that we needed to make a change. But denial is a powerful thing. What finally moved me to get medical help was my hypoglycemia. Like many of us, my blood sugar was spiking high, spiking low, over and over. Eating in a timely way, three meals and at least two snacks, was necessary or I grew tired, very grumpy, and finally, weepy.

Hypoglycemia was never addressed by my primary care doctor, although I had mentioned it. This started the search for an endocrinologist. Her advice was short: “No More Sugar!” She said hypoglycemia can occur for two reasons: either there is something wrong with your pancreas or you’re eating too much sugar. The doctor could tell from a blood test that the pancreas were functioning very well, so that wasn’t the reason. This left only one other possibility.

She did not say to cut down on sugar. Her words were: *No more sugar!* That was in January 2015. Since then I’ve been learning how to eat like a diabetic. No more sugar. Three sessions with a nutritionist counselor at the Diabetes Center at AAMC has been a great help in planning every meal and every snack.

A possibility of a chronic sugar overload is that one can become a diabetic. Regardless, for the first two years of my no-more-sugar life, I treated myself to cake whenever I was at a family member’s birthday,

but I’ve revisited that and have since had cake only at my own 75th birthday party. Along with that, I enjoyed a glass of Prosecco, which is a sparkling white wine that contains one gram of sugar and 80 calories.

Even after being mindful of eating and drinking choices for nearly three years, there are still daily challenges, one being tiring easily. A bit of research turned up metabolic syndrome. This is the term that describes the inevitable results of a high-sugar diet: abdominal fat, elevated triglycerides, high blood pressure and high blood sugar levels. Currently with two of these symptoms, I have given thought to what it would mean to actually be a diabetic. What would it mean to my self-image, what would it do to my eyes, blood vessels, nerve tissue and other tissues. Although many people had said that eating so much sugar is not good for a body, I hadn’t paid attention. Sugar tends to make one feel good, so it was hard to believe that this was correct. But indeed it is correct.

The best treatment, in my mind, is prevention. I have shared what I’ve learned with my family. They and their spouses use varying degrees of leniency and strictness with their families regarding sugar intake. All of my nine grandchildren have better teeth, practically no cavities, than I did at their ages. That’s a good indicator that they are not eating as much sugar as many others.

It’s a long road to recovery. Temptation to eat sugar is everywhere, but I do what I can to maintain an awareness and a healthy lifestyle. It’s a difficult addiction and many of us don’t want to hear it, but it’s very much a part of our lives today and it’s not going to go away easily. For more shocking information on the addiction, withdrawal and problems resulting from sugar consumption log onto www.rodalorganicle.com/food/how-to-reduce-sugar-cravings

Duffy, a registered nurse, psychologist and former sugar addict, can be reached at duffymc3@aol.com

ENDING THE SUGAR ADDICTION

By Duffy McHugh



And All That Remains

By Ryan Helfenbein

How many times have you heard the saying, “Perception is reality?” It unfortunately holds true in many aspects of our lives. For example, if we see someone in a nice car we immediately believe they are wealthy and if the date on a gallon of milk is expired, it’s got to be sour. We are all guilty of creating our own perception from false illusions. This stands true, especially in the funeral industry when it comes to cremation.

Undertakers will admit that if they had a nickel for every time someone said, “I just want cremation,” they’d all be retired on a beach somewhere! Nonetheless, people repeatedly say that merely because one of their perceptions is that cremation is a single step. In reality, that statement is the same as saying, “I’d like fries with that” before even ordering a cheeseburger. When we state we want cremation we are simply providing the answer to one question: what to do with the body, and not what is to be done upon passing. We are forgetting about the steps necessary to get to that end point.

In order to analyze cremation, we need to divide things into four important questions: When to do cremation, how will life be honored, what will the cremated remains need to go into and where are the cremated remains to go. These four areas will provide any undertaker the clarity necessary to the statement, “I just want cremation.” Let’s explore each of them.

When to do cremation is something often not even considered. Upon the receipt of legal documentation from the doctor and state of Maryland, only then can an undertaker begin to schedule cremation. Unfortunately, not many funeral homes own a crematory, so scheduling this depends on when a crematory may be available. But for those who do own a crematory and oversee the entire cremation process, we can offer this process at any time the family chooses. We see this often when families

request holding a visitation for family and friends, much like a traditional funeral, and afterward, rather than going to a cemetery, the individual is cremated. Other delays could be caused by a family member wanting to see the individual one final time, religious customs or perhaps it is simply a personal request of a particular day that cremation should be carried out. Whatever the reason may be, when to do the cremation process is a major question that determines the final plan.

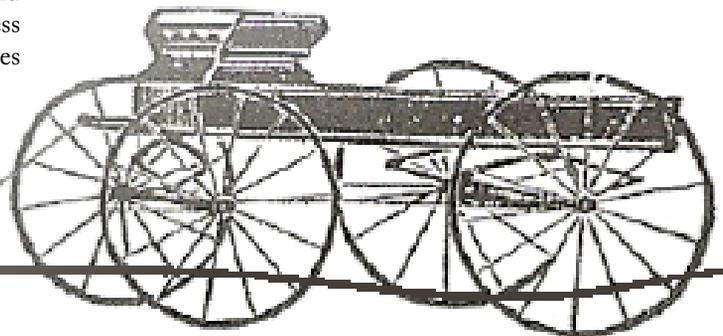
When cremation is selected, a wide variety of options for honoring the life of a loved one is something that is often explored. This life celebration could be held at the local pub, a backyard, event center and now, even at the good old-fashioned funeral home. Yes, modern day undertakers have transformed their offerings to include food, drinks, music, bands, custom tokens of remembrance and all the inner workings of a true celebration, much like that of a wedding reception, anniversary party or milestone birthday.

What to place the cremated remains into depends on where the final placement is to be – covering the last two considerations. If a family is thinking of scattering the ashes in water, the urn for the cremated remains should be biodegradable when placed in the water. There are urns meant specifically to be placed in a columbarium, to be buried in a cemetery or to be displayed in a family’s home. Or perhaps it is to grow back slowly in the form of a plant in your backyard. Yes, a tree urn is even available today!

The perception of almost anything can easily become reality for all of us. With this simple breakdown of options, we can all now see that there is a bit more to the idea of cremation. So, next time you have a nice car behind you, maybe spot them money for their toll, and the next time you’re at the drive-through, be sure to request the sandwich before stating fries are to go with it.

Ryan, who is 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

Modern day undertakers have transformed their offerings to now include food, drinks, music, bands and even custom tokens of remembrance.



For kids, fitting in is as simple as carrying the right lunchbox. What's your secret way of fitting in?

DISCOVER *Florida* AWAY FROM ITS BEACHES

By Kathryn Marchi

When cold winds blow and snow flies, folks head South. Many choose Florida for the sun and sand. But what if you are not a fan of beaches and you don't particularly like those ultraviolet rays? What else can you do in Florida?

My husband and I have been to Florida many times, but are not beach lovers. Over the years, we have done all of the tourist things, but last year we decided to head to Florida one more time for warmer weather and to see if there was anything that we've missed. With a little help from a map search we were able to find interesting places that were easily accessible in the allowed time frame. This was an easy enough task with a cell phone and the internet, no matter your search engine.

We decided to explore northern Florida and here's what we found:

Jacksonville: Who knew that the Cumer Museum was right there on the St. Johns River? Along with interesting art displays and an extensive German Meissen porcelain collection, it also houses a restored room of the original mansion, along with a cafe under a huge water oak, and two lovely gardens, one English and the other Italian. It was an easy drive right off of I-95.

Cedar Key: Hidden away in the northwest part of Florida on the Gulf of Mexico, it is said that this quaint little town is like Key West, 50 years ago. It did not disappoint. Interestingly, it is the second oldest city in Florida. Since Cedar Key has no beach, it is a haven for boaters and fishermen. The city is home to Southern Cross Sea Farms, the number one producer of farm-raised clams in the United States. On certain days, this factory opens to visitors who are shown clamming, starting from breeding, farming of the eggs on the bottom of the Gulf, to harvesting and dispersal to distributors everywhere. Of course, the quaint restaurants in the town all serve the most delicious chowder, filled with lots of plump, sweet clams.

Homosassa Springs: Driving eastward from Cedar Key is the Homosassa Wildlife Park that is an enjoyable treat and a must-see stop. One can either ride on a small train to the zoo area or take a boat through swamp waters. Similar to the Dismal Swamp, this swamp is complete with alligators and all sorts of wild birds and interesting plants. Along the way, the boat captain

gives a talking tour. The zoo itself is nicely done and houses many native birds, reptiles, mammals and even a hippopotamus -- certainly not native to Florida, but still interesting to see. It

is said that this animal preserve is one of the best places to see manatees.

Gainesville: Home of the University of Florida, it is very interesting to drive through the huge campus to visit the Florida Museum of Natural History and the Art Museum on its grounds. Visit the Butterfly Rainforest and then eat a nice lunch in the university-run cafeteria nearby.

Ocala: Home of "one of four major thoroughbred centers in the world," Ocala boasts 600 thoroughbred farms, producing national champions, including winners of the Kentucky Derby, Preakness Stakes and Breeders Cup races. Tourists can book several types of farm tours, where they get a close look at working thoroughbred farms with stallions, brood mares, foals and yearlings. On the tour are also two- and three-year-olds breezing on the track, and an Arabian farm with mares and foals. At certain times, dressage, show jumping and 4-in-hand driving shows are held in that area. (Google Ocala, Florida, for more information on dates). For the curious, a development called *The Villages*, an active adult community of more than 50,000 homes, makes for an interesting and easy side trip from Ocala.

For us, this trip to Florida was both pleasant and surprising. Of course, we had read about most of the places we visited, but had never ventured there. The beauty of this type of trip was finding other interesting sites along the way. The Homosassa Wildlife Park was an unexpected discovery and we visited it only because other tourists at Cedar Key recommended it. Gainesville and *The Villages* were other places we added at the last minute because of their proximity to Ocala.

So, if you're heading to Florida this Winter for the warm climate and not the beaches, why not scope out other interesting places? You'll be surprised at what you might discover along the way. You might even get a slight tan to show off to the folks up north on your return.

Kathryn, an avid traveler, can be reached at johnmarchi1@gmail.com



TOO MANY BOOKS

By Kater Leatherman

If you are a bibliophile, you might consider a house without books uncivilized. Yet, avid readers and collectors often find themselves drowning in them, with piles stacked on the floor, shelves and tables. It may be a nonissue for some, but unwanted or unneeded books do take up valuable space and have a way of weighing us down.

In case you haven't noticed, we have an intimate relationship with our stuff. Including our books. We like the way they smell, feel and look. They carry memories of better times so we keep them for nostalgic reasons. We also identify with them and, on an unconscious level, giving them away feels like giving away our stockpile of knowledge.

If you feel inspired to take an inventory anytime soon, start by asking a few questions: "Will I ever read it again? Does it carry a memory of something that upsets me now? Can someone else get more out of it than I currently do? Has it outlived its purpose in my life?"

This is where, when conflicted about giving something away, you need to upgrade your hard drive. Conceptualize it differently; letting go is about sharing the bounty. With your generosity, a single title could inspire, even enhance, the life of someone else. Perhaps a book has found you, one that literally "fell off the bookshelf" and changed the course of your life.

To integrate any new habit into your life, pair it with an old one. You might have a favorite television program on while culling through your collection of books. The process will include sorting them into one of four piles: keep, give away, recycle or undecided. Reserve your favorites by setting limits, i.e., keep five nature books and give the rest. Think *less stuff, better stuff*.

You probably have some books that carry value beyond their content. However, old books aren't necessarily rare books. Search out an antique book appraiser in your area. A dust jacket in good condition is considered by some to be the single most critical aspect of value for a 20th century title. A collector's item usually doesn't include irrelevant books, meaning they are not a modern classic, even if they are first or limited editions. An author-signed book can mean an increase in value. So can one with an ownership

inscription as long as it's not on the title page.

To maintain balance, donate at least one book for every new one you bring home. Freshen your

inventory by hosting a book swap. Sell unwanted books online, give them as a gift or donate them to a local used bookstore, library or charity. Remember, we live in the information age and everything can be referenced online, including all the facts and data found in those impossibly heavy textbooks we tend to keep.

"Holding on to old books doesn't allow you to create space for new ideas and ways of thinking to come into your life,"

writes Karen Kingston, author of *Creating Sacred Space with Feng Shui*. Still, there's no question that some books are sacred. Within them is language and language can be medicine for the soul. Books also offer an escape, especially since most of us can read

much more profoundly than we can write, speak or even think. And, it's a beautiful sight to see a walled library of books filled with titles that you love, want and read, especially when they are well organized.

Kater can be reached at katerleatherman@gmail.com or visit her website www.katerleatherman.com

Think less stuff, better stuff.

WINTER QUIZ: ACROSTIC
In the world's largest human migration, over one hundred million Chinese factory workers make a yearly pilgrimage to their home villages to celebrate the New Year with family. What film examines this chaotic mass exodus?

DOCUMENTARIES: LAST TRAIN HOME

A. Dances
B. Other women
C. Carpooling
D. Urban area
E. Moonlighting
F. Extras
G. Newsworld
H. Tower
I. Armo
J. Reach
K. Image
L. Escape
M. Suis

N. Laems
O. Adly
P. Samsah
Q. Time travel
R. Tick
S. Rail
T. Arney
U. Industry
V. Neigh
W. Hailsh
X. Ohio
Y. Mafstake
Z. Ewe



BALANCING TIME AT Home

By Kater Leatherman

Perhaps the most elusive challenge in our lives is that we don't seem to have enough time. Time is the beast that's hard to tame. It is fixed and unvarying, and because we define it in concrete terms, our lives revolve around calendars, deadlines and clocks.

One would think that shortcuts like high-speed internet, texting and "on-demand" information would give us more time, but it doesn't. It just compels us to cram more in, fueling the dark, compulsive side of busyness, which seduces us into feeling important, shielding us from staying focused and increasing our need to multitask. How can we be fully engaged in living if we're multitasking all of the time?

Solutions such as time management that follow a strict code of ethics to gain control no longer work for most people. What does work, however, is a lifestyle change that requires balancing the "have-to's" with the "want-to's."

Have-to's include the tasks of running your life: opening the mail, paying bills, grocery shopping and the many chores of running a household. Want-to's are more about activities that enrich your life and give you a sense of purpose, such as pursuing a hobby, practicing yoga or spending quality time with your children and grandchildren.

Want-to's and have-to's can also be the same. You might love your work, but you also have to make a living. Things that are essential to good health -- if that is important to you -- like eating healthy foods and exercising can also fall under both categories. So does taking care of your loved ones.

When life gets busy and we feel the stress of not having enough time, the want-to's seem to be the first to go. Mindfulness practices such as meditation neutralize internal busyness, but it's hard to justify the time because stillness doesn't feel productive in

our task-focused society. Yet, here's the paradox: Making time for yourself will actually give you more time because you'll work with greater efficiency, waste less energy and move through your day feeling more calm and relaxed.

How you spend your time is what defines the quality of your life, so here are eight ways to practice self-care and balance your time at home:

- Begin to notice who and what the "time thieves" are. Monitor anything that feels like an energetic drain on your time such as participating in activities that you don't like, family members who lean on you to do things they can do for themselves and self-imposed obligations.
- Clutter robs efficiency. Having to find things because you are disorganized steals precious time.
- Take care of things in the present moment. Reduce the clutter in your head by writing down reminders and appointments. Handle the mail when it comes in. Keep an ongoing grocery shopping list on your refrigerator. Every time you run out of something, write it down. That way, your grocery list is ready when you are.
- To eliminate time-consuming recipes, prepare easy, nutritious natural food meals, i.e., roast a chicken which can share the oven with some baked sweet potatoes. While this is cooking, steam a medley of colorful vegetables or prepare a salad.
- Arrive early. This will give you a sense of having more time.
- Stop a project in a place that makes it easy for you to come back to. This will minimize procrastination, another time robber.
- Hire someone to do what you don't want to do so that you can do what you want. If money is an issue, sacrifice one or two restaurant meals a month in exchange for a cleaning service.
- If you need to fill time, turn off the television and get moving. Make a difference in the life of someone else by becoming a mentor. Or volunteer. Take a class that challenges your mind. Offer to walk a dog that is cooped up all day. You'll feel better about yourself and your body will appreciate it.

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The first federal holiday honoring a president was established by an act of Congress in 1879. That was for George Washington. Born in 1731, he celebrated his birthday for the first 20 years of his life on Feb. 11. But in 1752, America moved from a Julian calendar, established in 46 BC by Julius Caesar, to the calendar of Pope Gregory XIII, established in 1582, to correct an 11-minute annual shortfall, which after centuries made the Spring equinox and Easter out of sync. The correction to the Gregorian calendar listed Washington's Birthday as Feb. 22. For 100 years, America celebrated his birthday on that day.

In Maryland during the 1940s the state also celebrated President Lincoln's birthday on Feb 12. February was the month when elementary school programs focused on the lives of these men and the lessons they taught us: Lincoln reading by candlelight in a log cabin in Kentucky and Washington chopping down the cherry tree and admitting it.

All the lesson plans changed in 1971 when Congress implemented the Uniform Monday Holiday Act, moving Washington's birthday celebration to the third Monday in February commonly called Presidents Day and only technically mentioned Washington's Birthday. But then Presidents Day became all Presidents Day and a three-day weekend and shoppers paradise obscured the specialness of our first president.

Lincoln's Birthday was never a federal holiday. But in 24 states it was recognized as a state holiday. Since it was Lincoln's proclamation in 1863 that called for a national day of Thanksgiving, two states proclaimed the Friday after Thanksgiving as Lincoln Remembrance Day. That Friday now is referred to as Black Friday, the largest shopping day of the year, recognized by 97 percent of the population, while the lessons of Lincoln and Thanksgiving, faded into obscurity, although some states observe both Washington and Lincoln birthdays on Presidents day.

There are other observances that never made it to wide acclaim as holidays. In 1889, a national monument to our forefathers commissioned by the Pilgrim Society was dedicated to those who arrived in Plymouth, Massachusetts, on the Mayflower. "Faith," 81 feet tall, with hand extending to heaven and

clutching a Bible, stands above the seated figures representing the four principles of the founding Pilgrims ... morality, law, education and liberty. The celebration of the Mayflower forefathers whose names are carved on the granite monument was intended to be a national celebration. The monument is in the Pilgrim Memorial State Park in Plymouth, commemorating a national holiday that might have been.

English Separatist Gov. William Bradford (1590-1657), wrote in his History Of Plymouth Plantation, " ... as one small candle may light a thousand, so the light here kindled hath shone unto many ... to our whole nation." His words are an appropriate epitaph for the celebrations of the special people that shaped our nation and of the Thanksgiving observance that is slowly fading from memory.

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

Mixed Up HOLIDAYS

By Ellen Moyer

Bay Bytes

If you're donating or just trashing a computer and want to delete all personal data, log onto www.consumerreports.org/computers/how-to-wipe-a-computer-clean-of-personal-data/ for detailed instructions.

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TAKE A HIKE

By Penelope Folsom

January and February are wonderful months to get out there and enjoy all that the frozen world has to offer. It's a great time to take a hike, and with most of the Fall foliage gone, it's a good time to catch glimpses of wildlife.

Bundle up with your best woolies and boots, call some friends, pack a thermos of hot chocolate, a few cookies and you're off! Most parks have picnic tables and some with open shelters, which offer a wonderful place to take a short break. Of course, it's always worth checking the hunting season at www.dnr.state.md.us/huntersguide/ before visiting any of the parks.

BALTIMORE AND ANNAPOLIS TRAIL

Annapolis to Glen Burnie
410.222.6244

www.aacounty.org/locations-and-directions/ba-trail-ranger-station

LOCATION: Various entry points paralleling Route 2
COST: Free.

TRAILS: North-south paved trail 13.3 miles. The connector trail around BWI is an additional 12.4 miles.

HISTORY: For 81 years the trail was the railroad bed connecting Baltimore to Annapolis. Now a very popular walking and biking trail, it was purchased by the county in 1979.

POSSIBLE SIGHTINGS: Winter birds, deer, raccoons and squirrels.

BLACKWATER NATIONAL WILDLIFE REFUGE

2145 Key Wallace Drive, Cambridge
410.228.2677

www.fws.gov/blackwater/

LOCATION: 12 miles south of Cambridge

COST: \$3 per vehicle. Free with Golden Eagle Pass.

TRAILS: Four popular walking trails from 1/3 mile to 2.7 miles long are

located along Wildlife Drive, the paved loop.

HISTORY: A 27,000-acre refuge was set up in 1933 as a haven for migratory waterfowl.

POSSIBLE SIGHTINGS: Bald eagles are regularly spotted as well as lots of waterfowl, Delmarva fox squirrels and owls.

CALVERT CLIFFS STATE PARK

9500 H.G. Truman Road, Lusby 301.743.7613

dnr.maryland.gov/publiclands/Pages/southern/calvertcliffs.aspx

LOCATION: 14 miles south of Prince Frederick on Routes 2 and 4

COST: \$5 per car. Free with Maryland state park senior pass.

TRAILS: 14 miles of unpaved, mostly interconnecting trails.

HISTORY: More than 1,000 acres edged by the Chesapeake and cliffs where the most extensive assemblage of Miocene fossils in the eastern United States are found.

POSSIBLE SIGHTINGS: Deer, eagles and very large beavers.

CEDARVILLE STATE FOREST

10201 Bee Oak Road, Brandywine 301.888.1410

www.dnr.state.md.us/publiclands/southern/cedarville.asp

LOCATION: Off Cedarville Road in Prince George's County

COST: \$3 per vehicle. Free over 65.

HISTORY: Land was purchased by the state during the 1930s to eventually form a 3,510-acre state forest. In the '50s, up to 3,600 pounds of charcoal were produced each week. A charcoal kiln still stands on the Heritage Trail.

TRAILS: Five trails ranging from 2 to 7 miles in length with numerous creeks, marshes and a pond along the route.

POSSIBLE SIGHTINGS: Rabbits, fox and deer.

Bay Bytes

Log onto www.nc.cdc.gov/travel to check out immunizations necessary for travel outside of the U.S. This site also provides lots of good information on health, safety and resources available for the traveler in distant countries.

EASTERN NECK WILDLIFE REFUGE

1730 Eastern Neck Road, Rock Hall 410.639.7056

www.fws.gov/northeast/easternneck/

LOCATION: Mouth of the Chester River. Six miles from Rock Hall

COST: No fees.

HISTORY: A 2,285-acre refuge was established in 1962 for migratory and wintering waterfowl.

TRAILS: Six miles of unpaved trails as well as a boardwalk through woods, wetland and along the marshes. Lots of great Bay and Chester River viewing opportunities.

POSSIBLE SIGHTINGS: Eagles, White-tailed deer, beaver, red fox, raccoons, muskrats, plus more than 30 species of waterfowl.

PATUXENT RESEARCH REFUGE

10901 Scarlet Tanager Loop, Laurel 301.497.5760

www.fws.gov/refuge/Patuxent/

LOCATION: Route 295 to Powder Mill Road, halfway between Baltimore and Washington

COST: Free.

HISTORY: Established in 1936 from an original 2,670 acres to 12,750 acres for the protection and study of wildlife.

TRAILS: Numerous woodland trails totaling four miles pass through forests and along lakeshores. An outstanding visitor's center is available to tour.

POSSIBLE SIGHTINGS: White-tailed deer, bald eagles, red foxes and great horned owls.

ST. MARY'S RIVER STATE PARK

c/o Point Lookout State Park

1175 Point Lookout Road, Scotland www.stateparks.com/saint_marys_river.html

LOCATION: Separated into two areas, Sites 1 and 2. The Site 1 area holds the 250-acre St. Mary's Lake. Located along Maryland Route 5, between Leonardtown and Great Mills.

COST: \$3 per car.

HISTORY: From 3,000 B.C., several different Indian tribes occupied the area as evidenced by the artifacts still being found.

TRAILS: An 11.5-mile trail encircles St. Mary's Lake. Eight miles is the shortest route around the lake. First-time hikers should allow extra time for unintentional, but interesting detours.

POSSIBLE SIGHTINGS: This park is remote and not well traveled, giving the hiker more of an opportunity for wildlife sightings including many species of migratory birds.

SANDY POINT STATE PARK

1100 East College Parkway, Annapolis

www.dnr.state.md.us/publiclands/southern/sandypoint.html

LOCATION: Annapolis western terminus of the Bay Bridge, off U.S. Routes 50/301

COST: \$4 per person.

HISTORY: Opened in 1952 as a recreational park with 786 acres.

TRAILS: Two short trails, but combined with roads and beach walks can total up to 5 miles or more.

POSSIBLE SIGHTINGS: White-tailed deer, migratory ducks and Canada geese.

TUCKAHOE STATE PARK

13070 Crouse Mill Road, Queen Anne 410.1820.1668

www.dnr.state.md.us/publiclands/eastern/tuckahoe.html

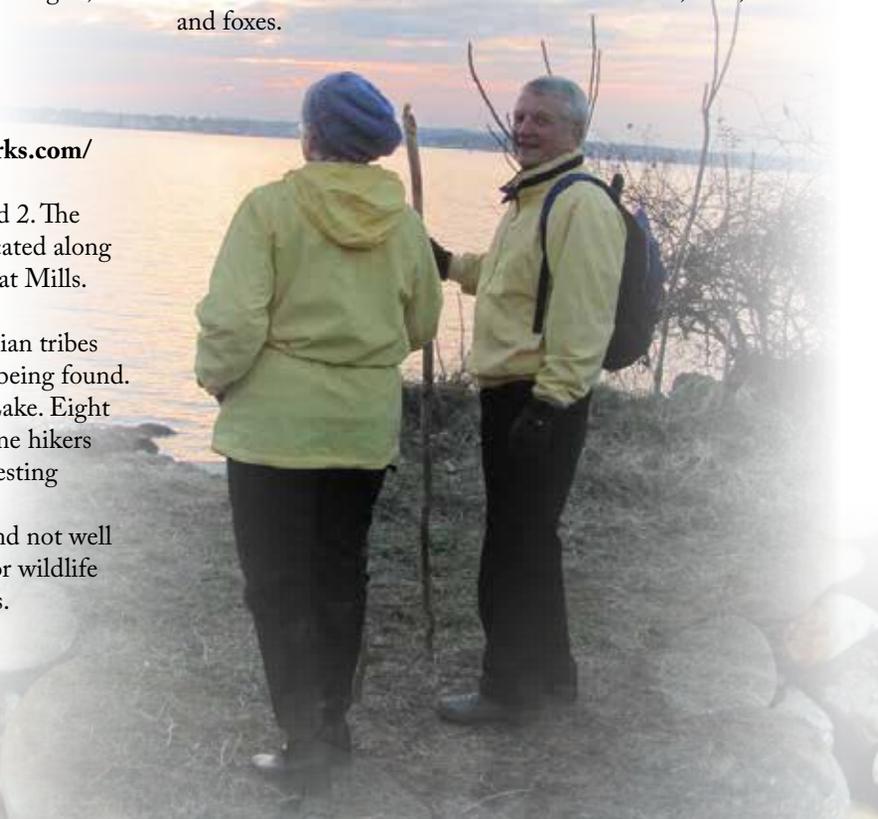
LOCATION: Route 50 east from the Bay Bridge, then 8 miles east on 404 to Route 480 and then Eveland Road

COST: No fee.

HISTORY: Formerly the home of the Nanticoke Indians, now a 3,800-acre park with a 60-acre lake. Crouse Mill Road, the entrance road, was the location of a gristmill from 1876 to 1920.

TRAILS: Fifteen miles of forested trails, varying in length from .25- to 4.5-miles that can be combined for longer hikes. A wonderful 3.5-mile interpretive trail passes through the adjoining Adkins Arboretum.

POSSIBLE SIGHTINGS: White-tailed deer, owls, muskrats and foxes.



Enjoy - this might be the best time of your life.

Cinnamon:

A FLAVORING AGENT AND A POWERHOUSE OF HEALTH BENEFITS

By Dr. Meenakshi Bhattacharjee

Who doesn't love a sprinkling of cinnamon on fresh apple pie or atop a chai latte? Cinnamon is a Greek word. This herb is native to Southeast Asia and belongs to the Lauraceae family. The flavor of cinnamon is due to an aromatic essential oil that makes up only .5 to 1 percent of its composition. Its bark is widely used as a spice. It is also useful in the preparation of chocolate in Mexico.

It's just one of those spices that taste fantastic. However, not too many people know the wonderful health benefits it has as well. What follows are some cinnamon home remedies, but remember that if symptoms persist or if you have a serious condition, visit your doctor. Here's a list:

Diabetes. According to a study published in the *Diabetes Care Journal*, cinnamon was a highly effective remedy against diabetes, especially type 2 diabetes. The study said that the spice has the ability to improve one's glucose and lipid levels by activating the insulin receptors. It also reduces the total serum glucose, triglycerides and the total cholesterol of a person since it stimulates the enzyme systems that regulate one's carbohydrate metabolism.

Cinnamon tea is one of the most beneficial methods to beat diabetes. To make the tea, boil cinnamon in water for 15 minutes. When the water turns brown, strain the liquid and drink. To add flavor you could add a few leaves of basil while boiling and add a spoon of honey for sweetness. Keep sipping on this tea throughout the day.

(A caution: Cinnamon can be good for diabetes, but if it is not taken properly, it can be toxic. While it may work well for people with urinary infections, it could shut down kidney functions for people who already have kidney problems. It might be dangerous if used regularly by someone who takes blood thinners.)

Alzheimer's. A study conducted at Tel Aviv University found that the extract of cinnamon, when administered on a daily basis to patients with Alzheimer's improved their longevity and bettered the locomotor defects they experience once afflicted with the disease. Cinnamon extract, also known as CEpt, inhibits tau aggregation and filament formation. Tau is a protein that aggregates around nerves that transmit impulses in the brain. Filament formation is believed to be caused by accumulated tau protein, which in turn can help cause Alzheimer's disease.

To help protect you from disease, try a teaspoon of freshly ground cinnamon with a little bit of honey. Have this every day on an empty stomach. If you find this mixture too pungent, try having it as tea.

Leukemia, lymphomas. In a study done by the U.S. Department of Agriculture, it was found that cinnamon extract was a potent weapon against leukemia and lymphomas. The study found that the extract worked by blocking the path of certain

components that were important for the regeneration of the cell, inhibited the further multiplication of cancerous cells and slowly reduced their spread. It also found that the higher the amount of extract the better the results. Remarkably, the extract only inhibited the growth of unhealthy cells and left the healthy cells untouched, unlike conventional therapies like chemotherapy.

Add cinnamon to your daily diet either by sprinkling it on your food or with honey.

Anti-inflammatory. Cinnamon is packed with a compound known as cinnamomum, which has very strong antibacterial and anti-inflammatory properties. That makes it a great home remedy for arthritic pain. Its natural heating mechanism provides added relief to aching joints.

Grind cinnamon into a fine paste with water and apply on the aching joints. You can place a soft muslin cloth on the paste to keep the paste wet longer.

Indigestion. Cinnamon is packed with mineral manganese, fiber, essential oils and calcium. The calcium and fiber combine with bile salts and help in their transport outside the body. The essential oils help regulate the action of gastric juices on food and improve digestion. Its anti-inflammatory properties helps reduce the inflammation caused due to indigestion, irritable bowel syndrome and ulcers. Moreover, the fiber content helps to relieve constipation and diarrhea.

To relieve a stomach upset, have cinnamon tea infused with mint leaves about two to three times a day.

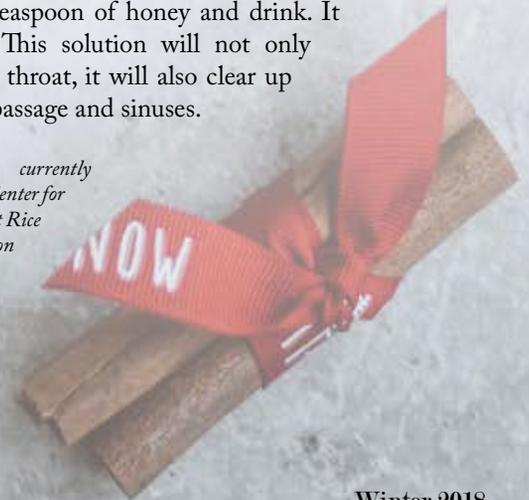
Helps with weight loss: Cinnamon has great digestive properties; it helps with weight loss by regulating the breakdown of carbohydrates and the production and use of insulin by the body. It also helps improve the digestion and assimilation of food within the body, helping one lose weight.

Drink cinnamon tea with a teaspoon of honey every day, half an hour before breakfast. Alternatively you could add cinnamon powder to your meal by sprinkling it on your salad, coffee or other foods.

Colds. Known for its antibiotic and body warming properties, cinnamon is a formidable remedy against a cold and cough. It not only helps to relieve the congestion commonly experienced with a cold, it is also great for a sore throat when combined with ginger, basil and honey.

Boil a small crushed piece of ginger, cinnamon stick, a few basil leaves and crushed black pepper in two cups of water. Cover the vessel with a lid and let the mixture boil at a low heat. When the solution has simmered for about 10 minutes, strain the liquid, add a teaspoon of honey and drink. It should be warm. This solution will not only soothe an irritated throat, it will also clear up the blocked nasal passage and sinuses.

Dr. Bhattacharjee is currently executive director of the Center for Applied Algal Research at Rice University in Houston and can be reached at minakshi12@aol.com



SEASONAL TREATS

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 represent the season, complete with many ingredients that are popular now. They are delicious on their own or can 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 similar 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.

About 1 and 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 using.

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)
1/3 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 Tasting the Seasons, This Book Cooks and The Seasonal Kitchen. She can be contacted at kerrydunnington@verizon.net or visit her website at www.kerrydunnington.com

Think of the possibilities and let that be your guide.

6 Tips FOR STRETCHING YOUR FOOD BUDGET

By Roz Andrews

Is your food budget tighter than it used to be? Do you tend to throw away more food than you would like to?

It's possible to gain maximum value from your food budget and reduce food waste at the same time. Here are some tips:

Use Food You Have: If you already have large quantities of food stored in your pantry, cupboards, basement and freezer, use as much of this food as possible before buying more food. Be inventive and substitute ingredients in recipes so that you use as much of your stored food as possible. This will significantly reduce the cost of your weekly grocery shop.

Plan Every Meal: Before you go shopping, plan every meal that you and your partner will eat at home during the next week. Don't forget to include lunches that you prepare at home and take to work. Your meal planning doesn't have to be too rigid. For example, you could plan seven main meals and then decide on each day which meal you'll prepare. After a very busy day, choose a meal that requires less effort, while on a weekend day, pull out a more complicated recipe that takes more time and energy. Write a list of all the ingredients you will need for all these meals and don't buy any other food.

Buy Larger Packs of Fresh Food: Buying large is more economical, and if you choose larger packs of products that are specials, you'll save money. However, it's important to use or freeze all the food you've purchased before it's past its prime.

So, if you normally buy two or three different kinds of cheese to use in two or three different recipes, just buy one larger pack of one type of cheese and use it in each recipe. Similarly, purchase larger packs of a smaller number of vegetables and substitute them for other vegetables in meals you prepare throughout the week. Also buy larger packs of more expensive fresh ingredients, such as meat. Use what you need for a meal and freeze the rest for use in the next few weeks.

Add Extra, Cheaper Ingredients: If you do this

with each meal, you'll cook larger quantities that can either be refrigerated and eaten in the next few days or frozen. For example, if you're cooking chili con carne, use the same amount of ground beef, but double the quantities of onions, kidney beans and tomatoes. That way, you'll gain more value from the money that you spend.

Choose Frozen Food: Large packs of frozen fruit and vegetables are usually better values than smaller ones. Two studies carried out in the United Kingdom by the University of Chester and Leatherhead Food Research found that frozen fruit and vegetables often have higher levels of nutrients than fresh produce. Frozen products are usually frozen soon after they are harvested so that the nutrients are locked in, while fresh produce may be refrigerated for up to a month before you buy it at a store. This leads to the deterioration of some nutrients.

Liven Your Leftovers: Think of ways to use your leftovers creatively. As you heat up your leftovers for lunch the next day, add a pat of butter, a squeeze of lemon juice and extra herbs or spices for more flavor. Sprinkle grated cheese over the top. Leftovers can also be frozen and defrosted on a day when you're too tired to cook. Alternatively, use leftover cooked meat or vegetables in other dishes. Make a pie using cooked chicken and carrots. Fill lunchtime sandwiches with leftover cooked meat and liven them up with mayonnaise or mustard.

These tips can stretch your food budget while you eat healthy meals. You'll also be helping to reduce the massive amount of wasted food that ends up in landfills each year. Between 30 and 50 percent of total world food production is thrown away, according to a report from the Institution of Mechanical Engineers (IME) in the United Kingdom. That's a staggering amount of wasted food and it's good to know that we can all contribute to reducing it while saving money and eating well.

Roz, who is a freelance writer, researcher, editor and proofreader, founded RA Writers For Hire. She can be reached at info@rawritersforhire.com

Bay Bytes

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CLUBS: DON'T JOIN ONE, START ONE

By Molly Lauryssens

Now that the holidays are over, are you ready to embark on a different kind of start-up? What better way to do it than to join with other like-minded people and organize a book club? If books don't do it for you, then maybe try a movie club. There are no limits on the kinds of clubs you can create. Just use your imagination, and rules, who needs rules! You can make them up as you go. If the idea of starting a club sounds overwhelming, we are with you. Not to worry, we are going to break it down in five easy steps:

1. Pick a card, any card. First you have to determine what kind of club you want to create. What is your pleasure? Reading, writing, movies, sports, cards, military. You can start a "Let's go shopping on Thursday club" if you so desire or let's visit museums on Tuesdays. The point is to make it something that you and others will enjoy. All you have to do is decide and then determine how often you want to get together. Once a week? Every other month?
2. Since you are starting the club, chances are you are going to play host or hostess the first time. Determine the time and place and then send out invites. You can get as fancy and creative as you want. Start a Facebook page or send out evites, or better yet, create a hand-written invitation. Or just pick up the phone and go. The goal is get the word out and give people the details.
3. On the day of your opening gathering, you are feeling super-excited. Everyone is coming over at your set time. You decided that you wanted the first meeting to be

special so you go all out. Since you were reading that historical thriller set in the 1960s in LA, you are doing a bit of a theme with snacks and punch. You even have name cards for each person and some questions to ponder while discussing the book. Let things happen organically, you don't have to run this club with a gavel and Robert's Rules.

4. While you have everyone there, you will need to establish some basic ground rules on how best to move forward. Some things to consider are who will play host? Or should you meet at a local coffee shop or restaurant? Who gets to pick the subject, etc. For instance, my book club meets once a month and the host gets to pick the book. You agree or disagree. Then you go from there. If it's a weekly card club, for instance, you can rotate menu or snack ideas.
5. Now that your club met for the first time, you can evaluate. How'd it go? Remember, while these meetings are driven by a common passion, life happens. You are going to miss meetings unexpectedly due to illness or weather. Be open to all the possibilities being a part of a group like this can afford.

It's Wintertime. We've all hunkered down and many of us are ready for something new. All it takes is one person to step up and get it going. Why not you?

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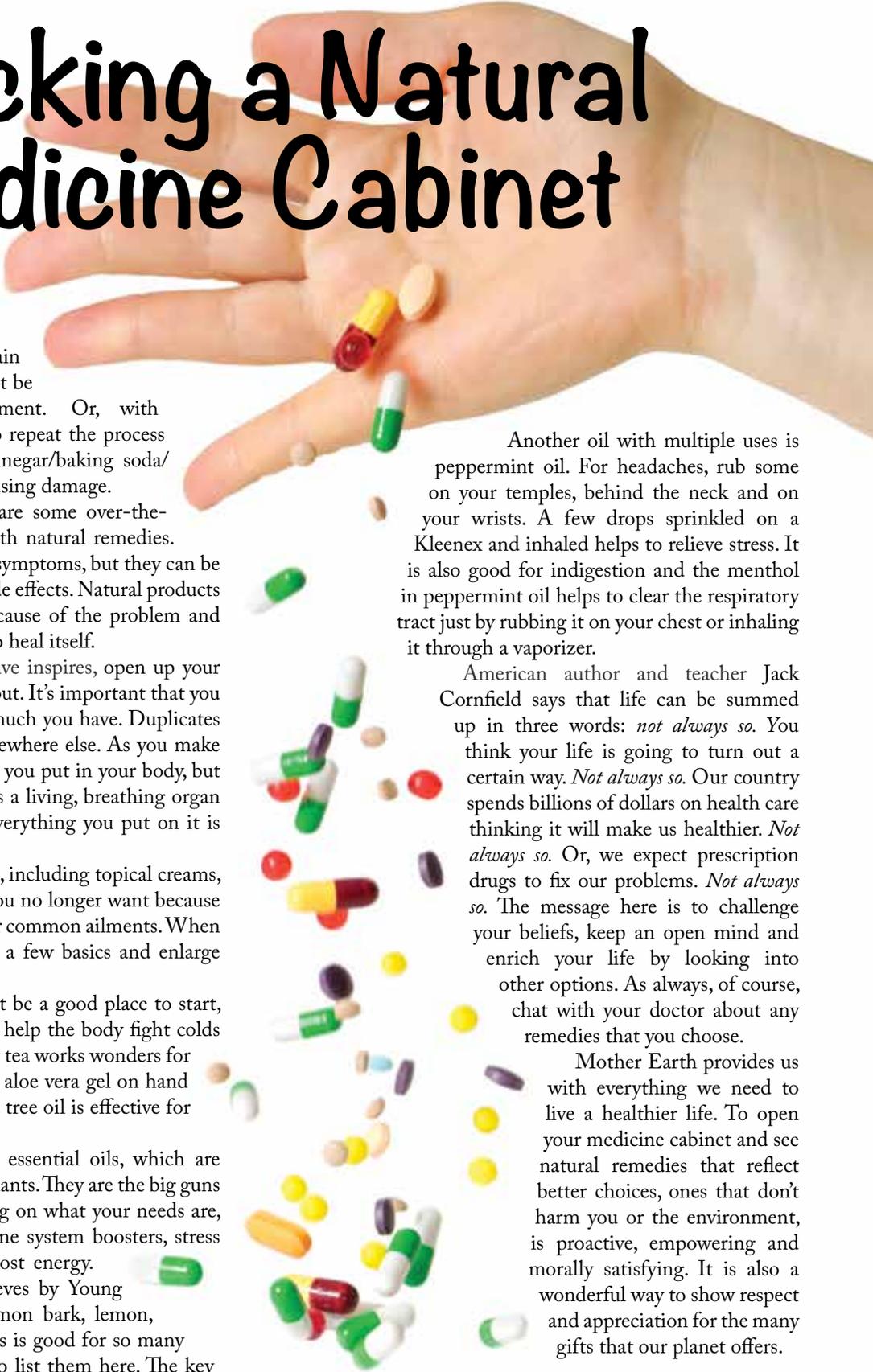
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Stocking a Natural Medicine Cabinet



By Kater Leatherman

Here's one way to look at it.

You can use a toxic, commercial drain cleaner that unclogs your drain, but not be so good for your pipes and the environment. Or, with similar results (while you may need to repeat the process for tougher jobs), you can use the vinegar/baking soda/hydrogen peroxide remedy without causing damage.

It's much the same if you compare some over-the-counter products and prescriptions with natural remedies. Basically, drugs and medicine manage symptoms, but they can be harsh on the body and have multiple side effects. Natural products minimize symptoms, get to the root cause of the problem and work with your body's natural ability to heal itself.

If the idea of a healthier alternative inspires, open up your medicine cabinet and take everything out. It's important that you not only see what you have, but how much you have. Duplicates are space hogs so store the extras somewhere else. As you make decisions, be mindful of not only what you put in your body, but what you put on your body. The skin is a living, breathing organ (the largest organ in the body) and everything you put on it is absorbed by the body.

Toss out anything that has expired, including topical creams, old prescriptions and medicines that you no longer want because you are now choosing safer remedies for common ailments. When you are finished culling, stock it with a few basics and enlarge your inventory as needed.

Witch hazel for insect bites might be a good place to start, vitamin C with zinc plus echinacea to help the body fight colds and arnica gel for muscle aches. Ginger tea works wonders for nausea. For cuts and burns, have some aloe vera gel on hand (a live plant would be even better). Tea tree oil is effective for clearing up infections.

Don't rule out therapeutic grade essential oils, which are made of natural compounds found in plants. They are the big guns and a little goes a long way. Depending on what your needs are, they can act as allergy fighters, immune system boosters, stress aids, respiratory rescuers and even boost energy.

One of the most popular oils is Thieves by Young Living, a proprietary blend of cinnamon bark, lemon, clove, rosemary and eucalyptus. Thieves is good for so many things that there's not enough room to list them here. The key when using drug-free remedies is to take them as soon as there are symptoms.

Another oil with multiple uses is peppermint oil. For headaches, rub some on your temples, behind the neck and on your wrists. A few drops sprinkled on a Kleenex and inhaled helps to relieve stress. It is also good for indigestion and the menthol in peppermint oil helps to clear the respiratory tract just by rubbing it on your chest or inhaling it through a vaporizer.

American author and teacher Jack Cornfield says that life can be summed up in three words: *not always so*. You think your life is going to turn out a certain way. *Not always so*. Our country spends billions of dollars on health care thinking it will make us healthier. *Not always so*. Or, we expect prescription drugs to fix our problems. *Not always so*. The message here is to challenge your beliefs, keep an open mind and enrich your life by looking into other options. As always, of course, chat with your doctor about any remedies that you choose.

Mother Earth provides us with everything we need to live a healthier life. To open your medicine cabinet and see natural remedies that reflect better choices, ones that don't harm you or the environment, is proactive, empowering and morally satisfying. It is also a wonderful way to show respect and appreciation for the many gifts that our planet offers.

Kater can be found at www.katerleatherman.com or email katerleatherman@gmail.com

Is it going to matter that you were here?

Our local ornithologists have accepted that the snowy owl is a rare visitor to the Bay area, but what of the other dozen or so species of owls who were once common to the region? Imagine our lives without this wise old creature hooting from his perch high in the trees. With his nearly insatiable appetite consisting of just about every rodent known to inhabit this area, it would be hard to imagine life without his imperious presence. Without this rodent catcher there would be an over population of mice, rats, squirrels and snakes, the owl's main diet. For example, the once-common barn owl, is thought to consume more than 1,000 mice a year. That outperforms any mousetrap and it certainly is safer than the poisons we leave out for the pests,

Preferring to hunt at dusk or at dawn, owls have extra large ear openings surrounded by feathers, which help to channel the very quiet pitter-patter of small rodent feet. Their hearing is 10 times more acute

than that of humans. Adding to that, their nearly silent flight, allows them to swoop down on their unsuspecting meal. Owls then typically swallow their prey whole, regurgitating bones and debris. If the prey is too large, such as rabbits, duck, foxes or small domestic animals, the owl will tear it apart before consuming his dinner.

Their extraordinary eyes take up a good portion of their skulls, which allows little room for eye muscles. However, owls are able to turn their heads up to 270 degrees to focus on a target. With excellent vision, acute both day and at night, these formidable

predators are a welcome addition to anyone's yard. And now, with the bare trees of Winter, catching a glimpse of an owl is much greater. The sound of his ghostly calls is also easier to pick up during the Winter months with the leafless landscape. Differentiating the unique calls of each species can be a challenge as each has its own sound, ranging from snorts, to whistles, to hoots, hisses and screams, to the screeches of the once-abundant barn owl. To help in identifying the calls, log onto www.allaboutbirds.org/

For living quarters, nonmigratory owls choose to bypass building their own homes and instead take up residence in the abandoned homes of other woodland creatures such as the hawk or squirrel. They can also be found setting up housekeeping in a hollowed-out tree or vacant building. Once the owl has settled in, up to half

a dozen eggs can be laid with staggered hatching times. This allows adequate feeding without overwhelming the busy parents. The hatchlings take flight within nine to 10 weeks. And although mature owls appear larger than they are, thanks to an abundance of feathers, their size ranges from 7 inches for a saw-whet owl to two feet for the Bay's most popular owl, the great horned owl.

And what of the snowy owl? He's now rarely seen in the Bay area. His appearance ties into the food supply of the Arctic tundra where parliaments of owls gather during breeding season. Between November and January, the snowy owl may fly as far south as Georgia in search of food.

With the increasing development and clearing of forested areas, many of nature's natural and hardworking predators are nearly extinct. The number of nesting sites such as old barns for the once-prolific barn owl has shrunk dramatically in the last 50 years. The owl is also being decimated from consuming the insects that we poison!

Awareness of the impact that we make on our reliable and much-needed predators such as the owl is essential. The Bay area is rapidly losing the environment once hospitable to our winged rodent control.

VALUING OUR GHOSTLY FRIENDS

By Penelope Folsom

BOOKS:

Old, New and Obscure

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, a small island nearly a half-day journey off the coast of Australia. A supply boat only arrives once a season.

When visiting the mainland, Tom meets a vivacious and 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 leaves her depressed and withdrawn.

This is where the novel takes a rather strange turn; it might seem a little too coincidental to the reader. 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 about 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 again. 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, 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

GEORGE WASHINGTON'S SECRET SIX: THE SPY RING THAT SAVED THE AMERICAN REVOLUTION

By Brian Kilmeade and Don Yeager,
Penguin Press, New York (2013)

All wars involve spying. Long before drones and hidden cameras, there were codes and invisible ink because it has always been critical to know what the enemy is planning. Spies and double agents have been woven into the fabric of diplomacy and warfare since time immemorial. George Washington became the head of a ragtag assortment of militia men and just as he had to forge an army from those men, he had to develop an espionage network of partisans and Tories whom he didn't even know personally.

It was a daunting task, made more important by the embarrassing and widely known capture and hanging of Nathan Hale on Sept. 22, 1776.

Kilmeade and Yeager have woven a fascinating tale, based on the correspondence and records of these secret agents themselves. As the British ebbed and flowed through New York and Philadelphia, these five men and one woman had to continually adjust their disguises and travel routes. They had to create excuses to eavesdrop and were ever on the alert to avoid capture and certain death. At times, fear silenced them. Washington was continually frustrated, even when communication went smoothly, by the time it took for information to reach him.

Nevertheless, these six foiled Benedict Arnold's plot to hand the fort at West Point over to the British. And by capturing the British naval codes, they were able to provide Washington with intelligence necessary to decode ship-to-ship communications prior to the battle of Yorktown. These two accomplishments saved the Revolution. This readable book provides a fascinating account of six unsung American heroes.

~ Tricia Herban

CODE WORD: PANDORA

By Doug Norton
Magothy River Press (2017)

Fasten your safety belt, hold onto your seat and be prepared for a roller coaster ride in an international thriller.

For those of you who have had the pleasure of reading author Doug Norton's first book, *Codeword: Paternity*, you wondered "where does he get these unique insights? Does he have a personal connection into the intelligence community of the United States?"

In retired Navy Capt. Norton's second book, *Codeword: Pandora*, you are again destined for a wild trip through another international intrigue novel.

As in his first book, this novel seems as if it comes off a major daily newspaper's front page above-the-fold headline. It is as if the author is prescient and has insights into future frightful happenings on Earth.

Norton gives you an inside look at the inner workings of a nation under siege. Multiple terrorist attacks are daily being orchestrated by a master terrorist. You see a president and his Cabinet struggling to protect their 300 million fellow citizens. And to make it more intriguing, it occurs in the middle of a presidential election campaign.

The novel's action brings riveting political intrigue, and we are entertained by the interrogation of the terrorist in a fashion so graphic it leaves you breathless. Along the way, author Norton gives the reader dramatic insights into the heated personal relationships among members of the president's family and his Cabinet.

Political intrigue runs amok as the nation endures attack after attack. Self-interested politicians maneuver for personal gain with the nation's welfare seemingly of no interest to them. As the story unfolds, the military action scenes are riveting, making you wonder if possibly Doug Norton was along for the combat operation itself.

In summary, the author spins a yarn with twists and turns that will keep you entertained from the first to the last page.

~ *Phil Ferrara*

COMING OF AGE: THE SEXUAL AWAKENING OF MARGARET MEAD

By Deborah Beatriz Blum

St. Martin's Press, New York (2017)

Although the title titillates, the book's content explicates this remarkable woman's early years as a scholar through the lens of her unusual social attitudes. Today Margaret Mead is remembered as a prominent and widely published anthropologist. Although not the first to study the social behavior of natives, and report them, she was surely the most effective promoter of this approach to scholarship.

Author of more than 20 books, Mead was an innovator and a revolutionary. Moreover, she was less of a scholar than she was a popularizer of the exotic. She was a role model for those interested in far away places and travel and who, moreover, admired a woman who would flaunt her county's cultural mores by going off to foreign parts without escorts or chaperones.

At the time of her marriage to a longtime sweetheart in 1923, she chose to keep her maiden name. Already determined to be famous, she wanted the fame to be hers, in fact and in name. This was less shocking than her travel, unescorted, to Samoa for a year of research. In later life, she had multiple relationships with partners of both sexes and she championed a woman's right to have control over her body as well as her right to succeed in the profession of her choice.

Was Margaret Mead a nice person? As understood from her diaries and letters and those of her intimates, her early professional life involved overlapping relationships shaped by her immediate needs. She thought that everyone should have the same freedom she sought and was surprised when others were sincerely conventional. It was her unorthodoxy that made her such an interesting person. And since Mead's ideas influenced several generations of increasingly liberated women, it is worthwhile to look at this anthropological presentation of her own beginnings.

~ *Tricia Herban*

SILVER OPS

By Marie Dunn

Create Space (2017)

Marie Dunn's new book *Silver Ops* picks up the story lines from her last book *Breach* and takes you into the secret background of the unsuspecting retired lady with the gray hair, Rondie.

She has formed a group of older women who appear to be the sweet, grandmotherly types, until you lift a polyester pant leg and discover a Smith and Wesson strapped to her ankle. Check under her cardigan and you may find another gun tucked into her back holster, backed up with an arsenal in the ladies' oversized bag.

They each have 30 years of undercover government work and have found their age and gray hair as the perfect camouflage.

This book takes you on a wild ride through politics, coverups and espionage, then back to Rondie's peaceful back porch in the mountains.

These women use their intelligence, wit and resourcefulness to begin the next chapter in their lives after retirement. A not-to-be-missed thriller.

~ *Judith Sparks*

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It's not too soon to start making plans for your Summer travel or even to start looking into a Fall adventure at an exotic location. Listed below are a few favorite websites that may be familiar, but worth a look. Most offer wonderful full-color catalogs you may want to order. We've listed them alphabetically to make it easier to navigate:

Amtrak.com Travel the old-fashioned way by train. Tickets can be purchased for multiple stops, allowing the passenger to disembark for touring or vacationing and then board again when it's convenient. There's also an auto train that will take car and driver to Florida. And if traveling over night, there are sleeper cars.

AvalonWaterWays.com Travel through the waterways of the world on large ships or smaller boats. Float down the Yangtze River for 10 days or the Rhine for five days to two weeks. Lots of nice choices.

BackPacker.com/trips Enter the name of the area that you'd like to visit, such as the Appalachian Trail and an amazing list of adventures will pop up.

BackRoads.com Active vacations offering a wide selection of adventures for singles, families or groups, featuring biking, walking, kayaking, camping and even cruising.

BareBoat.com Both captained or bare-boat cruises offered worldwide, including the Caribbean, South Pacific or Mediterranean.

bnb.com A source of bed-and-breakfasts available worldwide.

CountryWalkers.com Guided or self-guided walking adventures throughout the world rated easy to challenging, also lots of suggestions for family.

CruiseCritic.com/reviews An excellent source of all things cruising such as rating service, food, entertainment as well as size of ship and passenger capacity. Well worth logging onto before booking your next cruise.

CruiseShipJob.com/instructors The best way ever to travel (and maybe least expensive). Teach a course and receive a deeply discounted trip.

GCT.com Trips to every corner of the world for the traveler age 50-plus. Form your own group or join one of theirs. A good source of last-minute deals with particular attention given to the solo traveler.

GoAheadTours.com Offers airline bookings to get you to the destination. Well-planned trips to six continents focus on cultural discovery. Tour groups are kept small.

Mtsobek.com Offering small-group, active adventure travel throughout the world. Cruising, rafting, trekking and safaris -- they have it all. There's also the opportunity to lead adventures.

NationalGeographic.com A wonderful learning experience through upscale travel with the experts who lead the tours.

OatTravel.com Adventure travel throughout the world. Solo-friendly with a free roommate matching service.

OdysseySunLimited.com Small-group travel, no more than 24 per trip on affordable jaunts throughout the world lasting from 11 to 22 days.

PriceLine.com You've seen the ads and now it's time to try to determine if it really works. Name your location and your price. A wonderful source of last-minute deals.

REI.com/adventures Features adventures off the beaten path, as short as a weekend for backpacking, cycling, kayaking, climbing and cruising all over the world.

RoadScholar.org Formerly ElderHostel, a well-known, not-for-profit adventure travel group featuring lifelong learning in all 50 states and more than 150 countries. Prices are generally reasonable.

ShawGuides.com A favorite site for many. It's an up-to-date online source of more than 6,000 learning vacations offered worldwide.

SierraClub.org/outings/national An environmentally friendly outdoor adventure group. Its mission is to explore, enjoy and protect the planet on more than 300 trips per year. Trips run from leisurely to strenuous and can be found either near home or far away.

SmithsonianJourneys.org The premier adventure travel group. From group and family adventures to private round-the-world tours, they have it all and on a grand scale.

TransitionsAbroad.com Interesting site that has a huge amount of information on working, volunteering, vacationing, studying or living abroad. Also connected to many other informative sites of interest to the traveler.

TSA.gov Transportation Security Administration. Log onto this site for all the latest rules, updates and regulations governing air travel, mass transit, railroads, highway and maritime travel.

Untours.com Independent travel in Europe, the United States and Argentina. Untours makes the arrangements for you to stay in a cottage, apartment or farmhouse and will assist with trip planning and travel arrangements. Currently also offering cruises.

www.volunteerhq.org Not for everyone, but if you feel led to save the rhinos or build a home for Habitat for Humanity, this would be the site to peruse. Typically, fees are involved and run from \$50 on up. In some cases it involves sleeping in a tent and preparing your own food.

For your next grand adventure, try any or all of these sites to discover something new or even a prior adventure worth revisiting.

These Sites Can Help Plan Your Next Adventure

By Edree Hovey



If you are interested in travel, culture or history, you might be interested in becoming a word sleuth, or as my spouse refers to it, a word nerd. It requires no physical prowess or special abilities, just an inquisitive nature. What's not to love about a hobby that doesn't cost money, need dusting or closet space and challenges the mind? It's as simple as keeping a small notepad on hand to jot down words to explore.

Words are interesting for different reasons. Some are just fun to say, like *bastinado*, *quotidian* and *fungible*. Some have interesting meanings: A "vomitorium" is not necessarily what it is popularly thought to be. Words with interesting origins provide mini-history lessons and cultural insights. A recent literary reference to the "stercoraceous air of the nearby stables" unexpectedly led me to the diverse world of Roman deities.

At first glance *stercoraceous* (*ster ko RAY' shus*), may not appear particularly promising. It has the straightforward meaning of "dung-like or having the characteristics of manure." However, further reading into the word's origin casually mentions that *sterco*, the Latin for dung, is associated with *Sterculus*, the Roman deity of manure. Wait! There's a deity for manure? Yep! A little digging (really, no pun intended) and it appears the Romans had a god or goddess for just about anything. There's *Limentinus*, god of limes, *Robigus*, god of grain disease, *Sarotir*, god of weeding and hoeing and *Verminus*, god of cattle worms. The take-away? No matter how bad a day you are having, at least you are not the god of dung.

This same examination can be applied to familiar words with equally interesting results. You probably know that *auspicious* means favorable or promising success. You may not realize it comes from the Latin *avis*, for bird, and *specere*, for "to look or see," so that it literally means bird seer. In ancient Rome "bird seers" were known as "augers," priests who based their prophecies on the behavior of birds. Cicero wrote of the eating patterns of chickens used for military strategy. The Keeper of the Auspice Chickens, called a *pullarius*, would release the chickens from their cage. How they reacted to their food would determine whether the time for battle was favorable. Being a bird brain was not an insult in Roman times.

Even the Bay in *Outlook by the Bay* might surprise you. Bay originally comes from the old French (*baier*), a word derived from the Latin word *gapere*, meaning to "gape or yawn." Thus the indentation in a body of water is noted for its similarity to a gaping mouth. The figurative "mouth of the bay" is the literal a mouth of the bay.

Many words are named for the people that discovered, invented or popularized them. Known as eponyms, some are well known, like *macadam* and *sandwich*, but lesser known ones include *leotard*, *guppy*, *uzi*, *saxophone*, *shrapnel*, *boycott* and *lynch*. I had a boss who was known as a *martinet* because he was a stickler for petty rules and regulations. The term is named after Jean Martinet, a 17th century French lieutenant colonel who instituted a standardized system to discipline soldiers. Although regarded as one of the first great drill masters of modern times, his

strictness was unpopular with the troops. Perhaps not coincidentally, in 1672 he was killed by friendly fire.

Other cultures permeate everyday English with words adopted directly from other languages. *Pajama*, *khaki* and *bungalow* are *Hindustani*; *delicatessen* and *kindergarten* are borrowed from German; *alfresco* and a *capella* are Italian; *lemon* is Arabic; *carte blanche* and *cul-de-sac* are French. The answer to, "What is tarantism?" is the answer to, "What do Italy,

dancing and spiders have in common?"

Taranto is a town in southeastern Italy situated on the Gulf of Taranto. Tarantism is the epidemic disease which occurred around Taranto in the 16th and 17th centuries. The illness was characterized by hysteria and a reported mania for feverish movement. The whirling Italian dance we know today as a "tarantella" was said to be a cure for the disease mistakenly thought to be caused by a spider bite. The large, hairy spiders were called "tarantulas" because they were found nearby. Later studies indicated they were most likely wolf spiders, but by then tarantism, the disease, tarantella, the dance, and tarantulas, the spiders, all owed their names to the town of Taranto.

A person who learns or continues to learn late in life, is an *opsimath*, from the Greek. Age provides the advantage of accumulated knowledge and mental maturity. Julia Child didn't learn cooking until she was 37 and attended the prestigious Le Cordon Bleu school in Paris. Michelangelo, one of the greatest Renaissance artists, is credited with writing on a sketch at the age of 87, "*Ancora imparo*," meaning, "I am still learning."

Examining words expands the pleasure of reading. It doesn't have to be technically precise, just fun. Words become the gateway to biographies, food, history, culture and travel. The next time you come across an unfamiliar or interesting word, grab a good dictionary or get online and start exploring.

Power to the opsimaths!

A WORLD OF WORDS



By B. Cook McAllister

In retirement it doesn't matter who you were. Who are you now?



Dear Vicki,
Our family has grown far from our original nuclear family. We now have spouses-in-law and numerous grandchildren, many of whom no longer eat off the children's menu. Yet whenever we are at a restaurant or event with our extended family, we always pick up the check because nobody else offers. We even pay for one adult child's family to stay at a hotel whenever they come to visit because we no longer have room for all of them in our small house. We're financially comfortable, but now live on a fixed income while our children maintain double-income households. This is getting old and expensive. Help?

PASSING THE BATON: WHEN DO I STOP PICKING UP THE CHECK?

There is no hard and fast rule for when the “who pays baton” gets passed to the next generation and that transition is often awkward. Sometimes, this transition just happens in a natural and easy manner. More often than not though, decisions, timing, discussion and a good sense of humor are necessary to navigate through it.

Different families have different circumstances requiring different rules. Some parents insist upon always paying the bill and enjoy doing so. Other elders may do it because it gives them a sense of control. Some children insist upon paying to show they are financially responsible. Other adult kids may just assume that since it always has been this way, it always will continue in the same manner despite their parents now living on retirement funds. At times, there will be a great disparity between what one child can afford to pay and another one who needs a financial helping hand. Families are complicated.

Ideally, as adult children mature and, certainly, by the time they have families of their own, all family members will be gracious and considerate and make a sincere offer to pay for at least a portion of their expenses or to take turns in footing the bill if they are able to do so. If one side of the generational pool can't reciprocate in kind by treating for dinner, perhaps they can leave the tip or treat for breakfast instead.

The key is to make a sincere effort to show appreciation and consideration. In a perfect world, this just evolves without stress. But what do we do when this transition does not happen easily? How do we handle this when one party, either the parents or adult children, can no longer afford the status quo or when they

begin to feel taken advantage of which leads to resentment? Read on for some suggestions.

1). **Decisions:** If you are feeling put upon, you must make a decision about whether or not you wish to continue picking up the check or whether you want to make a change. A family is a system and when something is changed in a system, some pushback may occur. In a sense, a change will create new norms for your family. That may create some friction, but on the other hand, it may be a welcome change that everyone understands and even enjoys.

2). **Timing:** Seize the opportunity of a marker to transition to shared expenses. Retirement is a natural line in the sand where circumstances change in the older generation and it may be time for the younger members to begin pitching in. In a similar manner, parents can use other markers of “maturity” as a time to pass the baton, e.g., college graduation, first home, first job or for the older folks, downsizing or the move to a retirement home. In a sober vein, becoming a widow or widower may be the marker. You can even choose a silly marker such as the Chinese New Year. Since 2018 is the year of the dog, tell your family that it's time for this dog, i.e., the parent, to learn a new trick: stepping back and allowing the youngsters to pitch in.

3). **Discussion, Delicacy and Humor:** When and how you communicate these new norms to your family will go better if you approach it with some delicacy and humor, allowing for some

You'll never get anywhere unless you start somewhere.

discussion. Again, each family is different. Some families cannot get together due to time and distance and may respond well to a group email. If there is great disparity in income, you may need to talk to each party individually.

Below, you will find a sample script that you might find helpful in communicating your desire to pass on the baton of paying for all expenses. It may lend a light touch and may even start a family tradition to give each adult child a miniature baton in the form of a mini-glitter wand picked up at the party or dollar store as symbolic of this passage. As a final thought, you may be surprised at how much your children appreciate the opportunity to treat you -- and the faith that you've expressed in their ability to do so.

Bay Bytes

Before leaving on your next trip, check out www.sleepinginairports.net where you'll learn about the comfort factor in airports all over the world. Should you be stuck for the night, the site also has information on nearby hotels, available transportation and distances to nearby facilities.

Sample Script:

Hey guys! We've been thinking that since we just retired (or downsized, reached an awesome age, had our eighth grandchild, are approaching the year of the dog, and so on), it's time to shake some things up in this family. As much as we've loved treating you to meals (among other things), we realized we've been doing this for a very long time and are robbing you of the pleasure and privilege of contributing to all of the fun. What do you say that we have one more meal on our dime and then share the expenses in some way going forward? Come with a healthy appetite and some ideas of how you'd like to do this. We've thought of just splitting the bill or maybe taking turns on picking up the check, but are open to your ideas. This is an important baton to pass on to the next generation and we think it is time so we have included this small baton as a gesture of our love and great faith in the wonderful and responsible children we've raised.

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



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WINTER QUIZ-ACROSTIC

	1	K	2	E		3	B	4	M	5	Q		6	G	7	C	8	S	9	E	10	F	11	Y		12	S	13	O	14	D	15	V	16	L	17	W				
18	P		19	O	20	D	21	I	22	F	23	E		24	K	25	R	26	C	27	Z	28	B	29	H	30	A	31	I	32	U		33	E	34	Q	35	F	36	N	
	37	C	38	V	39	G		40	A	41	M	42	N	43	U	44	K	45	Y	46	G		47	T	48	A	49	Q	50	W	51	P	52	E	53	G		54	L		
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	166	C	167	J	168	D	169	X	170	F	171	E	172	R		173	A	174	N	175	G	176	P		177	N	178	L	179	B	180	A	181	U	182	F					

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Directions

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

- A. Lessen
- B. Monica Lewinsky, e.g. (2 wds.)
- C. Floccillation
- D. City (2 wds.)
- E. 1980's Cybill Shepherd TV series
- F. Outer curve of an arch
- G. Contestants on a Chuck Barris game show
- H. Bathroom staple
- I. Bullets
- J. Achieve
- K. Plunge
- L. Unearth
- M. Reconnoiter
- N. Acquires information
- O. Sore
- P. Jumpy
- Q. Theme of *The House on the Strand* (2 wds.)
- R. Shenanigan
- S. Genuine
- T. Direct-sales giant
- U. Hard work
- V. Barnyard call
- W. Diabolical
- X. Margarine
- Y. Boito opera
- Z. Home of boxties and bangers

180	151	173	30	57	48	114	40				
65	3	99	160	83	68	179	75	28	129		
166	76	66	86	163	37	152	7	26	145		
20	70	121	79	159	111	14	60	168			
105	52	33	2	9	171	89	139	96	56	23	112
35	155	170	102	22	10	116	182				
53	39	131	109	80	6	118	46	175			
29	104	146	120	110							
82	157	21	31								
135	81	123	63	167							
1	24	142	133	44	94	58					
100	178	54	93	107	156	64	16				
59	4	41	150	138	101						
88	177	174	36	42	161						
13	117	19	67								
176	77	158	126	18	51	74	55				
124	164	92	5	115	73	134	34	106	49		
162	122	25	172	71							
8	95	148	12								
141	47	136	62	85							
108	32	43	181	165	98	90	132				
38	113	137	15	147							
127	125	50	84	91	17	103					
69	144	130	169								
153	72	61	87	11	149	97	140	45	119	154	
78	143	27	128								

NEW!
Quiz-Acrostics Book 2, published by Puzzlemore is now available at amazon.com
 Sheila can be reached at acrostics@aol.com or visit her web site: www.quiz-acrostics.com

EXPLORING THE BAY: THE WINTER BEACH

By Henry S. Parker

Explore the Bay in Winter? You might think twice about venturing out when the coast is encrusted with ice and the wind seems to funnel straight down from Labrador. Perhaps you'd prefer a visit to the National Aquarium in Baltimore, where they've brought the sea indoors. In weatherproof surroundings you could take in the exhibit, *Maryland: Mountains to the Sea*, and scrutinize such iconic Chesapeake Bay creatures as blue crabs, diamond-back terrapins and (this is not a joke) the northern hogsucker, with its "fleshy, subterminal mouth."

But if you're feeling intrepid (and you've checked the latest forecast), why not head down to the shore? The Bay and the Eastern Shore are special places from December to March, when the crowds are gone and the beaches are deserted.

We'll substitute car and feet for the kayak this time, and head to Ocean City. As you cross the Bay Bridge you may see ice in coves and tributaries, but it's unlikely the Bay will be completely frozen over as it was in the Winter of 1976-77. That year even the open ocean at Ocean City congealed into ice and slush.

BEACHES CHANGE WITH THE SEASONS

From Annapolis, a two-hour drive on Route 50 will bring you to the beach. Your first impression—if you've been here in the Summer—is how different the beach looks in Winter. Gone are broad expanses of gently sloping, fine-grained sand. Instead, the beach is steeper and shorter, and strewn with pebbles and cobbles. Why the changes? Wave energy is responsible.

A beach is a strip of wave-worked materials located between the surf zone and the shoreline above the tides. Beaches are not always sandy. In fact, there was once a beach in England made of old tin cans, transported shoreward from a large offshore dump. And beach "sands" may consist of not only pulverized rock, but also of crushed shells and coral (think of the bright white beaches of tropical isles), or even ground-up lava.

Most beaches have a characteristic profile with the beach face rising to a raised, flat area called a berm at its upper level, and an elevated, vegetated dune above the berm. Beaches extend out underwater where most of the beach materials are derived. Typically, the relatively gentle waves of Summer deposit layers of sand on the beach face and the beach assumes a shallow gradient. But the high-energy storm waves of Winter erode much of this sand, excavate the berm, and hurl pebbles and rocks above the

low tide level—just as you can see here today at Ocean City. The eroded sand is deposited offshore, leaving a steeper, shorter beach in its wake. When Summer comes again, the offshore sand deposits are redistributed on the beach face, like a seasonal conveyor belt.

DUNES: THE FIRST LINE OF DEFENSE

Bending low to shield your face from abrasive, windblown sand and spume, you can work your way along the seaward edge of the dunes, taking care to avoid stepping on vegetation. Dune vegetation—typically tall beach grasses, low shrubs, wild roses and various other plants in the mid-Atlantic region—is essentially terrestrial, though it can tolerate limited exposure to sea water. As you watch the beach sands blow and drift, you'll appreciate that dunes are highly unstable environments.

You'll also appreciate the critical role of the dune vegetation in trapping and stabilizing the moving sediments. Without this vegetation, storm winds and waves would soon level the dunes, exposing the land inshore to flooding and erosion. This happened in Ocean City when Hurricane Gloria struck in 1985. In much of the mid-Atlantic region, dunes are the first line of defense against the sea. To see how this works, watch the windblown sand as it drifts against a clump of beach grass and note how the upright stems baffle and trap the moving sand. Now scrape away a bit of the sand at the base of the grass clump. You'll find an extensive network of spreading roots that help to anchor the grass.

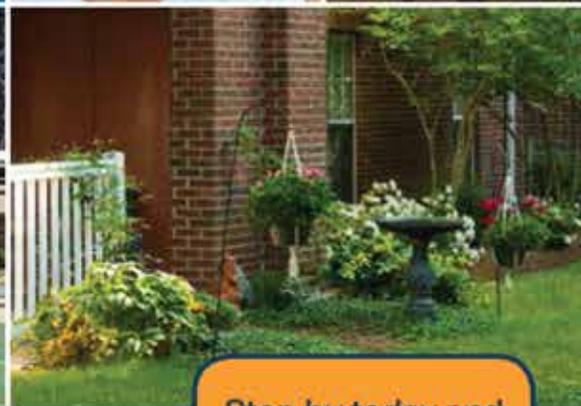
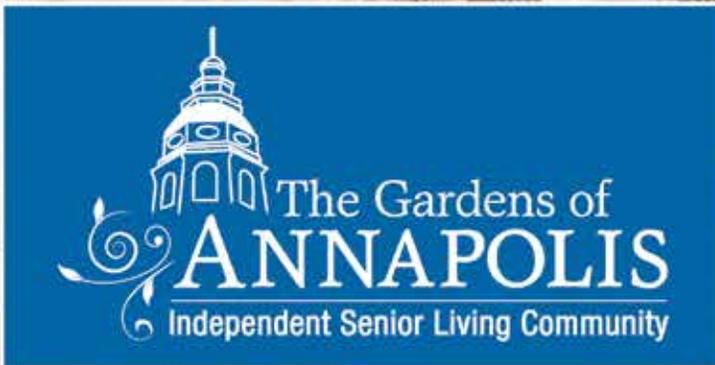
After decades of neglect, most coastal communities now recognize the protective value of dunes. Many beach towns, including Ocean City, have implemented environmental education and dune stabilization programs, with financial support from local, state and federal agencies and local businesses. These include planting programs for dune revegetation, and even fencing when necessary.

WANT TO HELP?

As you head back toward Annapolis, perhaps into a spreading, vermilion sunset, you might consider how you can help protect the Eastern Shore's fragile dunes. You could start by reminding others to stay on marked paths, to avoid stomping on sensitive vegetation. And you can also contribute money, or even your time, to help coastal towns like Ocean City maintain and manage their beaches. To learn more, visit the town's website and search for beach and dune stabilization programs. For Ocean City, go to: <https://oceancitymd.gov/oc/departments/engineering/environment/dune-stabilization/>

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

It's been more
than 40 years
since the Bay
was completely
frozen over.



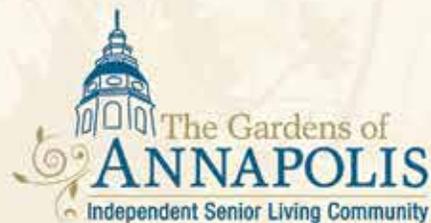
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