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The Magazine for the Savvy Senior

by the Bay

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OutLook by the Bay

The magazine for the Savvy Senior

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FROM THE EDITOR'S DESK

Do they ever leave?
Do we want them to?
Who has more trouble
cutting the cord?

Tecla Emerson Murphy
Publisher
and
Editor-in-Chief



These are all questions that most of us have asked ourselves over the last few years as the "children" pack up, return, unpack and pack up again for yet another departure. I recall the first time they left, one by one, until all three had flown the nest and how the first departure was as bittersweet as the last. We're so proud of their accomplishments, of how far they've come and of their ability to move on. With a tear in our eye we bid them adieu as our mind churns with just how we're going to turn their now-vacated bedroom into the office we've always wanted. We thought that "office" was ours, but now they come and go. The door begins to resemble one of those revolving doors of the kind you see in busy office buildings. Kathryn Marchi shares her fun and frustration on page 18 with the *boomerang kids* who have shared her life as circumstances in their lives changed. It's fun, it's different, and it gives you a good reason to get up in the morning and an even better reason to go on a long extended vacation! They return with all their paraphernalia, stow it in the garage or basement, and with each return they bring even more stuff, and sometimes that stuff comes in the form of warm little bodies.

Do we like it? That's the perplexing question. Most of the parents whom I've spoken with feel that it's a love/no-love relationship. We had privacy and had gotten accustomed to the quiet dinners with just the two of us while watching the evening news. We savored the near bliss of a calm and almost orderly household. Then the phone call comes! They move back in with kids, pets and spouses or maybe without spouse, which is a not so happy event. They get comfortable, and why not with mom cooking and getting to hang out with dad and his new 50-inch flat screen TV? The heating bill is paid, the mortgage is taken care of, life is good.

And from our perspective it's kinda fun. But then who doesn't adore their grandkids, which is more often than not part of the newly acquired additional baggage? I for one am much like Erma Bombeck: Why didn't we have those grandbabies first, they're such a delight. So what's the tradeoff? For them it's a lack of independence, another set of rules that they managed to shake off in college and a funny feeling, albeit a comfortable one of returning to the warmth of the nest. Is it a bad thing for either parent or now-grown child to enjoy this little hiatus from the world's reality? I say do it and do it often. There is nothing more fun than a houseful of laughing little kids running through the place leaving their little finger prints on anything they touch — including my heart!

I have my moments when they don't follow the "rules" and I go to my desk, which is off limits and it has been stripped of pencils and colored markers and scratch pads and Scotch tape. Or there's always reaching into the fridge for a little milk to top off a cup of coffee, only to discover the milk is gone. Or having to endure one more episode of Hannah Montana. Who is that girl and how on earth did she acquire such fame?

Life is chaotic and filled with surprises and moments of sorrow, but also great joys. My feeling is to savor the moment; they're off again all too soon. The fingerprints can be cleaned off, the dryer put back in working order and the fridge restocked with something other than leftover mac and cheese. How could we ever trade those few moments of time in the crazy household they create? Those gorgeous grandbabies grow so fast. As you may have guessed, part of my tribe has returned. They've been back for three weeks, taking up occupancy in my "office," the basement, the bathrooms and leaving little room for anything bigger than a skateboard in the driveway! Their new home is under construction. I'm getting accustomed to the unending chaos that comes with the five extra bodies, especially the ones who like to cuddle first thing in the morning. But I can't find my cell phone and I hear giggles coming from behind the couch. They're here for three months. I wonder if that's going to be too long or not long enough.

Tecla Murphy

Spring

2008



Features

- 6 Creating Outdoor Rooms
- 16 Confessions of a Former Houseplant Killer
- 18 Boomerang Kids ... They're Back!
- 28 Hardy Hostas
- 31 Bring on Spring
- 32 Recipes: Remembering Grandma's Gardening Tradition
- 34 Fresh Herbs ... the Culinary Coup in Your Garden!



In Every Issue

- 4 Your Thoughts
- 14 The Catfish
- 39 Techno Challenge
- 41 Books: Old, New and Obscure
- 42 Straight from the Heart
- 43 Crossword
- 44 OutLook for the Bay

Articles

- 8 Popular Trail History
- 11 Bucket List - Not Just a Movie
- 20 Turning Around Five Attitudes that Prevent Weight Loss
- 25 Reaping What We've Sown - Fiscally and Physically
- 27 Let's Get Together
- 29 Peace of Mind - Creating a Spiritual Legacy
- 30 As an RD, I am Committed to Helping You
- 35 Tread Carefully on Life Settlement Deals
- 36 A Well-Conditioned Mind
- 38 Today is Your Someday

Departments

- 10 Exercise: Personal Joys of a Personal Trainer
- 12 Travel: Institutionalized and Loving It - Vacationing at Chautauqua
- 15 Nutrition: Go with Your Gut
- 21 Dining: Dinner Clubs
- 22 Travel: Joy in the Journey - Newport to Annapolis
- 24 Bay Living: Glendening Preserve: A Jewel in the Crown
- 26 Exercise: Spring into Action: Exercise for Your Type
- 40 Entertainment: Home Entertainment to Remember



On the cover: Kathryn and Dennis Marchi recently downsized from their five acre horse farm to a more manageable home in Symphony village in Centreville. After busy careers that included Kathryn's teaching and Dennis's service with the U.S. Army, and later as a real estate broker, their time is now devoted to gardening, travel and grandchildren.

Cover Photo by R.C. Murphy; photos@OutLookbytheBay.com

Article photos by istockphoto.com



Coming Up Next Issue:

Summer Fun on the Bay
Tempting Crab Recipes
Best Beach Walks

LETTERS TO THE EDITOR:

SOS

Loved the article on SOS. With New England roots, I, too, grew up with bland SOS a couple of weekends a month. After a "change of command" ceremony at the Philadelphia Navy Yard in the early '70s, the hostess at a brunch gathering served the enclosed recipe. Since that time, we've enjoyed this meal on numerous occasions and have shared it with others as well. Hopefully, you'll find it a marked improvement to the SOS we all knew as youngsters.

~ Sincerely B.R. Davis

The Best "SOS" Ever!

Serves about four

1.4 lb. chipped beef, low sodium OK
4 tbs. butter, less if using Pam
½ medium onion, minced
1 c. milk, low-fat OK
1 c. sour cream, low-fat OK
1 c. white or yellow cheddar, grated
14 oz. can mushrooms, drained
salt and pepper to taste

Melt butter, add onions and sauté three minutes. Add beef broken up into small pieces. Mix well. Sprinkle with flour and add milk, stirring until thick. Then add cheese, mushrooms and sour cream. Mix well and stir until bubbling. Serve over toast points, English muffins or Holland Ritz crackers. Also, try it over a baked potato for dinner. If a main meal, a tossed green salad goes well.

~ Gail Watlington Emery

Wife of Adm. Tom Emery, USNA '55
via: Barbara R. Davis

Another SOS

Thoroughly enjoyed reading the current edition and in particular your commentary and the follow-up article on SOS. After reading it I immediately went to the Breakfast Shoppe to order it. I think you have a great magazine going here. I will personally continue to recommend it to my closest friends and those I meet along the way.

~ Greg

Please address your letters to:
editor@OutLookbytheBay.com

Batiking

I have always wanted to batik. It seems very complicated, but I was impressed with the results shown in your magazine and may decide to take it up having recently retired and finally having some free time.

Thank you for a great magazine.

~ E.S. Cerle

Book Club

Our book club has been in existence for 17 years. Our membership has changed over the years from the original dozen members but we're still having a wonderful time. We meet every six weeks. Seems to work better that way with all of the vacationers in our group.

~ J.H. Thurmon

Selling in a Buyer's Market

Enjoyed the "Selling In A Buyer's Market" article as I'm in the eighth month of trying to get my house sold. Even though we've done most of what the article suggested, we still enjoyed reading it as did our Realtor. I think the biggest problem is the press telling us how bad the economy is. Maybe if they'd stop using the dreaded "R" word, things would turn around.

~ ervon@yahoo.com

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Good Bank Service

"Getting Good Service From Your Bank" makes me wonder how far we've come. All this technology is not an excuse for brusque service. My bank acts as though they're doing me a great service whenever I go in there. There are more things that they don't do, rather than what they do! They don't cash checks, roll coins, smile pleasantly and have never called me by name. I'd go elsewhere, but where?

~ J. Thurmont

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CREATING OUTDOOR ROOMS

By Neil Moran



Now that you're retired or close to it, you should consider doing some serious relaxing. What better place to go to relax this summer than your backyard.

Backyards of yesterday consisted of a picnic table and some flimsy lawn chairs spaced out in a mostly open backyard setting. Today, many people see backyards as extensions of interior living spaces; outdoor rooms that include comfortable wicker furniture, a waterfall or pond, artsy garden accessories and a nice selection of indigenous plants.

What makes it seem like an interior room is the way these living spaces are enclosed or screened in by a fence, trellis, wall and/or various types of plants. People are finding these outdoor rooms appealing as they seek a peaceful refuge from the hustle and bustle of daily life.

Chuck and Jean Shroud's outdoor room evolved out of Jean's love for

gardening. Jean started planting cottage garden-style flower beds near their spacious deck while Chuck worked on a wooden bridge and a water feature. Before long there were pathways and outbuildings, including a small potting shed/greenhouse that Chuck built. Large hardwood trees create a natural canopy over most of the yard, while smaller shrubs provide a screen or enclosure around the perimeter, giving it the look and feel of a large outdoor living room.

Outdoor rooms should provide a seamless transition from the indoors to the outdoors. This can be achieved by using some of the same type of building materials inside as out. For instance, a home or cottage with tongue-and-groove cedar walls should be replicated outside by including cedar furniture and/or a cedar trellis. Likewise, an ornate home would probably be mirrored on the outside by a water feature and ornate statuary.

Like any home improvement project, renovating an outdoor living space into an outdoor room can run anywhere from a few hundred dollars to several thousand dollars. And like any such project, you need to make the decision whether to hire a professional to do the job or assume the role of a do-it-yourselfer.

If you're somewhat handy and have a considerable knowledge of plants and gardening, you can easily tackle this project. This is a project that can be pieced together a little at a time as the imagination and pocketbook allows. And in some cases, some of the framework for the construction may already be in place, such as a side of a building, fence or plant material of various heights, including overhanging trees.

The first consideration is location. Consider proximity to your home, to your neighbors, a barking dog, etc. Outdoor rooms are typically, but not always,

situated a few feet from a patio or deck, but they can also be located farther away from the home. The one my wife and I are working on (it seems like it is forever a work in progress!) extends from a small deck off a patio door. The enclosure or "walls" consist of an exterior garage wall, a wooden stockade fence, an above-ground swimming pool and some low-growing shrubs. This was a natural choice for us since it isn't far from our kitchen and bathroom.

Also consider things like exposure to the sun and wind. A northwest exposure could limit your time in your outdoor room, as could a hot afternoon sun. So plan accordingly. The screening choices, as mentioned above, can be natural or man-made. You may find a stockade fence a bit too imposing unless you need some serious screening out of a view in that direction. An upright six-foot-tall by five-foot-wide trellis may add a little softer touch to the fence and can be flanked on either side by some low-growing shrubs, such as hydrangeas and lilacs. Large trees can provide some of the framework for your creation, but it is the lower-growing plant materials underneath this wooded canopy that will make a nice screening for an outdoor room.

A floor covering is the next choice for your outdoor addition. There are many options here. Grass or turf is an option, however, it should be a quality turf that is level and well maintained. One problem with sticking strictly with turf is that you'll need to move your outdoor furniture each time you mow. Of course, you could have the best of both worlds and create one area for your lawn furniture and barbecue. For instance, a 12-foot square area consisting of materials such as mulch, crushed stone, or the costlier brick pavers, and surround it with a quality turf. Brick pavers are an option. Though expensive, pavers are fairly easy to install, will last a lifetime and look great. David Sauter's book, entitled *Plan It, Dig It, Build It* will give you step-by-step instructions on how to install brick or concrete pavers as well as the how-to for a whole lot of other landscape projects for your outdoor room.

Other options for underneath your feet include a three-to-four-inch layer of crushed stone in combination with some type of concrete or flagstone stepping stones. Crushed stone appears to be the choice over pea gravel, which can get messy underfoot.

Mulches also work fine and are sometimes applied around the stepping stones. The less flakier mulches, such as cocoa mulch and some grades of redwood and cedar mulch work best. The small pine bark nuggets are also a good choice for this type of construction.

Prior to laying down any of these materials, eliminate any grass or weeds with a nonselective glyphosate herbicide, such as Roundup. A landscape fabric, preferably the more durable nylon, should be put in place prior to bringing in the crushed stone or other flooring materials.

There are many man-made objects that can be used as accessories in your outdoor room, including bird feeders, sculptures, wind chimes and anything else that may suit your fancy. Some Saturday morning browsing at garage sales may provide you with some good finds to add to your creation.

Lawn furniture has come a long way these days and may consist of anything from traditional webbed lawn furniture to comfortable padded chairs. The awnings that are inserted into the middle of a table is a fairly inexpensive way to provide protection from the sun and rain while you're relaxing in your outdoor room.

Outdoor rooms can be built all at once or you can spread out the work and expense over a period of a few years. The task may seem a bit daunting at first, but if you add a little to your creation each year it won't be long until you have a peaceful private oasis for entertaining friends and family and for some serious rest and relaxation.

Visit Neil's Web site at www.neilmoran.com



Plants to form an enclosure in an outdoor room:

- ~PG. hydrangea (*Hydrangea paniculata* 'Grandiflora')
- ~Common lilac (*Syringa vulgaris*)
- ~Snowball viburnum (*Viburnum opulus* 'sterile')
- ~Forsythia (*Forsythia intermedia* cultivars)
- ~Flowering crabapple (*Malus*)
- ~Dwarf Alberta spruce (*Picea glauca* 'Conica')
- ~Emerald arborvitae (*Thuja occidentalis*)

Recommended reading:

- ~Garden Rooms, By Fine Gardening, by Robert T. Teske
- ~Plan It, Dig It, Build It, by David Sauter, Thomson Delmar Learning, 2003.
- ~Taylor's Encyclopedia of Garden Plants

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Popular Trail History

By Robert Weber

Have you ever noticed the many recreational trails throughout our area and around the country that have been built for activities such as hiking, biking and

inline skating? Have you ever wondered about the origins of those trails? We did. After cycling on several trails, such as the Alexandria-to-Mount Vernon trail in Virginia and the Chesapeake and Ohio Canal towpath in Maryland, it dawned on us that we were following the exact same routes taken by George Washington. We then learned that some of these same trails were established by American Indians long before European colonists arrived.

Being an avid videographer, I mounted a small camcorder on a helmet and started to record our rides. Then I did some research on the Internet and discovered that nearly all the popular recreational trails have some historical significance. One of the most fascinating aspects was to find notes in the journals written by George Washington that described buildings, which are still standing today. Combining shots of buildings, landmarks and scenes I took while cycling and video footage from some of the many historical reenactments held nearby, I was able to produce a DVD series entitled, *Bicycling Through History*. In the series, we explain some of the history for selected popular trails.

The DVD series starts by following the life of George Washington. We visited his birthplace along the Potomac River near Oak Grove, Virginia, and then cycled through surrounding towns such as Port Royal. These small towns have streets and houses dating back to the early 1700s. As a young man, Washington attended school in Fredericksburg, Virginia. Once again during a cycling visit, we found beautiful old streets and buildings. There is actually a tavern, built in 1760 by George's younger brother Charles Washington, that still offers fine dining and a unique atmosphere at its original location. The "Rising Sun Tavern" is well known for transporting modern visitors back to that period in history well before the Declaration of Independence. Fredericksburg is also where we noticed the concept we call, "layers of history." That particular town is probably better known for the Civil War battles that took place 100 years later.

Our cycling adventures next took us to Winchester, Virginia. This was another location providing many history lessons from one short

stretch along the outdoor shopping area in the old part of town. There, we could find the burial site of Lord Fairfax, dating back to the earliest colonial times, a headquarters building used by George Washington during the French and Indian War, a prison for soldiers captured during the Revolutionary War, numerous buildings used by both sides during the Civil War and countless other sites of historical significance. That came as quite a surprise and yet no more so than when I began doing research on Annapolis, Maryland. That is another location with authentic streets and buildings dating back to the 1600s. The State House, in particular, has a very rich history that includes being the site of the Constitutional Convention. We did find that cycling in Annapolis was far more hectic than the rural settings we had ridden through previously, so we had to return to the more bucolic surroundings that would remind us what life was really like for George Washington. For that, we made a trip to Barbados and found a great place to ride. Washington went there at age 19, accompanying his sick older brother Lawrence, whom he thought would benefit from the tropical weather. It did not help. Not only did the brother die, but George came down with yellow fever. He obviously recovered and that made General Washington immune to a disease that later took a serious toll on his Continental Army. During his recovery on Barbados, Washington studied the British military presence on the island. He learned valuable lessons that would serve him well later in life when he took on the British Army during the Revolutionary War.

Of course we rode wonderful trails through Philadelphia to Valley Forge in Pennsylvania, from Trenton and Princeton to New Brunswick in New Jersey, along the Hudson River in New York and past many historic locations in Connecticut, Rhode Island, Massachusetts and New Hampshire. Lexington and Concord have great cycling trails that clearly document the struggle for independence. Newport, Rhode Island, while famous for mansions, also has its share of Revolutionary War landmarks. Pirates were one set of historical characters we did not expect to find evidence of in nearly all of these locations. Few people probably realize the roles that pirates played in the economy of that era. Pirates could be good as well as bad. In our research and cycling through the coastal towns of the south, from Georgia to North Carolina, we discovered an abundance of historical references to pirates. We could not exactly retrace the paths that they took, but we did visit and cycle through the small town of Bath,



Directory of Trails

<http://www.traillink.com/>

Rising Sun Tavern

<http://www.apva.org/risingsuntavern/>

<http://www.simplyfredericksburg.com/history/risingsun.shtml>

<http://www.simplyfredericksburg.com/history/risingsun.shtml>

Winchester

<http://www.visitwinchesterva.com/>

<http://www.co.frederick.va.us/history.htm>

Virginia Creeper

<http://www.vacreepertrail.com/>

<http://www.vacreepertrail.us/>

Abingdon Tavern

<http://www.abingdontavern.com/>

DVD series

<http://www.bicyclingthroughhistory.com>

North Carolina, where the infamous pirate, Blackbeard, was married. We saw where he moored his ship and we saw approximately where they had his "wedding reception." Just being there was quite stirring. There was a terrific location along the cycling trail on Ocracoke Island, North Carolina. Although it was great for us, we learned that this was where Blackbeard had his head cut off in a violent battle. One entire DVD of the series is devoted to following the search for buried treasure of famous pirates.

Perhaps the most popular cycling trail, which just so happens to be all downhill, and which has some of the most spectacular woodlands to be seen, is the Virginia Creeper. This is located near Damascus, Virginia. The historical significance is that it follows the path taken by Daniel Boone during his many hunting ventures into the wilderness across the Appalachians. The Creeper Trail is actually on an old railroad bed from the top of a mountain down to the town of Abingdon. There are shuttle operations that rent special mountain bikes and take riders to the top on vehicles. That makes for a fairly easy 16-mile ride into the town of Damascus. This stretch into Abingdon is not exactly all downhill and that does require some effort. That extra effort could

reward the cyclists on finding the tavern, which dates back to 1779. It has an excellent menu and a superb wine list that would have made Daniel Boone proud.

We have ridden cycling trails all across the United States and have extended our cycling coverage to Montreal, Canada, and Cozumel, Mexico. We have many more stories to tell about the little-known history of popular cycling trails. Among other famous historical figures, we have attempted to follow the trails of Hernando DeSoto and Francisco Coronado as they crossed the North American continent in search of treasure back in the 1500s. Their story is ironic in the sense that they traversed across nearly the entire width of what is now the United States. They were looking for gold, silver and other treasures that could be transported back to the king of Spain. Instead, they found a vast wilderness with many scenic treasures like the Grand Canyon. Without modern technology, like digital cameras, all they could do was hope to survive the ordeal and describe their adventures. Only a very small percentage of those on the expeditions actually did make it back home.



Bicycling Through History is the name given to the six DVD editions published thus far. The DVD series is sold online through Amazon, but libraries are the primary market. It seems that librarians consider the series to be a resource not only for history, but also as a travel guide for people planning active vacations that might include cycling. The real benefit for people interested in this series is that they can sign out the DVDs for free, or at a nominal cost from their local library. You can discover great places to visit or go cycling, and in the process learn some fascinating history.



Robert Weber is semi-retired and manages real estate while pursuing his passion of producing movies. He lives in, works around and travels frequently from College Park, Maryland. Information about the DVD series can be found at <http://www.BicyclingThroughHistory.com>. The Web site has a link for Amazon, e-mail and frequently asked questions.



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Personal Joys of a Personal Trainer

By Tricia Herban

Having a personal trainer sounds like a big deal. Actually, I always thought it was downright pretentious — that is until I decided to get serious about preventing osteoporosis. The disease can be hereditary and not only did my mother have the typical dowager's hump, but she lost at least four inches in height and suffered through two compression fractures of the spine in her later years. This was a wake-up call for me. So I started taking calcium and eating yogurt. My doctors always mentioned "weight bearing exercise" and nodded approvingly when I said that I power walked regularly. But I kept worrying that I was getting exercise below the waist and doing nothing for the areas of weakness above that had given my mother such trouble.

One day after we moved to Maryland, a new friend of mine mentioned having a personal trainer. That was what I needed to hear. Perhaps a trainer could help me develop a way to protect my upper body from osteoporosis. I asked for more information and one thing led to another....

Perhaps you are wondering why I didn't just join a gym. There were several reasons. I had a bed and breakfast and needed to be at home much of the time. Equally important was the fact that I hate getting all hot from exercising and then going out into the cold, which I did in Ohio when I took jazzercise. I also found it unpleasant to change back into street clothes when I was all hot and sweaty. Moreover, I don't look at exercise as a social opportunity and I have no desire to own or wear designer sweats or warm-up clothes. I am a private person when it comes to my body. I prefer not to wear a bathing suit anymore and my exercise efforts are times just for me.

That said, why didn't I just get a video? Lots of people use them, including my daughter-in-law. But somehow, the idea leaves me cold. Possibly that's because I need motivation. Since I exercise for bone health and not to transform my sags into curves, the prospect of losing inches here or gaining them there isn't a factor. I'm like the

school kid who studies the assignments because a test is coming up. Knowing my trainer is coming, prods me to action.

Furthermore, there are things that a personal trainer offers that are not found in a video. For one, the trainer customizes the routine to meet my needs and abilities. I was pretty inexperienced at exercising. I didn't know the difference between an exertion pain and a strain pain. The former is good and the latter can be very harmful. It is hard to know when I am being a wimp and when I should stop and not do that exercise. And, with just a video, it would be even harder to know what alternative exercise to use instead.

Once I returned from a trip having hurt my arm and back. I didn't know what I had done to myself or when, but I knew I couldn't do my regular routine. When I explained this to my trainer, she came up with several other exercises that I could do. After a few weeks, the discomfort had gone away and I was back to normal again.

Another aspect of the exercise process is learning *how* to do each exercise. Does this sound obvious? If only it were that simple! Let's use the chest press for an example. When I am doing a standing military press, I have to hold the weights parallel to my body. From ear level, I have to raise them straight up, extending my arms all the way. While I am doing this, I have to keep my back straight -- not let it arch -- and to strengthen my back, I have to tightly clench my stomach muscles.

Although the standing chest press is a pretty simple exercise, there are four different parts of my body that have to do the right thing. While I am learning the exercise, I am teaching my body to develop "muscle memory." In time, I will know from the way it feels whether I am in the right

"Perhaps a trainer could help me develop a way to protect my upper body from osteoporosis."

position, but at first, I need to be told and that is where the trainer comes in. We all know that exercise is good for you. But it is important to remember the corollary; that you can avoid hurting yourself only by learning each exercise properly.

So far, this discussion has covered the basics of getting started with an exercise program. It is clear that a trainer can be helpful in starting this process. However, as time goes on, the trainer continues to be important.

As time passes, I become more proficient at my routine — the whole group of exercises I am doing. Gradually I reach the "maintenance" level, which means that I am no longer working hard enough to continue to challenge myself. The exercises that were impossible two months ago are now merely a workout.

The easy solution is to do more repetitions. That works for a while until boredom sets in. Just as my mind gets bored, so does my body.



"Knowing my trainer is coming, prods me into action."


Now is the time to add to my exercises or to change them. I could possibly do slow squats at the same time as I do the chest press. Or, I could do it standing on one leg to work on my balance. Any time that another part of the body is engaged or that motion is introduced, the exercise immediately becomes significantly more challenging.

An exercise routine is just that, a routine. It is a sequence of exercises in a particular order. Exercises may be alternated and repeated to increase the impact, working the muscles harder as they get tired. Then again, one exercise may be positioned to act as a stretch for another. A trainer thinks about all these factors when designing your routine. A video is just anybody's routine.

For me, that is what it comes down to. I am not anybody. And I don't have just any body. I have my body. For me to make the commitment to exercise three times a week, an hour or so at a time, I have to know that I am being productive. I have to be certain that there will be gain for the pain, not a pulled muscle or two weeks of stiffness going up the stairs. I am making an investment in myself and I want the highest return possible on that time and energy.

So, what does the "investment" cost? Nothing in special clothes. Nothing in gasoline or membership fees. Maybe \$50 in weights. And about \$50 an hour. That's less than a massage or a luxury pedicure.

For me, the payoff is enormous. Most important, I know that if I do develop osteoporosis, it won't be as bad as if I hadn't exercised and I can assure myself that I have done everything possible to prevent it. In addition, my balance is reliable, I am reasonably strong and my weak back hasn't bothered me in years. Moreover, my self-respect is enhanced because I have taken responsibility for myself in this way.


Do I like exercising? No. Do I procrastinate? Yes, sometimes until 9:30 at night. But I know that my trainer is coming, and I do it! So can you. 

Tricia Herban can be reached at triciab@evoli.com

BUCKET LIST: Not Just A Movie

By Penelope Folsom

So what's on your "bucket list"? Jack Nicolson, his classic cynicism intact, laughed at Morgan Freeman in the recent movie "The Bucket List," when he discovered that the terminally ill patient had a list of things to do before his number was up. The crinkled-up list Nicolson retrieved from the trash went from the wildly extravagant to "laugh until I cry." Had Freeman's life been so grim that he needed that for one of his last requests? Or did he remember that laughing that hard had been one of the highlights of his life? Forced into an explanation of the list, Freeman answered with a look of patience that you reserve for a child, explaining that while attending City College one of his professors had encouraged his students to make a list of things to do before they "kicked the bucket!" Reluctant to admit that his days were also numbered, Jack accepted that maybe Freeman was on to something. Now the two old codgers, unlikely roommates who found themselves lying in adjacent beds waiting for nothing more than the grim reaper, discovered that one had a dream and the other had the funds. Together they escaped from the confines of the hospital and well-meaning friends and family to pursue the last hurrah. The two new but cautious friends were successful in their final endeavors -- maybe not quite in the way that they had envisioned, but they were able to cross off one after another of the goals that they set out to accomplish.

It gives one pause to think: What's on my bucket list? It doesn't need to be as lofty as climbing Mt. Kilimanjaro. It can be as simple as Jack's "Kiss the most beautiful girl in the world," which he achieved in a way that he would not have suspected. Is it time to make out a bucket list? What would you put on it? Is there something that you haven't achieved? Something that you'd like to complete? Start? Learn? Finish? Reopen? Heal? Discover? You don't have to wait for some bad medical news... What's on your "bucket list?" 



DID YOU KNOW?

The National Institute on Aging, which does research studies in Baltimore, is frequently searching for volunteers. Studies have included the effects of fast food on inflammation, alternate ways to lower blood pressure and keys to successful aging. The institute is also collecting bone marrow and white blood cells for ongoing studies. Volunteers are compensated for their time. Call (410) 350-3941 or go to www.grc.nia.nih.gov/studies/ to learn more about how to participate.

Institutionalized *and Loving It -*

By Victoria A. Duncan

Tell someone you're going to be institutionalized for your summer vacation and you're apt to get some strange looks. But if you say that to a veteran of the Chautauqua Institution program in western New York State, you will probably be met with a dreamy look, a long sigh, a soft smile and the sight of some uptight shoulders descending to their rightful place on the body.

At least, that was what I encountered along with some vague murmurings of words such as "idyllic," "peaceful," and "magical" whenever I asked Chautauqua aficionados for a trip review. The vagueness kept me from planning a trip to Chautauqua for years -- I just couldn't get a sense of what all the fuss was about.

After suffering a severe case of what I have come to call the "re's," as in relocating, restoring, remodeling, refinancing and recovering from it all and in sore need of relaxation, my husband and I decided to give it a try. We spontaneously took two weeks to travel to western New York to stay at Chautauqua for a week and then travel on up into Canada, just a short drive away. How bad could this be? We could always leave for Canada early, if necessary.

At the end of one week, we were so in love with Chautauqua that we decided to stay for a second week. And at the end of that week, we discussed buying a summer house on the 750-acre gated property that comprises the institute and national historic landmark. So, yes, we fell hard and now belong to the same dreamy-eyed group and understand those vague responses because, — well, it's just difficult to describe the Chautauqua experience.

Try mixing the quaint Victorian homes and streets of Cape May, New Jersey, with the recreational amenities of a summer camp on a mountain lake. Add the intellectual stimulation of a college campus and throw in the cultural amenities of music, dance and art offered in a metropolitan city. Stir in the humanistic and spiritual underpinnings of an ecumenical faith community and don't forget to hold the noise and irritation of traffic, since Chautauqua is primarily a pedestrian community. Instead of noise, you will likely hear classical music wafting through the towering trees from performers practicing their art, or the laughter of children enjoying an ice cream cone on the grassy plaza. Shake thoroughly and present on a Norman Rockwell-type backdrop for a nine-week season stretching from mid-June to mid-August for the almost 200,000 people who attend some part of the program each year.

As Chautauquans, we are Johnny-come latelys since this picturesque oasis of tranquility began in 1874 as a summer meeting camp for Sunday school teachers. Since then, generations of families have made the annual pilgrimage to the banks of this emerald lake for rest and renewal. Now, Chautauqua has grown exponentially to evolve into a unique blend of what is best in our culture and you will find that it is not unusual



Vacationing at *Chautauqua*

If You Go

Getting There: Located in the southwestern corner of New York State, Chautauqua is approximately a seven-hour drive from Annapolis. Air service is available into nearby Buffalo, or by commuter plane from Pittsburgh to Jamestown, NY.

Where to Stay: On-ground accommodations (highly recommended) include hotels, inns, guesthouses and condominiums. A pricey option is the historic Athenaeum Hotel offering a modified-American plan. The hotel is somewhat dated and undergoing renovation. (800) 821-1881.

The Spencer Hotel offers lovely, whimsical rooms decorated in literary themes and is a recommended option that offers daily breakfasts. (800) 398-1306. A convenient link to Web reservations for inns and guesthouses is available online.

When to Go: The 2008 season June 21-Aug. 24. The schedule of weekly themes is available online.

Cost: There is a daily, weekly or seasonal mandatory gate pass that permits entrance onto the grounds and to most events and lectures. The weekly rate for 2008 is \$325 per person. There are reasonable fees for a few events, such as the opera or plays. Additional fees are charged for special studies classes as posted on the Web site.

Accommodation prices vary widely. Depending on accommodations, a parking fee may be charged.

Children: Chautauqua is an excellent family vacation with many children's activities available. Further information is available at the Web site.

Getting Around: Most people walk or bike. Bicycle rental is available. Automobile traffic is very restricted. Complementary shuttle and tram service is frequent and convenient throughout the grounds.

Meals: Dining options on the grounds are limited. However, there are nearby restaurants outside of the gates and many accommodations include a kitchen. It is wise to stock up before arriving though. Several grocery stores are within easy driving distance.

For Further Information: go to www.ciweb.org or call (716) 357-6262.

to sit at an event beside a retired U.S. Supreme Court justice, a fifth-generation descendant of the earliest Chautauquans or a newcomer who keeps asking "where has this been all of my life?" What nearly everyone shares is a friendly attitude, a relaxed countenance and wide smiles. What nearly no one misses are neon lights, loud bars, shopping malls or rude people.

In the nine-week season, each week is loosely organized around a theme in which timely and significant issues of today's life are considered. For example, this year's themes include "Healing the Globe," "The Ethical Frontiers of Science" and "Sport in America." The week's events, such as informative lectures and discussions, are presented by a host of well-known leaders, authors and speakers drawn from a number of disciplines that evoke some aspect of the week's theme.

In addition, there are more than 400 special studies classes offered each season. These enrichment classes range from games and recreational activities, such as sailing or golf, to hobby and craft classes, such as pottery or weaving taught by experts in their fields, to personal and professional development courses, such as investing or health and wellness. The selections are extensive and your most difficult task will be deciding which choices to make.


Evening entertainment includes a couple of recent releases at an old-fashioned cinema, an opera production, outstanding dramatic plays and some type of musical performance in the 5,000 seat open-air amphitheater. While all the performances are world-class, Friday night is reserved for particularly big-name performers with this year's offerings including Kenny Loggins, Winona Judd and Bill Cosby.

What is difficult to describe about this unique event is the magic, the sense that you have walked back into time and the peaceful tranquility juxtaposed beside the vibration of energy arising from a community of people fully engaged in what they love doing. You have to



experience this place to understand it. But be warned: It takes about two to three days to ratchet down your usual speed to the Chautauqua way of being. Once that happens and you "get it," you may never want to leave. Perhaps, that is why you notice that the majority of folks have gray hair and some wrinkles. It takes age and wisdom to appreciate that a good vacation is not always about seeing another tourist destination. Rather, it is often about the experiencing and sometimes the undoing that will feed your soul.

On one of my remaining Chautauqua afternoons, after I walked down the hillside to a park bench in the shelter of mammoth oaks for a quiet read, I placed my book aside. I felt awash with well-being and gratitude for

this source of replenishment and renewal. I wanted to just drink in every moment of serenity. No, Canada could wait. I would be staying here and returning often in the years ahead. As they say on the T-shirts sold in the gift shop, I was now a Chautauquan and was truly "Institutionalized and Loving It." 



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Cathleen F. Ward, Esq. is a practicing attorney in the Bay area. She can be reached at catward@wardpratt.com or questions can be faxed to (410) 390-9700.

The CATFISH

By Cathleen F. Ward, Esq.

Dear Catfish:

My neighbor smokes and I can smell it in my apartment through the walls, windows and under the door. I simply cannot use my balcony if my neighbor is using his or has his windows open. What can I do?

~ Still Coughing in Annapolis.

Dear Still Coughing:

Try consoling yourself with the fact that smokers are, after all, a dying breed.

But seriously, the first step is to read your lease. It may have rules governing smoking or a smoke-free requirement. If so, rat out the neighbor.

If the lease is silent on smoking, it will likely contain a prohibition against nuisance. You can argue that your neighbor is creating a nuisance, in violation of the rules of the apartment complex and should quit or be evicted. You could also argue that the landlord is liable to you because the smoke is interfering with the "quiet enjoyment" of your apartment or the apartment is not "habitable" because of the health impacts from the smoke. (You will probably need attorney's help with those arguments).

For a less attorney-intensive solution, you could advise your landlord he has the ability to regulate smoking and that he could have a policy for part or all of the apartment complex. Example: The landlord can go "smoke-free" and probably save money on his insurance policy without fear of discrimination suits.

While Maryland has one of the nation's toughest anti-smoking laws and many jurisdictions now have laws governing smoking in public places, smoking in multifamily housing is not typically regulated. Why? Nearly all have separate heating and air conditioning systems. Therefore, to get the government to help you, enlist the help of your elected representatives.

Now for the small print: The aforementioned is for entertainment, not legal advice or a legal opinion. The information is not intended to create and does not constitute a lawyer-client relationship between the Catfish, the publisher, or you.

Dear Catfish:

Should I cosign a loan for my kid for a townhouse? It's the only way that I know of to get him out?

~ C. Charles, Denton

Oh, there are plenty of ways to exorcise a child from your home without potentially ruining your credit by cosigning a mortgage. Try renting the movie "Failure to Launch" for great tips.

Remember, if you cosign a mortgage, you are just as obligated to the lender as your kid. If your kid can't manage to move out, he or she doesn't have the wherewithal to protect your interests against a lender. Another option would be to buy another home and rent it to the kid. If the kid makes all the payments for a while, then you could sell the house to your child. Or you could be a co-owner with the kid on a house, where the kid pays the mortgage and you have the full authority to sell the house when you see fit. Therefore, if things break badly, you can at least get yourself out of the mess. Before you buy, seek competent legal counsel with experience in real estate matters.

Dear Catfish:

My former husband remarried and is now terminally ill. We were married 25 years. When his pension and Social Security kicks in, what's in it for me, or does his new wife of just three years get it all?

~ Bitter Pill, Edgewater

Dear Bitter:

Well, we are all terminal and we have no idea who among us will go first. But you don't have to wait for him to die to obtain Social Security benefits on his record.

If you want to qualify for Social Security on your former husband's record, you must have been married to him for at least 10 years, be at least 62 years old, be unmarried and not be eligible for an equal or higher benefit on your Social Security record, or on someone else's Social Security record. If you remarry before age 60, you generally cannot collect benefits on your former spouse's record unless your later marriage ends.

I'm not sure if you will be happy or sad, but the truth is the amount of benefits that you may qualify for under your former spouse's record will have no effect on the amount of benefits your former spouse or his current spouse may receive.

Also, regarding his pension, check your separation agreement or divorce decree. There should be some private agreement between the two of you regarding any potential pension.



Truth is in what is, not in what isn't.

Go with Your Gut!

By EeVon Ling, ND

"Bacteria does your body good."

To the generation that witnessed the development of antibiotics, a.k.a., the "magic bullet," this statement may seem utterly nonsensical. However, after almost seven decades of widespread antibiotic use, we are starting to appreciate the importance of the ecosystem that resides in our bodies and how healthy bacteria are essential to good health.

With the exception of the very short period of time after our own birth, the human body is not sterile, nor is it supposed to be. In fact, a healthy person should have hundreds of different species of bacteria living in the digestive tract, on our skin, in our lungs and in the reproductive regions. The largest, and perhaps most important population of bacteria, resides in our digestive tract. You may have heard about food products like yogurt, cheese and supplements that contain "probiotics" or healthy bacterial cultures. It is claimed that these foods improve your regularity and immunity. And although the idea of probiotics may seem new, for centuries many traditional cultures around the world have incorporated cultured and fermented foods that are rich in gut-friendly bacteria.

"... if I already have hundreds of bacteria in me, why do I need to add more?"

"But wait," you may ask, "if I already have hundreds of bacteria in me, why do I need to add more?" Well, because among the hundreds of different kinds of microbes residing in your gut, a small percentage can potentially cause disease, such as candida albicans (the cause of "yeast infections"), E. coli (the same contaminant in hamburger meat) and streptococcus (the cause of strep throat) to name a few. So, we need to make sure that

we have enough of the good guys to outnumber the bad guys.

Keeping infectious microbes in check is not all that probiotics do. We actually have a symbiotic relationship with probiotics, meaning we benefit from them and they benefit from us. Many studies support the effectiveness with which probiotics can improve digestion, increase nutrient assimilation, decrease inflammation and improve immunity and toxin removal. Studies have shown that certain strains of probiotics can reduce infections caused by multidrug resistant bacteria. Other studies have shown potential cancer-fighting properties of probiotics.

In order to reap the most benefit, we must in turn keep the probiotics happy. They thrive on fiber, so eat your whole grains, psyllium husks, flaxseeds and the skins of fruits and veggies! They don't like high amounts of animal protein or fried foods. So if you are eating the typical North American diet of burgers and fries, you know your gut is not happy with you. And of course, antibiotics will kill them off. Naturopathic doctors and holistically minded medical doctors believe that supplying the body with probiotics during or after taking a course of antibiotics helps

improve general recovery from an infection and reduces the risks of antibiotic side effects.

Now that you have gotten over your squeamishness over gut-friendly bacteria, what foods should you eat to replenish them? Traditionally cultured and fermented foods are rich in probiotics. Yogurt, cheese, pickled vegetables, yeast extracts like Marmite and Vegemite, sourdough, Japanese miso soup and even wine and beer (in moderation) all contain beneficial bacteria. If you are interested in taking a supplement to improve your digestion and immunity, consult with a naturopathic doctor or other licensed health care practitioner.

EeVon Ling is a naturopathic doctor and can be reached at eling@twotreesnaturopathy.ca or visit her Web site at www.twotreesnaturopathy.ca





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Confessions of a Former House Plant Killer

By Louise Whiteside

If those little green leafy things had been people, I'd be serving time by now! Yes, I've wiped out more botanicals than I like to think about!

If you're anything like me, you may have started your indoor gardening pursuits with a few (or more) failures. When you saw your little English ivy wilting away, you may have sought advice from a more experienced friend, or even a sympathetic garden center employee. The end might have been unfortunate. Future plants may have fared better than your poor ivy, and you may have gone on to experiment with still more little green friends or, like me, you may have given up in despair, blaming it on a "brown thumb."

Well, if you can relate to this, know that I empathize. Having attempted the care and feeding of houseplants at all different stages of my life, I've caused plants to die of hunger or thirst; watched helplessly as leaves turned yellow or brown or just dropped off; waged war on pesky insects; and given up many times, after deciding I simply lacked the knack.

But all that failure didn't occur without some payoff! In the process of rubbing out some fine specimens, I've learned a bit about the art of selecting and caring for houseplants. And when I envision lush, green foliage and brightly colored flowers adorning my home, I can't help being inspired to try just once more. And with the added news that recent studies have shown that houseplants can actually clean the toxic air in our homes, how can I resist trying again?

So let me share with you a few basics that I've learned -- often the hard way about growing beautiful houseplants. No matter how discouraged you may be feeling, these simple tips might just get things growing again.

"In the process of rubbing out some fine specimens, I've learned a bit about the art of selecting and caring for houseplants."



Selection

Selecting plants is probably the most important factor to your success. Some varieties are superb bets for the beginner; others are just too temperamental to consider. To help you choose some good starters, a few plants are listed in the sidebar that will graciously accept all sorts of abuse and neglect (within reason), and still grow happily in your home.

Water

Underwatering is always a better mistake than overwatering. Too much water can cause roots to rot, which usually means goodbye to your plant. Most plants would much prefer to be neglected for a week or two than to be drenched. The easiest way to tell if your plant is thirsty is to stick your index finger about an inch into the soil. If the soil feels dry, it's time to water. If it feels moist, wait a few days and test again.

Light

Take a look at that little plastic spike that's sticking in the soil of your new plant. It will usually tell you whether your plant enjoys bright sunlight, filtered light, i.e., through a curtain or blind, partial shade, etc. A south-facing window in your home will provide the brightest light; an eastern- or western-facing one will afford moderate or partial light; and a northern-facing one will give the least amount of light. Experiment by placing your plant in a variety of locations; it will let you know where it's happiest.

Drainage

Your plant's pot needs to have a hole in the bottom. When watering, allow the water to run out of the hole until it stops. A few pebbles in the bottom of your pot will help with drainage. Never let your plant sit in a saucer full of water. Remember the warning about root rot?

Potting Mix

Your plant will be growing in its proper soil mix when you bring it home. If you decide to repot it, ask your garden center personnel which soil is best for this particular plant. In general, most foliage plants grow well in a regular potting mix; cacti and succulents require a sandier soil.

Fertilization

This just means feeding your little friends! Like you and me, they need nutrients to stay healthy. Liquid fertilizer is the easiest type to use. A few drops squeezed into your watering can about once a month in winter, twice a month in summer, will keep your plants beautiful.



Temperature

Most of the plants we will list here prefer the same temperatures that make you comfortable: 60 to 75 degrees by day; slightly cooler by night. Keep your plants away from heavy drafts.


Humidity

Is your plant from the tropics or the desert? If it hails from a jungle region, it will enjoy a more humid environment (50 per cent humidity is about right); if a desert was its original home, it will love dryness. If the interior of your house is anything like mine -- leaning toward the dry side -- your foliage plants may need the help of a humidifier. Alternatively, give their leaves a misting once or twice a week with a water-filled spray bottle.

Remember, these guidelines are only the basics. That little plastic spike in the soil will give you more specific directions for care.

A few varieties of beautiful, low-maintenance, easy-to-grow houseplants are listed below by their common names. There are certainly many other hassle-free houseplants that will beautify your living space and require less-than-optimum care, but this list should give you a head start. If you're a true beginner, I'd advise taking on a single plant or two for starters. Then add one or two plants at a time until you (and they) feel comfortable!

The best bottom-line advice I can give you is to become friends with a helpful, experienced employee at your local garden center. As well as possessing a wealth of knowledge, this individual is usually very patient and understanding with the unversed houseplant grower.

Happy growing! 

Louise's first choice of houseplants for beginning indoor gardeners were cacti of all types. Her reasons: They enjoy sitting in the sunlight, require watering only once a month and come in all kinds of shapes and sizes. She can be reached at Louise@OntLookbytheBay.com

Superb Selections

Foliage Plants:

English ivy
Heart ivy (philodendron)
Parlor palm
Lady palm
Pothos
Rubber tree (ficus)
Snake plant
(mother-in-law's tongue)

Cacti (all types)

Succulents:
Jade plant
Aloe vera

Flowering Plants:

Amaryllis
Geranium
Kalanchoe



Good Guzz

The Bowie Bay Sox are back with a season bigger and better than ever. If you've never gone to a game, this is the year. They're located just off Route 50 on 301 S. in Bowie.

With 71 home games lined up for the season, there's bound to be at least one that will fit into your busy schedule. For even more fun, bring the grandkids. There are fireworks after some of the games (check the schedule), lots to eat and the fun just doesn't end.

For a \$10 donation, they'll even make an announcement over the public system if you have a birthday, engagement or whatever. They have programs to accommodate groups of 20 to 600 in one of their many party rooms.

Tickets start at \$9 for seniors and parking is free. Log onto www.baysox.com for a full schedule or call (301) 805-6000 to book a special occasion.



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Boomerang Kids — They're Back!

*"...we all probably know
of someone whose children
have boomeranged into
the nest at some point."*

"kids" had found a well-paying job but were "saving" money by living at home; they were very comfortable having meals prepared and laundry done. Money, independence and no responsibilities. Why not?

We all know some of the reasons for this "return to the nest": Job loss, lowered income, divorce, roommate difficulties, just plain inability to get started in life (especially right after college) or a change in household status. These reasons are certainly legitimate but the changes for all concerned can be literally life-altering.

Perhaps you remember how you felt when your children left the nest. It was a bit sad at first but then euphoric. You and your spouse were "free at last" and alone again after years of raising your kids. And after all, you raised them to become independent adults, didn't you? Now you and your spouse could renew your relationship. You were free to come and go, eat cereal for dinner if you chose, and best of all, your front door stayed closed all night long! No more waking up in the wee hours, listening for your kids to come home. You even looked forward to having them come for a visit...

Then one day out of the blue, came the "phone call." Your adult child needed a place to live. Naturally you offered your home. The boomerang kid could "crash" there until some other situation could be found. You might have even felt a glimmer of happiness that the family could once more be together for a short time.

*"...when your children come
back home to live, they literally
become your 'children' again."*

In reality, it will not be the same as before. One thing you should know from the beginning is that when your children come back home to live, they literally become your "children" again. If they bring a spouse or a child with them, you become the mother of all of them! And even if this were not so, instinctively you feel obligated to be the mother again.

Some years ago, I returned to live with my parents for a year while my husband was in Viet Nam. Alas, I was a "boomerang kid!" At age 27 I boomeranged to my childhood home. I had been married and living abroad for five years and now I had a teaching position so my independence was definitely established. Now, this brings up the flip side of being a boomerang kid: When moving back into the childhood home, you feel like a kid again. After all, you are sleeping in your old room, living with your mother and daddy, and time has reversed itself! I remember blanching when my mom told me to wear a raincoat and take an umbrella because it might rain! My parents then wanted to know where I was going and what time I would be home. There was one reversal of this "kid again" feeling, though, when my dad and I had an argument about the family "liquor cabinet." I was told that I should buy my own liquor to share with my friends! I was shocked because, after all, wasn't this all mine to use five years before? So you can see why I can identify in some ways with the boomerang kids of today!

I've also had experience with my own boomerang kids so I know how it feels from that side as well. Just when my husband and I were getting used to being "empty nesters," our kids started returning. They both came and went several times, although at different intervals, thank goodness. Our door was revolving on a regular basis. Furniture came and furniture went and our truck was kept busy for



By Kathryn Marchi

Several years ago, I saw a Web site called *boomerangkid.com*. It was begun by a disgruntled adult child who had recently graduated from college and was back living at home. Adult children in the same situation were sharing their experiences on the site. The title *boomerang kids* was apropos since they were, indeed, adult children who had returned home to live with parents after being independent for a time. Indeed, this "kid" could be any age and in any circumstance. A new report even states that some of these "kids" can be in their 50s! It's at least in part due to the world out there becoming more expensive and competitive than ever before. Thus, we all probably know of someone whose children have boomeranged into the nest at some point. And some of us know firsthand.

I have to say that many of the "tales of woe" aired in the *boomerang kid* Web site were quite amusing. Even though the authors were living in the "lap of luxury," most of the complaints had to do with paying rent, sharing chores and having their lives once again monitored by their parents. These kids resented their situation even though living at home was supposed to be helpful in getting them restarted in the world. One in particular complained that she couldn't afford to pay rent because then she would not be able to go out and have "fun." Those who had menial jobs felt they could not afford to move out on their own and felt "stuck." A few

If not now, when?

several years. (It might be a good idea to sell that truck when the kids first leave!)

I have many friends who have gone through the *boomerang* kid experience just as I have. Perhaps we should have developed our own Web site. I'm sure some of our stories would have been amusing and others would have been written in desperation.

So, from all of the information about the circumstances of the *boomerang* kid, what else can we expect? How will it be to have the kid back in the family home after they have been independent for a time? How will we survive the experience? Will we all still be on speaking terms?

If your returning child is single, some of the same patterns you formed before will re-emerge. You'll have to resist being the "parent" again. You do have to remember that this is an adult child who is used to coming and going freely and will continue to do so. Your door will revolve once again, but you must not become involved in this. You should not lose sleep every night, it's not healthy for you! You'll have to "let go." Now, there is such a thing as common courtesy. If this adult child is going to stay out all night, you should most definitely be told. You might even have to work out the "liquor cabinet" arrangement as my father did!

"You'll have to resist being the 'parent' again...you should not lose sleep every night, it's not healthy for you!"

What if your *boomerang* kid comes home bringing a spouse and/or a child? Again, you have to resist the urge to become a parent to all of them. Then you have to operate under the assumption that all of you (save the child) are adults and can get along together in a mature manner. After all it can be difficult for two families to live under the same roof. And if small children are in the mix of the returnees, there can be added wrinkles. Just remember when your children came home with the grandchildren for the weekend. (But if you've never had that experience, heed this!) Do you recall how

your house looked while they were there? Cribs, playpens, highchairs, toys, toys, toys, books, diaper pails, clothing -- all of those necessities for small ones were scattered all over the house! Multiply this by 24 or 52 weeks and you'll have a real problem. Best to settle this right away, but expect the toy box to remain in your family room and a car seat in the back seat of your car!

Another thing to remember is that today, children are not being raised the same way you raised yours. You'll have to bite your tongue to keep some peace in the house.

One huge benefit of having the small ones come with the *boomerang* kid is that you will be closer to your grandchildren than most other grandparents. It is a wonderful bonding system. Even if the *boomerang* kid comes home alone, hopefully you can enjoy each other as adults without all of the worry and stress that went along with raising him!

Now that your house is "full" again, what about the matter of chores or rent or meals? Some compensation is important to ease your physical or financial burden. And, even though the *boomeranger* is living with you, he still must continue to act responsibly. If finances are an issue, the "barter system" can be very successful. Whatever special talents the *boomeranger* possesses can be utilized. If a talent is gardening, let him help design and plant a garden for you. A friend of mine did this with her son-in-law and now has a wonderful garden to show for it. If cooking is a strong point, you can enjoy some great meals! Another tradeoff can be babysitting your pets or house-sitting while you take a much needed vacation!

If a deadline has been set for your *boomerang* kid to move out and it is missed, you might have to take more drastic measures. Some kids get so comfortable that they don't want to leave. This is when "tough love" comes in. You may have to help this kid find an apartment, pay the deposit and help him move out! All of this presupposes that the kid has a job, and if he doesn't, you may have to help speed up the process and find him one!

These are just a few examples of what can occur when your *boomerang* kid

returns home. I really believe that parents and *boomerang* kids start out with the best intentions of living compatibly together.

Some succeed, even though in the best situations tensions can arise over the smallest issues, and others sadly find that it simply does not work.

Is there a way to know how your situation will turn out?? Thankfully, there is. Your instincts, and this rule of thumb: If your *boomerang* kid was considerate, cooperative and somewhat responsible before he or she left the nest, then most likely the same will apply to his or her return. Of course, many children who might not have possessed these qualities when they left home miraculously mature into responsible adults who actually appreciate your allowing them back home in their time of "need." They may surprise you by putting forth their best effort to make their stay as painless as possible!

My friends, that is what I wish for all of you if your *boomerang* kid returns to the nest!



Editor's note: "For another take on how to handle boomerang kids, see the "Dear Vicki" column on page 42.

"Some succeed, even though in the best situations tensions can arise over the smallest issues, and others sadly find that it simply does not work."



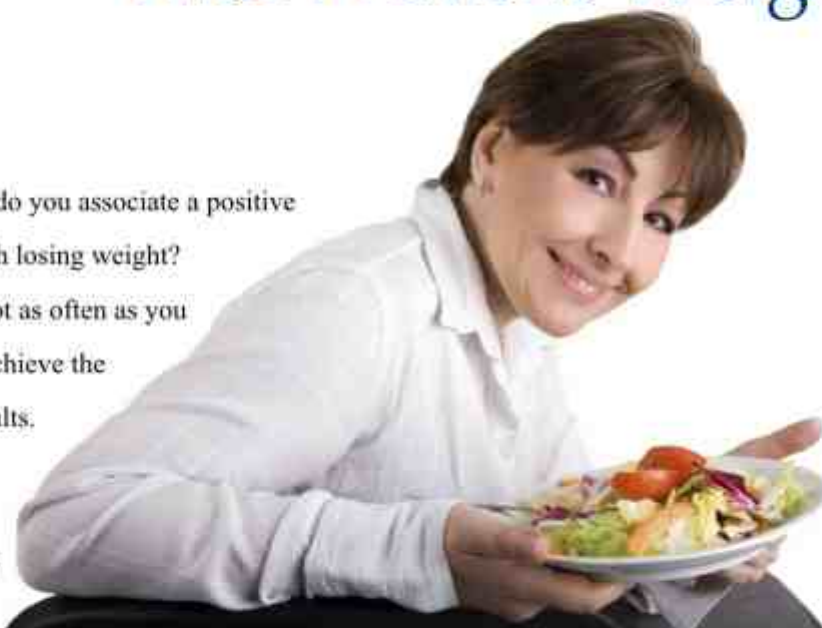
Have you made out your "bucket list?" If not, what are you waiting for?

Turning Around Five Attitudes That Prevent Weight Loss

How often do you associate a positive attitude with losing weight?

Probably not as often as you should to achieve the desired results.

By Suzette Langley



Most people trying to lose weight think negatively about the process and their success. The phrases "I feel fat," or "I'll never succeed" and "This isn't working," slip out easily and frequently. Rarely uttered are "I love my body," "I am doing a great job" or "This process works wonderfully." How do negative thoughts create barriers to success?

Studies have shown that those who believe they can lose weight and have a positive attitude about the process lost more weight than those who didn't lose weight. Those who struggled to lose weight expressed thoughts that indicated their weight was not under their control and that they believed they weren't capable of achieving the desired results. These thoughts lead to helplessness, hopelessness and lack of action.

Researchers in this area have found that optimists believe they have more control and influence over situations than pessimists. In regard to health, being an optimist reduces the risk of dying from heart disease, reduces feelings of physical pain, increases energy, and creates feelings of peace and happiness. On the other hand, pessimists view life events negatively and expect the worst possible outcome. When bad events occur, pessimists often blame themselves and see problems as permanent and pervasive. They experience more stress, more

physical pain and limitations due to physical problems, less vitality and poorer emotional health.

How can you use this information to your advantage and achieve your weight loss goals? Change one of the following common negative thoughts to a positive thought. Notice how your overall attitude shifts and eases your struggle with your weight.

This will never work. Weight loss is a mathematic formula. Take in fewer calories than you need and lose weight. Take in more calories than you need and gain weight. The formula works. Are you working the formula? Focus on action and taking the right steps consistently, like exercising and reducing portion sizes. Encourage yourself by saying, "I am doing what needs to be done and the results will follow."

I have no willpower. This little thought creates an automatic setup for eating whatever is put in front of you. It eliminates your power of choice and ability to make decisions. Focus on the choice in the situation instead of willpower. You have the ability to choose to eat the bread on the table or to let others eat it. What do you choose?

I blew it. This all-or-nothing, black-and-white statement leaves no room for error. It gives you permission to turn one cookie into three without a second thought. A better approach would be to

acknowledge that you were not planning to eat the cookie. Then, ask how you can adjust your plan to go with the flow. Perhaps you eat a smaller snack or skip the rice at dinner. "I can still have a successful day" is the mantra.

I'm deprived and it's not fair. When someone says this, they are looking at weight loss from a deprivation instead of an abundance mentality. Admittedly, you do have to limit your favorite foods like pizza, spaghetti or cake in quantity and frequency in order to adopt a healthier lifestyle. But it's a minor inconvenience when you consider what you gain in return: better health, more mobility, clothes that fit and increased energy. Keep adding to the list and focus on your abundance.

I hate my body. When you stop to think about it, your body is an amazing machine. Maybe you do not like how it looks, but it performs complex functions that require no thought on your part: breathing, pumping blood, writing, reading all day, every day. How do you treat something you don't like or don't care about? Usually with indifference, disrespect and disregard. Hating your body will not motivate you to action. When you love your body, you begin to treat it like the remarkable, incredible thing that it is.

Your thoughts guide you to action, whether they are positive or negative. If your thoughts are self-critical, your behaviors will be unproductive, which leads to discouragement. Conversely, acknowledging small accomplishments and adding positive thoughts leads to increased activity, healthier eating and an improved mood. Only you can create the positive thoughts that will bring the results you desire.

Suzette Langley owns Passion for Life Coaching, LLC, which offers executive and personal coaching and corporate training using the PeopleMap™ assessment. She resides in Annapolis and can be reached at suzette@suzettelangley.com

Dinner Clubs

— Let's Have a Party!

By Lesley Younes

Consider a supper club. It's like a book club, but instead of devouring words, supper club members gobble up good food that they and their friends prepare and present. There are no hard-and-fast rules for organizing a supper club. Different groups do it in different ways, but it is most important to form your club with congenial people who agree on objectives. Are you out for the gourmet cooking experience, a good time or interested in expanding your knowledge of food? Any goal is a good one, if you all agree on it. Menu planning is important, so is your theme — international, seasonal or a cooking style such as stir-frying, casseroles or just using wonderful vegetables and fruits from spring or summer, for example. Below is a sample menu with foods with a '70s theme, which can be put together very quickly and transported from one home to another. Budget may or may not be an issue, but if you are pooling your expenses, don't forget to include the cost of wine.

Two popular ways to share the cost of the evening is for each couple to bring a dish or bring along recipes and do a little math later that evening.

Not every dish will work every time, not every meal will be four-star, but that's part of the supper club experience — making friendships along with food.

Crab Dip

4 oz. crabmeat marinated in juice of one lemon for 30 minutes
8 oz. cream cheese, softened
1/4 c. whipping cream
1/4 c. mayonnaise
1 tbs. minced onion
1 garlic clove, minced
1/2 tsp. Worcestershire sauce
Dash hot pepper sauce
Salt to taste
Fresh chives (optional garnish)

Drain crabmeat and add to blender with other ingredients except for chives. Blend thoroughly. Scoop into bowl and garnish with chives. Serve with crackers or fresh vegetables.

1970s Buffet for Six Couples

Quick Pate

1 lb. chicken livers
1/2 lb. mild Italian sausage meat
1/2 c. fresh parsley
1 c. sliced onion
1 tsp. salt or to taste
1/2 tsp. black pepper
1/2 tsp. fresh thyme (less if dried)
2 eggs
1 tbs. Cognac (optional)
1/4 c. melted butter

Process all ingredients and fill greased loaf pan three-fourths full. Cover with foil and set in a shallow pan of water in a 275-degree oven two hours. Cool and refrigerate overnight.

Easy Meatballs

1 lb. ground beef, chicken or ground turkey
1/2 c. dry bread crumbs
3 tbs. fresh grated Parmesan cheese
1 egg, slightly beaten
1 small onion, finely chopped
salt and pepper
garlic salt
milk

Sauce

14 oz. bottle catsup
1/2 c. grape jelly
Dash hot pepper sauce

Mix together all meatball ingredients, using enough milk to make a mixture that can be shaped into small golf-ball size rounds. Brown in a deep nonstick skillet. Remove and keep warm. Combine sauce ingredients in the skillet. Heat thoroughly. Add meatballs and simmer over low heat about 30 minutes. Serve warm.

Oriental Chicken Wings

2 lbs. chicken wings
1 c. soy sauce
3/4 c. water
1/2 c. margarine or butter
1 c. packed dark brown sugar
1 tsp. dry mustard

Cut chicken wings into two pieces and discard tips. Combine other ingredients and heat in saucepan, stirring until sugar is dissolved. Place wings in shallow baking dish and pour in the marinade. Cover and refrigerate overnight. Bake at 300 for three hours, stirring occasionally. Serve warm.

Artichoke Dip

14 oz. can artichoke hearts, drained and chopped
1 c. grated Parmesan cheese
1 c. mayonnaise
2 tsp. jalapeno peppers chopped (optional)
black pepper

Combine all ingredients, place in baking dish and heat at 350 for 45 minutes. Serve hot with crackers or tortilla chips.

Tossed Waldorf Salad

1 small head cauliflower, broken into florets
1 medium bunch broccoli broken into florets
1 c. golden raisins
2 crisp unpeeled red apples, chopped
1/2 c. chopped pecan
1/4 c. fresh pineapple finely chopped
1/4 c. diced onion
10 strips bacon, crisply fried and crumbled

Dressing

1 1/2 c. mayonnaise
1/2 c. sugar
1 1/2 tbs. apple cider vinegar

Combine all salad ingredients, except bacon. Combine dressing ingredients and toss with salad. Sprinkle bacon on top just before serving.

Purple Lady

(This dish is good with turkey or chicken or served as a dessert as in this menu.)

6 oz. package raspberry-flavored gelatin
2 c. boiling water
20 oz. can crushed pineapple, undrained
16 oz. can blueberries, undrained
1 c. frozen raspberries
1 c. chopped nuts
8 oz. carton frozen whipped topping, thawed

Prepare Jell-O according to package directions, stir in pineapple and blueberries and refrigerate until slightly thickened. Stir in nuts and whipped topping until thoroughly blended. Refrigerate until firm.

Joy in the Journey

Long Island Sound to Annapolis

By Leslie J. Payne

Most sailors know it is the journey that counts. If speed were important, they would be on a powerboat. So when my husband, Richard, and I prepared to cruise the summer of 2006, we set our itinerary: Sail north. When we're halfway through our allotted time, turn around. It was a good plan for a great trip with plenty of serendipity along the way. Perhaps there is something here for your next cruising itinerary.

Westbrook, Connecticut

One of our favorite stops was an anchorage near Duck Island off Westbrook, Connecticut. A short dinghy ride will take you to Westbrook's Singing Bridge, so called for the sound it makes as cars drive over its metal grates. You can tie up to the dinghy dock at *Bill's Seafood Restaurant*, but beware of seagulls seeking handouts from diners on the deck. *Bill's* offers waterfront seating and everything from lobster and calamari to a fish sandwich, all modestly priced. Most nights there is musical entertainment scheduled, ranging from big band swing to easy rhythm and jazz. They even have an old-fashioned singalong night! Call ahead or click on the Internet to plan for your musical preference.

Oyster Bay, Long Island

Originally part of New Amsterdam in the 1600s, this area was named for its abundance of oysters or the shape of the harbor at that time. Oyster Bay boasts several historic attractions including Sagamore Hill. This huge Victorian mansion with original furnishings was Theodore Roosevelt's "summer White House" during his presidency (1901-1909).

"Classic Car Cruise Night" is reason enough to stop and see this delightful town. A weekly summertime event, this show has



Photos by Leslie J. Payne

every type of classic auto imaginable, each in pristine condition. (My favorite was the Good Humor ice cream truck!) Good-natured New Yorkers happily discuss their vehicles and answer your questions. Bring a camera and be ready to pose by that car you always wished you owned.

And if you spontaneously begin humming songs by Billy Joel while admiring an impressive collection of motorcycles, give a wave to the familiar-looking man nearby. Oyster Bay is the kind of place he enjoys on a summer evening and stopping at a car show in his beloved New York.

Atlantic Highlands, New Jersey

After you make it down the East River and pass the Statue of Liberty, make your way to Atlantic Highlands. The Atlantic Highlands Yacht Club and surrounding harbor area offer anchorage and moorings well-protected from wind and waves. It's also home base for the high-speed ferry service that runs several times a day to New York City, where you have the option to go sightseeing or take in a Broadway show.

The yacht club offers a free taxi service from your boat to the pier, making it easy to catch the ferry or go into town. On Sunday evenings free concerts are held at the Harbor Gazebo. A short walk up First Avenue offers dining options including The Memphis Pig Out, a moderately priced restaurant best known for fixing Memphis-style ribs and chicken cooked over hickory. They also have steak, seafood and a salad bar. After dinner take in a movie at the theater just across the street. And for dessert, get an ice cream cone to enjoy as you make your way back to the boat. This is summer cruising at its best!



Atlantic City, New Jersey

There is a cozy anchorage across the inlet from Atlantic City, but be sure to have your mosquito netting or bug spray ready to fend off those beastly buzzing bugs. With no easily accessible restaurant for dining, plan to eat dinner aboard. Afterward, enjoy watching the casinos' changing lights against the night sky. When you are relaxed it becomes mesmerizing entertainment.

Cape May, New Jersey

Two Mile Landing Marina is located a half-mile north of the drawbridge between Cape May and Wildwood Crest. With nice shower facilities and two restaurants they have all you need, but it gets even better with a taxi ride into Cape May. (In 2006 the ride cost \$15 each way.)



Cape May offers all the joys of summer its name implies: Victorian buildings, beaches, boardwalk, fudge, fries and a plethora of T-shirt shops. Take in all the sights and sounds of the area. Remember to stop by the grocery store for any needed provisions, and enjoy having to carry the bags only as far as your cab.

Chesapeake City, Maryland

On the banks of the Chesapeake & Delaware Canal this tiny town is worth discovering. A tour through the museum can educate you on the construction of the C&D Canal and its impact on our country's history. And if it's hot outside, you'll enjoy the air conditioning inside the museum.

A walk around town gives you the chance to see the many restored historic homes and a chance to shop in an old-

fashioned general store. There are several places to eat, The Chesapeake Inn and Marina being the most obvious. In the evenings there often is musical entertainment. As the sound carries over the water, you can enjoy it from the comfort of your own cockpit.

Home to Annapolis

Traveling by sailboat down the canal to the Chesapeake Bay and back to Annapolis makes for a full day and the chance to reflect on your memories. As wonderful as it is to take time to find joy in the journey, it is also true that there's no place like home!



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LesliePayne@OutLookbytheBay.com



Photo by Leslie J. Payne

WANT TO LEARN MORE?

Use these Web sites and phone numbers for up-to-date information and details:

Westbrook, Connecticut
www.westportct.gov/visitors

Bill's Seafood at the Singing Bridge
www.billsseafood.com
860-399-7224

Oyster Bay, Long Island
www.oysterbaytown.com

Atlantic Highlands Yacht Club
www.ahyc.net

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www.twomilelanding.com

Chesapeake City, Maryland
www.chesapeakecity.com

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Glendening Preserve: A Jewel in the Crown

By Phil Ferrara

Terms like a "hidden gem" or the "one true love" conjure thoughts that something special might be at hand. That proved to be the case on the day of the vernal equinox, when six members of the Piedmont Trekkers hiking club set out to explore the new Glendening Preserve at the Jug Bay Wetlands Sanctuary. The recent acquisition and opening of that preserve is a perfect complement to the sanctuary which is a sparkling jewel in the crown of the Anne Arundel County Department of Recreation and Parks. Our hikers reached the trailhead early on a sunny, crisp morning. From the moment we entered the forest it was hard to believe such a secluded place could exist in the midst of urban growth. In the club's three years of exploring the region between the Appalachians and the Bay we have found many hidden gems. This is yet another wilderness to be cherished — so near, and yet so removed.

At the outset as we progressed along the Red Oak Trail, towering beech trees lined the way. Recent rains gave life to a stream that crossed beneath us and flowed downhill to the Patuxent River. We turned left onto the Cliff Trail rising gently toward the west. The route was cloaked in heavy stands of oak, loblolly pines, holly and mountain laurel. Forty feet below us, the stream's bottomland was covered with emerging skunk cabbage. By summer that entire river bottom will be choked with giant cabbage greenery.

Shortly we were presented with a clear view of the Patuxent River to the west through a leafless forest. We turned our hike upriver along the left bank. On our western side the cliff plunged 80 feet to the broad marshes below. Stretching to the distant shore was a wide vista with the Patuxent wending its way lazily through the coastal plain to its rendezvous with the Chesapeake Bay, another 40 miles downriver.

On this first day of spring we could see red buds emerging in the crowns of numerous trees — the forest slowly coming awake. Everywhere the scenery was complemented by the tranquility of the woodlands. Soon the terrain of this alluvial land began to change as we entered an area known as the sand barrens. Baby cacti were growing everywhere on and beside the trail, and then a dead-end path invited us to explore, and fortuitously we did so!

As we moved toward the path's end, we observed numerous beaver-cut small trees alongside the trail. Then suddenly we came upon a fabulous engineering wonder of the animal kingdom — a four-foot-high, 15-foot-wide beaver dam. Created behind it was a primeval appearing pond of a few acres in area, pierced by the trunks of 100 trees.

After lingering a long while to marvel at the expertise of those furry little creatures, we resumed our hike and encountered the remains of a 'water run' from an old mill operation. We could only guess what colonial or 19th century business must have been there. Continuing farther up the Beaver Rock trail, the Galloway Creek reflected the low morning sun with the light literally dancing on the waters of the creek's surface.

Our path through the preserve brought us next into a wide pine barrens, thick with cedars and interspersed with large white birches. As we moved along the Blueberry Trail, the south side was thick with deciduous trees and the north side heavily covered by the conifers of the dense pine barrens. It was a strange and noticeable sight and suggested that the pine barrens might have once been a farm. Shortly afterward we found a big patch of deadfall tree trunks presenting a perfect place to sit and enjoy our lunch. Serenity and good friends, could life get any better?

After we devoured our gourmet fruit and sandwiches, we moved on through the forest meandering along the web of trails that lace the park. The end of our five-mile journey brought us to the car and the completion of an enjoyable hike. We had discovered another hidden gem in the Glendening Preserve that adds luster to the Jug Bay Wetlands Sanctuary.



Jug Bay

is located at 1361 Wrighton Road,
Lothian, MD 20711.
Call ahead as hours fluctuate
(410) 741-9330.

Entrance fee: adults \$5; seniors \$2.
Visit the Web site at www.jugbay.org
Trail maps and directions available
on the Web site.



The author initiated the Piedmont Trekkers hiking club three years ago. Interested hikers can reach him at pferrara65@comcast.net. He urges outdoor enthusiasts to consider joining the Friends of Jug Bay, a nonprofit organization that supports the Jug Bay Wetlands Sanctuary.

Reaping What We've Sown ~ Fiscally and Physically

By Linda Matney



from your IRA. When can you? When must you? How much should you? Some answers are easy because they are written into law. An overview follows of some of the rules (from www.irs.gov) you need to keep in mind when thinking about the timing of your withdrawals. These rules refer to withdrawals defined by the IRS as qualified distributions, and vary depending on whether the question pertains to a traditional IRA or a Roth IRA.

When can you? The earliest age you can withdraw funds from a traditional or Roth IRA without penalty is 59 1/2. Disability or death negates this requirement.

When must you? The latest you can begin withdrawals without penalty from a traditional IRA is age 70 1/2. (Technically, it's by April 15 of the year after the year in which you turn 70 1/2, but who's counting.) You are never required to take distributions from your own Roth IRA.

How much should you withdraw? I have the answer for this question: It depends. Yes, it's that simple,

and isn't everything when you bore down to the basics. How much can I "reap" each year and still have enough to fund all the fun I intend to have? For this answer you may want to consult your "people."

Regarding a Roth IRA, a qualified distribution is one that "is made after the five-year period beginning with the first taxable year for which a contribution was made to a Roth IRA set up for your benefit" as well as meeting the age requirement. Other circumstances, i.e., disability, death or qualifying for a first home, affect these rules. When contemplating any decision that can have a

tax consequence, please, as mentioned previously, consult your "people."

Enjoyable education, a little laughter with our learning, perhaps a little wit accompanying some wisdom, there are lots of things we may want to learn and this time around we get to choose! We have spent our lives investing our time in productive ventures (sowing). Now, we get to spend that time enjoying adventures (reaping)!

I hope some of the fiscal information is helpful; now for physical information.

Spring is the season of renewal and growth, a time to appreciate all that has been quietly growing throughout the winter. The perennials we planted several seasons ago; the shrubs and trees that continue to please. Our beautifully red Japanese maples, our lovely white or pink dogwoods, the beautiful green leaves of our oaks and birches, or whatever we have chosen to plant over the years.

Throughout our lives we have sown seeds of friendship as well. Some of those seeds grew into relationships that, like annuals, came into our lives and brightened them for a short time. Other friendships, like perennials, appear with regularity in our lives, perhaps associated with a function or activity that is a recurring event. And then there are the friendships that have weathered every season of our lives. Just as the flowers and shrubs in our gardens provide us with beauty and joy, so much more do our friendships. The most important point is that for our physical wellbeing we need to water and tend the garden of our friendships.

They're called anchors and wings...




Linda Matney is a founding member and recently retired general partner of WEDGE Capital Management and can be reached at lmately@carolina.rr.com

There are more financial writers currently offering advice than ever before. It seems they are in every newspaper and magazine. They are regulars on the news, show up on PBS specials especially during fundraising month and write more books than I care to count. The presentation and phrasing may be different because we always hope to entertain as well as educate, but there is nothing new. Just as there is no magic pill for weight loss, there is no one-size-fits-all financial plan ~ for sowing or reaping.

However, with that disclaimer, I confess that I read all financial articles with the hope that some turn of phrase or restated idea may offer a reminder of something I knew but forgot, or something that wasn't pertinent when I first read it, but it is now. I hope to glean some insight useful to enhance, if not my actual financial situation, then at least my comfort level.

Investing our discretionary dollars wisely during our work life by putting money into an IRA or other tax-sheltered savings plan, has been a fairly simple process. But getting your money out without violating any IRS rules, or creating an unnecessary and unintended tax burden, can prove to be a fairly complex chore.

The focus of this article is withdrawals

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Spring into Action

Exercise for Your Type

By Suzette Langley

You know about the benefits of regular exercise. It keeps you young and active. It reduces the risk of heart attack, stroke, cancer, diabetes and many more diseases. It improves bone density, staving off osteoporosis. You lose weight or stay slim. There are many benefits but you cannot seem to stick with a program and stay motivated. What gives?

Have you designed a program with your personality type in mind?

Recently, during a workout at the gym, I ran into a friend I had not seen in a while. We greeted each other enthusiastically and did some catching up. Without me asking, she shared how she wished she could be as committed to exercise as I was. She commented that she "lacked discipline" and got bored quickly in the gym. I held up a hand to stop her from comparing herself to me and underappreciating her positive qualities. I simply asked, "Have you tried to work with your need for excitement, adventure and fun?" I received a blank stare with a couple of blinks that let me know I had caught her off guard. Let me explain.

Each of us has a unique personality type with inherent strengths that help us succeed in our personal and professional lives. Though each personality type has strengths, each type has a weakness that can undermine success. When we know and understand our personality type, we can use our strengths to our advantage and build new strengths that create personal growth and satisfaction.

What are the types, what are you and how can you use this information to motivate yourself to exercise? Here's a brief description of each type and some suggestions to create an appropriate exercise plan.

First, the **leader** type. Leaders thrive on the big picture and want the bottom line. They strive to be the best and to win. Leaders create motivation for exercise by creating a vision of the results they want and how those results augment their performance. For example, an executive I coach uncovered his motivation by tying exercise to increased confidence, focus, energy and productivity, which increased his income. Leaders enjoy exercise that provides a challenge for them or allows for friendly competition with others.

Consider scheduling tennis or racquetball matches or golf or basketball games. At the gym, create a defined program that incorporates challenges like lifting weights or interval programs on cardio machines.

People types love, you guessed it, people. They love to be around people and protect the well-being of those around them. They also thrive on personal growth and awareness. They are motivated by how improving or maintaining their health connects them to others and enhances their personal development. They consider how being fit increases energy to play with grandchildren or to attend special events like graduations and weddings. People types often notice how physical challenges increase their self-confidence. People types enjoy having a workout partner, walking buddies or attending group exercise classes.

Free Spirit types are the fun and flexible people who thrive on freedom and variety. They do not enjoy the same hum-drum routine. My friend from the gym is a free spirit. Once we talked about her personality type and what really excited her, she designed a program of fun, challenging activities like dance, kayaking, yoga and Pilates. She remains committed to her program and has stuck with it for three months. With free spirits, variety and adventure keep you motivated to stay active.

Task types are the detail-oriented, systematic folks who thrive on structure. If you recall, my friend referred to me as self-disciplined, thus making me a task type. Task types are motivated by scheduling their workouts, having a plan and crossing it off their to-do list. Thus, a weight lifting plan from a trainer or regularly scheduled classes or a routine to work out at the same time each day keep task types on the move.

My friend from the gym commented that the struggle to stick with her exercise plan ended because she learned to honor and appreciate who she is instead of criticizing herself for something she is not. Moral of the story: Stop comparing yourself to others and create a plan that works with who you are. Then, enjoy the ease and motivation that follow as you reap the benefits of a regular exercise program.

Suzette Langley owns Passion for Life Coaching, LLC, which offers executive and personal coaching and corporate training using the PeopleMap™ assessment. She resides in Annapolis and can be reached at suzette@suzytollangley.com



Let's Get Together: Planning a Family Reunion

By Edree Downing

Family reunions are great -- it just takes someone to plan it. If just the thought of that sends you to bed with a migraine, ask the family organizer -- there's bound to be at least one in every family -- and then offer to help. Ask a few of the more adventurous family members where a great reunion site would be. It can be a mountain retreat, a seaside cottage on the Outer Banks, a cruise ship or even a house rental in Europe. Pick a time that would work for most everyone: the summer months are best if young people are involved, so try to plan it according to their vacations. The dates can be spread across two weeks so that people can arrive and depart at different times. It's unlikely that you'll find everyone available on the same week no matter how much advance notice they have. Not to mention that if there are family members who are at odds with each other, plans can be made accordingly. Not to encourage childish behavior, but realistically, conflicts exist even in the best of families. A cruise ship reunion would be the exception to a drop-in-whenever plan, and in this case, the longer the notice the better. A cruise departing from somewhere warm: Miami, Aruba or New Orleans, would be very popular during the January school break. A cruise can be the easiest of all to arrange as it eliminates the need to plan for meals and entertainment.

Set up a Web site early, sending out feelers as to date and location and then make the decision as to where and when. If you have a large family or are including extended family, whichever date and location you choose will never be convenient for everyone, but work at keeping the majority satisfied.

Divide the cost of housing by the approximate number of people and have them commit with a check. Money tends to cement a decision. If some family members can't come, ask them to send a video of themselves and a short message telling what they've been up to.

Once at the destination, have a set amount that each should contribute to the "pot" to feed the group. This should be agreed on beforehand. If that sum is used up in the purchase of food, everyone divvies up again. Take turns making the meals and

assign them even before they arrive. Let each family take a night to prepare the evening meal -- it's always fun to sample and share someone's favorite recipe.

Have a plan for activities, but don't demand that everyone participate. There's hiking, walking, museums, kayaking, cultural events to attend, sights to see and, of course, shopping. Have a good list of what's available including hours and admission fees if applicable. Maps of the area are very helpful.

Take lots of pictures. With all the digital technology out there it would be easy for the creative one in the group to compile a book or DVD of memories. There are recipes of favorite meals that can be included, music listened to that can be recorded on the DVD and even write-ups of the more humorous moments.

Most important to remember is that you're there to have fun. When things don't go exactly as planned, remember it next year when you get together -- you'll all be laughing at how you had to choke down Aunt Bertha's favorite eggplant and broccoli casserole or how a hurricane threatened but never materialized. Keep it light and enjoy each other and pass the torch to whoever volunteers to plan the next one.



HAVE A PLAN

- Set up a Web site with a group such as www.MyEvent.com
- Reserve the location and check their refund policy.
- Send out invitations to all. Create them or have one of the local shops create one for you.
- Have a reasonable RSVP date.
- Calculate costs and have the guests include a check with their reservation.

HELPFUL WEB SITES

- Reunionsmag.com
- Triphub.com
- Family-reunion.com

CREATE A BOOK OR DVD OF MEMORIES

Snapfish.com
Picasa.com
Ritzcamera.com

DESTINATIONS:

Cruising: www.cruiseannapolis.com
Outer Banks: www.visitob.com
Europe: www.Untours.com
Cape Cod: www.CapeCodChamber.org
Mountain cabin: www.SherandoahValleyweb.com
Rentals around the world: www.GreatRentals.com



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Hardy Hostas

By Mo Camid

How is the *hosta* genus so hardy? Let me count the ways. Plant them in dense shade along a new brick path. In dappled shade on a slight incline. In a shaded, raised bed. In a container sitting on your shady porch. Wherever in your partial to deep-shaded landscape you want to have diverse shades of green, hostas will be happy to thrive. Most of these perennial plants, also known as plantain lily, are vigorous even when receiving some direct morning sunshine. You

do need to maintain a moist yet well-drained soil for optimum hardiness.

Now that we know where hostas flourish, it's time to decide color preference from yellow to green to blue to white and variegated hostas. Whereas most hostas are native plants in East Asian countries, gardeners in the United States have access to many cultivars. Numerous species offer various hues of green that will blend from the side of your lawn to the edge of your evergreen forest such as 'Tardiflora' and *Hosta montana* f. *macrophylla*. But try living on the wild side with chartreuse shades such as 'Guacamole,' 'Sum and Substance' or 'August Moon.' Dramatic hostas such as 'Golden Tiara' and 'Great Expectations' offer both forest greens and chartreuse within their individual leaves. Of special beauty are the blue-tinted hostas include 'Blue Cadet,' 'Buckshaw Blue' and 'Blue Umbrellas.' The variegated greens and whites on each leaf such as 'Francee' or 'Patriot' species add striking character to your garden.

When you select your hostas, don't forget to examine the shape and texture of leaves, and consider overall plant size. Look for heart and lance-shaped leaves in a variety of styles that can be described as cupped, flat, puckered, twisted, wavy or wrinkled. Select your plantings to accommodate the size of the 4-to-5-year-old mature clump. 'Shining Tor' usually produces a six-inch clump with one-to-two-inch tiny leaves, while the 'Spritzer' may grow to a 36-inch clump with 10-inch lance-shaped leaves cascading down from your container.

Another trait that endears the hardy hostas to us are the flowers that dramatically appear in June or July. 'Blue Angel' blooms are white, forming on long, upright leafstalks. If lavender is your preference, then you will enjoy the dangling, trumpet-shaped blooms on the 'Aoki' cultivar. Aroma from lavender buds opening to white, large flowers is characteristic of the 'Fragrant Bouquet.'

While hostas are low maintenance, here are a few aggravations. There appears to be no stopping the deer's preference for tasty hostas. Voles also enjoy a fine meal as they encounter hosta roots underground. If a hosta wilts, you may want to immediately dig it up and replant. Dig a hole double the plant's size, line the hole with rocks, then add dirt around the margins. Place the hosta in a plastic pot, cut out the bottom, and replant the hosta in the armored hole. For extra protection, you may want to sprinkle the hole with cayenne pepper... and on top to perhaps discourage slugs. Otherwise, the most recent gardener's tip is to, "Get a cat!"

As the hosta garden continues to grow, we'll want to share our treasures with friends. Early in spring the anxious gardener frequently examines hosta plots for the first sign of the promised hardiness. Without disappointment, here come the half dozen or so spikes atop tightly rolled leaves. The colors range from purple to ground level chartreuse or spikes of cream to ground level lime green. As the season progresses, hostas become full clumps of leaves twisting and turning, growing upright to relaxing. By mid-summer we are thrilled with the firecracker blooms of white and lavender. As fall descends, so do our hosta leaves. Empty flower stems and brown foliage can be cut back or simply ignored. Or we can take action to share plants with fellow gardeners — a very easy task. Once the plants reach maturity, hostas may be divided. Using a sharp shovel, cut straight down through the center or cut into thirds or fourths of the plant clump. Move the divided clump to the plant's new location or hand off to a plant-loving friend. Another option is to divide the hosta in the springtime when the plant first sprouts its spikes. Dig up the entire plant, wash the soil off and divide the plant as indicated naturally. Your hardy hosta will now be two or three or four plants and continue providing color, shape and even fragrance in your favorite shaded garden.



Mo Camid, a recent transplant from Alaska, enjoys applying gardening tips gleaned from the experts and from her own experiences with the lengthy growing season in the Bay area. She can be reached at Mo@OutlookbytheBay.com

Peace of Mind

Creating a Spiritual Legacy

By Tricia Herban

This may sound odd or disrespectful, but it is not intended to be.

Recently a friend of ours died. We went to the viewing and the funeral. Although she was in her eighties, her health had been excellent, so her fatal stroke was a shock to all of us.

A lovely collage of snapshots was shared with guests at the funeral home. We saw the joy, radiance, and energy of a woman in her prime. One of those photos appeared with her obituary in the newspaper. The juxtaposition of the photo with the reality of the text caught me up. There was a definite discontinuity.

It turns out that I wasn't the only one who had noticed this. However, while I found myself thinking that I would prefer to choose a photo more representative of my actual calendar age for that inevitable moment of public recognition, a friend of mine disagreed. In fact, she said to me several times, "We're going to pick out the photos we want used in our obituaries." Until then, I had never given it a thought.

Probably I hadn't thought about my obituary because I tend to live in the present. Another reason may be that I feel that my life is summed up by the *way* I have lived and the lives I have touched, not so much by the "things" I have "done." These are very personal attitudes and each of us has a different point of view.

In fact, these are spiritual issues. Regardless of your religious affiliation or the constancy of your religious practices, we all have perspectives on the meaning of life and the finality of death.

If you care particularly about these matters, then there are many aspects of your death that you may wish to control. Returning to our friend's funeral, you certainly can select the photo for your obituary. Moreover, you can write the obituary itself. Best of all, personally see to it that a family member is designated to place the obituary with newspapers in communities where you would like to be remembered. It would be wise to arrange

for payment. Remember, unless you are a public figure, most newspapers run only paid notices, and they can be expensive.

You might want to plan your funeral service. It would be appropriate to select the music that would greet guests at the beginning and usher them out at the end, hymns to be sung, passages and prayers to be read all can be chosen. Perhaps you would like a favorite piece of music to be played or sung. (Why? Do you have a favorite flower? Are there special family members or friends you want to be pallbearers? A very important matter is whether the casket should be open or closed. If open, what will you wear? This may sound macabre to some, but to others, these are important details and settling them can bring peace of mind.

You may want to talk to your faith community's recognized leader, your pastor, rabbi or other spiritual spokesperson. Topics for discussion might include: the way your faith has been important to you; spiritual lessons that you would like to pass on to others; the ways you have tried to live your faith in your life; your hopes and wishes for your family members and loved ones. This knowledge could help him or her develop any remarks about you and would also be important in consoling those loved ones in their grief.

You could further shape the memorial observances by suggesting a few lay speakers. They could be family or friends you especially love and respect who might best describe the value of your life to others. This is increasingly common and frequently the officiant follows those prepared remarks with an invitation to others present to share their recollections as well. One of the loveliest services I have attended was made so by a 10 year-old grandchild who spoke briefly about her grandpa!

For some of us, such personal thoughts may remain unspoken. That is a matter of preference. However, the answers to these questions can provide great solace to

*A spiritual legacy is about the
how and not the what of life.*

*Through interactions with others,
we build mutual experiences
every day and by putting our
beliefs into words, we can
interpret those moments and
leave a tangible remembrance
for those we love.*

others. A letter to your family or a chosen religious leader would be another kind and loving way to pass on this information. Your words would be a treasured gift by which you would be remembered.

Each of us leaves a legacy behind. As I see it, the life lived is the measure, not the assets acquired. Growing up, I was told repeatedly that "actions speak louder than words." And early on, I learned to distrust people who said one thing, but did another. When I grew older, I also tried to "Live each day as if it might be your last." To me this meant living by the Golden Rule and being careful to "never let the sun go down on your anger."

I have a friend who writes a letter to each child once a year, reviewing their relationship, highlighting the child's accomplishments, and expressing loving hopes for the coming year. The letter could be a holiday remembrance, a Valentine, a birthday salutation. It is a graceful way of giving tangible form to the true meaning of the fleeting moments that total the experiences of life. Such a gift could build a legacy for both the writer and the recipient. In a world where we take the future for granted, how lovely to stop a while to appreciate those dear to us. Then, how gracious and merciful to share that love with those who created it through their unique gifts and lives!

Tricia can be reached at triciah@erols.com

As an RD, I am Committed to Helping You; Do You Know Who I am?

By Krystal Register

Im an RD. There is a good chance you don't know what RD signifies. Federal law now recognizes the RD and if you sit down long enough to read this article, from now on you will too.

The RD, or registered dietitian, is your food and nutrition expert. RDs know the science of nutrition. We have degrees from accredited colleges and universities and practical training in hospitals. We have passed a national board exam and earn continuing education credits to stay current. We registered dietitians draw on our expertise to develop personalized nutrition plans for people of all ages. RDs are committed to helping people enjoy healthy lives.

As an RD, I work with people looking to improve their health, whether their doctor has recommended this, or they just want a better quality of life. I try to be creative about getting whole grains and vegetables on the dinner table. I eat breakfast everyday. I pack fruit and healthy snacks to keep me going. And yes, the slow cooker can be very helpful -- when I remember to put something in it in the morning before work. I love my profession, I love to help those around me and I really do love food. Food has always been a focus in our daily lives. Who doesn't have a favorite restaurant, or perfect dessert? But have you noticed that nutrition is now taking center stage? Consumers are now more health conscious than ever before. As an RD, I am committed to helping you focus all that "consciousness" on your well-being. There are just so many different messages out there. But we are bombarded daily with articles and advertisements about nutrition and health, weight loss and super foods. Which ones do you believe, and what should you really be eating? My best advice is to check to see if a registered dietitian was involved in the nutrition messages that catch your attention.

Know the source. Knowledge is power. Next time you start a new diet plan, pick up a new cookbook, read a magazine article offering weight loss secrets, go to a Web site, or tune in a TV spot about the top 10 foods you must have everyday, make sure that you see or hear the

"RD." Search for the RD credential, your trusted source for food and nutrition information. With the help of a registered dietitian, you can believe in what you find, make lifelong changes and plan your meals with confidence.

Do you know someone who has had a premature baby? Ask them about the RD who helped save their tiny baby's life in the neonatal intensive care unit. Do you have a relative with celiac disease? Ask them about the RD who created a life-changing gluten-free diet for them to follow. Or do you watch the reality weight loss shows? Remember that there is an RD behind the individualized plans created for each contestant.

Most often, we remain "behind the scenes," but the media is now seeking out RDs for the facts. You should be too. Everybody wants the truth. Everybody wants an expert to help make sense of the science. Let the RD bring good nutrition and food to your table. Food that is good for you can taste good too. In fact, the RD is your perfect resource for bridging nutrition science and the culinary arts. Taste really does matter.

Here are some situations in which you can put a registered dietitian to work for you:

Want to lower your blood pressure without medication?

An RD can help you to do that.

Has your doctor told you that your cholesterol is high, but you don't know how to lower it without medication?

Visit an RD before your next checkup. The RD can suggest changes that just might surprise your doctor, lower your cholesterol and keep you off of a new medication.



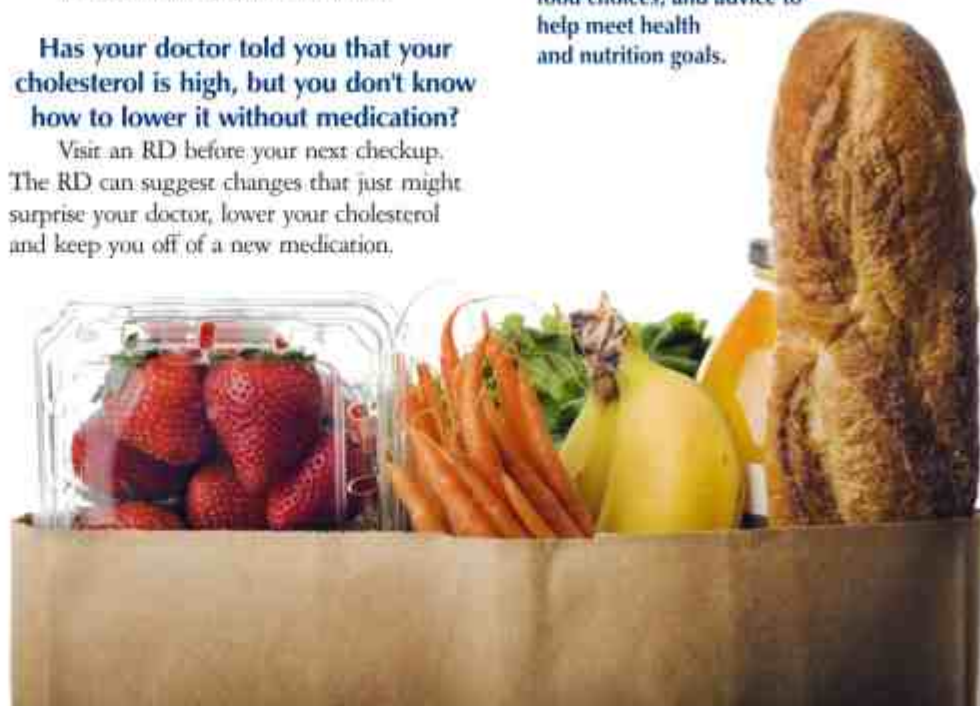
Do you have "borderline" or high blood sugars, causing your doctor to suggest staying away from sugar?

An RD can work with you to understand what is going on in your body and come up with a workable, personalized plan to help bring those borderline levels down a notch. Not always, but in some cases, with guidance on a few small lifestyle changes, the RD can serve as an affordable ticket to better health without all of the side effects of medications.

Krystal Register is a registered dietitian, and state media representative for the Virginia Dietetic Association and can be reached at krystalrd@comcast.net

The American Dietetic Association at www.eatright.org is a good source for a reading list, tip of the day, nutrition and health news and for locating an RD in your area.

USDA's MyPyramid at www.mypyramid.gov is a good site for personalized eating plans, interactive tools to help plan and assess food choices, and advice to help meet health and nutrition goals.



Bring on *Spring!*

By Gina G. Courbron

Here are some tips in making some changes to your interior environment:

- 1 First, remove clutter and simplify! It is all about taking away clutter, and yes, that includes those Christmas decorations that are still hanging around.
- 2 Clean your surfaces and do some brightening up. It is not only essential, but good for the mind and soul.
- 3 Change the layout of your furniture. That alone gives a sense of change. Perhaps the focus should now be the big picture window that faces that beautiful garden you have.
- 4 Paint! Change the color of a wall, a room or an area. Paint color helps set a new "canvas" from which to develop an entire new decorating scheme. It is an easy and inexpensive way to completely alter the nuance of the room or space.
- 5 Trade your heavy artwork for lighter, airier pieces. Bring in the outdoors with garden scenes in fresh spring colors.
- 6 Replace lampshades with new ones in a lighter color.
- 7 Update your sofa and chairs with bright, new lighter-colored slipcovers, new accent pillows or cotton throws.
- 8 Bring light into your home by placing a mirror across from a window allowing bright sunlight to reflect throughout the room.
- 9 Use citrus-colored candles in place of white or ivory ones.
- 10 Shop flea markets for light-colored, bright vases to use to display branches of forsythia, apple blossoms, azalea and pussy willow in your home.
- 11 Replace heavy Persian rugs with lightweight area rugs such as sisal or straw.
- 12 Display a beautiful screen, a large silk plant or a large vase of spring and summer silk flowers in front of the fireplace. How about using bright and cheerful floor cushions on the raised hearth?
- 13 Open up your windows with lighter draperies or sheers. If that is not possible, tie back your heavy draperies to reveal more of the outside.
- 14 Create a fresh spring bedroom. Replace your bed linens with crisp cottons, perhaps in a floral pattern. They bring cool texture to the bed. Use plump pillows and shams in cheerful colors.

Remember to stay in your color scheme when making all these changes, but have fun. Create something new and different. Be daring. Breathe new life and freshness into your home. Happy Spring!

For information about GG Design Inspirations and services please visit: www.ggdesigninspirations.com or call (410) 672-7224.

Ah yes, spring is just about here. The cool breezes, blue skies and flowers starting to bloom signal rebirth and renewal. We have thoughts of everything being lighter, brighter and simpler, and our homes should reflect that. Whether you are looking to update your entire home or just make some changes, spring is the perfect time to do it.



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Remembering Grandma's Gardening Tradition

By Debra Tobin

When I think of gardening, my mind wanders back to all the fun I had in my grandma's garden when I was a young tyke in the 1950s and 1960s. That was the only time I was allowed to get dirty and not get in trouble for doing so. Yes, my mother believed as so many other mothers did that daughters should wear cute little dresses and act like sweet young ladies. I thought it was going a little overboard since I was a young child and should be out having fun with everyone else, but who was I to say what I was to do at that young age?

I loved going to my grandparents who lived on a farm with chickens, pigs, dogs and all sorts of wild animals roaming throughout the property. Grandma had a tomato patch just off the back porch and it was my favorite place to be since I loved tomatoes. One day two of my cousins and I decided to take a break from hoeing and weeding and sat down on the porch with a lap full of freshly picked tomatoes.

Those tomatoes were so juicy and tasty. With every bite the juice would just pour down our chins. We sat there and ate tomatoes until we heard the back door open and there stood grandma with a stern look on her face and we knew we were in trouble. She yelled and yelled and yelled until her voice went hoarse.

For our punishment we had to pick the beans in the garden and clean them. We picked two bushel baskets of beans and it took us hours to clean them. We swore then we would never set another foot in grandma's tomato patch.

Although I didn't like to clean the beans or shuck the corn, I did like to work in the garden. The reason I liked to is because even as a child, I appreciated the fact that when it was snowing and cold in the wintertime we would be eating home-canned veggies from the garden.

I realized at an early age that our family was not rich and we all had to pull our weight and work hard in order to succeed in life and that included working in the garden each year. I watched my parents on a daily basis work from dawn to dusk for what we would consider today to be just pennies. And although we were not wealthy in money, we were wealthy in the fact we had good health, a close family relationship and yes, we always had fresh veggies and meat on the table, thanks in part to grandma's huge garden.

One thing grandma loved to do was can and prepare for the winter ahead of us. Sometimes grandma even canned meat. Since I was the only granddaughter I would help grandma with preparing the jars and getting all the veggies in order. My favorite was pickled green beans and grandma's tomato juice. Grandma was usually the main woman in the family to do most of the canning but all of my aunts and my mom also chipped in and helped. We would gather in grandma's kitchen and can for hours and then transport them to the "cave" for safe-keeping.

Until moving back to the Midwest, I always had a huge garden just like the one my grandparents had when I was growing up. To me there was nothing better than fresh vegetables from the garden and it gave me a chance to carry on the tradition. I not only canned vegetables but also fruit from our many fruit trees and sometimes meat. And yes, I did use some of the recipes from my childhood with a little tweaking here and there just to change the taste a little.

Unfortunately, I now live in town and have not had a vegetable garden for some time. I do, however, have a very huge flower garden that keeps me busy weeding and pruning on a daily basis. This year I have decided to throw in a few tomato plants and some beans just as a reminder of my childhood. My two four-year-old grandkids, Nikki and Kollton, will be helping me.

Two of my favorite canned vegetables growing up were pickled green beans and grandma's canned tomato juice. I have my mom's private cookbook with special family recipes so bear with me because they may seem a little odd to some.



Pickled Green Beans

Prepare beans to cook. Cook until not quite done. Rinse in cold water until cool. Pack in quart jars adding one tablespoon of coarse salt to each jar. Fill with cold water and seal. Set in warm place to ferment. Beans will be ready to eat in approximately three weeks. These are especially good fried with ham or bacon and potatoes.



Tomato Juice

1 peck tomatoes
4 medium onions
4 stalks celery
1 bunch parsley
1/2 cup firmly packed brown sugar
1 1/2 tbs. salt
1/4 tsp. paprika

Place tomatoes, onions, celery and parsley in a large kettle; cook until soft. Press through sieve. Add sugar, salt and paprika. Bring to a boil; cook for three minutes. Pour in sterilized jars; adjust caps. Process in boiling water for 10 minutes.

You can also add some jalapenos or hot sauce to this recipe to give your tomato juice some spice. I happen to love spicy food so I always add a little "heat" to it.

Mock Strawberry Preserves

6 c. ground green tomatoes
7 c. sugar
9-ounce box strawberry Jell-O
1 box of Sure-Jell

In saucepan mix sugar, tomatoes, Sure-Jell and Jell-O together. Bring to boil and allow it to boil for 15 minutes. Pour in hot jars and seal with hot lids.

Now that I have strolled down memory lane, it is time for me to get busy in the garden and start thinking of canning.

Until next time, happy gardening.



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Fresh Herbs

...the Culinary Coup in Your Garden!

By Peggy Markham



Cooking with herbs, clipped fresh from your garden, raises the culinary level of your menu from bland to gustatory delight. Herbs also fill the air with the scents of Tuscany and southern France.

Ease of growing makes them gardener-friendly and they can be planted inside or out of doors, requiring only the simple basics of sun, water, organic fertilizer and good soil. These plants happily accommodate small spaces, in little pots on a windowsill or tucked in the garden among vegetables and flowers. Herbs are perfectly suited for pots and jardinières on a patio or deck. To use space more economically, build a tiered herb bed in the backyard.

Herbs are not just confined to the kitchen. Many herbal plants are dramatic, colorful ornamentals that mingle well with other foliage. Dazzling bushes of English lavender, cascading vines of nasturtiums and bunches of violets will blanket your garden in color, but be patient, the ornamentals may take more than one season to mature.

Herbs are inexpensive to buy and grow and they are naturally resistant to pests, diseases, and foraging critters. Depending on how quickly you want to enjoy your harvest you can start from seeds or purchase seedlings from your local nursery. There are a variety of choices for herbal plants, some savory and some ornamental. Look for arugula, basil, bay laurel, borage, calendula, cilantro, chervil, chives, coriander, dill, fennel, French tarragon, garlic, geraniums (scented), lavender, lemon verbena, marjoram, mint, nasturtiums, onions, oregano, parsley, rosemary, thyme and violets.

Like other plants, herbs may be annuals such as basil, borage and dill, that complete their growth cycle within a year, or perennials (examples include, mint, tarragon, thyme), that can live for two years or longer. A third category, biennials like parsley, take two years to complete a life cycle.

Some details about suggested herbs to consider for your garden:

Basil, an annual, is a tender, fragrant plant that prefers the warmer summer season. Keep the leaves pinched back to prevent blossoms from sapping the flavor from the leaves. Add to food at the last minute to render the most intense flavor. Basil is delicious on a salad of fresh mozzarella and heirloom tomatoes dressed in a light vinaigrette.



Dill, an annual, is a fast growing, delicate herb and graces the garden with an aroma of fennel. It can grow leggy with slender, feathery stems. Dill adds a slight caraway taste to soups, salads, sauces and raita.

Italian flat-leaf and curly leaf parsley, are biennials, but should be treated like an annual. This herb is a favorite of gardeners for its ease of growing and dresses up any dish as a garnish. It provides a bright flavor when added at the last minute to soups and salads.



Maintaining and Preserving Herbs:

- **For fresh-cut herbs**, immerse the herbs in cool water, shake gently to dislodge grit. (Do not use a salad spinner, which will bruise the delicate leaves.) Put each bunch of herbs in its own glass jar, fill with water, keeping the leaves above the rim out of the water. Cover loosely with a plastic bag such as a produce bag, then twist the edges of the bag and tuck under to secure. Refrigerate and change the water when it becomes murky. Discard decayed, yellowish leaves or stems.

- **To freeze fresh herbs**, cut the herbs in the morning, rinse in cool water and drain on paper towels. Spread the herbs out in a single layer on a cookie sheet pan and set in the freezer until frozen solid. Pack the frozen herbs in airtight plastic bags and return to freezer. You may also chop the herbs, place in an ice cube tray, fill each cube with water and freeze. When frozen solid, pop out the cubes and place in plastic freezer bags. These are handy for adding flavor to soups, stocks and stews. Some herbs (basil, mint, sage) darken quickly and should be blanched prior to the freezing process. To blanch, immerse the leaves in boiling water for two to three seconds then immediately pluck them from the boiling water and immerse in ice-cold water. Drain on paper towels then freeze as directed above. Frozen herbs do not make attractive garnishes as they discolor and become limp when thawed and are more suitable for adding to cooked dishes.

- **To dry fresh herbs**, Gather fresh, mature herbs, keeping the varieties separate, and tie into bundles with cotton string, twine or raffia. Leave a strand to loop for hanging. Hang bundles with leaves down in a warm, dry place away from direct sunlight, allowing air to circulate around each bundle. Most herbs will dry in seven to 10 days. The leaves will crumble when dried. Store in airtight containers.

Rosemary, a woody-stemmed perennial, is a bold aromatic that blends with foods and flavors of the Mediterranean. It can be grown in pots, as a bush or formed into a spectacular topiary. (Note that rosemary, and its cousin sage, love sunlight but do not flourish in rich soil or too much water.) Sprigs of rosemary will add a decorative touch to your culinary presentations. Enhance flavors by placing sprigs on meats, fish and poultry as they bake. Strip leaves from the stems and scatter them over roasting vegetables. Prepare an unusual treat by stirring in a tablespoon of minced rosemary leaves to shortbread batter. Tie the sprigs into bundles and use as a basting brush for grilled meats and vegetables and make kabobs using the woody, stripped stems as skewers.



Mint, a perennial, comes in a variety of flavors including peppermint, spearmint, lemon and chocolate. This herb is almost indestructible and needs to be controlled. Plant it in an isolated spot in your garden as mint is a "walker" whose root system intrudes on your other plants. Use as a garnish for fresh summer fruits and berries, iced beverages, fruit salads and tabbouleh (bulgur) salad.

Tarragon, a perennial, is reminiscent of licorice and the preferred variety is French tarragon. Chop the leaves and add to omelets, crab cakes, fish chowders, tomato-mushroom sauces and green goddess dressing.



Herbs are part of everyday cooking and as easily used by the novice as the gourmet chef. Consider the possibilities: Tuck sprigs of thyme and rosemary under the skin of a roasting chicken; create herbal sauces for fish dishes; season chowders and crab cakes; flavor soups and stews; bundle a variety of Mediterranean herbs for stocks; give a hostess gift made from herb infused oils (woody herbs are good choices, including rosemary, sage, thyme) and vinegars (choose herbs such as, French tarragon, basil, violet and lavender blossoms); mix homemade biscotti batter with a tablespoon of chopped lemon thyme or mint; prepare herb butters and dollop on cooked asparagus, green beans and corn on the cob. Enjoy the freshness and beauty of herbs, the culinary coup in your garden and in your kitchen.



Peggy Markham can be reached at dpmark@wisipertel.net

Tread Carefully on Life Settlement Deals

By Mick Rood



Want some cash to help your kids out, pay off some debts or fund an investment? Look no further than your life insurance policy, but look carefully. Life insurance companies have always let you sell your policy and collect a small portion of its face value. Now so-called life settlement firms are willing to pay much more to purchase policies, sell them to secondary market investors who keep up the premiums expecting to profit when you die and the policy pays off.

Life settlement deals arose due in part to the AIDS crisis barely 15 years ago when desperate victims of that disease needed cash to pay bills. It's no longer an obscure business. One industry research firm estimates the face value of transferred policies exceeded \$6 billion by 2006 and projects that will grow by \$1 billion annually for the foreseeable future.

Critics have derisively tagged companies buying up life insurance policies as stranger-originated life insurance (STOLI) or speculator-initiated life insurance (SPINLIFE).

So what could be wrong with this idea and would it fit your needs? One of the first firms to specialize in purchasing life insurance for resale to the securities markets, Life Settlements Solutions Inc. of San Diego, has described its target audience as "high net worth seniors" who want to cash in unneeded or unwanted life insurance policies. Others in the business may not be so straightforward about who could benefit by cashing out, and if you don't meet the definition just described, chances are you should stay away from life settlement agreements.

Here's why: There are limits to how much life insurance you can buy, based usually on your net worth. If you sell a substantial amount of your coverage, you may not be able to buy more coverage later if needed. More obviously, your estate could be considerably diminished if you make a life settlement deal. Also, if you leave your life insurance policy alone, its payout to your designated beneficiaries is tax-exempt. Proceeds you reap from a life settlement are taxable. If you give out medical information to a life settlement firm, it could end up in the hands of third parties. According to a recent California Department of Insurance advisory to seniors, it could get this bad: Investors who bought up your policy could be making phone calls to check on your health *because of their obvious interest in your death*. As the department notes, these buyout deals are hardly "free" or "no-cost" as some salesmen have described them to seniors.

Most states don't closely regulate life settlement transactions, only so-called viatical settlements that are for seriously ill people with less than two years of life expectancy. But that is changing. As more stories of fraud and abuse surface, legislators and insurance departments in some states are considering crackdowns. Not surprisingly, the life insurance industry is lobbying heavily for tougher regulations as life settlement firms eat into their profits.

Best advice is to consult your lawyer or financial adviser or both before even considering such a deal. If you think you have been approached to make a questionable STOLI or SPINLIFE transaction, call your state insurance department or commission for information on the company and what state law allows. Another twist: Be especially wary if you are approached at a financial seminar to invest in life insurance securities and make an easy profit. Cases have surfaced in which investors never received their "guaranteed" payoffs.





*“... it's so simple,
it's boring:
exercise, diet,
positive thinking.”*

~ Jack LaLanne

A Well-Conditioned Mind By Kater Leatherman

Wellness is about treating the whole self -- eating healthy "living" foods, exercising regularly and fulfilling your soul's purpose. But it's also about cultivating a healthy, sound mind. I believe that conditioning and toning the mind "muscle" is our greatest challenge, one that requires hard work, commitment and consistent effort.

Spiritually speaking, we are born whole. Our soul knows who we are and what our life purpose is. Unfortunately, many of us were conditioned in ways that don't support our ability to be happy, productive, whole human beings. We came into a world of people whose beliefs, values, perspectives, ideas, attitudes and opinions will affect us. By the time we reach adulthood, many of us are living with so much mental clutter that our lives are out of balance, even unmanageable.

We begin to believe that the world conforms to our beliefs and they will be reflected back to us. Ultimately, we learn that we don't see things the way they are; we see things as we are. Wayne Dyer reminds us that "when we change the way that we look at things, the things we look at change."

What pain is to the body, problems are to the mind. A healthy mind doesn't avoid challenges, it overcomes them. Even the most well-adjusted people have days that feel out of alignment, and no one is immune to sorrow, rejection and disappointment. But the well-adjusted understand that life's problems are not about the challenges, but how we choose to handle them.

In order to develop and maintain a well-conditioned mind, the basis for health, well-being and longevity, here are some thoughts, insights and tools:

ONE

Avoid wishing too much because it denotes that you are lacking. When you are wishing for something, you are affirming that you don't have it. Instead, begin to practice the power of intention. Intention implies that you already have much of what you want. Intention bridges the gap between where you are and where you want to be. Upon waking up in the morning, take a moment to ask yourself how you want your day to go. Choose a word - peace, fun, nonjudgmental, content, happy, compassionate, etc. Declaring your intention is like raising an "antenna" so that the universe (or whatever you choose to call it) will know how to support you. Every time you find yourself off balance, center yourself in your chosen intention for the day.

TWO

The law of attraction is another powerful law. It states that we attract what we pay attention to. Successful people think about success. People who are content know what brings them joy and do more of it. If we perceive the world as a friendly place, then we will experience it the same way. Again, make sure you focus on what you specifically want. Then, let it go and the universe will figure out "the how." It will put people, signs and opportunities in front of you. Begin to think, feel and act as if what you want is already happening. This is a foolproof law that will change your life if you use it. For more information, the best spiritual cinema movie on the subject is called *The Secret*. To order, go to

www.thesecret.tv. The film was produced by Australian self-help guru, movie producer and best-selling author Rhonda Byrne.

THREE

Beliefs are thoughts charged with emotional energy. Energy follows thoughts, so one single thought can allow the most agitated mind to experience love, joy and compassion.

FOUR

Just as it is easier to tense the body than it is to relax, the same is true for the mind. Negativity is the easiest emotion to slip into, while positive thinking requires sustained effort. Similarly, it's easier to be unhappy than it is to be happy. Granted, while some people are naturally happier than others, achieving lasting happiness is a choice that requires desire, effort and practice. If you are susceptible to negative thinking, try this: Keep a rubber band around your wrist. Every time you have a negative thought, pull on it and say to yourself, "Cancel!" Then, immediately replace it with a positive thought.

FIVE

When you find yourself agitated by a person, place or situation, you can choose blame or take responsibility. Taking responsibility for yourself not only has the power to heal, but is one of the keys to happiness.

SIX

Affirmations are designed to counter negative thoughts and self-talk. They are "I" statements written in the present tense. One example of an affirmation is, "I am choosing to be content," not, "I am going to be content," which makes it sound like something needs to happen before you are content.

SEVEN

Uncontrollable mental interruptions compete for our attention, making it nearly impossible to be productive and present. On-the-spot solutions include closing your eyes, relaxing your facial muscles and focusing on breathing for a few minutes. This will help slow down the mind as well as the body. Meditation is good for resting the mind.

EIGHT

The use of words has a tremendous impact on the way that we see things. Take probably versus possibility. Probably is ego-driven, fear-based and limiting. Possibility might not happen. With possibility, anything can happen. Possibility is unlimited. If you stay focused on the idea of possibility, then whatever it is that you want can be accomplished.

Another word to consider dropping from your vocabulary is hope. Hoping for something denotes a feeling that it may or may not come to fruition. Notice how it feels when you say, "I *know* that this is a good thing," as opposed to, "I *hope* that this is a good thing." You might as well intend for something to be good instead of creating doubt in your mind.

NINE

The basic motivation of the subconscious mind is love, happiness, health and self-expression. A sound mind also needs a creative goal. Creativity nurtures and feeds our mind and keeps us grounded in our passion for living.

TEN

For manifesting what you want, create a vision map. Start by collecting pictures, words and images from magazines. With a blank piece of poster board as a palette, compile a collage of pictures and words. Make them "I am" statements, such as, "I am 10 pounds lighter," not, "I want to lose 10 pounds." If a higher salary is what you want, include a \$1 dollar bill and, with a black magic marker, write on the bill in big letters the amount that you want. Keep your vision map where you can see it everyday.

ELEVEN

When making decisions, think with the end result in mind.

TWELVE

External power is trying to change others. Internal power is trying to change you. Enabling is making it easy and possible for others to remain stuck.

Empowering others is helping them to create the conditions for them to act on their own behalf.

THIRTEEN

We live in an information-overload society, so be selective in what you feed it. Nurturing the mind has as much value as caring for your body.

FOURTEEN

Exercise is wonderful for the mind; it can actually help to develop new brain cells. It also reduces anxiety, improves sleep, helps us think better and clears the mind.

FIFTEEN

Foods that are known to be good for the brain include avocados, bananas, lean beef, brewer's yeast, broccoli, brown rice, cantaloupe, cheese, chicken, collard greens, eggs, flaxseed oil, legumes, milk, oatmeal, oranges, peanut butter, peas, potatoes, romaine lettuce, salmon, soybeans, spinach, tuna, turkey, wheat germ and yogurt.

SIXTEEN

We want to blame our brain for not being as sharp as it used to be, but it may not be for reasons that we think. Impaired thinking, fading memory, headaches and being forgetful can all be attributed to the brain not getting proper nourishment, especially if we are overusing it. Like the body, our brain cells need to be nourished. One way to achieve this is by lying on a slant board that

allows gravity to increase the blood flow to the brain.

SEVENTEEN

Even when we sleep, the mind is busy. Energy goes where attention goes, so cleanse the mind from the business of everyday responsibilities, commitments, negative thoughts and emotions by focusing on breathing.

EIGHTEEN

Life is about choices and consequences. Everything happens to teach us something and allows us to experience life's lessons in order to evolve. Give up the need to know why things happen as they do. It's very draining to the mind.

NINETEEN

Nothing new will come into your life unless you are grateful for what you have. Instead of focusing on what you don't have, look at what you do have. Gratitude is an effective way to balance your mental sobriety and give your spirits a boost.

TWENTY

Keep your mind sharp by engaging in activities that stimulate it.



This article is excerpted from Kater Leatherman's upcoming book WELLNESS ESSENTIALS — Eat, Feel, Live Better: A Guide to Thriving in Our Toxic Environment. Currently, she teaches yoga classes at Ridgely Retreat in West Annapolis and can be reached at Kater@CreativeSimplicity.com

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Today is Your Someday

Yesterday is the past.

Tomorrow is the future.

Today is a gift.

*That's why it is called
"the present."*

~ Anonymous

A few years ago, my high school friend sent me a couple of books for my birthday. He works for a bookstore so I gladly receive all sorts of goodies and perks from his job. On this occasion, he included with the books one of his famous crayon letters (he's very creative) and some stickers. The stickers read "Someday is Today!" and were a promotion for a children's book, *Someday: Is Not a Day of the Week*, by Denise Brennan-Nelson. I know from my friend's comments in the letter that he did not think of the stickers as anything more than something fun.

I'm surprised that the phrase stuck with me over these past few years. Those simple stickers and the book title reminded me just how much I, and those I talk to, use the word "someday" in our conversations. A sample:

- Someday, I'll lose this weight.
- Someday, I'll try a new hairstyle.
- Someday, I'll plan a party for my friends.
- Someday, I'll clean out the garage.
- Someday, I'll save more money.
- Someday, I'll take a day off just for me.

The list of "somedays" can be endless! Notice when others use the someday phrase, their tone of voice fills with longing and wistfulness. A heavy sigh may signal resignation a someday that may not come. A faraway look enters their eyes as if they are imagining being thinner, or getting together with friends, or having a clean garage.

Our "somedays" events could be fun, useful (but not necessary) to accomplish or simply make us feel good. As is often the

case when it comes to taking care of ourselves, we put our desires last and take care of the necessities and others first. It sometimes seems like we are waiting for a perfect moment to treat ourselves. We want a time when we can be free of all other distractions and just concentrate on that one thing, our someday. We also worry about our someday. What if our day off is not as relaxing as we imagined? What if cleaning the garage creates a chain reaction, reminding us of other areas that need cleaning? What if our hair looks terrible? Fear about someday not turning out the way we would like holds us back.

Someday is a poor deadline since it is undefined. Nothing gets accomplished and time just passes. Using someday as a deadline also gives us time and space to talk ourselves out of taking action because we start to worry about the "what ifs." What if this is selfish? What if the money is spent foolishly? The longer the "what ifs" dance through our mind, the more frustration and hopelessness builds and someday never becomes a reality.

In fact, someday only becomes reality when we take action to make it happen. Someday is not a day on the calendar, like Monday or Friday. Someday is not annual, like a birthday or Christmas. To make a someday happen, we must make a plan and take action.

The year my friend sent the stickers I made a decision to make a someday happen. After five years of somedaying, my husband and I allocated part of our tax refund to a Hawaiian vacation. We bought the tickets in February before any life crisis

occurred or we talked ourselves out of spending the money on a trip because the house needed improving. The trip was worth every penny. The experience created more positive energy, joy and wonderful memories than any new furniture or paint ever could.

Pause for a moment and consider how often do you use the word "someday?" Is it a staple of your vocabulary? What is holding you back from making your somedays realities? What can you do to make one of your somedays happen? Maybe you can make them happen today. Or, you can make a plan for your someday to happen next Thursday or later this year. No matter what, just remember, someday does not exist on the calendar but you can choose to make today your someday.

Suzette Langley owns Passion for Life Coaching, LLC, which offers executive and personal coaching and corporate trainings using the PeopleMap™ assessment. She resides in Annapolis and can be reached at suzette@suzyettelangley.com.

***"... someday does not
exist on the calendar
but you can choose
to make today
your someday."***



By Suzette Langley

Dusty Old Slides

By Cindy Rott

Do you have a closet full of picture slides that you don't know what to do with? I know these hold favorite memories that you can't bear to part with, but let's be honest, they are just collecting dust. Chances are, your slide projector hasn't even worked in a decade and the bulb burned out long ago and you have no idea how to find a replacement. All those precious pictures, all those special moments are really a legacy trapped in an outdated format. What to do? There are answers for preserving your family's history in pictures. Don't wait much longer, dust and mold will eventually make them unusable. Get up off your couch and convert granny's slides today.

The choices are simple:

1. Send them out for conversion to a digital format.
2. Convert them yourself.
3. Do nothing until they disintegrate and you throw them out.

In my very humble opinion the easiest and most cost-effective solution is to send them out. There are great companies that specialize in this type of service, giving you great quality and tons of help. Scan Café.com is one of the easiest ways to tackle this project. The site has recently received accolades from *Money Magazine* and even Oprah. This is a Web site that will basically hold your hand while you make the conversion from outdated slides to digital copies. Scan Café will give you detailed instructions on the best way to ship your slides (a Saran Wrap box works well) and a printed label to ship them. They will scan all your slides and as long as you choose to keep more than half of the scanned slides you only pay for the ones you keep. I do suggest at least doing a quick sort before sending them out. (How many pictures of the Grand Canyon in 1972 do you want to preserve forever?)

Once Scan Café gets your images, they will scan them and will



even touch up the slides to remove dust and scratches for free. Next, you pick which images you want to keep, and they will return the originals along with a disc of your chosen pictures. With digital images you can print them at home or at your favorite photo store. You can also electronically share them with your friends and family. Scan Café can also assist you in as many or as few steps as you need assistance with. Now don't expect overnight processing, but for a mere 24 cents a copy, I am willing to wait, and they make it so easy, it is hard to resist.

Of course, Scan Café is not your only choice; many other independent photo stores will convert your slides to pictures or to digital images or to both. I have used Severna Park Photo before with excellent results. I recommend getting a digital copy that you can keep forever and then browsing through them and printing the best ones. Resolution can vary a lot, so if you have a whole bunch of slides, I suggest printing them in batches to make sure you like the final result.

Of course if you would rather do it yourself, Brookstone, Hammacher Schlemmer and even Amazon.com sell slide converters. With a slide converter you can convert your slides to the digital format yourself. A basic slide converter retails for about \$100. Remember though that this process is time-intensive and the images won't be as crisp as a service that will color-correct, but it is an option, and it is better than leaving them in shoeboxes in the attic.



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Home Entertainment to Remember

By Melissa Conroy

You've planned the perfect meal, cleaned the house to Army standards and laid out your best china and silverware in meticulously arranged rows. But the dinner progresses and your worries mount. Everything is going well and your guests compliment you on your lovely dining room and elegantly prepared meal, but the conversation is stifled and no one seems to be enjoying themselves that much. There is something missing, some key element that would pull everything together to make your evening a success.

What is missing is probably *ambiance* that feeling or mood evoked when certain elements are gracefully meshed like a fine fragrance blended by a master perfumer. Ambiance is what makes people relax, smile and revel in their surroundings, taking great pleasure in all the different aspects and focusing on the moment.

Creating *ambiance* around your table is not as difficult as you might think. Many people have the impression that "ambiance" is synonymous with "perfection" and that it is only accomplished when everything goes exactly as planned. In fact, striving for perfection often kills *ambiance*. Think about it. Would you rather attend a dinner where everything is meticulously orchestrated and planned to the second or one where you can relax and enjoy yourself?

Evoking *ambiance* while you are entertaining in your home depends on two factors: psychological attitude and physical reality. Ambiance is as much about you and your approach to entertaining as it is about your house and the food you prepare. If you want to create *ambiance* in your home, the first place to start is with you.

First, take a look at yourself and the reasons you are entertaining in the first place. Bear in mind this important rule: The purpose of entertaining people in your home is to provide a relaxed, comfortable setting where people can get to know one another better and enjoy each other's company. Yes, you should strive to make certain that you have a delicious menu served in an attractive setting. But obsessing with these details only makes



people uncomfortable and ruins *ambiance*.

Rather than striving for perfection, resign yourself to the fact that while you are entertaining, something may burn, spill, break or cause minor embarrassment. A guest may knock over a full glass of wine or the dog may suddenly burst into the kitchen flinging mud everywhere. If you are prepared to laugh at any minor emergency like this and concentrate on helping everyone have a good time, your guests will sense this and be grateful. Relaxation and ease are what make *ambiance* possible. You cannot experience or create *ambiance* if you are tense.

During entertaining, your focus should be on your guests. It can be so easy to get caught up in worrying over whether you made enough canapés to last that you don't pay much attention to the conversation. Instead of fretting over little mistakes and problems, concentrate more on enjoying your guests' company. This helps foster a sense of comfort and relaxation. If you are calm and at ease, your guests will be too. If you are tense and fretful, they will sense it.

Your psychological attitude is very important to creating *ambiance* in your home, but the physical aspects of your house are important too. There are many touches you can add around your house to help foster a sense of *ambiance*.

A relaxed attitude, a few touches here and there, and a candle or two can help your next dinner party be a wonderfully refreshing experience for you and your guests. Creating *ambiance* in your home is truly simple. You don't need to be Martha Stewart to provide a lovely setting that will leave guests thankful both for a memorable evening and your warm friendship.

There are many touches you can add around your house to help foster a sense of *ambiance*.

- Lighting contributes greatly to *ambiance*. During the day or early evening, natural lighting is the best. In the evening, candles are by far the best and easiest *ambiance*-inspiring tools.
- Air quality and scent is important to *ambiance* as well. If weather permits, open your windows and allow some fresh air to circulate throughout the house.
- Keep in mind that the temperature of the house will go up with the number of your guests. You might want to drop the temperature a few notches so that your guests are comfortable.
- Fresh flowers scattered throughout the house add a great deal of *ambiance*.
- Music is also extremely important. Be careful to choose instrumental music — music with lyrics can disrupt conversation.
- Create *ambiance* at the table: Make certain your centerpiece is not too huge or attention-grabbing, keep clutter on the table down to a minimum, creatively display napkins and to truly create a sense of elegance and style, you need to avoid paper and plastic.

Happy for No Reason

By Marci Shimoff and Carol Kline
Free Press (2008)

Savvy seniors spend a lot of time planning for retirement by tweaking the 401k, finding the perfect set of golf clubs or polishing the deck of the boat. We even know what's best to eat to reduce the risk of heart attack, lower our cholesterol and manage diabetes. Yet how much time do we spend in the pursuit of happiness?

If I told you happiness is something that you can practice and actually get good at, or at least better at, would you believe me? Just like you can spend 30 minutes a day walking to get your physical exercise, which, studies prove can also help reduce stress by releasing stress-reducing endorphins, you can spend time on specific mental and spiritual practices that will help you feel happier. At least that's the opinion of Marci Shimoff, author of the best-selling book *Happy for No Reason*.

In Shimoff's book, she offers many tools, techniques and insights so that you, too, can be a happier soul. The good news is we don't have to have the fattest 401k or the best golf game to be happy. In her program for being happy she suggests we have to work from the "inside out." In other words, happiness comes from inside, not from the stuff we have or the success we've achieved.

Shimoff interviewed several people for her happy 100 and found that happy folks come from all walks of life -- from the wealthy to the not so wealthy. It is a state of mind that must be achieved, it can't be bought.

OK, it would be nice to beat that loud mouth out on the golf course or to buy a bigger boat. It would enhance our ego and make us look more elegant, but not necessarily make us more happy. To be truly happy we need to change our thinking patterns. Fortunately, there are many techniques, which come from several different disciplines, to raise what Shimoff calls our "happiness set point."

She says one of the best things we can do to enhance our happiness is to adopt an "attitude of gratitude." If you're like me, you're used to focusing too much on the negative things that happened during the day, and you ignore the positive. Have you ever had a flat tire or the car wouldn't start? When that happens, most of us declare it "ruined our day," or say "it's been one of those days," as we sulk around the house or the office. Instead of taking that attitude, think of the good things that happened that day. Perhaps you were helped out with that flat tire by a good Samaritan or got the day off from work because of the mishap and got a lot done around the house. Or you could realize that it could have

been worse (like a car accident), which should be enough for you to feel grateful.

If you're going through a stressful time in your life or facing illness, try this at bedtime. Think of five good things that happened to you that day. You'd be surprised at all the good things that happen that we otherwise take for granted. By taking part in this practice we can start focusing on the good things that happen in our lives and raise that happiness set point.

I once witnessed an awful car accident while driving to work. Both people involved in the crash were killed. Both folks were taking part in a daily routine: one person was going to work, the other one returning. If nothing else goes right during the day, I try to feel thankful that I made it to and from work without getting in an accident. Now, each night when I go to bed I count off the good things, however minute, that came my way during the day.

I've read more than my share of self-help books in the past. Most have been good at telling you what you should do, but not necessarily how to do it in a practical way. The nice thing about Shimoff's book is that she gives you many tools to work with from many different disciplines. So if you don't like one approach, you can try another.

For example, Shimoff suggests that when a situation or a relationship just doesn't seem to be working out, try to rate it on a scale of 1 to 10. Let's say you're not getting along so well with your new son-in-law. Try this technique. Rate the relationship. OK, the guy is a bit "difficult to deal with," or so you think. So you give the relationship a lowly 4 on the scale. Ask yourself this: What are the positive aspects of the relationship that earned it a 4? Perhaps it was because the guy has the qualities of being honest and a good worker. Now you're focusing on the positive. By doing so, you work from the positive and perhaps build a better relationship, or at least learn to live with the shortcomings you perceive.

Notice my use of the term "perceived shortcomings," because another tool we can use is to question our perceptions of a situation. A lot of times we lock in on what *we think* as being true. Some of these things may be negative perceptions we have about ourselves (e.g., I just can't learn new computer skills). Borrowing again from Shimoff's work, we can try this exercise: Are we being truthful to ourselves? Can we absolutely know it is true? How would we be different if it wasn't true? Then go on to rephrase the statements you are telling yourself.

In the scenario above you may be absolutely convinced the son-in-law doesn't like you. Ask the three questions above. What we may find out is that the son-in-law just has a

gruff way of dealing with people, but is really a teddy bear inside. Or perhaps we have our own hang-ups that are forming a roadblock to accepting the son-in-law.

Shimoff offers many other techniques as well as inspiring stories in her book. So, go ahead, give it a try. What do you have to lose? Perhaps a golf game because you've become a more laid-back person who no longer defines happiness by beating the next guy.

— Neil Moran

Snow Flower and the Secret Fan

By Lisa See

Random House New York, NY (2005)

In a remote county in 19th century China, a secret-code writing called *nu-shu* was developed by women exclusively for their own use. In the wonderfully written novel, *Snow Flower and the Secret Fan*, this secret writing is crafted into a story of the oppression of Chinese women, who managed to maintain some light in their life and reach out of their isolation by communicating in code.

Born in 1823, Lily, the main character in this story, narrates a tale that takes us through the torturous ritual of foot-binding of young girls, their emotional matches with "laotongs," or "old sames," their arranged marriages and their isolated lives.

A matchmaker pairs Lily as a laotong with Snow Flower. They are now considered matched for life. Much of their communicating through the years is on a secret fan that is passed back and forth to their separate villages. The relationship between these two girls, from age seven to old age is a fascinating read.

We are beautifully transported to this remote part of China. As the years pass the reader feels immersed in the life of famine, arranged marriages, rebellions, loneliness and all the problems and joys of motherhood. A woman's worth was measured in her ability to have sons, and girl babies were considered a burden. The relationship and friendship of these two laotongs is severely tested in the latter part of their lives.

Anyone who has read *Memoirs of a Geisha* will find *Snow Flower and the Secret Fan* an equally enjoyable and enlightening book. Lily will forever live in your memory.

— Peggy Kiefer



Dear Vicki



Victoria Duncan is a licensed professional counselor who works with individuals and couples to address a full spectrum of client issues. She welcomes your questions at Victoria@OutLookbytheBay.com.

Rerun Season

This is really not a problem yet, but it could be soon! Our son has asked to move home for a while. He's college educated but has made some poor financial decisions. He wants to save money to pay off some credit cards and his car. We've agreed and want to help. However, we don't want a rerun of our parenting years and are a bit anxious. What do you suggest?

So-called boomerang children, meaning young adult offspring on their own for college, jobs or military service, who then move back to the family home, are not an oddity for baby boomer parents. Frequently, just the problem you cite financial pressure is the culprit rather than any desire to be dependent for any lingering amount of time.

And yes, it does pose some significant challenges. You are probably experiencing a complicated stew of thoughts and feelings including a desire to help, anxiety, resentment and guilt. Likewise, there is probably a similar brew within your adult child. For example, he may be having feelings of failure, guilt, gratitude and maybe a bit of resentment too. This can make for bubbling cauldron of tension and stress.

As you take a look at these suggestions to make for a smoother passage, remember that while this rerun season may be short, the effects can last a lifetime. Note that the advice acronym spells PLEASE. That's a good word for all of you to use remember and use.

P for Plan, plan, plan. A good plan will be discussed, agreed upon, written and include accountability. In other words, communication is key. Be very specific and write it down so it can be referenced. Cover such significant questions as: a) What is the end point to this arrangement? When the car is paid off? When a certain bank balance is achieved? b) How will chores be divided up? What are the expectations and standards? c) What about financial accountability? Who is paying for what? How about food for guests? Is a monthly check-in on checking and saving account balance indicated? d) How will conflict be resolved? How will you know when your plan needs amended?

L for Love Each Other. Despite the best planning, this is going to be work. Do remember that the ultimate goal is to preserve (and build) a loving relationship. It's not easy to balance the needs of two generations and sometimes it is simply impossible. If that is the case, love each other enough to request and choose other living arrangements before there is permanent damage to your relationship.

E for Evaluate. Regular evaluation builds in focus and accountability and keeps communication channels open and clear. Depending upon the length of the proposed stay, either monthly or twice-monthly evaluations are reasonable. Schedule this in advance so you don't fall into the habit of only discussing things when there is conflict. Check in on how things are going, what progress has been made toward the goal of achieving independence, and re-negotiate your plan, as needed.

A for Avoid Regression. It's easy to slip into those old roles of nagging parent and surly teenager. Head this off with good planning. Then, if possible, reserve complaints until your regularly scheduled evaluation and discuss the situation without anger and guilt. Use "I" language rather than "you" language. For example, "I feel frustrated when you neglect putting your dishes into the dishwasher," rather than, "You left dirty dishes all over the kitchen again." If the need for discussion is really pressing, respectfully request a time for an emergency meeting rather than letting resentment simmer.

S for Share Responsibility. Just because your son needs to economize and you may want to help out by not making him financially responsible for room and board does not mean that this is a free ride. Being an adult means accepting responsibility and it makes everyone feel like they are on a more even playing field if household responsibilities are shared. While it helps to iron clear expectations in advance, a spontaneous gesture by your son or a politely phrased request on your part, is always appropriate and appreciated.

E for Enjoy. Make way for fun! Positive experiences ease much of the stress of simply living together. Build in time for shared pleasure such as a meal together, hanging out over a cup of coffee or reminiscing about a crazy family trip. Maintain a friendly and relaxed interest in each other's lives. Be creative and observe the magic of what a little dollop of time and attention can do to wipe away strain. In the same manner, make time for enjoyment on your own and as a couple.

Remember that just as you employ the word "please" as you make your requests, try to remember that "thank you" is just as important. Everyone likes to feel appreciated and it's easy to take each other for granted. Polish up those manners, lead by example and have reasonable expectations for a time-limited, multigeneration household in which you all like each other for most of the time!

Seeing Green

My long-term marriage broke up, not by my choice, more than five years ago. While I wouldn't say it was a happy marriage, I was comfortable and would not have chosen to rock the boat if it had not been forced upon me. I'm financially comfortable, have friends, many interests and my health. My life is pretty good. Yet, when I see my friends who are still married making plans for retirement travel and new lifestyles, I become almost pea-green with envy. This is not the life that I ordered. How do I ditch these uncomfortable feelings?

Envy is a basic human emotion, but it is a poison that robs us of our well-being and sense of satisfaction in life. It is also a sneaky foe that may attack you when you least expect it. A chance encounter or offhand comment by someone that you rank as better off than you in some way can throw you into a tizzy before you know it. Suddenly, your own good fortune pales and you find yourself in a green funk of regret and resentment.

What happened? Well, envy is born out of unfair comparisons that we make between ourselves and others. I say unfair because you are comparing someone else's outside with your own inside. Of course, you have no way of knowing the intimacies of their lives and are making judgments based on purely externals. Foul play! Everyone has problems and issues and your friends are no different. My experience as a therapist bears out that most people are excellent at masking their personal struggles.

The best cure for envy is to expose it for the fraud that it is with some healthy self-talk. Be honest with yourself about those uncomfortable feelings. Then, check to see if your feelings are arising from faulty logic, as noted above, or if those feelings are pointing to a need in your life that is not being fulfilled. If the latter is the case, pay attention and try to find creative ways that you can fill that void for yourself. Finally, do not underestimate the power of gratitude. Make it a habit to write down at least three things that you are grateful for each day. Research shows that grateful people are the happiest and that gratitude is a characteristic that can be developed and strengthened over time.

Envy saps you of emotional energy and the ability to see and appreciate who you really are and what you already have. While there is always someone who looks as if they have more of the good stuff, you can learn to strip envy of its power and rise above it with practice.

If this was the last day of the rest of your life, what would you do?

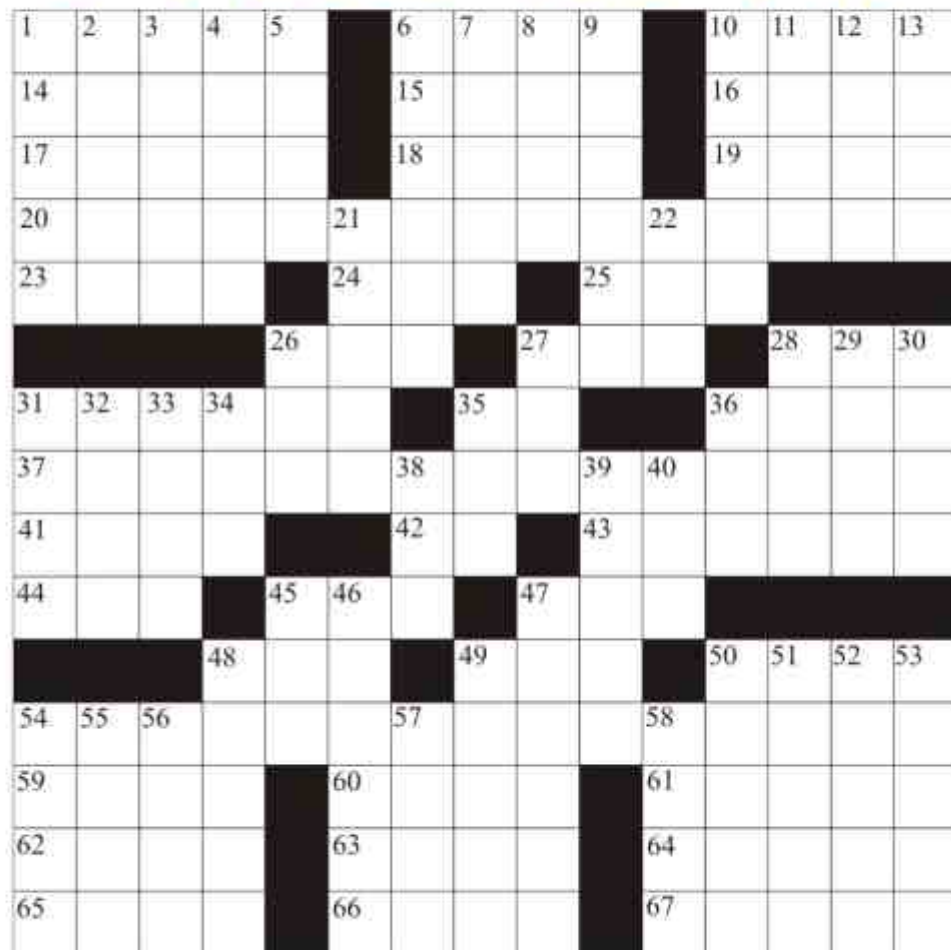
'A as in ...'

Across

1. Evaluate
6. Theatrical piece
10. Fix a leak
14. Capital of East Pakistan
15. B _ Railroad
16. Money in Milan
17. Make use of
18. Gas sign?
19. Mayberry man
20. Variety for 37 across
23. Looks at
24. Places where scrubs are worn
25. Cell user?
26. Actress Lupino
27. Wear and tear
28. Granola grain
31. Be there
35. Hesitator's word
36. A convex shape
37. Pioneer, Chapman
41. Chills
42. Exists
43. Basic shelter
44. Reel holder
45. Synonym for 38 down
47. _-de-mer (seasickness)
48. King Kong, e.g.
49. Entertaining
50. It's played by an "angelo"
54. Baker's option for 20 across
59. Hot zone
60. Pupil's colorful place
61. Zones
62. Go over
63. Shower material
64. _prosequi (court-record entry)
65. Facile
66. Shout
67. Map in a map

Down

1. Wise saying
2. _ Truffle (Beatles song)
3. Bathroom item, maybe
4. Sulphuric and hydrochloric
5. Harvard rival
6. Bullock of "Speed"
7. Supports for proposers, perhaps
8. TV's "American _"
9. Restorative drinks
10. Flat area
11. Type of type
12. Language of Pakistan
13. Talese and others
21. Simpleton
22. Miler Sebastian
26. Lodge
27. Guy at the plate



Dave Fisher (© Dave Fisher)

28. Sign
29. Help a hustler
30. Kind of list
31. Opened a crack
32. Like some orders
33. Fall follower?
34. Newark to Cape Cod (dir.)
35. FedEx rival
36. Second-largest English-speaking country
38. Synonym for 45 across
39. 10 down to a gaucho
40. Slippery one
45. Wall St. debut
46. Funny business
47. Clam's relative
48. Irk
49. Perk
50. Cook's cover
51. Cambodian dollars
52. Norman Vincent _
53. Something in the plus column
54. Went fast

55. Place for 60 across
56. Commies
57. Shallowest Great Lake
58. Indian princess

Solution to Early Spring 2008 "Money Matters"

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

Do one thing each day that you've never done before.

A Song of Love



Spring peepers with their cacophony of sounds are recognized by all as nature's way of announcing that spring has arrived. It's a delightful and welcome harbinger of the warm days to come. Wherever there's a marsh or even a small still pool of standing water, the tree frog can be found singing his three-note peep. Peep? It can be more like a deafening jangle of a million jingle bells. On overcast days and warm nights, the primarily nocturnal male competes with his lusty and endless three-note song of love. It is a riotous competition as each tries to outdo the other with a deeper bass or a faster pace of song. The louder and deeper and faster the song, the more likely the *pseudacris crucifer* is to attract a mate. She doesn't sing and does not reach the breeding stage until three years of age. Should she survive the threat of snakes, salamanders, birds, pollution, toxins and even larger frogs, she will choose her mate between March and June and then find a pool of freshwater, free of any fish, and there deposit her 900 to 1,000 eggs. She then heads for the woods to pass the summer months. The larvae emerge in 6 to 12 days, morphing into wiggly tadpoles after two months. With no parental concern or involvement, the larvae and later tadpoles exist on a diet of bugs, detritus, small spiders, ants and other small insects. Reaching adulthood before the first frost, the peeper will hibernate in soft mud or in forest debris allowing his body to partially freeze during the frosty days of winter. The frog's production of glucose acts as an antifreeze to keep the cells from rupturing. He'll be among the first of the amphibians to emerge in the spring.

The peeper, easier to hear than to see, has been difficult to study. Spending his days in piles of decaying leaves and even reeds of swaying grass, the peeper, with his round adhesive toe pads is also found — up to three feet high — on tree trunks.

Small, elusive and difficult to monitor, it appears that with the encroaching development and disappearance of open areas, their numbers are dwindling. Currently, the tiny harbinger of spring is listed as threatened in Kansas and on the protected list in New Jersey. The spring peeper population, as it is with much of the Bay's fauna and flora, is on the decline. With better stewardship of what remains in our ecological system perhaps this trend will someday reverse itself, allowing the spring peeper to continue as the familiar town crier heralding the arrival of the balmy days of spring.



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