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One Paw at a Time



Laurie Potasiewicz, Master Groomer, Justin Nelson and Amanda Tuttle of One Paw at a Time.

by Al Dorantes

But was there ever dog that praised his fleas? ~ William Butler Yeats

One Paw at a Time, located at 3 Main Street in Whitesboro, New York is your dog grooming destination. Whether your pooch needs a simple bath or requires the whole grooming experience; Laurie Potasiewicz, Master Groomer, and her staff can accommodate your dog.

One Paw at a Time is a full service grooming center. From the moment your pet arrives it is cared for and pampered. Bathing, breed standard grooming, nails trimmed, ears and teeth cleaned is the standard treatment for all pets. Laurie says, "No dog is too big or too small and I do not turn any breeds away."

Laurie has been grooming since 1992 and has been at her current location since

May 2013. She is the only nationally certified master groomer in the Mohawk Valley. After 10-12 years of experience Laurie decided to kick her skills up a notch and took the test from the National Dog Grooming Association of America to become a Master Groomer. The National Dog Grooming Association of America (NDGAA) alone can award the title of Master Groomer, after candidates complete and pass 2 phases of testing for each of the breed groups.

The certification process is very rigid. Candidates have to provide and groom 4 dogs (long legged terrier, short legged terrier, sporting, and non sporting). The 4 dogs must each have at least 8 weeks worth of growth. Laurie had 2.5 hours to groom to breed standards. In order to pass you also have to know anatomy and the dog breed and pass a

test on each of the dogs. This is a prestigious certification and assures you that your pet will look the way it is supposed to look. No surprises at pick up at One Paw at a Time!

When asked, how early should you start your grooming regimen, Laurie answered, "When a new puppy enters the family, owners are so busy with housetraining, socializing, and training that they tend to put grooming on the back burner. By the time owners take the dog to the groomers or start grooming at home, they've missed the early window for accustoming a pup to handling, brushing, and trimming." Laurie went on to explain that getting your pup in at an early age is especially important with higher-maintenance breeds such as Poodles. "Owners can change the entire lifetime grooming experience for their dog by

starting early."

On a busy day Laurie will groom 10-15 dogs. Laurie's niece Sabrina Tuttle, a professionally trained groomer has her own clients and works alongside her. Justin Nelson, assists both Laurie and Sabrina by bathing and blow drying the dogs. Justin interned with Laurie while he was attending Oneida County BOCES where she teaches grooming a couple of times a year. Many of those students intern with her at the shop.

One Paw at a Time also offers an array of related products and grooming essentials for at-home care between appointments. The shop recognizes that in our climate our furry friends need an extra layer once in a while so One Paw at a Time offers outerwear for



Laurie poses with 3 of her satisfied customers!

your pets that will keep them warm and dry. Dogs love tasty treats. "Our shop offers healthy pet treats so you can feel good about spoiling them every day." Toys relieve boredom, keep your pet's mind stimulated, and help prevent chewing or scratching. From rawhide bones and plush toys to biscuits One Paw at a Time has a range of toys and distractions for your pet. Brushes and combs are a must to maintain coats and reduce shedding between appoint-

ments. "The right tool will make your at home maintenance much easier." stated, Potasiewicz. "We will guide you in your purchase so that you get the right tools for the right pet."

Give Laurie Potasiewicz, the area's only certified Master Groomer a call, get an appointment for your pet, and spoil your Furbaby. For more information go to: www.onepawatatimegrooming.com or follow them on facebook: One Paw at a Time ■

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Utica Curling Club

- Curling Popularity increasing in Central New York

by Daniel Baldwin

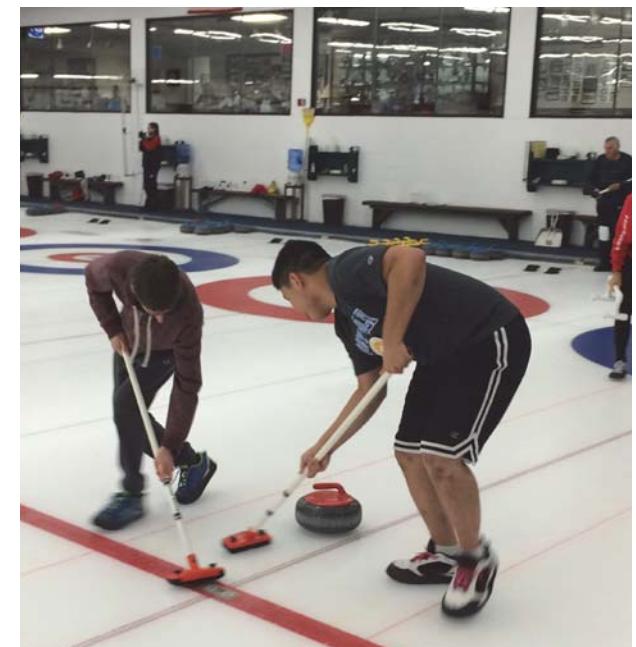
Winter is right around the corner as well as the hockey season. The Utica Comets just kicked off their AHL hockey season on October 10, and the Utica College men's hockey team will start their season on October 30. Although Utica and the rest of Central New York are mostly filled with hockey fans, another winter sport is becoming popular in this area and drawing more people into this competition.

Local residents are becoming more involved into the game of curling, another winter sport that has been around since the early nineteenth century. In the game of curling players slide stones on a sheet of ice towards a target area. That target is made of concentric circles. Each game requires two teams,

made of four players, take turns sliding heavy, polished granite stones (aka rocks) across the ice towards the circular target marked on the ice (aka the house). Each team has eight stones. The goal is to accumulate the highest score for a game and points are scored for the stones resting closest to the center of the house. A game usually consists of eight or ten turns (aka ends). Curling is similar shuffleboard on ice.

"In Central New York we are about it curling," Oneida resident and curling player Pete Ciaralli said. "We've been growing slowly and we want to grow faster."

The village of Whitesboro has its own curling club called the Utica Curling Club. According to Carol Jones, a member of this club,



it has 300 members, and a majority of them are from the Central New York area. They even have their own curling ice rink as well as many brooms and stones.

For three days, the club offered free curling training sessions for local residents. People gathered at the club's facility and got the chance to glide the circular stones on the ice and sweep rapidly with their curling brooms. Most of the people, who attended this training session, are curling athletes who were preparing for an upcoming bonspiel (tournament).

"I'm sure that many of people are here to train for the Olympics and curling events that are televised now," curler and club member Michael Hurd said.

But there were also other people who were here to have fun and get more people involved in this sport.

"Tonight I'm here just to encourage the growth of the sport," Blake, another curling athlete and New Hartford resident said, "and get more members to join."

Jones, who heads up the training sessions and she said that this organization has hosted these events for many years. "The club has been around since 1868," Jones said, "and as far as I know, they always had a training session where

they introduce people to the sport of curling. It has developed over the years, and the five-to-10 years they've changed the introduction to the point where people could come down this week and get to try it ever so slightly that they can see what it's like, and then they come back again to learn more."

Curling is not a difficult sport to learn, according to Jones. It is also an affordable sport.

"It doesn't take a long time to learn," Jones said. "It takes a couple hours to get used to it. The nice thing about curling is that it is a very inexpensive sport to get into. All you need is a warm jacket and enthusiasm. We supply the racks. We'll supply the curling broom. We'll supply the sliders and the grippers, so everybody can learn without very little investment."

Encouragement is still the club's main goal for every training session. Ciaralli is also the media coordinator for the Utica Curling Club, and he said that the training sessions are a way to gain popularity for the club and the sport of curling. "We've got a great club facility," he said. "It is the biggest in the northeast. We have tremendous tradition over here, and we're one of the oldest curling clubs in the country. We feel that we want to share the fun, fitness, and friendship of this

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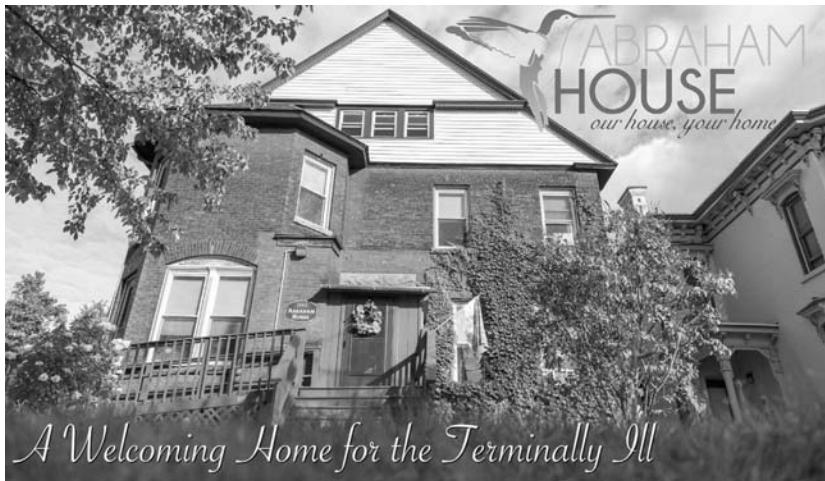
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Abraham House



A Welcoming Home for the Terminally Ill

by Al Dorantes

Abraham House, a Victorian home located at 1203 Kemble Street, Utica, New York, offers guests a secure, loving home and provides physical, emotional, and spiritual support to the terminally ill. The original intent of Abraham House was to care for the terminally ill at absolutely no cost to the guest or their family. With the generosity of so many, they have still managed to honor this promise today. It is the utmost privilege of the Abraham House to care for the terminally ill. These moments are intimate and personal and Abraham House believes that there is no greater satisfaction and compliment in this world.

Dr. Abraham Shaheen had his medical practice in the building that would become Abraham House. He would treat patients and sometimes would accept what they could give even if it were only a loaf of homebaked bread or a basket of vegetables from their garden. There are many stories about his generosity circulating in the greater

Utica area. That philosophy founded the organization when he donated the house. Abraham House has managed to honor that ideology since 1998.

The 2 bed comfort care home operates with no charge. Abraham House is free; there are no bills for guests or families and there is no insurance reimbursement. Abraham House also receives no state or federal funding. Therefore, they rely solely on donations, fundraisers, and small grants in order to continue operating.

There is a nationwide conversation happening about euthanasia and how we die. Executive director, Gina Ciacchia, recently delivered a presentation called, "A Beautiful Death" to the Tri-County Funeral Directors Association. The well received talk focused on end of life conversations. Discussions about how we want to die should happen early and often. These conversations need to happen so choices and informed decisions can be made. How we die as individuals is as unique as how we live.

Abraham House provides a service that you hope you never need but if you do need it you are glad they are there. One of their tasks is spreading awareness. Sometimes dying just does not work out at home. It is draining on families or the terminally ill simply do not want to die at home.

That's another reason why conversations need to happen.

Abraham House allows guest's family members to be as involved or uninvolved as they choose allowing their guests a peaceful, easy departure. Abraham House is calm place. It is comfortable; like home. Abraham House encourages families to make themselves at home in the common living room and the kitchen. Upstairs, there is a bedroom, bathroom, and kitchen available for family use whether it be company from out of town who need a place to stay or if a family member just wants to remain close to their loved one.

As previously stated, Abraham House survives on donations, fundraising, and small local grants. They have 2 unique, major fundraisers each year. On November 6, Abraham House will host their gala, "A View of Hope." The cocktail attire gala features heavy hors d'oeuvres and entertainment by Last Left. A more casual fundraiser is March Meatball Madness. March Meatball Madness is a meatball contest that sees each participating restaurant making 700 meatballs for the fun event. Anything goes at March Meatball Madness.

Abraham House's fundraising is the result of great committees. Those committees never seem to stop working. Some of their plans include a golf tourney in 2016 and possibly a

Utica Curling Club continued...



sport with other people. We want to grow our club and sport. Curling is one of the fastest growing sports in the country."

The club is so far doing a good job in fulfilling its mission to attract more people into curling. It is also no surprise to see many Central New York residents getting involved into this sport.



"When I used to tell people about curling, they always ask 'what is that?'" Jones said, "and now when you go out and about, and they happened to notice that you're wearing a curling jacket, they say 'oh wow you curl.' Everybody knows what it is, so it's steadily growing. We have a lot more people that come in here, and they just want to do it on their bucket list." ■

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Flannel Shirts and Pumpkin Spice Dreams

by Troy Bishopp

I don't know about you but when I slip into my well-worn plaid flannel shirt for the first time as the geese get restless overhead, it truly feels like fall. Flannel is a fabric for the country soul. "Flannel is an integral part of our national heritage. It's literally the fabric that binds us together," said Essayist Deborah Knight.

The origin of flannel can be traced back to Wales, where it was well known as early as the 16th century. Flannel was originally made from carded wool or worsted yarn. At one time Welsh, Yorkshire, Lancashire and Irish flannels differed slightly in character due largely to the grade of raw wool used in the several localities. Originally it was made of fine, short staple wool, but by the 20th century, mixtures containing either cotton, silk or synthetic fiber became common. And for you old rockers, the use of flannel plaid shirts peaked in the 90's, when popular grunge bands like Nirvana and Pearl Jam used them as their trademark fashion statement.

After the first flannel shirt of the season has been christened with leaf fragments and cat hair (cause they love to snuggle in it), it seems the flood of this soft nap seeps into our daily lives as the temperature ticks downward. The sheets and pillow cases are transformed to flannel. The polos of summer are changed out in favor of colorful, brawny, lumbersexual hues. Pajamas, bathrobes, long underwear and scarves are all put in play to fight old man winter. Even



Flannel is the fabric that binds us together.

the discarded flannel is used for cleaning, wrapping a newborn animal or mopping up grease in the shop.

When I go to buy flannel shirts, quality is all over the board. I prefer companies like Woolrich, Duluth Trading, LL Bean and my own Herb Philipsons when my budget allows. Trouble is, the bargain-rack pseudo flannel for 12 bucks also calls my name. It doesn't seem to matter which product I chose, I always find ways to rip, stain or shrink the darn things.

As a flannel-nista, I prefer vibrant colors, plaids and patterns.

Abraham House continued...

motorcycle ride as well.

At Abraham House you will notice the hummingbird. It is part of their logo and can be found around almost every corner. The hummingbird is their symbol. There are many legends about the hummingbird. In some cultures the hummingbird is the messenger between the worlds of life and death. The hummingbird is an important talisman to the Abraham House representing the transition from this life into the next.

With 24 hour care by Abraham House caregivers, guests are in good hands during their most vulnerable time. 20 active care givers (volunteers and per diem) cover medication administration, hands on health and hygiene, feeding, and patient assessment. A segment of volunteer staff are "buddies" who work with caregivers to handle the social and

emotional needs of guests and their family. There is little paperwork when guests arrive. Abraham House has no doctors or nurses; they provide surrogate care.

Abraham House is the only comfort care home in 3 counties. Covering Herkimer, Oneida, and Madison counties their guests primarily are referrals through Hospice although physicians and health care agencies may also make referrals. Down the road it would be of interest to establish another Abraham House maybe in Herkimer County. Executive Director Gina Ciaccia explained that Abraham House is always looking for donations and volunteers. She also extends an open invitation for anyone who would like to tour the home and see what it has to offer. For more information go to: www.theabrahamhouse.org ■

They always match with jeans and any kind of Carhartt clothing accessory. I've worn a flannel kilt in running the highland mud-fest and what man about the town, wouldn't dabble in a flannel, man-scarf. The fabric's versatility is unmatched. I have to admit however, that my favorite article is when my wife wears my shirt and cuddles with me on the couch. Flannel I think is even an extension of love.

Lately, there seems to be another significant sign of colder weather. It's the advent or permeation of the pumpkin spice phenomenon into my olfactory receptors. It's boggling to see how many items get infused with pumpkin spice. The flavor resonates in hot pumpkin macchiatos, lattes, cookies, muffins spiced candles, mouthwash, gum, beer and even pumpkin-spiced pumpkin seeds. My morning French Vanilla coffee also has its subtle overtones. What's next? My aftershave!

Apparently folks are getting a bit agitated by the exhaustive advertising blitz of pumpkin spice-it is and all its high fructose companions, but sales of pumpkin-flavored items continue to soar, rising 11.6 percent to \$361 million for the year ended July 25, according to Nielsen. With this entire bonanza, I was hoping the pumpkin farmers were doing really well. Alas, fresh pumpkins at the retail level aren't seeing the same boost. In fact, fresh pumpkin sales dropped in 2011, 2013 and 2014. I'll fight the trend and enjoy an ole fashioned pumpkin pie anyway, which I'm sure is more nutrient dense. This high calorie orange season will end about as fast as you can say candy-cane latte.

Whatever traditions ring in the fall for you, one should get out and enjoy the fall colors and scenery that our region is known for. Take time to nap in the autumn sun wearing your comfortable flannel and having pumpkin spice dreams. ■

Baked treats worth the effort

Baked goods can take some time to prepare. But as many baking enthusiasts know, the results are well worth the effort. Such is the case with the following recipe for "Pistachio Honey Rolls" from Marguerite Marceau Henderson's "Small Sweet Treats" (Gibbs Smith).



Pistachio Honey Rolls

Makes 32 rolls

2	cups shelled pistachio nuts
1/2	cup sugar
1/2	teaspoon ground cinnamon
1	teaspoon finely grated orange zest
16	sheets phyllo dough, rolled out and kept covered with a damp towel
4	tablespoons butter, melted
1/2	cup honey, warmed

Place the nuts, sugar, cinnamon and orange zest in a food processor and grind until nuts are finely chopped. Transfer to a bowl.

Place a sheet of phyllo dough on a work surface. Keep the remaining sheets covered with a damp towel after each sheet is used. Brush the sheet of phyllo with butter; top with another sheet of phyllo and brush with more butter. Lightly spread the sheet of phyllo into four strips lengthwise. Roll up each strip, starting at the bottom, and place on a Silpat or parchment-lined baking sheet, seam-side down. Continue with remaining 14 sheets of phyllo and nut filling. Bake on the middle rack of a preheated 375 F oven for 15 minutes. While still warm, drizzle with honey. Allow to cool completely before serving. ■

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Little Lie



by David Griffin

My wife and I have had an agreement for the 50 years we've been married. I won't lie to her and she won't murder me. I've never fibbed about anything serious, but if she had been strict about our bargain she would have widowed herself at a very young age.

When the cell phone rang, I turned the volume on the car radio down and dug into my pocket. I sure don't know how we ever got along in life without cell phones.

"Where are you?" my wife asked.

"I'm sitting up at the end of the north parking lot and I can see the Mall entrance where I dropped you off."

"OK," she said, "I'm inside walking toward it now."

"I'll be looking for you when you come out the door," I said.

"Well, start driving. I hate to stand outside waiting for you. The young guys always

try to pick me up and take me out for a drink," she said.

"A word of advice..." I began.

"Never mind," she finished. "Start driving."

"I will when I can verify you're actually at the North exit. You get your directions mixed up, come out the wrong exit and I drive around wondering where the heck you ..."

"It says 'North Exit' in big letters," she said, "in English, right over the door. Which I'm walking through now."

"I don't see you," I said from my perch up at the end of the parking lot. "You should carry the Boy Scout compass I gave you for these occasions."

"I am at the north parking lot exit," she said heatedly. "I'm not carrying that thing. I'd look like a surveyor."

"With the flip-up mirror, anyone would think you're just checking your make-up with a compact."

"Who carries a brass

compact mirror as big as a hockey puck? I'm holding up my shopping bag," she said. "You can't miss it. It's bright pink. Can you see me?"

"No," I said, "wave it back and forth."

"Oh, for ... I can't," she said, "it's too heavy."

"Set down the bag and just raise both hands and wave," I said. "Like a cheerleader," I added.

I got no answer. Perhaps I needed to explain further.

"You're too short," I said. "Can you get some height? Remember jumping jacks, where you jump up and clap your hands together over your head? Or is there a bench or something you can climb up on?"

Still no answer.

"Are you there?" I asked. "Are you listening?"

"I stopped listening to you the first year we were married," she replied. "I'm busy looking for a nice young man to buy a drink for a soon-to-be widow."

You know, it's simply amazing how we can miss the little things in life. I'd been sitting there up at the end of the North parking lot for almost an hour without noticing that the sign on the mall building I was watching plainly read "South Entrance." I guess that meant I was in the South parking lot.

"OK I see you!" I hurriedly shouted into the cell phone as I turned the key and

ripped the shift lever down into Drive.

I lied. "Yes, that's you. Gee you're just as pretty from a distance as the day I married you," I added.

"Then remind me to keep my distance from you," she said.

The car in front of me stopped abruptly and waited to take the place of an SUV backing out. This annoys me. I stopped in time only a foot from her rear bumper. The SUV driver couldn't see traffic in either direction and he inched out backwards a tiny bit at a time.

"Where are you?" asked my wife.

"I'm in motion," I said.

"Uh huh," she said, "don't hurt yourself!"

The SUV driver was now out far enough to see up and down the traffic lane. He accelerated and swooped backward, crashing into the driver waiting in front of me. Her car lurched backward and hit my bumper.

I got out to inspect the

damage to my car... only a slight scratch.

"What's going on?" asked my wife.

"I'm caught in traffic." I lied again.

The woman ahead of me was taking a long look at the front of her car while the other driver stepped from his SUV and apologized.

"No problem with my car," I said as I approached the two, holding the cell phone away from me with my finger over what I thought was the tiny voice pickup on the device.

They didn't seem to notice me. "And your back bumper looks OK," I said to the woman.

"It's my husband's new car," she said to no one in particular. "He will absolutely kill me!"

"I gotta go," I said to her, with my hand up in the air; the cell phone held as far away from me as possible. Someday I'll find the mute button. The last time I held my hand that high was in the third grade the day I almost

wet my pants before getting the teacher's attention.

A policeman materialized to my right. "Sir, I'll need your license and registration," he said. "You can put your hand down now."

"Honey, I've been involved in a minor accident," I said into the phone.

"Well, you look OK to me," said my wife, standing now to my left.

"I brought her with me," said the policeman.

"I heard the crash on the phone," she said.

"While you were standing on the bench, lady," said the policeman.

"He said he was arresting me," my wife said, glancing at me with what might have been a proud look on her face.

"I said I was rescuing you, Ma'am," said the policeman.

"Well, I was only standing there, young man, and this is America!" said my wife. "You're lucky I hadn't started my jumping jacks." ■

Dogs and their unique relationship with weather

-your pup may be more reliable than the weatherman

Changing weather can affect canines much like it does people, but dogs may also be affected in ways their owners are not. According to the Society for the Prevention of Cruelty to Animals, dogs can feel changes in barometric pressure and even in the static electric field that occurs in the air. The American Animal Hospital Association says dogs' behavioral changes may be attributable to changes in the weather. Dogs may become agitated or overexcited by dips in barometric pressure. As electrical storms approach, some dogs may get very anxious, even running and hiding if their anxiety is especially high.

Many dogs are afraid of thunder and lightning and can sense approaching storms even when they are still miles away. According to researchers at Penn State University, between 15 and 30 percent of all dogs are extremely scared of thunder and may experience a rapid increase of cortisol, a

stress hormone.

Dogs also can sniff out storms, detecting concentrations of chemicals common during some storms. Dogs can smell ozone in the air associated with lightning as well.

Dogs may be physically affected by weather just like their owners are. Although there is little scientific work specifically on the affects of cold or damp weather on dogs that occurs during autumn and early winter, it does seem that canines feel the effects of these changes. Owners often notice more stiffness and lameness in pets during adverse weather conditions. Pain resulting from arthritis may increase and muscles may stiffen when the climate becomes cooler.

Many animals are known to have an innate sense of changing weather or oncoming storms. Dogs can learn to anticipate meaning behind atmospheric changes that can alert others to upcoming weather. ■

Let centerpieces add style to special occasions

Design elements and decorations can help set the mood for special events. Centerpieces are one such design element that can set a strong tone for dinner parties. Centerpieces can be easy to create, even for hosts working with limited budgets.

Decorating the dining table with a visually stunning centerpiece may be all the creative touch hosts need to impress their guests as they sit down to dinner. Whether

you prefer simple centerpieces or something more elaborate, follow these tips for centerpiece success.

Size

To determine which centerpiece to use, party hosts must first calculate a few things to come up with an appropriate size for the centerpiece. The first consideration is the size of the table. Scale the centerpiece to the dimensions of the table. The more people you can seat

at the table, the larger the centerpiece can be. Also think about the size of the room. Rooms with high ceilings or large architectural accents may accommodate larger or taller centerpiece more capably than smaller rooms. Centerpieces that are transparent can create height without blocking guests' views.

Materials

Hosts can use just about any materials they wish

when creating centerpieces. Floral arrangements make for popular centerpieces because flowers are available in a wide array of colors, sizes and heights. Plus, flowers can be chosen based on personal preferences, season or budget. Their sweet aroma also adds another sensory experience to a party. But hosts are not limited to centerpieces that feature flowers. Fresh fruit, seashells, pebbles, marbles, candy, and even live fish are just a few of the materials that can be used to create memorable centerpieces. Think about which materials might provide a conversation starter at the dinner table and build around that.

Placement

As their name implies, centerpieces generally go in the center of the table. But creative hosts you can play with placement if they so desire. Rather than one large centerpiece, consider creating a table runner of sorts through the middle of the table that features various smaller centerpieces. This can be useful when a larger element would take up too much room on the table. Factor the height and

visual line of guests when arranging centerpieces as well. Sit at the table with your elbows on the table surface and arms bent up. The height of your fists is the general sight line. Avoid centerpieces that fall within this sight line. Use a pedestal to raise up a centerpiece or keep the centerpiece lower so guests can converse across the table. Think about placing smaller

replicas of your main table centerpiece elsewhere in the entertaining space, such as near the entryway and in the powder room, to tie everything together.

Centerpieces are a key design element when hosting a special event, adding visual appeal to a space while helping any party appear more upscale. ■



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How to tend to an indoor herb garden

Fresh herbs and recently picked ingredients can add flavor to any meal. A home chef can even improve the flavor of store-bought or prepared foods with an herb garnish that can transform otherwise bland dishes into something you'll want to eat again and again.

Harvesting fresh herbs is easy for homeowners who have gardens right in their backyards. However, everyone does not have a backyard, and even those that do might find their gardens threatened by changing seasons or unwanted critters. When gardens are moved indoors, the bounty of fresh ingredients continues no matter the date on the calendar.

Herb gardens are perhaps some of the easiest gardens to cultivate indoors because they don't require large pots or much space. The plants themselves are relatively compact, and it only takes a pinch of herbs to give a meal some extra flavor.

When growing herbs indoors, your indoor growing area must have adequate light to simulate the longer days of summer; otherwise, the plants may go dormant. It's ideal to have a southern exposure on the herbs, with at least eight hours of sunlight per day. If you do not live in a particularly sunny locale, consider supplementing the plants with grow lights, which will provide the full spectrum of light the plants need to thrive.

Indoor air can become too dry for herbs,

so you will need to compensate by providing humidity. While there may be added humidity in a kitchen greenhouse window, it still may not be enough to keep the plants healthy. Think about misting the plants daily to create some extra humidity, or place herb pots on top of a water-filled tray with pebbles so the evaporating water will add moisture without making the roots soggy.

Insects are another threat to indoor gardens because there is no cold weather to inhibit the hatching of insect eggs. Soil from outdoors may be more susceptible to insects that are already living in the dirt. Instead of soil from outside, use packaged soil or a nonsoil alternative that will hold moisture without the added risk of bugs. If small insects appear, use a mist of soapy water to kill the bugs without harming the plants or making the herbs unfit for eating.

Group herbs together according to their watering needs to make maintenance that much easier. New sprouts generally need more water than established plants.

Prune the herbs as needed for recipes. If the herbs experience a growth spurt, trim some of the plants and freeze the herbs for later use.

Many indoor herb gardeners begin by growing parsley, chives, oregano, and basil, but you can experiment with just about any herb. ■

Planning a home office?

- here are some factors to consider



As technology has made working remotely easier, more and more professionals are working from home. Working from home can help working parents save money on childcare costs and help all workers avoid rush hour traffic jams and the costs of commuting to and from the office. The right working environment is essential for men and women who work from home. An environment that's conducive to work can help people increase their productivity and make their employers more likely to allow more employees to work from home. Professionals who are new to working from home may find it takes some time before they can create the perfect working environment, but the following are a few factors to consider when planning a home office.

Space

One of the disadvantages to working from home is that remote workers don't have access to the same level of equipment as in the main office, such as color copiers or scanners. If you want to include even scaled-down versions of such equipment in your office, you will need ample space. In addition, less spacious home offices can feel too tight and enclosed, making workers uncomfortable and less enthusiastic about working every day. Pick a spot in your home that affords room for your equipment and the ability to move around so you don't feel cramped throughout the workday.

Lighting

Lighting is another factor remote workers must consider when they're planning their home offices. Natural light can provide an energetic boost and improve your mood, so choose a room in your home that gets lots of sunlight during the day. Many professionals who work remotely do so from the basements of their homes, which can make it difficult to rely on natural light. If the basement is the only location in your home that can fit a home office, look for lighting sources that replicate daylight so you are not working in dark quarters. Speak with your physician about how to arrange lighting to reduce eyestrain caused by staring at a computer.

Connectivity

Connectivity also must be considered when planning a home office. While wireless Internet has made Internet dead zones less problematic, certain areas or rooms in your home may still be touch-and-go with regard to Internet connectivity. Such

areas should be avoided when choosing a room for your home office, as it can be difficult to remain productive if your connection to your office's external server is routinely compromised. Find an area where the wireless connection is always strong.

Distractions

While your home might be empty for much of the day, you don't want to be distracted when the kids come home from school or when your spouse or roommate arrives home from work. Avoid putting your home office too close to popular hangout areas in your home, such as the kitchen and the living room. Instead, choose a room where you have lots of privacy so you can focus on your work and won't be routinely interrupted.

Working from home can pay numerous dividends, but professionals who telework must put careful thought into the rooms or areas of their homes where they plan to work. ■

Finished basements save energy

and deliver more living space

(MS) — By finishing your basement, you can gain more living space while reducing the amount of energy loss from downstairs. Basements that are not fully finished typically do not have insulated walls or covered flooring. This can result in heat loss and cause your furnace to work overtime. A remodeled basement offers more than additional storage space. It can provide a lot of extra room for a growing family, such as space for a gym, home theatre, office, guest suite, or a playroom for the kids.

To ensure a comfortable and inviting basement, there are a few project components to consider:

- Insulation will make sure your space warm and comfortable. For the best results, install a stone wool insulation product, a measure that can be done easily with the ROXUL ComfortBoard IS. This product is mechanically fastened or adhered to the concrete foundation wall, offering you a higher R-value and better acoustics.
- Drywall will help define the space and make it feel like a part of your home. If you haven't tackled drywall before, consider hiring a pro to ensure your walls are seamless.
- Flooring should be water sealed and covered with an insulated material. There are many products on the market, but consider laying padding before carpet or in-floor heating before tiles.
- Personalize it with finishing touches. Select furniture that can fit down a typically steep staircase and choose items that complement the rest of your home's décor. ■



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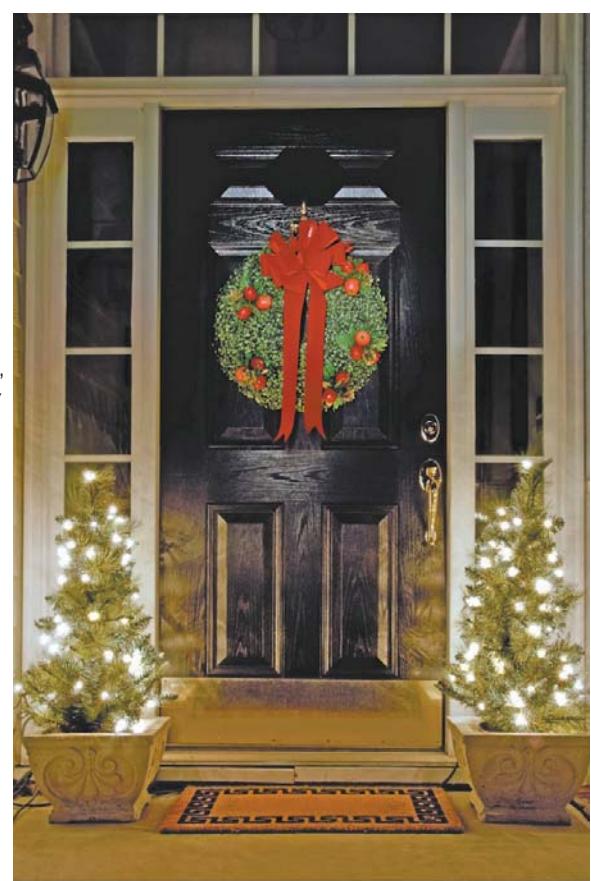
Make holiday decorating easier this year

It is not the holiday season until homes, stores and town centers are decorated in lights and tinsel. When entire neighborhoods are enhanced by bows and animated figurines, the celebratory tone is set and decorations can trigger happy feelings associated with holiday gatherings.

Some people find holiday decorating enjoyable and eagerly anticipate taking out storage containers and sorting through all of their memory-laden trinkets, while others are less enthusiastic about readying their homes for the season. No matter which group you fall into, the following are some simple tips to make holiday decorating easier:

- Plan to decorate on a day when you do not have any other responsibilities. Choose to decorate on a day when you can devote your full attention to decorating, avoiding a day when you might be distracted by other things. If you prefer to decorate alone, ask a friend to watch the kids or have a spouse take them out of the house for a few hours. If decorating is a family event, find a day when everyone's schedules are clear.

- Take out the decorations the day prior. Hauling boxes and containers from the attic or basement can take a while. Take some time to move all of the decorating items to a main floor of the house the day or night before your decorating marathon. This way you won't get discouraged or tired by the task even before the real decorating has begun.



Follow a few strategies to make easy work of holiday decorating.

one person in charge of decorating the living room while another handles the outside lights, wreaths and inflatable items.

- Turn on the tunes. Working to music frequently takes your mind off of the work and will help pass the time more quickly. Have your favorite holiday playlist at the ready and turn up the volume. Sing along to the carols or contemporary songs while you are elbow-deep in decorations.

- Take some breaks. Working hungry or tired may lead to sloppy work or frustration. There's little chance of untangling a knot in the lights with your patience in tact if you haven't eaten for hours. Plan some time for lunch while you sit and rest. Survey the work you've done and make a list of the next steps.

After the hard work of decorating, you'll likely have a sense of accomplishment. Now it's time to enjoy the holiday scene and prepare for the excitement of the weeks ahead.

Signs that more insulation is necessary

- If the snow melts on your roof but not on your neighbors', this may be a sign that you need more insulation in the attic. Melting snow means heat is escaping from the attic or under the eaves.

- Bare spots in the attic and insulation that does not extend to the edge of the roof may indicate a need for more.

- Check the level of insulation in the attic. If it is level with or falls below the

- ceiling joists, an extra layer should be installed.

- If energy bills are higher than normal for the time of year, that may be due to a lack of insulation. Notice whether the HVAC system is running more than usual.

- An unusually warm second story during hot weather also may be indicative of an insulation deficiency. Such a situation suggests hot air is infiltrating the home through the roof.

When adding insulation, choose the right R-value for your home. R-value measures how well certain materials, such as insulation, resist heat. The higher the R-value, the greater the insulation. Therefore, insulation with a higher R-value will perform better than insulation with a lower rating. Colder climates may require a higher R-value than warmer ones. ■

There Are Smiles

by Terry Berkson



Shirley and George

Got a call from our old friend Shirley Horigan the other day. She thought we might still have a copy of a photo of her and her late husband George that she treasured but somehow misplaced. I told her I'd do my best to find it but after looking through several boxes and photo albums I didn't come up with the picture she had in mind. So, instead, my wife and I found a nice photo of Shirley and George smiling with a party hostess standing between them and cut out the middle figure in order to put them together. I must say we did it rather skillfully because you had to look twice to see that the photo had been altered.

Shirley was due back in town to attend a class reunion. I planned to first have the "scissored" picture photocopied, which would make it look even more convincing, and then deliver it to her at the gathering. Of course it wasn't the shot she wanted but when she saw it she liked the photo and had to give it a second look to realize it had been altered. During our conversation I asked her if she had ever read a story I had written called "A Night At Harry's." There was a scene in it that involved her George. She hadn't read it and asked, "What's it about?"

I began with, "You weren't married at the time." It was a Saturday night and Harry's nightclub was mobbed. I had to push my way into the place and past the crowded bar. Couples were out on the floor dancing to the Contour's "Do You Love Me." I made my way to a rounded leather-lined booth where George was sitting oddly alone with his elbows resting on the table and his head in his hands. He looked depressed.

"What's the matter, George?" I asked above the loud music. He shook his cradled head. "I had her in the palm of my

hand," he groaned. "I was making all the right moves. She was hanging on every word I said. I lit her cigarette like a pro. But when I went to blow out the match my upper plate flew out on the table. She screamed and stood up on her seat!"

It seems George had somehow broken his upper dentures and was keeping the two halves loosely in place with the back of his tongue which made him talk like Humphrey Bogart.

"So where is she now?" I asked.

"Dancing with that guy," he said nodding towards a couple out on the floor.

Shirley laughed and began to tell me her story about George. "You remember we owned two houses in town. When we were getting along we lived in the same house but when things weren't so good we lived separately."

She went on to say that during one of the times they were living apart she bought a little dog she named Moe to keep her company. At the time she was on speaking terms with George and asked him to take the little pooch to his house while she went on an overnight trip to visit family. Arriving home, good natured George set the dog up in a blanket-lined cardboard box and retired for the night. When he awoke in the morning he reached for his then intact upper plate but the teeth weren't in the water glass on the night table where he had placed them. A brief search led to the dog in the blanket-lined box and the dentures that had been chewed on like a bone. Moe didn't look at all guilty but George was miffed and picked the dog up as he headed for his car and Shirley's house. She had just arrived home and when she came to the door her husband angrily thrust the little dog into her arms.

"What's the matter?" she wanted to know.

"He chewed up my teeth!" George yelled before stepping back and letting the storm door slam. Then he abruptly turned and headed for his car.

Frank Dibble a nosy friend and nearby neighbor phoned Shirley to learn what the commotion was all about.

Later in the day Dibble met George on the steps of the post office downtown. "Hey George," he said. "I saw Shirley's new dog!"

"So," George said begrudgingly.

"He's got a smile just like yours!"

George threw up his hands and headed for his mail box.

"That's a great story," I told Shirley. "Did he ever get new teeth?"

"Yeah," she said. "His smile looked even better than Moe's, so we moved back in together." ■

“

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A Matchmaker's Ball

by Terry Berkson

The other day I was driving on County Route 16 when I noticed the ruins of an old barn. Upon closer inspection I realized it was the remains of a block building that had been built and used by a man I once knew. His name was Ziggie Pucecki and I got to meet him through the efforts of my Aunt Ruta who fancied herself as a kind of matchmaker. I was a kid from Brooklyn who liked farms and he was a farmer. But, that wasn't the only match my aunt wanted to make. Ziggie was an eligible bachelor who was at that time about forty years old. One August afternoon, Aunt Ruta had Uncle William drive us out to the Pucecki place where she intended to secure a photograph of the farmer that she would send to my Aunt Kay who was living with her young son in a furnished room in New York City. In Aunt Ruta's mind, here was a man that needed a woman and a woman that needed a man. She thought they would make a great couple and once she had come up with that idea there was no stopping her. I was about thirteen at the time and was not at all interested in my aunt's plans. I had come along with my dog Pinky because I was told

I'd get to see how a farm operates.

While Uncle William leaned against his Plymouth smoking a pipe, Aunt Ruta was in the house getting the photograph from Ziggie's mother who was scheming with my aunt to find a woman for her son. At the time, the farmer had no idea that they had plans for him. He came out of the milk house and asked of my dog, "Does he chase cows?"

I didn't know if this was something good or bad and answered, "He chases cats!"

It was almost milking time and I followed the farmer out into the pasture to bring in some stragglers. He told me to let Pinky loose and sure enough my dog took out after some logy Holsteins making them trot in the right direction. I had no idea that my little black and white mutt had any herding abilities. Ziggie was very pleased with this and invited me to stay on at the farm for a while. I guess Aunt Ruta had expected the invitation because she had stashed some clothes and my new BB gun in the trunk of the car.



So, for a time I stayed on at the "Pupetski" farm—that's what Aunt Ruta called it. I rose early to help with the milking and went to bed not long after sunset. There was no television in the house back then. I guess after a few days Ziggie sensed that the city kid was getting bored so one night we headed for a movie at the Capitol in Richfield Springs. It felt like a return to civilization. A horror movie starring Bela Lugosi was playing. The farmer fell asleep in the middle of the movie.

Besides working hard at his dairy, Ziggie had another job at some kind of mill or factory. Before he'd leave for

the day, he'd plan a couple of chores for me to do but mostly I had a lot of time on my hands. One morning after I had finished cleaning the barn I picked up my BB gun and crossed the road to sit in the garden next to the house. I shot at various targets, a fence post, a bird, an old wooden bucket. Then my eyes came to rest on this shiny metal sphere that was about the size of a basketball. I figured it would ring like a bell when my BB hit it. It was sitting on a cement pillar that was about three feet tall. I took aim and squeezed off a shot. Incredibly, the thing disappeared with a crashing noise that sounded

like a window had been broken. The ball had been made of glass!

Mrs. Pucecki came running out to the yard to see what had happened. "What you do?" she exclaimed.

"I didn't know it was glass," I said.

"That was expensive thing," she shouted.



Aunt Ruta's match making plans

my surprise when I returned, Ziggie had several beer cans lined up on a fence. He took the gun and shot down a couple before handing it back to me. Then he told me to shoot. The message was clearly made without one cross word.

I intended to buy another ball for Mrs. Pucecki with money I didn't yet have. I felt guilty for a long time but unfortunately I never got to replace her treasured ornament. I once read somewhere that in olden days people put the glass ornaments in their gardens to ward off evil spirits.

seemed to have disintegrated like the ball. The photograph was sent to Aunt Kay but I guess she wasn't cut out for the country and Ziggie never got to meet her. I heard he was married some years later—and that he had had a difficult life. He's gone now. All that remains is the block foundation of a barn, and the photograph that Aunt Ruta had once sent. ■

Ziggie's mother went out to talk to him as soon as he got home. I braced myself when he came over to me and told me to get the gun. I pictured it bent and broken in a garbage can. To

Paramedic in wedding dress works crash on way to reception



CLARKSVILLE, Tenn. (AP) — When Sarah Ray's father and grandparents were in a car crash on the way to her wedding reception, the off-duty Tennessee paramedic rushed to the scene in her wedding dress.

"My dad called my husband and said there had been an accident," Sarah Ray said. "All he told him was there had been a wreck, and the car was totaled. We didn't know anything about injuries."

Ray found her grandmother in an ambulance with injuries from the air bag and seat belt that were serious enough to send her to the hospital, but not life-threatening. ■

"One of the first things she said to me was sorry she ruined my wedding day," Ray said. Ray assured her grandmother she had done no such thing.

As she walked back to the car in the drizzling rain, holding her wedding dress off the ground, ambulance and fire truck behind her, Ray's mother snapped a photograph.

The photo was posted to the Montgomery County government's Facebook page with the caption, "How dedicated are you to your job?" The caption briefly explains the circumstances of the photo and concludes, "Thank you, Sarah, for loving what you do!" ■

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Lizzy's Cupcakery and Candies

by Al Dorantes

A wedding is not a wedding without a cake. Amanda and Jesse Tuthill, our cover photograph, sealed their special day with sweet treats from Lizzy's Cupcakery and Candies. Lizzy's Cupcakery, located in the New Hartford Shopping Center has been producing delicious, fresh, scratch baked cupcakes for over 4 years.



The beautiful cake and cupcakes for Amanda and Jesse Tuthill's wedding last fall came from Lizzy's Cupcakery and Candies in the New Hartford Shopping Center. Photo by AJ's Photography.

scroll work on the sides.

Lizzy explained that she is pretty casual about wedding planning. Most brides have an idea or vision of what they want or she can steer them towards what works. Lizzy said that her fresh made cupcakes are averaging about \$250 (\$2 each) and up for weddings. She explained that the Pinterest effect has been mostly good. "People come in with ideas now. They have pictures to show me what they want. People sometimes have to be reined in and sometimes I can meet them halfway." Cupcakes are becoming

popular for weddings because couples can offer variety for their guests. You can have multiple flavors for the same price as a traditional wedding cake.

Lizzy is busy now booking holiday parties and consultations for next year's bridal season. Finish your reception with cupcakes from Lizzy's Cupcakery. For more information go to: www.lizzyscupcakes.com or follow them on Facebook: Lizzy's Cupcakery.

Amanda and Jesse had 4 flavors of Lizzy's cupcakes at their reception. They had Oreo, chocolate peanut butter plus red velvet and vanilla. They also had a 1 tier wedding cake with

Groom's cakes make a comeback

Guests and well-wishers expect to see at least one cake at wedding receptions. But wedding guests should not be surprised if they attend a wedding and notice two cakes sharing the spotlight on the dessert table.

Groom's cakes have existed for generations but have fallen out of favor in many parts of North America since the 1970s. Now groom's cakes are experiencing a resurgence in popularity.

A groom's cake traditionally represents something masculine, providing a contrast to the oft-feminine features, such as floral bouquets and frilly gowns, that dominate many weddings. Groom's cake designs often reflect a particular hobby or interest of the groom's.

Historically, groom's cakes are chocolate, a sharp contrast to traditional wedding cakes, which tend to be vanilla and white. Tradition once called for single women at the wedding to take

home a slice of the groom's cake to sleep with under their pillows. It was believed the cake would help them have sweet dreams of the man they would eventually marry.

Women today are likely no longer snuggling up to fondant and mousse cake slices at night, and wedding cakes are no longer relegated to vanilla cake with vanilla icing, which may account for the waning popularity of groom's cakes. Yet with wedding cake bakers showing off their creative prowess on television or through their own artistic bakery displays, it's no wonder that couples looking for something unique are once again embracing the tradition of groom's cakes.

Couples who are mulling whether or not to add a groom's cake to their menus should consider the following tips.

- Make sure it is highly personal. Groom's cakes typically reference hobbies,

affiliations or interests of the groom. Some men may want their cake to showcase the logo of their favorite professional sports team, while others may want a cake inspired by a favorite superhero.

- Involve the groom in the process. Despite the name, groom's cakes may not always involve the groom. A cake may be designed or selected by the groom's bride-to-be or his mother. Some forward-thinking brides may want to encourage their grooms-to-be to select their own cakes and offer input on their designs.

- Find a bakery that has experience in whimsical cakes. Groom's cakes are very often intricate structures and sculptures. The groom's cake may be more labor-intensive than the traditional wedding cake, so couples may want to shop around for a cake chef with the experience to pull off the design they desire.

- Experiment with flavor

combinations. Because the groom's cake is all about that special guy, the flavor of the cake should be centered around what he would enjoy. The sky is the limit on flavors and can include traditional chocolate, candy bar-inspired flavors, coffee, coconut, or even a bacon-infused cake.

- Consider serving the groom's cake at the rehearsal. Some couples prefer to serve the groom's cake at the rehearsal dinner rather than having two cakes at the wedding. Guests may not be able to fit two slices of cake after a large wedding meal, so serving the groom's cake at the rehearsal dinner may be the best of both worlds.

The bride — and her cake — typically steal the show at the average wedding. Therefore, a groom's cake can be a special touch that allows the groom to bask in his own wedding-day spotlight. ■

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by Amanda Comstock

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Hair Matters

Ashley is a newly wed and in need of a new style. She had just gotten her hair colored for her wedding and it looked gorgeous on her. We picked a copper base with a brighter copper ombre'. These tones are perfect with her skin tone and eye color, not to mention it was ideal for a fall wedding! Also the ombre would look great on a short style as well because we knew she was going to cut it off after her honeymoon. When she returned, we set a day for her to come and get her new look.

We ended up choosing collar length for the back with a severe drop to the front. Adding layers to the cut, creating movement and mobility to the cut, she was ready for styling. Ashley has coarse natural curl and needs moisture when styling to keep her locks from getting damaged from extensive heat. I used Brazilian Blowout Straightening Balm before blow drying to control her curls as well as nourishing them. This made it incredibly easy to



BEFORE



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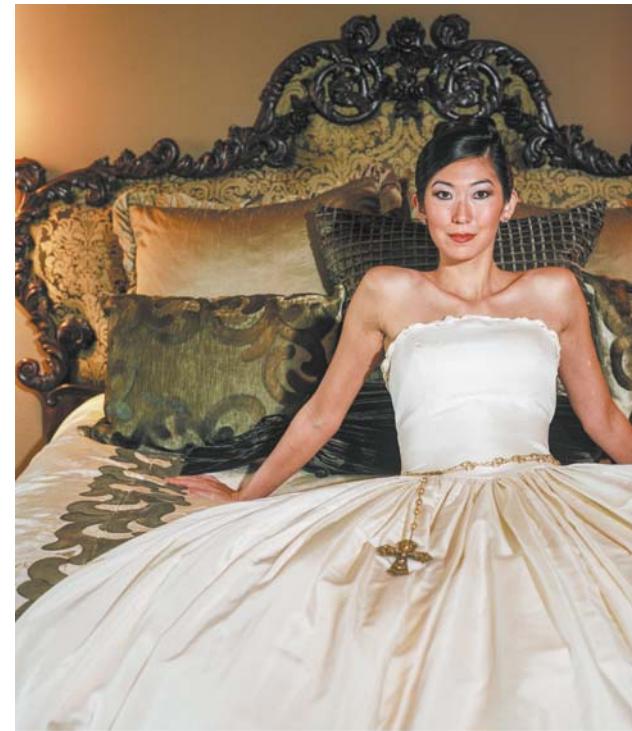
The many ways to recycle or repurpose a wedding gown

Brides want to look their best on their wedding days. In addition to professional hairstyling and makeup, many brides invest in extravagant wedding gowns.

Estimates suggest the average wedding gown costs \$2,000. Brides who indulge by purchasing a designer dress can pay upward of \$5,000 for their gowns. But even the most expensive dress will only be worn once by the blushing bride. Fortunately, there are a variety of ways brides can reuse or recycle their wedding gowns.

Heirloom

One of the easiest ways to get more from your gown is to pass it down to another bride after your wedding day. Brides frequently save and preserve their gowns with the intent of passing it down as an heirloom to a daughter or another family member. Maintain the beauty of the gown by hiring a professional dry cleaner or wedding gown preservation service to treat and package the gown before storing it



for some lucky lady's future use.

Religious outfit

If you feel the style of the gown won't keep up with the times, the fabric of the gown can be repurposed into a baptismal outfit or a

communion dress or suit. Christian children are welcomed to the faith in white clothing, which is a symbol of purity and cleansing of sin. Seamstresses can fashion beautiful dresses or suits from original wedding gowns.

Play clothes

Many little girls and boys like to play dress-up. And rather than have a gown sitting in the closet, use it to make play clothes for little ones. The gown can be turned into a dress for a fairy princess or an ice queen.

Ornaments or favors

Lace from gowns can be turned into doilies, accents on other clothing, undergarments or decorative pieces for the home. A lace-covered lampshade can be a creative way to commem-

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orate your wedding day for years to come.

Art

Use the gown as a background for artwork. Simply stretch it across a wooden frame and staple on the back. You then have a handy canvas at the ready.

Nursery décor

Decorate a baby's nursery with a portion of the wedding dress, which can be turned into a crib skirt or pillow. The dress can also be used to create frilly curtains. A white dress will blend with just about any pattern.

Anniversary tablecloth

Measure out the length of a dining table, and cut and sew the gown into a special occasion tablecloth. Take it out each year on your anniversary.

Stuffed animals

Present children with cozy friends that they can love for years. Cut out a pattern for a bunny or bear and use it to craft a stuffed toy from the gown. Visit a local craft shop for stuffing fill and buttons for eyes.

Donation

Some less fortunate people cannot afford a gown. Work with a church or shelter and find out where you can donate the gown to be used by someone who normally would not wear something so lavish.

Theater prop

Many plays and musicals feature wedding scenes. An upstart theater company may benefit from having a wedding gown in their costume department.

Handkerchief

Cut out a piece of the gown and sew the hem. Offer it as the "something old" or "something borrowed" for a loved one's wedding.

Wedding gowns do not need to be relegated to a closet once a bride has said "I do." Turn that dress into something useful for years to come. ■

Our Cover Story

Amanda Spink Tuthill

-a bride's journey



ajs-photography.com

The beautiful bride. Amanda's engagement ring and wedding band were both purchased at Engelbert's Jewelers.

by Al Dorantes

When you are planning your storybook wedding there are thousands of tiny details that need to come together. One couple planned and achieved their dream wedding and they did it by shopping locally. The October weather even cooperated; it was 70 degrees and sunny.

Amanda and Jesse Tuthill's wedding story began, "once upon a time." They have known each other since kindergarten. While they went their own ways, fate and destiny brought them together and they reconnected. They were together for 3 years and then engaged for 2 years. Finally on October 12, 2014 there were married. The wedding was the culmination of careful planning and shopping locally.

Amanda attended many local bridal shows. She would return and give Jesse 3 choices and he would chose from there. Jesse said, "I can't remember anything that was too difficult." Amanda added, "Once we had the date and venue set I was really relaxed. Not rush

rush."

Amanda said, "Shopping local is what sold me on my vendors. You build a relationship with them."

Amanda and Jesse chose Hotel Utica for their ceremony. Amanda's father walked her down the stairs from the mezzanine. Amanda was very happy



The cake and the cupcakes were purchased from Lizzy's Cupcakery located in the New Hartford Shopping Center. Amanda said, "Delicious!"

that Hotel Utica let them use the antique piano in the lobby. Jesse's twin brother's wife Allison played the old piano. The bride and groom exchanged standard marriage vows as they exchanged rings.

Amanda's rings, both her

engagement and wedding band, came from Engelbert's Jewelers. Engelbert's has locations in both Rome (West Dominick Street) and the New Hartford Shopping Center. Jesse's wedding band was purchased at Lennon's W.B. Wilcox jewelry in New Hartford.

The wedding's flowers came from Chester's Flower Shop and Greenhouses. Amanda's bouquet was orange and white gerbera daisies. She knew exactly what she wanted and the professionals at Chester's hit the mark perfectly.

The bride and groom entrusted their photography to AJ's Photography. Amanda said that photography was the one wedding detail that she refused to skimp on. Besides love and devotion it is the photos that brides and grooms have after the wedding. Everything was on time thanks to AJ's Photography. The uber professional photographer Allan Bartnick kept every detail of the wedding on track. Their photo album full of beautiful pictures will trigger memories of their wedding day for decades to come.

After the vows the newly married Tuthills moved their guests to Francesca's Banquets & Catering on Main Street in Ilion. Francesca's spacious and

elegant hall was decorated to match Amanda and Jesse's autumn theme vision. Centerpieces featured pumpkin spice candles to accentuate the fall feeling of the celebration.

A wedding celebration is not complete without a cake. Lizzy's Cupcakery

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The Hotel Utica made the perfect setting for their ceremony. Photo by AJ's Photography.



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Recently celebrating their 1st wedding anniversary, the newly weds, Jesse and Amanda reflected on their first year together as husband and wife. It's been a wonderful first year for the Tuthills, and now, baby makes three!

“
Forever is a long, long time, but I wouldn't mind spending it by your side.
Tell me, everyday, I get to wake up to that smile.
I wouldn't mind it at all.”
~He Is We, I Wouldn't Mind

made cupcakes and a small wedding cake for Amanda and Jesse. Amanda said, "Everything was great. Delicious!" She added, "We just ate the cake on our anniversary."

Jesse Tuthill said, "I got a lot of great feedback from the wedding guests thanks to the planning." Amanda added, "I would do it exactly the same way." The couple explained, everything they did they did inexpensively. They got a lot of great deals by shopping local. "If you're on a budget booking on Fridays or Sundays is great for deals."

Jesse said, "Amanda did a great job shopping around."

Amanda and Jesse are on to the next chapter in their story book. They are expecting. Amanda is 21 weeks along ...

Did you know?

Though many couples still tie the knot in traditional religious ceremonies officiated by a minister, priest, rabbi or other religious leader, more couples are embracing less traditional ceremonies that can be officiated by secular officiants. Humanist weddings, for example, may be officiated by someone who shares the same philosophy of life as the bride and/or groom, and such officials typically have no religious affiliation. Civil ceremonies are another type of wedding ceremony for couples who do not want a traditional religious wedding. Civil ceremonies are often presided over by a justice of the peace, political official or even a certified notary public. The rules regarding civil ceremonies vary from state to state, so couples considering a civil ceremony should do their homework before moving forward with any wedding plans. Couples with different religious backgrounds who still want a religious ceremony may want to consider an interfaith ceremony that includes traditions from each faith and may even include religious leaders from each faith. ■

Many people feel the type of flowers chosen for wedding ceremonies symbolize different things. While some couples may make their final decision on wedding day flowers based cost, they may be surprised to know what different flowers have traditionally symbolized. For example, writers and poets alike have long relied on roses as metaphors for emotion, beauty and true love. Lily of the valley is another popular flower that's more than just a natural beauty. Though lily of the valley is one of the more expensive flowers couples can choose for their weddings, some legends link the flower to happiness, while followers of England's royal family no doubt remember that lily of the valley was the flower chosen by Duchess of Cambridge Kate Middleton for her 2011 wedding to Prince William. ■

Francesca's Banquets and Catering

by Al Dorantes

After their nuptials Amanda and Jesse Tutthill moved their celebration 13 miles east to Francesca's Banquets and Catering. Located at 144 East Main Street in Ilion, New York Francesca's has the perfect atmosphere for weddings from the moment you arrive to when you leave.

Amanda and Jesse had approximately 120 guests which is average for the area. The hall was decorated with a fall theme and featured lanterns with acorns inside as center pieces. Francesca Magro recalled that their guests stayed to the end. She added, "AJ's Photography and Kenny the Promo Guy (the Tuthill's DJ), 2 of the area's top professionals in the area made it easy to work with."

Francesca said, "Amanda was really great to work with. It was a fall themed wedding; beautiful. They booked on a Sunday."

Francesca offers deals for wedding parties booking on Sundays; free cheese and cracker platter, champagne toast, or chair covers. Amanda and Jesse chose chair covers. Magro said, "Sunday weddings are not the number 1 date for wedding receptions because people have to work on Mondays." Booking on Fridays or Sundays is a smart, cost conscious option for future newlyweds.

When talking about the Pinterest effect, the deluge of wedding related images available to modern brides, Francesca said, "I like to see new things that brides envision. I like the creativity. Some things can be challenging but I can share ideas with other brides down the line."

Francesca met with Amanda and her mom a couple of times to go over center pieces and chairs and setups. She did a few trials to get it right. Modern



A great time was had by all during the great reception held at Francesca's. Amanda and Jesse said that Francesca Magro was great to work with. "She listened and created just the perfect menu for our fall wedding. The room was so beautiful." Be sure to see Francesca's ad in the glossy section of this edition of EDITOR.

Photo by AJ's Photography

brides are dealing with huge budgets for weddings. Francesca's sees \$7,000 - \$20,000 for average wedding receptions. Those figures based on number of people and their specific

details. Francesca is happy to work with all of them. Francesca said, "Amanda was easy going. She knew exactly what she wanted." Francesca's keeps up on

the newest trends and can help make your wedding reception dreams a reality. For more information go to: www.francescasbanquets.com ■

How to decide between a band or deejay

Few things set the tone for a wedding ceremony and reception better than music. Music establishes ambience and serves to transition guests through the various components of the day.

The decision of whether to hire a band or deejay often comes down to personal preference and budget. The following are some things couples should consider as they make their decision to go with a band or deejay.

Band

Live musicians spend years honing their crafts, and watching a band play at a wedding reception can be akin to attending a concert.

A live band can bring with it a sense of sophistication. Performers can tone the music to the crowd and improvise if necessary to meet the needs of the room. A good bandleader also will serve as a master of ceremonies at the reception.

Many wedding bands can competently play songs from various genres of music, while some are especially skilled at recreating the sound of a particular group.

Bands tend to be more expensive than deejays, and that's something couples must factor into their budgets if they prefer a band to a deejay.

Deejay

The deejay is one of the first vendors people think of when they envision a wedding reception. Perhaps because they are less expensive, deejays tend to be more popular than bands among today's couples.

Deejays are advantageous for various reasons. Thanks to the accessibility of digital music, deejays can often procure just about any song a couple desires for the reception. That's a significant benefit for couples who want to hear the original versions of their favorite songs, and not a band's take on those songs.

Deejays also can read the crowd and make adjustments to the music at any time. If a particular genre is not working, deejays can easily transition to another type of music to get guests back on their feet. That's not always possible for bands whose repertoire is exclusive to a particular genre.

Many deejays also blend songs seamlessly and may incorporate lights and other effects into their performances, which can encourage guests to loosen up and hit the dance floor.

Deejays also tend to travel with less equipment than bands, so they will take up less space in a party room.

No matter which road a couple chooses to travel, it's a good idea to listen to a deejay or band perform in a live situation before making a final decision. Couples also should confirm that the performers they meet or audition will be the ones who will perform at their weddings. Make sure this is written into your contract.

Couples should provide a list of songs they want to hear well in advance of their wedding day. This affords a deejay ample time to find each song or bands to learn the songs before the big day arrives. ■

"

When you realize you want to spend the rest of your life with a person, you want the rest of your life to start as soon as possible.

-Billy Crystal, When Harry Met Sally

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A trace of time

by Joan O. Scharf

After spending a hectic weekend at the Med-Cor business seminar in Albany, Susan took the wrong road on her way home. Somehow she missed the sign to the Thruway, and eventually found herself lost in the middle of a strange town.

A chill wind twirled off the late October leaves in sporadic swirling red and gold puffs as Susan drove down the unfamiliar tree lined street. She tried punching in her GPS, but gave up when it refused to respond. The fast approaching twilight brought a spatter of rain to mottle her windshield, and the temperature, in a true upstate fashion, turned decidedly cooler.

Annoyed, and uncertain of which direction to take, she braked to a stop and squinted up at the sign post on the corner. A movement near the bottom of the post caught her eye. Glancing downward, she was startled by the sight of a little girl standing alone on the sidewalk. The vision was at first blurred, then clearer with repeated swipes of the windshield wipers. She couldn't be more than three or four years old, Susan thought. Far too young to be out by herself.

She pulled over to the curb without further hesitation. Opening the car door carefully to avoid frightening the child, Susan stooped down beside her with a friendly smile. "Hello. My name is Susan. What's your name?"

At first the girl remained motionless, then turned to look directly into Susan's face with such sadness Susan felt her heart contract. "Did you hear me sweetie?" she asked again. "Can you tell me your name?"

The answer came in a thin whisper. "Amelia."

"Where do you live, Amelia? Where are your Mommy and Daddy?" But in spite of gentle coaxing, she could elicit no further response.

Susan began to take notice of the girl's faded cotton dress, bare feet and pale skin. Where on earth were her parents? What could they be thinking to let her out on a damp raw evening like this. She felt for the girl's hands. They were deathly cold.

Remembering her own lined windbreaker in the back seat, Susan opened the car door, reached inside and snatched out the jacket. She glanced around uneasily in the darkening neighborhood that obviously had seen better days, flicked down the lock and returned to the child. She wrapped the warm yellow jacket around the tiny girl as best she could, saying, "There, is that better? Doesn't it feel nice?"

Amelia made no attempt to reply. Even with the sleeves rolled up, the jacket engulfed her thin little body.

Worried, Susan began to realize there was no sight or even sound of traffic in the empty street. Homes once graced with Victorian elegance now huddled shuttered and boarded as if hiding past secrets. Streetlights standing like lonely sentinels keeping watch were the only sign of civilized life. It was as if all existence temporarily ceased, leaving the two of them alone in the misty rain. An odd feeling enveloped her. Susan's thoughts reeled...drifted. The child was lost; so was she. Could there be a reason fate had chanced them to come together on this deserted street corner? ...Shaking herself back to reality, she tried to focus.

Shelter or help must be found quickly. Her cell phone. Grabbing for her accustomed shoulder purse, she clutched only air; and abruptly knew with a sinking feeling that her purse—with keys and phone—was inside the locked car.

Since she had made the mistake of locking herself out several times in the past, she often stuffed the extra set of keys somewhere in her outfit before leaving home. She thought she had done so this weekend, but a frantic search through her pockets was of no avail.

Fat raindrops began spattering hard against the pavement. Susan glanced down at the silent child. Drizzle was turning her light brown hair into stringlets, and it was difficult to tell



whether tears or rain streaks ran down her pallid cheeks.

"I think it's about time we find ourselves a dry place, Amelia." Scooping up the child in her arms, she hunched over her protectively and hurried down the block.

From the next corner Susan could see the outline of an old stone church tucked in half way down the street. It was partially illuminated by the golden glow of a streetlamp, and she felt irresistibly drawn in its direction. Possibly a place of shelter.

Still carrying a motionless Amelia, she hurried toward the church following along the tall black iron fence with paint peeling from its sharply pointed spindles. In spite of attempts to move silently, her brown leather sandals slapped on the wet pavement. Moisture vapors curled catlike around her feet. The rain clouds had since blown over leaving fitful moonlight to cast grotesque shadows that faded in and out and she glanced apprehensively at each dark clump of bushes as she passed by.

Susan felt the chill of the child's body penetrating through the windbreaker. Readjusting her light burden, she bit her lip as she gripped the brass handle of the heavy wooden door at the top of the church's stone steps. Relief poured over her as the door slowly pulled open.

The interior of the church was dim, but the rows of candles flickering in red glass votives near the foot of the altar gave off a comforting glow. Finally a dry safe haven, she thought. Placing Amelia beside her, Susan settled gratefully in one of the mellowed oak benches near the front to gather her emotions. Amelia's dark eyes appeared enormous in the candle light as she began to look around, taking an increasing interest in details of her surroundings.

"Don't worry, sweetie. Things will be all right. I'll get you home." She gave the child a reassuring hug. Susan turned around in her seat looking for a pastor or someone to help. Seeing no one, she knelt and rested her face in her hands as she whispered a heartfelt prayer. "Lord, help me to return this sweet child to where she belongs. I don't know what to do next. I need your guidance to show me the way."

Breathing a sigh, she leaned back in the pew and reached out for Amelia's hand. There was no one beside her. Susan's eyes flew open. In a panic she looked about, barely catching the movement of the wooden church door as it swung shut.

"Oh, no!" The words came involuntarily. "I can't let her become lost again."

Susan burst out of the door just in time to see Amelia, still wearing the bright yellow windbreaker, disappear through an iron gate leading into the gloom toward the back of the church. Susan dashed through the gate after her. "Amelia! Wait. Where are you going?"

The plunge into blackness along the church's shadowy stonewall caused Susan to stop short. As her sight gradually adjusted, she realized to horror she was standing in the old church graveyard. With the tall spiked fence surrounding it, there was nowhere else to go.

"Amelia? Where are you?" Her voice sounded hollow. Silence answered.

A half-moon hung low in the night sky. Wisps of feathery fog drifting over the tombstones gave the enclosure an eerie mystical feel. Susan felt an increase in her pulse and the strength drain from her legs. Compelled to find Amelia, she stepped fearfully into the cemetery. Straining her eyes in the dim light, she spotted a blur of yellow in a far corner, and she prayed the elusive child would remain there. When she finally arrived at the spot, only the yellow windbreaker lay on the ground.

Bewildered, Susan reached down to pick up her jacket. As she did so, there was a distinct jingle at her feet. In the glimmer of metal on the ground she recognized the spare set of car keys that apparently fell from her windbreaker pocket. They had landed on the small flat headstone the jacket was covering. Thankfully, now she had a way to return home. Bending to retrieve the keys, her trembling fingers brushed against a name carved in the mossy stone. By the pale rays of moonlight Susan was able to decipher....

Amelia Thomas

Born October 1892. Died October 1896
"Here lies a daughter
Her story be told,
A Little Lost Lamb
Returned to the Fold."

Chester's Flowers

Amanda Spink Tuthill turned to Chester's Flower Shop and Greenhouses, 1117 York Street in Utica, New York, for her wedding floral needs. It was a good choice; Chester's Flower Shop has been in business since 1937. J. Chester Waszkiewicz started the shop on Columbia Street and they moved to its current location in the 1960's. Current owners, Laurie Griffiths and Bill Waszkiewicz are the grandchildren of the founder and namesake, Chester, and they took over the reins of the flower shop after their parents retired.

Laurie Griffiths explained that Chester's Flower Shop does a great deal of weddings

from May to October. It is the busiest time for weddings and they see multiple weddings most weeks during that time. For fall weddings brides usually select assorted fall flowers like orange mini calla lilies, orange lilies, and dahlias. Amanda's bouquet consisted of orange and white gerbera daisies.

Laurie Griffiths or another floral consultant will work with brides to plan their event. The professionals at Chesters will get the details of a bride's vision and can work within any budget. They usually meet 4-6 months before the wedding and then again 1-2 months prior to the big day. Griffiths

said, "Most brides take our advice. We're the professionals."

When asked about the Pinterest effect, all the visuals available on line, Laurie Griffiths said, "It's not a bad thing. We can see what brides are envisioning. Before brides didn't always know what they wanted. Pinterest and the internet allow brides to show us exactly what they want. It's a visual aid for us."

Chester's Flower Shop also has silk arrangements, wreaths, plants, dish gardens, tropical plants, gifts, candies, purses, jewelry, scarves, and more. Their 5 green houses keep their shop fully stocked with plants

and flowers. They also have candy by Russell Stover and Sweet Shop Truffles. 15 employees, 1/2 full time 1/2 part time, keep arrangements, deliveries, and orders flowing. And they bring on more help at holidays.

Whether your wedding is a spring, summer, fall or winter nuptial, simple or elaborate, Chester's Flower Shop and Greenhouses can provide bright, beautiful flowers to make your day unforgettable. For more information go to: <http://www.chestersflowers.com/> or follow them on Facebook: Chester's Flower Shop and Greenhouses ■



Chester's Flower Shop did the flowers for Amanda and Jesse Tuthill's wedding. The girls here in a relaxed pose after the ceremony. The flowers were the perfect accompaniment for the fall color scheme. Photo by AJ's Photography.

Chester's Flower Shop & Greenhouses

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AJ's Photography

Amanda and Jesse planned for a picture perfect wedding day. For their literal perfect pictures they relied on AJ's Photography to handle creative, cost conscious, and professional photography.

Allan Bartnick started with photography while he was in high school. He has been a wedding photographer for 29 years. Allan has been shooting weddings so long that he started with real film. This gives him an advantage over purveyors of Photoshop and filters. With actual film photographers had to get it right the first time.

Allan took Amanda's engagement pictures and wedding photos. Amanda and Jesse were married at Hotel Utica and the stunning architecture combined with their easy going attitude made Allan's work easy. He said, "They were happy to be married. They trusted AJ's photography with what we had to do."

Allan also photographed Amanda's sister Jennifer's wedding. He also shot a trash the dress photo shoot with Jennifer. That is where brides take photos in places and situations where a bridal gown might not be under normal circumstances; underwater, in the mud, with paint, etc.

The trend across the country, because of the availability of digital cameras, is that everybody thinks they are a photographer. Because of the internet and the omnipresent digital camera bad work is becoming standard. There are so many different specialties with photographers. AJ's Photography has an efficient



ajs-photography.com

Our bride, Amanda Tuthill with her Mom and Dad, Kim and Brian Spink. Photo by AJ's Photography.

way of doing things to keep bride and groom happy. "You don't get that with friends with a good camera." Allan has backup plans, alternatives, and contingencies to keep nuptial snafus from ruining a wedding day photo shoot. If it rains on your special day, Allan will know where to take you so that you have great pictures.

Allan prides himself on his fast turn-around of bridal pictures. In most cases brides will be able to pick up their proof books in a couple of weeks. Allan is one of the few photographers who still prints proofs. Newlyweds will see actual proofs in a proof book. Allan also provides couples with a thumb drive with digital files.

They get high resolution files; not low resolution files that seem to be the norm. AJ's Photography offers wedding parties many packages including photography, videography, and a photo booth.

Wedding photography has even made its way to Pinterest. It has its own tab. There are millions of pictures to give ideas for innovative wedding pictures. Allan cautions though. He said, "People should still rely on skill; quality matters." The other side of the coin is that Facebook and social media has been great for his business. For more information go to: www.ajs-photography.com or follow them on Facebook: AJ's Photography ■

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Factors to consider when hosting an outdoor wedding

Many couples tie the knot outdoors, as nature can provide an idyllic backdrop on such a special day. In many ways, planning outdoor weddings is similar to planning weddings that take place with a roof overhead and four walls surrounding couples and their guests. But there are some distinct features of both indoor and outdoor weddings, and couples planning the latter would be wise to consider the following factors before they commit to a location for their ceremony.

Laws

Laws dictate what can and cannot be done in open spaces, and couples with outdoor locations in mind should confirm local laws and regulations before they commit to a location for their wedding. Research which permits you might need and if there are any rules or restrictions at each location you are considering. The cost of such permits may be negligible, but the rules may restrict what you can do in a given space and how long you can do it. Discuss these rules with each other to determine if the rules are something both of you can live with.

Location

Proximity to your reception venue and the hotel where guests are staying is another factor to consider if you are planning on hosting an outdoor wedding. A remote location might provide stunning views and privacy, but guests might tire if the ceremony location is far from the hotel and/or reception venue. This should not be too big an issue if the ceremony and reception are held at the same locale, but couples should still look for nearby lodging before booking remote outdoor locations.

Weather

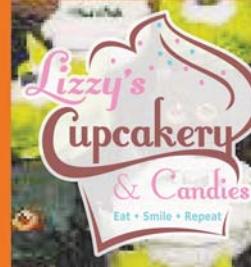
Weather is perhaps the biggest factor couples must consider when planning an outdoor wedding. Outdoor weddings are best held during those seasons when the threat of precipitation is insignificant and temperatures are mild, but it's still necessary to have a backup plan just in case Mother Nature does not want to cooperate. If possible, find an outdoor location that provides access to an indoor ceremony facility in case of inclement weather. If that's not possible, monitor the forecast as closely as possible and arrange for a tent to be erected should rain start to fall. (Note: The cost of such tents can be considerable, so build this contingency



into your budget.) If the forecast is calling for chillier temperatures than you had hoped for, email out-of-town guests a few days in advance to remind them to dress warm.

Logistics

No matter how beautiful a backdrop may be, photos of an outdoor ceremony can be compromised. Couples, along with their photographers, should visit the site in the weeks before their weddings to determine arrangements for the ceremony that will guarantee photos are not compromised by sunlight or shade. Facility managers can probably offer advice as to the best places to hold the ceremony and seat guests, but a run-through at the location with your photographer in tow can help ensure your photos come out perfect. ■



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Hotel Utica

When it came time for Amanda and Jesse to pick a venue for their wedding they chose the refinement of Hotel Utica for their ceremony. Hotel Utica opened its doors to commercial travelers and sophisticates alike on March 11, 1912, only five weeks before the fateful maiden voyage of the Titanic. Hotel Utica was originally a 10-story building of fireproof construction with 200 rooms, four dining rooms, a ballroom, an assembly hall, a restaurant for ladies and a grill and cafe for gentlemen. The top four floors were added in 1926, which increased the total number of rooms to 250. As business declined, the hotel ceased operating in 1972. It later became two adult care residences, the Hunter House and then Loretto Adult Residence. Time and vandalism took a toll on the landmark. In August of 1998 Joseph R. Carucci and Charles N. Gaetano purchased Hotel Utica, and demonstrated care and commitment in returning the area landmark to its original grandeur. After 2 years and \$13 million of extensive renovations, every detail of the hotel has been meticulously restored to take on the luster of its original beauty. Famous guests staying at the hotel have included President Franklin Delano Roosevelt, Hopalong Cassidy, Mae West and Bobby Darin.

Hotel Utica has 2 venues, 1 large ballroom and 1 smaller, more intimate room. The 2 venues offer flexibility in accommodating wedding parties of different sizes in appropriate sized halls. The space is, "They don't build them like this anymore." The building's renovated grandiosity is not something that can be found just anywhere in the Mohawk Valley.

Another unique perk of Hotel Utica is their overnight accommodations. At Hotel Utica the bride and groom receive the honeymoon suite with their booking. Hotel Utica will also offer blocks of rooms with discounted rate for out-of-town guests.

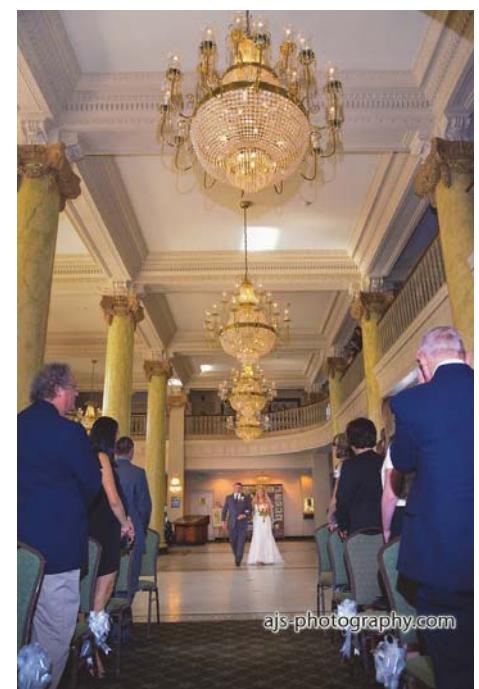
Hotel Utica is independent. They are now operating their restaurant, the 1912 Restaurant & Lamp Lighter Lounge. Running their own restaurant offers them a huge amount of flexibility. They can easily change details to match your wedding visions.

Jamie Gaetano, of the Hotel Utica, explained that there is not an average price for a wedding at Hotel Utica because there are so many variables. She said, "We're reasonable and competitive with rates. We can meet any budget." She also added that brides are getting a lot of variety with a buffet. You get a lot of bang for your buck.

Amanda and Jesse took advantage of



The unique architecture of the Hotel Utica makes it one of our areas most beautiful settings for ceremonies and receptions. Photo by AJ's Photography.



Here comes the bride, Amanda , taking her last steps as a Spink. Her Dad, Brian Spink leads her to the marriage alter at the beautiful Hotel Utica. Photo by AJ's Photography.

Hotel Utica's historic architecture and stateliness. Amanda's father walked her down the elegant staircase from the mezzanine. Their memories and pictures are filled with an ambience that simply cannot be matched at other venues.

Jamie Gaetano related that she sees a great deal of interesting ideas from Pinterest. Brides are bringing their vision with images they find on the internet. She said it is important for Hotel Utica to help them accomplish their vision. For more information go to: www.hotelutica.com or follow them on Facebook: The Hotel Utica. ■

Not fiddling around

-Young violinist plays seriously for fun

by JILL SCHRAMM

Minot Daily News

MINOT, N.D. (AP) — The violin is a special instrument to Shelby Huston. Playing violin has become so integral to her life that she's come to consider the instrument an extension of her arm.

Huston, a 16-year-old junior at Minot's Magic City Campus, is making a name for herself as a fiddle player, but whether fiddling bluegrass or performing a Bach concerto, she is doing what she loves.

"I am blessed by the opportunity to play both styles. A lot of violinists only get to see the classical side," she told the Minot Daily News.

Huston picked up the violin for the first time in fourth grade. She had been interested in playing cello until her mother informed her that she would be carrying whatever instrument she decided to play to school by herself. She switched to the violin.

Her instructor, Jim Tengesdal, introduced her to fiddling after discovering she enjoyed playing fast.

"I like how fiddling has more of a swing rhythm, and I like the traditional old-time fiddling. I like how that gives me diversity and makes me a more well-rounded musician," Huston said. "With fiddle music you have more room for interpretation than with a classical piece. You can almost add your own little licks."

Huston took first place in the 34th annual Minnesota State Old Time Fiddle Cham-

pionships held in August in Mountain Iron, Minnesota.

She has competed in the International Peace Garden's fiddling competition held each summer. She's won her division twice. She competed in the youth division until age 13, when her high scores bumped her into the champions division. She has participated in the championship round three times. Fiddlers with the top five scores compete in the championship round, regardless of division. For the past two years, she finished second overall.

"I like competing. I like any type of performing. I just like sharing music with others," Huston said.

Huston participates in her high school orchestra and its 18th Century orchestra, which focuses on the classical music of that era. She said her college plans are to major in music education and minor in violin performance.

Her instructor, Jim Tengesdal, sees potential in Huston for a professional career in music if she chooses it.

"She's that gifted with her abilities, and you can tell just by watching her; it's truly her passion. She absolutely loves playing the violin," he said.

He recalled watching her as a beginning student in grade school, when she would come to practice with a sparkle in her eye, thoroughly enjoying every song. She would show up early and wouldn't want to leave.

By the time he began giving her private

lessons, Huston had a solid foundation with a good ear for music. Reading music was a weak point, which Huston admits she had to work on. Now, Tengesdal said, she is exceptional in that area.

"It's been a real fun experience for me, watching her, because she excels in just about everything she does," he said. "She's a really good fiddler but she's classically trained. She can play Mozart with the best of them way beyond her years."

Huston credits Tengesdal, her parents, her frequent accompanist Selmer Moen and early instructor Kari Moen as just some of the people who have helped her along the way. She doesn't consider herself to have arrived at her destination, though.

"There's always room to grow," she said. "You want to strive to do your best, but you always have to keep in the back of your head, there's still always room for improvement."

Huston said it's easy to spend an hour or more each day with her violin.

"It's so much fun to play. I don't really consider it practicing anymore," she said.

Her parents, Kevin and Jennifer Huston,

have encouraged her interest, although her father noted they did long ago nix the pre-6 a.m. practices of a little girl who didn't want to leave the instrument alone.

In a school assignment, Huston wrote about the impact the violin has had on her life. She recalled how at age 11, she broke her thumb playing softball and had to work with her instructor to learn new ways of playing so that she did not have to back out of performing at a wedding.

"Practicing so diligently in a time of struggle taught me how to be professional under tough circumstances," she wrote.

Selmer Moen said he has seen Huston develop tremendously as a musician since he first began accompanying her about five years ago.

"She was playing at a phenomenal level then and much more so now. She really matured in a lot of respects. She has always had a certain amount of stage presence, but that's really blossomed over the last couple of years," he said.

"Being on stage and under the lights makes me just feel like I am on top of the world. I love being able to look at the audience and see their faces," Huston said. ■

Young Cub Scouts

-learn fishing skills at event in Marshall

by DILLON DAVIS

Battle Creek Enquirer

MARSHALL, Mich. (AP) — It's a breezy Saturday in October and Tristan Thornton is getting anxious to fish. Sitting next to his father on a picnic table at the Wilder Creek Conservation Club in Marshall, Thornton, 6, takes a long look at an instructor explaining how to attach a bobber to a fishing pole.

Soon, Thornton, a fourth-generation Cub Scout, will be doing this on his own.

Thornton was one of about 50 kids at the Hooked on Scouting event recently in Marshall. The second-annual event is the first time many freshly registered Cub Scouts get a chance to go outside together for a

family scouting activity.

"This is my son's first real scouting experience as a registered scout," Nate Thornton, Tristan's father and a third-generation Eagle Scout, told the Battle Creek Enquirer (<http://bcenews.com/IN8n9bn>). "He's been going to stuff with me for a long time. He used to go up to camp with me when I was a camp director. This is the first time going to his first scout event. It's pretty cool!"

The event had a series of seven stations to teach various aspects of fishing, from learning how to cast a line into the water, to how to properly bait a hook, to proper fishing etiquette, to the importance of a tackle box. Some children listened intently until the instructor

finished; others laughed and talked among friends — after all, it was a networking event.

All scouts in attendance received free fishing poles, fishing gear including bobbers and hooks as well as a hot dog lunch.

Matt Thornton, scout executive and CEO of the Boy Scouts of America Central Region, said Hooked on Scouting is "a great way to spend a day" for families, many of whom stay with their children for the duration of the event. Thornton, also an Eagle Scout, guided young scouts throughout the event, especially acting as a watchdog to his son, Nate, and grandson, Tristan.

"I want them to enjoy being outdoors, enjoy being out with your family," Matt

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Haunting the schoolhouse

by Joan O. Scharf

In October on a Thursday approaching Halloween, Valentine's teacher, Miss Mackey, was close to finishing a story about a headless horseman she had been reading to the students since Monday. It was "The Legend of Sleepy Hollow." The small one room schoolhouse in the fringes of the Catskill Mountains stood only a short distance from the town of Sleepy Hollow, and that caused the story to be all the more frightening.

Walking home from school that afternoon, the girls bunched close together. They frequently cast quick nervous glances from side to side as if they expected something to happen. Valentine and his friend Ralphie took notice of this as the two boys sauntered along a little distance behind the girls.

"So what do ya think, Ralphie? You wanna give them a REAL scare tomorrow?" asked Valentine. "I got an idea."

Ralphie's freckled face under his red hair lit up with a wide toothed grin. "Whatcha thinkin'?" He bent his head to listen, and they continued to plod along together as Valentine outlined his plan.

The next morning, earlier than usual, the two boys met at the old stone foundation a short distance from the school. It was a cloudy dark day with the wind twisting the last of the leaves off the trees, perfect for what they had in mind.

"Did ya get the rope?" Ralphie asked, eyeing the uneven lumpiness of Valentine's clothing.

"Yep. All set." He patted

his side. "Got it out of the horse stall. It's looped over my shoulder underneath my jacket."

"And I got my pocket full'a little stones. They'll make sounds like mice running," Ralphie added with a satisfied smile.

They arrived at the schoolhouse just as Mr. Elmore was unlocking the door. Mr. Elmore was the man who came every morning with his horse and wagon to open the school, and start up the fire in the wood stove on chilly days. He lived down the road about a half mile.

"Hello boys. How come you're here so early?" Mr. Elmore asked as he propped open the door to the school house to haul in the large jug of water he unloaded from his wagon. The jug provided the day's drinking supply for the thirteen students and the teacher.

"We need to work on a project," Ralphie answered quickly. He nudged Valentine in the side with his elbow when Mr. Elmore's back was turned.

The two boys helped Mr. Elmore carry wood chunks from the woodpile outside and load them into the black iron heating stove sitting near the corner of the classroom. He added small thin pieces of kindling wood, and striking a long match, quickly had a fire going. Mr. Elmore adjusted the damper on the pipe, and closed woodstove door with a clang.

"Alright, boys, I'm goin' home now. Miss Mackey will be along soon."

As soon as they were sure Mr. Elmore was headed back down the road on his wagon, the boys turned away from the window. Both looked

up at the small wooden trap door in the ceiling.

"I think it'll work," said Valentine. "Let's try it."

Ralphie didn't need to be asked twice. Together they stacked a second desk on top of the one already sitting under the wooden trap door. Valentine carefully climbed on top of the two desks.

"Hold 'em steady," he said, reaching up to push on the trap door.

"Does it open? Does it open?" Ralphie asked excitedly.

Valentine didn't answer. He wiggled the board off to one side and stuck his head in the attic for a peek. Bracing his forearms on the ledges of the opening, he managed to scramble up. Almost immediately he appeared back over the edge, his dark hair dangling over his eyes.

"Ralphie, take that extra desk off and put it back in place! Then stand on top of the desk under me. I'll let down some rope. Hurry up!"

Open beams in the attic easily provided a place to tie one end of the rope. The other end came snaking down and Ralphie grabbed on. Even though Ralphie was skinny, and even though Valentine was tough and wiry for his size, it took a lot of struggling and squirming to haul Ralphie into the opening of the ceiling. When they finally caught their breath, the first thing they did was to replace the trap door.

It was dim in the attic. A few small beams of light filtered in between old siding that didn't quite meet. The roof rafters were very close overhead. The boys could stand in the middle of the attic but had to crouch where the roof slanted down on each side. Several areas on the floor were missing floorboards, and unfinished spaces between them went directly to the thin classroom ceiling below. It could be dangerous to walk around.

There was nothing in the attic. Nothing but dust and... Ralphie grabbed Valentine's arm in a death grip. "What's that dark thing over

there?" His voice was raspy.

Valentine looked in the direction of Ralphie's stare. In the poor light he could make out something black lying in the corner.

"Do ya think it's alive?" whispered Ralphie uneasily.

Valentine squinted his eyes, watching. It wasn't moving. Cautiously they edged closer. To their relief, it turned out to be a straight length of stove pipe about three feet long. Valentine picked it up. Although about as fat around as a dinner plate, the length of tin pipe was surprisingly light in his hands.

He grinned at Ralphie. "This'll work a whole lot better than those pebbles we were gonna roll around, don'cha think?"

Just as the two of them figured out what they were going to do with that piece of stove pipe, they heard Miss Mackey enter the schoolroom below them. Right behind her, came Shirley along with four more girls. Lying on their stomachs and looking through cracks in the wooden trap door, the two boys could see Josephine, Sophie, Annie and little Genevieve.

Valentine whispered to Ralphie. "Shhh...sneak over to the other side of the attic there, and don't make any noise."

With Valentine toward one end of the attic and Ralphie across from him at the other, they squatted down to wait. They heard the voices of Joe, Frank, and then Andrew, followed by Emily and Rachel, the Williamson sisters. Herbert came running in at the last minute and took his seat as Miss Mackey began a lesson.

It was time to put the plan into action. Valentine carefully set the stove pipe in front of him and gave it a gentle shove toward Ralphie. The tin pipe made a strange hollow noise as it rolled unerringly along the floor. All activity in downstairs suddenly stopped. The stovepipe reached Ralphie.

For a minute or two he held it still, and then pushed it back on a slow roll toward Valentine. Again, it made a

spooky moaning sound.

"Miss Mackey, What's that? Is it thunder?" Valentine could tell it was Josephine who spoke.

"Stay in your seats, everyone," ordered Miss Mackey. She sounded unsure of herself.

Valentine happily took another turn at rolling the stovepipe on the attic floor over their heads. This time he pushed it a little faster. It made a louder rumble.

"Maybe it's a ghost!" There was fear in Shirley's voice.

"I don't like that noise. It's scary!" Sophie stood up. "I wanna go home."

By now Ralphie had a big grin on his face. He picked up the stovepipe and tried to stand, forgetting the low beam above him. His head bumped the rafter, and the stovepipe dropped out of his arms. It bounced nosily a few times then rumbled on an angle toward an area with missing floorboards, where it landed with a thump in the ceiling directly over the student's desks. A scattering of dust sifted down.

Screams erupted from the room below. Little Genevieve started to wail, and all students dashed for the door. Even Miss Mackey snatched her coat from the hook and left, saying something about getting a neighbor to check things out. The nearest farm was about a five-minute walk, and she took off in that direction in a rush, as the students scattered for home.

When the school house was empty, Valentine untied the rope and tossed it down to the classroom floor.

He clung to the trapdoor framework to lower himself, and then dropped to the desk below nearly losing his footing. Then it was Ralphie's turn to hang down from the opening. Valentine wrapped his arms around Ralphie's dangling legs to brace him and said, "Slide that door where it goes while I hold you up. Hurry, before she comes back!"

With everything in its place, they fled from the school and waited out of sight behind a group of evergreen

trees.

"Here she comes," Valentine whispered. For a better look, he pushed aside a branch sticky with pine sap.

A tall thin man in overalls was with Miss Mackey. "That's Albert Jones," Ralphie said. "He helped out my Pa with the milking last month when Pa hurt his back. They got a little kid who's gonna start school next year."

It wasn't long before Albert Jones came back out of the school shaking his head. The boys watched from a distance as he spoke to Miss Mackey, then shrugged his shoulders and left.

Valentine and Ralphie strolled up the path to the schoolhouse. The teacher was locking up the door, leaving.

"Sorry we're late, Miss Mackey. Don't we have school today?" asked Ralphie, an innocent look on his face.

Miss Mackey turned and studied the two boys. The faint odor of pine sap drifted into her nostrils. She took notice of the bunched up lump on Valentine's left shoulder, and the frayed edge of rope dangling from underneath his jacket. Finally she said. "No, there is no school today, but be sure you are not late again on Monday."

The boys walked toward home at a slow pace, neither one in a hurry. "Bein' there's no school today, my Pa's gonna make me help with the chores," Valentine said.

"Yeah, mine, too. Betcha I have to clean out the calves pens. I hate that job."

Valentine kicked a stone out of the way. "Thought it would be fun just give 'em a scare. Didn't think they'd all run out and go home like that." He spat in the dirt at the side of the road. "Miss Mackey was gonna read the end of that headless horseman story today."

"Yeah, that was a good one. Probably she won't wanna finish it now."

The wind picked up, swirling dried maple and oak leaves around them as they walked on towards home. ■

Cub Scouts continued ...

said. "Learn that catching a fish isn't a bad thing. Learn that putting a worm on a hook isn't a bad thing. Learn how to put a bobber on. And just learn to be outdoors."

Among a group practicing casting their lines into a field littered in fallen leaves was Battle Creek resident Logan Wolfe, 6, and his mother, Stephanie Yates.

As Wolfe drew back his arm and whipped his fishing

pole over his shoulder in the distance, Yates said she was happy to have "good, quality time" with her son in an outdoor setting, as many parents did.

"It's good to see adults not on their phones and actually spending time with their children," Yates said. "I like that there's adults willing to take time out of their own busy lives and devote it to such a good organization." ■

There was nothing in the attic. Nothing but dust and... Ralphie grabbed Valentine's arm in a death grip. "What's that dark thing over

Simple solutions to save on your wedding



Couples who host their wedding receptions on weekend afternoons instead of Saturday nights can save substantial amounts of money.

Couples in the midst of planning a wedding often find themselves overwhelmed by the cost of such a meaningful yet expensive undertaking. The average wedding is as expensive as a new car or a down payment on a new house, so it's no surprise many couples experience sticker shock when they first begin to negotiate with vendors.

But as shocking as the cost of saying "I do" in front of family and friends can be, there are some tried-and-true ways to drastically

reduce that cost without making the big day any less special.

Guests

Many couples save the most money by reducing the number of people they invite to their wedding. Couples who come from large families may not be able to cut family

members from their guest lists without causing a significant stir, so such men and women can look for other areas to trim. Professional colleagues and old acquaintances who you no longer keep in touch with are unlikely to be offended if they don't make the cut, and removing them from the guest list can save couples substantial amounts of money.

Venue

Perhaps no element of wedding planning is more open to negotiation than the venue where the reception will take place. Many couples now choose venues that can host both the wedding and the reception, and that can save couples the cost of booking two separate locations and transporting out-of-town guests from one location to another. Venues are typically open to negotiation with regard to the price per person for the reception, and few will not have some wiggle room built into their initial quote. If young children and teenagers will be attending the wedding, negotiate lower rates for their meals, as they won't be drinking alcohol and therefore won't cost the venue as much as adult guests.

Location

Where a couple decides to tie the knot will have a significant impact on their bot-

tom line. Certain locales, such as large cities, are more expensive than others. Couples who come from small towns may benefit from tying the knot close to home, as vendors tend to charge less the further they are from large metropolises. Waterfront venues, regardless of which city they happen to be in, also tend to be more expensive than venues with less impressive surroundings. Couples willing to sacrifice city lights and breathtaking views of the water are likely to find more affordable venues for ceremonies and receptions.

Timing

The timing of a wedding also affects a couple's bottom line. Couples hoping to get married when wedding season hits its peaks, which is generally considered the months of May and June and then also late-September into October, can expect to pay substantially more than couples willing to get married at other times of the year. Couples also can save money by choosing to get married on Friday or Sunday nights or Saturday afternoon, when many venues charge considerably less per person than they do on Saturday night, which remains the most popular night of the week to get married.

The cost of a wedding is considerable, but couples can cut those costs in several ways if they're willing to be flexible and negotiate with vendors. ■

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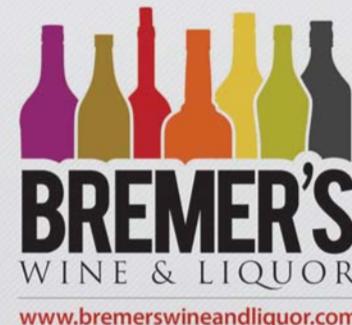
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Kids or no kids?

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ceremony.

Chances are word will spread that the wedding is not for child guests. If you do not want to handle inquiries, ask a member of the bridal party to answer any kid-related questions.

Children allowed

Contrary to popular belief, children can be well-behaved at a wedding and add a youthful component to the celebration. Watching a child twirling on the dance floor or devouring a large piece of wedding cake can make a wedding day more memorable and special.

Couples who invite kids to the wedding should expect the unexpected from their youngest guests. Let the small things slide and speak with youngsters' parents if any issues arise.

Arrange for some activities to keep children entertained and out of trouble. Have the band or deejay incorporate some child-friendly dances or activities. Designate the kids' table and arrange some small toys or activity books.

No children

Couples who decide to exclude kids from their guest lists should alert guests well in advance of the "no kids" edict. Be tactful when alerting guests. If you will be sending out save-the-date cards, include the phrase "Adults only, please" on the card. You also may want to include the information on a wedding website if you have one. A website affords you more space to explain your stance on young guests.

When it comes to the wedding invitation, your indications should already be clear. However, you can reinforce that kids are not invited by addressing the invitations accordingly. Do not include the children's names or "and family" on the envelope. Invitations should only feature the names of the people being invited.

Be consistent if you do not want children at the reception. It is not okay to allow one guest's kids while excluding another's. The only exception is children who are members of the wedding party. However, if you prefer a kid-free wedding, you may want to avoid a ring bearer and flower girl during the

reception.

Some reception sites may provide a separate room where children can gather. A television with a favorite movie or a few video games may be all that's necessary to pass the time. Hire a babysitter to stay with the children and give adults in the other room peace of mind.

Limited children

You may want to include older children at the wedding but have younger ones stay home. As you would for a wedding without kids, spread the word that there is an age limit. On save-the-date announcements, request that "No children under age 12" attend the wedding.

Be prepared for some opposition from guests whose kids fall under the age limit. Just be firm with your plans. ■

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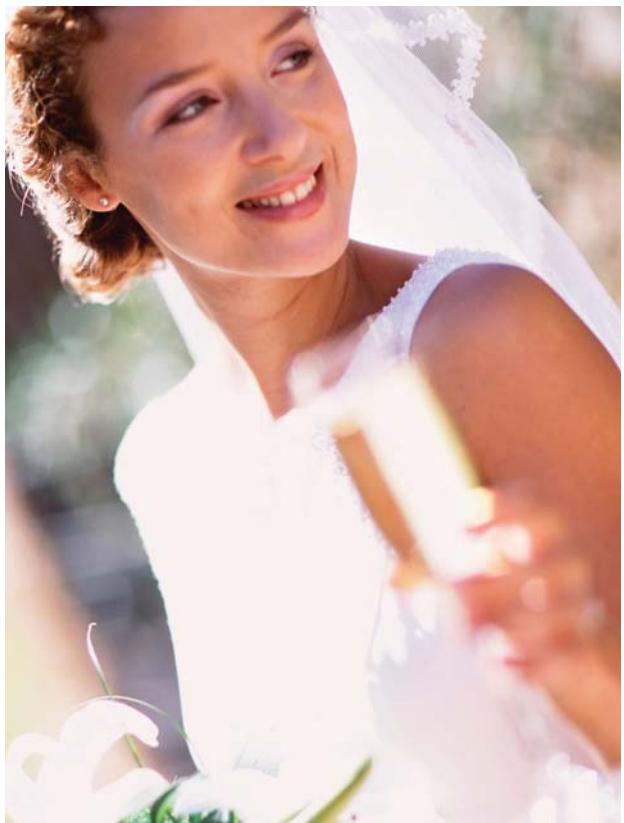
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History behind the bridal veil



Wedding day attire has changed in many ways, but one component of getting dressed up for a wedding that has withstood the test of time is the wearing of a wedding veil.

Though many brides know it is tradition to wear a bridal veil, many do not understand why. Here is a look at the history behind the veil and why it is continued to be worn today.

The veil and the bouquet that a bride carries may predate the wearing of white. Although there is no definitive reason for the wearing of a veil, many

"Superstition has it that it is bad luck for the groom to see the bride prior to the wedding"

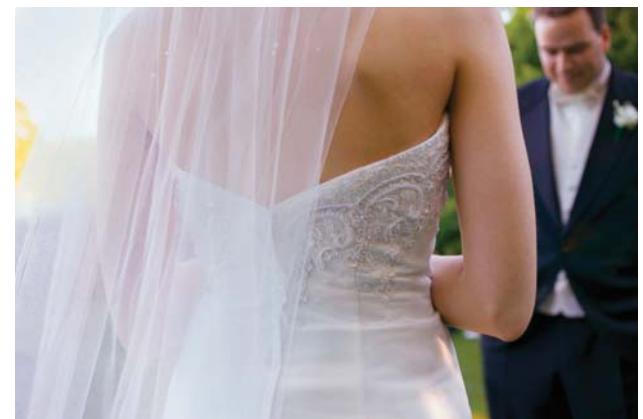
surmise it has to do with ancient Greeks and Romans' fear of evil spirits and demons. In fact, this is where many of the bridal traditions actually come from, including bridesmaids wearing similar dresses in order to serve as decoys for the bride. In an effort to frighten away or disguise the bride from evil spirits, brides-to-be were dressed in brightly colored fabrics like red and obscured by a veil. But in many cases, the veil prevented the bride from seeing well. That is why her father or another

person "gave her away." He was actually escorting her down the aisle so she wouldn't bump or trip into anything. The veil also served as a method of shielding the bride's face from her future husband, especially in the cases of arranged marriages.

Superstition has it that it is bad luck for the groom to see the bride prior to the wedding. A veil hiding her face also ensured that the groom would not see his soon-to-be-betrothed up until the ceremony.

Eventually the meaning behind the veil transformed as weddings evolved into religious ceremonies. The veil came to symbolize modesty and obedience. In many religions it is seen as a symbol of reverence for women to cover their heads. When white wedding dresses were worn to symbolize chastity, the white veil followed suit.

There are others who say that before the advent of shampoo, people didn't wash their hair as often and it could get quite dirty. The veil may have been a meth-



od to covering up unsightly hair.

Regardless of the origins, veils continue to be sported by today's brides, who choose from a few different styles. A flyaway is a short veil that ends at the shoulders, while a sweep veil ends at the floor. Chapel and cathedral veils follow the bride at a significant length (nine and 12 feet, respectively). A blusher is a very short veil that covers just the bride's face as she enters the ceremony. With a fingertip veil, the veil reaches the bride's waist and brushes at her fingertips.

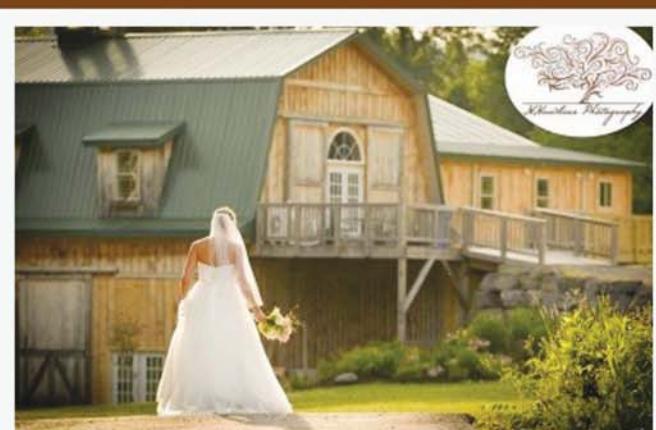
The veil will coordinate with the style of the gown, and many wedding attire consultants suggest choosing the gown prior to the headpiece and veil. ■



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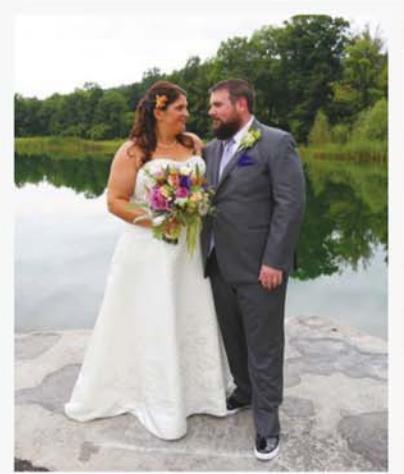
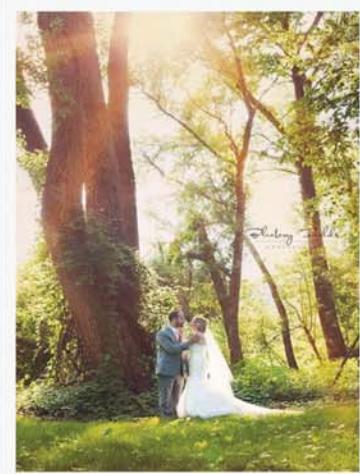
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Making use of wedding leftovers



Leftover food from the reception can be taken home, given away or donated to the needy.

In an effort to create a once-in-a-lifetime event that is remembered by all in attendance, many couples will admit to going a tad overboard with their weddings. When the party has wound down, conscious couples can ensure that some of the excesses of the wedding get repurposed for good use. And that begins with the food.

Many wedding caterers, in an

effort to ensure no guest goes without their fair share of food, grossly overestimate the amount of food needed for the reception. That means there may be plenty of appetizers and main courses leftover, all of which couples have paid for. There are a number of ways that food can be saved and given to others.

* Create classy take-home-pack-

ages. People have become much less averse to taking home food they cannot finish from restaurants. As portion sizes continue to grow, taking a portion home to enjoy later is both cost-conscious and a healthy idea. While a wedding may be a formal event, it shouldn't preclude guests from feeling comfortable taking home any uneaten food, particularly if they like the food. Provide the reception center with decorative to-go boxes or containers that can be used to package any food guests want to take home with them.

* Donate leftover food. Neighborhood food banks may be willing to accept food donations from your wedding. Although many deal with only nonperishable foods, some will pick up both. Before the wedding you can inquire within certain organizations to find out which specialize in what area of food collection. Feeding America (feedingamerica.org) has an extensive list of food banks and food-rescue programs available on-

line. Some organizations can pick up food and deliver it within the same day to a soup kitchen. If you cannot find an organization to help, you may actually be able to donate your food to livestock. Some farms and recreational farmers will feed pigs leftover food. This is a way to ensure food will not go to waste.

* Help reduce waste. You can speak with your wedding caterer about cutting down on the amount of food without making it overtly noticeable to guests. First, consider a sit-down dinner where portions are carefully measured rather than buffet where amounts are estimated. Also, removing extra courses such as dessert can further keep down the amount of extra food as well as the cost.

* Take it home. If you will not be traveling to your honeymoon directly after the wedding reception, you can have the catering staff package the food and you can bring it home. Keep your freezer empty and put the food

inside. When you return from your honeymoon you will have plenty of dinners already premade so you can enjoy life as newlyweds. Otherwise, you can invite friends over to view honeymoon photos and serve the food as refreshments.

* Recycle flowers. Food may not be the only item leftover at the end of the night. Guests who may not have taken home favors or centerpieces will leave behind many beautiful items that would normally end up in the trash. Flowers and gifts can be donated to a hospital or senior center to brighten the atmosphere. Be sure to keep just a few favors available for people who send gifts in the mail since they weren't able to attend the festivities.

There are a number of ways to ensure that the excesses of a wedding can be put to good use. By donating food and other items or simply taking them home with you, you can stretch your money and resources further. ■

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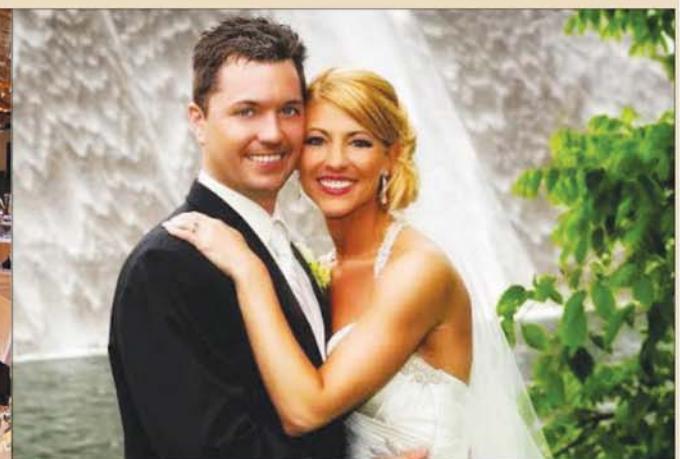
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Winter wine and spirits fit for a celebration

FAMILY FEATURES

The highlight of the holiday season is often the gathering of friends and family for a seasonal meal. Whether hosting and planning a full menu or attending a holiday get-together, keep in mind the perfect wine and spirit pairings for either a traditional feast or a more modern soiree featuring a variety of hors d'oeuvres.

Wines, such as La Crema Chardonnay and Liberated's Cabernet, and spirits or liqueurs, can serve as more than just a terrific accompaniment to your holiday spread; they also make great gifts for those wine connoisseurs and liquor aficionados on your shopping list.

The Perfect Accompaniment to Any Celebration

An elegant choice for your favorite hostess or connoisseur, this limited production La Crema Chardonnay is a true expression of the Russian River Valley in Northern California. Complex and nuanced, with flavors of ripe pear, nutmeg and hints of nougat, this lush wine is the perfect accompaniment to any holiday celebration and pairs well with roast chicken, creamy cheeses or seafood. Learn more about La Crema and their hands-on, artisan winemaking techniques at lacrema.com.



SERVE SPIRITS LIKE A PRO

Spirits can be served in a variety of ways, and different people prefer their drinks certain ways, so when entertaining this holiday season it is important to be familiar with some of the most common serving techniques:

- **Neat:** When spirits are served and consumed at room temperature with nothing added.
- **On the rocks:** When spirits are served and drank over ice.
- **Up:** When spirits are shaken or stirred with ice or chilled but drank with the ice filtered out.
- **With a mixer:** Some spirits lend themselves well to mixing, with ingredients such as tonic water, cola or juice.
- **With a twist:** When spirits are served with a thin strip of citrus peel, traditionally lemon, on the rim of the glass.

The Art of Chocolate in a Bottle

One brand is recognized all over the world as the ultimate expression of the art of chocolate – Godiva. Belgian Master Chocolatier Joseph Draps developed a unique rich chocolate with unparalleled smoothness more than 80 years ago, and Godiva Chocolate Liqueur is the ultimate embodiment of the original chocolate collection. Each bottle combines chocolate with enticing flavors from around the world that mix well with a variety of spirits. Find more ways to enjoy Godiva Chocolate Liqueur at godivaliqueurs.com.



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Since its first introduction in 1974, Baileys Original Irish Cream liqueur has become one of the world's most popular spirits, currently ranked seventh among globally sold distilled spirits. Its distinctive creamy taste comes from a blend of Irish whiskey, fresh double cream and other ingredients. Baileys' award-winning recipe, which now also includes Vanilla Cinnamon, Chocolate Cherry, Salted Caramel and Espresso Creme, is perfect as a ready-to-serve cocktail or mixed with coffee. Find out more at baileys.com.



HOW TO AGE WINE GRACEFULLY

Whether you plan to store that wine you received as a gift for weeks, months or years, here are a few tips to ensure your wine ages well:

- **Store bottles on their sides.** The cork can dry out and crack if not in contact with wine.
- **Keep bottles between 55-65 F.** The perfect cellar temperature to store wine is 55 F. Cooler temperatures can slow the aging process.
- **Keep humidity between 60-80 percent.** Low humidity can cause evaporation and oxidation while high humidity encourages mold.
- **Keep temperature swings to a minimum.** Temperature fluctuation causes wine to expand and contract, damaging the cork.
- **Store in a dark place.** Light exposure can cause wine proteins to become hazy and also cause aroma and flavor change.
- **Store in a location free of odor and vibration.** Vibration can hinder wine's development and odors can seep in through the cork.

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Start a new family tradition this holiday season with the Magic Light Wand. Witness real magic on the children's faces when they touch the button on the wand, hear the tinkling chimes and see all of your holiday lights come alive. Avoid the hassle of rummaging around behind the tree to plug in a cord or searching for a tiny remote and visit magiclightwand.com for more information and to order.



Comfortable Holiday Warmth and Style

Give the gift of luxe comfort this season with a cashmere turtle-neck sweater from Charter Club. Soft to the touch and incredibly warm, this sweater is a versatile addition to any wardrobe and the perfect way to embrace the latest color trend by selecting an off-the-moment pastel hue. Retailing for \$139, pick up this holiday essential exclusively at Macy's stores and macys.com.

A Safe Home for the Holidays

Give homeowners simple, smart security this holiday with Kidde's RemoteLync WiFi-enabled products. The plug-in monitor sends an alert upon hearing a smoke or carbon monoxide alarm. The cordless camera instantly sends video upon sensing motion. Mount it nearly anywhere and set it to arm/disarm based on your location, or request an on-demand video if the monitor is triggered. A free mobile app allows for custom notifications. For more information, visit kidde.com.



Pens and Pencils Make Great Stocking Stuffers

Everyone loves a stocking full of sweets and treats, but why not add something both fun and practical, such as Zebra pens and mechanical pencils that last long past the season? Durable Steel pens make great gifts for dads and dudes, while Cadoozles' playful patterns please kids of all ages. Moms can express themselves with vibrant Sarasa gel pens, which come in many colors, and everyone can appreciate the smooth, reliable Z-Grip Plus. Learn more at zebrapen.com/stockingstuffers.



Photo courtesy of Getty Images

FAMILY FEATURES

Santa's made his list, checked it twice and found out who's been naughty and nice. For family and friends who found their way on to Santa's nice list this year, these great holiday gift ideas, ranging from organization to ways to stave off that winter chill to gifts that bring out the magic of the season and last long after the holidays are over, can help earn you a spot on your loved ones' nice lists for years to come.



Heat Up Your Holidays

This chilly holiday season, give the gift of heat to the outdoorsman who loves to hunt and camp, a friend who enjoys tailgating or the proud parent who spends time on the sidelines at their child's outdoor games. The Chaheati Heated Add-On is cordless, lightweight, has a rechargeable battery and fits onto any portable chair. The heating system has four temperature settings – keeping you warm and outside doing what you love longer. Visit Chaheati.com/Retailers for retail locations and more information.



The Gift of Sight

This holiday, give a gift that changes the way someone you love sees the world – a gift that keeps giving even after the holidays are over. Now for as low as \$17/month, you can give the gift of good vision from VSP Direct to someone who doesn't have access to vision insurance. Coverage from the No. 1 name in vision care means a comprehensive eye exam, glasses or contacts, plus the lowest out-of-pocket costs. For more information, visit givevspdirect.com.



Get Organized This Holiday Season

Stop overloading friends and family members with presents that cause clutter. This holiday season, get creative and give the gift of organization. With ClosetMaid's SuiteSymphony Collection Kits, you can provide an easy way for your loved ones to reclaim control of their closets. Available in three finishes (pure white, natural gray and espresso) and a variety of configurations, Collection Kits are easy options to consider this year. Start your holiday shopping now at ClosetMaid.com/SuiteSymphonyCombo.

The guide to choosing groomsmen



Grooms-to-be face many decisions regarding their pending nuptials, but few may prove as delicate as choosing the groomsmen for the big day. Friends who expect to be groomsmen

may be disappointed if they are not ultimately chosen, while brothers may feel left out if they are not asked to walk a bridesmaid up the aisle.

Choosing groomsmen

should not be taken lightly. Grooms-to-be who are facing some difficult choices with regard to that decision can follow a few pointers to ensure they make the right call.

- Pick a number: Before you even consider who you want your groomsmen to be, speak to your fiancée about how many bridesmaids she hopes to have. The number of groomsmen and bridesmaids typically matches, so your fiancée's intentions may make your decision a lot easier. For example, if you have two brothers and several friends you're considering, but your fiancée only intends to have a maid of honor and one bridesmaid, then you can just ask both of your brothers to serve as groomsmen. Friends are unlikely to be offended if family members get the nod ahead of them, so discuss numbers with your fiancée before you begin trimming your list of candidates. If you already have an idea of who you want to be your groomsmen but your choices outnumber your fiancée's, see if she has anyone else she can

add to her party so no one is left out.

- Choose the best man for the job: Many grooms pick a brother to serve as their best man, and while that's a nice sentiment, it's important that grooms recognize that being a best man carries with it some responsibility. A best man will organize the bachelor party, give a toast at the wedding and handle any post-wedding duties, such as returning the tuxes or arranging for the newlyweds' transportation to the airport. If your brother is already incredibly busy or if you doubt he is up to the task of being a best man, then you might be better off asking him to be a groomsman and finding another best man who's more capable of juggling the numerous responsibilities that come with being best man.

- Don't forget your fiancée's family: While you should not feel pressured to pick anyone in particular as your best man, if your fiancée has any brothers, ask her if she had her heart set on including any of them in the bridal party. Some brides

want their brothers to be groomsmen, so discuss this with your fiancée before asking anyone to line up beside you. This discussion can go both ways as well, as you can ask your bride-to-be to include a favorite sister in her bridal party if you so desire.

- Confirm their availability: When asking friends or family members to be groomsmen, it's best to ensure they can actually make it to the ceremony. This is a concern for grooms who are planning a destination wedding or those getting married in their fiancée's hometown and not their own, as some guests, including potential groomsmen, may not be able to afford to attend an overseas

or faraway ceremony. When asking, explain the situation to them, and let them know you fully understand if they cannot commit to being a groomsmen due to travel or financial concerns. Confirm their availability as soon as possible, as you don't want to be down one groomsman come your big day. For those who you want to be a groomsmen but are unable to make it, it can be a nice gesture to buy them a groomsmen gift as a token of your appreciation for their friendship.

Many grooms face difficult decisions when choosing their groomsmen. But there are ways to make such decisions a lot easier than they may seem. ■

Why marriage can be good for your health

Proponents of marriage may quote any number of reasons why couples should tie the knot instead of living a life of singleness. A desire to raise children together is one reason many couples wed, but getting hitched might also be better for your health. That's right, a growing body of evidence has suggested marriage may be beneficial for men and women from a health and wellness standpoint.

A 2006 study published in the Journal of Epidemiology and Community found that, compared with married people, people who are widowed, are divorced/separated or have never married are more likely to die earlier. In addition to a greater combined wealth that may make access to health insurance or better healthcare possible, there are a number of possible reasons behind why married couples tend to be healthier and happier.

* Safety: Being married and committed to one partner reduces your risk of developing a disease through intimate encounters. Furthermore, married couples tend to be less involved in behaviors that may put them at risk for violent altercations between others. Research by the United States Justice Department has found that single and divorced women are four to five times more likely to be victims of violence in any given year than women who are married, while bachelors are four times more likely to be victims of violent-crime than men who are married.

* Health monitoring: Married couples may pay attention to and monitor changes in each other's health more so than boyfriends and girlfriends. Couples who can recognize the subtle changes in physical or emotional health may be able to identify problems before they become more serious. Couples may also be able to urge spouses to make appointments for routine health screenings and follow up on doctors' appointments.

* Greater financial security: Money is a primary source of stress for many men and women. But living in a dual-income household can ease some of that stress and the potential

health problems that come with it. Some research has indicated that married men make as much as 40 percent more money than comparable single men, even after accounting for education and job history. Marriage could be seen as an indication of security and trustworthiness, traits appealing to

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I love you in a weak at my knees, butterflies in my stomach, giddy little kid in a candy store kind of way.”

How to clean your jewelry

Engagement rings are not only tangible investments in the future of a relationship, they're also investments in a more traditional sense. Men and women save for months to purchase these special symbols of love and fidelity that will be treasured for years to come.

Properly caring for fine jewelry can help it retain its luster and beauty, as well as its value. According to a 2011 Engagement & Jewelry Survey from XO Group Inc., formerly The Knot Inc. and owners of TheKnot.com, the average American engagement ring costs \$5,200, and wedding bands only add to those costs. Upon making such significant investments, it's no surprise that couples prioritize proper care and cleaning techniques to protect their jewelry, and the following are a few ways to do just that.

- * First examine all the prongs on settings, clasps and other components of the rings to make sure they are secure. Otherwise, pieces or stones could come loose and be lost during the

cleaning process. If anything is loose, bring it to a jeweler for repairs.

- * When cleaning, try soap and water first before moving on to harsher chemicals if necessary. Soft, porous jewelry, such as opals, pearls and turquoise, should only be cleaned in this type of solution to ensure they look their best. Select a mild cleanser, like a gentle clothing detergent or dish soap. Add a few drops to two cups of warm water and quickly dip the jewelry. Use a soft, dry cloth to dry and buff, then lay gems flat to air dry further. If stones need a little more elbow grease, use a soft-bristled toothbrush to scour gently.

- * White vinegar is another tool to use when cleaning jewelry. Drop gemstones and gold jewelry into a small jar of vinegar for roughly 15 minutes. Agitate the jar to dislodge any debris. Remove the jewelry and rinse off under water, then dry off.

- * Ammonia also can clean jewelry quite effectively, but its aroma may turn people off. Diamond jewelry, in particular, can be soaked in one cup of warm water mixed with 1/4 cup ammonia for roughly 10 to 15 minutes. Use a soft-bristled toothbrush to clean any grime from the crevices of the setting and beneath the diamond. Rinse off and allow to dry before wearing. If diamonds are set in platinum, ammonia will also clean the setting effectively.

- * For silver jewelry, use aluminum foil to clean



Keep jewelry looking its best by prioritizing maintenance.

tarnished silver. Line a tray with a piece of crumpled aluminum foil and place your jewelry on the foil. Sprinkle a layer of baking soda over the jewelry, then pour boiling water over it. The tarnish will transfer from the jewelry to the foil. You may need to flip or move the jewelry around so all sides come in contact with the foil. Remove and rinse with water. Otherwise, try a specialized silver cleaning paste or solution purchased at the drug store.

- * Many jewelry stores will clean jewelry free of charge, especially if couples return to the store where the rings were purchased. Some use high-pressure steam to loosen dirt and debris, while others use jewelry cleaning solutions.

- * When jewelry isn't being worn, it should be carefully stored inside a jewelry box or the box in which it was shipped or purchased. Place jewelry back in the same place each time so it does not get lost. Try not to take off expensive rings in the bathroom and leave them on the sink, where they are vulnerable to falling down the drain.

Remove rings and other jewelry if you will be using your hands to mix messy foods or to work with paint, soil or other materials that might put jewelry in jeopardy. Removing jewelry prevents scratching and keeps particles from lodging in the stones or setting.

Caring for jewelry can make it last a lifetime. Then jewelry can even be passed down to other generations ■

Marriage is good for you continued...

a company.

- * Increased intimacy: According to information compiled by Richard Nilon Ph.D., nearly half of all married people engage in intimate relations twice a week, compared to 20 to 24 percent of single and cohabitating men and women. Sex releases endorphins that improve mood, can be classified as moderate exercise, creates a feel-good environment that can reduce stress and promotes further contact between couples.

- * Improves mental health: Many people joke that getting married removes freedoms that lead to happiness, but researchers find that this isn't the case. In their book, "The Case for Marriage: Why Married People Are Happier, Healthier, and Better off Financially," authors Linda Waite and Maggie Gallagher found married men are only half as likely as

bachelors and one-third as likely as divorced guys to take their own lives. Wives are also much less likely to commit suicide than single, divorced or widowed women. Married people are much less likely to have problems with alcohol abuse or illegal drugs. An international study of 17 developed nations from Steven Stack and J. Ross Eshleman found that "married persons have a significantly higher level of happiness than persons who are not married," even after controlling for gender, age, education, children, church attendance, financial satisfaction, and self-reported health.

There are many health-related benefits to getting married. Men and women about to enter into a new life together can add good health to the reason why they are happy about their upcoming nuptials. ■

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Cunningham Custom Jewelry

Cunningham Custom Jewelry located at 4528 Commercial Drive in New Hartford, New York designs and manufactures one of a kind jewelry completely in house using state of the art equipment. Their old world craftsmanship combined with cutting edge 3D printing technology is taking jewelry making into the future.

Bob Cunningham explained that his grandfather bought this building and opened a store at their current location. They were Cunningham TV for years. Bob Cunningham also said that his grandfather was on the cutting edge of technology even then. In the beginning days of TV they had a television antenna factory on Liberty Street in Utica. The embracement of technology has allowed the Cunninghams to take their next technological step; 3D printing jewelry.

The 3D jewelry making process starts with Brian Cunningham, 4th generation, designing the piece of jewelry in the computer using a jewelry specific CAD program. Once the design is approved it is printed in plastic. The customer can see and feel what will eventually be the final product. Once they approve the plastic printout Cunningham Custom Jewelry will reprint the jewelry in their proprietary resin. It takes approximately 4 hours in the printer to grow a resin ring. Once the jewelry piece is printed it is put on "tree" to make a mold. Finally Cunningham Custom Jewelry will cast the piece in silver or gold.

Cunningham Custom Jewelry has a great deal of flexibility in their designs. They have the ability to make changes easily with their computer. In the past even the slightest change from a customer would result in hours back at the drawing board as an artist would have to carve designs by hand out of wax blanks. Mistakes or changes meant starting all over. Now with their CAD program modifications are as simple as a click of the mouse. Cunningham Custom Jewelry can create jewelry with your custom logos.

Pendants, rings, and more go from your imagination to their printer.

Bob Cunningham said, "Heading in this direction makes the most sense. We can wow people with one of a kind pieces at affordable prices." Cunningham Custom Jewelry can design and cast, set stones, and final polish almost anything that you can imagine. They are one of the few shops that can do that under one roof. It has taken them a long time to perfect the process and incorporate the 3D printing.

"That entrepreneurial spirit and embracing technology is still with us as Brian uses



Bob Cunningham with a Utica Comets jersey for Sitrin's Jerseys, Jeans & Jewels. This idea will become a custom pendant.

state of the art technology to make jewelry." If you can imagine a piece of jewelry, then Cunningham Custom Jewelry can design, print, and cast your idea. For more information follow them on Facebook: Cunningham Custom Jewelry. ■



The cast above and the final product to the right.



"The artist's world is limitless. It can be found anywhere, far from where he lives or a few feet away. It is always on his doorstep."

-Paul Strand

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Natural Stone Jewelry by Nicolle

-and the First annual 10k run, 2k walk and kids fun run to support The Northeast Kidney Foundation

by Al Dorantes

After an auto immune kidney disease was diagnosed in 1992, one kidney transplant, and 13 years of dialysis Nicolle Buell is a survivor and expert on kidney disease. High blood pressure and diabetes are the 2 leading causes of kidney disease. There are over 600,000 people on dialysis in USA and over 102,000 are on transplant lists waiting for new kidneys. Nicolle is on a wait list for transplant in New Hampshire. She said, "You have to plan everything around this disease."

Nicollette started her business, Natural Stone Jewelry by Nicolle, which features handmade jewelry using natural stones. A portion of the proceeds are donated to the Northeast Kidney Foundation. Nicolle uses natural stones, real dipped leaves, and lacquered flowers in her jewelry. Nicolle only does selective craft shows and she is currently looking for places to retail her jewelry.

Jewelry is Nicolle's focus until she is healthy enough to get back into food. She is a Culinary Institute of

America trained chef and she is looking to get back into cooking as soon as her health will allow. Nicolle cooks super healthy and has been canning a large amount of organic homegrown garden produce.

The Northeast Kidney Foundation is a voluntary health organization dedicated to preventing kidney disease and enhancing the lives of all those affected. Since 1974 the mission of the Northeast Kidney Foundation has been to improve the quality of life of those affected by

kidney disease and related conditions through early identification, intervention, prevention and support services; to promote organ donation; and to empower those we serve to be an effective voice for better healthcare at the local, state and federal levels. Nicolle chose the Northeast Kidney Foundation because of the way it handles funds. The money raised here stays here.

When she is not making jewelry or canning veggies from her garden Nicolle is busy planning an inaugural 10k run, 2k walk and

kids fun run to support The Northeast Kidney Foundation. On October 31st, 2015 registration will begin at 9 am in Western Park in Little Falls. For the run, there is a \$20 fee in advance and \$25 the day of the race. There is no fee to walk but fundraising is encouraged. The race starts at 10 am, walkers follow the runners and the kids fun run follows the walkers. The run walk is a day of Halloween fun for the whole family. There will be entertainment, refreshments, Halloween costume contest for adults and kids with prizes, mini pumpkin decorating, and a

Chinese auction with many great items donated by local businesses and individuals.

Nicollette said, "There's nothing like this event in the valley area. It keeps money here in the valley; it's kid and family friendly, and raises awareness. For more information on Nicolle's jewelry follow her on Facebook: Natural Stone Jewelry by Nicolle. For more information on the run walk follow: First annual 10k run, 2k walk and kids fun run to support The Northeast Kidney Foundation on Facebook.

10k run, 2k walk and kids fun run to support the Northeast Kidney Foundation October 31st • Little Falls



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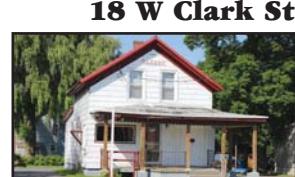
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Holiday Hosting

Time-saving tips for effortless entertaining

FAMILY FEATURES

This year, find creative ways to elevate your holiday hosting with a time-smart approach that's no less gourmet. Look for versatile recipes that can be made ahead, reheated in minutes and served straight from the oven to make holiday entertaining stress-free.

Creative combinations of fresh, seasonal ingredients transform typical casserole dishes from mundane to gourmet fare fit for any holiday occasion. But delicious time-smart cooking actually starts with the right cookware, such as the Anolon Advanced Umber casserole pan, which seamlessly moves from stove top to oven to table with a unique umber finish that brings warmth to your holiday spread. Anolon's high-performance, exceptionally crafted cookware, bakeware, cutlery and gadgets are offered in a wide selection to satisfy each home cook's unique style.

Another time-smart way to elevate your holiday entertaining is offering a selection of high quality wines to accompany your meal. Look for wines that consistently exhibit intense layers of flavor with complexity and balance, such as Kendall-Jackson's Vintner's Reserve collection. For example, Kendall-Jackson's 2013 Pinot Noir uses grapes grown in California's cool coastal vineyards to achieve flavors of ripe strawberry, raspberry, blackberry and dark cherry. Five months of aging in French oak barrels layers on aromatic hints of toast, vanilla and cedar.

Start your holiday menu with a versatile and savory bread pudding, created by Irvin Lin, author of the blog, Eat the Love. This winter dish is ideal for a crowd and offers the flexibility of serving smaller portions as a side item or larger portions for a main course.

"This bread pudding is perfect for a holiday brunch, easy lunch or casual holiday dinner," Lin said. "It can be made ahead of time for convenience and served at room temperature or warmed up."

Join @Anolon to discover your kitchen creativity and find more holiday hosting inspiration on Facebook, Pinterest, Instagram and Tumblr, and use the code ANOLONCOOKS (case sensitive) to receive 20 percent off your total order on Anolon.com this holiday season.

Follow Kendall-Jackson @KJWines on Facebook, Instagram and Pinterest for holiday food and wine pairing tips, recipes and holiday decor ideas. Use the code KJHOLIDAY to receive free shipping on orders of \$49 or more on KJ.com.



Savory Mushroom, Bacon and Gruyere Bread Pudding

Servings: 6

1/2 pound bacon
1/2 pound (about 1/2 loaf) crusty sourdough bread
2 tablespoons olive oil
2 teaspoons chopped fresh thyme leaves
1 1/2 teaspoons kosher salt, divided
1 1/2 teaspoons fresh ground pepper, divided
1/2 teaspoon garlic powder
6 cloves garlic, minced
1 1/2 cups chopped onions
1/2 cup chopped celery
1/2 cup chopped red pepper
1/2 pound sliced button mushrooms
1/4 cup chopped parsley leaves
2 teaspoons dried oregano
4 large eggs
2 cups heavy cream
1 cup (4 ounces) shredded Gruyere cheese, divided

Place bacon in freezer to chill. This will help make it easier to chop. Heat oven to 375 F.

Cut bread into 1/2-inch cubes and place in large bowl. Drizzle olive oil over bread and sprinkle with thyme, 1/2 teaspoon salt, 1/2 teaspoon pepper and garlic powder. Toss with spatula to coat evenly, then spread bread evenly in one layer onto rimmed baking sheet. No need to clean bowl yet. Bake bread for 20 minutes or until bread starts to turn golden. Remove from oven and lower oven temperature to 350 F.

Remove bacon from freezer and finely chop it. In 3 1/2-quart oven-proof stovetop casserole pan, cook bacon over medium-high heat until crispy. Use slotted spoon to move bacon pieces to bowl lined with paper towel. Pour bacon grease out, but don't wipe out pan.

Add garlic to pan and cook over medium heat for 30 seconds or until it starts to smell fragrant. Add onions, celery and red pepper and cook for 2 minutes, stirring frequently. Add mushrooms and cook until all vegetables are soft, about 5 more minutes. Season with remaining salt and pepper.

Pour toasted bread into original large bowl and add vegetables and cooked bacon. Add parsley leaves and dried oregano, and mix together with large spatula. In medium bowl, whisk together eggs and cream. Pour over bread and vegetables, add 1/2 the shredded Gruyere cheese and mix with spatula. Pour entire contents back into casserole pan.

Sprinkle top of pudding with remaining cheese. Place in oven and bake for 30-35 minutes or until top of bread pudding has turned golden brown and cheese is melted. Serve warm.



Recipe Reimagined

Eat the Love blog author Irvin Lin offers these variations and tips for a winning dish your guests will love:

- Make the bread pudding vegetarian by omitting the bacon, using 1 tablespoon of olive oil to sauté the vegetables and adding 1/2 cup of smoked Gouda cheese to the filling.
- If you can't find Gruyere cheese, feel free to substitute Jarlsberg or Swiss.
- To reheat the pudding if you prepare ahead of time, bake for 15 minutes in the oven at 350 F.

History in Your Backyard

- Erie Canal

Many of us pass over the Erie Canal every day and do not realize its part in the history that made New York State the Empire State. The Erie Canal was built to create a navigable water route from New York City and the Atlantic Ocean to the Great Lakes. The canal was first proposed in 1807 and construction began in 1817. The canal contains 36 locks and a total elevation differential of about 565 feet. It opened on October 26, 1825.

The problem with digging a canal from the Hudson across the state was that the land rises approximately 600 feet from the Hudson to Lake Erie. That meant that the canal would need locks. Locks at the time could handle up to 12 feet of lift. That meant with the distance and the rise that over fifty locks would be required along the 360-mile canal. A project like that would be cost prohibitive even with modern technology. In the 1800's the cost was unimaginable. President Thomas Jefferson called the project "a little short of madness" and rejected it.

Governor DeWitt Clinton liked the project and backed it. There was much opposition, that the canal project became known as "Clinton's Folly" and "Clinton's Ditch." In 1817 a determined Clinton received approval from the legislature for \$7 million for construction.

They started Construction, patriotically, on July 4, 1817 in Rome, New York. The first 15 miles, from Rome to Utica, opened in 1819. At that rate the canal would not be finished for 30 years. The main hold-ups were felling trees to clear a path through virgin forest and moving excavated soil, which took longer than expected. Using a scraper and a plow, a three-man team using oxen, horses, and mules could build a mile of canal in a year. The next issue was finding enough labor to dig the canal. Increased immigration from Northern Ireland helped fill the need. Many of the laborers working on the canal were Scots Irish.

With the new workers they picked up the pace of construction. When



they got to Montezuma Marsh (at the outlet of Cayuga Lake) it was rumored that over 1,000 workers died of "swamp fever." It was actually malaria!

The middle section from Utica to Syracuse was completed in 1820. Boats and barges started using the middle section immediately on its completion. Workers continued on the eastern and western sections. The eastern section, 250 miles from Brockport to Albany, opened on September 10, 1823.

The Erie Canal was officially completed on October 26, 1825. A flotilla of boats, led by Governor Dewitt Clinton aboard the Seneca Chief, sailed from Buffalo to New York City in ten days. Clinton then ceremonially poured Lake Erie water into New York Harbor to mark the "Wedding of the Waters." On its return trip, the Seneca

Chief brought a keg of Atlantic Ocean water back to Buffalo and it was poured into Lake Erie. The Erie Canal was completed in eight years and cost of \$7,143,000. It was extolled as an engineering marvel that united the country and helped make New York the Empire State

The effect of the Erie Canal on New York State is undeniable. Cities and towns were built on the Canal. Almost 80% of upstate New York's population lives within 25 miles of the Canal. The Canal is what made New York the Empire State. In 1829, there were 3,640 bushels of wheat transported down the Canal from Buffalo. By 1837 this figure had increased to 500,000 bushels; four years later it reached one million. In nine years, Canal tolls more than recouped the entire cost of construction. While in recent time cargo moving along the Canal has decreased and the waterway has become mostly used for pleasure boating surprisingly in 2013 100,000 tons of commercial cargo moved along the Canal.

The Erie Canal continues to be important today. A recent study found the Canal supports 26,472 jobs, \$1.6 billion in personal income, and \$702 million in tax revenue, both directly and indirectly. A total of \$6.2 billion in annual non-tourism economic activity, industrial facilities using Canal system water as a production input or for processes such as processing, rinsing, or cooling were found to contribute the greatest economic impact of all the sectors studied. The facilities depending on canal water contribute an estimated \$4.7 billion in direct business revenue annually.

As you pass over the Erie Canal on your drive to work or on your way to dinner take a second to realize the History in Your Backyard. ■

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Securing party reservations and other restaurant special requests

Restaurants can be ideal spots to celebrate special occasions or simply get a night off from cooking. One of the joys of dining out is having a delicious meal prepared and served without having to worry about post-meal cleanup.

Dining establishments are in the business of keeping customers happy, but diners can do their part to make their next dining experience as enjoyable as possible.

When planning your night out, call the restaurant or make a visit in person to inquire about the establishment's reservation policy. Find out how far in advance reservations must be made, and discuss the size of the party you plan to bring. Restaurant employees can advise you as to which days tend to be the least busy and which times ensure you will have a smoother dining experience, especially if your dinner party will be large.

If possible, become a regular patron at a particular restaurant you like. This allows you to develop a rapport with the staff and possibly even the owners. Like the restaurant's page on social media and sign up for email alerts about specials so you receive advance notice about upcoming events.

For special requests that go beyond regular restaurant offerings, consult with the manager well in advance of your party. Many restaurants are able to accommodate special requests, such as renting out the space or bringing in flowers. The restaurant may have a set of protocol they follow or vendors with whom they contract, and that can make the dining experience even more special. Discuss the extra costs involved and work out the details thoroughly so nothing is left to chance. Call ahead a few days in advance and confirm the reservation and special plans, if any. This way there will be no surprises come the night of the dinner.

Always be on time for a reservation, especially when you have a large dinner party. The restaurant's job is to turn over tables, and while you want to have a relaxing meal, you do not want to be late or dawdle past an

acceptable time. Consider the restaurant's business and be a good patron.

Remember to reward exceptional and friendly service during your meal and when paying the bill. Generous diners who treat the staff courteously and go above and beyond in terms of gratuity will likely be remembered the next time they dine out. Go out of your way to praise exem-

plary service and offer to give positive reviews of an establishment online.

Hosting a special occasion at a restaurant can be even more enjoyable with some pre-dinner planning and by working with restaurant staff you trust. ■

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By S.D. Shapiro

In the fast paced 21st century we've traded common sense for the ability to quickly look up information on the internet. We've forgotten our manners and civility. How do we get back to our roots? Can we get back? Food for thought . . .

For a group of people in a modern world we use a lot of phrases and figures of speech that are based on animals. **Cat on a hot tin roof.** **Every dog has his day.** With emails whipping through cyberspace and Wifi surrounding us with

What Would Your Mother Say???? Where did all these animal sayings come from?

its invisible cloud of connectivity why are we still using these figures of speech?

The **dog days of summer** comes up in the late summer when the August sun usually bakes us. Where does the expression come from? Would you guess that it comes from the areas around the Mediterranean Sea? Homer mentions in the Iliad,

"Sirius rises late in the dark, liquid sky,
On summer nights, star of stars,
Orion's Dog they call it, brightest,
Of all, but an evil portent, bringing heat,
And fevers to suffering humanity."

In the Southern Hemisphere, the Dog Days flip to February and March.

Hotter than a **snake's tail** is another temperature/weather related euphemism. There are other variations of this saying using other parts of the snake's anatomy but you get the gist. It

means it is hot. Who thought to choose a snake to measure temperature?

Rounding out the trio of weather related animal sayings is; **raining cats and dogs.** It means it is raining; hard. We have all seen some large rain drops but none have ever been as big as a dog or even a small cat. The biggest drops I have ever encountered were about the size of bees. "It's raining bees" is a nightmare nobody wants to deal with.

One of these animal euphemism that has always struck me as odd is, **"I haven't seen you in a 'coon's age."** Obviously, it means that I have not seen you in quite some time. Makes sense. But why replace "a long time" with "**'coon's age?**" It is a very nonspecific length of time. How long do raccoons live! In the wild a raccoon's lifespan averages between 1 and 3 years. In captivity they have reached 20 years. That is quite a disparity. Why did they pick the raccoon? Could whoever coined the

phrase have picked a different animal? Should we have different animal time spans? "Hey, I haven't seen you in a mayfly's age!" A mayfly lives about 24 hours. A tortoise can live over 100 years. When will we use, "a tortoise's age?"

If you measure from point A to point B on a map that distance is, "**as the crow flies.**" In our modern times traveling as the crow flies is nearly impossible unless you live on a freeway. Even if your address was on the straightest of roads getting to and from places is never as easy as a straight line. There is always some construction detour that ties your course into a cat's cradle. Or your GPS will take you in the most convoluted direction and tries to murder you.

We make **mountains out of molehills** and **shed crocodile tears.** We have the **memory of an elephant** and the **eye of the tiger** and we love these sayings. We will keep using them **until the cows come home.** When it comes down to all these animal sayings there are **more of them than fleas on a dog.** Stop and think, "What would my mother say?" She would say, "People say all sorts of things and it makes me **madder than a hornet.** You have to let it roll off you **like water off a duck.**" ■



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Make the most of “dinner and a movie” night



The “perfect date night” differs depending on the couple. Some couples might prefer a night on the town during which they get dolled up and visit a five-star restaurant, while others might find a laid back night at home makes for the ideal night for two.

Dinner and a movie has long been a go-to for couples who prefer something short of a fancy night out but more extravagant than a relaxing night at home. While making plans to dine out and catch a movie is not complicated, there are some things couples can do to make sure such nights go off without a hitch.

- Make a dinner reservation. If you’re going out on a Friday or Saturday night, be sure to make a dinner reservation in advance. Chances are strong other couples have similar plans, and you don’t want to miss

the movie because you were stuck waiting for a table at the restaurant. Dinner and a movie nights tend to be impromptu, but make a reservation a few nights in advance if you’re planning on going out on a popular date night.

- Leave ample time between dinner and the start of the movie. No one wants to rush through a meal, especially couples who may not get too many chances to dine out and enjoy each other’s conversation. If your movie begins at 9 p.m., make a dinner reservation for 6 or 6:30 so you have ample time to eat, enjoy each other’s company and make it to the theater on time. If you’re planning on seeing a highly anticipated movie on its opening weekend, be sure to leave enough time between dinner and the start time of the movie so you can get to the theater early enough to get good seats.

- Buy your movie tickets in advance. Much like you want to make a dinner reservation so you can get a table, you also want to buy your tickets in advance so you aren’t shut out if the theater sells out. If you’re worried about committing to the movie too far in advance and want to wait to buy tickets, choose a fallback movie to see just in case the film you were hoping to see sells out before you can buy tickets.

- Know the addresses of nearby theaters and show times. Many a couple has arrived at a movie theater only to find the movie they planned to see is sold out. Oftentimes, such letdowns can be remedied by driving to another theater nearby that is showing the movie at a slightly later time than the initial theater the couple visited. Know your movie schedules and theater addresses so you have options should your movie be sold out. Download an app like Fandango on your phone so you don’t waste precious time trying to find show times and addresses on the Internet.

Dinner and a movie is a staple for couples’ date nights, and there are some tricks of the trade couples can employ to ensure their next date night is memorable for all the right reasons.

■

The benefits of hiring an event planner

Event planners are worth the investment for a variety of reasons. While some hosts may feel event planners are an unnecessary expense, many event planners end up saving hosts substantial amounts of money in the long run. But the potential to save money is not the only reason to hire an event planner for your next corporate event or private party.

- Event planners save time. An event planner will listen to your ideas and goals before working out the details on his or her own. This frees up your time to focus on other aspects of the party, such as arranging lodging for out-of-town guests or getting a wardrobe together. Experienced event planners also know all the ins and outs of planning an event. Such details can prove difficult and time consuming for inexperienced hosts to figure out.

- Get insider deals. Party planners already have established relationships with vendors. They may be eligible for discounts or perks that someone who walks in off the street will not be offered. Those savings alone can make hiring a planner well worth it. Your

planner also may know which vendors are easiest to work with and which locations offer the best services.

- Event planners take the stress out of hosting. Planning large events can be stressful, particularly if you’re not completely sure where to start. When you hire an event planner, he or she will take on many of the burdens for you. This enables you to be more focused and have more fun at the event.

- Event planners give parties a more professional feel. Event planners’ designs will go beyond crepe paper and balloons. Planners offer strategies to help you create an impressive-looking event that guests will enjoy and remember for years to come. Plus, planners know the tricks of the trade to keep guests engaged and the party moving along smoothly.

Event planners are unsung heroes when it comes to organizing corporate parties or private events. Hiring such professionals affords hosts more free time to enjoy the festivities, and the investment in a good event planner often pays for itself. ■

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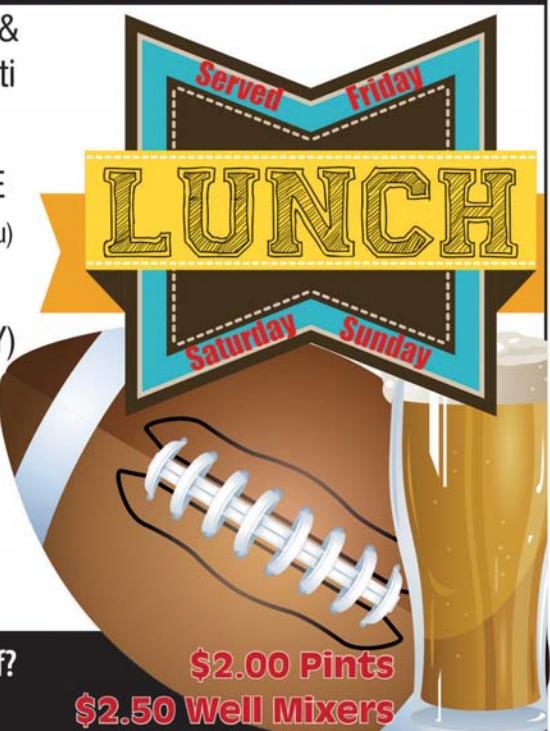
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-Dan Wilcox and Thad Mumford



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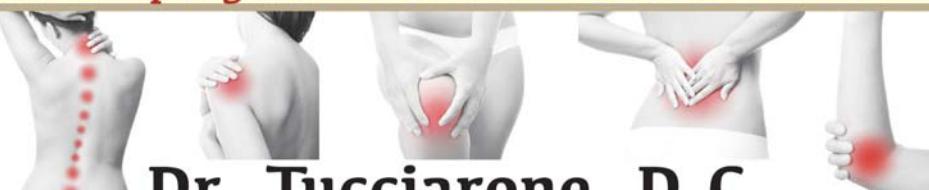
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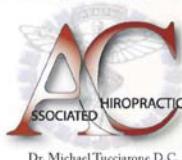


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\$100 Contest Winner

Our contest winner from the last issue is Gladys Kaczor from New York Mills. She is another faithful contestant and found herself a bit frustrated this week when she tried to call and got no answer. We had moved our office to Yorkville over the weekend and our phones were being a bit sketchy. Time Warner Cable got them up and working very quickly and Gladys was able to get through to us! It must have been her lucky day because when we did our drawing, her name came up!

When I gave her a call, she was very excited to hear of her good fortune but was quick to tell me there would be no photos until she had her hair done! I completely understood and postponed our get together until Saturday so that I could get her picture at her salon! Gladys says she has been

a faithful customer of this salon for years. It was formally known as Cut n Curl and is now under new ownership as All About Hair and owned by Sharon Hanrahan.

Carol Delguidize, stylist, has been doing Gladys' hair for over 15 years. Gladys said, "She even came to my house to do my hair when I had surgery. She's a good person."

That's really important Gladys and I have to tell you, you quickly stole my heart yourself. You're a fine person as well!

Gladys usually picks up her copy at All About Hair when she has her appointments. Her daughter Dianne is always willing to assist her Mom in any way she can and taking her to her weekly hair appointment is just one of the things she lovingly does for Gladys. If the timing isn't right, Dianne said the next favorite pick up spot for her Mom's copy is at Twin Orchards in New Hartford.

We're just glad to hear that it's your mission to find one Gladys! She told me that she reads it from front to back and reads



Carol Delguidize, stylist; Gladys Kaczor, our contest winner and Sharon Hanrahan, owner of All About Hair.

every word. She loves the stories and the advertisements. I asked Gladys if we could do anything to improve the magazine for her personal tastes and she said, "I love it the way it is." That's music to my ears!

Gladys has a soft spot for recipes as she was a professional cake decorator for Gold Top Bakery where she was better known as Mitzi. Her cake decorating won many awards which she is very proud of.

Today, she still enjoys baking with the assistance of her daughter Dianne and even her grandsons when they are home

from college. I don't mean to pop your bubble grandma, but I think their motives are purely selfish... they can't wait for the finished products!

Gladys enjoys baking pies, cookies, eclairs and all sorts of goodies.

Last year her cookies took first place in the OD's Entrée Magazine's holiday contest! Way to go Gladys!

Her daughter said, "She's not only a great baker, she's also the best Babci ever!" For those of you who don't know what Dianne is referring to, Babci is Polish for grandmother.

Her grand daughter is taking the time to record all of Gladys' recipes so that they will be saved and passed down through the family. That's such a wonderful experience and I applaud you for taking the time to do that.

Congratulations to you Gladys. I am picturing you spending your winnings on baking supplies and bringing more smiles to those you love with your delicious creations!

It was my pleasure, as always to meet our winner and award her the \$100 prize. Keep reading Gladys and thank you once again for your kind words.

This issue's contest clue can be found in the ad in this issue on page 43. We wish you all the best of luck! ■

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EDITOR

Just Good Reading

Number / Classification

20 Air Compressors
 25 Air Tools
 35 Announcements
 45 Antiques
 55 Appraisal Services
 75 ATV
 80 Auctions
 82 Auto Body
 110 Bedding Plants
 120 Bees-Beekeeping
 130 Bird Control
 140 Books
 155 Building Materials/ Supplies
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 161 Bulk Foods / Spices
 165 Business Opportunities
 170 Butchering Supplies
 173 Carpentry
 175 Cars, Trucks, Trailers
 180 Catalogs
 182 Catering
 190 Chain Saws
 195 Cheesemaking Supplies
 205 Christmas
 214 Clocks & Repair
 215 Collectibles
 216 Clothing
 235 Computers
 253 Consignment
 265 Construction Equipment For Rent
 275 Construction Machinery Wanted
 277 Construction Services
 280 Construction Supplies
 312 Crafts
 325 Custom Butchering
 330 Custom Services
 360 Deer-Butchering & Hides
 370 Dogs
 410 Electrical
 415 Employment Wanted
 440 Farm Machinery For Sale
 445 Farm Machinery Wanted
 447 Farm Market Items
 460 Fencing
 470 Financial Services
 480 Fish
 483 Flooring
 495 For Rent or Lease
 500 For Sale
 510 Fresh Produce, Nursery
 525 Fruits & Berries
 527 Furniture
 529 Garage Sales
 530 Garden Supplies
 535 Generators
 537 Gifts
 575 Greenhouse Supplies
 585 Guns
 587 Hair Styling
 589 Hardware
 600 Health Care/Products
 605 Heating
 610 Help Wanted
 653 Hotel / Motel
 683 Jewelers
 700 Lawn & Garden
 711 Lessons
 760 Lumber & Wood Products
 790 Maple Syrup Supplies
 805 Miscellaneous
 810 Mobile Homes
 811 Monuments
 812 Multi Media
 813 Music
 815 Motorcycles
 817 Nails
 820 Nurseries
 910 Plants
 950 Real Estate For Sale
 955 Real Estate Wanted
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 1109 Thrift
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 1147 Trains
 1148 Travel
 1165 Trees
 1170 Truck Parts & Equipment
 1180 Trucks
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 1190 Vegetable
 1200 Veterinary
 1205 Wanted

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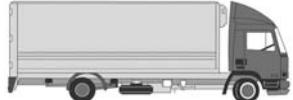
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26 words - \$5.20	27 words - \$5.30	28 words - \$5.40	29th word - \$5.50	30 words - \$5.60
31 words - \$5.70	32 words - \$5.80	33 words - \$5.90	34th word - \$6.00	

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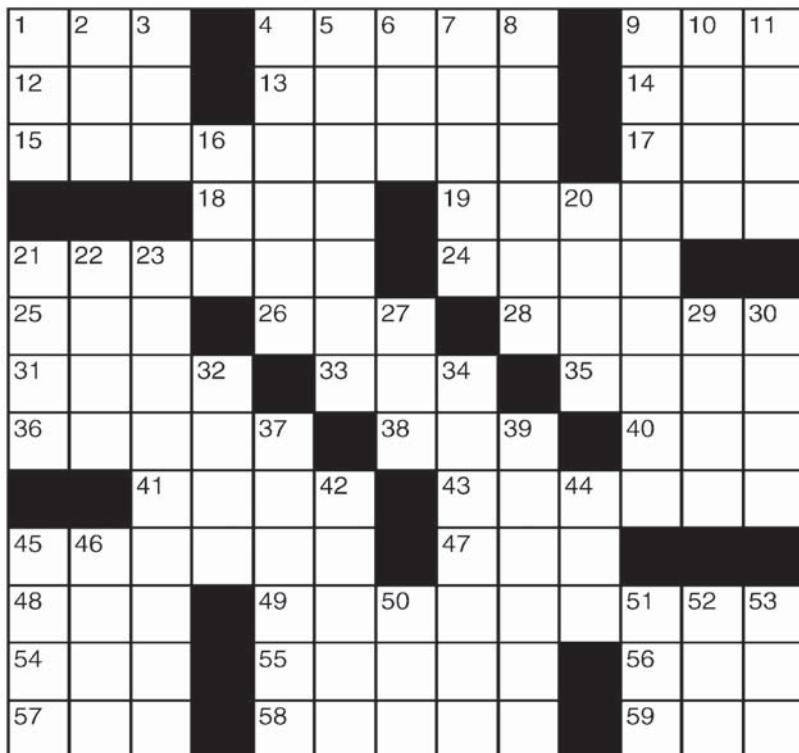
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King Crossword


ACROSS

- 1 Health resort
- 4 Actor Lorenzo
- 9 Massachussets cape
- 12 Paintings et al.
- 13 Put into law
- 14 Japanese sash
- 15 Captain's subordinate
- 17 Pal of Larry and Curly
- 18 "— Got a Secret"
- 19 Enlarged a hole
- 21 1964 Burton/ O'Toole movie
- 24 Indonesian island
- 25 From — Z
- 26 Pigpen
- 28 French subway
- 31 Addition results

DOWN

- 33 Hearing organ
- 35 Ladder rung, e.g.
- 36 Shout-out from the bleachers
- 38 Small barrel
- 40 Corrode
- 41 Caspian feeder
- 43 Cavalry weapons
- 45 Straight, for short
- 47 Actress Hagen
- 48 Rd.
- 49 Fuss
- 50 Pitch
- 54 Wickerwork willow
- 56 That girl
- 57 Type measures
- 58 Transmits
- 59 Cut the grass

30 Chooses

- 1 Pouch
- 2 In favor of
- 3 \$ dispenser
- 4 Fall fallers
- 5 Bening or Funicello
- 6 Crazy
- 7 Tart in tone or temper
- 8 Rill
- 9 Group of legislators
- 10 Reed instrument
- 11 Conked out
- 16 "Ferd'-nand'
- 20 Pub orders
- 21 Wild party
- 22 Needle case
- 23 Many subway riders
- 27 Tibetan bovine
- 29 Back

Differences: 1. Fence opening is wider. 2. Hair is different. 3. Neckline is different. 4. Arm is moved. 5. Window shade is missing. 6. Shirt is missing.

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HOCUS-FOCUS

BY HENRY BOLTINOFF



Find at least six differences in details between panels.



Weekly SUDOKU

by Linda Thistle

	8	4		2	
9	6		1		4
5		7		3	
	5	6		1	
	2	7		3	6
3		8	9	7	
4		5	2	4	9
7	1	3	5	4	8
9	6	2	1	3	7

Place a number in the empty boxes in such a way that each row across, each column down and each small 9-box square contains all of the numbers from one to nine.

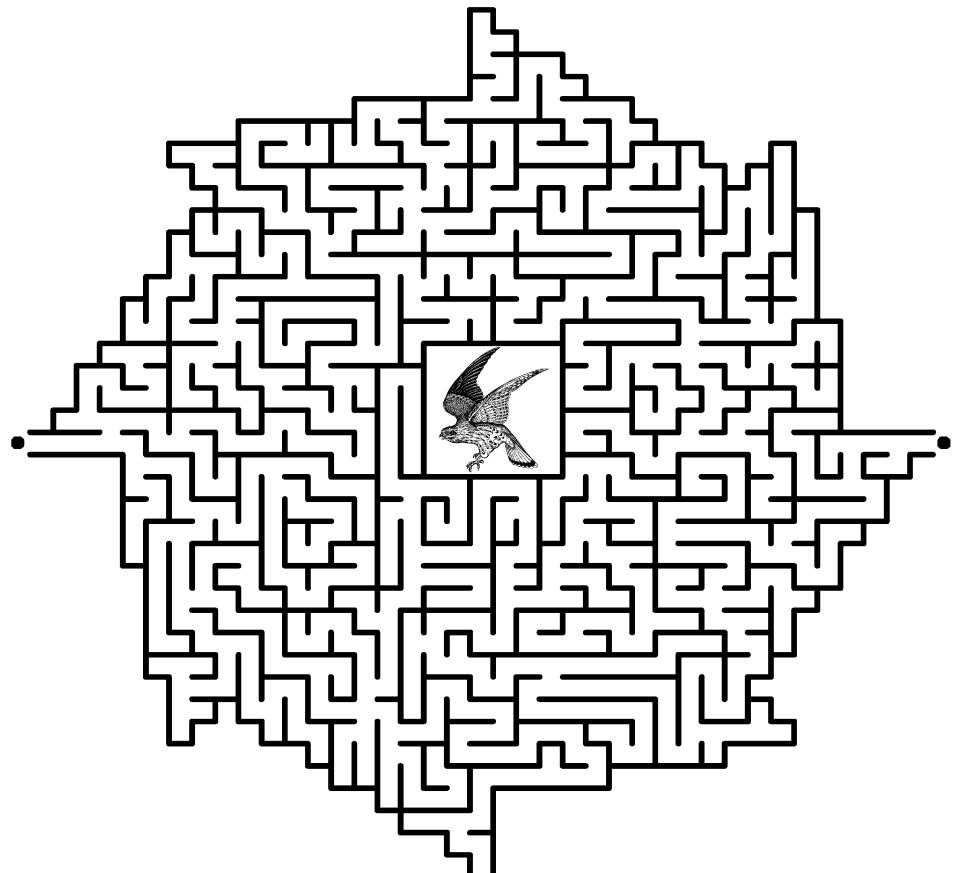
DIFFICULTY THIS WEEK: ★

★ Moderate ★★ Challenging
★★★ HOO BOY!

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Mega Maze

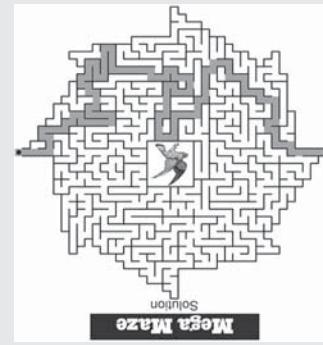
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ANSWERS

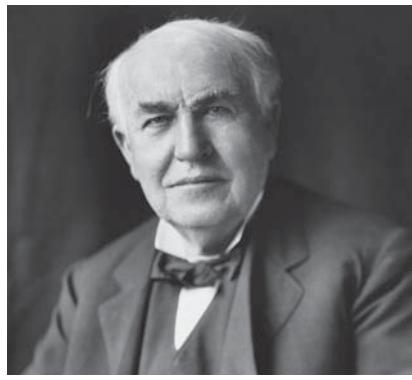
2	7	3	1	9	6	8	5	4
6	8	5	7	2	4	3	1	9
4	1	9	3	5	8	6	7	2
3	6	1	8	4	9	7	2	5
8	4	2	5	7	1	9	3	6
9	5	7	6	3	2	4	8	1
5	2	4	9	8	7	1	6	3
7	9	6	2	1	3	5	4	8
1	3	8	4	6	5	2	9	7

ANSWER



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

Solution time: 21 mins.
Answers
King Crossword



Thomas Alva Edison, photo by Louis Bachrach — Bachrach Studios, 1922.

"Our greatest weakness lies in giving up. The most certain way to succeed is always to try just one more time."

— Thomas A. Edison

SWAMP

-twas the Will-o-the-Wisp



by Joan O. Scharf

Kyle ducked his head under the stream of fresh water as his brother worked the handle of the outdoor pump up and down.

"Yaowsir! That's cold," he said, rubbing his hands over his face and down the back of his neck. Scattered hayseeds remained stuck to his tanned shoulders, and droplets of water dribbled from the brown ringlets plastered against his head.

Sweaty, and tired from the day's labor, Joby urged, "Hurry up. My turn."

Changing places, Joby bent over and braced himself for the icy gush. His scalp tingled as the water flowed through and ran off his sun-bleached hair. Cupping his hands beneath the spout, he caught what he could and slurped it with noisy gulps.

The screen door on the weathered grey farmhouse closed with a bang as Hiram Dibble limped out holding a tin cup in his callused hand. "Here. Use this. You boys must be thirsty after pitchin' all that hay, but we got most of'er done. Hope ta see you here tomorrow, and we'll finish up the other side of the field. Been cut couple days ago, and I turned it over early this mornin'.

Should be dry iffin it don't rain tonight."

Both boys drank from the cup. Kyle wiped his lips with his forearm and handed it back. "Yep. Guess we'll be here. Pa says we have one field left to do but it ain't ready for cuttin' yet. We'd best be gettin' on home now. It'll be dark pretty soon, and Ma will have supper waitin'."

Hiram hooked his thumb under the strap of his bib overalls as he glanced toward the fading sunlight. "Didn't realize it was gettin' that late. Wait up. I'm gonna get a lantern outta the barn. The sun'll be gone afore you get home, and it gets real dark in those woods, 'specially where the road cuts through Nine Mile Swamp. Y'all can bring it back with you tomorrow."

It wasn't long before Hiram returned with the lantern, primed and lit. "Here, this'll last for those two miles and then some. I'll settle up with payin' you boys after we're done tomorrow."

The brothers walked along the dirt road towards home, kicking at occasional small stones in their path. "What do you reckon Ma is cookin' for supper tonight?" Joby asked.

Kyle looked sideways at his younger brother with a

grin. "You ain't hungry, now, are ya?"

Joby plodded onward, ignoring the humor. "I hope it's beef stew, with those hot biscuits she makes. And maybe there'll be gingerbread, or even a pie."

The boys' thoughts focused on supper, and they increased their pace. Halfway

through the second mile, in the area of the swamp that lay on the either side of the narrow strip of woods lining the road, darkness caught up with them. As the chill of impending night met the days' remaining heat, fog appeared in vapory swirls, gradually thickening to occasionally slither out on the path in front of them.

The thin sliver of moon gave only limited visibility to their way ahead, and Kyle swung the lantern back and forth through the vapor as he walked.

Joby glanced around nervously. "Sure did get

dark quick. Glad Mr. Dibble loaned us that lantern."

Kyle sniffed. "Don't be such a scardy cat. Won't be long and we'll be home."

Suddenly Joby stopped. He stared off to the right.

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“

How to raise kids who grow up giving



Generosity is something children can learn at an early age.

Nancy Phillips, founder and president of DollarSmart Kids Enterprises, Inc., says it's been scientifically proven that giving increases self-esteem and self-confidence. Children who learn that they can help others will soon realize they have the power to make a difference. Recognizing that they can make a big change is a very empowering discovery for kids. Here's how parents can foster a love of giving.

- Choose age-appropriate tasks. Young children do not have a lot of money, so try to find charitable tasks that allow them to donate their time and skills. Kids can help make cookies for bake sales or participate in food drives in front of grocery stores for certain charities.

- Let children choose the beneficiary of their

efforts. Children may have their own ideas about who they want to help. Let kids choose because they're more likely to get behind the effort if they feel their input is valued.

- Lead by example. Don't just pay lip service to the idea of being charitable. Provide a good example by getting involved yourself. Make sure the entire family gets involved with the effort of giving.

- Let children see where their efforts are going. Writing a check is a rather unceremonious way of giving that may not resonate with young children. But if they can see food being delivered to the hungry or pet supplies going to an animal shelter, they can see the fruits of their efforts paying off.

- Create a giving account or box. Make it a family tradition that members of the household will donate an item they receive or a small amount of money to the box each month. At the end of the year, the family can deliver those funds and gifts to a charity of choice.

- Talk about giving at dinner. Make philanthropy a regular part of family conversation. Discuss the plight of the less fortunate with your children, focusing on the value of volunteering and helping others.

Children can learn to be generous and give to others at an early age, and those that do are more likely to grow into charitable adults. ■

SWAMP from previous...

"What's that?" His voice came out in a tight squeak.

Kyle, five paces ahead, whirled around. "What's what?"

"I saw somethin' over there

in those trees. It looked like a light; it was shiny... but now I don't see it."

Kyle hesitated, looking in the direction his brother indicated. "Aw, I think you're seein' things. Ain't nothin' there." He tugged at Joby's arm. "Come on, let's go."

Moving forward only a few steps, both saw a bright flicker in the woods beside them. They froze. In the silence came an indistinct whispery sound.

Kyle raised the lantern higher. "Who's there? What do you want?"

Again the mysterious light emerged briefly in the mist, and again they heard the muted sound.

"Did ya hear that? Sounds to me like a girl callin' for help." Cautiously Kyle moved closer to the edge of the woods, swinging the lantern around slowly.

Joby listened, holding his breath, his lips parted. "I think it's the wind."

The light glimmered through the haze, and as they stared, the fog thinned and momentarily lifted. A faint luminous outline of what appeared to be a slender female form revealed itself, and then the light went out.

"I see you. Wait there, I'll come ta' help," Kyle shouted. He handed the lantern to Joby. "Here, hold this up real high where I can keep an

eye on it. I'll go see what's the matter, and be back quick."

"No! Don't go!" Joby said in a hushed terrified tone. He began to panic, and became louder. "Don't go, Kyle! Remember what Grandpa said about the Will-o-the-Wisp that lives in swamps. Nine Mile Swamp is right behind those trees!"

Kyle waivered, peering into the woods. The orb of light, now farther back, winked on and off and a soft sweet voice seemed to float through the mist, beckoning him. "Over here."

Kyle shrugged. "Grandpa just sits around telling old folks tales. Besides, he's gone blind now. What does he know any more." Leaving Joby by the roadside, Kyle slipped away, calling out, "I'm comin'! Where are you?"

Joby stood, rigid in fear, holding the lantern. He wanted to scream for his brother to return, but all he could manage was to croak out repeatedly, "Kyle! Come back! Come back!" He watched as the flickering light drifted farther and farther away, past the trees and on into the shrouded murky swamp.

The sounds of Kyle's footsteps rustling through the leaves into the woods faded away, and finally there was nothing...but blackness and an eerie silence. The cloying marsh smell of decaying

wood and stagnant water penetrated his nostrils.

Joby shivered, his arm ached from holding up the lantern, and his voice became hoarse from calling Kyle's name. He began to sob as weak-kneed, he stumbled the rest of the way home.

He burst in the door with the stigma of fear on his face. He saw his mother turn from the kitchen sink, soapsuds clinging to her hands. Her eyes widened and she gasped clutching at her throat when she saw only one of her sons return. His grandfather sat by the table with his coffee cup. His father yanked the pipe from his mouth and stared.

Joby, breathing in gasps, collapsed on a kitchen chair. "We was walkin' home and Kyle followed this light off into the swamp. Said sounded like some girl callin' for help. First the light was close-by and then it kept movin' away, and he kept going after it. I waited and waited but he didn't come back!"

Grandpa, at the kitchen table, knotted his fingers together on the heavy wooden cane in front of him, and spoke solemnly. "Twas the Will-o-the-Wisp. The haunt of the swamp. She lured 'em in." He shook his head sadly. "I'm feared we'll not be seein' Kyle again." ■

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The basics

-driving with trailers in tow



Safely and successfully driving with a trailer takes practice and patience.

• Know your vehicle's tow weight capacity. The owner's manual will list the maximum weight a vehicle can tow safely, but this is just a simplified estimation of data. To tow successfully, it's important to know your vehicle's gross combined weight rating, or GCWR. This includes the vehicle itself, its passengers and cargo, as well as the trailer and the trailer's cargo. More passengers on board reduces the amount of weight you can pull. Another weight factor is the tongue weight, or how much of the trailer's weight rests on the hitch, which should be around 10 percent of the trailer's weight. This helps reduce

trailer sway and can improve steering.

- Practice proper weight distribution. Distribute the weight of the item being towed to make towing smoother and safer. The cargo's center of gravity should be low, and most of the weight should be toward the front. Weight on either side also should be even. These steps will help prevent the trailer from fishtailing or flipping over.

- Use the right hitch equipment. Adjust the hitch so that the trailer being towed is relatively level to your vehicle when attached. Connect lights to your trailer through the hitch system

so that brake lights and other indicators work properly. Make sure the hitch ball is the right size for your trailer, otherwise the trailer might disconnect during towing. Use a pin and safety chains to keep the trailer secure.

- Check if extra brakes are required. Many states require a separate braking system on towed vehicles with a loaded weight in excess of 1,000 pounds. Newer trucks may have a built-in controller for brakes or you may need to have a system installed. Experts from Popular Mechanics advise using a trailer brake output system that matches the trailer brake output to the tow vehicle's deceleration.

- Slow down and drive more cautiously. A vehicle towing a trailer will not maneuver the same way as a vehicle without a trailer attached. Give yourself a greater cushion of space between other vehicles. It

may take longer for you to brake because of the added weight. Get used to using side-view mirrors because the trailer may block your rearview. Larger, extended side-view mirrors may help you feel more comfortable and safe. Make wide turns so that the trailer will clear curbs and not tip over.

- Avoid backing up. Unless you're experienced with driving large rigs, you may find reversing with a trailer very challenging. Limit situations that require backing up. Park in pull-through parking spots when possible. If you need to back up, move slowly and with your hand on the bottom of the steering wheel, turning it in the direction you want the trailer to go.

- Practice, practice, practice. Get acclimated with towing in a parking lot or on empty streets before taking your trailer out on the open road. ■

How to get the most bang for your automotive buck

Maintenance

Adhering to manufacturer maintenance guidelines is perhaps the most effective way for drivers to ensure a great return on their automotive investments. Routine maintenance, whether it's changing oil at the recommended mileage intervals or keeping tires properly inflated so engines aren't overtaxed, can add years to a vehicle's life expectancy, stretching drivers' dollars along the way.

Technology

Many drivers purchase a car or truck and never give a second thought to the vehicle's lights. But there's a great disparity between standard manufacturer-installed lights and aftermarket lights that employ the latest technology, such as Philips Vision LEDs. With LEDs, vehicle owners are less likely to lose a light to burnout or failure, which can effect visibility and potentially result in a police citation. Unlike incandescent bulbs that will eventually fade and go dim, LEDs stay bright at the same intensity, so drivers can be confident and rely on their consistent performance. Vision LEDs are new, innovative bulbs that are available for direct replacement on interior and exterior lights and feature an advanced design capable of handling extreme heat and high vibrations. Because of their robust design and durability, Vision LEDs are backed by a 12-year limited warranty providing drivers with more than a decades' worth of return on their initial investments. And, unlike standard incandescent lights in brake light applications, Vision LEDs turn on instantly, helping drivers react faster. A faster light response can help reduce overall braking distance. For example, at a speed of 75 mph, a driver can reduce braking distance by up to 20 feet because of a quicker reaction to the brake lights. ■

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by Al Dorantes

Veteran Auto, located at 6622 Martin Street, Rome, behind Frank's Transmission is a repair shop that puts service at the forefront.



Owner Eric Hartman has been dedicated to serving his customers since 1999 when he got his start as an automotive technician. Since beginning his career he has further developed his skills

as a technician. Eric has been certified by several manufacturers as well as ASE. Service to his customers wasn't enough so Eric decided to serve his country as well by joining the Army

Reserves in 2007. Eric served in Operation Enduring Freedom in Afghanistan.

Eric joined the Army Reserves in May of 2007. He was called up and deployed with the 444th Engineer Company out of Oswego in January 2012 as a Recovery Specialist for Route Clearance Package in Paktia Province, Afghanistan. Sgt. Hartman served the unit as a wheeled vehicle mechanic and recovery specialist. He described his job as finding IEDs (improvised explosive devices) and making sure trucks did not hit them. Eric returned home February 2013 after being in Afghanistan for a total of 11 months.

Veteran Auto's new location is larger to better serve its customers. Eric explained that he can now fit 5 vehicles in the shop at the same time; 2 cars on the lift and 3 on the floor. Veteran Auto specializes in electronic diagnostics. He will connect your car to his diagnostic computer and analyze and pinpoint exactly



Sgt. Hartman; deployed with the 444th Engineer Company out of Oswego in January of 2012.

what branch you served in, veterans and current service members will always receive a 20% Parts & Labor Discount on all services or repairs.

Eric Hartman said with a grin, "If it's broke, I'll fix it." For more information follow them on Facebook: Veteran Auto. ■



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Simple ways to trim auto insurance costs



Drivers looking to save money on their auto insurance policies should let their agents know if their driving habits change.

The cost of owning an automobile extends beyond maintenance and fueling costs. One of the biggest expenses motorists must plan for is auto insurance, the cost of which can vary greatly depending on geography and driver history.

But no matter where drivers live or what their histories are, there are some simple ways for drivers to save money on their monthly insurance premiums.

- Reassess your driving habits. Auto insurance companies consider how many miles drivers drive per year when determining the cost of an insurance policy. Many drivers provide this information when opening a policy, but then never update it when renewing or extending their policies. If you drive less now than you did when you opened your policy, notify your insurance company and you might end up paying less

each month, especially if your daily commute is considerably shorter than it used to be.

- Check your credit rating. Another way to save money on your auto insurance is to check your credit rating and, if necessary, take steps to improve your credit score. Credit rating is another variable insurance companies use to determine drivers' premiums, and a good credit rating can save drivers a substantial amount of money on their policies. If your credit rating has improved since you opened your policy, contact your insurance company and you might see the cost of your insurance reduced dramatically. It's also good to periodically view your credit report to determine if there are any errors that are negatively affecting your rating. Such errors may be inflating your auto insurance premiums.

- Hit the books. No matter how many

years you have behind the wheel, your auto insurance company may offer you discounts if you periodically take defensive driving courses. Such classes are inexpensive, but they may save you as much as 10 percent on the cost of your auto insurance policy. Young, inexperienced drivers and seniors tend to benefit from defensive driving courses more than other drivers.

- Change your policy. Drivers also can save money by making changes to their policies. Raising your deductible is perhaps the easiest way to save money without affecting your coverage, and such a decision can save

you as much as 15 percent depending on how high a deductible you're willing to pay. Drivers whose cars are older and completely paid off might want to drop their collision insurance, which pays you if your car is damaged or destroyed in an accident. Such insurance won't yield much in return if your car is not worth much money, and dropping it from your policy can save you between 10 and 15 percent.

Auto insurance is a necessity for drivers of all ages, but there are several ways to cut the costs of insurance premiums without affecting coverage. ■

Types of sunroofs

Drivers who like to allow a little light and fresh air into their vehicles may be surprised to learn that there are many different types of sunroofs. The following are just a handful of sunroof options drivers may want to consider when buying their next vehicle.

- Top-mount: Drivers who want a top-mount sliding sunroof may be able to find both manual and electric sliding options. In a top-mount sunroof, a large glass slides on tracks on top of the roof, and many feature integral wind deflectors that eliminate noise from the wind no matter how fast the car is traveling.

- Panoramic roof systems: Like their name implies, panoramic roof systems provide a wider view than other sunroofs. That view is available whether the sunroof is open or closed, and panoramic systems are typically made of glass. Passengers in both the front and rear seats can enjoy the view through panoramic roof systems.

- Spoiler: Spoiler sunroofs are also known as tilt-and-slide, and these sunroofs are a popular built-in factory option. The view through a spoiler sunroof is not as wide as that of a panoramic system, but they tilt to vent and slide open, so passenger headroom is not typically affected by their presence.

- Inbuilt: Inbuilt sunroofs are common in luxury vehicles. With an inbuilt sunroof, the panel slides open between the metal roof and interior headliner. That creates a full opening, but it takes away some headroom. Unlike imported models that use painted steel, American-made inbuilt sunroofs typically use a glass slider, which provides a view whether the sunroof is open or closed.

- Pop-up: Pop-up sunroofs are compatible with many vehicles, and they are among the least expensive options to install. Pop-up sunroofs are manually operated tilting panels that typically are made of glass. Panels must be stored when removed, but they also can be tilted to provide a venting effect. ■

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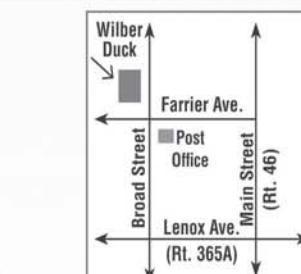
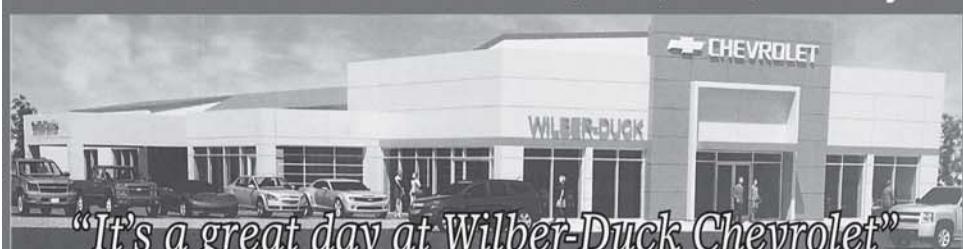
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Maintain tire balance and alignment for a smooth ride



Tire balance is checked on a machine that will measure heavy spots. Technicians will apply weights to the tires to balance any inconsistencies in weight.

It is easy for motorists to take their tires for granted when everything is working correctly. Wheels and suspension systems bear the weight of cars and trucks and must bear the brunt of

rough roads, pot holes and any additional obstacles, so some wear and tear is to be expected.

Many drivers know to monitor their tire pressure, but it's also important to

check for worn treads and inspect tires for punctures or damage. Proper tire alignment and balance also is essential for a comfortable and smooth ride.

Balance

Balancing tires involves equalizing the weight of the combined tire and wheel assembly so that each tire spins smoothly on the road. Tires are mounted on the wheel assembly, and the chances of this assembly having precise weight distribution is nearly impossible without a little help. According to Discount Tire, the slightest imbalance in the tires, even as little as half an ounce, can be felt by drivers. Unequal mass can make tires wobble, causing noticeable vibrations.

Mechanics will test tire balance by putting it on a balancing machine. The machine will spin the tire and determine the tire's heaviest point. Counteracting weights will be placed on the tire hubs to create a more uniform balance of weight. Lead weights are often used, but some are being phased out for other metals, such as zinc, because of the medical and environmental implications of lead.

Tires that are not balanced will not only cause vibration, they also can lead to uneven

wear.

Alignment

Tire alignment is another way to reduce wear on tires and help avoid steering and "pulling" problems. Bridgestone Tires defines tire alignment as an adjustment of the vehicle's suspension, or the system that connects a vehicle to its wheels.

When tires are not properly aligned, drivers may notice uneven tread wear. Misaligned tires also may cause the vehicle to pull to the left or right. Drivers who notice their steering wheel is off-center or vibrating when they are driving may need to adjust their tires' alignment.

Camber, or the inward or outward angle of the tire when viewed from the front of the vehicle, will be adjusted. In addition, "toe," or the extent to which the tires turn inward or outward when viewed from above, will be adjusted. Caster angle also helps balance steering, stability and cornering. Caster is the angle of your steering axis when viewed from the side of your vehicle.

When tires are balanced correctly and aligned, vehicles will offer a smooth ride with little to no vibrations. Having tires serviced can maximize their performance and lifespan. ■

Snow tires a worthy investment

-all-season tires may not be enough for rugged up-state NY



Many people leave all-season tires on their vehicles throughout the year, but snow tires may help decrease snow-related accidents and may even help drivers save money on their auto insurance.

The following snow tire tutorial can shed some light on why driving in winter is safer with snow tires.

- Snow tires are particularly helpful for people who cannot wait for roads to be cleared before they begin their days. Snow tires provide greater traction in wet, snowy or slushy conditions. Snow tires provide ample grip and make it easier for cars to turn corners and stop on slick roads.

- As the mercury falls, the rubber used to make traditional tires can become hard and less pliable, compromising its ability to grip the road. However, many snow tires are made with a specialized rubber that remains supple even in very cold temperatures, making it easier for the tire to hug the roadways even when those roads are in poor condition.

- People who live in very cold climates and areas where snow and ice dominate the landscape for several months per year often find all-season tires are inadequate and likely to slip. Snow tires make for safer alternatives in such regions.

- Snow tires are typically manufactured the previous summer, meaning inventory is finite, according to Consumer Reports. Drivers who wait until the first snowstorm to purchase their snow tires may encounter limited inventory and find it difficult to locate the right size tire for their vehicles. That's why it's important to shop early.

- Retire snow tires earlier than you would all-season tires. Snow tires lose almost all of their effectiveness once they reach 6/32-inch deep tread.

Snow tires can make roads safer for drivers who live in locales with long, snowy winters. They also are ideal for drivers who desire more traction, cornering and stopping capacity on winter roadways. ■

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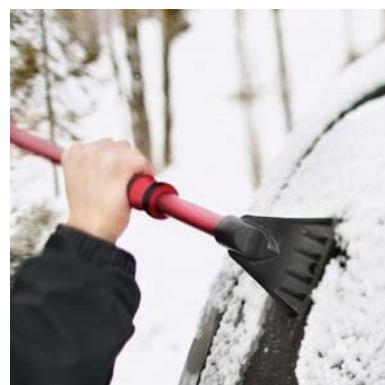
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Winter can be an unforgiving season. Freezing temperatures coupled with snow and ice can take its toll on people who live in climates where cold weather is a fact of winter life.

While winter can test people's patience, it also can be harsh on cars and trucks. Understanding what components of a vehicle can be compromised by dropping temperatures and snowy roads can help drivers take action to safeguard their automotive investments.

Drivers should take their vehicles for a tuneup and inspection before wintry weather arrives. A mechanic will examine the car battery and check antifreeze levels and make sure that the thermostat, defroster, brakes, and even wiper blades are working effectively. Have the tires inspected for adequate tread, which can make



navigating roads safer. If the treads are worn, replace the tires.

In addition to visiting their mechanics, drivers can perform some inspections and fixes themselves.

- Check that all of the vehicle's lights are operational so your car can be easily seen during inclement weather. Exchange your existing windshield washer fluid with one that will not freeze in cold conditions. Check the nozzles on the windshield-washer system

routinely and clear out any blockages of ice or debris. While addressing windshield washer fluid, also replace worn out windshield wiper blades with ones that can withstand snow and icy weather.

- A new coating of wax can serve as a shield against road salt, snow, sleet, and rain. Try a polymer wax to protect the paint.

Whenever possible, rinse off salt and grime so it does not dry on the car and gradually wear away at the paint. Some drivers mistakenly believe that salt stops being a problem once it dries simply because moisture is the active ingredient for a corrosive reaction. But humidity in the air is enough to keep the salt eating away at the car's paint, and that can contribute to rust. Be sure to rinse off the undercarriage of the vehicle as well.

- Get your tires' alignment checked toward the end of winter or early spring. A season of traveling over pothole-ridden roads or hitting curbs buried under snow drifts can affect the alignment. Get everything back on track. Similarly, inspect tires routinely, as weather changes can affect tire pressure and strength.

- Use a soft snow brush or a foam brush to clear snow off of the car. Avoid hard plastic scrapers you might use on your windshield, as they can scratch painted surfaces.

- Try to park the vehicle in a garage or under a car port, each of which can protect cars and trucks from the often harsh elements of winter.

Vehicles can be affected by the cold weather. Keep them running efficiently to prevent damage this winter. ■

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