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Expect the unexpected when renovating a home

Renovations have increased across the country. And one only need travel through communities to see a greater number of contractors and homeowners working on homes.

Tackling any renovation project is an exercise in patience. Renovations can impede on daily activities and cause a certain level of upheaval in homeowners' lives. Homeowners planning renovations also may find that they must have some wiggle room when it comes to both their budgets and their expectations. Remodeling, particularly with regard to older homes, may unveil unforeseen issues that only arise in the face of the renovation.

So what can homeowners expect during a renovation? The following are a few issues that might arise during home improvement projects.

- **Dirt and noise:** Homeowners can count on dust, debris and noise throughout the renovation process. Dust appears when walls come down or go up, and construction teams typically erect temporary walls or tarps to contain the debris. Air filtering systems also can limit dust particles. Noise is unavoidable. If it becomes troublesome, arrange to be outside of the home when the bulk of the construction is taking place.

- **Delays or schedule changes:** Even the best contractors cannot control every aspect of the job. They rely on subcontractors and vendors to do portions of the work. Materials may not always arrive on time, or they may fall short of homeowners' expectations. This can push back the project schedule. Homeowners should hope for everything to be done on time, but it can be less stressful if homeowners anticipate delays and be a pleasant surprise if there are no delays.

- **Hidden issues:** Contractors may uncover all sorts of issues that need to be addressed before a project can progress. Examples include the presence of asbestos (common in older homes), plumbing problems, incorrectly



Homeowners often discover hidden problems when delving into renovations. Budgeting for remediation can help remove some of the stress of unexpected delays and concerns.

wired electrical systems, and leaks or moisture issues. These problems also can impact the cost of the project, so set aside some money in the budget for unforeseen expenses. Chances are you are going to need some extra money to handle a few surprises during the project.

It's important to expect the unexpected when embarking on home renovations. Budgeting for hidden costs, expecting delays and coping with the upheaval to daily schedules are par for the remodeling course. However, the end result is often well worth the time and effort. **E**

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Simple ways to boost your energy levels



A low-calorie bowl of cereal in the morning can help improve energy levels throughout the day.

No one is immune to random bouts of fatigue. For many people, fatigue is most common around midafternoon, when the workday starts to drag and that hefty mid-day meal has inspired thoughts of catnaps.

Though an episode of fatigue here or there is likely nothing to worry about, adults who find themselves routinely struggling to muster any energy, whether it's to finish a project at work or play with the kids at night, might be surprised to learn that boosting daily energy levels is relatively simple. The following are a few easy ways to boost your energy levels and make the most of each and every day.

* Get regular exercise. Many adults know the value of exercise but simply can't find the time in the day to squeeze in a little time on the treadmill or at the gym. But the American Council on Exercise notes that as little as 10 minutes of moderate or vigorous ex-

ercise at a time each day can boost your energy levels and improve mood. The Centers for Disease Control and Prevention recommend that adults get at least 2 hours and 30 minutes of moderate-intensity aerobic activity, including at least two days of muscle-strengthening activities, each week. If that's a problem, particularly on weekdays, squeeze in 10 minutes here or there when the opportunity presents itself. But the more committed you are to regular exercise, the more your energy levels are likely to improve.

* Treat yourself to a massage. Many people find their energy levels are adversely affected by stress. Too much stress can make you physically sick and cause both physical and mental fatigue. There are many ways to more effectively cope with stress, and treating yourself to a massage is one of them. A massage can relieve stress and help overworked muscles recover, boosting energy levels as a result.

* Treat breakfast with the respect it deserves. When you wake up in the morning, even after a great night's sleep, your body's energy reserves are almost entirely depleted. Consequently, men and women who don't eat a healthy breakfast are almost certain to struggle with their energy levels throughout the day. Something as simple as a bowl of low-calorie cereal or some oatmeal with fruit can help restore your body's energy levels and lay the groundwork for a productive day. Skipping breakfast entirely will make you feel sluggish in the morning and increases the risk that you will overeat come lunchtime, adversely impacting your energy levels for the rest of the day.

* Focus on maintaining steady energy levels throughout the day. Lacking energy over the course of a typical day might be a byproduct of your eating habits beyond the breakfast table. Numerous studies have found that eating three large meals per day is not an effective way to maintain **ENERGY - 8**

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Packy's Pub

By Carly Proulx

Packy's Irish Pub at 9281 Kellogg Rd. in Washington Mills, NY is your new home away from home, if you take comfort in beer, and good food that is. Packy's has been around since 1889. Question is, where have you been? Serving food Monday-Thursday from 11 am - 10 pm, and Fridays & Saturdays from 11am-Midnight there is plenty of opportunity for those of you who've remained in the dark this whole time to start living under this shamrock of tasty grub.

With a great selection of bottled craft beer such as everyone's favorite IPA Ithaca Flower Power, and old time favorites like Guinness, and Utica Club maintaining on top staple status there leaves little room for drinking disappointment. Walter Scott runs the bar side of things, and with a full assortment of liquors, as well as a decent wine selection has this bar fully stocked, and prepared to cater to any an eclectic crew. Long time chef at Packys' Cory Benoit grew up in the restaurant business, and is self-taught in the art of cooking. The menu is extensive, but there are a few good old standbys that are sure to leave you full, however, not in the least bit with regret. The Packy's Reuben on rye is melt in your mouth deliciousness, loaded with thinly sliced corned beef, sauerkraut, Swiss cheese, and the ingredient responsible for marrying the aforementioned foods together in heavenly taste bud matrimony, Thousand Island dressing. The Utica Club Melt is Packy's grilled corned beef BLT with coleslaw and Swiss cheese, and rates mighty high on the customer appreciation scale.

Perhaps you're craving a burger loaded with goodness, and bold fla-

vors. Again, welcome to the right place. The True Grit has cheddar, cherry peppers, and Cory's homemade hot sauce. The Sinatra has greens, long hots, onions, mozzarella, and mushrooms. You get a few choices for sides here, and that includes Benoit's homemade potato salad and potato chips. Packy's has done well not to forgo their vegetarian friends with a wide variety of menu offerings such as their Bruschetta Mozzarella Veggie burger. Which begs the question, do they have a few healthy salad options? More than a few is the correct answer, and 8 to be exact. From the Chicken Caesar to the Ahi Tuna Steak served over arugula with a hot bacon dressing there's nothing but choices folks. My suggestion to you is get to know the menu, maybe decide what you're in the mood for before even stepping foot in, and chances are they have it. With 5-6 daily specials, there is constant exploration, creativity, and freshness behind the scenes at Packy's. Definitely, all good things for a restaurant in this area, not to mention a huge win for the foodies.

Summer time can't get here soon enough, as this is the season that Packy's Pub opens their deck for their customers to eat, drink, and be merry in the fresh air. Thursday night is Karaoke night with Sound Investment DJ/VJ and Karaoke Service providing the entertainment for you to stop by, sign up, sing, and wake up the next morning to a series of flashes from your five minutes of rock star fame. "We built this city," yikes, apologies-just had a flashback of my own. Monday's is 35 cent wings all day, Wednesday is a dozen steamed clams for \$5, Thursday is \$6 Gyros, Friday is fresh haddock, and Saturday is 2 for 1 on specific appetizers. As far as the sweet factor goes Packy's is got



Packy's Pulled Pork Nachos with Bacon, Cheddar, Lettuce, Onion & Tomato with Honey Mustard & BBQ Sauce. A zesty sweet, and savory dish to share!

that covered too. Fresh baked homemade pies are a daily fixture, and fresh baked cookies are known to make an occasional appearance.

If you're looking for somewhere to spend your St. Patty's day, look no farther than Packy's Pub. Every year they offer a special menu of several different traditional Irish feasts, with the one that never fails to show up be-



Packy's Reuben, and Utica Club Melt with a side of homemade chips, and potato salad are worth the trip to Washington Mills. Pairs nicely with a Utica Club in draft or bottle.

ing their Famous Corned Beef & Cabbage Dinner. Last year they offered a slew of entrees to accompany the above classic such as the Guinness Pot Roast Dinner, the Irish Stew Dinner with Lamb and Corned Beef, the O'Malley's Chicken with Swiss, spinach, and dill sauce, and the Emerald

Isle Haddock. Everything came with O'Brien's mashed potatoes and cabbage. Select appetizers such as the Blarney Chowder, and Packy's sandwich favorites, and wraps are also offered yearly on the St. Patty's Day menu. Oh yeah, Jello shots, and car bombs are mandatory after dinner refreshment!

If you don't have the time to dine in there's

always the option of take out. Go to www.packys-pub.com to read through the menu, and call up the Pub if you need to order ahead of time at (315) 737-9910. Make Patty's a priority for a nice bite out, or a fun gathering of friends. Really, it's whatever you want it be, as there's choices aplenty! **E**

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Romantic poetry fitting for Valentine's Day

Traditionalists who want to commemorate Valentine's Day in the most romantic way possible may want to harken back to the days when poetry was the primary way lovers expressed their affection for each other.

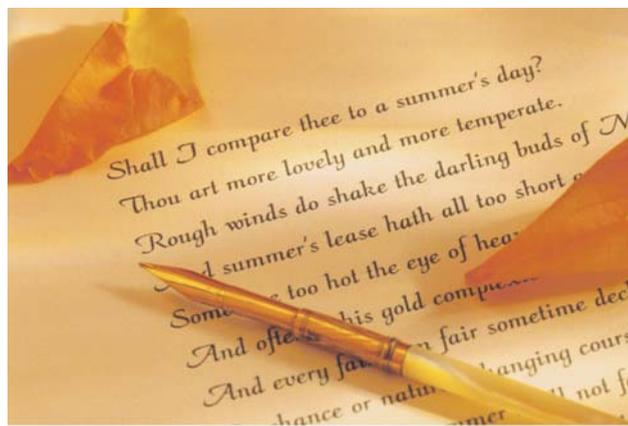
Poets have been putting pen to paper for centuries, and many great works evoke the themes of love and romance. Those with little experience writing their own poetry can always borrow heartfelt words from some of history's greatest bards.

John Keats

Keats was an English Romantic poet who lost both of his parents at a very young age. As Keats grew older, he was introduced to a circle of literary men, including Percy Bysshe Shelley and William Wordsworth. Keats decided to try his hand at poetry as well and went on to publish many poems now considered among the greatest ever written. Tragically, Keats died from tuberculosis at the age of 25. "Bright Star" is one of his famous romantic works.

Bright Star

*Bright star, would I were stedfast as thou art—
Not in lone splendour hung aloft the night
And watching, with eternal lids apart,
Like nature's patient, sleepless Eremite,
The moving waters at their priestlike task
Of pure ablution round earth's human shores,
Or gazing on the new soft-fallen mask
Of snow upon the mountains and the moors—
No—yet still stedfast, still unchangeable,
Pillow'd upon my fair love's ripening breast,
To feel for ever its soft fall and swell,
Awake for ever in a sweet unrest,
Still, still to hear her tender-taken breath,
And so live ever—or else swoon to death.*



William Shakespeare

It should come as no surprise that the man who wrote the tragic love story of Romeo and Juliet would also prove himself an accomplished poet. "Sonnet 18" is evidence of Shakespeare's grasp of the theme of love.

Sonnet 18

*Shall I compare thee to a summer's day?
Thou art more lovely and more temperate.
Rough winds do shake the darling buds of May,
And summer's lease hath all too short a date.
Sometime too hot the eye of heaven shines,
And often is his gold complexion dimm'd;
And every fair from fair sometime declines,
By chance, or nature's changing course, untrimm'd;
But thy eternal summer shall not fade,
Nor lose possession of that fair thou ow'st,
Nor shall death brag thou wand'rest in his shade,
When in eternal lines to time thou grow'st:
So long as men can breathe or eyes can see,
So long lives this, and this gives life to thee.*

Robert Browning

Browning was already proficient at reading and writing by the age of 5, having studied with his father, a scholar. At an early age the young Browning became interested in poetry but didn't write much through his formative years. Only after marrying fellow poet Elizabeth Barrett did Browning begin to write in earnest. "Life in a Love" is one of his romantic musings.

Life in a Love

*Escape me?
Never—
Beloved!
While I am I, and you are you,
So long as the world contains us both,
Me the loving and you the loth,
While the one eludes, must the other pursue.
My life is a fault at last, I fear:
It seems too much like a fate, indeed!
Though I do my best I shall scarce succeed.
But what if I fail of my purpose here?
It is but to keep the nerves at strain,
To dry one's eyes and laugh at a fall,
And baffled, get up to begin again,—
So the chase takes up one's life, that's all.
While, look but once from your farthest bound,
At me so deep in the dust and dark,
No sooner the old hope drops to ground
Than a new one, straight to the selfsame mark,
I shape me—
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Maximizing Your Assets in Retirement



(Family Features) No matter how diligent you may have been about saving for retirement, unexpected life changes and economic realities can negatively impact your retirement budget. Sustained low interest rates have suppressed yields on income from bonds and rising health care expenses have affected retirees of all ages.

Many retirees are surprised to learn that one of the most valuable assets in their portfolios may be a life insurance

policy that they no longer need.

It's not uncommon for people to outlive their need for life insurance, and if you no longer need the policy or can no longer afford the premiums, you could consider selling the policy through a life settlement. This is a financial transaction in which a policy owner works with a company, such as Coventry Direct, to determine if they qualify to sell their life insurance policy. The policy seller receives an immediate cash payment

while the buyer assumes all future premium payments. Most life insurance policy types qualify, even convertible term life policies.

Consider this story about a financial advisor who recently retired from a long, successful career. He decided the money he was spending on the rising premiums for his \$799,975 life insurance policy could be used to help fund his retirement. After some research, he called Coventry Direct and was happy to learn he had an option other than just letting the policy lapse. He sold his policy through a life settlement for \$25,000, which was more than four times the value he would have received if he surrendered the policy back to the insurance company.

If you don't own a life insurance policy or still need your coverage, you may want to evaluate the real estate you own. Think about downsizing to a smaller home or selling other property you no longer need. Many retirees discover that they have significant equity tied up in real estate - equity that could be used to help fund expenses.

Another useful exercise is reviewing your investments. If your retirement income is failing to produce the amount needed to maintain your lifestyle, you may need to rebalance your portfolio in order to meet your changing needs.

If you find your retirement income is insufficient, there are options available to maximize your assets. For many retirees, an existing life insurance policy may be a hidden asset that can be utilized to generate cash. To learn more about life settlements, visit coventry-direct.com/lifeselements or call 888-858-9344. **E**

Did YOU Know?

Men and women over 50 who are considering returning to school may be eligible for financial assistance through various programs. According to the American Association of Retired Persons, older men and women who want to go back to school do not necessarily have to bankroll that expenditure on their own. AARP notes that the Internal Revenue Service offers tax breaks such as the American Opportunity Tax Credit and the Lifetime Learning Tax Credit that older students can take advantage of to lessen the blow of tuition costs, which have risen considerably since today's men and women over 50 were in college. Older men and women may also be able to take advantage of 529 college savings accounts they opened for their children that their kids did not end up needing. AARP also notes that men and women over 50 who want to apply for financial aid must be prepared to enroll in more than one class and in more than just a continuing education program. More information is available at aarp.org.

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How to care for your senior dog



Senior dogs require some modifications in care so they can continue to enjoy a high quality of life.

Dogs mature at faster rates than human beings. While many have heard the rule that every human year equals seven dog years, the reality isn't so cut and dry. Size and breed play roles in determining a dog's age equivalent.

Thanks to advancements in veterinary care, dogs are living longer lives. Pet owners may have to adapt their care and exercise regimen to accommodate the changes in their pets. Senior dogs show some distinctive signs of aging that are on par with what humans experience. These include cloudy eyes, gray hair (in dogs this starts around the muzzle and spreads to other areas of the face, head and body) and loose skin. Elderly dogs also may begin to experience stiffness in their legs, particularly the hind quarter. To ensure a dog's quality of life remains consistent through its senior years, pet

owners can take the following steps.

- Have a candid conversation with the vet. Make an appointment with your dog's veterinarian to discuss a plan for making the dog comfortable and happy as the animal ages. Your vet can make recommendations regarding which type of foods the dog should eat and how much exercise it needs.

- Make accommodations based on disability. A dog may develop arthritis or another degenerative disease that causes a general slowing down. Dogs may not be able to walk as far or play games as long as they used to. Dogs also may have difficulty getting up and down stairs. As a result, aging dogs may need some extra help getting around. Invest in ramps and ergonomic pet beds and bowls to help ease aging dogs' discomfort.

- Examine and modify dogs' diets. Food needs can change as dogs become less active. Keeping dogs lean can prevent a host of illnesses. PetMD says more than half of American pets are overweight, and obesity can contribute to disease and put stress on pets' joints.

- Keep up the exercise. Exercise helps slow down the degeneration of joints and helps keep dogs healthy. Continue walks, but pare them down if your dog can't keep up. Swimming is a low-impact exercise that is great for senior dogs. Look for a dog swim vest, which can help the animal maintain some buoyancy. **E**

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ENERGY from 4
steady energy levels over the course of a typical day. Instead, smaller, more frequent meals coupled with healthy snacks can stabilize blood sugar levels and help maintain sufficient

energy levels, improving both mental acuity and mood. Instead of a large omelet platter for breakfast, choose a small bowl of low-calorie cereal and follow it up three to four hours later with a healthy snack of fresh fruit.

When lunchtime arrives three to four hours after your mid-morning snack, choose a small lunch with ample protein and follow that up a few hours later with a healthy snack of yogurt. The specifics of your diet should be discussed with your physician, but you will likely find that eating smaller, more frequent meals and healthy snacks will drastically improve your energy levels throughout the day.

* Drink more fluids. Your lack of energy might not be the result of an unhealthy breakfast or a lack of exercise. Some people simply don't drink enough fluids to stay hydrated and feel sluggish as a result. Symptoms of dehydration mimic those of hunger, leading many to purchase unhealthy snacks when they might just need to drink more fluids. Those snacks can compound the sluggishness you feel from being dehydrated, zapping your energy levels even further. So if your daily routine does not include drinking enough fluids, try having a few glasses of water each day and your energy levels might just improve. **E**



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How to pay off your mortgage before maturity



Homes are the most expensive purchases many people will ever make. While home ownership can be rewarding, first-time homeowners may experience some sticker shock when shopping for homes and calculating their potential mortgage costs. But as expensive as home ownership can be, there are ways for homeowners to pay off their mortgages long before those loans reach maturity.

- Pay extra each month. Factors like home value, property tax and your mortgage loan interest rate determine how much your monthly mortgage payment will be. But there's still room to save. According to the Chase extra payments calculator, homeowners who borrow \$200,000 (after making an initial 20 percent down payment of \$50,000 on a home valued at \$250,000) at 4 percent interest and pay \$4,000 annually in property taxes and homeowner's insurance

can save more than \$26,000 in interest over the life of the loan by paying as little as \$100 extra per month. In addition, including an additional \$100 each month will trim 59 months, or just about five years, off the life of your loan.

- Stop paying PMI. If your initial down payment was less than 20 percent of the value of your home at the time you purchased it, then you were likely required to pay private mortgage insurance, or PMI. PMI may be costing you a couple hundred dollars per month, but once your mortgage balance falls below 80 percent of your home's appraised value, you can ask your lender to stop charging PMI. While it might be nice to pocket those PMI costs for a rainy day, continue paying that money each month so you can shorten the life of your loan.

- Have your home reassessed. While homeowners would like to think the value of their homes is always on the rise, some homes decrease in value over time. If your home is reassessed at a lesser value, your property taxes will decrease. Put the money you're saving on property taxes toward your monthly mortgage payment each month.

- Refinance your mortgage. Refinancing to a lower interest rate can lower your monthly mortgage payment, but be sure that the costs to refinance do not exceed the savings you will earn. Apply any money you save from refinancing to your monthly payment. **E**

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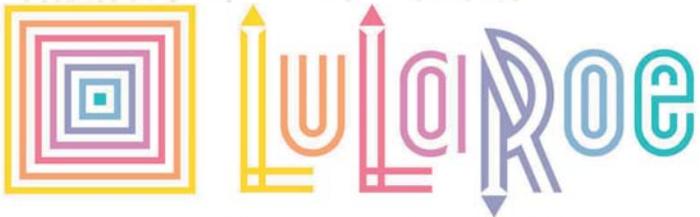
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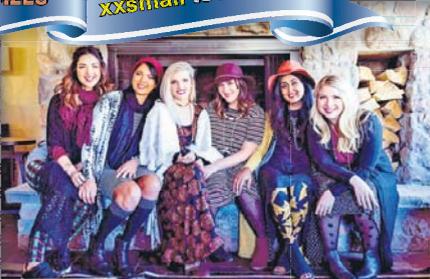
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Changes to expect as cats age



Dogs are widely referred to as “man’s best friend,” and few dog owners can imagine life without their beloved pups. But Fido’s feline counterparts are incredibly popular as well.

According to estimates from the American Society for the Prevention of Cruelty to Animals, somewhere between 74 million and 96 million cats are owned in the United States, putting cats on par with dogs (the ASPCA estimates Americans own between 70 million and 80 million dogs).

Many prospective pet owners feel that caring for cats must be easier than caring for dogs. Cats do not need daily walks to stay happy and healthy, and many cats do not crave attention as much as their canine counterparts. But caring for cats is not always so simple, especially as cats grow older.

The American Association of Feline Practitioners notes that some cats age faster than others. But older cats are often classified into three groups:

- Mature or middle-aged: 7 to 10 years (44 to 56 years for humans)
- Senior: 11 to 14 years (60 to 72 years for humans)
- Geriatric: 15-plus years (76-plus years for humans)

Though this might surprise some people, the AAFP notes that many cats can live well into their geriatric years, some even reaching their early twenties. Owners of geriatric cats may need to be extra diligent when caring for their felines, as cats often experience significant changes in their health and behavior as they age. It’s important for cat owners to take their cats for routine veterinary checkups regardless of their cats’ ages, but such appointments are especially necessary for aging cats. Because cats tend to require less attention than dogs, it can be harder for cat owners to notice changes in health or behavior in aging cats than they might notice with aging dogs. Routine vet visits can ensure that age-related health conditions don’t go undiagnosed, and such visits may even help to delay the onset of certain problems.

The AAFP recommends that healthy older cats be examined by their vet-

erinarians every six months. While that may seem frequent, six months for older cats is roughly equivalent to two years for human beings, and that’s plenty of time for cats’ health to change dramatically.

In between vet visits, cat owners can look for the following changes that cats often undergo as they age, calling their cats’ vets immediately if any of these signs appear to be having any adverse effects on the cat.

- Altered sleep-wake cycle
- Changes in vision
- Appearance of brown spots in the iris
- Decreased sense of smell
- Brittle nails
- Decreased lung reserve
- Heart or circulatory problems
- Decreased ability to digest foods and absorb nutrients
- Loose skin
- Reduced ability to handle stress
- Changes in behavior
- Changes in mobility

More information about caring for aging cats is available at www.catvets.com. **E**

Did YOU Know?

According to the pet adoption service Petfinder, dogs chase their tails for various reasons. Some dogs may be curious about the appendage or have a predatory instinct, while others may chase their tails just to get some exercise. Tail-chasing may also be a nervous tick that’s indicative of the dog’s anxiety. Flea infestation is another reason dogs may chase their tails. Some dogs may believe they can alleviate itchiness from flea bites by latching onto their tails. Dog owners concerned about excessive tail-chasing should discuss those concerns with their veterinarian, who may offer insight as to why the dog is chasing its tail and how to reduce that chasing in the future. **E**

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Transition your wardrobe from one season to the next



People who put a lot of thought into their wardrobes know that one of the challenges presented by the changing seasons is figuring out what to wear and when. For example, as spring transitions into summer, the occasional chilly day is to be expected, removing summertime attire like shorts and sleeveless shirts from consideration.

Such sudden changes can be problematic, as not everyone has the room to store multiple seasons' worth of clothing in their closets and drawers. Yet, with a little ingenuity, men and women can make their seasonal wardrobe transitions a little easier.

• Layering: Layering is the key to keeping comfortable no matter the weather. Layering enables you to take off layers or put them on as needed. Lightweight sweaters or blazers can be worn over short sleeves or sleeveless ensembles when temperatures have yet to reach their midday highs. Layers also can prove in-

valuable in office settings where the air conditioning may make working environments especially chilly. Leggings can be worn under skirts or dresses and then removed as temperatures rise.

• Long-sleeved shirts: Keep a few long-sleeved shirts at the ready. Simple sleeve length can mean the difference between comfort and discomfort.

Covering shoulders and/or arms with a lightweight top also can protect against the rays of the sun. Choose among your most versatile long-sleeved shirts, meaning basic colors that will blend well with any outfit.

• Bright colors: Bright colors go hand in hand with warm weather. Keep bright-colored items you typically wear during other seasons so they can be paired, if necessary, with summer staples. This may include a thick sweater for cooler nights on the beach or trousers for formal evenings out on the town.

• Maxidresses: When shopping, invest in

maxidresses. They're easy and cool for hot days and nights, but they also can be refashioned if you wear them with long sleeves or knit sweaters. When covering up, use a waist-cinching belt or scarf to add structure to the look.

• Vary shoes: While flip-flops and other sandals may be summer staples, have a few other pairs of more traditional shoes at the ready as well. One can get away with boots with a maxi-dress. If you walk a lot, look for shoes with structure, as summer footwear tends to provide less support than footwear worn during other times of the year.

Transitioning clothing from one season to the next takes a little ingenuity. While it may not require a person to keep all of his or her clothing out of storage, transitioning from one season to the next may require reserving a couple of versatile items that can be worn throughout the year. **E**



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Avoiding Scams

With spring almost in sight our seniors will soon be inundated with phone calls offering

everything from home repair to security systems to medical alert systems and more. How do seniors protect themselves

from being scammed?

One of the first steps to avoid scams is, do not feel obligated. Many charities send gifts to their donors as a token of appreciation for their support. Some criminals masquerading as charities will send gifts to potential victims in an attempt to fool them into writing a check. Whether a charity is legitimate or not, seniors should not feel obligated to donate simply because they received a gift. If you receive a gift and want to donate, confirm that the organization that sent you the gift is legitimate and not an imposter organization that is baiting you with a gift. If the gift was accompanied by a donation form, do not fill out that form, choosing instead to make a direct donation via the organization's website, a site you should find independent of the mailer/gift you received, or mail a check directly to the



organization after you independently confirm its address, be it through your own research or by contacting the Better Business Bureau (www.bbb.org).

One helpful hint to help seniors avoid scams is to keep a list of vendors you have used or organizations you have donated to

in the past. Many people who perpetuate charitable fraud reference a past relationship or donation history between their victims and the charity the criminal is claiming to represent. Maintain a list of your donation history, including the organizations you have donated to and the amount of those donations. This can help you verify if the person calling, emailing or visiting you is telling the truth.

Avoid donating over the phone. No reputable charity will insist on a donation over the phone. When a person calls and says they represent a charity, they should be willing to send you information in the mail so you can further explore their organization before making your final decision. If a caller attempts to pressure you into donating over the phone, hang up.

Don't be afraid to ask for help. If you are confused when it comes time to make your annual dona-

tions, ask a son, daughter or trusted confidante for help so you can rest easy knowing your donation goes where you intend for it to go.

If a company contacts you with an unbelievable offer then beware. "If it sounds too good to be true; it probably is." Offers with confusing or complicated criteria to qualify; beware. Free items (trips or services) do not require a "down payment."

Con artists can victimize anyone, but seniors are especially vulnerable to such criminals. Men and women who perpetrate fraud often target older men and women, feeling that seniors are more likely to have a significant amount of money in their bank accounts and less likely to report crimes for fear of embarrassment. The steps to safeguard seniors from scammers are as simple as common sense. **E**



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Tips & Information to Navigate Senior Life

Grow gray hair out gracefully



For some people, gray hair comes with age. Both men and women have spent much time, money and energy covering their gray heads of hair with various hair dyes. But now there's a growing trend among people with gray hair to embrace the gray.

Gray hair — especially hair close to the temples — tends to be coarser and more resistant to absorbing hair color than other hair. It can be difficult to cover the gray hairs, and then once it is dyed, gray hair may end up showing through prematurely. As a result, many men and women have discovered

it is more cost-effective to embrace their gray hair.

Just like any other hair change, whether growing out a short hairstyle or growing out bangs, it can take time to adjust to a head full of gray hair.

- Prepare mentally for gray hair. Hair does not generally turn gray overnight. Therefore, people must expect to live with the gradual change and insecurities that arise as hair starts to turn gray. This requires a certain measure of strength and perseverance. Some may even desire to give up on the process altogether by coloring their hair or, for men, shaving their heads. But sticking it out allows adults to maintain their natural hair, and many men and women even like their hair once it turns gray.

- Work with a stylist. Hair colorists and stylists can make the transition to gray hair a bit easier. With careful placement of highlights, stylists can blur the lines of the graying hair from the other

colors. A good stylist also may be able to suggest a cut that will draw attention away from graying roots.

- Consider a major haircut. Sometimes the process can be sped along with a dramatic hair cut that removes much of the dead ends and hair that has not yet turned gray.

- Stop using color-care shampoos. Certain shampoos are designed to lock color in place. Those who want to go gray can use regular shampoos or clarifying shampoos that strip old hair dye from the hair shaft. Switch over to a toning shampoo that leaves a bit of pigment to counteract brassiness in gray hair.

- Consider a makeup swap, too. Transition makeup color to give the face a warmer, rosier glow. Avoid dark eye shadows, which can wash out a complexion.

With a few simple techniques, men and women can naturally transition to gray hair. **E**

Prep work makes weeknight dinners easier

There is often no denying how busy the week can be for the average individual or family. Very frequently people eschew cooking dinner simply because they find the process takes too much time out of their already hectic days. Some people look to fast food or dining instead, but this can be costly and potentially unhealthy. Though home cooking can be time-consuming, planning ahead for weeknight meals can drastically reduce the time it takes to whip up a good meal.

While it may seem like people are spending more time eating out, statistics point to the contrary. In a 2009 survey sponsored by CBS News, 43 percent of American respondents said they cook 6 to 7 nights out of the week, and 32 percent of the respondents said they cook 4 to 5 nights out of the week.

Individuals who are still dining out or ordering in instead of cooking may benefit from the following time-saving tips.

* Make a meal schedule. Take a cue from schools and office cafeterias and create a weekly or monthly meal calendar. Come up with items you enjoy eating and combine them for meals. Use cooking magazines for inspiration if necessary. Having a schedule of what you will be cooking enables you to shop for the ingredients in advance and to know exactly what you'll be serving each night -- two time savers.

* Create a detailed shopping list. Use the meal calendar to make a list of the ingredients you will need for each meal. Some ingredients will overlap (i.e. fresh spices, like garlic and parsley), but there may be some ingredients unique to a particular recipe. Buying all of the ingredients in advance enables you to have them on hand when it's time to cook, instead of running out for something that is missing.

* Do preparation work on the weekend. Spend a few hours prepping food over the weekend for the upcoming week. If vegetables need to be diced, do so then and store them in zip-top plastic bags. Meats that take a long time to cook can be pre-cooked and simply reheated before being served. Certain meals, like casseroles and baked pasta dishes, can be made entirely and stored in the freezer. Having some of the work already done may help to make weeknight meals easier to cook.

* Invest in a slow cooker. If you prefer a hot meal right after walking in the door, a slow cooker can be an invaluable tool that delivers meals-on-demand. A slow cooker works by cooking ingredients at a very low temperature over a long period of time. Ingredients can be added in the morning before you leave for work, and the meal will be ready and hot by the time you return home. There are dozens of different slow cooker recipes and cookbooks completely devoted to meals made in a slow cooker. It is a versatile tool and one that can be an asset in a busy person's kitchen.

* Think outside the meal box. Dinner doesn't necessarily have to consist of "dinner" foods. Turn pancakes,



Taking some time to prep for weeknight meals means you can enjoy delicious foods at home without spending too much time in the kitchen.

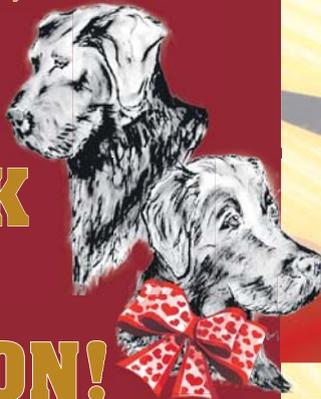
eggs and sandwiches into heartier meals with the addition of a few ingredients. Omelets can be enhanced with cubed meats and vegetables. Top pancakes with fresh fruit and granola for a more substantial meal. Paninis are popular these days, so take an ordinary sandwich and make it gourmet just by pressing it and heating.

Taking the time to plan ahead for meals means that weeknight dinners can be less stressful to put together. **E**

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Crafts for the not-so-crafty hobbyist

Creativity lends a lot to everyday life. School parties are made that much better by intricate dessert designs. Handmade blankets tend to be more inspiring and cherished than mass-produced alternatives. Because of that, many people find hobbies that inspire their creativity to be incredibly rewarding.

While crafting is a hobby that can be enjoyed by people of all ages and skillsets, some people are more craft-inclined than others. That doesn't mean those with little arts and crafts experience cannot

make items they can be proud of. The following are a handful of projects for inexperienced crafters who may feel as though they have two left thumbs.

Dress-up premade items

Sandra Lee made a career of teaching people how to blend some prepackaged food items with other ingredients to create semi-homemade menus. Anyone can use the same mentality to put together craft projects without having to start from scratch. Search the hobby stores or department stores for items that

can be paired together. For example, why not glue a 4-by-6-inch picture frame to the top of candlestick holder for an ornate and interesting design element at home? Mason jars can be embellished with just about anything — from ribbon to fabric to glitter — giving them a decorative touch. Simply giving an item a new coat of paint or adding some decorative tacks or hooks can easily change its look and give it a crafty feel.

Grow comfortable with a computer printer

Homespun graphic arts can be mastered by just about anyone with access to some clip art, fonts and basic design software. You may also be able to find free apps or shareware online providing ready-made templates. Print out cute labels or tags that match party themes and put them on favor bags or prizes. Print cute slogans on cardstock and staple them to a small, filled plastic baggie to serve as classroom gifts or Valentines. Make a collage



of different images and print them out to frame. Or snap a picture of a particular pattern or design element that fits with a room's theme and then frame that image for matching artwork.

Make soaps or candles

Thanks to the bevy of kits available at craft stores, it's easier than ever to make your own soaps or candles at home. All it usually takes is melting down the medium, adding the desired

scents and colors and then allowing them to set in a mold or container. The result may seem like you worked for hours when really it was a relatively easy task. These handmade products can make great hostess gifts or nice touches when guests stay over at your home.

Personalize clothing

You do not have to be an artist to create t-shirts, aprons or other items that have that personalized

touch. If you do not want to hassle with the mess of fabric paints or pens, use iron-on stencils or letters. Another idea is to create your own stencil (fire up that printer again), cut out your design or letters and then use a bleach pen sold in the laundry or cleaning aisle to color in the design. Let it sit and then launder for a faded and fun project.

Crafting doesn't have to be difficult. Projects exist for people of varying skill levels. **E**



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How 3D printing is changing the craft world

The technology behind 3D printing has changed the world in various ways. Such technology has impacted scientific discovery and contributed to advancements in medicine.

Three-dimension printing has also influenced how many people, including crafts enthusiasts, approach their favorite hobbies. Crafting enthusiasts already are seeing the myriad designs and possibilities available with 3D printing that have appeared on popular crafting and retail sites like Pinterest and Etsy. While 3D printing may not feel like the crafting of yesteryear, it can require the same intricacy and skill as other forms of art.

"It [3D printing] takes the lid off of what's possible, and provides a really good bridge between technology and hands-on crafting," said Andrej Suskavcevic, president and CEO of the Craft and Hobby Association in Elmwood Park, New Jersey.

While there has always been a marriage of sorts between art and science, 3D printing takes that relationship even further and can be even more relevant in a world now being shaped by a focus on STEM.

The 3D printing process starts with a virtual design of the object to be

made, which serves as a blueprint, or a computer aided design, or CAD, file. The CAD file is made using a 3D modeling application or with a scanner that will copy an existing object into a digital format. The model is then divided into hundreds or thousands of horizontal layers utilizing slicing software in a process commonly referred to as "slicing." The slices are read by the printer and are recreated, layer by layer, so that a 3D object is ultimately formed. The printing media can be any number of materials. Plastic resins, metal, plastic filaments, and other substances are used, depending on the printer.

Desktop printers can now produce figurines, small gears, doll parts, mobile phone covers — just about anything a person's imagination can dream up. Hobbyists can explore the depths of their design abilities and produce finished materials in real time.

Those who need a little help finding inspiration need only go online for do-it-yourself project ideas and tutorials on how to get started with 3D printing. While many at-home 3D printers don't produce high-quality pieces, the technology is changing and there are companies that will print 3D artwork or objects for a fee. **E**



Cupid and Eros tied to love!

One of the most common images associated with Valentine's Day is that of a young cherub with bow in hand ready to aim an arrow at an unsuspecting sweetheart. This winged perpetrator of matchmaking mischief has become as much a part of Valentine's Day celebrations as chocolate, flowers and other gifts.

The instigator of romantic love goes by two different names, having ties to both ancient Greeks and Romans. This archery expert was known as Cupid by the ancient Romans and as Eros to the ancient Greeks and was the god of love.

Eros/Cupid's family tree can be confusing. Some Greek mythology experts say Eros was the son of Nyx and Erebus, others Aphrodite and Aries. The Roman Cupid is believed to be the son of Venus and Mars, the goddess of love and god of war, respectively.

Armed with a bow and quiver filled with golden arrows, Eros/Cupid took aim at both mortals and gods. Ancient poetry once portrayed Eros as a handsome immortal who was irresistible

to both man and gods. But some time later he was increasingly described as a playful, mischievous child. Cupid was not a major character in mythology, but through time the playful child persona became linked to Valentine's Day, helping to give Cupid/Eros a more noticeable presence.

In the Middle Ages, Eros/Cupid continued to be a popular figure in art. Multiple winged archers, known as "amores or amorini" to Romans and "erotes" to Greeks, can be seen in many paintings of the period. In modern art, many people experienced difficulty distinguishing if the winged child was Cupid himself from mythology or the "putto," a secular figure in a work of art depicted as a chubby male child, usually naked and sometimes winged. Nowadays, the terms "cupid," "cherub" and "putto" are often used interchangeably to describe the image of a pudgy, winged child.

Eros or Cupid are symbols of Valentine's Day that have endured for centuries. **E**

The Irony of it All

-Happy Valentine's Day

By Mike D. Burke

They say, "Love is blind." They also say, "Love is in the air." Well one February I'm pretty sure it was just snow that blew in my eyes. I was eighteen and in love with my girlfriend of the time. We had been dating for more than two years. That would soon all change.

I was on a train back from NYC going home to Utica, NY. The rails were smooth that day. I was ecstatic because I had just finished my first trip to New York Comic-Con and it had been a success. I rubbed elbows with a few big wig editors in the industry and had landed my first freelance job with the promise of more if I could manage (side note: I was eighteen and spazzy and did not manage, a lesson to learn) and I was ready to conquer the world. I sent my love a text message letting her know I was on my way home and how the trip was really a great thing for me to do and yada, yada. The reply I got back was not quite the reply I was looking for: 'When you get back, could we go for a ride? We need to talk'. Good God! I gasped aloud, "Gasp!" and then breathed out a deep, Lord Byron-esque sigh and shook my head and said, "Well, shit." "What's up?" said a strange gentleman next to me, he was short and a bit stocky and bald with thin, big glasses in a puffy winter coat. I looked at him and said, "I think my girlfriend wants to break up." "That sucks." He said and just went back to reading his paper. My sentiments exactly. What was I to do? Reply back? I was loathe to start the conversation early and not face-to-face. How was I to

plead my case if she couldn't see how earnest my loving face was? Then it hit me. I looked at the gentleman next to me again. Bald, stocky, glasses, a bulky coat? I was sure if I put his glasses on a rock the first thing I would think of is... Costanza! George Costanza of Seinfeld! Of course, I knew how I could get around the whole, "We need to talk", thing. So classic too, that whole phrase, didn't think people had actually used it except for television till it happened to me, funny how that works.

V-day was sneaking up fast on me. I avoided any chance to talk with my girlfriend for as long as I could. I avoided texting, Facebook-ing, and calling most definitely. Choosing instead to mistakenly miss her calls and answer texts late at night when I knew she'd be asleep. I know this seems petty, but I just didn't want to break up, as I said, I was in love. Yet finally the day came. Valentine's Day. I could not avoid the toiling of its bell. My girlfriend and I met up and went for that drive.

I handed her a gift, "Happy birthday pup," oh yeah, Valentine's Day is also her birthday, I called her Pup, it was a nickname, I forget why now, "I hope you like it." She accepted it and sighed, "Look, we're breaking up, it's over. I'm sorry." I was aghast, I had almost dreamed that my gift and eyes might reawaken the love, I said, "You're choosing to do this today? Of all days?" I was in tears. She looked at me and shook her head and said, "No, I tried to call you and get us to meet sooner. You're the one who decided to come over today." It wouldn't be till a year later the irony of it all finally made me laugh. **E**

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A Star burns bright in The Stables, and that star is Ilion Little Theater

By Carly Proulx

Placed on the historical and national registries in 1976, what is known present-day as “The Stables” has been home to the Ilion Little Theater Club (ILTC) since the early 1920’s.

Once upon a time 13 Remington Avenue in Ilion, NY was the carriage house, and stable of the Philo Remington estate. Otherwise known as the Remington Mansion, the estate was eventually torn down, and all that remained was The Stables, and carriage house. The founders of the ILTC purchased The Stables in 1927, and constructed the stage and auditorium that, though having undergone several renovations since are still being used today. ILTC would sell some of the carriages at an auction in NY, and end up donating the rest to a museum. It’s come a long way from the attic of Lucille Worden’s home, as well as Klippel’s home on Barringer Road where the ILTC used to rehearse and perform as a private club. It remained somewhat of an elite group up until 1968 when through the sale of subscriptions, the club’s performances became a public privilege.

ILTC is in its 93rd season, having and continuing to do so 3 consecutive plays a year, sometimes more, but never less for precisely that long. The 2016-2017 Ilion Little Theater Board consists of third year President Kelly Stone, Vice President Suzanne Murdock-Rodio, Secretary James Willsey, Treasurer Charlene Levonski, Member at Large Art Wilks, Mary Lee Lynch, and George Lyon. Some subtle changes for comfort, and damage control have come into play, such as their late 90’s upgrade from risers to cushioned seating, yet a significant amount of the pre-ILTC architecture, and charm remain the same. The original doors of the groom’s quarters used as today’s side entrance to the theater is just one example of what stands reminiscent of yester-years in this space, rugged and enduring.



The cushioned seats that replaced the risers the ILTC put up for shows until the mid nineties.

On March 3,4,5,10, 11, and 12 the ILTC will put on their 2017 production of Steel Magnolias. Twenty years ago, Cindy Shepherd, a former 10-year President in the 90’s of ILTC directed the aforementioned show here, only this time around Shepherd will perform, playing the role of Ouiser Boudreaux. Directed by Rick Vroman the production also stars current President Stone playing M’Lynn Eatenton. Stone has been on the local theater scene since 96’ when ILTC called her up last minute to see if she could fill a role in “Lend Me A Tenor.” Of course, she did, and the rest is true love’s history. “It’s my true love to be on stage,” a Smitten Stone confesses. Since joining the ILTC Stone has directed, assisted directors, and throughout it all consistently performed. It’s perfectly obvious by the light in her eyes when she speaks of performances past that Stone’s heart strings are tugged most ardently by the art of acting, and singing on stage.

Visit their website at www.ilionlittletheatre.org/this-season.html to stay current with the season, and purchase tickets for their upcoming March 2017 performance of Steel Magnolias by Robert Harling, and their

May 2017 performance of Black Tie by A.R. Gurney, directed by David Stritmatter. Like them on Facebook @ilionlittletheatre, and check the above website to inquire of audience subscriptions and memberships, available for purchase in varying options online, or call (315) 894-3203. Check up on the who, what, and when for open auditions of the season’s duration. All is fair in love and ILTC, as they don’t pre-cast plays.

A dinner meeting is held every 3rd Thursday of the month. Everyone brings a dish to pass, and talks shop regarding the club’s past, present, and future. You don’t have to be a member to attend, but at the very least have an interest in becoming a member, contributing to the theater in some way, or just a general curiosity and interest in the theater’s overall livelihood. Whether it’s lighting, directing, acting, or writing that speaks to you the ILTC is no longer a social privilege as the olden days permitted active members be voted in. This special place, and the special people who make it up are there so they can express themselves, and rejoice in the libation for their passions for the arts with the public to cement the community in this tale as old as time, or rather, only slightly younger than woman’s right to vote. ILTC has held multiple workshops, including the Little Theater’s Young Actors Workshop (YAW) for the past 12 years, encouraging the local youth ages 8-17 for free in acting, and stagecraft. Through “Theaters helping Theaters,” a collaborative effort of Ilion Little Theatre, Rome Community Theater, Utica Players, and Outcast International, with grant funding through CNY Arts a series of workshops have been made possible, inviting the public to learn and share in the different components of the theater, and production.

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Reaves Dental

-2017 National Children's Dental Health Month



February is National Children's Dental Health Month (NCDHM). The month-long national health observation brings together thousands of dedicated dental professionals, healthcare providers, and educators to promote the benefits of good oral health to children, their caregivers, teachers and many others. This year's NCDHM campaign slogan is, "Choose Tap Water for a Sparkling Smile."

During National Children's Dental Health Month, Justin Reaves, DDS of Reaves Dental will be venturing out of the office to talk to children in his daughter's kindergarten class about dental health. Dr. Reaves started visiting schools during National Children's Dental Health Month about 7 years ago. His presentation will highlight the importance of proper brushing, a healthy diet, and seeing a dentist.

Brush your teeth twice a day with a soft-bristled brush. The size and shape of your brush should fit your mouth allowing you to reach all areas easily.

Replace your toothbrush every three or four months, or sooner if the bristles are frayed. A worn toothbrush won't do a good job of cleaning your teeth.

Reaves explained that many parents across the country will issue a common refrain at dinnertime tonight, "You'd better eat that--it's good for you!" There's another old favorite in the parental arsenal of dietary Admonitions, "Don't eat that—it'll rot your teeth!"

Now more than ever, kids are faced with a bewildering array of food choices -- from fresh produce to sugar-laden processed convenience meals and snack foods. What children eat and when they eat it may affect not only their general health but also their oral health.

Americans are consuming foods and drinks high in sugar and starches more often and in larger portions than ever before. It's clear that junk foods and drinks gradually have replaced nutritious beverages and foods for many people. For example, the average teenage boy in the

U.S. consumes 81 gallons

of soft drinks each year! Alarming, a steady diet of sugary foods

and drinks can ruin teeth, especially among those who snack throughout the day. Common activities may contribute to the tendency toward tooth decay. These include grazing habitually on foods with minimal nutritional value, and frequently sipping on sugary drinks. When sugar is consumed repeatedly in large, often hidden amounts, the harmful effect on teeth, can be dramatic. Sugar on teeth provides food for bacteria, which produce acid. The acid in turn can eat away the enamel on teeth.

Almost all foods have some type of sugar that cannot and should not be eliminated from our diets. Many of these foods contain important nutrients and add enjoyment to eating. But there is a risk for tooth decay from a diet high in sugars and starches. Starches can be found in everything from bread to pretzels to salad dressing, so read labels and plan carefully for a balanced, nutritious diet for you and your kids.

Reduce your children's risk of tooth decay: Sugary foods and drinks should be consumed with meals. Saliva production increases during meals and helps neutralize acid production and rinse food

particles from the mouth. Limit between-meal snacks. If kids crave a snack, offer them nutritious foods. If your kids chew gum, make it sugarless -- Chewing sugarless gum after eating can increase saliva flow and help wash out food and decay-producing acid. Monitor beverage consumption

– Instead of soft drinks all day, children should also choose water and low-fat milk.

Schedule regular dental visits. Creating a relationship with your dentist, especially at a young age can help preempt many problems. Reaves sees patients as young as 1 year old.

It's never too early to get kids involved with their dental health. National Children's Dental Health Month is a great time to start. For more information, go to: www.reavesdental.com or www.ada.org/en/public-programs/national-childrens-dental-health-month.

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the ILTC has certainly inherited that old-fangled inspiration. Nevertheless, ILTC is open to the broadness of the arts, and is anything but stuck in the past. Today ILTC is seeking grants to preserve their antiquated charm, such as their current need to repair the crack in the tower. There is an obligation of this community to help in anyway the safeguarding of the arts, and in this case a place that has allotted those responsible for supplying the community with this much-needed substance, and culture a platform to foster their artistry. Today, shining a very bright star amongst the backdrop of some otherwise cloudy nights in the Mohawk valley there's a whole crew of people deserving our thanks



Just one of the original doors to The Stables that stand tall, oblivious to the sand storms of time.

for its preservation, and luminosity through the years, too many to thank in fact. We can thank them by supporting the arts, as the need to keep this star burning bright is therefore up to us all. **E**

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Eat healthy at 50 and beyond

A balanced diet is an integral element of a healthy lifestyle for men, women and children alike. But while kids and young adults might be able to get away with an extra cheeseburger here or there, men and women approaching 50 have less leeway.

According to the National Institute on Aging, simply counting calories without regard for the foods being consumed is not enough for men and women 50 and older to maintain their long-term health. Rather, the NIA emphasizes the importance of choosing low-calorie foods that have a lot of the nutrients the

body needs.

But counting calories can be an effective and simple way to maintain a healthy weight, provided those calories are coming from nutrient-rich foods. The NIA advises men and women over 50 adhere to the following daily calorie intake recommendations as they attempt to stay healthy into their golden years.

Women

- Not physically active: 1,600 calories
- Somewhat active: 1,800 calories



- Active lifestyle: between 2,000 and 2,200 calories

Men

- Not physically active: 2,000 calories
- Somewhat active: between 2,200 and 2,400 calories
- Active lifestyle: between 2,400 and 2,800 calories

When choosing foods to eat, the NIA recommends eating many different colors and types of vegetables and fruits. Phytochemicals are substances that occur naturally in plants, and there are thousands of these substances offering various benefits. The Produce for Better Health Foundation notes that a varied, colorful diet incorporates lots of different types of phytochemicals, which the PBH says have disease-preventing properties.

The NIA also advises that men and women over 50 make sure at least half the grains in their diets are whole grains. Numerous studies have discovered the various benefits of whole grains, which are loaded with protein, fiber, antioxidants and other nutrients. Whole grains have been shown to

reduce the risk for diseases such as type 2 diabetes, heart disease and some types of cancer.

Another potential hurdle men and women over 50 may encounter is a change in their sense of smell and taste. A person's sense of smell may fade with age, and because smell and taste are so closely related, foods enjoyed for years may no longer tantalize the taste buds. That can be problematic, as many people instinctually add more salt to foods they find bland. According to the U.S. Office of Disease Prevention and Health Promotion, older adults should consume no more than 1,500 milligrams of sodium per day. That equates to roughly 3/4 teaspoon of salt. Older men and women should resist the temptation to use salt to add flavor to foods, instead opting for healthy foods that they can still smell and taste. In addition, men and women should mention any loss of their sense of smell to their physicians, as such a loss may indicate the presence of Parkinson's disease or Alzheimer's disease.

Maintaining a healthy diet after 50 may require some hard work and discipline. But the long-term benefits of a healthy diet make the extra effort well worth it. ■

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The hidden benefits of water

Dehydration is a dangerous condition that can cause a host of complications and even prove fatal in severe cases. But as dangerous as dehydration can be, many cases are entirely preventable.

The best way to prevent dehydration is to drink enough water. When the body does not take in as much water as it puts out, it can become dehydrated. People who live in warm climates or in elevated altitudes may lose more water than those who do not. In addition, water loss is accelerated during strenuous exercise, highlighting the emphasis men and women must place on drinking enough water during their workouts.

But water does more for the body than prevent dehydration. The following are a handful of lesser known ways that water benefits the body.

- Water can help people maintain healthy weights. Dieting fads come and go, but water is a mainstay for people who want to control their caloric intake in an effort to maintain healthy weights. Water has zero calories, so reaching for a bottle or glass of water instead of a soda, lemonade or another caloric beverage can help people keep the pounds off. A study from researchers at the University of Texas Health Science Center found that even diet soda enhances weight gain by as much as 41 percent. In addition, soda has been linked to conditions such as obesity, diabetes and tooth decay. No such association exists with water.

- Water helps to fight fatigue. The fatigue-fighting properties of water are another of its lesser known benefits. When the body is not adequately hydrated, it can experience muscle soreness. And fitness enthusiasts who do not drink enough water may notice their bodies require extensive recovery time after working out. Each of those consequences can be prevented by drinking enough water, and doing so can even improve performance, as studies have shown that just a 3 percent loss of body weight due to dehydration can cause as much as a 10 percent drop in performance level.



- Water can improve the appearance of the skin. Skin that does not get enough water can turn dry and flaky and feel tight. In addition, dry skin is more likely to wrinkle than adequately hydrated skin. Getting water to the skin can be tricky, as the University of Wisconsin-Madison School of Medicine and Public Health notes that water will reach all the other organs of the body before it reaches the skin. But the school recommends applying a hydrating moisturizer within two minutes of leaving the bath or shower and drinking at least eight glasses of water a day to ensure the skin is getting

enough water.

- Water helps the gastrointestinal tract. Water can help maintain normal bowel function. When the body lacks sufficient fluid, the colon will pull water from stools in an effort to stay hydrated. That can lead to constipation, a condition in which people experience difficulty emptying their bowels. By drinking enough water, people can ensure their colon will not have to pull water from stools to stay hydrated, thereby helping them stay regular.

Water helps the body in myriad ways, many of which might surprise people unaware of just how valuable water can be to the body. **E**

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The Light, and Truth at the end of the blind date tunnel

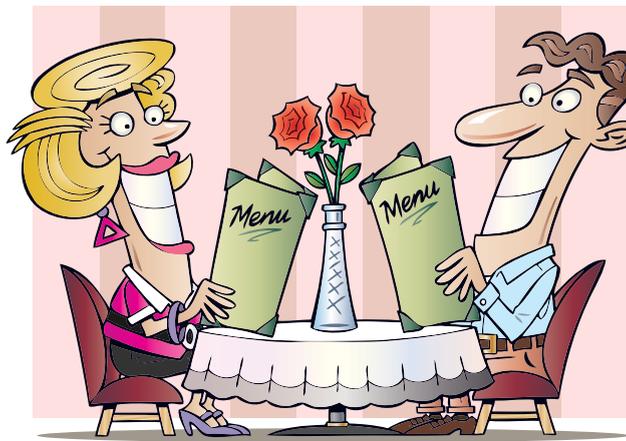
By Carly Proulx

Are blind dates really worth the hassle?

Disclaimer: If you're me the answer so far is a big old no, but you're not, and so I'll attempt to remain as unbiased as possible throughout this rant. Keep in mind that somewhere in between the trying, and striving

for success I might crash, and undeniably burn. Therefore, don't expect too much.

This is the point however. Precisely how can you make a blind date worth your while? First things first. We must drop any, and all expectations that this date is going to be any different than the six-month losing streak of



lame ones we've been on. Like I said, don't expect too much! It's bizarre to me, this concept of meeting up on purpose with someone you don't know save an online profile, a couple pics, their Facebook posts, and maybe a few adjectives your friend used to describe him or her. Perhaps it's unrealistic to think that we can walk in with zero expectations, but if you put forth the effort I guarantee you'll have a way better time than if you'd set the bar high—unless of course he, or she ends up meeting this height, and doing one armed crunches while thumbs-upping you with the other hand. But survey of my fellow single warriors out there says chances of this outcome are slim. I don't know if I yet believe in love at first sight. I suppose this notion, depending on the day I'm having, or mood I'm in can seem either ridiculous, or ridiculously romantic. I'm quite susceptible to both.

My experience in dating

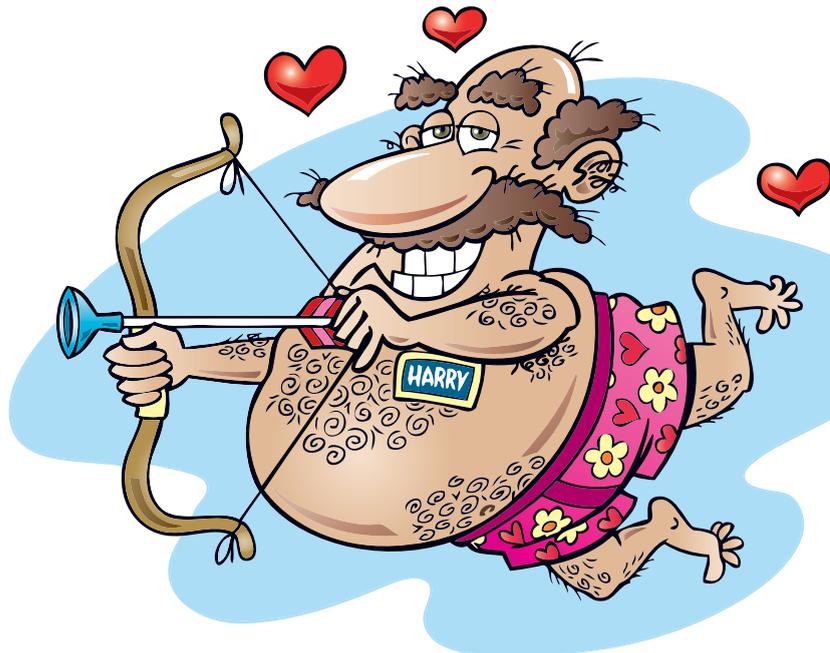
hasn't been a successful one, but always I seem to take away something. I'd learn a little bit more about myself, this other person, or just life in general. Occasionally I'd meet up with someone who'd trigger blasts from my pasts. Whether it was great bands I'd forgotten to listen to, intriguing

But it's like anything else on this roller coaster ride we call life. Whether it's changing your college major, or your hairstyle a little Feng shui can do some good. We must learn to bend, and sway when things don't exactly go our way. To withstand the world folks that's just what it takes. This world doesn't wait for you to come to grips either, sometimes you just have to get out there, and embrace the blindness of the day to day. None of us are immune to the unpredictability, and the sooner we learn to take the good with the bad the better off we'll be. A quote from one of my favorite books, Antoine De Saint-Exupery's 'The Little Prince,' 'I must endure the presence of a few caterpillars if I wish to become acquaint-

natures until finally you break out in nervous laughter from the complete, and utter futility of it all. There's the one that you'll immediately fall for, and go into a sudden state of shock when you knock them off that pedestal once having discovered the guy is married, or that gal was only sniffing for her green card. Then there are those that, well might not involve white horses, and a quartette of black birds in the background will surprise you.

Do yourself a favor, and avoid judging a book by its first date cover. Chances are this person is just as insecure as you are. Keep in mind there are those of us with walls up, and it's little to do with you if they're not so keen on taking them all

down on the first cup of coffee. Maybe you're someone who has the patience, and endurance to knock walls down, but not everyone is the right person for this job. Just because you two have similar interests, and both your favorite colors are robin's egg blue doesn't mean it's meant to be either.



authors I'd yet to read, or the simple conjuring of people you forget to remember because you grow so sick of missing them. In this respect, as far as successful blind dates go I've had a few. We have to redefine our idea of a victory on the blind dating front before strapping on the high heels, or tipping the brim of your brand-new bowler. I know as a single female there is this nagging voice inside my head, as much as I try to beat it with my rational brain baseball bat. It whispers sweet nothings such as "Maybe this is it. He's the one. Yes. This is it. My moment, my knight in shining—" until I've bashed it in a deaf mute. I'm 28, and I'm already tired of the weeding out.

ed with the butterflies" comes to mind. We need to accept that not everything can be as glamorous as the movies. In order to discover true beauty in people, and the world around us it's true we must experience some not so beautiful things as basis for comparison. Whether we like it or not this is real life. It's at times ugly, disappointing, and tragic. As much as I'm not a fan of the above I've learned to recognize they're essential parts to the whole, and play significant roles in beauty, satisfaction, and blessings.

Some dates are surely going to bore you. With others, that first awkward as heck feeling will refuse to back down, forcing you to endure silent pauses in between disagreeing

Ultimately, the ball is in your court. You're on this date for you. Keep an open mind. Be as honest as you possibly can without trying to justify who you are, your career choice, or current lot in life. It's only a date, and not a contest after all. And if you couldn't manage to leave the expectations at the door then I have one last piece of advice. Unless they're complete jerks, in which case just turn around, and don't look back don't act as if your time is too precious to be wasted. This was your choice, and the date is only as blind as you want to make it. But if you do choose to stick around, be nice. Maybe you're not the only one in the room that feels this isn't the ideal blind date. E

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Avico Distributing, Inc. and Broad Street Cash & Carry is located at 729 Broad Street in Utica. Inside the no nonsense building, the building was built in 1886 was a muffler factory during World War II, you'll find everything from frozen foods to pasta and olive oil to cheese. And the freshest spices including the famous Utica Grind.

Avico (pronounced AH'-VEECO) is a trade name and abbreviation for Antonio Vitagliano and Company. Antononio Vitagliano, the founder of A. Vitagliano & Co. established the company in 1928 at 811 Kossuth Ave in Utica. When a close friend suggested that his personality and resources were a perfect match for him to serve the public in the imported foods business. Mr. Vitagliano thought it to be a splendid idea and made it his goal to provide these products at the lowest possible price with the best possible service and quality. Almost 90 years later the tradition has been handed down through its 4th generation of his family and is known as AVICO Distributing, Inc.

The current owners, John Zumpano, Jr. and Robert Zumpano, are the grandsons of the owners of the original company carrying on with the same reputation for good products and service at excellent prices. Their products are available at various major chain stores such as Price Chopper, sold to restaurants, pizzerias and all across the country through the internet. Avico is a wholesaler of food, paper, and cleaning products. They have lasting relationships with many manufactures, growers, importers, and redistributors. This allows them to offer over 67,000 items that they can deliver to you including; baking and cooking supplies, beverages, candy and snacks, cleaning supplies, paper products, dairy, fresh and frozen foods, gourmet and specialty foods, and international foods.

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Common myths about frozen foods

Frozen foods are staples in many households. Freezing foods can ensure there's always something to eat at home, and freezing leftovers can help prevent waste created when such foods spoil before they can be eaten.

Wasted food is a pressing issue across North America. A 2014 report from Value Chain Management International Inc. indicated that \$31 billion worth of food is wasted every year in Canada, and roughly 47 percent of wasted food comes from private homes. Americans throw away approximately \$165 billion worth of food each year, which translates to as much as \$2,200 per household, according to a recent study from the Natural Resources Defense Council. Freezing foods can cut back on that waste and make people feel better about their eating habits at home, especially when they push past the myths and get to the facts about frozen foods.

MYTH: Frozen food is less nutritious.
FACT: Frozen foods can be even more nutritious than some fresh items available at the grocery store. That's because out-of-season produce is sometimes picked before it has ripened and then stored while shipped long distances. Nutritional content may be depleted even before the food reaches the dinner table. Frozen foods are picked at the height of ripeness and then flash frozen. Such foods will only lose some of their nutritional value during storage.

MYTH: Frozen foods

are more expensive.
FACT: Very often frozen foods can be less expensive than fresh foods. That's especially true when purchasing whole foods rather than prepackaged convenience foods, such as whole meals.

MYTH: Frozen foods contain preservatives or are highly processed.
FACT: There are plenty of healthy choices in the grocery store freezer that are not highly processed. Look at the ingredient list to confirm what is in a product before buying it. The freezing process often removes the need to rely on preservatives, and freezing keeps food from developing bacteria or other microbes that make people sick. These microbes cannot grow on foods stored at temperatures less than 0 F.

MYTH: All foods can be frozen.
FACT: Many foods freeze under the right conditions, but there are

some that should never be frozen. In certain foods, the structure may break down or taste can be affected. Delicate vegetables like lettuce will disintegrate when thawed. Creams can curdle or separate when thawed. Foods should not be frozen in cans or eggs in eggshells. Avoid freezing foods with a high water content, as they will end up a soggy mess as they defrost.

MYTH: Frozen foods last forever.
FACT: Many foods can stay fresh for months, but they can begin to lose quality and taste if they are left frozen for too long. Prepared leftovers can be stored for two to three months on average. Raw meat may last anywhere from four to 12 months. Label frozen foods to remember the "use by" date. Freezing food and relying on healthy frozen alternatives at the supermarket can be reliable and cost-effective. It also helps cut down on food waste from spoilage. **E**

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Prepare an authentic charcuterie party platter

(MS) — Artisanal charcuterie meats have exploded in popularity recently, so just watch as your party guests line up to get a taste of your own chef-guided platter. These savory plates make a perfect appetizer or even a light meal.

Darryl Fletcher, better known as “Chef D” to fans of his television show, is also corporate chef for Piller’s Fine Foods. He recommends

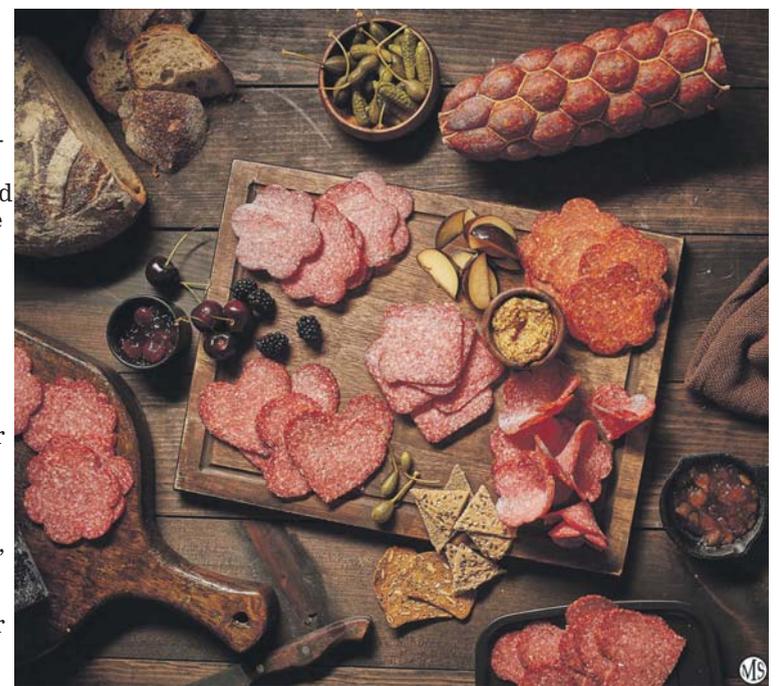
the following tips for a perfect charcuterie party platter.

Start with premium deli meats such as high end salamis or prosciuttos. The Black Kassel line includes a wide array of salamis such as Old Forest, Picante and Mustard Seed. Also available is Speck, which is like a smoked prosciutto. These allergen-free products — free of milk, eggs, fish, tree nuts, peanuts, wheat, and soybeans —

are also available at major grocery stores.

For crudités, Fletcher recommends assorted pickles, assorted sliced fruit, like figs and pears, and grapes. For condiments, choose grainy Dijon mustard, honey or honeycomb, and specialty jam or chutney. And for specialty cheeses, Parmigiano-Reggiano, Manchego, triple cream brie, or aged cheddar work well.

But it’s also important to combine the correct beer and wine with the platter. For Old Forest salami, a flower-shaped lean blend of pork with a delicate flavor, go with a pale lager. Mixed with finely chopped mustard seed and a hint of garlic, Mustard Seed salami is perfect with an unoaked Chardonnay. The cayenne pepper in the gypsy salami



Charcuterie meats have exploded in popularity! Use fresh, high quality meats and let your imagination go wild with crudites!! It's almost as fun to make as it is to eat!

gives it a semi-hot spicy flavor that pairs well with Riesling. Featuring habanero peppers, Picante salami is great teamed with Gewürztraminer. E

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How chocolate became tied to Valentine's Day

Heart-shaped boxes filled with decadent treats are coveted gifts on Valentine's Day. Chocolate lovers typically have a favorite type of chocolate, whether it's creamy filled truffles or chocolate pieces with fruit or nut fillings.

The tradition of gifting chocolate is anything but new. Chocolate and other sweet treats have been offered for centuries as prized gifts. Even ancient Aztecs and Mayans celebrated chocolate and saw it as a hot commodity. Drinks made of cacao beans would be given as presents to people of high status. Chocolate also would be offered to the gods as a token of appreciation. Cacao beans were even used as a form of currency at one point.

During the 17th century, chocolate consumption grew considerably across Europe. Chocolate houses cropped up in London, and the French elite often indulged in chocolate. Chocolate's popularity continued to grow, but the dessert was not linked to Valentine's Day until nearly 200 years later. In the mid-1800s, an enterprising individual named Richard Cadbury was looking for a way to make chocolate even more popular than it already was. He sought out a method to make drinking chocolate more palatable and created "eating chocolates." These chocolates were packaged in decorative boxes. Eventually, Cadbury saw the benefit of putting images of cupids and roses on the boxes. Cadbury even designed chocolate boxes in the shape of hearts that could be saved as mementos. These chocolates soon became intertwined with Valentine's Day celebrations.



Chocolate has been considered a special gift for centuries. It became linked to Valentine's Day in the 1800s.

caramels in chocolate in 1894. Hershey would go on to develop one of the most successful brands of chocolate in the United States, which included the famous Hershey bar. In 1907, Hershey launched production of tear-drop shaped "kisses." (The chocolates were given their unusual name be-

cause of the "smooching" noise made by the chocolate when being manufactured.) The kisses became wildly popular and made for affordable chocolate gifts on Valentine's Day.

Many other chocolate manufacturers soon began packaging their chocolates in special boxes for Valentine's Day. Russell

Stover and Whitmans are two such manufacturers who have long specialized in heart-shaped boxes or other decorative Valentine's gifts.

Traditionally, men have gifted women with boxes of chocolate for Valentine's Day. However, that role is reversed in other areas of the world. For ex-

ample, in Japan, women give gifts — namely chocolates — to the men in their lives to express love, courtesy or social obligation. This tradition first began in 1936 when confectioner Morozoff Ltd. ran the first ever Valentine's Day ad in Japan through a local English newspaper. By the 1950s, other Japanese

confectioners were following suit.

Chocolate has long been tied to Valentine's Day gifting. Whether one believes that chocolate symbolizes heightened status, acts as an aphrodisiac or is just a special treat, chocolates will likely always be associated with the day of love. **E**

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On the other side of the Atlantic, Milton Hershey dabbled in commercializing chocolate as well. Hershey began as a caramel maker, but experimented with covering the

How to speed up metabolism

When attempting to lose weight, men and women can expect to hear or read a lot about their metabolism. The process by which the body converts the foods we eat and the beverages we drink into energy, metabolism is widely misunderstood.

Many people may have been told that a naturally slow metabolism might be to blame for their weight gain. But according to The Mayo Clinic, a slow metabolism is rarely to blame for excess weight gain, which can most often be attributed to both poor dietary choices and inactivity. Certain conditions that slow metabolism, such as Cushing's syndrome or hypothyroidism, can cause excessive weight gain, and people who have been diagnosed with such conditions should consult their physicians for advice on

dealing with their conditions. But those without conditions that affect their metabolisms may need to make certain lifestyle adjustments that can speed up their metabolisms and help them lose excess weight.

- Start strength training. Muscle burns more calories than fat, even when the body is at rest. Building muscle is a great way to speed up metabolism. Each pound of muscle your body has burns roughly six calories per day just to sustain itself. That's three times the calories that each pound of fat burns. Add that disparity up over time, and a body with significant muscle is burning considerably more calories than one with excessive fat.
- Stay hydrated. Dehydration takes its

toll on the body in myriad ways, including affecting metabolism. Even mild dehydration can slow metabolism. When the body is dehydrated, its ability to use fat as fuel is compromised, slowing metabolism as a result. In addition, muscles need water to generate energy, so dehydrated muscles will not be burning as many calories as those that are fully hydrated. Make an effort to stay hydrated throughout the day, whether you're sitting at your desk in the office or working up a sweat at the gym.

- Snack, but snack healthy. Healthy meals benefit metabolism, but unhealthy snacks can derail your dieting efforts. Metabolism speeds up and burns calories each time the body eats, and many people adhere to the concept of "grazing" for that very reason. Grazing involves eating several small meals every three to four hours throughout the day rather than the more traditional three full meals each day. Grazing devotees feel that the approach burns more calories than more traditional diets, but the difference in calories burned may actually be negligible. Still, healthy snacking can speed up metabolism and help men and women avoid overeating at breakfast, lunch and/or dinner. In lieu of snacking on potato chips or baked goods, opt for healthier fare such as Greek yogurt or a serving of fruits or vegetables.

- Eat more protein. The thermic effect of food refers to the process by which the human body uses energy to absorb, digest and dispose of the food it ingests. Protein stimulates the thermic effect of



food more significantly than foods that are high in fat or carbohydrates, so the body will burn more calories digesting dietary protein than it will other foods. In addition to speeding up your metabolism, dietary protein also helps people feel full longer, reducing their risk of overeating.

Understanding metabolism can help men and women as they attempt to lose weight and maintain healthy weights once those extra pounds have been shed. E

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Meat-free meals

Come late winter, diners may notice more meat-free selections available on restaurant menus. That's thanks to the Lenten season that precedes Easter Sunday. During Lent, Christians traditionally abstain from eating meat on Fridays. Lent

is an ideal time for men and women looking to get healthier to include more vegetables, whole grains, fish and seafood in their diets. Try substituting ground beef with tofu, and incorporate vegetables where meat may be used. For example, layer lasagna with slices of

zucchini instead of filling it with sausage. Plus, eat more fish. Research shows that fish high in omega-3 fatty acids decreases the risk of abnormal heartbeats, which can lead to sudden cardiac death. Omega-3 fatty acids also decrease triglyceride levels, slow the growth rate

of atherosclerotic plaque and lower blood pressure. Lucky for us, our area has many great diners and restaurants that offer fabulous Lenten menu items. Watch the pages of EDITOR during Lent to see some of the best of the best. **E**

Lent 2017
 Begins Wednesday, March 1st
 Ends Saturday, April 15th

Grill up some bold shrimp

(Family Features) Grilling and game day go hand-in-hand, but if your tailgating menu needs a makeover, it may be time to explore new ways to bring bold flavor to your favorite dishes and drinks.

Chef Justin Smillie, of Upland in New York City and author of "Slow Fires: Mastering New Ways to Braise, Roast and Grill," relies on a good quality vinegar and roasted garlic butter spiked with a bold flavor like Tabasco Sauce to bring heat and add life to the flavors on the grill.

"I love to use Tabasco Sauce as a flavor enhancer, much the same as you would use a good vinegar," Smillie said. "It's a sauce that helps draw out and accentuate flavor."

Here are some additional meal prep tips from Smillie:

- * Work with ingredients and techniques that you are already comfortable with and then accent with a new idea.
- * Have foods set up and nearly ready when guests arrive so they only require a few final touches at the grand reveal before you can enjoy the meal.
- * Keep pantry items on hand that bring a little nuance and subtlety to a dish, such as a good vinegar or olive oil with a subtle perfume.
- * Start early, plan ahead and build flavors. The success of good barbecue never starts the day of; it's a labor of love that only gets better with time.

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Tequila Grilled Shrimp

Recipe courtesy of Chef Justin Smillie of Upland Restaurant in New York City



Servings: 4

- 2 red bell peppers, stemmed and de-seeded
- 4 limes, cut in half
- 6 tablespoons Tabasco Original Red Sauce
- 4 tablespoons olive oil, divided, plus more for the grill
- 1/4 cup silver tequila
- 25 cilantro sprigs, chiffonade
- 1/2 cup chives, cut into long, thin strips
- 6 cloves garlic, grated
- 1 piece ginger (1-inch long), grated
- 1/8 cup fresh lime juice, plus zest
- 2 tablespoons agave
- kosher salt, to taste
- 16 jumbo head-on and tail-on shrimp, peeled and deveined

Heat grill to medium-high heat and place peppers over flame until charred. Repeat with limes, charring flesh side then set aside. In food processor, puree charred, roasted peppers 30 seconds.

In large mixing bowl, combine pureed red peppers, pepper sauce, olive oil, tequila, cilantro, chives, garlic, ginger, lime juice, agave and salt over ice and allow to stand 20 minutes. Remove from ice, submerge shrimp in marinade and allow to stand 30-40 minutes so marinade can fully penetrate shrimp.

Heat grill to medium-high heat and grill shrimp 2 minutes per side until completely cooked.

Serve immediately with grilled limes as garnish.

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Pitch in and save money

Home improvement projects can be expensive. While the size and complexity of a project will affect how expensive the project is, homeowners can expect to shell out a pretty penny when they renovate or remodel areas of their home.

According to HomeAdvisor, an online resource for homeowners looking to connect with home improvement, maintenance

and repair professionals, the average bathroom remodeling project costs \$9,348, while the average home addition costs slightly less than \$41,000. But renovation-minded homeowners need not reconsider their commitment to remodeling, as there are various ways to cut the costs associated with home improvement projects.

One such way is for homeowners to pitch in and do some of the work themselves. Calculating labor costs can be difficult, as such costs can vary greatly depending on the project, the contractor and the amount of hired help that contractor intends to employ. However, some estimates suggest labor will account for anywhere from 25 to 50 percent of the overall cost of the project. So it's no surprise that homeowners can save themselves substantial amounts of money by doing some of the work themselves.

Homeowners who intend to do some of the labor themselves should discuss this plan with contractors during the vetting process. Before hiring a contractor, make sure homeowners' expected labor contributions are clearly defined in the contract.

While it's best to leave the most complicated parts of a project to the professionals, homeowners can pitch in during the following phases.

- **Demolition:** Demolition involves more than picking up a sledgehammer and swinging away. Some demolition projects are best left to the pros. For example, any projects



Homeowners capable of pitching in on home renovation projects can save substantial amounts of money on labor costs.

that involve exposure to hazardous materials are risky and therefore best left to experienced laborers. However, many homeowners are capable of safely and effectively pulling cabinets from walls, removing flooring or knocking down drywall. Homeowners unsure of how to approach demolition tasks can ask their contractors to demonstrate the proper technique so the demolition is done right and on time.

- **Salvage:** Removing debris and items that will no longer be needed once the renovation is complete is another way homeowners can pitch in. Homeowners remodeling their kitchens may be replacing their existing stoves and refrigerators and hoping to donate these items. In such instances, driving the items to the donation site or arranging for them to be picked up rather

than taken off the premises by the contractor or his employees can cut labor costs.

Home improvements are costly. But homeowners who are capable of pitching in can greatly reduce the overall cost of their next renovation project. **E**

Did YOU Know?

Heart disease can affect just about anyone. While it was once widely and mistakenly considered a man's disease, since 1984, more women than men have died each year from heart disease. According to the Harvard Medical School, heart disease is the leading cause of death in women over age 65, just as it's the leading killer of men. Myths abound with regard to heart disease and heart attack risk. One such myth that prevails is that a person who has heart disease should avoid all exercise. However, cardiologists advise that physical activity can help to strengthen the heart, which will improve blood flow to the brain and internal organs. Those who want to exercise should speak with their doctors about which types of exercise are right for them. In the interim, begin with some low-intensity walking, as this is usually a safe, low-impact way to improve personal health. **E**

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The Jumping Chicken of Otsego County

By Terry Berkson

Got a call the other day from my friend Charlie in Brooklyn. He said that he was thinking of getting a couple of chickens to keep in his apartment so that he could get really fresh eggs. I got on my high horse and asked, "What do you know about raising chickens?"

"I'm good with birds," Charlie countered. "Remember how I taught my parrot to stand on his head for money?"

It was true. I don't know how he did it, but when he'd pull a dollar bill from his pocket and wave it in the air, Webster, that's what he named the bird, would invariably hold onto the cage bars and stand on his head. Maybe the fact that Charlie's an obsessive compulsive provided the repetition needed to teach his pet such a trick. I had just cleaned out the coop and warned Charlie that chickens were a lot messier than his little Webster. "Also," I continued, "hens can be noisy. You ought to hear them scold me when I try to slip an egg out from under them."

"They don't crow like roosters," Charlie said.

"No, but they argue over a spot in the laying box. Your neighbors would never stand for their clucking."

"I guess you're right," my friend said of his shot down idea. I felt bad because Charlie is the biggest fan of eggs and chickens I know. I always bring him a dozen on trips to Brooklyn and he invariably raves about how much better my free range, naturally fed, browns are.

In response to his parrot story, I told him about a trick my favorite chicken, Danielle, does. When I go out to the yard with a leftover corn on the cob, Danielle will jump five feet in the air—without the assistance of wings—to peck at a kernel. "None of my other chickens do that," I tell Charlie.

"Really?" he says.

I assure him it's true.

"You can enter that bird in a competition. There must be bird-jumping contests up there. I could be her manager!"

I was doubtful about Charlie's idea. The only chicken competition I ever heard of was cock fighting and that's illegal.

"You have a money maker on your hands! I can teach her to jump hurdles! Isn't there a Chicken Olympics at your Otsego County fair?"

"I don't think so," I say. "You're getting carried away."

"Look into it. You may be sitting on a gold mine!"

"I will," I tell my friend. But lately, it's been snowing a lot and I find myself almost on my belly trying to push my undersized snow blower out to the coop.

"Should've sold them chickens before winter!" my wife Alice reminded me. "You'd have more time to finish renovating the house."

Yesterday, she took the initiative by calling King's Livestock Auction to tell them we were coming. Of course, I was feeling guilty. Danielle and the other Golden Comets had been great egg producers until the bitter cold set in.

Alice, eager to get rid of the competition, held the box lids closed as I sadly stuffed in my girls. Unfortunately, the last chicken I had to catch was my super jumper, Danielle. When I bent to grab her she rose over my head while hooking a claw into my nostril and scratching



Danielle and the author on better terms

me way up to the bridge of my nose. I was bleeding profusely. All feelings of guilt were gone as I went back to the house to apply alcohol and stop the flow of blood. Pressure, cold water, ice, nothing seemed to be working. We had to be on the road shortly to be on time for the auction. Finally, I took large strips of toilet paper and pasted them to my face, loaded the chicken boxes into the truck and headed out. I got the impression that the toilet paper stuck to my nose didn't look too cool because Alice laughed a little every time she looked at me. The paper remained for fear I'd start bleeding again.

I was a little heavy

on the gas pedal as we passed the intersection of Routes 20 and 51. Just my luck, a state trooper was hiding behind a nearby barn. He took after me with his lights flashing. I pulled onto the shoulder and he stopped several yards behind. When he approached and I rolled down the window, the toilet paper was the first thing he saw. "What

happened to your face?" he asked.

"I was training a chicken and got scratched," I told him. "We're headed for The Chicken Olympics at King's and we're late."

"I never heard of The Chicken Olympics," the

officer said soberly.

"Oh yeah," I assured him. He didn't even crack a smile.

"Have you been drinking?" he asked as he sniffed the air in the car. He probably smelled the

CHICKEN- 30

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4-H Tack Sale Provides for Regional Equine Community

On Sunday, February 19th from Noon until 2:30pm members of the Oneida County 4-H Horse Program will be holding a consignment tack sale at the Vernon Downs Hotel on Stuhlman Road in Vernon. The 4-H youth of Oneida County have organized and promoted this event for 23 years now. The consignment tack sale is a lesson in entrepreneurship. The youth promote the event, send information to consigners, vendors and potential customers, assist with setup and cleanup, inventory items, and calculate proper payment to those consigning items. There is always a wide selection of new and used

tack, equipment and riding apparel. CR Graphics and Taylor's Tack and Field will be vendors at this year's event. The funds collected from the 4-H Tack Sale are used for other educational opportunities for the 4-H youth such as trips, workshops, fairground improvements and educational resources for 4-H members.

Consignment sheets will be available pre-sale by registering at http://reg.cce.cornell.edu/TackSale_230. If you would like more information on the 4-H consignment tack sale or the Oneida County 4-H program, please contact Lisa Farney at (315) 736-3394, Ext. 122 or email lb553@cornell.edu.



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Companion animal overpopulation is a problem that continues to tax the resources of communities throughout North America. Each year, millions of animals are euthanized in animal shelters because there are simply not enough people to adopt them.

One of the easiest ways to prevent pet overpopulation is to spay and neuter animals. Cats can reproduce at very fast rates. According to the Cat Rescue, Adoption & Foster Team of Central Oregon, two uncontrolled breeding cats can create the following situation if they have two litters a year at a survival rate of 2.8 kittens per litter: 12 cats in the first year, 66 cats in the second year, and 2,201 cats in the third year. Cats reach puberty between 4 and 12 months of age. Female cats reproduce between January and September, and might come back into "heat" every 14 to 21 days until they have bred or daylight decreases considerably. Cats can give birth 60 days after they have bred.

With regard to when to spay or neuter animals, experts advise taking a "the earlier the better" approach. The North Shore Animal League America's SpayUSA says that, for many years, veterinarians were taught that cats and dogs had to be one year old to be spayed or neutered. But it is now known that kittens and pups can be spayed or neutered at the age of two months (or two pounds). The American Veterinary Medical Association has endorsed this practice, which is referred to as "early age neutering." When spayed or neutered early, animals recover more quickly from surgery than they would if spayed or neutered later in life.

The Canadian Federation of Humane Societies offers that spaying or neutering is the responsibility of all



pet owners. But for some owners, the cost of spaying or neutering can be a deterrent. Several municipalities, humane societies and SPCAs now offer low-cost spay/neuter programs or clinics to address this issue. One such organization is the Beat the Heat Alliance, Inc., which offers spay/neuter access, assistance and education in northeastern Tennessee. The group also sponsors the Beat the Heat annual event.

By controlling the rate of reproduction, communities can help alleviate the strain that is posed by pet overpopulation. **E**

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CHICKEN from 29

alcohol I had put on the wound.

"No!" I said emphatically.

"I'll have to ask you to step out of the car," he said as Alice's mouth dropped open.

So, there I was out on Route 20 trying to walk a straight line in the slippery snow with the toilet paper flapping in the wind. Passing cars slowed as I tried to stand still on one leg. When I

slipped and almost fell, he pulled out a Breathalyzer and told me to blow into it. I heard the chickens muffled laughter in the boxes.

When I passed the test, the officer went back to his car and returned a few minutes later. "Here's some more paper for you," he said as he handed me the speeding ticket.

Disgusted, I started the truck and began to head down the road towards

King's. I was wondering what my friend Charlie would have done in this situation. He's a resourceful guy. Maybe he would have gotten a chuckle and disarmed the cop by pulling that dollar out of his pocket and getting a jumping demo from Danielle. Or maybe he would have been arrested for attempted bribery. Unlike parrots, state troopers don't stand on their heads for money. **E**

Brenda's Natural Foods

-bringing goodness to Rome, New York

By Carly Proulx

Brenda's Natural Foods on 236 West Dominick Street in Rome, NY is open Monday-Friday 10am-6pm, Saturday 10 am-3 pm, and closed Sundays. Owner, Brenda Henry, is celebrating 7 years in business, having first opened the store in January 1, 2010.

Brenda, and husband Mike Henry own Wood Creek Herb Farm in Verona, NY. The farm, and the aforementioned farmers, are Brenda's Natural Foods organic produce source, as well as the suppliers of their farm to store pork, eggs, and chicken products. The prelude to Brenda owning a Natural Foods store was her vending at the Rome Farmers Market in 2000, although you could claim it started with her predisposition to get people to eat right, eat local, and stay informed. Back when Brenda worked at the post office she'd bring along gifts from her organic farm such as Indian corn, and gourds. Her husband Mike is well known for his famous cookies sold in Brenda's store. I must say they leave no room for humility. Cookie fame is his game, and there is no shame in the deliciousness of the Chocolate Chip with Pecans or Oatmeal Raisin. And to boot he makes a mighty mean Maple Walnut Granola.

The store is loaded with all natural

goodies. From healthy, locally made gourmet foods such as the Old Goat salsa out of Clinton, NY, Rella's Originals Marinara and Riggie sauces out of Whitesboro, NY, a wide variety of Heidelberg bread stacked high on their shelves from Heidelberg bakery in Herkimer, NY, and Mu Mu Muesli organic granola cereal out of Sharon Springs, NY, which actually won best new cereal in a recent issue of Veg Times Magazine. Brenda's Natural Foods is reserving her spot in the burgeoning line-up of reasons to frequent Rome, NY. Around the same time, she started vending at the farmer's markets in Rome Brenda began a CSA (Community Supported Agriculture) on her farm, and is present day a drop site for 2 other CSA's. CSA allows city residents to have direct access to high quality, fresh produce grown locally by regional farmers. You're purchasing a "share" of vegetables from a farmer once a member, and either weekly or bi-weekly, usually from June to October your farmer will deliver that share of produce to the drop-off location. Sounds neighborly, smart, and reasonable.

You'll find delicious items such as containers of Brenda's homemade curried mashed sweet potato in the cooler, among local cheeses, and yogurt. Of course, there is plenty a gluten-free, and vegan option in both the store, and on the cafe menu. Oh, I didn't mention there's a cafe before? Well that's partly



Brenda's Natural Foods cafe's Vegan Lentil Chili is a healthy, delicious menu item, as well as the perfect topping to the Mexico salad layered with corn chips, and avocado slices.

because it's one of those places you want to keep tucked away, a little "for yourself secret," because it's just so good! The cafe offers homemade soups, salads, panini's, grilled sandwiches, wraps, and organic coffee and smoothies. I got the Mexico Salad topped with fresh avocado, and the cafe's homemade Vegan Lentil chili. My friend got a big bowl of the chili. We were both full in that fully satisfied, but not awfully

immobile kind of way. The cafe provides a full-service lunch and dinner menu. There's plenty of seating, whether you have the time to relax, and enjoy, or you're taking it back to the office I guarantee you'll find an excuse to be back for more, and sooner than later.

When in season, the cafe offers their farm to table items such as the kale,

BRENDA- 32

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BRENDA from 31



The store's produce section is plentiful, and grown with the owner's two hands on her land, and Henry's farm out in Verona, NY.

lettuce for salads, onions, beets, cabbage, and beans. Brenda will get her greenhouse going in March, and soon enough we'll see an abundance of plants, greens, and other goodies filling the stores space. Unique to Brenda's is their Children's area. A cool little nook with a table, chairs, toys, and a magical mural on the wall where kids can hang out while their parents get some shopping done. Nearby to this is their on tap Kombucha. With flavors by Aqua ViTEA out of Middlebury, Vermont such as their Tumeric, Ginger Lime, and Blood Orange to choose from you could just grab a half liter bottle, but you're probably going to opt for the big growler to bring back and refill when back in the area.



Kombucha on tap at Brenda's Natural Foods. Choose from 3 different flavors, and bring home a half-liter or growler full!

From the Pasture Raised pork, and organic vegetables from Henry's farm to the cafe's kitchen and your table of affordable, fresh, and organic delights it's all right here in Rome at Brenda's Natural Foods. Check out the menu in depth at www.brendasnaturalfoods.com, or call the store and cafe at (315) 337-0437 to pre-order your pick-up, or for any questions about your specialty food needs. There is a whole freezer called "Gluten-Free Epiphany." Ask Brenda about special orders if the store doesn't carry it, and she's more than willing to oblige. "I especially love New York State products, and feature them as much as I can in my shop," Brenda expressed on the blog "Bigger and Better" on the store's website. If you're interest in learning how to play a bigger part in

supporting your local farming community, just ask Brenda about stepping stones, as this farm girl knows all about growing from the roots up. **E**

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Addressing spring ant problems

Although many species of ants are harmless, homeowners do not want to see ants inside their homes — especially in large numbers. The following strategies can help homeowners address ant infestations this spring.

- Identify the type of ant around your property. Consult with online guides or books to identify the species of ant on your property. Knowing which species of ant is in or around your home

can help you address the problem more effectively.

- Create a food trap. Ants are attracted to various food sources, such as fats, sweets and proteins. Mixing a very small amount of a food with boric acid can help control ant populations. Ants will bring tainted food back to their colonies and perish.
- Keep a clean house. Use vinegar, soap and water to clean areas where ants are seen. Many leave a scent trail of pheromones to tell others where to go



for a food source.

- Treat carpenter ants at the source. Carpenter ants will not bring back food to the nest. Instead, sprinkle diatomaceous earth, or DE, around outdoor nests to eradicate colonies.
- Work with an exterminator. If home remedies do not work, consult with a trained exterminator. **E**

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2017's Miss Copper City's Outstanding Teen

-a beauty queen inside, and out

By Carly Proulx

Arlena Occhipinti is 2017's Miss Copper City's Outstanding Teen. From Rome, NY she's 13 years old, and believes in the power of self love. Every day she wakes up is a day she dedicates to spreading the message locally, and universally, the message to love yourself.

Arlena entered the Miss America system at age 9, but has been entering beauty pageants with the support of her mom since 7. As 2017 Miss Copper City Arlena has been able to create a platform. She's been non-stop spreading positivity, raising awareness, and promoting herself to get her message out there through a program at the YMCA in her hometown of Rome, NY called Girl Talk. The message = Love your

selfie#nofilternecessary, and is reaching girls of all ages, and of all different walks of life through Arlena's Facebook page, as well as in person. Every Wednesday girls ages 5-16 can gather, and join Arlena in talking about the trials and tribulations of life at the YMCA. Arlena's own experience with having little to no confidence at a young age, getting bullied in school, and overcoming it all through self love is what motivated her to reach out to other young girls in the community who may be battling a similar situation. But it doesn't have to be bullying. It can be any problem a young girl is facing, and the program is a way for them to become either proactive in solving said problem, or simply a way for them to have a voice, get feedback, and better cope with the issue at hand.

Arlena is a mentor to many a young girl, but her confidence didn't grow overnight. Growing up with ADM (Acute disseminated encephalomyelitis), a rare autoimmune disease in her left wrist resulted in, due to its location, and the actual disease itself being a rarity (there are fewer

than 200,000 cases in the U.S.) Arlena, along with her family enduring the hardship of her going undiagnosed for a time. Eventually, once doctors identified what the cause of her health issues were, Arlena and her biggest supporter, her mom Eleanor could face it head on. Arlena began entering

pageants, as her mom thought it might help boost Arlena's confidence level which was at an all-time low due to her medical condition, and those fellow classmates that reminded her she was different from everyone else. Arlena recalls "I used to fake being sick in elementary school because

of my lack of confidence, and lived in fear of what others would think of me, and say to me," admitting "when I did go to school I wore long sleeved shirts, and was always trying to cover up what made me different."

We all, at one time
TEEN - 34



Miss Copper City 2017 Outstanding Teen Arlena Occhipinti hangs out and gets creative with the Girl Scout Troops she mentors.

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Finger Lakes Winter Wine Tour \$85 PP



Saturday, February 25th

Winter wine trips are a blast! We will be visiting 3 Brothers Wineries and Estates, Bagley's Poplar Ridge Vineyards, Hazlitt's 1852 Vineyard, Americana Vineyards Winery and Montezuma Vineyards.

The cost includes motor coach transportation, all tasting fees and special treats.

New York City Spring Bus Trip \$70 PP

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TEEN from 33

or another fell prey to society's stipulations for 'fitting in,' and keeping up the cool factor by following the latest trends in fashion magazines, and on TV. With Arlena's low self-esteem, and medical condition she realized being different didn't have to be a bad thing, and that the only one that had control over making her feel like being different was herself. In one's youth as a female it's easy, and seemingly the natural progression of our kind into the dreaded teenage years to become, and remain our own worst critic. Unfortunately, this doesn't just magically disappear once you graduate high school. Self-esteem issues can haunt you up until your late 20's, and well into your later years if you choose to keep listening to those voices. If you make no effort to correct these thoughts, that you are somehow not worthy of your peers, cute boys, or going after your dreams of becoming a Roller Derby champion then you will start to believe them.

It wasn't until two years ago, after meeting many an empowered woman at the beauty pageants and competitions she entered as a kid that Arlena finally built up enough confidence to spread her message. Her goal is to compete in the Miss



Miss Copper City Teen Arlena promoting her platform, and program "Girl Talk" Love Your Selfie campaign #Nofilternecessary.

America Teen pageant, and aim to win the title of New York's Outstanding Teen. If she does end up winning she'll be able to spread her platform of her Girl Talk program, and "love your selfie#nofilternecessary" message across NY state. "You have to be comfortable with yourself before other people can be" Arlena expresses.

The world could use more advocates for our young like Arlena. Your best bet to reach Arlena is on Facebook @arlenaOchipinti, where she's well known for getting back to our youth pretty much instantly. Posting positive

quotes, and photos on Instagram and Facebook of her being active in the community, and connecting with our youth Arlena stays highly involved in social media. Recently she spoke to the local Girl Scout troops at an event, inspiring, informing, and relating to the youth as part of her Copper City Teen duty, and genuine want of spreading her message, and helping these girls. You can join Arlena, and a group of girls for an open discussion on certain topics every Wednesday at the YMCA in Rome. It's a safe place for young girls with questions, concerns, and simply sharing of unique life struggles and stories.

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Arlena wants you to know you're not alone anymore, as she's created a special network, connecting a whole group and then some of girls just like you who could use a little more confidence, a little more friendship and understanding, self-acceptance, and self-love. It's important to be comfortable with you who are, wherever you go. There is only one you, and it's never too late to start loving her. **E**

House Calls for Cats

By Pat Malin

As most pet lovers can confirm, cats think human beings were placed on earth solely to adore “moi,” our royally-inclined, four-footed population

If you agree, Mohawk Valley Cat Care in Clinton is well-suited to handle fussy felines. Dr. Keith Blackmore, a veterinarian for 38 years, has been specializing in cat care since 1990.

Located at 3060 Austin Rd., just off Route 12B, south of the village of Clinton, MV Cat Care provides a full range of services from low-cost spay and neuter, grooming, preventative care and emergency treatment.

However, MV Cat Care goes a step further. Whether it’s a finicky cat or a concerned owner, Dr. Blackmore will make house calls. Though common in large cities, it’s an unexpected service in the Mohawk Valley.

“We offer house call service for those who may need the care brought to them,” Blackmore explained on his website (mohawkvalleycatcare.com).

Blackmore, who has spent his entire career in the greater Kirkland area, finds that house calls fill a need. House calls are usually reserved for Tuesdays, he said, but are convenient for cat owners who don’t have the means to drive to his office. Or it could be for the cat who runs and hides when it’s time to go to the vet because of a prior bad experience.

Unlike people-pleasing dogs, few cats enjoy car rides. Many well-meaning owners have attempted to take their cats to the vets by forcing their pet into a dark, confined pet carrier and tossing them in the car. At the veterinary office, the frightened or sick cat is examined by strangers and might be given a painful vaccination.

Imagine blindfolding your child and taking him or her to their first visit to a doctor’s office in this manner. It’s inhumane and it can leave a lasting, fearful impression.

Another occasion to consider a house call is for end-of-life care or hos-



Dr. Blackmore, who has two cats and a dog, poses at home with frisky Lucifer.

pice, a heart-wrenching time for owners. Blackmore will be sensitive to their needs and discuss euthanasia for a seriously-ill cat.

“As your cat enters his or her final years, they need extra love and care,” the website states.

Blackmore is a native of western New York. His interest in veterinary care began while he was majoring in biology at small Hiram College in Ohio. In 1972, he had the opportunity to study abroad in the Lake District in Britain.

He was very impressed with the solo veterinarian Chris Lewis, who treated mostly farm animals.

After graduating from Hiram in 1974, Blackmore attended Cornell University School for Nutrition from 1974-1975. He was admitted to the Cornell Veterinary College in 1975 and graduated in 1979 with his DVM degree. He passed additional exams and received certification as a member of the Royal College of Veterinary Surgeons (MRCVS).

While at Cornell, Blackmore said the students were notified of the need for vets in Oneida County. He came here in 1980 and

small animals, from farm animals to house pets, as well as providing emergency care.

In 1990, Blackmore founded the Paris Hill Cat Hospital, the first cat-only veterinary clinic in Oneida County. “It was just an idea at first, but I was seeing more cats than dogs and realized there were not as many specialists for cats,” he said in an interview.

He sold Paris Hill Cat Hospital in 2005 to pursue a new venture, Kirkland Area House Calls for Cats, now Mohawk Valley Cat Care, at his home and office on Austin Road.

Blackmore, 64, with the help of licensed veterinary technician assistant, Jeanne Combella—a 1986 graduate of SUNY Delhi—can provide a wide range of care, including surgeries and spaying and neutering.

Mohawk Valley Cat Care charges \$108 for a spay and \$75 for a neuter.

“We believe that taking care of your pets should never be dependent on wealth,” Blackmore states on his website. “A pet

isn’t an object; he or she is a family member who deserves the best loving care possible.”

CATS - 36

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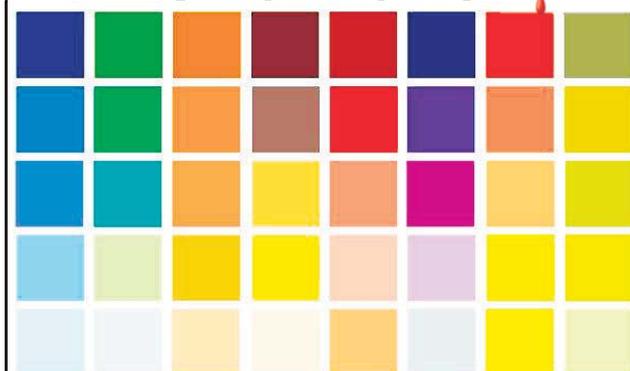
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EITC is a refundable credit and those who qualify and claim the credit could pay less federal tax, pay no tax, or perhaps even get a refund. This credit could put anywhere from \$2.00 to \$6,269.00 into a taxpayers pocket.

The IRS wants taxpayers with disabilities and parents of children with disabilities to be aware the credit is out there and correctly claim it if they qualify.

The IRS estimated about 1.5 Million people with disabilities miss out on this credit because they don't file, thinking they fall below the income threshold filing requirement.

Many taxpayers are also concerned that getting a tax refund will change eligibility for one or more public benefits (SSDI, Medicaid and Food Stamps). In fact, tax refunds including refunds from tax credits are not counted as income when determining if you are eligible for public benefits or not. This applies to any federal, state or local program that is federally funded.

To qualify for the EITC, the taxpayer must have earned income. This can be wages from a job or from self employment. Social security benefits and social security disability do not count as earned income.

Use the "EITC Assistant" on irs.gov to see if you meet the requirements for this and other credits available to lower

income families. (ACTC)

The best and fastest way to file your taxes is to file electronically through a qualified tax professional and have the refund direct deposited into your bank account.

Be prepared to provide documentation to your preparer when claiming any tax credits. Due diligence requirements are very specific and carry substantial fines for reporting false information.

A reminder that tax returns claiming EITC and ACTC are being held by the IRS until February 15th. Refunds are not expected to start arriving until the week of February 27th.

NYS now requires a valid driver license or state issued id card to complete a tax return and file electronically. This is an additional verification tool to deter fraud.

It is best to file your taxes as soon as all of your documents arrive.

Call Tax Worx for your appointment today!

EITC
Earned Income Tax Credit

The IRS may change dates after publication of this column.

Alicia Cashman
Tax Preparer/Owner



Make the year ahead clutter-free



Opting for e-statements instead of paper statements can help men and women reduce clutter around the house.

Many people feel the dawn of a new year provides an opportunity to clean the slate and begin anew. That notion can be applied in various ways, including around the house.

Cleaning the slate at home may involve reducing clutter around the house. Clutter can gradually overtake a home's interior, turning a once pristine home into one

overwhelmed with non-essential items. Clearing a home of clutter can seem like a monumental task, but the following tips can help homeowners and apartment dwellers make the year ahead clutter-free.

- Scan important documents and save them on a computer. Some documents cannot be discarded, but that does not mean they have to be stored in bulky file cabinets or desk

drawers. Scan important documents such as medical receipts or tax returns and save them on your computer where they won't take up any physical space. Purchase an external hard drive as a safety net where you can store backups of important documents in case a computer crashes and cannot be rebooted.

- Thin out DVD and CD libraries. Thanks to streaming services and digital music players, DVDs and compact discs have become somewhat obsolete. Discard or donate DVDs that you can just as easily stream through your television, and convert compact discs to digital files that you can play on your computer and MP3 players, ultimately donating the discs and clearing space.

- Purchase furniture that doubles as storage. Storage ottomans and benches can help clear common areas and bedrooms of clutter such as blankets and bed linens that can make rooms feel more claustrophobic. Storage furniture might not get excess items

out of the house, but such furnishings can create a more comfortable, welcoming environment.

- Switch to e-statements for bank documents and utility bills. Paper is a big contributor to household clutter. That's still the case even though many adults now pay the majority of their bills online. When given the chance to choose between paper or e-statements, opt for the latter so bills and bank statements don't pile up on your desk or throughout your home office. If you still want to keep important bills and bank statements, download them to your computer and keep them in a designated folder on your desktop.

- Adopt an "out with the old, in with the new" mantra. Resolve to discard old items after purchasing new ones or receiving birthday or holiday gifts. Hanging on to old items because they can still function and serve some utility is a recipe for a cluttered home. Anytime you or a family member brings a new item into your home, make sure the item it's replacing finds its way out the door.

Clearing clutter is a goal for many people at the dawn of a new year. As intimidating as clutter can seem, discarding it is easier than it may appear. **E**

CATS from 35

MV Cat Care can arrange routine and preventative care on-site or at your home, including exams, vaccinations, blood screening, dental care, urinalysis and grooming. Blackmore and Combellack will also evaluate the feline's behavior and help you cater to your cat's desire to be pampered.

New customers receive 10 percent off a first visit or house call. However, this promotion does not apply to the spay and neuter program since those rates are already reduced. To request the discount, mention you saw it on Mohawk Valley Cat Care's website: www.mohawkvalleycatcare.com

MV Cat Care is open weekdays, 8 am - 6 pm and Saturdays, 9 am - 1 pm. Phone (315) 859-1144 for details. **E**



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Memorable prom and graduation movies



High school students with proms and graduations on the horizon realize that these events will provide some of the most memorable moments of their lives. Promgoers and graduates frequently look back on this special time in their lives with fondness as they remember the special moments they spent with friends and family.

Prom and graduation are such extraordinary events that many filmmakers have immortalized them on the silver screen. Here's a look at some memorable prom and graduation films; you may learn a thing or two before your own prom and graduation.

- "Twilight": "Twihards" swoon over the pivotal scene when Edward and Bella attend their high school prom together. Bella, who claims to have two left feet, stands on the feet of Edward, and together they dance and enjoy a magical moment under the gazebo. The memorable scene can make any girl wish she had a vampire of her own to take to the prom.

- "Napoleon Dynamite": A film about an awkward and alienated teenager helping his new best friend run for the class presidency resonates with current and former students who can relate to the awkwardness of high school. Decked out in 1970s-era brown suit and wide tie, Napoleon picks up his prom date in rural Idaho in a classic car supered up with hydraulics and driven by friend Pedro's cousins. Napoleon later tugs at audience heartstrings while dancing with Deb in her puffy-sleeved glory to the classic Cyndi Lauper tune "Time After Time."

- "Legally Blonde": Shortly after her astonishing legal win in court as a law student, Elle Woods serves as the keynote speaker at her graduation from Harvard Law School, showing that beauty and brains can be joint assets.

- "Say Anything": Fans

of this 1980s classic enjoy exploring the insecurities and social pressures of high school and getting ready to move on to the next phase of life through the scope of the relationship between Lloyd and Diane.

- "A Cinderella Story": A familiar tale of students from different social circles, this movie gives the concept a unique spin, as two students fall in love online and keep

their identities secret in the weeks leading up to graduation.

- "Carrie": On a prom night gone awry, telekinetic teen Carrie exacts revenge on her mean-spirited classmates in this adaptation of a Stephen King novel.

- "Back to the Future": Marty McFly gets the impossible chance to attend his own parents' prom and help them solidify their feelings for each other.

All the while he rocks out to some classic 1950s music, inspiring none other than Chuck Berry along the way.

- "Grease": No prom and graduation movie list would be complete without this classic musical. Despite their differences, a group of friends reunites to share their last glory days of school together — with a few rousing musical numbers. **E**



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Massage Luxury or Necessity **MOBILITY IS NOT A LUXURY**

Let's define luxury, according to Merriam Webster (www.merriam-webster.com) "*an indulgence in something that provides pleasure, satisfaction, and ease.*"

Let's define Massage Therapy: North western Health Science University (www.nwhealth.edu) states "*Massage therapy is manual manipulation of soft body tissues (muscle, connective tissue, tendons and ligaments) to enhance a person's health and well-being.*"

As you can see they are very different but yet they are one in the same massage is a Luxurious Necessity. The Touch Research Institute (TRI) has done vital research on the effectiveness of massage on a variety of patients and has found that treating with massage on patients with Circulation, Depression, Fibromyalgia, Back pain patients showed increased work productivity and trunk flexibility and lowered stress levels. These are just a few of over 100 case studies of the effectiveness of massage on various conditions.

But Massage Therapy is so Expensive and I can't Afford it lets look at some statistics In the US the average massage costs \$70.00 for one hour. This is with hands on treatment, Pre and Post consultation and planning with your therapist. Pain and stress level decreased and mobility increased. The cost to eat out and to put gas in your tank is about equal to this on average.

Yes most massage therapists do not except insurance so the expanse is out of pocket as opposed to a doctors visit were insurance is covered. But looking at massage as being a Preventative to your healthcare you have to ask yourself "Are you worth it?" Every 3,000 miles you go to get your oil changed in your car and last I checked car insurance does not cover your oil changes but you still get them and continuously ignore your own maintenance.

Massage Therapy is regular maintenance for your body

and with continuous neglect can seriously damage your engine. So I ask again "Are you worth it?" Still not sure well let's think about this, since the average massage is \$70.00 per visit to save for a monthly visit you would need to put away \$17.50 each week that's it! less then \$20.00 a week it's not that hard when you consider what you spend on coffee, movie tickets, or fast food.

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Prom pointers and safety tips



Parental involvement is key to keeping prom night safe and secure.

For high school students, excitement is in the air come the end of the school year. While graduation might be just over the horizon, prom is foremost on the minds of many students.

Many schools celebrate prom with a dance and dinner on campus or at a rented venue. Prom is a chance for students to socialize and reminisce before graduating from high school.

Prom can be a celebration of past friendships and a way to make new memories, but it should be remembered for all of the right reasons. By playing it safe, prom can be an experience students cherish for the rest of their lives. Both students and parents can take steps to ensure

prom night is as safe as it is fun.

- Be an involved parent. Involved parenting is the best way to make prom night safe. Parents should take an active roll in understanding prom plans and set ground rules. Too often parents contribute to poor prom decisions, such as setting the tone for the night with toasts or encouraging potentially dangerous behavior by organizing hotel stays or large parties. Parents should have a detailed itinerary of their children's prom night plans, including schedules, who will be accompanying kids to the prom and any post-prom activities. Request check-in calls or text messages, and set a curfew.

- Avoid scare tactics. In the weeks leading up to

prom, school districts and police departments often stage mock automobile crashes to illustrate the dangers of distracted driving or driving while intoxicated. But studies have shown these tactics do not have long-term benefits. The U.S. Department of Health and Human Services' National Institutes of Health found that programs relying on scare tactics to prevent children and adolescents from engaging in certain behaviors are not only ineffective, but also may have adverse effects. Being open and honest with students and treating them like adults may be a more effective way to get through to them. Let them know you are available at all hours if they do not feel comfortable in a situation or need a ride home.

- Provide adult supervision. The prom and after-parties should be supervised by responsible adults. Although it may not eliminate all opportunities for risky behavior, adequate supervision will serve as a deterrent.

- Encourage students to think before acting. Many students view prom as a deadline for certain perceived rites of passage. They may believe prom is the time to drink or try drugs for the first time or to go further intimately with a boyfriend or girlfriend. Parents should encourage kids to think before acting, letting them know that prom is not a night to throw caution to the wind and experiment. **E**

Prom hair how-to



Book prom hair appointments early and ask your stylist to try a few different looks so you find one you like.

Prom and graduation season has arrived, and students everywhere are on the lookout for formal attire to wear to these special occasions.

Once promgoers have chosen their beaded gowns and sleek tuxedos, prom-worthy hair is next on their priority lists. A fresh haircut or an intricate updo can perfectly complement a well-planned wardrobe. Some promgoers will dabble in styling techniques and products at home, but many will be visiting salons to perfect their prom looks.

For girls, prom presents an opportunity to indulge in a complete grooming package that will include hair, makeup, nails, and faux tanning.

Salons are bound to fill appointments quickly, so teens should start planning their prom looks early on. The following tips can help you look your best come prom night.

- Select your dress and jewelry first. Choosing your dress and jewelry first allows you to customize your prom hairstyle to complement the rest of your look. Many girls want to follow a theme, such as romantic or sleek, come prom night, and hairstyle is an important element of such themes.

- Book a trial appointment at the salon. When booking your hairstyle appointment, which should be done at least a month in advance of prom night, book a trial appointment as well. Bring photos of your gown to your trial appointment and ask the stylist to make suggestions on which looks will complement the gown.

- Keep your hair texture and cut in mind when choosing a hairstyle. Although great stylists often can work magic with your hair, they can't do the impossible. If you have short hair and want a long, cascading style, you will need to invest in extensions. Ladies with naturally curly hair may have to spend more time in the chair having their hair straightened if they want a sleek bob. Sometimes it's in your best interest to work with your hair's natural texture.

- Get a grasp of your role in crafting your hairstyle. Speak with your stylist about how long before prom you should undergo any chemical processes, including perms, coloring, straightening, or relaxing treatments. Do not make

drastic changes right before the prom. Any modifications should be made a few months before the big night so you can get acclimated to your new hair and make any necessary adjustments.

- Take care of your hair so that it is healthy on prom night. Stick to a regular hair maintenance schedule, including trims every four to six weeks, so your locks look healthy on prom night. Depending on your hair texture, a stylist may recommend deep-conditioning treatments. Always be gentle with your hair, avoiding tugging or harsh brushing while it is wet, as such treatment can lead to breakage.

- Practice, practice, practice if you are going it alone. Make several trial runs if you plan to do your own hair, asking a friend or family member for help if you have difficulty working on your own hair.

- Don't go crazy cleaning your hair. Oftentimes, complicated styles are more easily achieved with slightly "dirty" hair. Do not wash your hair the day of the prom; do so the day before so your hair has more grip and will be less likely to slip out of pins or other hair accessories on the big day. Adding a little texturizer or pomade to hair can thicken it up and give it more hold as well.

- Have a backup plan at the ready. A backup plan covers you if your hair simply isn't cooperating or if the weather is not conducive to the style you selected. A sleek chignon or a messy French twist can reign in problem hair.

- Call the salon before you leave the house to ensure the stylist is running on time. Call ahead so you aren't left twiddling your thumbs as you wait for a tardy stylist at the salon. In addition, wear a shirt that can be removed easily without disrupting your newly styled hair as you change into your dress.

- Don't forget hair accessories. Ask your stylist to recommend any accessories you may need to keep your hair looking great through the night and don't forget them at home.

- Keep your makeup artist in the loop. If a makeup artist will be doing your makeup, be sure he or she is brought up to speed on your prom night hairstyle and the type of dress you will be wearing. **E**

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Factors to consider when choosing a neighborhood

When shopping for a home, it's easy for buyers to fall in love with a property. A well-maintained home with updated features can be hard to resist, but buyers must consider more than just a home's appearance before submitting an offer.

One variable prospective home buyers tend to value more highly than others is the neighborhood where they will ultimately choose to live. Many buyers even value neighborhoods more than homes, feeling they can always fix a home but cannot necessarily fix an undesirable neighborhood. When considering which neighborhood to begin a home search, buyers should research a host of factors.

Crime

Crime statistics are public domain, meaning buyers can examine crime figures for any neighborhood where they are considering buying a home. Some real estate websites list neighborhood crime ratings among the information they offer about a given property. In addition, buyers interested in learning about crime in a given neighborhood can visit a site such as CrimeReports.com to access data on crimes committed near a particular address.

Home values

Home values are another factor to consider when choosing a neighborhood in which to buy a home. Buyers can work with a local realtor to find a neighborhood or area where real estate prices are trending upwards. While buyers might be able to find a great deal on a home in a neighborhood where home prices are dropping, it's important to remember those home prices are dropping for a reason. Work with your realtor to find a neighborhood where you can afford a home and where property values are not in decline. Realtors will have access to recent sales figures so you can get an idea of whether a neighborhood is trending upward or in decline.

Amenities

The proximity of amenities such as shopping,



restaurants and parks is attractive to many buyers, and that's something all buyers should consider before buying a home. Even if you prefer a home in a remote location, that could limit your market of buyers when you want to sell the home down the road. While your own comfort and preferences should ultimately prevail over potential resale value, it's important that you at least consider access to amenities before making a decision. You might be able to find a compromise

in a home that is a short drive away from a town center, but still remote enough that you are not in the middle of the hustle and bustle.

Commute

Quality of life is heavily influenced by commute time. Many men and women feel their quality of life improves dramatically the shorter their daily commute is. When considering a particular neighborhood, do a test run before making an

offer on a home. Wake up early and drive to the area where you are thinking of buying, and then commute from there during rush hour. Also, do the reverse commute come quitting time. You might be able to get an estimated commute time online, but a test run can give you a more accurate idea of what your daily trips to and from the office will be like.

Choosing a neighborhood where you will enjoy living requires some forethought and research. **E**

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How to find the right volunteering opportunity



Volunteering to coach a youth sports team is one way athletes and sports fans can combine their passion for sports with their desire to give back to their communities.

Millions of people volunteer every year. Some parents may volunteer to coach their children's athletic teams, while other volunteers work with nonprofit organizations in need of assistance to help turn their mission statements into reality.

Though many people may spend a lifetime volunteering with the same organization, many others find their initial foray into volunteering does not meet their expectations, and such volunteers might walk away in search of another

organization or opportunity. Because the turnover rate of volunteers can be so significant, many charities, in particular those that work with children, ask volunteers to make a minimum commitment before coming on board.

But the reason many volunteers walk away from a volunteering opportunity has little to do with time and more to do with finding a volunteering opportunity that's right for them. The right opportunity differs for everyone, and men and women who want to give back to

their communities can ask themselves a series of questions in an effort to find a volunteering opportunity that best suits them.

What causes am I passionate about?

A cause you are passionate about is often a great place to start when you search for a volunteering opportunity. For example, people with a love of animals may find that working with a nearby animal shelter, whether it's working at the shelter or fostering animals in need of temporary homes, is a great way to give back. Sports fans and athletes whose playing days are largely behind them may want to volunteer with their local youth leagues or coach at a nearby school. When you are passionate about a cause, you will likely be passionate about volunteering to advance that cause.

What do I want to do?

What you want to do while volunteering is another factor to consider. Men and women who work in an office all week may want to get outdoors on the weekends, so volunteering opportunities with the local park system might be an ideal fit.

It's also important to determine what you don't want to do. Some people are uncomfortable asking others for money, so such men and women should avoid volunteering positions that focus on

fundraising. If a volunteering opportunity involves activities you don't enjoy, you're less likely to stick with it.

How much time do I have to volunteer?

It's not a crime to have a hectic schedule. Prospective volunteers whose time is already stretched thin may want to avoid ongoing volunteer opportunities that require significant time commitments. Such people might be more suited to one-time projects or those opportunities that allow volunteers to decide at the last minute if they will attend. Honestly assess your schedule to determine how much time you have to devote to volunteering before choosing an activity.

Where do I want to volunteer?

Cities typically have more volunteering opportunities than the suburbs, so men and women should determine if travel is a deterrent before choosing a volunteering opportunity. A nearby city might have opportunities that are more suitable to your skills, but if you are averse to traveling, then you may not stay committed to such projects. When looking for a volunteering opportunity, determine where you would like to volunteer, and be honest with yourself when assessing if travel is a potential deterrent. **E**

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Begin planning kids' summer recreation now



Summer school recess will be here before you know it. Make sure you're prepared for camp and other recreational programs.

Many families spend winter figuring out how to chase away cabin fever and endure frigid temperatures until spring and summer mercifully return. Parents thinking ahead to swimming pools and days lounging on the beach can put their daydreams to practical use by planning ahead for their youngsters' summer vacations.

Youth recreational

programs and summer camps can bridge the gap in care between the end of school and the day when classes resume. Due in part to high demand, parents who want to place their kids in summer rec programs or summer camps should be vetting such programs and camps well in advance of summer. The following are a handful of tips for moms and dads who want their kids to have fun and fulfilling summers.

What is sustainable clothing?

Consumers who have adopted a greener way of living may include organic foods and beverages in their eco-friendly plans. Such men and women may be very familiar with the way organic foods are produced, including how these foods are made without the use of chemical pesticides or artificial growth additives.

Organic items are not limited to just food and drink. Organic and sustainable clothing has exploded in popularity, providing yet another way to help preserve the environment.

Currently there are no global or even domestic standards for organic or sustainable textiles like there are for organic produce. According to Organic Clothing, an eco-fashion resource, any product sold in the United States — regardless of where it was grown or produced — that carries the USDA Organic logo must have been inspected by a certified agent of the USDA certification program. Textiles do not need to be 100 percent organic to carry organic labeling, according to the USDA. Other labeling standards may be overseen by The International Federation

of Organic Agricultural Movements, The Organic Trade Association, and EKO/KRAV, a Scandinavian organization.

Clothing fibers that do not meet strict organic requirements may fall under a broader umbrella term of "sustainable" fibers. These may include garments made from recycled materials or eco-friendly, man-made fibers. These, too, have their share of benefits.

There are many advantages to choosing sustainable or organic fabrics and clothing. These materials may have

- Ask for recommendations. Speak with fellow parents and trusted friends about where they send their children. Personal recommendations can be very helpful, providing firsthand insight into a particular camp or program. Schedule appointments to visit camps that fall within your budget. Take your son or daughter along so he or she can get a sense of what camp will be like.

- Explore all options. Camps come in more flavors than ever before. Certain camps may be faith-based ministries while others may focus on particular sports. Band camps and art camps may appeal to creative kids. Also, there are plenty of general-interest camps that offer various activities without narrowing in on any particular one. Parents may need to choose between a sleep-away camp or day camps, depending on which camp experience they want for their children.

- Inquire about camp schedules. While many camps are flexible, day camps do not have the same level of flexibility as after-school programs. Arrangements will need to be made if care is required after regular camp hours. Speak with camp staff to see which types of after-hours programs, if any, are available.

- Determine your camp budget. As varied as program offerings may be, camps also can vary greatly with regard to cost. Government-run camps may be less expensive than those offered by private companies. Day camps typically cost less than those that provide room and board. Find out if a particular organization subsidizes a portion of camp costs. Scouting programs often have a dedicated camp and may offer affordable options for scouts. Martial arts schools and dance centers frequently offer camp schedules.

been produced using less water, fewer pesticides and fewer herbicides than conventional farming methods. Organic cotton, for example, is produced from nongenetically engineered seed. These factors combine to help keep unnecessary chemicals from entering the environment.

Clothing produced from recycled materials, such as plastics, keeps materials that are slow to decompose or those that do not break down from reaching landfills. The company ECOALF repurposes discarded fishing

nets, plastic bottles, used tires, post-consumer coffee, and post-industrial wool, among other materials into functional clothing. The company notes that one backpack made from recycled plastic bottles can keep 135 bottles from littering the environment.

Choosing sustainable clothing is another way to live an eco-friendly lifestyle. What may have started out as clothing produced from cotton, silk, hemp, and jute has expanded to include many upcycled materials as well. **E**

If camp seems out of reach, look into local summer recreation programs at parks or schools. Such programs may not be as extensive as those offered by camps, but they can quell kids' boredom and keep children occupied during the day.

In addition to camp, remember to plan for some free days so children can

just enjoy some downtime. Such days can break up the monotony of a routine and provide kids and families time to relax together.

Summer recreation may be far off, but it is never too early to start making summer plans, including finding camps and other activities for kids. **E**

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Fascinating facts about the human cardiovascular system

The human heart and the miles of blood vessels that snake through the body are a wonder to behold. Made up of three independent components, the cardiovascular system functions best when these three components, which include the heart, lungs and portal



vessels, work cohesively.

Each day 2,000 gallons of blood travel through the blood vessels to provide oxygenated blood to the body and remove waste materials, including carbon dioxide. That's a lot of traveling. In fact, according to LiveScience, if you were to lay out all of the arteries, capillaries and veins in one adult from end-to-end, they would stretch roughly 60,000 miles, which means that our blood vessels could wrap around the Earth 2.5 times.

The human cardiovascular system is nothing short of fascinating, and the following are some even more remarkable facts about this wonder of nature, courtesy of Mercola, PBS, CPR Certified medical training group, and LiveScience.

- The heart beats around 2.5 billion times in the average person's lifetime.
- Red blood cells have to move in a single-file line to fit through the miniscule capillaries in the body.

- When the body is at rest, it takes about six seconds for the blood to go from the heart to the lungs and back.
- A woman's heart typically beats faster than a man's heart, at a rate of 78 times per minute (men's hearts beat 70 times per minute).
- The corneas in a person's eyes are the only bodily cells that do not receive a blood supply.
- The thumping sound of the heart is made by the four valves of the heart closing.
- If a heart has an adequate supply of oxygen, it can beat even when separated from the body, thanks to its own electrical impulse.
- Ancient Egyptians believed the heart, rather than the brain, was the source of emotion, wisdom and memory.
- Unlike other cells, red blood cells do not contain nuclei so they have room to carry oxygen. However, this absence is why they cannot divide or synthesize new cell components.
- Healthy bone marrow will constantly manufacture new red blood cells.
- Within a tiny droplet of blood, there are about 5 million red blood cells.
- The right ventricle is responsible for moving blood to the lungs, where it will receive fresh oxygen and nutrients. The left atrium and left ventricle receive this oxygenated blood back from the lungs.
- The heart begins beating four weeks after conception.

The cardiovascular system is an amazing component of the human body. **E**

DID you KNOW?

When making floral arrangements for special events, such as weddings, anniversary celebrations or company galas, party planners can save substantial amounts of money sticking with native and in-season flowers. While exotic flowers flown in from afar may make stunning dining table centerpieces, the cost of importing those flowers can be considerable, possibly even more than the cost of the flowers themselves. In addition, conditions to keep non-native flowers looking their best must be ideal, which can be difficult for party planners to ensure. In-season plants are budget-friendly, as prices can skyrocket when party planners choose out-of-season blooms for their get-togethers. While it's possible to get many flowers out-of-season, others are available only in-season, saving planners the trouble of finding ways to pay the often exorbitant costs associated with finding and securing such blooms during their off-seasons. Planners who have their hearts set on particular blooms that are temporarily unavailable should discuss their options with local florists, who may suggest look-alike flowers that are similar in appearance and in-season. **E**

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Streamer JUNKIE

By Mark Usyk

Wet Elk

It's funny, the questions you start getting once people find out you tie flies and get stuff wherever you can. The morning Holly called me from work to tell me there was a deer on the side of the road I knew she'd given in to the fact that this was happening and there was nothing she could do but accept it. Naturally I told her it was illegal for me to just pull to the shoulder and start hacking parts off of a dead deer, but I appreciated the fact that she'd not only accepted it, but was actually looking too.

Then there's the conversations that come out of nowhere. Ones you didn't

think you'd ever have, and that the friend that started it never saw coming. They may become a little bewildered by your knowledge of such things even. "Hey, there's a dead blue jay outside my bedroom window. It must have flown into the glass. Do you want it for tying flies?" When you answer politely "Thanks but no, it's illegal to possess song birds or their feathers because they're federally protected" You get that shocked "Oh, I didn't know that... How do you know so much about them?" You can only explain to so many people, that you've been offered dead birds that flew into windows so many times, it's simply good knowledge to have and it comes



Feathers, fur, and fiberglass.

with the territory. Of course, if you're constantly offered dead things, road kill and birds that fly into windows, you're either in a very economically depressed part of the world where such things are probably as normal as our run to the grocery store, or you tie your own flies and the people around you find it somewhat fascinating. Fascinating enough to even think to offer you a dead blue jay in the first place.

I got a text from our friend Pat. His friend is a taxidermist and the question was simple and straight forward enough. I got a bunch of deer, elk, bear, sheep, and coyote. All tanned. You want it? Once again the obvious answer was sure do. I was picturing a bag of little scraps that would have been left from the taxidermist mount work.

The next day I got home and two bags, about the size of a pillow cases were outside the front door. They were full of scraps, ten times what I was expecting. Jake had seen it and called Holly. I'm sure the conversation would've sounded a bit odd to anyone overhearing them,

but it probably seemed pretty normal to my wife and son. He told her there were animal furs outside the door, and she told him to just leave them there for me to bring in. The problem was he moved them to get in, and when I got home one bag had been just out far enough to get wet from the sloppy snow falling. So an old broken slatted head board in the garage that I've failed to throw out yet made for the perfect drying rack. Procrastination does pay off sometimes, even if in the most odd ways.

The next morning the question was asked, what's that smell in the garage. It was a simple answer, straight forward, and in most other houses in the area would have gotten a raised eyebrow and more thorough questions. In this house, the answer fails to warrant even the batting of an eye. It's just wet elk.

Mark Usyk is the author of *Reflections of a Fly Rod* and writes the *Streamer Junkie* blog at jprossflyrods.com. JP Ross is an advocate for clean water and preservation of local wild trout habitat. ■



Did you know fish eat deer?

Little-known facts about Abraham Lincoln

Presidents George Washington and Abraham Lincoln both made their marks on American history, so much so that every year Americans celebrate their birth and influence with Presidents' Day.

Washington may have been the country's first president, but Lincoln is perhaps more frequently celebrated for his profound efforts to abolish slavery. He is best known for presiding over the United States during the Civil War and signing the Emancipation Proclamation, which liberated slaves across the country. While much is widely known about Lincoln and his life, there are some lesser-known tidbits that only historians or history buffs seem to know. In honor of his birthday, here are 13 facts about the man that aren't as widely known.

1. Towering over others at a height of 6 feet 4 inches

tall, Lincoln remains the tallest president to hold office. It is likely his stature helped to present an air of authority during his presidency.

2. Lincoln had two romantic interests before he married Mary Todd in 1842. Lincoln was in a relationship with Ann Rutledge, who died of typhoid fever. He also courted Mary Owens for some time before they ended their relationship.

3. Lincoln was notoriously messy. His law office was often cluttered, much to the chagrin of his partner William Herndon. It is said Lincoln kept an envelope on his desk marked, "When you can't find it anywhere else, look into this."

4. Lincoln was the first president to be photographed at his inauguration. His future assassin, John Wilkes Booth, can be seen in a photo standing close to the president.

5. In 1849, Lincoln ob-

tained Patent No. 6,469 for a device that was designed to lift and keep boats afloat when they passed over a sandbar or entered shallow water. Lincoln served as a

Hanks is a distant relative of the former president.

9. Despite his stature, Lincoln apparently had a high-pitched voice and not a deep timbre.

sometimes pace the White House because of insomnia. He would keep Hay up with funny stories or with readings of Shakespeare.

12. Lincoln accepted a

through his differences with Lincoln amicably rather than face him in the duel.

13. The contents of Lincoln's pockets on the night

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Recycle yard waste into valuable compost

Composting may be a person's first foray into an eco-friendly lifestyle. Compost is a nutrient-rich natural fertilizer that some people refer to as "black gold." It can be made from most types of lawn and garden waste as well as some discarded items from the kitchen.

Many people have renewed interest in composting because they understand the environmental ramifications of over-reliance on chemical fertilizers. Ground water may become contaminated and certain fertilizers may have adverse effects on wildlife. Compost, a living organism of sorts, comprised of beneficial bacteria, insect life and nutrients for plants, is on the other side of the plant food spectrum. Because it can be generated for little to no cost, compost is not only environmentally responsible but economical as well.

A home landscape can provide a wealth of material to use in a compost heap or bin. Rather than putting fallen leaves or lawn clippings to the curb or in the trash, they can be turned into beneficial material to help keep your garden self-sustained.

To begin, you will first need to determine the composting method that will work for you. Compost can be generated from a pile of material placed in an out-of-the-way corner of the yard or be created in a specially designed, expensive compost bin. Many homeowners fall in between these two methods with their compost systems. Most create their own bins from wood and chicken wire or even use a trash container to contain the compost.

Once the container or pile location is established, it is time to start the compost recipe. In order to function optimally, compost should have an abundance of aerobic bacteria, which will compost the waste quickly. Aerobic bacteria need oxygen and a certain amount of moisture to survive. Therefore, it is important to include materials in the compost that will achieve these conditions. Composters frequently refer to "greens" and "browns" in a compost mix. Greens are fresh leaves and grass clippings and kitchen scraps. These materials will have an abundance of moisture as well as nitrogen. Browns are older, dried out plant material and wood. The browns help create air cushions in the compost that facilitate aeration and also contain



carbon. Without aeration, the compost will compact down too quickly, which could slow down the decomposition process. This may result in a foul odor.

Avoid the use of bones, meat or cheese in a compost bin. This will only attract scavengers and may rot faster than it can be decomposed by the bacteria. Also, avoid pet waste or any lawn trimmings that have been treated with pesticides.

Turning the compost will help keep it aerated and will also distribute the bacteria. This can help speed along the composting process. Avoid adding weeds to juvenile compost because it may not be hot enough to kill the seeds and then you'll be stuck with weeds in the compost -- and wherever you place that compost.

Moisture is essential to the compost. Each time you add new material to the compost bin, dampen it. It should be moist but not dripping. Adding a balance between greens and browns should help regulate the moisture level as well. Remember, during warmer months, the compost may dry out more, so you will need to be on top of the moisture levels.

The composting process works best at temperatures between 120 and 150 F. The compost will generate its own heat as matter is broken down. However, the heat of warm months can speed up the process. Novice composters may want to begin their composting in the summer as a first attempt.

Hot composting piles can be turned into soil fertilizer in as little as 8 to 10 weeks. Therefore, plan your composting start date accordingly. Soon after you may have a naturally sustainable garden that produces material enough to continually feed your existing compost pile. **E**

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Challenges facing farmers today and tomorrow



Greater public awareness of agricultural challenges could help the industry in the future.

Though farming was once big business in the United States, by 2012 less than 1 percent of Americans were professional farmers. Many challenges face today's farmers, many of which are largely unknown to the general public.

Many people have an outdated view of a farm as a small, family-owned and operated parcel of land where livestock is raised in open pens and crops are hand-harvested when ripe. The reality is that modern-day farms have had to overhaul operations to meet demand and remain competitively priced while adapting to the ever-changing ways technology infiltrates all parts of life. Each of these factors present obstacles for today's farmers.

Technology

Rural farming communities are expected to make an effort to integrate modern technology into an industry that has been around for centuries. But such a transition in rural areas, where communications systems may not be as up-to-date as those in urban areas, is not always so easy.

According to the Manitoba Rural Adaptation Council, a shift from a resource-based to an information-based economy, compounded by the rapid introduction and expan-

sion of new technology in the workplace, has altered farm operation and the skills in demand. Older workers who have been schooled in one way of agriculture may have a significant impact on labor supply and the vitality of farming as a career. Younger adults who are knowledgeable in technology may no longer seek out agricultural careers.



Decrease in farming as an occupation

The United States En-

vironmental Protection Agency says that only about 960,000 Americans claim farming as their principal occupation. As that figure has dwindled, the average age of farmers continues to rise, as the Bureau of Labor Statistics notes that roughly 40 percent of the farmers in this country are 55 years old or older. This has led to concerns about the long-term health of family farms throughout the United States.

Environmental concerns

Many farmers have come under scrutiny for how farming impacts the environment. A growing emphasis on sustainability and conservation has led many people to protest certain farming practices. Protesters claim that certain practices, such as raising livestock, can pollute water, while the use of fertilizers and chemical pesticides is bad for the environment. Many farmers, however, have altered their methods to be more environmentally friendly and self-sustainable in the process.

Climate change is another environmental issue farmers must deal with. Strong storms and severe droughts have made farming even more challenging.

November of 2012, the United States Bureau of Labor Statistics indicated that the unemployment rate within the agriculture, forestry, fishing, and hunting industries was at 13.6 percent, far higher than the national unemployment rate. As a result, many farm families have found themselves stuck between a rock and a hard place, as rising costs for equipment and technology are being coupled with decreasing profits and rising unemployment.

Further complicating matters is competition from corporations and international food producers who have made it difficult for family farmers to turn a significant profit. Many family farmers rely on loans and lines of credit to survive, but thanks to changes in the financial sector that saw banks become less willing to extend lines of credit, some farmers are facing bankruptcy.

Though it can be easy for those who do not work in the agricultural industry to overlook the struggles

facing today's agricultural professionals, a greater understanding of those struggles and the chal-

lenges that lay ahead can benefit the industry and its employees down the road. **E**

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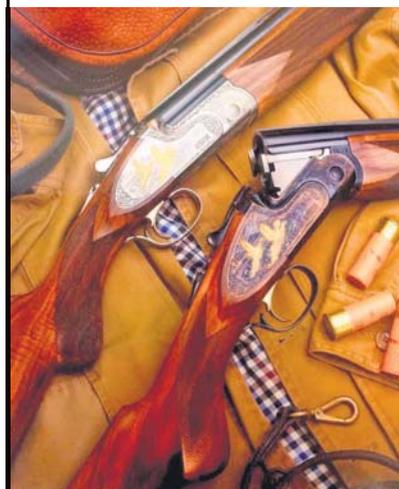
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Financial fall-out

The ongoing recession of the last half-decade has also affected farmers. In

Shoppers' guide to Presidents' Day sales

On the third Monday in February, Americans stop to remember the contributions of the many great leaders who have served as President of the United States. Certain Presidents' Day traditions have developed over the years, including an opportunity for shoppers to find great deals on a host of items.

Originally established in 1885 to recognize President George Washington, the day we now know as Presidents' Day was then known as Washington's Birthday and was traditionally celebrated on February 22. The holiday became known as Presidents' Day after it was moved to the third Monday in accordance with the Uniform Monday Holiday Act, which enabled the nation's workers to enjoy more three-day weekends. In addition, the Uniform Monday Holiday Act served

as a way to combine the celebration of Washington's birthday and Abraham Lincoln's birthday, which is February 12.

In addition to serving as a chance to celebrate and reflect on the contributions of our nation's past presidents, Presidents' Day has emerged as a day to rest and shop. Stores across the country advertise special prices to tie into the day and capitalize on the three-day weekend. For many retailers, Presidents' Day is the first major sales opportunity of the new year. The following are some ways shoppers can capitalize on Presidents' Day sales.

- Stock up on winter apparel. Now is the time to enjoy deep discounts on winter apparel. Purchase clothing, coats and boots that your family can wear next year. Parents can estimate sizes for growing children. Discounts on winter apparel as winter winds down may be as high as 70 percent, meaning savvy shoppers can save substantial amounts of money.

- Score big on big-ticket items. Appliances may go on sale at steep discounts on Presidents' Day. Shoppers who need new appliances for their kitchens may find Presidents' Day sales have what they need at the prices they want to pay. Save even more on big-ticket items by using cash-back or points balances on credits cards to lower out-of-pocket costs even further.

- Shop around for electronics. Computers, laptops and many different electronic devices go on sale on Presidents' Day. Compare and contrast items you have had your eyes on for some time, determining regular prices for each item. Knowing the regular prices and sale prices will help you determine if the Presidents' Day sale price is a good deal.

- Don't overlook deals on automobiles. Certain holidays, such as Presidents' Day, provide opportunities



for consumers to find great deals on new vehicles. That's because sales tend to be slow in February. Scout out the deals being offered on the car or truck you want. Sales personnel may be more open to negotiations if it will close the sale.

Presidents' Day is, first a foremost, a chance to reflect and honor past presidents. But it also is a day for shoppers to find great deals on a host of items. **E**

Facts about February

Despite being the shortest month of the calendar year, February has an interesting history. Early calendars marked the start of the new year in

March, but when the second king of Rome, Numa Pompilius, rose to the throne in 713 BC, he synchronized the calendar to the lunar year. That required the addition of January and February.

- February was named after an end-of-year celebration called "Februa," also known as "Februalia" or "Februatia." Februa was a Roman festival of ritual purification and washing — a spring cleaning of sorts. This festival was later incorporated into Lupercalia, another Roman celebration that has ties to Groundhog Day. January was actually added after February and was named after Janus, the Roman god of beginnings and endings.

- Both January and February originally had 28 days. However, at the time, even numbers were considered to bring bad luck, so Pompilius added another day to January. However, February was left with 28 days and had long been considered an unlucky month.

- February was the last month of the year for around 200 years, until the Gregorian calendar designated January the start of the new year.

- Julius Caesar is responsible for adjusting the calendar and the length of February's length. In the Julian calendar, 10

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The origins of Groundhog Day



Every year on February 2nd, people anxiously await the appearance of a medi-

um-sized furry mammal who they believe can predict if winter weather will rage on or if spring will

arrive sooner than later. Although it's a rather strange means of prognostication, millions of people celebrate Groundhog Day, a tradition that is older than many people may know.

The first official Groundhog Day took place on February 2, 1887 at Gobbler's Knob in Punxsutawney, Pennsylvania. In the ensuing 130 years, individuals have gathered in Pennsylvania and other areas around the United States to find out if the groundhog will see his shadow. If the groundhog

sees his shadow, winter will continue for six more weeks. If the groundhog does not see his shadow, then spring will arrive early.

Although the Groundhog Day of today is relatively new, the concept is actually quite old and

dates back to the ancient Christian tradition of Candlemas. Candlemas is a Christian holiday commemorating the presentation of Jesus at the Temple. Candlemas falls on the 40th day of the Christmas/Epiphany period and is one of the

oldest feasts of the Christian Church, celebrated since the 4th century in Jerusalem. Around the 14th century in Europe, Candlemas began to overshadow Pagan holidays like Lupercalia (Romans) and Imbolc (Celts). **GROUNDHOG-68**

FEBRUARY from 48

days were added to the calendar year in various months, and February was increased every four years (leap year) to 29 days to coordinate the calendar year to the solar cycle of roughly 365.2425 days.

- During common years, February can pass by without a single full moon.
- British mathematician John Conway determined that some dates inevitably share the same weekday within any given year. The last day of February will be on the same weekday as March 7, April 4, May 9, June 6, July 11, August 8, September 5, October 10, November 7, and December 12.

• In the northern hemisphere, February is the equivalent to the third month of winter. In the southern hemisphere, it is the third month of summer.

• In Finnish, February is called "helmikuu," meaning "month of the pearl," which refers to the snow melting on tree branches.

• During leap years, February will end on the same day that it begins.

• February's birthstone is the amethyst, which symbolizes piety, sincerity and spiritual wisdom.



• Residents of St. Lucia celebrate their independence on February 22.

• Despite being the shortest month of the year, February is packed with events. In addition to Valentine's Day, Groundhog Day, World Marriage Day, and Presidents' Day, February is when Flag Day is celebrated in both Canada and Mexico. February also serves as Black History Month.

February is notable for many reasons and packs quite a number of activities into its few weeks. **E**

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BOCES Continuing Education - Fostering Community

What would you see and hear if you visited

a BOCES Adult Education class? You would see a group diverse in

age, race, ethnicity, gender, background, and purpose; you would see a teacher sitting with one or more students, or standing to deliver a more traditional “lesson;” you would see student work displayed; manipulatives, text books and high-interest reading material; and computers. You would hear conversation, laughter, debate and questions being asked and answered in an environment that encourages the interaction. Adult students routinely engage with each other and the instructor in a positive, effective learning atmosphere. Most importantly, you would see a community forming. Of course, BOCES teachers and staff are there to facilitate learning but they also create a welcoming environment where relationships develop and community evolves.

Here at BOCES, the relationships that form within a class are just as important as, and in fact integral to, the success-

es students achieve. Whether demonstrating growth in reading or math, tackling a new software program, learning a new hobby or skill, passing the TASC exam to earn the high school equivalency diploma or ultimately landing a job or better job – BOCES students support and celebrate each other’s successes big and small on a daily basis. Literacy program staff shares their good news about student successes with each other so when they see the student, they are able to celebrate their success with a “good job”, “great work”, and “we knew you could do it!” The encouraging, positive atmosphere promotes retention and continued student success.

BOCES vocational instructors foster community in another way. They work locally as contractors or in business and while they teach the trades and other skills, they also lead discussions on the importance of having a positive attitude

at work, good attendance, strong communication skills, teamwork and how to accept supervision. This helps prepare students to have the soft skills employers seek while also fostering a positive community environment both inside and outside the classroom.

Adults entering a BOCES program are often unsure of what to expect. For some, having put education on hold for years or decades, there is anxiety about coming back to “school.” While it is the job of teachers and staff to relieve that anxiety, very often fellow classmates encourage them and build their confidence, as they too experienced those feelings. Soon, friendships and friendly competition become motivators to reach their goals. Routinely, partnering agencies within our community visit our buildings and classrooms to speak with our students about resources available to them. Partnerships and support of our adult students helps with retention but also builds students’ trust that the community is routing for them to succeed, too. Community is an important characteristic of the BOCES site – but what about outside the classroom? BOCES adult learners are good citizens and take on leadership roles as they improve their skills and increase their confidence.

Many BOCES and English language learners “pay it forward” by helping Refugee Center Resettlement staff prepare apartments for new arrivals (as was done for them before they

arrived). Students also participate in Earth Day clean up in the neighborhood. They clean up trash, rake leaves, plant flowers and otherwise help ready our neighborhood for the “One World Flower Fest” in Oneida Square each spring. A favorite way of celebrating fellow classmates is to attend Naturalization Ceremonies throughout the year and celebrate their fellow students and families becoming American citizens. These newly arrived members of our community do their part to contribute to their new home and support each other.

An adult student, who recently completed the program at the BOCES Rome ACCESS Site, enrolled at Mohawk Valley Community College. Despite carrying a full course load, she immediately joined the college’s Student Activities Planning Committee, MVCC Student Congress and the “Mentor Me” program through the Rome Gansevort Elementary School. Students from the Utica ACCESS Site are engaged in Utica’s Empire State Poverty Reduction Initiative participating on its Task Force committee while other students volunteer for local charities or become active in their children’s school.

BOCES adult students have donated time and talent knitting hats for newborns and the homeless; providing haircuts and makeup to help families ready for holiday pictures; and building a shed that was donated to a local public library. The accomplishments adult students experience at BOCES give them pride and inspiration to contribute to their community – and they do in many different ways!

The Adult and Continuing Education programs are delivered through a partnership between Madison-Oneida BOCES and Oneida-Herkimer-Madison BOCES. If you or someone you know would like to learn more about what BOCES has to offer, visit www.moboces.org/adulted or call (315) 361-5800.

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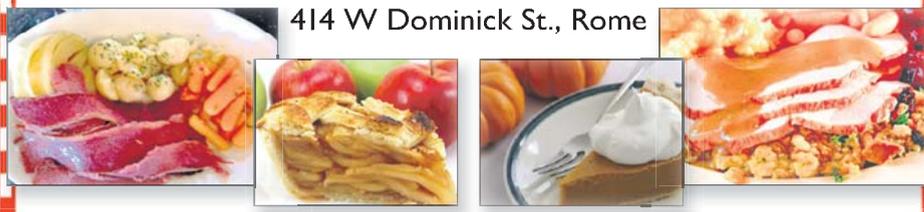
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Exploring the classic/historical car hobby

Car enthusiasts appeared as soon as the automobile was introduced to the general public in the 18th and 19th centuries. Through the years, certain vehicles have proven more desirable to customers than others based on their looks and other attributes.

Auto hobbyists devote substantial time and effort to purchasing, restoring and displaying classic cars. While the hobby of restoring classic cars is not necessarily for everyone, its popularity suggests it's an activity that's here to stay.

According to an article in *The Economist*, in the wake of the recent recession, investors were increasingly pulling their money out of stocks and converting assets into tangible items, such as classic cars. As late as 2013, collector cars were outperforming other tangible investments like art, wine, stamps, and coins by large margins.

Those ready to dip their toes in the classic car

waters should understand a few key factors that can affect how much they enjoy this potentially rewarding hobby.

- Environmental regulations. Some collectors face challenges when attempting to restore classic vehicles because the cars do not meet today's stringent clean air initiatives that govern automobiles. With the increasing number of new, clean cars on the road, vehicles that fail to meet modern emissions standards may pose a costly problem to classic car collectors.

- Introduction of alternative fuels. As governments increasingly emphasize the importance of clean fuel options, classic car owners may find it challenging to find more traditional fuels or face the added expense of adapting their vehicles to run on alternative fuels.

- Lack of mechanical expertise. Workers in the automotive trade are trained to manufacture and repair new vehicles. As a result, classic car owners without much mechanical ability of their own may find it difficult to find mechanics with the skills necessary to repair and restore classic cars.

- Historic requirements should be heeded. Each state has its own requirements governing classic cars. To qualify for historic vehicle registration, vehicles may need to be 25 years or older, owned solely as



a collector's item and used exclusively for exhibition and educational purposes. When driven for personal use, such vehicles may not be allowed to exceed 1,000 miles per year.

Classic cars continue to attract hobbyists from all over the globe. Restoring classic cars can be a rewarding pastime, but one that involves dedication and an investment of both time and money. **E**

Reduce risk of vehicle theft

According to the Insurance Information Institute, more than 700,000 motor vehicles were reported stolen in the United States in 2015. And car theft is not exclusive to the United States, as the Insurance Bureau of Canada reports that automobile theft costs Canadians roughly \$1 billion each year.

Car thieves are often highly skilled, but that does not mean car owners cannot take steps to reduce their risk of being victimized by auto theft.

- Take the simple steps. Suggestions like keeping cars locked at all times and rolling up all windows before walking away from the car may sound simple, but they're also effective. Drivers should avoid being careless no matter how briefly they plan to be away from their vehicles. Talented thieves need only a few seconds to steal a car, so don't make it any easier for them than it already is.

- Park in well-lit areas. Well-lit parking lots may not prevent cars from being stolen, but such lots, especially ones monitored by security cameras, can be a strong deterrent to thieves who want to avoid being seen and having their crimes documented on camera.

- Park in public areas. Avoid parking in areas that are off the beaten path. While this might make for easy parking, such areas are also enticing to prospective car thieves worried about people witnessing their crimes. When parking at grocery stores, malls or other areas with large parking lots, park as close to pedestrian entrances as possible. Constant foot traffic can deter thieves

from attempting to steal cars.

- Install an alarm system and anti-theft device. Insurance companies often discount their premiums for drivers whose vehicles have alarm systems and anti-theft devices. Such systems and technology draw attention to vehicles when thieves attempt to steal them, and many thieves can easily spot which cars have anti-theft devices they would prefer to avoid.

- Remove personal items and valuables from the vehicle. Automobiles should not be used as rolling storage facilities for various reasons. One such reason is that valuables may attract thieves. Women should always take their purses with them when leaving their vehicles, and all drivers should make sure to remove all valuables when exiting their cars.

Car theft is a legitimate concern for drivers, but savvy motorists can take steps to reduce the risk of their vehicles being stolen. **E**



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How first-time parents can cope with colic

First-time parents face many challenges upon bringing their new babies home. One of the more frustrating challenges new parents may face is colic, a confusing condition that can be uncomfortable for both parents and their babies.

What is colic?

According to the American Academy of Pediatrics, roughly 20 percent of all babies will develop colic, a condition in which children may cry inconsolably, scream, extend or pull up their legs, and pass gas. When a baby develops colic,

the causes of which are unknown, his or her stomach may be enlarged or distended with gas.

What are the symptoms of colic?

Babies tend to be finicky, so those that are fussy are not necessarily dealing with colic. But when healthy babies who are well-fed experience the following symptoms, colic might be the culprit.

- Predictable periods of fussiness: Babies who have fussy periods each day during similar time frames may be experiencing colic. The AAP notes that these periods of fussiness are particularly



common among babies with colic between the hours of 6 p.m. and midnight.

- Intense or inconsolable crying: The Mayo Clinic says babies with colic may experience intense, high-pitched crying that sounds distressed. During these bouts of crying, babies' faces may be flushed, and it may be nearly impossible for parents to console their babies.

- Inexplicable crying: Babies tend to cry when they are hungry and when they have soiled themselves. But babies with colic will cry for no apparent reason.

- Changes in posture: During a colic episode, babies' legs may curl up and they may clench their fists. Abdominal muscles also may tighten during colic episodes.

When does colic begin?

Babies with colic will typically begin to exhibit symptoms within a few weeks of being born. While the condition is frustrating for parents and babies, colic often improves by three months of age.

How to handle a baby with colic

The AAP recommends that parents who suspect their baby has colic first consult their pediatricians to confirm that the baby's crying is not linked to a serious medical condition. Once something more serious has been ruled out, parents can discuss multiple topics with their pediatricians:

- Nursing: Mothers who are nursing may try eliminating potentially irritating products, such as caffeine, onions and cabbage, from their diets.
- Formula: The AAP suggests parents discuss protein hydrolysate formulas with their pediatricians if food sensitivity is causing the discomfort.
- Pacifiers: Pacifiers may provide instant relief from colic to some babies, while others may refuse pacifiers outright.

More information about colic is available at www.healthychildren.org. ■



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Little-known dietary contributors to heart disease

Red meats, hydrogenized oils -- these are the foods we associate with heart disease and high cholesterol. But a few other things many people eat rather frequently could be contributing to future heart problems.

White pasta and breads

Researchers have found that eating a diet high in refined grains, including those in most store-bought pastas and white breads, can double the risk of heart disease. These foods are those that have a high glycemic index, or GI. Foods with a high GI quickly release sugar into the bloodstream. Doctors have found a correlation between high GI and heart disease, mainly in women, according to research at the University of Milan. The study questioned 32,578 women and 15,171 men. Those who consumed the largest concentration of high GI foods were 2.24 times more likely to develop heart disease than those with the lowest.

Nutritionists advise that, when choosing grain products, it is important to select those made from whole grains. Not only do these products provide the nutritional benefits of whole grains, including fiber, they also help reduce cholesterol and the risk for heart disease.

Sugary items

While many people associate sugary snacks, beverages and sugar itself with dental decay or unnecessary calories, these items also impact cholesterol levels.

The average American eats the equivalent of 21 teaspoons of added sugar a day, which is two to three times the



amount they should, according to an article in the Journal of the American Medical Association. Researchers found that individuals who consumed the most sugary products had the lowest HDL, or good cholesterol, and the highest blood triglyceride levels. Eating large amounts of sugar can then be a major risk factor for high cholesterol and heart disease.

In its 2010 guidelines, the American Heart Association recommended limiting added sugar in the diet to no more than 100 calories a day for most women and 150 calories for most men. That's 6 teaspoons for women and 9 for men. To put those guidelines in perspective, consider that a 12-ounce can of soda has between 8 and 10 teaspoons.

In addition, many processed foods contain sugar even if sugar's inclusion seems foolish. Some restaurants and food manufacturers have admitted to adding sugar to foods -- especially those geared to children -- to make them taste better and be more appealing. Therefore, sauces, ready-made dinners and other items may have sugar, and the consumer may not know it without reading the nutrition label.

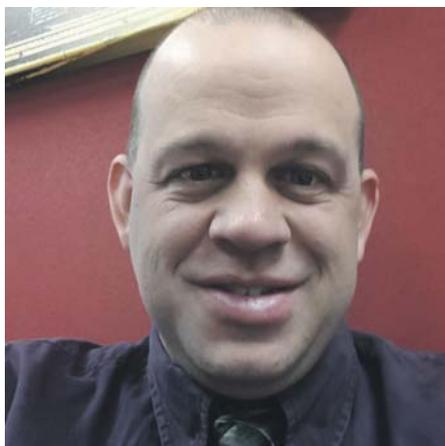
Also, it's important to note that beverages are the leading supplier of added sugar for many people. Simply reducing the amount of juices, sports drinks and sodas in your diet can greatly reduce sugar consumption. ■

Meet some of your EDITOR Team!



Fred Mang

Fred Mang is a lifelong resident of Central New York. Fred Lives in Fort Plain with his wife Linda and 2 children, Kasey and Spencer. Fred has been selling for Editor Magazine for 4 years. Specializing in Auto related sales Fred is your go-to for marketing. In his spare time, Fred enjoys motocross and evens owns and operates, with his family, a motocross track called TwisterValley Sports Complex in Fort Plain. A small business owner himself, Fred knows the challenges his clients face and is ready to assist.



Dave Hadasz

An Account Executive for EDITOR Magazine, Dave has nearly 20 years of solid marketing management and administrative experience. He was born and raised in the Mohawk Valley and lives in Marcy. Dave is very familiar with the media market available to his clients. He knows that not every business is the same

Why advertise your local business?
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Identify Advertising lets people know you’re in business. It conveys your business name and the type of products or services you offer.
Reach out A big example of the benefits of advertising is bringing potential customers to your store who might otherwise never know you exist. A storefront is only seen by people who walk past your door, but advertising can reach out to others in the surrounding towns and counties.
Seasonal Promotions There are great benefits of advertising for specialty items or seasonal products. Perhaps you sell products that only your store has locally, such as musical instruments. Advertising special seasonal items, such as selling Christmas trees, can bring additional sales at certain times of the year.
Confidence Business owners often don’t realize that one of the benefits of advertising is making potential customers feel more confident in a business they see advertised.
Blitz Every time you watch a football game on TV, you’ll see beer advertisements. These compa-

and not every business has the same needs. He assists his customers in evaluating their marketing needs, because isn’t that what it’s all about? RESULTS?!

Kelli Hickey

A Utica native, and graduate of Notre Dame High School and long Island University, CW post campus, Kelli relocated back to Central New York in 1994 to continue her career in radio and television sales and marketing. Kelli also spent seven years in the beauty industry as a Salon Consultant for Goldwell of New York. Kelli joined the marketing team at EDITOR magazine in December of 2016. She is



very excited to use her 20+ years in marketing/sales to bring fabulous campaigns to the businesses of Central New York. Kelli, a resident of Utica, has a 20-year-old son named Michael and an eight-year-old son named Bobby.

“

Doing business without advertising is like winking at a girl in the dark. You know what you are doing, but nobody else does.
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Successfully switch auto insurance providers

Once drivers purchase an auto insurance policy, many simply let the policy renew each year. But with a little digging, drivers may be able to reduce their insurance costs considerably.

According to the Insurance Information Institute in New York, consumers should ask themselves if they're happy with the cost, service

and coverage of their existing policies whenever it's time to renew. If they are, they should stick with their existing policies. However, if customers feel things can be better, then it's a perfect time to see what's available. Many driver advocates advise shopping for a new policy every two or three years.

When it comes time to switch car insurance

companies, follow these steps and remember to avoid gaps in the coverage.

- Compare apples to apples. When shopping for new policies, consumers should compare the same features offered by various providers, including coverage types, deductibles and any limits. Keep a copy of your existing policy's declarations page so that all quotes can be accurately compared to the existing policy.

- Research any cancellation fees. Before switching over, find out if there are any cancellation fees associated with an existing policy.

- Eliminate coverage gaps. Eliminate gaps in coverage by ensuring a new policy begins the moment the existing one ends.

This prevents potential financial ruin should a driver get into an accident without any insurance during a gap period.

- Take note of any lifestyle changes. Be sure to list anything that can affect the cost of coverage, such as anti-theft devices on the vehicle, window etching or updated driving habits.

- Explore union or group affiliations. Drivers who are members of particular clubs, professional organizations or something similar may be eligible for special policies with certain providers. Make a list of any affiliations and contact the organizers to see if they have relationships with auto insurance providers. Law enforcement personnel or veterans may be eligible for certain discounts as well. Some insurance carriers only cover police officers or former military. It pays to look into these discounts.



Drivers who want to save money can explore their auto insurance options before renewing their policies.

- Consider small companies. Just because they don't advertise as much as some of the more well-known providers does not mean small insurance companies are not capable of providing sufficient, affordable coverage. There are plenty of reputable small companies that offer excellent rates to drivers willing to exercise their due diligence. Supporting our local agencies helps our local economy too!

- Check with the existing provider, too. Drivers can discuss their current rates and coverage with their existing insurance company, who may offer suggestions on reducing coverage or even offer lower prices in an effort to hang on to customers. Consider these possibilities before switching.

Shopping around for a new automotive insurance policy may help customers cut rates and increase coverage. **E**

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ADVERTISE from 53

nies are huge, and they have plenty of customers, but their goal is to keep their products' names in front of consumers. If you see a commercial for a certain candy bar dozens of times, the next time you're in a convenience store and see that candy bar, you're more likely to buy one.

Consistency A business that stops advertising may give the impression that the business is out of business. When people see a business advertise for a long period of time and then stop, they may get the false impression that the business is no longer there, even though it is still open. Consistent advertising yields the best results.

Invest Another of the benefits of advertising that many businesses don't realize is that it takes money to make money. An old saying in the marketing industry is "Advertising doesn't cost, it pays." Sometimes you have to invest money to make money, and advertising should be an investment that is included in a business's annual

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WHAT would YOUR MOTHER say??

By S.D. Shapiro

Common Cold

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 . . .



Well, it happened; I came down with the common cold. Some CSI level investigation points to patient zero as being either one of the kids or one of the dogs. As I laid on the couch swaddled in my favorite sweat suit and a pile of blankets, I contemplated my slow death from the common cold, it dawned on me; with all our modern medicine, we really haven't made a ton of advancements in fighting the cold. I couldn't breathe through my nose, I was all stuffed up. My cough sounded like the bark of an old dog and I generally felt like warmed up garbage.

On my coffee table, con-

veniently within reach, was a couple bottles of water, 2 bags of cough drops (one menthol and one cherry), a bottle of cough syrup (grape), a box of tissues, and just about every over-the-counter cold medicine I could buy. I had decongestants, expectorants, and even some antihistamines. I had little packets of powder that you mix with hot water to create an anti-cold serum.

From the couch, I read the ingredients and instructions on all the little bottles. I sat up to better reach some orange juice and my head started to depressurize. Suddenly I heard what sounded like the song of a humpbacked

whale as my stuffed up head went in the opposite direction. Nearly instant-

ly, my nose started running. And there seemed to be no stopping it.

One of my cousins swears by the netti pot. That's where you take a warm saline solution and flush your sinuses with it by pouring it up your nose. I tried it once and ended up wearing more of it than I got to my sinuses. There's just something unnatural about pouring water up your nose.

I called and ordered some chicken soup from the Chinese restaurant down the street. I was in no shape to go out and they deliver. I thought to myself, "This is the 21st century and this is how I'm supposed to fight this cold?"

With all the connectivity and electronic and computer programming and the best way to fight the common cold is cough drops and old wife's tales like, "feed a cold and starve a fever." Why hasn't one of our super geniuses invented some sort of gizmo to hook up to that will relieve a cold? We don't have our flying cars yet, but we should at least have that.

When it comes down to being sick, dealing with the common cold, and all the aches and pains it brings remember to be tough. Stop and think, "What would my mother say?" She would say, "Quit whining. Take 2 aspirin and go to work." **E**



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Help your body bounce back after cancer treatment

GET FIT



Regular exercise after treatment can help cancer survivors regain strength and may even reduce their risk of recurrence.

Cancer treatments like chemotherapy and radiation therapy can take a toll on patients' bodies. Though the side effects vary depending on the type of cancer and the treatment being administered, cancer patients may experience both short- and long-term consequences related to their treatments, leaving many with some work to do once their treatments have proven successful.

Fatigue, bruising and bleeding and skin irritation are some of the more common short-term side effects associated with cancer treatments. But cancer patients may also experience long-term side effects. For example, Susan G. Komen®, a tax-exempt organization that aims to address breast cancer through various initiatives, notes that early menopause is a

potential long-term consequence of breast cancer treatments.

Helping their bodies recover after cancer treatment is a primary goal for many cancer survivors. While cancer survivors should work with their physicians to devise a post-treatment recovery plan, the following are some helpful tips for survivors to keep in mind as they get back in the swing of things.

- Recognize the importance of

exercise. Cancer survivors who did not exercise much prior to their diagnosis should recognize the important role that exercise can play in their lives going forward. According to the Mayo Clinic, cancer survivors who exercise may benefit from improved mood and sleep, and many report feeling less anxiety than they did during or prior to treatment. And the American Cancer Society notes that some evidence suggests that maintaining

a healthy weight, eating right and being physically active may reduce the risk of cancer recurrence and other serious, chronic diseases.

- Take it slow. Cancer survivors should approach their post-treatment recovery slowly at first as they reacclimate their bodies to regular exercise. According to the ACS, cancer survivors should aim for at least 30 minutes of exercise five or more days per week. As the body grows more accustomed to exercise, survivors can increase the intensity and duration of that exercise. But some low-intensity yet routine exercise once treatment has ended is a great first step on the path to recovery.

- Don't downplay feelings of fatigue. While fatigue is generally a short-term side effect of cancer treatment, survivors should not downplay any feelings of fatigue that linger even after treatment has run its course. On days when cancer survivors lack the energy for vigorous physical activity, a walk around the block or something similar can take the place of more strenuous activities. Report prolonged feelings of post-treatment fatigue to your physician.

- Focus on nutrition. The ACS notes that a healthy diet can help cancer survivors regain their strength and rebuild tissue. The ACS recommends that cancer survivors try to eat at least 2½ cups of fruits and vegetables each day and include plenty of high-fiber foods in their diets. In addition, the ACS suggests limiting red meat intake to no more than three to four servings per week.

Bouncing back from successful cancer treatments may take survivors some time, but staying committed to exercise and a healthy diet can help survivors regain their strength and potentially reduce their risk of recurrence. **E**

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Caring for braces at any age



Braces require more detailed care to help keep teeth healthy and strong.

Braces are often necessary for children and adults to develop straight, healthy teeth. According to the American Association of Orthodontists, braces help fix teeth that are crooked, too close together and too far apart. Braces also can be employed to address under- or overbites. Fortunately, braces no longer carry the stigma they once did, and many children are eager to embrace this orthodontic gear if it means achieving a more attractive smile and a properly aligned bite.

One thing that kids (and adults) who wear braces need to consider is that oral hygiene is imperative while wearing braces. Taking good care of braces and teeth is essential to avoiding problems now and when the braces are eventually removed.

Compliance

The rules orthodontists give their patients are intended to make the duration of time wearing braces as short as possible. Therefore, avoiding hard or

sticky candies and resisting any urges to open items or bite on inflexible items, such as pencils, is crucial. Broken hardware or snapped wires will only prolong the length of treatment if they have to be replaced frequently.

Brushing

Braces will collect more food particles and bacteria than teeth without brackets and wires. Those with braces may have to change the way they brush their teeth and the frequency with which they brush their teeth. Orthodontists may recommend brushing after each meal to keep food particles from being lodged and plaque from building up. More time should be spent brushing to ensure all crevices and surface areas are addressed. Consult with the orthodontist about the products that may help keep teeth clean. Toothbrushes may need to be replaced more often if braces cause the bristles to wear down quickly.

Threader floss

Flossing should continue while wearing braces, even though flossing with braces can be difficult. Many orthodontists recommend “threader floss” that allows patients to floss properly around wires. This type of floss has a stiff end that permits flossing between brackets. Reusable plastic floss threaders in combination with regular floss also can be used. Children should be careful not to put too much pressure on wires or brackets when flossing so they don’t accidentally dislodge any hardware.

Keep appointments

Visiting the orthodontist routinely for adjustments is a necessary part of wearing braces. Those who skip appointments or do not follow the advice of a skilled doctor may need to spend more time wearing braces. If something becomes loose or dislodged, visit the orthodontist right away.

The benefits of wearing braces are numerous. Proper care can make braces even more effective and a lot more comfortable. **E**

How to encourage kids to take care of their teeth

Parents of young children know that getting kids to brush their teeth can sometimes feel like pulling teeth. Kids have a long history of disliking dental care, which can frustrate parents who know the importance of proper dental hygiene.

While many youngsters may never excitedly run to the bathroom to brush their teeth, parents can try various approaches to get kids to embrace proper dental care.

- **Start early.** Parents should not hesitate to begin cleaning kids’ teeth once the first tooth appears. The earlier dental care is part of a child’s routine, the more likely he or she is to accept it as part of everyday life. The AAPD advises taking kids to visit a pediatric dentist when the first tooth appears, or no later than the child’s first birthday.

- **Make it a group effort.** Young children love to imitate their parents’ actions and behaviors, and moms and dads can use that adoration to their advantage when trying to get kids to brush their teeth. Brush teeth together as a family, making it seem like an enjoyable twice-daily activity.

- **Involve kids in choosing their dental care products.** While parents should be mindful of the type of toothbrush their children use, always sticking with products recommended by their child’s pediatric dentist, let youngsters choose their toothbrush and toothpaste.

- **Compliment kids after positive dental appointments.** When dentist appointments go well, compliment children and express your pride in them for taking dental hygiene as seriously as they do. **E**

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How to spur kids' interest in the arts



Art can enrich the lives of people young and old, male and female. The arts can introduce adults and children to different cultures and traditions, while also helping them to develop more fully as human beings.

While some may feel the benefits of the arts cannot be measured, the nonprofit organization Americans for the Arts notes that kids who are involved in the arts are four times more likely to be recognized for academic achievement than kids who are not involved in the arts. And though mathematics and science may not be the first thing people associate with the arts, kids involved in the arts are four times more likely to participate in math and science fairs than kids who are not involved in the arts.

Parents can do a lot to make art a bigger part of their kids' lives. The following are some simple ways parents can bring more art into their kids' lives, courtesy of Americans for the Arts.

- Join in the fun. Parents can make art more fun for kids by playing music around the house and singing and dancing alongside their youngsters. In addition, read

a book to or with your children and join in when they pursue other artistic endeavors, such as drawing or painting.

- Find local events. Many school districts have slashed their arts budgets in recent years, but parents can still find local arts events for kids in their communities. Peruse the local newspaper and other community-based periodicals for cultural events for kids. Support local theater groups by attending performances with your children and explaining to them that the performers live in the community just like they do.

- Pitch in with local arts organizations. Local arts organizations typically rely on donations and volunteers to support their programs. Parents who want to instill a love of the arts in their children can help local organizations' fundraising efforts and even volunteer their time if the opportunity presents itself. If possible, take kids along when volunteering so they can get some firsthand experience with the arts.

- Encourage kids' artistic pursuits. Some kids may decide to pursue artistic endeavors on their own, and parents can encourage such pursuits. Celebrate kids' participation in arts-based activi-

ties in school and in the community, recognizing their hard work in the same way you would acknowledge their successes in the classroom and in sports.

The arts can benefit youngsters in various ways, but it's often up to parents to instill a love of the arts in their children. **E**

Great part-time jobs for retirees

Upon retiring, many newly minted retirees find themselves looking for ways to fill their free time. Hobbies may not take up too much time, and travel can stretch retirees' budgets.

One way that retirees can make great use of their free time and make a little extra money is to find part-time employment. Retirees interesting in finding part-time work may want to consider the following jobs.

- Consulting work: Many retirees have long résumés, and that experience is still valuable even after retirement. Consulting firms often hire experienced businesspeople on a project or contract basis, which can be great opportunities for retirees to fill their time and make sizable amounts of money without having to commit to long-term employment.

- Teaching: Retirees can also put their professional experience to work in the classroom. Inquire about teaching opportunities at a nearby university or

even the local high school.

- Seasonal work: Seasonal work is another great way for retirees to fill their time and make a little extra money along the way. Come the holiday season, retirees should have no trouble finding seasonal retail work at their local malls or shopping centers. In warmer months, retirees may find seasonal employment at area beaches, golf courses or parks.

- Sports teams: Retirees who live in cities with professional sports teams may be able to find work with their favorite franchise. Professional sports franchises often rely on retirees to staff in-game positions like ushers and concessions employees. While the pay might not be great, such positions are ideal for retirees who happen to be big sports fans.

Many retirees still work and opportunities abound for those looking to fill their time and make a little extra money along the way. **E**

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We Can Be Heroes

By Carly Proulx

I sat down with Kevin Bennet in hopes he could shed some light on the unique position of caring for an untrained rescue dog as a first-time pet owner. With little to no experience there were more than a few questions raised in Bennet's mind while the wheels were on, and if you've thought about rescuing an animal before, but haven't yet made it a priority chances are you've had some similar inquiries.

What you're about to find out: Was its bark bigger than its bite? Was Bennet biting off more than he could chew when he resolved to take the rescuing route? Though before I divulge the above I'd like to refer to the source that made possible Bennet's first time pet owning experience. A few weeks ago, with some encouraging words from a close friend Bennet did something he'd been saying he'd wanted to do for years. Having done a bit of research after visiting a few shelters in the area Bennet rescued a 3-year-old Rat Terrier from Stevens-Swan Humane Society. Her name was Lola. Located at 5564 Horatio Street in Utica, NY Stevens-Swan Humane Society is a private organization that dates back to the early 1900s. It was first founded by Gustavus Swan and James N. Stevens, and the first animal shelter was purchased in 1949. Their mission back then, to take care of lost, unwanted, and surrendered animals hasn't changed.

Relying on the contributions of the community in the form of bequests, estates, day-to-day donations, membership drives, and annual fundraisers the burden of caring for these animals takes a lot more than simply having love for them. Thankfully there are generous people helping to meet the demands of the Stevens-Swan mission goals, and ordinary people like Bennet making an extraordinary impact when they decide to take in an animal in need. Lola came to Stevens-Swan back in August with Lyme disease, open wounds all over her body, and scabs on her neck and thighs. Lola, along



Kevin Bennet may have given Lola a week vacation from the shelter, but she gave him a whole lot more.

with several other dogs from this same household had been abused. After years of abuse and neglect, four long months of cage life surrounded by other abused dogs at the shelter someone was finally giving Lola a place to put her paws down.

Bennet wasn't naive to the road that lay ahead. He knew it would be a challenge, but when it's love at first sight we humans tend to walk through blind, arms flailing, and refusing to

HEROES- 60

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HAIR MATTERS

by **Amanda Comstock**
at **Julie Diehl Salon**



Some of you might remember Christine. I wrote about her a few months ago...Her story then was about growing out a really short spiky style into a slightly longer, asymmetric, sassy style! Well, she was finally long enough for me to transform her and achieve the style AND color she's wanted for months!! I don't know which one I was more excited about doing...

The color Christine wanted was a gorgeous shade of silver that had a violet undertone! And just so there's no question, these shades are NOT easy for your stylists to achieve. They're actually quite difficult, time consuming, and costly. The only reason I was able to achieve this in one day was the fact that Christine was already a light blonde.

The first step was to brighten her up to a level 10 platinum, because the hair HAS to be the palest level blonde before it can be silver. I went through section by section all over the head with my lightener, feathering close to the scalp. She sat under my processing machine for 15 mins and that step was done. After drying it, I noticed she had a few sections that needed to be ashed out and slightly brighter so used a color mixture that would be more gentle and in 10 minutes she was good to shampoo! At the sink I used my 10 ICY express toner by Goldwell to cancel any other brassiness and get her to the platinum state. After 5 minutes she was ready to rinse and blow-dry.

The next step was the silver! For this I used ShadesEQ 9V ... a truly gorgeous color! She sat under my processing machine for 20 minutes and then the moment of truth! I was ecstatic! But she still wasn't done. The very last step, after drying her, was applying a deep ash brown to the root area. We call it a "shadow

root". I used Goldwell 6A with a bit of A mix (ash) to make sure she didn't get a "hot root" (gold). I applied just at the very root, 1/4" up the strands just to add a bit of depth to her color, and it also helps to camouflage her regrowth when it starts to come in. After 10 minutes she was absolutely gorgeous!

Now it was time for the cut!! I started by sectioning out the whole top leaving out the hair 1/2" above the ears and around to the occipital bone. This whole section was going to be razored really tight to the head creating an "under cut". I also took the hair right up and around her ears on both sides. I then took the top down and started the asymmetric part of the cut. Her hair parts on her right side so that meant her left side would be longer. With my razor, I took the right side to the middle of her ear, but shattered it so you can see the hair underneath. This technique has a really cool effect! Her left side I wanted to have the same shattered look but I wanted the very front drop to her jawline. She also has sweeping side bangs that brought the whole look together! Now that the perimeter was where I wanted it, I went into the interior and shattered a bit more to give her movement and a little funkiness so she can play with it when she's styling it herself.

After a quick blow-dry, I used a little Taffy Wax by Surface to give her incredible shine and some definition and she was ready to rock her new locks!!!

The whole process took 3 hours, 5 steps, and it cost Christine \$175, but after waiting months for this, the look on her face after seeing herself in it....PRICELESS!



“Dogs, for a reason that can only be described as divine, have the ability to forgive, let go of the past, & live each day joyously. It's something the rest of us strive for.”
-Jennifer Skiff

HEROES from 59

listen to all those nay-sayers. So, Bennet did indeed adopt Lola, and though he returned her to Steven-Swan's a week later there was much to be gained. Certainly, the onset of guilt hit Bennet, as we humans end up loading up on regret whenever we're unable to conquer something we've set out to. "Like people dogs have their own personalities, their own agency, and sense of self," expressed Bennet. The volunteers at Stevens-Swan warned Bennet to keep Lola away from other dogs due to the likelihood of her becoming aggressive

towards them. Bennet disproved this theory, and discovered not only did this dog have a sweet disposition with humans, but other animals as well. But it is important to take heed, or at least be aware of the shelter's warnings. Sometimes it is the littlest thing that can trigger a dog, especially ones whose past tracks are covered with abuse.

One of the hardest trials in Bennet's week with Lola was accepting his lack of control in this dog vs. human situation. It is a challenge to own a dog that doesn't yet know its name. Things such as getting into a good

routine, and acquiring listening skills aren't unattainable for dogs who've lacked stability and endured abuse, but you have to know going into it that it will take some time. "I needed to develop more patience. It's kind of a character flaw," confessed Bennet. There are certainly things we can't always prepare ourselves for, and sometimes the only way to discover ourselves, and learn something new is to take on something new. In Bennet's case, he really couldn't have known that he wasn't 100% ready for the commitment without taking that first step. For a little while it was working out. Bennet shared in the beginning, "It's nice having someone to come home to. She's really loyal, good-natured, and sits to let me take off her leash when we come back in for a walk."



It turned out owning a pup wasn't for Bennet, but he tried, and that's more than most can say. Stevens-Swan took Lola back open arms. One volunteer who'd recommended Lola to Bennet was especially excited, and last I heard was considering adopting her himself. It's one of those things that you stick with, and it becomes the ultimate reward. If you have the time to give an animal what it needs i.e. food, water, potty breaks, exercise, and love then the rest of it will come. Bennet's overall advice for those of you contemplating rescuing a dog, "Be a hero, and just do it." E



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Is it time to update your home's electrical system?



The invisible systems in a home often are taken for granted. When such systems are working as expected, daily life moves along smoothly. However, when a system goes awry, it can negatively impact routines and may create a dangerous home environment. This is especially true when something goes wrong with a home's electrical system.

Faulty wiring is a leading cause of residential fires. Many homeowners, particularly those who live in older homes, might be living in properties that have outdated electrical systems. The experts at Lowes ProServices state that having old wiring and/or insuf-

ficient amperage in a house can endanger residents. It also may damage appliances and make it difficult to sell a property in the future.

It can be difficult to gauge exactly when to overhaul an electrical system. Unless circuits routinely trip or lights often dim, homeowners may put off the work. But degrading wires or overextended circuitry can pose a fire risk, so it is best to address electrical systems promptly.

Home inspections may uncover electrical problems. Some homeowners may discover potential trouble while making renovations that require opening up walls or tearing them down, exposing the wires. Still other homeowners learn about electrical systems when they're adding new, large appliances or other gadgets that consume more power than existing items. These devices may continually cause power outages in the house, such as tripping the circuit breaker or popping a fuse.

When it comes time to update the electrical system, it is always best to work with licensed and bonded electricians who have the expertise to work with electrical wiring without getting injured. This is not a do-it-yourself type of job since it requires specialized training.

Electricians likely will recommend upgrading the electrical panel to bring more power from the utility poles into the home. This can include replacing the

existing meter and circuit breaker box to allow it to handle more power or replacing items that are obsolete or dangerous.

Many older homes are only capable of handling a minimum number of amps, utilizing just a few circuits. But nowadays, when homeowners have far more electronics in their homes than they once did, increased demand on electricity can overload a circuit (all of the outlets linked on one wire). Tripping a circuit breaker is a safety measure to prevent the wire from becoming overheated and causing a fire. However, in some old systems, the circuit breaker will not trip, and this can be problematic.

Rewiring a home is another step. Wire insulation can deteriorate over time, and new wires may be needed. This can be messy and time-consuming, but it's a small price to pay for safety. When rewiring an electrician also may suggest new outlets. Many home building codes now require outlets with ground fault interruptors, or GFIs, in kitchens, bathrooms and other rooms exposed to moisture. Some older homes may not even have three-pronged outlets, so this will necessitate an update as well.

Electrical systems are the heart of a home, delivering power where it is needed. It is essential to keep such systems up-to-date so they can handle the power demands of everyday life. **E**

How to prevent simple plumbing problems

No homeowner wants to be confronted with plumbing problems, which many associate with costly repairs and water damage. But many plumbing problems are preventable if homeowners take the time to learn about them and make the effort to nip them in the bud before they become something major.

- **Clogged kitchen sink:** Kitchen sinks get used quite a bit in the average home, and what makes its way down the sinks can contribute to plumbing problems. Avoid pouring gravy, grease, cooking oil, or fat down the kitchen

sink, as these substances can cling to the pipes and lead to a backed up sink and a potentially messy situation. Discard thick liquids and sauces in the trash can instead of the sink. Periodically turn the faucet on as hot as it can go and run it for a few minutes to dislodge anything that might have stuck to the pipes.

- **Clogged shower drain:** The pipes in the shower/bathtub can easily become clogged as well. Hair is the main culprit when shower drains get clogged, so install hair traps that catch any hair you and others might

shed while they are bathing. Instruct each person to remove their hair from the drain upon getting out of the shower. If you suspect the drain might already be on its way to clogging, use a wet/dry vac to remove any hair that might have started piling up in the pipes.

- **Washing machines:** Few homeowners may think to periodically inspect their washing machines, but normal wear and tear on washing machine hoses can gradually build up, potentially leading to flooding if left unchecked. Periodically inspect hoses for cracks and other

damage, replacing them if they look especially vulnerable.

- **Water heater:** Water heaters also can produce plumbing problems if homeowners don't keep an eye on them. Rusty

tank fittings on water heaters are a warning sign that the heater might need some repairs. When left unchecked, water heaters can cause flooding that produces significant water damage, and water

heaters may even need to be replaced, which can be very expensive. If you detect any problems with your heater, call in a plumber to confirm if anything is awry and address the problem. **E**

How to create an effective workflow in the kitchen

Bathroom and kitchen makeovers are some of the most coveted and profitable improvements that can be made to a home. Installing new cabinetry, countertops and appliances can transform the look of a kitchen, but homeowners also must consider the functionality of design when renovating.

The National Kitchen and Bath Association suggests applying the kitchen "work triangle," which is a concept used to create efficient kitchen layouts. The triangle comprises imaginary straight lines drawn from the cooking appliance, sink and refrigerator. These are where much of the work in the kitchen takes

place. The general idea is that when the work triangle is positioned accordingly — with the three components in close proximity to one another — the kitchen is easier and more efficient to use. Homeowners will be able to move freely among these elements when they are placed at appropriate distances, reducing wasted steps.

The NKBA suggests following these guidelines to create efficient kitchens.

- No major traffic patterns should cross through the triangle.

- The sum of the work triangle's three sides should not exceed 26 feet. Each portion of the triangle should be between four and nine feet.

- Avoid cutting through an island or a peninsula.

- If the kitchen has only one sink, it should be placed between or across from the cooking surface, preparation area or refrigerator.

The work triangle is a suggestion, not a law of design. As kitchens evolve and more people use them simultaneously, designers may take certain liberties — even having multiple triangles at play. Homeowners should also design their kitchens so they function best for their own individual lifestyles.

Kitchen layout can be just as important as the decor and appliances within the kitchen. **E**



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Dos and don'ts for second-floor laundry rooms

Laundry can be a cumbersome chore. In homes with more than one story, clothes are put in a hamper, carried down to the washer and dryer, where they are then cleaned, dried, folded, and taken back upstairs to be put away. The entire process can be inefficient, which may contribute to why so many people delay doing laundry for as long as possible.

As unenjoyable as it can be, doing laundry is a necessity. Fresh clothing not only looks and smells good, it is essential to personal hygiene. One way to make the process of doing laundry go more smoothly is to consider moving the location of the laundry area. According to the National Association of Home Builders, more homeowners are moving their laundry rooms upstairs so they don't have to transport laundry baskets up and down the stairs.

Before moving their laundry rooms, homeowners should take steps to safeguard their homes, and that may involve finding the ideal location

for the new room. Find space for an upstairs laundry room and then consult with an engineer to be sure that the plan is feasible. An engineer and an architect can assess if a home is structurally sound enough to handle the weight and vibration of an upstairs laundry.

One of the biggest concerns with regard to moving a laundry room upstairs is the fear of flooding or leaks. There are certain steps to take to minimize these risks. Experts advise installing an easily accessible water shut-off valve. Turn off the valve when the washer is not in use. Also, steel-braided washer hoses are more sturdy than standard hoses and are

less likely to burst. Homeowners also can place the washer in a drain pan, which will catch overflowing water and drain it through a pipe. Some areas may require a floor drain as an alternative.

Homeowners also must recognize that noise can be a problem with upstairs laundry rooms. Front-loading appliances may cause more vibration and movement than top-loaders. However, some front-loaders are designed to be quiet. Antivibration pads may help with vibration issues.

Before moving their laundry rooms, homeowners should consult with contractors to ensure things go smoothly. **E**



DID you KNOW??



Paving stones are used around the house in many different applications, including on walkways and patios. Sometimes, however, paving stones are beyond homeowners' budgets. Fortunately, there's another alternative that may look just as attractive and save homeowners money. Stamped concrete, also called textured or imprinted concrete, is a design element that replicates the look of stone, brick, wood, slate, or other materials in concrete. Stamped concrete can be used for patios, sidewalks, driveways, and pool decks. Stamped concrete also may be incorporated into interior flooring designs. Homeowners can explore their options with regard to stamped concrete by speaking with a masonry expert or landscape architect. **E**

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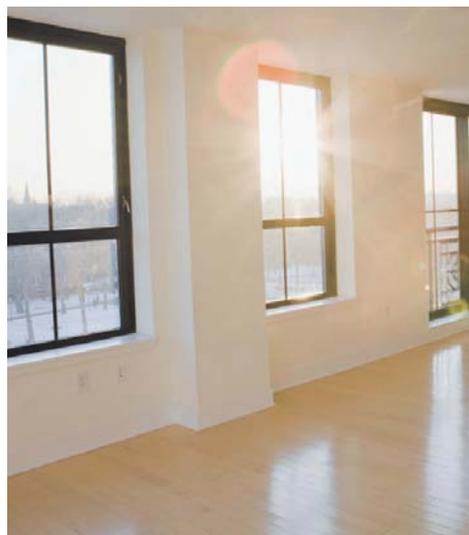
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How to make existing windows more energy efficient



Drafty windows make homes less comfortable by allowing cold air in during the winter and warm air in when temperatures rise. But comfort is not the only concern associated with leaky windows, as such fixtures also can have a negative impact on the environment.

Leaky windows require heating and cooling systems to work harder to keep home interiors comfortable during times of the year when temperatures can be extreme. In the dead of winter, a leaky window will force a home's inhabitants to turn up the thermostat, which only increases energy consumption and energy bills. The same scenario plays out in summer, when leaky windows allow hot air in, leading homeowners to lower the temperature of air conditioning units so everyone inside is cool and comfortable.

Thankfully, making windows more energy efficient does not necessarily require homeowners to replace existing windows. Before going that potentially expensive route, homeowners can consider the following strategies to improve the energy efficiency of their windows.

- Hang curtains. Curtains can help homeowners cut down on heating and cooling costs. According to the U.S. Department of Energy, properly hung draperies can reduce heat loss by as much as 25 percent. In the summer,

curtains can block the hot rays from the sun from entering a home, reducing the need to turn up air conditioning units. While curtains won't fix leaks or block hot or cold air from entering a home, they can serve as a buffer between a home's inhabitants and the air seeping in through leaks.

- Caulk or add weatherstripping. Small cracks and gaps around windows, which are most often found around windows in older buildings, might not seem like a big deal, but such breaches can lead to considerable energy loss. The DOE recommends using caulk to seal cracks that are less than 1/4-inch wide on the parts of the window that do not move (i.e., frames and where the trim meets the wall). Caulk might be less effective at fixing leaks larger than 1/4 inch in width. Employ weatherstripping to address leaks on movable parts of the window. Properly applied weatherstripping should adequately seal windows when they are closed without making it difficult to open or close them later on. Weatherstripping is available in various materials, and homeowners can visit www.energy.gov/energysaver/weatherstripping to find the material that's most suitable for their situation.

- Install windows films. Plastic window films are another option for homeowners looking to improve the energy efficiency of their windows. Heat shrink film can be cut to fit each individual leaky window in a home and then attached to windows using double-sided tape. A hair dryer can then be used to shrink the film and remove any wrinkles. Low-emissivity, or Low-E, coatings are a more expensive alternative to heat shrink film, and they can be equally effective at improving energy efficiency. Installation of Low-E coatings can be more difficult, as they do not provide as much leeway for mistakes during application as heat shrink film.

Leaky windows are bad for homeowners' energy bills and the environment. But homeowners have options other than full window replacements to fix leaks and improve efficiency. **E**

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Reduce radon in your home

Radon is an odorless, invisible gas that may be lurking in homes even if homeowners are unaware of its presence. Although it is a naturally occurring substance, radon has the potential to cause serious illness. Therefore, its detection and reduction are paramount.

The U.S. Environmental Protection Agency and the Surgeon General's Office have

estimated that as many as 20,000 lung cancer deaths are caused each year by radon, which is the second leading cause of lung cancer in the United States. The EPA further notes that many homes are in radon danger areas. Nearly one in three homes checked in seven states and on three lands designated for Native Americans had screening levels over 4 pCi/L, the EPA's recommended action level

for radon exposure. According to Air Chek, Inc., a radon testing resource, a radon level of 4 pCi/l is equal to approximately 35 times as much radiation as the Nuclear Regulatory Commission would allow if a person was standing next to the fence of a radioactive waste site.

Testing can determine if radon is present in a home. Homeowners can rely on professional companies or purchase self-testing kits at home improvement retailers. If a test comes back positive for high levels, conduct a follow-up test before taking any measures to fix the problem. Unusual weather can increase radon levels. If repeat testing yields the same results,



Radon may be lurking beneath a home. Fortunately, there are many ways to reduce radon levels in a home.

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efforts to reduce radon levels are necessary.

Homeowners must keep in mind that no two situations are the same and various techniques may be necessary to reduce radon levels in a home. Simply opening the windows in a home may not be enough, and many radon remedies require the skilled services of professional contractors who are experienced in radon reduction procedures. Homes can be fixed, but some instances may be best left to the professionals.

One of the most popular methods of reducing radon concentrations involves a process

called active soil depressurization, or ASD. This is a cost-effective and reliable technique to reduce radon that involves capturing the radon from beneath a building before it can enter the dwelling. A venting system draws the radon gas from the soil beneath the foundation and exhausts it outside of the building — far away from windows and other home openings. A continuously operating fan draws and discharges the radon outdoors.

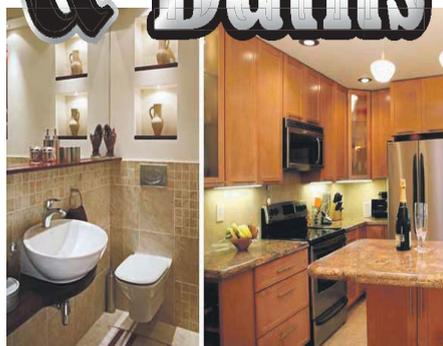
Radon that has infiltrated water supplies may require other removal methods. Such methods may require spraying water into a

contained air space, introducing air bubbles into the water or storing water in a tank until the radon has decayed. Another method employs granular activated carbon (GAC) to remove radon from the water. The GAC method has been more widely tested and is more commonly used in individual homes, according to the EPA.

Because radon removal often requires a specific skill set, it is a job better left to professionals. Opening windows and allowing natural ventilation may help, but a more long-term approach to radon removal might be most appropriate. **E**

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Create drama with bold paint colors



Painting is one of the easiest and least expensive ways to transform the look of a space. Paint colors can dramatically change the mood and the design of a home. And depending on a homeowner's goals, paint can make a statement or blend into the background.

Many people are now looking to bold colors to make spaces stand out. But choosing a paint color can be challenging. Homeowners looking to update walls and complement decor may want to look at some of the more impactful colors that Pantone indicates will be popular for the 2017 season. Primrose Yellow, Lapis Blue, Flame, Pink Yarrow, and Greenery are some of the more eye-catching selections. Once colors are selected, consider these guidelines for using bolder colors in room designs.

- Decide how big an impact you want to make. Are you looking for color overload or just a small focal point of vivid color? Remember, using bold color doesn't mean every wall must be lathered in that hue. Instead, select one wall to serve as an accent point and use that spot as your bold color display. Otherwise, rely on bold colors to dress up otherwise mundane areas, such as the back wall of a cupboard or moldings and trim.

- Try bold in a small space. Many people are surprised at how well bold colors work in small spaces. Powder rooms can be an ideal spot to experiment with

paint colors. Try deep colors that can make the area seem intimate and even exotic.

- Go bold in the kitchen. Incorporate a splash of color in the kitchen without going overboard. Try an appliance or design fixture in a bright shade. Or paint the inside of the cabinets in your favorite color and install glass inserts in the cabinet doors so that everyone gets a peek of the color beyond. A neutral kitchen also can be brightened up with the use of silverware, dishes, pots and pans, and other kitchen items featured in bold hues.

- Stick to boldness on interchangeable items. Those who like to experiment with color may find that they like to switch out the colors now and again. Instead of having to repaint every few months, use decorative items in bright shades to make swapping out color that much easier.

- Establish balance. Rely on neutral furniture, rugs, moldings and baseboards if you decide to take bold colors up a notch. This will help create a sense of balance in the room.

Painting is a fun way to experiment with color. Many homeowners are not hesitant to use bold shades of color when they learn the right techniques. And because paint is an inexpensive option for making over a room, homeowners who find they do not like a particular color can easily paint over it with a new color. **E**

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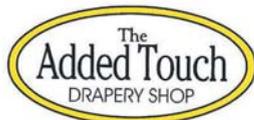
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How does solar electricity work?



Those who are still pondering the decision to go solar may want to know more about how it works. Although the guidelines vary depending on location and the energy company issuing the bill, here are some of the basics.

Generating solar electricity

Solar electricity is generated through a process known as the photovoltaic effect. Sunlight shines on solar panels, which are mounted on the roof of the home or in another prominent location. Each panel typically has between 60 to 72 solar cells strung together. These photovoltaic cells use the irradiation in sunlight to stimulate the flow of electrons in the semiconductor material, which creates direct current, or DC, electricity. Systems that directly convert the DC to alternating current, or AC, the type of power voltage used in a house, do so by way of an inverter. The inverter feeds power to the circuit board.

Solar panels are seen more and more on roofs of residential homes and even some businesses. Due in part to more aggressive marketing by solar energy companies, as well as greater awareness by customers, solar energy has become increasingly popular in recent years.

The Solar Energy Industries Association® reports that solar energy in the United States is booming. The association offers that, since the passage of The Solar Investment Tax Credit in 2006, solar has experienced a compound annual growth rate of more than 60 percent.

While many might assume that environmental preservation is the driving force behind the growing popularity of solar energy, it's actually the financial benefits of solar energy that are leading the way. One Block Off the Grid polled nearly 200 solar homeowners to learn more about their motivations for going solar. Roughly 75 percent would not have gone solar if there was no economic benefit to doing so. A number of people who have switched to solar say they are getting a high rate of return on the investment. The average electricity bill a person saw prior to solar energy hovered around \$177 a month. After the conversion, bills were now as low as \$55.

Demand and excess

When the demand from a home or business is equal to the amount of solar power being generated, the system is working optimally. When solar power falls a bit short, grid power will make up the deficit. There's also the possibility that excess electricity will be produced.

In a grid connect system, certain areas may operate with a 1:1 net metering policy, states Solar Reviews, which offers consumer reviews of solar products. This means that the utility company will credit a homeowner 1 to 1 for every kilowatt hour produced in excess because the excess energy goes back into the grid system. This is called "back-feeding" the grid. It's handy for powering homes at night with standard electricity at no additional cost. If the production of kWhs exceeds what is purchased from the utility each year, some utility companies will continue to credit for the excess.

Solar electricity systems are changing the way people think about energy. With the financial motivation to do so, consumers who embrace solar energy are helping the environment while also saving money. **E**



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Factors to consider when choosing carpeting

When the time comes to choose flooring for their homes, homeowners may be overwhelmed by the vast array of options at their disposal. The choice between carpet and hardwood flooring, laminate or tile is a matter of personal preference. People have long extolled the virtues of hardwood flooring, but carpeting can be just as stylish and provides a host of other benefits as well.

Carpeting insulates rooms in the summer and winter, adding that extra level of protection against the elements. Carpeting also absorbs sound in a home. Many appreciate the warmth and cozy feeling of carpet, especially when stepping out of bed. Carpeting also can increase the level of safety at home. According to the Carpet and Rug Institute, carpeting makes areas of play safer and may also reduce the severity of an injury in the event of a fall.

Today, there are many different types of carpeting available. Selecting the right carpeting for a room comes down to identifying the level of traffic in a particular room, the attributes homeowners would like the carpet to have and any other needs that fit with their lifestyles. The following guidelines can make carpet shopping a bit easier.

Type of carpeting

There are many different types of carpeting, some of which are best suited to certain situations. For example, plush and saxony carpets are better in low-traffic areas. These carpets may

show footprints and also vacuum tracks and dirt, but they're higher on the comfort spectrum than other types of carpet. Berber, which is more flat and dense, helps mask stains and tracks. It is durable in high-traffic areas. Textured carpets like frieze are cut from fibers of different heights, so they mask stains and are also softer on the feet than berber.

Padding

Padding can impact the way carpeting feels and how long it lasts. It isn't always necessary to purchase the most expensive or thickest padding. However, it is wise to pick a pad that matches the type of carpeting you're selecting and one that aligns with how you plan to use the room. You may be able to go with a thinner pad in low-traffic rooms and beneath dense carpeting like berber. In high-traffic rooms, choose a thicker, more durable padding. Padding prevents carpet backing and fibers from coming apart over time. It pays to invest

in a padding that will last as well.

Installation

Select a reliable carpet retailer and installer for your business. Competent installers will lay the carpeting in the correct manner so that it will look beautiful and maintain its durability for the life of the product. Shop around to find the right installer or even do the work yourself if you feel capable.

Take time when shopping for carpeting, which is a substantial investment that can last for many years if the right material is chosen and installed correctly. **E**



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Steps to take before an appraiser's visit

Homeowners unfamiliar with the appraisal process might not know if there is anything they can do to make the process go more smoothly. While certain variables involved in the appraisal process, such as location of the home and the value of surrounding homes, are beyond homeowners' control, the Appraisal Institute recommends homeowners take the



Make necessary repairs before your appraisal. Appraisers can not assume that you will make those repairs after they leave and it will affect your appraisal amount.

following steps before an appraiser visits their home.

- Clean the house. A dirty home that is full of clutter will not make the best impression on appraisers. Dirty homes may be vulnerable to insect infestations that can lead to structural problems with the home. While a dirty home is not necessarily an indicator of infestations or a reflection of a home's value, a clean

home will create a stronger first impression with the appraiser.

- Make any necessary repairs ahead of the appointment. Homeowners who have been putting off repairs should make them before the appraiser arrives. Homes with repairs that still need to be made will likely be valued less than similar homes with no such repair issues. Though repairs can be costly, investing in home repairs will likely increase both the appraisal and resale value of the home.

- Obtain all necessary documents before the appraiser arrives. Homeowners who have certain documentation at the ready can speed up the appraisal process. Such documentation may include a survey of the house and property; a deed or title report; a recent tax bill; if applicable, a list of items to be sold with the house; purchase history of the home; and the original plans and specifications of the home.

- Inform the appraiser about recent improvements. Homeowners can inform appraisers about any recent improvements to the home and the cost of those improvements. The value of home improvements with regard to a home's appraisal value vary depending on a host of variables, but having such information at the ready can help appraisers make the most informed appraisal possible. **E**

GROUNDHOG-from 49

Rather than torches and blessings from goddesses, on Candlemas custom called for members of the clergy to bless candles and distribute them to the people to symbolize that

Christ was the light of the world. Weather played a role in the celebration of Candlemas. Rainy, wet weather was preferable because it suggested spring's arrival was on the horizon.

Candlemas was celebrated in many parts of Europe and eventually spread to Germany, where animals were involved in the ceremony. Hedgehogs were plentiful in the area, and celebrants believed if they

cast a shadow during fair weather on Candlemas, more bad weather was in store. Pennsylvania's earliest settlers were German, and these immigrants brought their Candlemas traditions with them. But hedgehogs were not common in Pennsylvania, so settlers used groundhogs instead. Thus, the groundhog was seen as a wise and suitable substitute for prognostication.

Today's celebrations

include tens of thousands of visitors from all around the world who travel to Pennsylvania to see Punxsutawney Phil in person. Phil has become a celebrity of sorts and has appeared on various television shows, on a jumbo screen in Times Square and as the star of the 1993 movie "Groundhog Day." (Although the real Phil was not allowed to be in the movie because it was filmed in Illinois instead of Pennsylvania, and the Groundhog Day organizers were notably upset.)

Boasting a deeper history than many people may know, Groundhog Day will continue to delight revelers for years to come. **E**

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



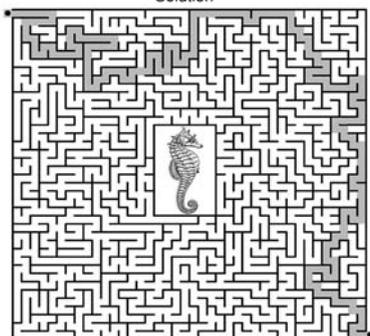
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Answer

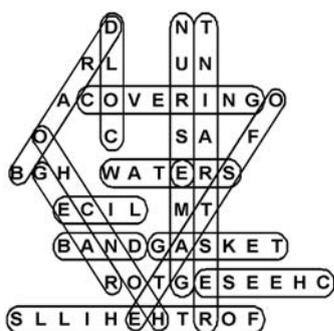
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Mega Maze

Solution



HEAD



King Crossword

Answers

Solution time: 25 mins.

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| B | A | R | | A | D | D | S | | O | F | F | S |
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Sticklers Answer

The answer is 504.

1³ + 1 = 2 4³ - 4 = 60 7³ + 7 = 350
 2³ - 2 = 6 5³ + 5 = 130 8³ - 8 = 504
 3³ + 3 = 30 6³ - 6 = 210

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 - 445 Farm Machinery Wanted
 - 447 Farm Market Items
 - 460 Fencing
 - 470 Financial Services
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 - 483 Flooring
 - 495 For Rent
 - 500 For Sale
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 - 525 Fruits & Berries
 - 527 Furniture
 - 529 Garage Sales
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 - 820 Nurseries
 - 910 Plants
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Recognize and avoid buying a lemon

New or preowned vehicles are significant investments. New cars might be more expensive than preowned models, but according to Edmunds, the average cost of a pre-owned vehicle is around \$16,000.

Preowned vehicles

seem and often are consumer-friendly options. However, preowned vehicles always carry some measure of risk. Unless a vehicle is covered by a warranty, consumers take that risk on themselves.

One way for buyers to reduce any anxiety

they may have about preowned vehicles is to learn as much as they can about automobiles and spotting potential lemons. Despite the availability of vehicle history reports, some lemons still make it onto used car lots. The following are a handful of ways buyers can protect



themselves from buying lemons.

- Research vehicles through reputable sources. Investigate the reliability ratings of certain vehicles on reputable sites such as Edmunds.com, the National Highway Traffic Safety Administration website (NHTSA.gov) and Kelly Blue Book (kbb.com).

- Ask the right questions. Once you find a vehicle that interests you, ask pointed questions about its condition and features. Relatively new cars with high mileage may raise red flags, so ask how many owners such vehicles had and if maintenance records are available. Consumer Reports says a high-mileage car used on a long highway commute is better than if the car does many short trips or stop-and-go driving. Also ask if a vehicle you're considering has been in

an accident or if there are any recalls on the make and model.

- Request a vehicle history report. Ask to see a copy of the vehicle's history report. Such reports may include information about major accidents, mileage counts, number of owners, airbag deployment, and many other clues that can shed light on the condition of the vehicle. The report also may include warranty information and whether the car or truck was branded a lemon.

- Conduct a visual inspection. Look at the vehicle for certain telltale signs of wear and tear that may indicate you should not buy the vehicle. Such indicators may include prematurely worn pedals or a sagging driver's seat. Check for dents, chipped paint, mismatched body panels, body filler, or sloppy repair work. Inconsistent

welds around the hood also may indicate the car has undergone significant repairs.

When looking under the hood, Consumer Reports suggests paying attention to the level of grease and corrosion on the engine, radiator and battery. Check for wet spots that may be indicative of leaks. Melted wires or blackened areas can be a sign of an engine overheating or even a fire.

- Rely on a trusted mechanic. Ask a mechanic you trust to give the vehicle a thorough, professional inspection. He or she may be able to spot signs of a lemon more readily than amateurs.

Purchasing a car can induce some anxiety. Research and patience can calm buyers' nerves and ensure they find the right vehicle at the right price. **E**

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Interactive pumps can fuel more fun when filling the tank



Interactive fuel pumps may be the wave of the future at gas stations. (Image courtesy of BP Global.)

Digital entertainment has taken over the world. Not to be outdone, at least one fuel company is making the process of filling up more interactive.

BP Global recently introduced interactive fuel pumps at various sites around New York and Chicago that are intended to make filling up a gas tank a more enjoyable

experience. The smart pump is named “Miles,” and the company calls it a BP Personality Pump. Miles uses a proprietary interactive technology to audibly greet customers

and initiate the fueling experience.

While filling up, customers can select music on Pandora, record a video e-card to share on social media or play music trivia. The pump responds in real time through a touchscreen tablet-like device and provides drivers with a variety of entertainment options.

Developed through a partnership with The Onion and Pandora, Miles has a clever personality. According to Donna Sanker, chief marketing officer for BP Fuels North America, “We believe this technology could change the way people think about the typical fill-up and give consumers another reason to visit our stations.”

After pumping gas, driv-

ers can send themselves a text message with content created at the pump, a link to the Pandora station they chose and a special return offer.

Although these interactive pumps are still being tested, they may soon be noticed across the country. They’re particularly targeted to millennials, who consistently immerse themselves in technology

and rely heavily on digital content.

BP has not yet revealed plans to expand Miles to pumps in other high-profile markets. Only time will tell if the company expands its interactive fuel pump efforts and whether competitors like Exxon Mobil, Shell, Chevron, and Valero develop their own interactive technology. **E**

Tire maintenance a key component of spring check-up



When warm weather arrives, many people enjoy a collective sigh of relief. Just as people welcome the end of the cold, snow and ice, cars and trucks also can benefit from more moderate temperatures.

Salt, grime and pot holes can take a toll on tires over the course of a typical winter. Drivers will not get far this spring and summer without tires in good repair, which is why tire maintenance should be part of any seasonal repair checklist.

Inflation levels

Now is the time to use a tire pressure gauge to see if tires are at the ideal inflation levels. Many tires indicate the recommended PSI (pounds per square inch) on their sidewalls. Cold temperatures may cause tires to deflate a little. Esurance states that winter weather can cause tire pressure reduction at about one PSI for every 10 degrees the temperature

drops. Driving on improperly inflated tires can be dangerous, potentially affecting handling and braking distances.

Check tires when they are cold for the most accurate reading. Properly inflated tires also will improve fuel economy, so drivers may even save a little money by inflating their tires.

Tire rotation realignment

Examine the tires for tread wear. Any uneven or abnormal tread wear could indicate that the tires need to be rotated and the wheels realigned at the very least. Take the vehicle to a qualified mechanic to get their opinion on how to remedy the situation. Mechanics may recommend rotating tires every 6,000 to 8,000 miles, or about every six months for the average driver.

Wheel realignment may be necessary after a season of driving over potholes and other irregularities in the road. Misaligned wheels can cause handling problems, like the car “pulling” to one side.

Tire replacement

Drivers may discover extreme tread wear, bulges or even cracks in the sidewall during a tire inspection. These signs indicate that it’s time to replace the tires. Failing to replace old, worn down tires can increase the risk of automobile accidents.

Thorough cleaning

Once tires are inspected and possibly serviced or replaced, treat the car or truck to a washing and thorough detailing. This will help tires shine and get the vehicle road-ready for spring trips. **E**

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How waxing benefits a vehicle



In addition to protecting a vehicle from the elements, waxing provides the following benefits.

- **Deep shine:** Wax is the easiest way to make a vehicle look brand new again. While a carnauba-based wax may be recommended, many synthetic waxes are now available, and such products provide excellent shine capabilities as well.
- **Fills in scratches:** While wax will not remove scratches, it can fill in shallow scratches to make them less visible.
- **Reduces friction:** Car wax smooths the surface of the paint and will reduce the friction between debris and the car's exterior. This means debris will be more likely to slide right off than cause paint to chip.
- **Catches contaminants:** Airborne contaminants will be trapped in the wax rather than settle into paint and etch the car or truck.

A number of tests can indicate when a car needs a new coat of wax. The water-beading test is one such test. If the water beads up nicely while washing or during a light rain, the wax is still performing. If the water runs in large "sheets," it's time for a new coat of wax.

Drivers can conduct the towel test as well after the car is washed and completely dried. The resource How To Auto offers guidance on how to perform this test: Fold a 100-percent cotton terry cloth towel until it's hand-sized and thick. Apply firm pressure to the car's surface and twist the cloth back and forth in a clockwise and counter-clockwise direction. If you hear a squealing noise, then it's time for a wax job.

Before waxing, the vehicle should be clean, dry and free of contaminants. Afterward, work in a shady area. Work carefully, but do not go so slowly that the wax dries too quickly. Do not apply the wax too heavily; a little goes a long way. Try to keep it even during application. Buff the wax with a microfiber towel when done.

Waxing remains an important part of vehicle maintenance, safeguarding a vehicle from the elements while also keeping the car or truck looking new. **E**

Car and truck owners recognize that a certain measure of upkeep is necessary to maintain safe, efficient and good-looking vehicles. Making sure what's under the hood — and under the chassis — is in excellent condition is important. So, too, is safeguarding against damage to the exterior of a car or truck.

One of the ways to protect against environmental damage is to wax the vehicle. Bird droppings, rain, salt, and sun can take their toll on a vehicle, and waxing can help combat these often inevitable environmental factors.

The experts at Popular Mechanics say that, even though modern paint jobs have improved considerably in recent years, wax formulations have improved as well. Both can work wonders with regard to defending against color erosion, scratches and dullness. Furthermore, waxing increases resale value at trade-in time and can make it easier to clean vehicles.

The consumer advocates at Angie's List recommend that vehicles be waxed not less than twice a year. However, many detailers advise drivers to have their vehicles waxed once every three months, or one time per season.

Wet weather driving tips

Driving in the rain can be more hazardous than driving in the snow, particularly because drivers fail to realize the dangers wet roads can impose. After averaging 10 years of statistics, the National Highway Traffic Safety Administration found that 46 percent of weather-related crashes happened during rainfall, but just 17 percent occurred while it was snowing or sleeting.

Drivers often think rain is no big deal, but while it's not necessary to avoid driving when the raindrops begin to fall, exercising caution when the roads are wet can decrease the risk of being in an auto accident.

- **Slow down.** Wet roadways cause tires to lose traction, as friction is reduced between the rubber and the asphalt. It's possible to lose up to one-third of traction in the rain. To compensate, slow down to reduce sliding and stopping distances.
- **Improve visibility.** Turn on windshield wipers and lights when it is raining. This makes it easier to see the road and makes your vehicle more visible to other motorists.
- **Leave more distance between cars.** In addition to improving your reaction time, giving others more space can improve visibility by reducing the amount of mist or splashing caused by other vehicles.
- **Stick to daytime driving.** If possible, when it is raining, drive only during the day. Glare from wet roadways and headlights at night can further compromise poor visibility.
- **Watch for wind gusts.** Anticipate gusts when traveling through windy road corridors or over bridges. **E**

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Tips for preowned vehicle buyers



researching the makes and models they are considering. Whether they are checking a vehicle's safety ratings, gas mileage or warranty terms, buyers know that such research is essential to making the most informed decisions. Preowned vehicle buyers should be just as diligent as new car buyers, researching the vehicle's initial assessments and ordering a vehicle history report to determine if a vehicle they're considering has been in any accidents and how many drivers have previously owned the car. Buyers also should research manufacturer warranty terms to determine whether the original warranty is still in place or if they will need to purchase a new one.

The impression of used cars and trucks has changed dramatically in recent years. Now widely referred to as "preowned vehicles," such automobiles are now the first choice of many buyers who want reliable vehicles without having to pay full sticker price.

While buying preowned vehicles is less risky today than it might have been two decades ago, there is still some risk for buyers who purchase cars that are not brand new. The following tips can help motorists find preowned vehicles that suit their needs and budgets.

- Do your homework. Drivers rarely buy brand new vehicles without first

- Develop a realistic budget. Budgets are important whether buyers are purchasing brand new or preowned vehicles. But while new car buyers can reasonably expect their maintenance costs to remain low for a few years, preowned vehicle buyers, especially those purchasing cars without warranties, should expect to deal with repairs sooner than they would if they were buying brand new cars. Leave some room in your budget for repairs and then look for vehicles that fit your budget. Maxing out your budget could prove disastrous if your car needs repairs sooner than expected, and if repairs are a long way off, you are still saving money.

- Make sure you are getting the best price. Preowned vehicle prices may be

more flexible than the prices of brand new cars, but it's still up to buyers to ensure they're getting the best price. Resources such as Kelley Blue Book (www.kbb.com) and the Edmunds.com True Market Value (TMV)[®] pricing tool can help buyers make the best buying decisions. Using such resources is quick and easy and can help buyers quell any concerns they might have about overpaying for preowned cars or trucks.

- Insist on a pre-purchase inspection for vehicles not designated as certified preowned vehicles. Before making an offer on a preowned vehicle, buyers should insist on a pre-purchase inspec-

tion performed by their own mechanics. Such inspections are not necessary when buying certified preowned vehicles from dealerships because such certifications are only granted when manufacturers or other certifying authorities have inspected the vehicles before they were offered for sale. If private sellers or dealers selling uncertified preowned vehicles resist your efforts to get a pre-purchase inspection, walk away and continue your search elsewhere.

Preowned vehicles no longer carry the stigma they once did, and savvy buyers can find great deals on reliable pre-owned automobiles. **E**

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Simple maintenance projects to keep cars running smoothly



Oil checks and changes are vital to engine health.

One of the ways to keep vehicles running strong for years on end is to adhere to the manufacturer's recommended maintenance schedule. Although there are many factors drivers cannot control, including recalls, weather and road conditions, proper maintenance is something drivers can control, and maintaining a vehicle can be very simple.

Oil changes

Motor oil lubricates the engine and keeps it in good working order. Old oil becomes more viscous and can lose its efficacy. While changing motor oil is important, motorists should follow the owner's manual or the factory maintenance schedule regarding how often it needs to be changed, as all vehicles are not alike. The old myth that cars and trucks need oil changes at set intervals has changed as digital check capabilities have evolved.

Car computers can now keep track of more than just mileage. Computers now track starts and stops and trip durations to determine when cars need oil changes.

Coolant levels

Coolant helps prevent vehicles from overheating and also prevents the water that it mixes with in the radiator from freezing or boiling. Coolant is nearly as important as motor oil in vehicle maintenance. Coolant is typically comprised of a 50/50 mix of distilled water and antifreeze. These two substances work together to maintain a proper ratio of

heat energy and prevent eventual breakdown and destruction of the engine.

Coolant is usually changed once per year or at 30,000 miles. This keeps the coolant working properly and will help prevent corrosion and deposits from forming inside the cooling system. Coolant levels might be checked during a full-service oil change appointment.

Check battery contacts

Many modern car batteries do not require a lot of maintenance. However, one problem that may occur is a buildup of minerals or corrosion from leaking battery fluid on the contacts. In such instances, use a battery cleaning brush to clean the contacts and then replace the cables.

Tire maintenance

Properly inflated, balanced and rotated tires make for a smooth, safe ride. Check that tires are wearing evenly and that the vehicle is not pulling to one side. A lack of tread on tires requires they be replaced. Because tires can be expensive, many drivers put off routine tire maintenance. But this can be a costly mistake. Tires that are worn or not properly inflated can cause skidding, problems braking and accidents. Blow-outs also may occur, putting drivers, their passengers and fellow motorists in danger. It's best to be proactive with regard to tire maintenance.

Maintaining a vehicle in adherence to manufacturer guidelines can prolong the life of the car, improve its safety and increase its trade-in or resale value. ■

Did YOU Know?

The excitement of driving a new car off of the lot extends beyond the thrill of having a new set of wheels to show off. Some people just love the smell of a new car. But while that aroma may be pleasant to the olfactory senses, it may be wise to eliminate the smell as soon as possible. According to a 2012 study from the nonprofit Ecology Center and HealthyStuff.org, that

"new car smell" may include toxic fumes from chemicals used to create the car's interior. There are some indications that the smell is generated from more than 50 volatile organic compounds, or VOCs, that are off-gassing in a relatively confined space. While the potential dangers of breathing in all of these compounds continues to be studied, the flame retardants and plastics used

in cars have been linked to illnesses when they have been used in other applications. To speed up the process of removing VOCs from a car, open all of the windows and let it sit in the hot sun. Also, purchasing a vehicle that has been sitting on the lot for a while may mean some of the chemicals have dissipated.

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