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Country Editor
November 24, 2018
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The Fort Plain Volunteer Fire Department will be selling Christmas Trees at Fort Plain True Value starting the afternoon of November 23rd. Thanks for your support!

WE HAVE! Timberwolf log splitters. Call for pricing + models available. North Creek Auto 315-866-3698

MAKE our phone ring so we can return the favor!! Place your reader ad today. Only $4.00 for the first 14 words. 518-673-0111

We want to hear from you!
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Holiday open house at Johnson Hall State Historic Site

JOHNSTOWN – In conjunction with the City of Johnstown's Colonial Stroll holiday activities, Johnson Hall State Historic Site will hold its Holiday Open House on Friday, Nov. 30 from 5 - 8:30 p.m.

Johnson Hall will be decorated for the holiday season and will feature live 18th century music performed by Liaison Plaisantes. Homemade mulled cider will be served at the Stonehouse fireplace. The museum shop will offer 20 percent off for holiday shopping that evening. Horse-drawn wagon rides of the mansion's circular drive, by Fritz-Ann Farms, will be available to visitors between 6 and 8:30 p.m.

The evening's event is free and open to the public. Donations will be gratefully accepted and will be earmarked for the continued restoration efforts of Sir William and Molly Brant's historic home.

This year's event is co-sponsored by Johnson Hall State Historic Site, the Friends of Johnson Hall, Goderie's Tree Farm and Hewitt's Garden Center.

Johnson Hall was the 1763 Georgian estate of Sir William Johnson and Molly Brant and their family. Sir William (1715-1774) was the single largest landowner and most influential individual in the colonial Mohawk Valley. His success in dealing with the Six Nations had a lasting impact on their relationship with the English and largely influenced England's victory in the Anglo-French struggle for control of colonial North America. The main house and flanking stonehouses, originally surrounded by a 700-acre farm, now interpret the Johnson family through guided tours of the period room settings, educational programs and special events.

Johnson Hall State Historic Site is located at 139 Hall Ave. in historic Johnstown, just off West State Street (State Highway 29 West). For more information, visit Facebook or www.friendsofjohnsonhallny.org or email JohnsonHall@parks.ny.gov .

The New York State Office of Parks, Recreation and Historic Preservation oversees more than 250 individual state parks, historic sites, golf courses, boat launches and recreational trails which are visited by 71 million people annually. For more information on any of these recreation areas, call 518.474.0456 or visit parks.ny.gov or connect on Facebook or Twitter.

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Holiday dinner and auction scheduled

It's that time of year again and the Richfield Springs Community Center is preparing for their 11th Annual Holiday Dinner and Auction. This event, the Center's largest fundraiser of the year, will be held on Saturday, Dec. 1 at the RSCC at 6 Ann St.

The evening will start at 5 p.m. with a delicious dinner prepared for you by the Center's many volunteers. Before and during dinner there is time to preview the many auction items that will be up for bid.

The auction begins at 6:30 p.m. with Sid Talma wielding the gavel. Along with all the wonderful holiday items that will be available, you will also have the opportunity to win door prizes. Tickets for the dinner/auction are just $9.

In the spirit of giving, consider donating to the Center's efforts if you enjoy making holiday crafts, pine wreaths, pottery, paintings, woodworking items, quilts and the like. All of these items make a perfect donation and would be gratefully accepted for our holiday fare. Come join us on Saturday, Dec. 1 at 5 p.m. for an evening of good food, camaraderie and fun.

For donations and more information regarding the event, contact the Center at 315.858.3200, check out www.richfieldspringscommunitycenter.org and like us on Facebook at Richfield Springs Community Center.

Wednesday night fly tying class

Are you itching for a springtime feeling already? Join Craig Buckbee and Otsego Land Trust for fly tying demonstrations and lessons on Wednesday, Dec. 12 from 5:30 - 7:30 p.m. at the Otsego Land Trust office, 101 Main St., Pioneer Alley, Cooperstown (this is the same building as the farmers market).

Buckbee, a licensed New York State fishing guide and a Master Certified Instructor with FFI (Fly Fishers International), will lead a lesson in fly tying and anything else you want to know about fly fishing! He will be doing demonstrations for those who would like to watch and will lead a hands-on lesson for those wishing to participate.

Equipment and materials will be provided, courtesy of HMH Vises in Biddeford, Maine. However, participants are also welcome to bring their own tools – vise, scissors, bobbin and lamp with extension cord.

This is the first of two fly tying classes that OLT will be hosting with Buckbee. Details for the second will be released shortly. The culminating event will be a fly casting/fishing workshop in spring 2019 for participants to return with their handmade flies.

Children ages 11 and over are more than welcome, but must come with an adult. Pizza and beverages will be provided throughout the evening, compliments of the land trust.

The mission of the Otsego Land Trust is to conserve our natural heritage of woodlands, farmlands and waters that sustain rural communities, promote public health, support wildlife diversity and inspire the human spirit.

Pre-registration is recommended. To RSVP and for more information, contact OLT's Communications and Outreach Manager Becky Talbot by email at becky@otsegolandtrust.org or by calling 607.547.2366 ext. 108.

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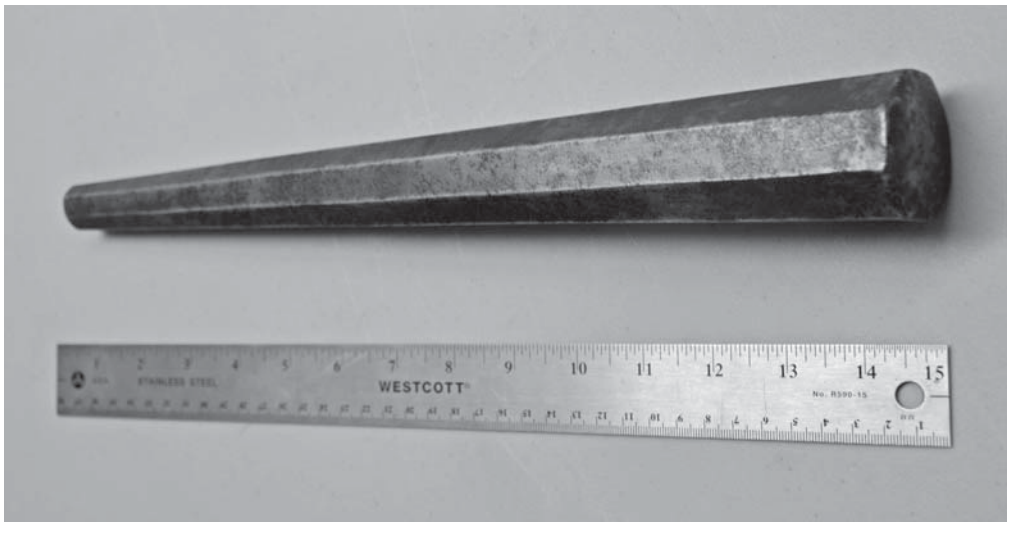
Whatchamacallits

Last week, our whatchamacallit was a small, lightweight swage hammer. This week, we're looking at something a bit heavier – a swage bar.



To review: Swaging is a forging process in which the size and dimensions of an item are altered using dies into which the item is forced. The process is usually done with unheated items. Swages were originally tools used by blacksmiths to form metal into various shapes too intricate to make with a hammer alone. These have handles for holding or pegs for attaching to an anvil, and often a flat head for striking with a hammer. Swage blocks are anvil-like dies with various shapes forged into them, which are also used for forming metal. Swages called "fullers" are specific to making grooves in swords and knives.

This swage bar, more than 12 inches in length, is a compact metal items that weighs about six pounds.

Used to reduce the outer diameter of round, flat, square rod, pipe or tubing, swaging provides a reduced round cross section suitable for subsequent machining and/or forming operations such as tapping, threading, upsetting, welding, etc. Swaged components benefit from increased tensile strength and improved appearance as a result of this hot forging process.

Swaging also minimizes stress points commonly caused by milling ends for threading. If only one end is swaged, the other end can be formed or machined to your specifications. Use swaging to eliminate secondary machining and welding operations.

Do you have your own Whatchamacallit?
Send a photo and short description to cllewellyn@leepub.com or call Courtney at 518.673.0144

Paw's Corner

by Sam Mazzotta

Cat returned home riddled with fleas

Dear Paw's Corner: I went on a weeklong Caribbean cruise with friends and left my cat "Fuzzy" with a pet sitter who kept her in her home. The sitter had good references, but a few days after I returned and picked up Fuzzy, I noticed her scratching. Checking her fur, she was riddled with fleas! I'm very unhappy about this – it will be very difficult to rid her and my apartment of the infestation. Should I ask for my money back from the sitter? – Caroline in Brooklyn

Dear Caroline: You certainly should contact the sitter and tell her about the flea infestation. Let her know that Fuzzy didn't have fleas before she stayed over, and that now she does.

The sitter may not have known that fleas were an issue in her home. Perhaps they rode in on another guest cat. So, she'll certainly need to treat her home before accepting any more pets.

She should know that you're not happy and that you have to shell out money to treat Fuzzy for fleas. As to whether she should refund your money entirely? It may be up for negotiation. She may offer to refund the difference of the cost of ridding Fuzzy of fleas – so save your receipts from the pet store and veterinarian.

Since pet-sitting fees for a weeklong stay can run to hundreds and even thousands of dollars, you may want to consult a lawyer for advice. Chances are you can directly negotiate a refund with the sitter, but it's good to know all your options, like small claims court, just in case.

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Calendar of events

NOTE: Calendar items must be submitted by Tuesday prior to the publication date to be included in the Calendar of Events. Entries may be emailed to cfeditor@leepub.com

Nov 27

Colonial Medicine. 6:30 p.m. Enders House. Free. Contact Schoharie Crossing State Historic Site at 518.829.7516.

Joint luncheon with Meals of Montgomery and Arkell Hall. 11:45 a.m. Arkell Center, 2 Lower Maple Ave., Canajoharie. Pasta primavera, spinach and roll with warm apples w/raisins. Following at 12:30 p.m. — Gary Van Slyke "Over the River & Through the Woods".

Paper-crafting workshop with Patty Murray. 6 - 8 p.m. Fort Plain Free Library, 19 Willett St., Fort Plain. Advance registration and a $5 registration fee, refundable the night of the event, is required as seating is limited. To register or for more information, visit the 19 Willett St. library or call 518.993.4646.

NYS History Month Tuesday Talks Series. Schoharie Crossing State Historic Site, Fort Hunter. "Colonial Medicine". For information, call the Visitor Center at 518.829.7516 or email SchoharieCrossing@parks.ny.gov, or visit our Facebook page.

Nov 29

Diet Club. Arkell Center, 2 Lower Maple Ave., Canajoharie. Call 518.673.2112.

Get Stuck on Stamps. 6:30 - 8 p.m. Fort Plain Free Library, 19 Willett St., Fort Plain, NY. Casual, drop-in group. Facilitated by stamp collector and American Philatelic Society member Keith Seeber. Cost: Free. Open to the public.

Writers Group at Fort Plain. Each Thursday from 3 to 5 p.m. Fort Plain Free Library, 19 Willett St., Fort Plain, NY. Group is facilitated by published writer, Joan Caska. Contact 518.993.4646.

Creative Textile Fibers Group. Each Thursday from 12:30 to 2:30 p.m. Fort Plain Free Library, 19 Willett St., Fort Plain. Contact: 518.993.4646.

Nov 30

Johnson Hall Holiday Open House. 5-8:30 p.m. Johnson Hall State Historic Site, 139 Hall Avenue, Johnstown, NY. Call Johnson Hall at 518.762.8712 or visit www,friendsofjihnsonhallny.org.

Chicken and Biscuit Dinner. 4-7 p.m. Oppenheim Senior Center, 108 Tobacco Rd., Oppenheim. Adults $10. Children 5-12 $5. Under 5 free.

Bingo with our Senior Citizens Club. 1:30 p.m. Arkell Center, 2 Lower Maple Ave., Canajoharie. Bingo starts directly following the Senior Citizens Club meeting.

Canajoharie Senior Citizens Club Meeting. Nov 30 18. 1 p.m. Arkell Center, 2 Lower Maple Ave., Canajoharie.

Dec 1

11th Annual Holiday Dinner and Auction. 5 p.m. Dinner at 6:30 p.m. Richfield Springs Community Center, 6 Ann Street, Richfield Springs. For donations and more information regarding the event, contact the Center at 315.858.3200, check out our website at www.richfieldspringscommunitycenter.org and Like us on Facebook: Richfield Springs Community Center.

Dec 2

St. Nicholas Day at Fort Klock. Noon-3 p.m. Fort Klock, 7214 State Route 5, St. Johnsville. For more information visit http://www.fortklock-restoration.org.

Dec 5

Christmas Tree Lighting. Lighting begins at 6 p.m. Village of Ames, in front of the Ames Museum. Following the event, refreshments will be served in the Ames fire station. Visit www.amesmuseum.weebly.com or at f@amesmuseum. Visit www.amesmuseum.weebly.com or at f@amesmuseum.

Dec 8

Fort Plain Reformed Church Faith Formation Holiday Fair 2018. Dec 8 18. 7 a.m. - 1 p.m. 165 Canal Street, Fort Plain. Serving Breakfast 7–9:30 a.m. Serving Lunch 10:30 a.m. – 12:30 p.m. Auction Number Calling 12:30 p.m. Featuring: Homemade preserves, jams and jellies; Jewelry: new and used; Handmade crafts: hats, scarves, doilies, etc.; Holiday Decor; "Nearly New" household items; Christmas Ornaments and more. 165 Canal Street, Fort Plain, NY, 518-993-4302. Call the church at 518.993.4302.

Dec 9

Valley Voices for Christ Holiday Vocal Concert. 6 - 7 p.m. Church of Christ Uniting, 22 Church Street, Richfield Springs. Light refreshments. Free will offering.

Dec 12

Wednesday Night Fly Tying Class. Dec 12 18. 5:30 - 7:30 p.m. Otsego Land Trust office, 101 Main St. Pioneer Alley, Cooperstown (this is the same building as the Farmers' Market). Children ages 11 and up are more than welcome, but must come with an adult. Pizza and beverages will be provided throughout the evening, compliments of the land trust. Pre-registration is recommended. To RSVP and for more information, please contact OLT's Communications and Outreach Manager Becky Talbot by email: becky@otsegolandtrust.org or by calling 607.547.2366 ext. 108.

Dec 19

Local History Round Table. Dec 19 18. 6:30 - 8:30 p.m. Fort Plain Free Library, 19 Willett St., Fort Plain. The local history forum is a free, drop-in discussion group facilitated by town and village historians on the third Wednesday of each month. Please call 518.993.4646 for more information.

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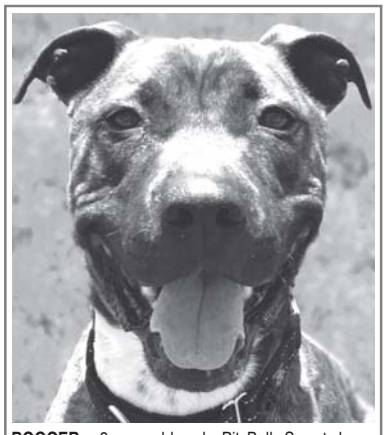

BOGGER - 3 year old male Pit Bull. Sweet, loves people and has lived with kids.

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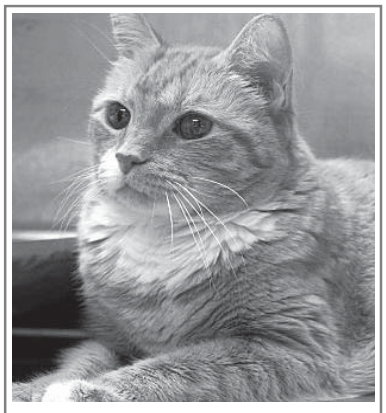

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Mon. Nov. 26th - Normal Monday Sale & Monthly Organic Day. Special: Conventional Herd – Dairy Dispersal for Bill Tompkins, Gilboa, NY. 36 head of Jersey & Jersey-Holstein Cross Dairy Cattle. Nov. DHI RHA 13435 4.6 548 3.3 444. SCC 200,000 Cows are in all stages of lactation with a 12.3 mo. Calving interval. 18 of the 26 milking cows are in 1st or 2nd lactation. 26 cows and 10 bred and open heifers.
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Mon. Dec. 10th – Normal Monday Sale & Monthly Heifer Sale.
Mon. Dec. 17th – Due to being closed Monday Dec. 24th this will be our Normal Monday Sale – Sheep, Lamb, Goat , Pig Sale & Monthly Organic Day.
Mon. Dec. 24th – We will be closed this week due to the holidays.
Mon. Dec. 31st - We will be closed this day due to the Holiday but will reschedule to open Wed. Jan 2nd
Wed. Jan. 2nd – This will be our Normal Sale day due to the Holidays – Monthly Feeder Sale.
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Kovels: Antiques and Collecting

by Terry and Kim Kovel

Folk-art chair

It is sometimes the unique collectible at a show or sale that is a "must have" for an unsuspecting collector. Folk-art collectors often see "one-offs" that are too expensive, too large or too outrageous to fit into the house. Recently, James Julia auctions had a "Late 19th-century American ... unique spool art chair." It was too big, too unfamiliar, too gawdy and too uncomfortable-looking for most collectors.

It was made of padded upholstered panels joined to make arms, a seat and a back. The frame was made with spool-turned legs, and other parts of the frame looked like real spools. There was more — the chair featured gilt metal scrolling, cast metal serpents and brass rosettes, and its back was 53 inches high. It sold for $968. Folk-art collecting started in the 20th century, and there are few rules about what is considered "good" or "bad." Collectors are writing these rules with their purchases.

Q: When were typewriters invented? I know mine is very old. It is a Royal Quiet Deluxe, and it was bought by a relative in the 1940s to use at college.

A: Your typewriter is not very old to a collector. The first commercial typewriter in the United States was the Sholes & Glidden typewriter, which was made by E. Remington & Sons in 1874. It typed only uppercase letters. Hundreds of different types of typewriters were made, and there were many that were very different in appearance and how they worked. The earliest ones did not have the letters in the order used today (known as the QWERTY keyboard). Your typewriter was popular in the 1940s and would sell today for about $25. Unusual-looking, older typewriters can sell for thousands of dollars if they're in good condition with the original decoration.

About 10 years ago, a new group of typewriter collectors started buying working machines. They wanted to use them instead of a computer or electric typewriter. Those who learned to type on the old machines with a bell, typing sounds and the noise of the return couldn't get used to the new improved machines. So there now are clubs, social events, type-ins, writing parties and even a typewriter orchestra. And there is even a book and a movie about the typewriter revolution.

Current prices

• Medal, red cross, donor award, Dr. Landsteiner portrait, bronze, 1939, 2 1/4 inches, $20.

• Book trough, carved oak, arched ends with cut-out Winnie-the-Pooh and Piglet figures holding hands, book storage, c. 1940, 8 x 20 inches, $80.

• Wristwatch, Omega, 14-karat gold, oval face, brushed gold band, felt case, Swiss, woman's, late 1900s, $375.

• Weathervane, silhouette of St. Florian, patron saint of firefighters, black metal, stand with arched base, Austria, 1700s, 30 x 15 inches, $1,500.

Tip: Don't store costume jewelry in the bathroom. The moisture will damage the plating. Keep jewelry in another room in cloth bags or a plastic bag with a piece of cloth.

For more collecting news, tips and resources, visit www.Kovels.com

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Is this chair art? Collectors answer that type of question every time they go antiquing. Clever, unfamiliar designs are becoming more desirable and more expensive. This folk-art chair of no special design period sold for $968.

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Paper-crafting workshop with Patty Murray

FORT PLAIN – Paper-crafter Patty Murray will return to the Fort Plain Free Library on Tuesday, Nov. 27 to conduct a holiday-themed card-making workshop.

The workshop for adults will be held from 6 - 8 p.m. in the local history room of the 19 Willett St. facility.

Murray has conducted numerous workshops at the library. Prior workshops included the making of Valentine's Day-themed cards and a reusable, rubber-stamped calendar.

Advance registration and a $5 registration fee, refundable the night of the event, is required as seating is limited.

To register or for more information, visit the 19 Willett St. library or call 518.993.4646. Follow the Fort Plain Free Library on Facebook.

Good Housekeeping

Flounder Rolls

2 medium plum tomatoes
2 medium dill pickles
1/2 cup reduced-fat, cholesterol-free mayonnaise dressing
2 teaspoons prepared white horseradish
3 tablespoons plain dried breadcrumbs
1/2 teaspoon paprika
1/2 teaspoon salt
2 (8-ounce) flounder fillets
2 tablespoons salad oil
4 frankfurter rolls

1. Chop tomatoes and pickles. In small bowl, combine tomatoes, pickles, mayonnaise dressing and horseradish.

2. On waxed paper, combine breadcrumbs, paprika and salt. Cut each flounder fillet lengthwise in half, then cut each half into 2 pieces. Coat fish with breadcrumb mixture.

3. In 12-inch skillet over medium-high heat, in hot salad oil, cook fish until golden on both sides and fish flakes easily when tested with a fork, about 4 minutes.

4. Place 2 pieces of fish in each frankfurter roll. Spoon mayonnaise mixture over fish. Serves 4.

* Each serving: About 400 calories, 21g total fat, 54mg cholesterol, 1,220mg sodium.

For thousands of triple-tested recipes, visit our website at www.goodhousekeeping.com/recipes/.

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FMCC leading drive for food security for college students

by Muhammad K. Usman, FMCC student

Food insecurity on college campuses is becoming an increasing concern in New York State. Governor Andrew Cuomo announced his fifteenth proposal of 2018 titled the "No Student Goes Hungry Program," which provides students from kindergarten to college with access to healthy meals. As a result, the State University of New York announced the introduction of its Food Insecurity Task Force, which supports and advances Gov. Cuomo's mission. According to Monroe Community College President Anne M. Kress, hunger is one of the issues that poses an effect on a student's retention and their ability to achieve academic success.

According to a 2018 report by Feeding America, Fulton County ranks twelfth and Montgomery County ranks thirteenth out of a total of 25 counties in the state of New York with the highest rates of hunger.

Fulton-Montgomery Community College is in the process of creating the Raiders Relief Food Pantry which will assist in combating the food insecurities that exist among the FMCC college community.

The Phi Theta Kappa Honor Society (PTK) at FMCC will be leading clubs on campus in providing the food pantry with supplies. In October, FMCC's PTK attended the Fall Honors in Action Regional Conference in White Plains, NY, where they were asked by Westchester Community College and LaGuardia Community College to bring canned goods. This inspired FMCC's PTK officers to take action in their own community. "Food insecurity has been identified as a national problem on college campuses. Certainly, FMCC would experience similar aspects of food insecurity as the rest of the nation. We are very encouraged by what our students are doing to help those who may not have enough food for themselves and their families," Dr. Dustin Swanger, president of FMCC, said.

"The PTK students at FMCC are looked to as leaders amongst our peers. They are doing outstanding work in their efforts to fight hunger on the campus. They have put out a call of help to all student clubs and organizations at FMCC with the thought of one small step may just start something big. I am extremely proud of our students and their willingness to help with this initiative," Gwen Ossenkop, coordinator of student activities, said.

With the help of our communities we can make a difference. Consider a non-perishable donation or monetary contribution to the FMCC Raiders Relief Food Pantry. Businesses can also help by allowing the FMCC's PTK chapter to leave donation boxes at their establishments. They hope this message reaches community members and inspires them to take an active role in supporting FMCC and the PTK chapter's efforts to combat food insecurity in our community.

For further information or to drop off food, contact Muhammad K. Usman at mu90873@student.fmcc.edu or Gwen Ossenkop at gwendolyn.ossenkop@fmcc.suny.edu or 518.736.3622 ext. 8131.

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Stamp lovers and collectors to meet at Fort Plain Free Library

FORT PLAIN – Do you think stamps are beautiful, interesting or educational? Join like-minded individuals on Thursday, Nov. 29 as the Fort Plain Free Library hosts an informal gathering for stamp lovers of all ages and experience levels.

The free, drop-in group meets at the 19 Willett St. library on the last Thursday of each month from 6:30 - 8 p.m. It is facilitated by stamp collector and American Philatelic Society member Keith Seeber and is open to the public.

Call 518.993.4646 for information.

Thirty ways to celebrate a merry month

The holiday season begins in late November and runs through New Year's Day. It is marked by various gatherings of friends and family, decadent foods, cocktails, traveling, and gift exchanges. The National Retail Federation says consumers will spend an average of $967 during the holiday season. However, the joy of the holidays also is about all of the memorable experiences that tend to make the season so beloved.

With that in mind, here are 30 ways to make the holiday season that much more merry.

1. Visit with an elderly or housebound neighbor and share conversation.
2. Donate gently used toys to a children's hospital.
3. Research the history of the holiday and share it with people you care about.
4. Make handmade Christmas tree ornaments.
5. Donate money to a charity or other good cause.
6. Encourage "pay it forward" movements in your community. Start by doing something simple like buying a coffee for a complete stranger.
7. Feed birds facing the cold, winter weather.
8. Take a ride or walk around the neighborhood to look at decorated houses.
9. Make a fire in a fire pit in the yard and toast marshmallows while sipping hot chocolate.
10. Binge watch holiday movies.
11. Attend the concert of a children's choir.
12. Help a friend decorate his or her home.
13. Host a tree-trimming party.
14. Schedule a day for baking cookies.
15. Sing Christmas carols at a nursing home.
16. Put together care packages of items and send them to troops overseas.
17. Share the holidays with a military family whose spouse is in service and can't make it home.
18. Offer to shop for someone who is homebound due to age, a chronic illness or injury.
19. Visit a large city to look at Christmas window displays.
20. Buy and hang real mistletoe … and use it.
21. Make a new friend and invite him or her to a holiday party for the first time.
22. Babysit a newborn so his or her parents can get errands done or just catch up on rest.
23. Volunteer at a soup kitchen.
24. Share the religious traditions of your holiday with someone of a different faith.
25. If weather permits, go sledding, build a snowman or have a snowball fight.
26. Share favorite memories at family holiday dinners.
27. Remember a deceased loved one with a special tribute.
28. Construct a gingerbread house.
29. Teach someone how to make a cherished family recipe.
30. Surprise a distant relative with an impromptu visit.

How to be certain you're buying safe toys this holiday season

Few things compare to seeing the joy on a child's face upon opening a holiday gift. Many adults remember holiday gifts they received as children, and holiday shoppers often try to look for gifts that will be just as memorable to the special youngsters in their lives.

Shoppers might have kids' smiles on their minds when holiday shopping, but it's just as important to focus on safety when buying gifts for children. Prevent Blindness, an organization devoted to ensuring everyone enjoys healthy vision from infancy through adulthood, offers the following tips to toy buyers who want to make sure they give safe gifts to kids this holiday season.

• Read all warnings and instructions on the box. Before taking a toy to the checkout line, give the packaging a thorough read-through, paying particular attention to product warnings and instructions. Such warnings are designed to keep kids safe. When buying toys online, only purchase toys that include the warnings within the product description.

• Purchase age-appropriate toys. Kids' toys come with age recommendations, which are typically listed on the front of the packaging. Stick to these recommendations. Kids might not have the ability to use toys designed for older children, and such toys might not be safe for them to use, so it's always best to stick to the age guidelines.

• Avoid certain toys. Toys with sharp or rigid points, spikes, rods or dangerous edges can pose a threat to youngsters. Avoid such toys, opting for toys with rounded and/or dull edges instead.

• Stick to sturdy toys. Kids do not often treat their toys delicately. Toys will be dropped or thrown, so choose sturdy toys that can withstand being dropped or thrown without breaking into tiny pieces. Tiny shards can pose a choking hazard to curious youngsters.

• Purchase toys with the ASTM designation. ASTM International is an international standards organization that develops and publishes voluntary consensus technical standards for a wide range of products, including toys. Prevent Blindness notes that toys with the letters ASTM on the packaging have been tested and met the toy standards set for by ASTM.

• Avoid toys with parts that shoot or fly off. These types of toys can damage the eyes and lead to other accidents or injuries.

The benefits of LED holiday lights

Many people put significant effort into their holiday lights. When a bulb goes out, all that effort can seem like it was for naught. Replacing a single bulb or multiple bulbs can be a lot of work. Fortunately, LED holiday lights provide a more user- and eco-friendly alternative to traditional incandescent bulbs. According to the Office of Energy Efficiency & Renewable Energy (OEERE), the following are some of the attributes that make LED holiday lights a superior alternative to traditional incandescent bulbs.

• **Safety:** LED lights burn a lot cooler than traditional incandescent lights, reducing the risk of combustion. And because they burn cool, they also reduce the risk of burnt fingers, which may make them more appealing to parents of curious youngsters and people who will be hosting family and friends during the holiday season.

• **Sturdiness:** Because they're made with epoxy lenses and not glass like traditional incandescent bulbs, LED holiday lights are less likely to break. That can be especially beneficial to people with pets who might bump into the family Christmas tree.

• **Longevity:** LED lights are initially more expensive than more traditional lights. However, the OEERE notes that lights bought today may still be in use 40 holiday seasons from now. That longevity makes them well worth the higher initial investment.

• **Ease of installation:** LED lights are easily installed, and the OEERE says as many as 25 strings of LEDs can be connected end-to-end without overloading a wall socket. That can ease the nerves of homeowners concerned about the potential hazards of elaborate holiday lighting displays.

• **Energy savings:** LED lights consume considerably less energy than incandescent lights, saving homeowners money on their energy bills, which can skyrocket in December thanks to interior and exterior holiday lighting displays using incandescent lights. In fact, the OEERE estimates that by 2027, widespread use of LED lights could save consumers more than $30 billion at today's electricity prices.

Gift-wrapping tips and tricks

Wrapping can be the prelude to the gift itself, and intensify the anticipation.

Much of the focus of each holiday season is on gift-giving, but all those gifts will eventually need to be wrapped. Stacks of presents just waiting to be covered with paper and ribbon can overwhelm gift givers, prompting them to put off wrapping gifts until the last minute. Hesitant wrappers with a pile of gifts to wrap can use these tricks to make the process go smoothly.

Find inspiration

Instead of looking at wrapping as yet another chore, try to envision how the recipient will feel peeling open the paper and finding the gift inside. Wrapping can be the prelude to the gift itself, and intensify the anticipation. The wrapping paper or style also may draw on aspects of the gift itself. For example, a knit scarf can be placed in a crocheted stocking.

Handle oddly-shaped items

Wrapping rectangular boxes can be a snap, but what about something that's round or full of angles? Think about placing oddly-shaped items inside another item to make the shape more uniform. Shoe boxes, coffee cans and even paper towel rolls can hold items. Then place the wrapping on these containers.

Cover prices

To enable easy exchanges or returns, do not cut off the price tags of gifts. Instead, place a festive sticker over the dollar amount, but leave the scan bar visible. This way the gift recipient can return the gift with ease if necessary.

Keep supplies at the ready

Devote a bin or bins to wrapping supplies and tools. Having scissors, paper, tape, ribbon, and more in a designated spot will cut down on having to hunt and peck when it comes time to wrap. Martha Stewart suggests getting a rotary cutter to cut long straight or decorative edges on wrapping paper. Rotary cutters may be easier to use than scissors, especially when paired with a ruler.

Wrap on a firm surface

Devote a table or counter to wrapping gifts. This will keep the paper taut and neat and make it easier to cut and position. You risk tearing the paper or puncturing it when working on carpeting or bedding.

Color- or pattern-code gifts

It's easy to visualize who gets what gift when each recipient has his or her own special wrapping paper. This is also a handy idea when wrapping gifts from Santa, as it will differentiate the Santa gifts from the ones being given by Mom and Dad.

With a few helpful pointers, wrapping gifts can be easy. And for those who prefer to skip the wrapping themselves, many malls and retailers offer complimentary wrapping for a small donation to charity.

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You may not need an extended warranty

Millions of people head to stores each holiday season on a mission to find gifts for their loved ones. After waiting in line to check out, oftentimes customers are asked by cashiers if they would like to purchase a warranty for their gifts, particularly when the items in the cart are electronics or larger gifts.

In one of Consumer Reports' latest surveys on electronics purchases, 65 percent of in-store shoppers said sales staff had presented a service plan to them. People may not know how to answer when asked about extended warranties. Consumer Reports notes that some retailers push hard to get customers to purchase extended warranties and service plans because they're particularly lucrative for the retailer. Stores often keep 50 percent or more of what they charge for these warranties.

For the most part, retail industry experts say that consumers do not need added protection on their purchases. According to the consumer advice tech site iMore, the out-of-pocket costs for most repairs on electronics or other items, such as appliances, usually do not exceed the price of a service plan being purchased. And when they do, it's maybe $20 more.

Some repairs may already be covered by the manufacturer's warranty, and a service plan will only duplicate coverage. Even though manufacturer warranties may not last as long as they once did, Consumer Reports says that many warranties will cover a product for at least 90 days in full, and some may have longer-ranging coverage.

Consumers should not overlook their credit cards as they pertain to purchase protection, either. Many credit cards will extend the manufacturer's warranty for a certain period of time. Plus, that coverage is part of having and using the card at no additional cost.

Shopping at stores known to have excellent return policies also can help customers skip service plans. Should the item break, they can simply return it to the retailer with the receipt or other proof of purchase.

Many service plans exclude certain repairs and replacements. Therefore, it is important to read the fine print on extended warranties prior to purchasing one.

Extended warranties may be useful when buying computers or televisions that cost more than $1,500. Some people prefer replacement plans for smartphones in the event the phone is lost or damaged, as these devices can be expensive to replace out-of-pocket.

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How to stay organized during the holiday rush

The holiday season is a busy time of year when there is much to accomplish. But everyday life continues during the holiday season, and that can make the month of December feel like a juggling act.

Organization is one of the keys to managing the holiday season, and the following are a handful of strategies to stay organized during the holiday rush.

Write it down

Moving things that need to be done from the recesses of the brain to a physical piece of paper or note-taking app on a mobile device can be quite helpful. Break down and sort tasks into categories or list them in chronological order, prioritizing those tasks that need to be completed first. Cross off tasks as they're completed.

Buy gifts early

Shopping is one of the biggest stressors of the holiday season. The longer you wait to begin shopping, the longer the lines will be at the store when you finally get going. Instead, make a list of gift ideas early in the season and start shopping at the end of November or when you can take advantage of seasonal bonus deals or free shipping.

Pick social events wisely

You cannot be everywhere at the same time. And even if it's possible to attend 10 holiday parties in a row, that can easily lead to burnout. Attend those gatherings that mean the most to you. If you're struggling to choose between events, attend and those that seem the easiest to handle. Recognize that you will have to say no to others — just do so with finesse.

Have go-to supplies

Got invited to a last-minute gathering? Need a gift in a pinch? It is helpful to have a running stock of hostess and other gifts at the ready. Stock up on delicious, yet reasonably priced bottles of wine. Have a few gift cards to a favorite retailer handy. Put together a care package of movie ticket vouchers and jumbo candy boxes. And don't forget to find an easy, no-bake recipe and keep the ingredients on hand so you can arrive in style with a homemade dessert.

The holidays are festive, fun and full of things to do. Organization can help ensure all of those things actually get done.

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How to buy clothes as holiday gifts

Holiday shopping lists are being made, and there is a strong chance that clothing has made many of those lists. Year after year, apparel, along with technology and books, dominate the top giving categories, according to Nielsen Global Holiday Spending Expectations. However, before rushing out to buy that new sweater or pair of slacks, shoppers are urged to follow a few tips that can make clothing shopping easier.

• Mimic the recipient's sense of style. Take your shopping cues from the types of clothing your loved one typically wears. Now is not the time to try to impart your own fashion sense on someone else. Enlist help if you're not exactly sure of your loved one's sense of style; retail associates are there to help.

• Stick with classics. Instead of mimicking his or her style, you can always select from classic apparel or general categories if they seem like they might be the right fit. Certain pieces, such as classic black pants or a skirt or a camisole and cardigan, always work seamlessly in a wardrobe. A gentleman might appreciate a new dinner jacket or blazer for those special occasions like a night out on the town. Opt for muted colors unless the recipient to make a statement.

• Find out the right size. This can take some investigatory work, but enlist other friends or family members to determine which size clothing your loved one wears. Otherwise, do some subtle sleuthing. Indirectly inquire as to size in general conversation. Or you can be forthcoming and say, "I'd like to get you clothing as a gift, what sizes do you wear?"

• Discover his or her favorite stores. Through your relationship, you may have learned about your loved one's favorite clothing stores. Such knowledge can give you a better sense of where to shop.

• Get gift receipts and learn the exchange policy. Even items purchased with the best intentions might not be right or fit correctly. Give the gift recipient an easy out by including a gift receipt with the present. This way he or she can exchange the gift for something else at full purchase price. Avoid retailers with especially stringent exchange policies.

• Enroll in a clothing subscription service. You don't need to buy clothes to gift clothing. Another way to gift clothing is to enroll your loved one in a trial for a clothing service. Clothing services ask members a few questions, and then fashion specialists will choose select pieces to ship each month. The clothing can be kept or returned for new items.

Clothing gifts are very popular. Gift-givers can help ensure they're well received by selecting items with care.

Christmas trees brighten the season

Decked out in tinsel, lights, ornaments and garland, Christmas trees are enduring symbols of the holiday season that boast a rich history.

Evergreen trees have been used to celebrate winter festivals for thousands of years, and eventually became associated with Christianity. Plants and trees that remained green all year held special meaning to ancient peoples, and were purported to keep away illness and evil spirits.

Germans were credited with tying evergreen trees to Christmas celebrations. In the sixteenth century, devout Christians brought decorated trees into their homes. Martin Luther, the Protestant reformer, is believed to have first added lighted candles to these trees after he was inspired by twinkling stars in the night sky.

While early Americans found Christmas trees an oddity, the tradition, brought over by German settlers, eventually caught on. Today, between 25 and 30 million natural Christmas trees are sold in the United States each year, states the National Christmas Tree Association. Trees are grown in all 50 states and Canada.

The following is a look at some popular tree varieties.

Living Christmas trees

Living Christmas trees, which refers to those with their roots still intact, are popular among eco-conscious holiday enthusiasts. That's because living trees can be promptly planted after they've served their purpose indoors.

Opt for a moderately sized tree, as root balls on larger trees can be heavy and difficult to move. Living trees can typically be kept indoors for around seven to 10 days before they will need to be returned outside. Move such trees to a sheltered outdoor area for one to two weeks so they can reacclimate to the climate. So long as the ground is not frozen, trees can then be planted when the reacclimation period ends. Better Homes and Gardens suggests selecting a mild day to plant the tree.

Fraser fir: Fraser fir trees are typically uniformly pyramid-shaped trees that have strong branches that turn slightly upward. These trees have good needle retention and a dark, blue-green hue. Many people feel these trees have a pleasant scent. Because they are such a quintessential Christmas tree, Fraser fir, as well as their close cousin, Balsam fir, tend to be more expensive than others.

Scotch pine: One of the advantages of Scotch pine trees is their needle retention. Experts say Scotch pine needles will not drop off even if the tree is dry. Scotch pine is an introduced species brought to North America by European settlers, and it's known for dark green foliage and sturdy, stiff branches. The Scotch pine is one of the most popular Christmas trees today.

White spruce: As a Christmas tree, the white spruce is known for excellent foliage color, short stiff needles and good needle retention. The blue-green color is pleasant, but when needles are crushed, the tree doesn't produce a favorable evergreen aroma. White spruce trees keeps their needles longer than other spruces.

With proper care, any variety of Christmas tree can look beautiful throughout the holiday season.

Christmas Tree Guide

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Woodchucks in the garden

by Dr. Leonard Perry, Horticulture Professor Emeritus, University of Vermont

Woodchucks are most common in open farmland and the areas adjoining them as well as in woody or brushy areas near open land. Their burrows can be found in fields, along fence rows and stone walls, near (even under) building foundations and trees and along roads. These burrows are easily found by the large mound of earth outside the opening, which can be up to 10 inches wide. There is often a second opening, well-hidden and dug from below so with no soil outside, used to escape danger. The main opening descends at a sharp angle, then levels into a smaller tunnel leading to the "living area" and the separate toilet area.

New burrows that appear in autumn are usually from older woodchucks, leaving the established burrows for their offspring, or for other mammals such as rabbits. Woodchucks generally live for three to four years. Their main enemies are hawks, owls, foxes, coyotes, bobcats, weasels, dogs and humans and their cars.

Knowing their behavior is the first step toward knowing whether woodchucks will be a problem, and to controlling them. They usually venture only 50 to 150 feet from their burrows in order to retreat if they sense danger. If your garden is farther away than this, you may not have a problem. Woodchucks are true herbivores, only feeding on vegetables, grasses, legumes, herbaceous flowers and some landscape plants. They feed mainly in early morning and evening, and can climb trees to feed.

Fencing, or exclusion, is the most permanent and effective means of control and works on other mammals as well. Make fences three feet above ground, and of heavy poultry wire, heavy gauge rabbit fencing or two-inch mesh wire. Bury the lower edge one foot in the ground to prevent burrowing, with the lower six inches bent outward in an L-shape. You may bend the top foot or so of wire mesh outward at a 45-degree angle to inhibit climbing. If you want even more insurance, place an electric wire about five inches off the ground and five inches outside the fence. This too will prevent digging as well as climbing.

If woodchucks aren't a serious problem, or your area is too large for fencing, you may try any number of repellents available at garden stores, farm stores and online. These work by either disagreeable smells to the woodchucks (such as garlic, old tennis balls soaked in ammonia or used smelly kitty litter), or tastes when sprayed on susceptible plants (such as from hot pepper sauce). If the population is large and feeding pressure high, these may not work.

Frightening may work too, either from noise (as from radios) or light (as from motion lights). Just make sure they are portable and moved every few days, otherwise the woodchucks will learn they are of no harm.

Live trapping also is used by some. Since woodchucks are a potential rabies vector, trapping in many states is illegal unless you are moving them on your own property or humanely euthanizing them. Beware that by relocating them in autumn they may not be able to find a den for hibernation, and that relocation in spring may cause death to their young. Such large wire traps also might catch non-target mammals such as pets, or even skunks!

If using a large wire cage trap (10 x 10 x 24 inches), place it near a burrow opening or along major paths they travel. Conceal it with brush or a black cloth, and replace the bait daily. Bait may consist of apple slices, carrots with tops, lettuce, cabbage or cantaloupe pieces. Check traps at least in morning and evening, so trapped animals can be removed. Often it helps to fix the trap open for a few days so they get used to it before then setting it. You may need to use wood or concrete blocks to create a tunnel between their burrow and the trap so they don't bypass it.

Before attempting control, check to make sure the products and measures you'll use are legal in your area, can be done safely, and are not restricted by game control regulations. Many states allow shooting if woodchucks are damaging property. If you don't feel up to the task of woodchuck control or aren't having any luck, check locally or with your state wildlife agency for pest control specialists.

More interesting facts on woodchucks, and details on control, can be found in a wildlife leaflet from Pennsylvania State University Extension (extension.psu.edu/woodchucks).

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CANAJOHARIE - PALATINE BRIDGE CHAMBER OF COMMERCE

ANNOUNCING . . . .

Elves Night Out

Friday, December 7th

4:30PM ~ Santa arrives at the Canajoharie Post Office to pick up the letters from our children.

6:00PM ~ Lighting of the Christmas Tree & Carolling led by our elementary choir and of course Santa & his elves. (Park is downtown adjacent to Little Mohawk Street, near the dummy light.)

After the Tree Lighting ~ Santa entertains the little ones and hears their "wish lists". Christmas cookies and hot cococa will be served at the Canajoharie Library/Arkell Museum.

Horse Drawn Wagon Rides from 5-8:30PM

Basket Raffle - New This Year! Hosted by Canajoharie Reformed Curch at their downtown ministry location - 64 Church St., Canajoharie. See baskets available starting Wed., Dec. 5 @ 3PM.

The Canajoharie United Methodist Church, 60 East Main Street, will be offering face painting, arts and crafts, cider and other refreshments from 4:30-9

50/50 Raffle Tickets will be available at participating downtown businesses All Week Long!

Canajoharie Youth Center will once again be hosting vendor tables in their gym - Interested vendors should contact Amanda Sweet 518-673-5117.
More to come from the Youth Center - watch future ads for details.

Downtown Shops will stay open late - watch ads for specific specials!

Elves will take over the town!
Lots of photo opportunities... snacks... bargains... fellowship.. watch for more details!!

For information contact
Chamber President,
Janet Stanley
M-F 10-5
518-673-0292

Get Christmas crafty with homemade ornaments

Handmade gifts, trinkets and treats help make the holiday season special. Although cookies and other baked goods are some of the most popular homemade creations this time of year, gift-givers young and old can put their talents to use with various craft projects. Ornaments and decorations are one such idea. Here are some clever and, not-too-time-consuming craft projects to try this holiday season.

• Mini sleighs: Create miniature replicas of Santa's famous sleigh. Paint several popsicle sticks to form the main body of the sleigh and glue them together. Put one at the top perpendicular to the others to serve as the steering rudder. Two silver-painted popsicle sticks placed on their thin sides act as the blades of a sled.

• Popcorn garland: Garland made of popcorn is a classic handmade holiday project. For a new twist, toss the popcorn with food coloring and allow it to dry before stringing for some bright color on the tree.

• Photo ornaments: Print out several different photos that you love. Purchase round or square thin wood pieces from a craft store and attach the photos with Mod Podge®. When dry, drill a hole through the top and thread with twine.

• Advent calendar: Make an Advent calendar to count down to Christmas by covering a foam board with fabric. Use paper tags or small ornaments and write a number on each for each day of the month. Hang these all from the board. As each day passes, move the tag or ornament to the tree.

• Wooden snowflakes: Have children collect small twigs from outdoors, as well as holly leaves and some sprigs of evergreen. Arrange similarly sized twigs in the shape of snowflakes and glue together, or tie with twine. Embellish with stickers, glitter, dried berries, and more.

• Dough ornaments: Anyone can have fun molding their own ornaments, letting them dry and then painting them. Use cookie cutters to get perfect holiday shapes. Craft stores sell various types of modeling clays and lightweight modeling materials. Or, make your own salt dough.

• Reindeer bottle topper: Put to use any wine corks you have lying around. Attach googly eyes and a small fuzzy nose to the front of a cork. Insert twisted, brown pipe cleaners to make the antlers up top. Add ribbons, small snippets of faux fur or any other extras you desire.

• Sweet sentiments: Use old Scrabble® letter tiles to form a favorite holiday phrase, like "Joy to the World." Glue the tiles together and hang from the tree on a piece of ribbon.

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www.OmahaSteaks.com/excellent07

Benefits to open concept floor plans

The way a home is designed can say a lot of things about it. In fact, many real estate professionals and contractors can determine when a home was built based on the design of its interior. For example, homes with sunken living rooms were likely built sometime in the 1960s and 1970s.

Open concept living rooms are one trend that might one day make people nostalgic for the early 21st century. Many of today's home buyers want homes with open concept floor plans, which can give homes a more spacious feel, perhaps even creating the illusion that a home is bigger than it really is.

Homebuyers who have never before enjoyed open concept floor plans can consider these benefits to these wildly popular layouts.

Entertainment

Many people who live in homes with open concept floor plans cite their convenience when entertaining as one of their biggest assets. In an open concept home, guests don't have to be corralled into a single room in the home. Instead, hosts and their guests can roam freely from room to room because there are no walls dividing common areas. This can make gatherings feel less cramped than in homes with more traditional floor plans.

Safety

The safety of open concept floor plans may be most applicable to parents of young children. Open concept floor plans allow parents to keep an eye on their children while cooking dinner, working from home or tending to other chores around the house. Since there are no walls to divide rooms in open concept homes, parents don't have to wonder what their curious kids are up to because they can see them at all times.

Flexibility

Open concept floor plans give homeowners more flexibility. For example, homes with more traditional floor plans may have designated spaces for dining areas. These spaces don't leave much room to work with and may not be valued by homeowners who don't often host dinners at home. As a result, such rooms may just be wasted square footage. With an open concept floor plan, homeowners have the flexibility to make dining areas as big or small as they see fit and can even adjust the rooms on the fly on those occasions when people are coming over.

Open concept floor plans continue to be popular among homebuyers and might prove to be the most lasting home design trend of the early 21st century.

Many people who live in homes with open concept floor plans cite their convenience when entertaining as one of their biggest assets.

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Krutz Properties is #1 per Capital District MLS for property SOLD in Montgomery County!

014: 26 Center Street, **PALATINE BRIDGE:** This home has been totally remodeled from top to bottom, beautiful hardwood floors **through-out.** Large bedroom into a master bathroom. One full bath on 1st floor and one full bath on 2nd floor. **Two bedrooms on 2nd floor.** A nice space **on the second floor that can be a family room or kids play** area. **Located on a dead end street with a decent size back yard** for the kids to play. **There is a new roof, new furnace and hot water heater, brand new kitchen with granite counter tops.** The house has plenty of natural light. **Asking $134,000**

030: 30 Schultz Street, **CANAJOHARIE:** Home with plenty of room inside and out. If you have a family, there is a nursery school one **block away and the** other schools are all within walking distance. There are three bedrooms on the second floor and possible fourth on the first floor and one full bath and one 1Ž2 bath. The property runs from Schultz Street **to a driveway entrance off of Prospect Street.** There is a large two **car garage and a heated outbuilding that is used as an art studio. A new roof, furnace and hot water heater were installed in the past** year. **Many new windows. Asking $75,000**

507A: 72 Walnut Street, **CANAJOHARIE:** Two story, three bedroom, two full bath home with many nice features. Hardwood floors, large **kitchen with a tin ceiling, formal dining room with a pelt stove.** A master bedroom with a walk-in closet. **Great front porch for morning coffee and a back deck for those evening barbecues overlooking** your private backyard w/fire pit and shed. **Updated furnace, 2 heating units, central air, foam insulation and two driveways.** Laundry on 2nd floor and a full walk-in attic. **Asking $110,000**

MLS201832971: **NEW LISTING!!!** 12 Averill Ave., **ST. JOHNSVILLE: Two-story home** located in the Village of St. Johnsville. Interior home completely re-painted and all new flooring. Dining room, living room and side porch. Three **bedrooms and 1 1/2 baths.** Walking distance to school and stores. **Owner will pay additional 1% bonus to buyers agent, if, under contract within 60 days of listing OR 0.5% if under contract within 90 days of listing. Asking $54,900**

Have you heard?

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www.facebook.com/LeePublicationsRealEstate

Carbon monoxide: Know the hazards

Montgomery County Public Health wants everyone to be warm this winter, but we also want you to be safe while heating your homes during the cold winter months ahead.

Every year, many people get sick or die due to carbon monoxide poisoning from alternate heating sources. Carbon monoxide (CO) is a poisonous gas that can kill you in minutes. It is invisible, tasteless, odorless and non-irritating. Carbon monoxide is produced from burning fuels such as wood, oil, natural gas, propane, gasoline and kerosene.

Carbon monoxide is known as the "silent killer." It can prevent the body from getting oxygen. Symptoms can be flu-like: nausea, headache, dizziness, shortness of breath, sleepiness and weakness. In large amounts, carbon monoxide can cause loss of consciousness, brain damage or death.

Public Health suggests these safety tips to help prevent carbon monoxide poisoning:

• Make sure fuel-burning appliances are properly installed, operated and serviced by qualified technicians according to the manufacturer's instructions and local building codes.

• Properly vent all fuel-burning appliances to the outside of the house and make sure the vents are not covered with snow, tarps or other items.

• Consider buying a vented space heater when replacing an unvented one.

• Never use a portable generator, gas or charcoal grill or portable fuel-burning camping equipment inside a home, building or shed.

• Open the fireplace damper before lighting a fire and don't close it until the ashes are cool.

• Move your idling car or truck outside the garage to warm up.

• Never use gas appliances, such as stoves, ovens or clothes dryers, to heat your home.

Working carbon monoxide detector alarms provide you and your family with warning signals and critical time to escape your house in case of a carbon monoxide incident. Place carbon monoxide alarms in a central location outside each sleeping area and on every level of your home. Test all alarms every month to make sure they are working properly.

If you suspect carbon monoxide poisoning:

• Open all windows and doors.

• Get out of the building and into fresh air.

• Call the fire department from outside the building.

• Call the gas company from outside the building.

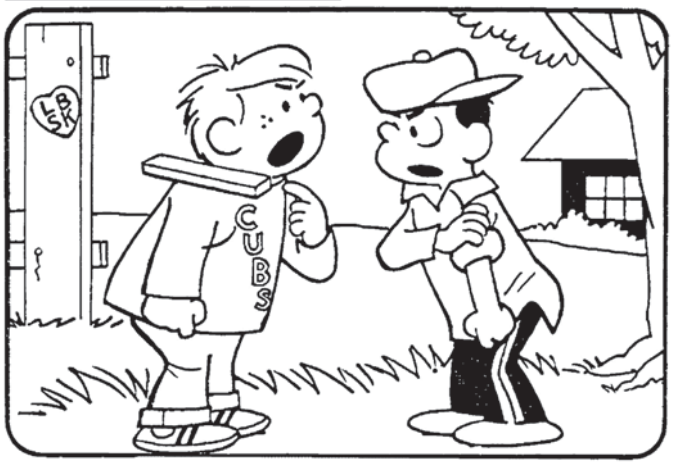
• Call 911 if you or someone else is experiencing symptoms, or take the ill person to the emergency room. Tell the physician you suspect carbon monoxide poisoning.

Have a carbon monoxide detector to give you all the security you need to be safe. Preventing the problem is better than relying on an alarm.

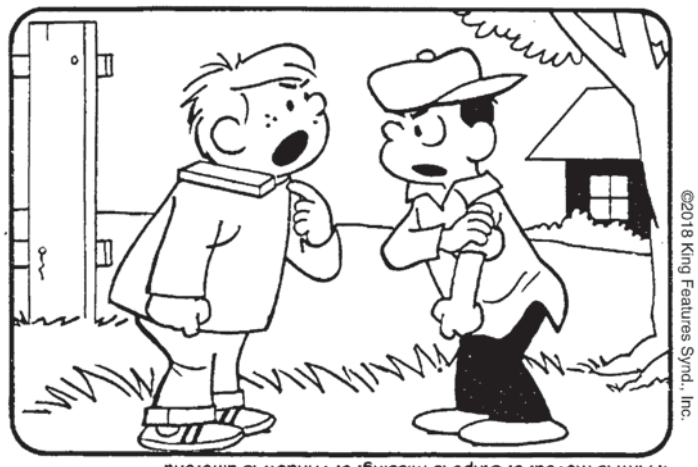
For more information contact Montgomery County Public Health at 518.853.3531, Monday - Friday from 8:30 a.m. – 4 p.m. Like us on Facebook at Montgomery County – NY.

HOCUS-FOCUS

BY HENRY BOLTINOFF



Find at least six differences in details between panels.



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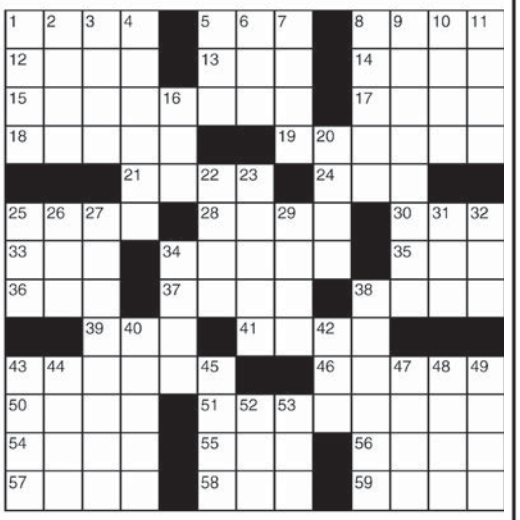
Differences: 1. Heart is missing. 2. Block is shorter. 3. Team name is missing. 4. Arm is moved. 5. Stripe is missing. 6. Window is different.

King Crossword



ACROSS

1 Nitwit
5 High-arc shot
8 Book after the Gospels
12 Rainbow
13 Ram's mate
14 Exceptional
15 Team leaders
17 Skewer
18 Massage
19 However
21 Frog's cousin
24 Business abbr.
25 Rate of speed
28 Part of a Batman costume
30 Height of fashion?
33 "Born in the —"
34 Gem
35 "— Got a Secret"
36 Recipe meas.
37 Addict
38 From the start
39 America's uncle
41 Lascivious
43 Jane Goodall's topic
46 Thesaurus compiler
50 Leak out slowly
51 South American rodent
54 Ready for customers
55 Beerlike beverage
56 Satan's forte
57 Pirate William
58 Gasoline stat
59 Hunt for

DOWN

1 Clark or Cavett
2 Algerian port
3 Prop for Sherlock
4 Will subject
5 Hawaiian garland
6 Possess
7 Above all others
8 Firebug's crime
9 Type of monkey
10 Advanced math
11 Adam's third son
16 Commotion
20 Any of Rome's seven
22 High pair
23 Wooden pin
25 Deposit
26 Donkey
27 Overturned
29 Existed
31 11-Down's mom
32 Kitten's comment
34 Bound
38 Pueblo structures
40 Fix the Constitution
42 Type of humor
43 Diner employee
44 Arizona tribe
45 Con game
47 Donated
48 A Great Lake
49 Chat
52 Matterhorn, e.g.
53 "— o' My Heart"

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Weekly SUDOKU

by Linda Thistle

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

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

DIFFICULTY THIS WEEK: ◆◆◆

◆ Moderate ◆◆ Challenging ◆◆◆ HOO BOY!

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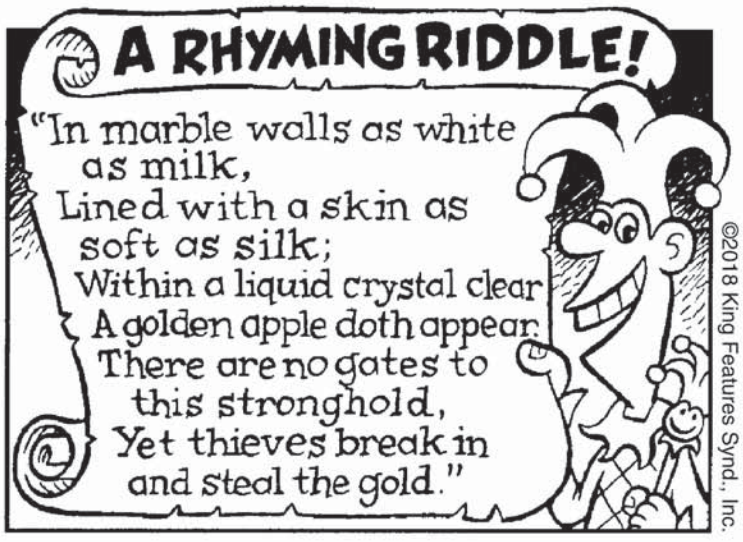

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CAN YOU FIGURE OUT the answer to the Jolly Jester's Rhyming Riddle!

Answer: He's talking about an egg.

CAN YOU EXPLAIN how a baseball pitcher could win a nine-inning game without once pitching to a batter?

Answer: He could if he were a substitute pitcher brought into the game at the top of the ninth inning with the score tied, two outs, and a man on first base. If he then picked the man off at first base, the side would be retired and his team would come to bat. If his team then scored the winning run, in the bottom of the ninth, he would be the winner without ever having pitched to a single batter.

Illustrated by David Coulson

LINK-UPS! Here's a list of 12 short words, divided into two columns. Turn them into six longer words by linking them together. To do this, draw a line from one word in the left column to one word in the right.

1.	JAB	ALE
2.	ERA	OWED
3.	GARB	BED
4.	FIN	END
5.	HALL	SING
6.	LEG	LED

Answers: Jabbed, erasing, finale, garbled, hallowed, legend.

Junior Whirl

by Charles Barry Townsend

1.	L							D
2.		L					D	
3.			L			D		
4.				L	D			
5.				D	L			
6.			D			L		
7.		D					L	
8.	D							L

FIND THE BIG WORDS!

Using the definitions and the anagrams below, you must find the eight eight-letter words that fit into the framework pictured on the left. For each definition, the letters in the two anagram words must be unscrambled and used to form the word asked for.

DEFINITIONS:	ANAGRAM:
1. What the shipbuilder did.	hand + clue
2. Found in toothpaste.	dour + file
3. Used to reckon time.	land + acre
4. A large kettle.	laud + corn
5. Found in newspaper.	nail + heed
6. Campers need them.	orbs + dell
7. Eccentric people.	dabs + doll
8. A wooden interlocking joint.	viol + date

Answers: 1. Launched. 2. Fluoride. 3. Calendar. 4. Cauldron. 5. Headline. 6. Bedrolls. 7. Oddballs. 8. Dovetail.

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108 Tobacco Rd., Oppenheim

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Be Our Guests For Family Night
Sunday, December 2nd 5-7PM
Sunday, December 16th (Christmas at Cornerstone) 4:30-7PM
Our Family Night themes for December will focus around giving.
December 2nd will be Blacklight Night
After a short devotional to start the evening we will be having fun with a variety of games and decorating Christmas cookies. Pizza, beverage and cookies will be served during the evening. Don't miss out on the fun.
December 16th - Christmas at Cornerstone
We will meet at church at 4:30 pm and get instructions for going Christmas caroling in the village of Ames (be sure to dress warm and bring a flashlight.) When we finish caroling there will be snacks and hot chocolate served at the church.
We look forward to having you join us for these events - if you have any questions you may call the church for more information.
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THOUGHT FOR THE WEEK: "Let's Attend Church This Sunday". You and your family are welcome at Grandview Baptist Church, corner of Lydius & Washington St., Ft. Plain, NY. Sunday School 10am. Morning Worship 11am.

ACCESS TRANSPORTATION IS HIRING Part Time Wheelchair Van Drivers. 20-30 hours per week. CDL-C required or able to obtain (training provided). Apply IN PERSON with copies of license and current DMV driving abstract at 16 River St. Fort Plain. NO PHONE CALLS

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RAFFLE TICKETS: 500- $60, 1,000-$75, 1,500-$90, 2,000-$100. Other quantities available. Call Lee Newspapers Inc. at 518-673-0101 or email commercialprint@leepub.com

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WE HAVE! Timberwolf log splitters. Call for pricing + models available. North Creek Auto 315-866-3698

PACA GARDENS has Gift Certificates available in any amount. If you are not sure what to buy, you can't go wrong with a Gift Certificate. Everyone loves Alpaca clothing. Paca Gardens, 27 West Main St., Little Falls, NY 13365. 315-823-1100 M-F 10-5, Sat 10-4.

FOR SALE – 2009 HHR Nice car, low price, 75,000 miles, w/NYS inspection. Sale price $4,500- Call or stop in to Sitterly's, 7826 St Hwy 5, St. Johnsville, 13452 518-568-2416

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Good Housekeeping

Cod and Vegetable Saute

This colorful fish saute is tasty and low-carb. Serve with brown rice to round out the meal.

1 pound cod fillets
2 small (about 6 ounces each) zucchini
2 medium red peppers
1 large onion
1/2 pound large mushrooms
Salad oil
Salt

1. Cut cod, zucchini and red peppers into 1 1/2-inch chunks. Slice onion; cut each mushroom in half.

2. In nonstick 12-inch skillet over medium-high heat, in 2 tablespoons hot salad oil, cook cod fillets with 1/4 teaspoon salt until browned on both sides and fish flakes easily when tested with a fork. Remove from skillet; keep warm.

3. In same skillet in 2 more tablespoons hot salad oil, cook vegetables and 1/2 teaspoon salt until vegetables are tender-crisp and lightly browned. Stir in 1/4 cup water; heat through. Spoon vegetable mixture onto platter; carefully tuck in cod. Garnish with parsley sprigs if you like. Serves 4.

* Each serving: About 265 calories, 15g total fat, 49mg cholesterol, 465mg sodium.

For thousands of triple-tested recipes, visit our website at www.goodhousekeeping.com/recipes/.

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Senior News Line

by Matilda Charles

Social Security increase for 2019

The news is in. We now know how much our Social Security benefit will increase for 2019. It's going to be a seemingly large 2.8 percent, the biggest since 2012. For the average person now receiving $1,422 per month, that means a $39 increase to $1,461 after the COLA kicks in, which is what the financial gurus have been predicting.

Medicare Part B premium is going up from $134 per month to $135.50. If your individual income ranges from $85,000 to $107,000, your premium will be $189.60.

There are a few other changes as well. Taxable earnings for those still working will go up from $128,400 annually to $132,900. For those who retire during the year, the maximum income exemption will rise from $45,360 to $46,920.

The Senior Citizens League (seniorsleague.org) did a study with frustrating results. Since 2000, our benefits have gone up 46 percent, but our expenses have gone up 96 percent. Real estate taxes up 129 percent, heating oil up 181 percent, out-of-pocket drug costs up 188 percent. For every $100 worth of groceries we could buy in 2000, today we can only buy $66 in groceries. It's no wonder we don't dance for joy when we get a Social Security benefit increase. We're struggling to just keep up with rising costs.

Something to be considered: There's a significant difference between the Social Security benefit you get if you quit working at your full retirement age (depends on your year of birth) and if you wait until you're 70 years old. If you're still working now, you need to ask yourself if you want to keep working a few more years. Investigate thoroughly, because there are compelling reasons on both sides of the question.

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Strange but True

by Samantha Weaver

• It was civil-rights leader Martin Luther King Jr. who made the following sage observation: "Nothing in the world is more dangerous than sincere ignorance and conscientious stupidity."

• Everyone knows that a sophomore is someone in his or her second year of high school or college. Most people don't realize, though, that the word is derived from the Greek words "sophos," which means "wise," and "moros," which means "stupid."

• Have you ever tried to hum while holding your nose? It can't be done.

• The creator of the ubiquitous smiley face earned a grand total of $45 for his creative effort.

• If you're a pet owner, you probably know that the epidemic of obesity is not limited to humans; many pets are overweight, too. You might be surprised to learn, though, that some pet owners choose to deal with the problem in a way that we usually associate only with people: liposuction. Yes, you can get cosmetic surgery for your pets.

• If you hear the word "Bilbo" you might think of a famously adventurous hobbit, but a bilbo is also a finely tempered Spanish sword.

• A recent study by scientist Karl Berg suggests that an adult green-rumped parrotlet, a tiny bird native to Venezuela, will "name" its babies, assigning each a particular series of peeps to identify it. Not only that, other parrotlets then learn to associate that exact series of peeps with that particular bird, and actually use the sounds to get that bird's attention.

Thought for the Day: "Life is not a spectacle or a feast; it is a predicament." — George Santayana

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

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Answers

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C	A	P	T	A	I	N	S	■	S	P	I	T
K	N	E	A	D	■	■	T	H	O	U	G	H
■	■	■	T	O	A	D	■	I	N	C	■	■
P	A	C	E	■	C	O	W	L	■	H	E	M
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Just Like Cats & Dogs by Dave T. Phipps

"Whenever it is a damp, drizzly November in my soul, I shall recall the memory of warm, sunny, late summer afternoons like this one, and be comforted greatly."

- Peggy Toney Horton

Donna's Day: Creative family fun

by Donna Erickson

Make fall haystack cookies with kids

We were sitting around the dinner table recently commenting about fall and how much our family loves this time of year. When it came to specifics, we blurted out favorites like football, jumping in raked leaves, crispy apples at the farmers market and cooler evenings sleeping under comforters with the window still open. Then a friend who grew up in Indiana chimed in, "Don't forget haystacks!"

If you are a city dweller, you probably don't think of haystacks when images of fall come to mind. But take a leisurely autumn drive into the countryside, and you'll no doubt see haystacks of all shapes and sizes lined up in the farm fields, mile after mile.

Haystacks have been part of our culture for ages. Young children recite the charming rhyme about "Little Boy Blue" who fell fast asleep under a haystack; French impressionist Claude Monet painted a memorable series of haystacks; and there's the old expression "It's like finding a needle in a haystack" that comes up in moments of frustration. Now you and your kids can make your own Haystack Cookies in your kitchen in three easy steps to celebrate this harvest season.

Haystack Cookies

1/4 cup light corn syrup
1/4 cup honey
1/2 cup peanut butter
1 teaspoon vanilla extract
1 cup cornflakes cereal
1 cup chow mein noodles
1/2 cup chocolate chips

Here's the fun:

1. Let the kids measure and stir together the corn syrup, honey and peanut butter in a medium saucepan. An adult should take over and bring the mixture to a boil. Remove from heat and stir in vanilla.

2. Meanwhile, kids can measure and mix the cornflakes, chow mein noodles and chocolate chips in a large mixing bowl. An adult should pour the melted peanut butter mixture over the dry ingredients. Stir lightly until completely coated.

3. When cool to the touch, let kids drop the mixture by heaping tablespoons onto a foil-covered baking sheet. Form each one into a haystack shape. Cool in refrigerator until firm. Makes approximately 24 haystacks, depending on the size you create.

Note: These cookies freeze well.

Tip: Take a walk with your child or grandchild and look upward for nests tucked in bare tree branches. When you return, prepare this recipe, replacing the cornflakes with more chow mein noodles, for a total of 2 cups. Shape the cookies into bird's nests instead of haystacks.

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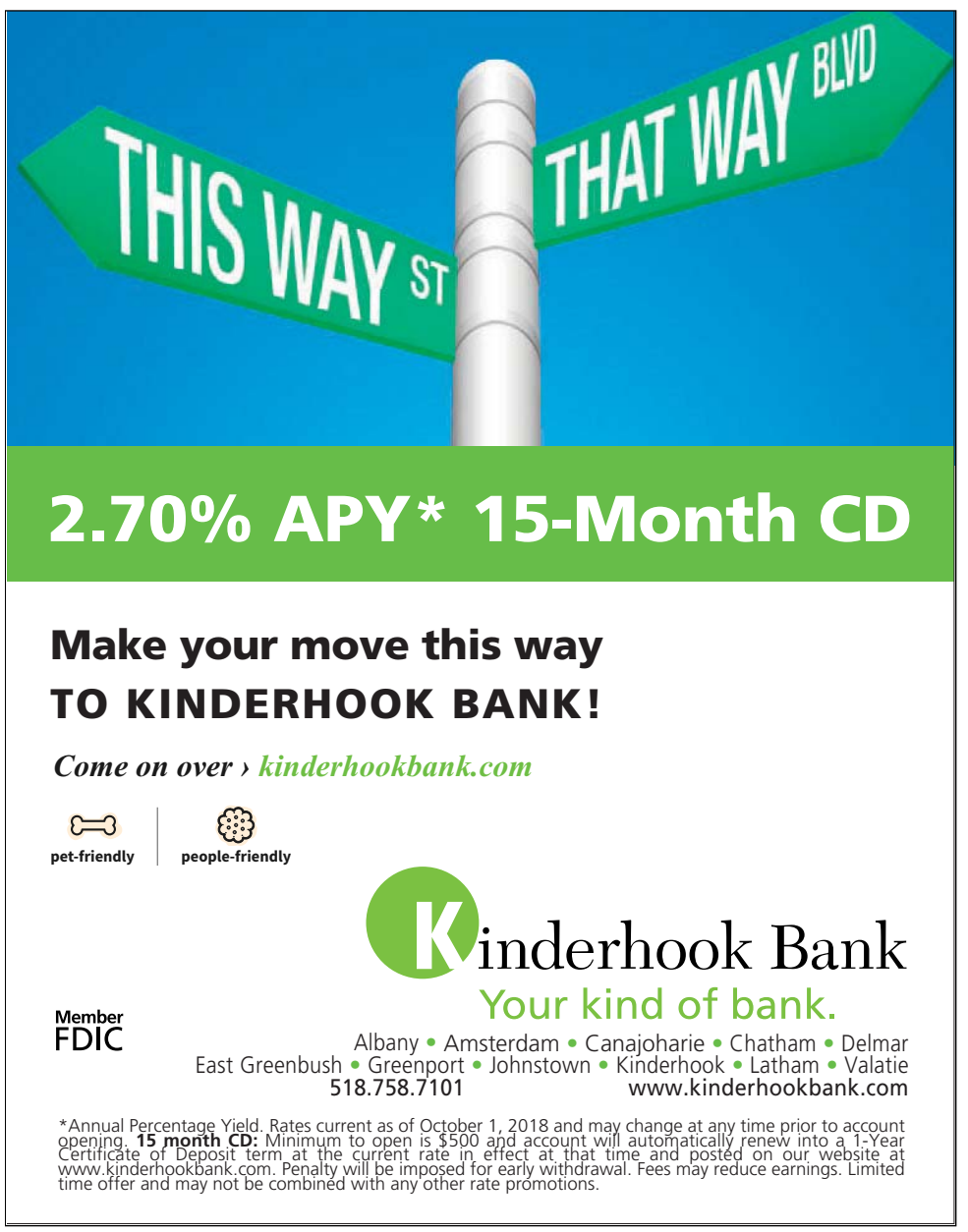
Now you and your kids can make your own Haystack Cookies in your kitchen in three easy steps to celebrate this harvest season.



Did you know?

Improved performance and reliability has increased the life expectancy of many vehicles. As a result, many drivers are keeping their cars and trucks in excess of 10 years. According to an IHS Markit study, the average age of vehicles in the United States is a record 11.6 years, with the average length of ownership at 79.3 months, or nearly seven years. Even after an owner has relinquished his or her new vehicle, that used car or truck can go on to provide many more years of utility for its next owner.

Certain models top the charts among the longest kept vehicles, according to iSeeCars, an automotive industry group. These include the Toyota 4Runner, Chevrolet Corvette, Mercedes-Benz SLK, Porsche Boxster, and the Toyota Land Cruiser, which is the longest kept vehicle and also is the automaker's longest-running SUV. This vehicle is held onto for an average 10.6 years after being bought new.

To hold on to their vehicles as long as possible, drivers should follow maintenance schedules, keep their cars and trucks clean and make repairs promptly. When it comes time to get a new vehicle, upkeep can go a long way toward improving resale value or getting back more on trade-ins.

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Four insurance myths and misconceptions dispelled

(BPT) – There are several myths and misconceptions that exist when it comes to insurance. For example, true or false? It costs more to insure red cars.

The answer is false. Car color has no impact on insurance premiums; however, factors like your driving history, annual mileage driven, the cost of your vehicle and other things will affect how much you'll pay for insurance.

Insurance is one of the most useful investments you can make to help safeguard your belongings and financial assets, but it's important to know what you're purchasing. Here are four things you should know about auto, homeowners or renters insurance policies to ensure adequate protection in the event of an unforeseen or unexpected loss.

1. Myth: Auto insurance covers all vehicle-related issues.

Most states require drivers to carry auto liability insurance. This coverage provides financial protection if you're found to be legally responsible for causing injury to another person or their property. It doesn't cover damage to your vehicle, however, or items stolen from your vehicle, or damage from a storm or vandalism.

Collision insurance covers you while your vehicle is in motion and you crash into another vehicle or with a fixed object, like a pothole, guardrail or light post. This coverage is typically required by a lender when you finance a vehicle.

Comprehensive insurance is coverage that protects your vehicle when it is damaged while not in motion. Examples of this could include vandalism, theft or an act of Mother Nature like a hailstorm or fire.

"When financing a vehicle, the lender may require you to carry this coverage until it is paid off. If your vehicle is older, however, and it has been completely paid off then comprehensive insurance may not be the right coverage because a vehicle's value decreases with age. Consider whether the savings of not having comprehensive insurance are enough to offset the risk of potentially having a large repair or replacement bill," says Kevin Quinn, vice president of auto claims at Mercury Insurance.

2. Misconception: Homeowners insurance protects against damage from all natural disasters.

Homeowners insurance covers losses or damages to your house and personal belongings in the event of a fire, sudden flooding caused by a broken pipe, theft and even objects falling from the sky like airplane debris. It also provides liability coverage if visitors suffer injuries on your property, and it can extend to events off the premises as well like if personal property is stolen from your vehicle.

"Generally speaking, homeowners insurance is designed to help you rebuild your home and replace personal property if it is damaged or stolen," says Christopher O'Rourke, vice president of property claims at Mercury Insurance. "However, you may need to purchase a separate flood insurance policy to protect your home from floods, because these events are usually not covered by a homeowners policy."

Homeowners should contact the National Flood Insurance Program to inquire about coverage for floods, rising tides or storm surges.

3. Myth: Renters insurance is unnecessary.

Renters insurance is very affordable; however, only 41 percent of renters purchase it. And without renters insurance, you'll have to pay out of pocket if your personal belongings are damaged in a fire or are stolen.

"Unfortunately, your landlord's insurance policy will not cover any of your personal belongings and it won't provide liability protection if a lawsuit is brought against you because a visitor slips, falls and injures themselves inside your rental unit," says O'Rourke. "Renters may not be responsible for repairing the home they live in, but there's always a chance their possessions and valuables will need to be replaced if they are damaged or stolen, so purchasing a renters insurance policy is a smart way to provide financial security."

4. Misconception: Your auto insurance policy provides coverage whenever you are driving your vehicle.

A personal auto insurance policy protects drivers in case they're involved in a collision. However, there are certain situations where more coverage is needed.

"With the advent of the gig-economy, many people are turning to ride-hailing jobs, where they can be their own boss and set their own hours," says Quinn. "Without the proper insurance, however, they're putting themselves and others at risk if they get into a collision, because your personal auto policy doesn't cover you when you use your vehicle for commercial purposes. This includes driving for Uber or Lyft, or even pizza delivery."

Insurance is a sound investment, but can be complicated, so it's always a good idea to speak to an insurance agent. These highly trained professionals can provide expert advice and guidance to help ensure you are adequately protected.

Insurance is one of the most useful investments you can make to help safeguard your belongings and financial assets.

The Kitchen Diva

by Angela Shelf Medearis

Get the scoop on winter squash

Winter squash are prominently displayed at grocery stores in the fall and winter months, but many shoppers pass them by because they don't know what to do with them. Winter squash are easy to prepare and are a healthy addition to any meal.

The Cucurbitaceae family is the Latin name for gourds, pumpkins and squash. The terms Summer and Winter can be deceptive and are based only on current usage, not on actuality. Summer squash is in the market all winter, and Winter squash is available in late summer and fall, as well as winter. This terminology was never meant to confuse – it dates to a time when the seasons were more crucial to man's survival. Vegetables that would keep until December became known as winter vegetables.

Winter squash are picked when they are fully mature, and they have a thick, inedible skin. This thick skin provides a protective covering for the squash and allows for a long storage life. Winter squash can be stored for three months or longer in a cool, dry place, preferably in a single layer.

Every part of the squash plant can be eaten, including the leaves and tender shoots, which can be cooked in omelets or made into soup. Winter squash are a good source of vitamins A and C, potassium and fiber. One-half cup of cooked winter squash has only 40 calories.

Winter squash comes in shapes round and elongated, scalloped and pear-shaped, with flesh that ranges from golden-yellow to brilliant orange. Most winter squashes are vine-type plants whose fruits are harvested when fully mature. They take longer to mature than summer squash (three months or more) and are best harvested once the cool weather of fall sets in.

Some of the most popular types of winter squash are butternut, spaghetti, acorn squash and delicata.

Butternut squash is tan in color and has a long, bell-like shape. Spaghetti squash is oblong or oval in shape and yellow in color.

Acorn squash is actually shaped like an acorn. It is dark green in color and has a ridged rind or skin. Delicata squash is oblong, ridged, yellow and green. The skin is soft and edible.

When shopping, look for squash that are heavy for their size, free of soft spots and have a dull sheen (a shiny skin is an indicator the squash is not fully mature).

All winter squash bakes well. Cut the squash in two (be sure to use a sharp, heavy-duty knife if the squash has a hard shell), scoop out the seeds and brush the cut surface with oil. Place cut side down in a baking dish with 1/4 cup of water. Bake uncovered at 350°F until the flesh is soft.

Once butternut or acorn squash is cooked and cooled, it can be peeled away from the skin, cut into cubes, and used in soups, stews and casseroles along with other vegetables. Butternut or acorn squash can be used interchangeably in recipes.

Spaghetti squash is the exception. Once cooked, use a fork to peel the flesh away from the skin. It looks just like spaghetti as it peels away. You can serve it with any type of pasta sauce, in the same way you would serve spaghetti noodles.

Delicata squash is the easiest squash to prep and cook because of its soft, edible skin. It contains seeds in the center, but they can easily be removed by scraping them out with a spoon. This delicious recipe for Maple-Garlic Delicata Squash Oven Fries is a wonderful side dish on a cold winter's day!

Maple-Garlic Delicata Squash Oven Fries

1 large or 2 small delicata squash

2 tablespoons extra-virgin olive oil

1 tablespoon pure maple syrup or agave syrup

1 garlic clove, crushed or minced

1 teaspoon sea salt

1. Heat oven to 375°F and line a large rimmed baking sheet with parchment paper or foil. Place the pan in the oven to provide even roasting on the top and bottom of the squash.

2. Cut the ends off the delicata squash, halve it lengthwise, scrape the seeds out (using a small spoon) and slice each half into thin half-moons.

3. Combine the olive oil, maple syrup, garlic and 1/2 teaspoon of the salt in a medium-sized mixing bowl, then add the delicata and toss until it is evenly coated with the oil mixture.

4. Remove the hot pan from the oven and carefully arrange the squash in a single layer on the lined baking sheet.

5. Roast for about 15 minutes, then stir the squash and rotate the pan. Continue to roast the squash for another 15 minutes until it starts to turn brown and crispy. Sprinkle with the remaining 1/2 teaspoon of salt and serve immediately. Serves 4.

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