



The Country Editor

Just good reading

August 7, 2013

Volume 1 Number 17

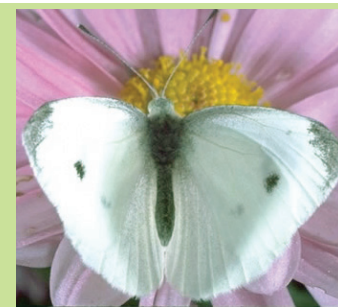


Master Falconer
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Early to bed can take effort at summer's end
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On Six Legs: Cabbage caterpillars loopy chewers
~ Page 11



An amish farmer from Stone Arabia brings the grain in from the field.

Time to thrash the grain in Stone Arabia

by Skip Barshied

None but the older generation of this ancient settlement remember a day and age before the fields of golden grain were harvested with a combine. That is, before our Amish neighbors arrived in 1986. They brought with them the ways that had gradually disappeared here through the years. An everyday history lesson.

To understand the importance of grain in Stone Arabia, we must turn back time to the dawning years of the 18th century when the Palatine Germans first arrived. There is little doubt that Native Americans grew corn here long before the Europeans came. However, we will now discuss the growing of grain, particularly wheat.

History records the growing of wheat in Schoharie soon after the Palatines located there. When these German-speaking people came overland from Schoharie in

1723 or possibly before, the seed for the first crops doubtless came with them. The earlier Holland Dutch settlements of Schenectady and Albany could also provide it.

The tremendous task of felling the trees of the forest and planting the first crops lay before them. In time buildings were erected to house not only the people themselves but also the harvest and the few livestock they would possess. I say few animals because this was long before dairy products, except that used by the family, were needed.

It was a grain growing era. In time the great timber barns now called Dutch Barns would be built to house the grain, and often the barns would be more important to these early farmers than the houses they and their family would reside in. The equipment used to cut the grain went through a transition from the hand reaping sickle, which had its beginning almost before recorded history, to today's

combine. However, that advancement was a back-breaking one. The Flemish or Hainault scythe, sometimes called a sith in America, and its accompanying mat hook doubtless was known to the earliest Stone Arabia settlers. Although those utensils are rare today, enough are found to attest to the fact that many were used here in that early day.

To use the sith and mat hooks while in a bent position must have been greatly fatiguing. The sith was wielded with the right hand while the mat hook in the left hand caught and drew the standing grain within reach of the blade; the grain was cut off in a deft sweep and toss of the hook, then thrown into a swath. The grain was bound into bundles or sheaves for transport to the barn. This hand binding process was to continue on into the days of the horse drawn reaper. Later the

See Stone Arabia page 3

Family Road Trip – then and now

by Al Dorantes

Much of America will, at some point, pack their cars and venture out onto the highways and byways on a family road trip. It might be to an amusement park or a national park or even a historic monument. Approximately 31.2 million Americans plan to drive to their destinations, according to AAA. The average distance traveled will be 690 miles, up from 642 a year earlier.

The packing the car for a family road trip usually falls on dad's shoulders. He'll rely in skills passed down from his father before as he crams every usable inch of space with cargo. His high score on Tetris will finally be of use as he crams the cargo hold full of everything that could possibly be needed on the trip.

Navigation is another task that dad will rarely trust to anyone but himself. In the olden days a Rand McNally road atlas would be spread out on the kitchen

table. The night before the big trip dad would map out the best, fastest route. Now we have MapQuest or Google Maps. Most modern cars are now equipped with GPS. You can even pick the voice and accent to nag you about making a left turn in 250 yards. Either way, dad won't stop for directions. Recalculating!

Gone are the days of the family restaurant, the greasy spoon, or the Bob's Big Boy. The interstates are populated with convenience stores with names like Nice & Easy, Fasttrack, GetGo or Sheetz. Some of these convenience stores, modern day trading posts, even have small franchise restaurants attached; Subway, McDonalds and others. You can get everything from soda, ice cream, and microwaveable burritos to cigarettes, beer, and magazines. And off course, Gasoline.

For those of us born before the new millennium, we had games like I spy or the license plate



Every usable inch of space of the family vehicle is crammed with cargo.

game as our in car entertainment. Today, kids pack along more electronic devices with more calculating power than the Apollo 11 capsule. They have iPods, iPads, iPhones, and tablets to entertain themselves with. No more sing-alongs; kids have their own music pumped directly to their ear drums via ear

buds or giant headphones. If we were lucky, dear old dad would let us pick the radio station. More than likely we were stuck with whatever FM station dad chose. The glow of the dashboard light has been replaced by the illumination of the electronic gadget.

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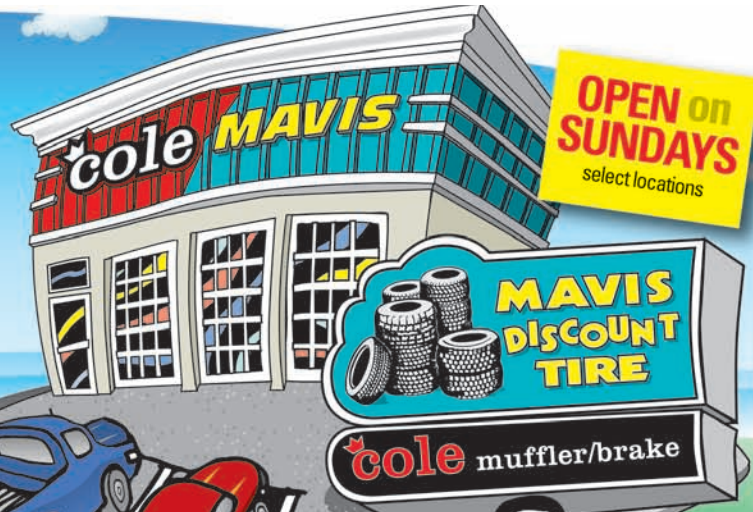
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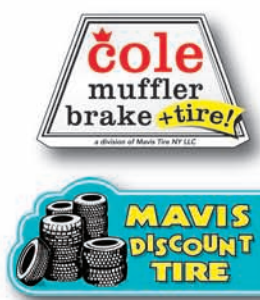
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Stone Arabia thrashers waiting for the grain with their steam engine in the early 1900s.

Photo provided by Skip Barshied

Stone Arabia from 1

binder that not only cut the grain, but tied it into sheaves or bundles, came onto the scene. That is what is still being used by the Amish.

One of the important innovations for the cutting of grain was the grain cradle. Just when or where this welcome advancement was produced is not certain. It appears to have been used in New England before finding its way to the Mohawk Valley. It is quite probable that the grain cradle became popular when New England people started coming here in the late 1700s. The grain cradle is a cumbersome-looking implement. However it was used for many years and allowed the user to at least partially stand erect. The wooden fingers gathered the cut grain so it could be deposited on the ground in a position where those who followed could easier tie the bundles. However the grain was cut and bound, the bundles were set up in groups in the field to dry. One bundle was laid on top of those standing to help shed the rain. When we see fields of set up bundles of grain waiting to be thrashed, some of us think they are a beautiful sight. A sign of a bountiful harvest.

For the story of thrashing, we must also reach back through the centuries from today's combine. One wonders

what our 18th century ancestors would have thought if they could see one of those huge mechanical monsters at work. In those early days, the bundles of grain were drawn to the barn and cast overhead to dry. When they thought the grain was just right, the bundles were dropped to the thrashing floor and opened. The kernels of grain were separated from the straw by being struck over and over with a flail or by being trod on by the feet of draft animals. Then the doors from each gable end of the barn were opened to let the wind blow across the thrashing floor and aid the removal of the chaff and dust. The grain was tossed into the air by using a blanket or a winnowing basket, if one was available.

The path to the invention and development of a usable thrashing machine was long and complicated. The farmers of the mid-to-late 1800s wanted and received the machines that could not only remove and clean the grain but also blow the straw into the straw mow in the barn for use as bedding for the cattle. Thrashing machines were made by many manufacturers, including the Williams Grain Thrashers made at St. Johnsville, NY during the late 1800s and into the mid 1900s. Several farm-



A horse-drawn reaper, early ancestor of today's combine, cuts grain in a field outside of Palatine Bridge, NY.

Photo by Joan Kark-Wren

ers bonded together to own a machine, as the Amish still do today.

A Day of Destruction at Stone Arabia

We have followed the story of Stone Arabia grains. However, there was a chapter of the story from long ago that was disastrous. It has been said that an army travels on its stomach. In the late 1770s and early 80s that army would have been that of General George Washington in its struggle to separate from Great Britain and create the United States of America.

Stone Arabia grain helped to sustain that army. The area was part of that called the Breadbasket of the American Revolution. Fifty years of hard work had turned the area into a

prosperous one. On Oct. 19, 1780, Crown forces attacked Stone Arabia in an effort to destroy the recently harvested crop and those that would follow into coming years. The homes, barns, cattle and equipment were put to the torch. By the evening of that fateful day, American Colonel John Brown and some 40 of his defenders of the Stone Arabia settlement lay dead in a field where grain had for years cast its golden shadow over the land. Little remained of the settlement besides the determination to rebuild and push forward to a future that would know the progression from reaping sickle to sith, then to grain cradle, and finally to thrashing machines and onward to today's combines, as each in turn harvested Stone Arabia Grain.



After the grain is cut and bound, the bundles are set up in groups in the field to dry. One bundle is laid on top of those standing to help shed the rain.



A mat hook and sith propped against an early Dutch barn. This form of harvesting grain required the farmer to work bent over, doubtless a fatiguing exercise.

Photos by Emily Enger

Master Falconer

by Laura Rodley

A connection with a peregrine falcon that is so powerful that he will hunt for you. That's what people of the Old World 4000 years ago had, when trained falcons and hawks helped provide food for families, delineated by class. While people no longer rely on falcons or hawks to provide food for them, that connection still resonates for Chris Davis, Master Falconer, breeder, founder and director of New England Falconry in Hadley, MA.

He is the first person licensed in the U.S. to provide hands-on educational experiences with falcons to the general public.

He is quick to point out that he does not apply names to his peregrine, nor 14 Harris' Hawks he utilizes in educational work, referring to them only by the last couple of numbers on their leg bands, making it clear that they are not pets, and respecting the fact that they are wild.

His interest stems back to his youth, supported by his parents. "Here in the U.S., when anyone want to be a falconer, they must have a written exam, have facilities inspected and an apprenticeship for two years," said Chris. He completed his apprenticeship in New York state, receiving his falconer license in 1979.

A falconer must trap his or her first bird from the wild to use, a young bird open to training. The bird

can be kept, or released back into the wild. "Removing a bird from wild has no effect on wild population," he said. There are 4000 falconers in the U.S. that keep close tabs on each other. Twelve of his 14 hawks, used only in educational work, he bred and raised.

Training includes "manning the bird," getting it used to cars, people, environment. Locating bells are attached to their legs. They learn whistles and that the gloved hand held up means food.

He uses his peregrine in other activities, such as bird abatement from buildings. Using peregrines in scaring off birds in vineyards or airports is more typical, he notes. He chooses not to utilize his peregrine at airports, since it requires a lot of time on site.

During the hands-on session in his quiet backyard training facility, he covers the history of falconry, and its evolution, prompting participants to look at their belief systems relating to birds of prey. "Some people have ideas about wildlife influenced by things through their life, anthropomorphizing their relationships with animals," he said.

Raptors have a long history of being a very powerful symbol, with origins in Mongolia.

"Falconry dominated the feudal system. Owning one was a status symbol, position of power," he said. Aristocracy determined rules about what types of bird people were allowed.

When North America was settled, it was the post heyday of falconry, here and in Europe. With inventions of firearms, people no longer needed to rely on them. "The belief was, conquer the new world, and the native people, and no thought of falconry," he said.

Due to this reversal and lack of reverence, "For many years, it was perfectly acceptable to shoot any hawk or raptor you saw," he said, whether it was stealing your chickens or not.

Then DDT's effects on calcium in peregrine eggs, thinning shells so chicks could not hatch, woke peo-



Chris Davis, holds his 13 year old male Harris's hawk during an educational demonstration at his training facility in Hadley, MA.

Photos by Laura Rodley

ple up. Chris teaches the public about hawks to further conservation.

Earning another status symbol by default, "Peregrine falcons became the first species emblematic of the endangered species movement, led the way in release of young birds. State and federal falconers led the way in breeding, developed techniques, becoming a modern conservation success story, brought a lot of the attention onto them in the 1960s and 1970s." In 1999, peregrines were taken off the Federal endangered species act.

This day, a couple from Topsfield, Joe and Brenda Darisse experience the intense rapture and delight as a Harris' Hawk lights on their gloved hand, a culmination of a long-time wish, one perhaps ingrained by our ancestors in the Old World. The hawks do not need to bring us rabbits, only joy.



| The Harris' hawk descends.

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John Snyder, Sales Manager
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Brenda Darisse of Topsfield, MA watches a Harris' Hawk eat some ground beef from her gloved hand.

Road Trip from page 1

Eventually, the GPS will chirp, "You've arrived at your destination on the left," in its cheerful electronic voice. You'll park (\$15/day at Disney World), shuffle to the ticket window where you'll fork over more hard earned money (\$95 for a one day pass to the Magic Kingdom), and enjoy the fun of the park. That is if you can stay awake. Before you know it, lunch time has arrived and more money is handed over to the kid serving up the portion controlled fast food.

And then it's on to the souvenir stand. Twenty years ago a 10 dollar tee-shirt or a key chain would have sufficed as reminders of the trip. Sure, they have hats, tee-shirts, and key chains but they have much more. There are pins, luggage, car accessories and more. Some amusement parks even have a home décor section. Helpful hint: buy your souvenirs on the way out. That way you don't have to lug them around the whole park. Or lose them.

Now, after a long day (or days) at the amusement park, camp ground, or historic monument it's time to pack the car for the journey home. Vacation is supposed to be a break from stress. Sometimes we forget

that. Take a moment and look in the rearview mirror. The kids may be totally engrossed in their electronics but, they're along for the ride. They're soaking up the adventure like a sponge. In 20 years they'll say, "Remember that horrible lunch we had at the Waffle-hut? Still one of the best lunches ever!" It's the memories that count. God speed, on your family road trip, may the memories pile up like luggage on your roof rack.





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Take steps to prevent skin cancer

by Gail Lapierre, Vermont AgrAbility Project Outreach Specialist, University of Vermont Extension

Did you know that one in five Americans is expected to develop a form of skin cancer in his or her lifetime, making this the most common form of cancer in the U.S.?

These are not very good odds, but there are simple ways to reduce your risk. The easiest way is to keep your skin covered. If you are going to be outside, wear long sleeves, long pants, a wide-brimmed hat, sunglasses, shoes and socks.

Okay, you're probably thinking that it's often too hot to wear the long sleeves and pants. You should at least wear the

wide-brimmed hat and sunglasses. In addition to the sun protection they provide, the hat will keep you cooler and the sunglasses make being in the sun more comfortable. Besides, squinting without sunglasses causes wrinkles, and who needs more of those?

For added protection, especially if you are fair-skinned, consider sun-protective or UV-protective clothing. Some outdoor clothing manufacturers sell lightweight pants and shirts, hats and other apparel with a UPF or Ultraviolet Protection Factor (UPF) of 15 to 50-plus that help block out harmful rays.

You also need to apply sunscreen every day,

even cloudy days, when you are going to be outside, reapplying every two hours to any skin that is not covered with clothing. Use a water-resistant, broad-spectrum sunscreen that protects against both ultraviolet A (UVA) and ultraviolet B (UVB) rays and has a SPF or Sun Protection Factor of at least 30. If you have sunscreen that is more than three years old, replace it.

Many people don't use enough sunscreen or else fail to reapply it during the day. You will need to use at least one ounce to cover all your exposed skin. Rub it in well and allow about 20 to 30 minutes after applying for it to soak into your skin

and form a protective layer before you head outside. Sunscreens with titanium dioxide and zinc oxide actives are effective immediately.

Seek shade when outside. The sun's rays are strongest between 10 a.m. and 2 p.m. If your shadow is shorter than you are, try to stay out of the sun.

Are you near water or sand? All these reflect and intensify the damaging rays of the sun as does snow in winter months.

Don't use the excuse of not protecting yourself from the sun because you are seeking vitamin D. You get that through food. Salmon, mackerel, sardines and many other

fish and seafood varieties, as well as dried shiitake mushrooms and eggs, naturally have high levels of vitamin D. Milk and some cereals also are vitamin D-fortified.

Check your skin for signs of skin cancer. Watching for changes to moles and your skin is key to detecting skin cancer in its earliest, most treatable stages. If you see something suspicious, make an appointment with your dermatologist.

Go to the American Academy of Dermatology website at

www.aad.org/spot-skin-cancer/understanding-skin-cancer for more information, including how to perform a skin self-exam. The site also has a body mole map that can be downloaded for tracking changes in your skin.

Enjoy the wonderful sunshine, but do take care of your skin. And to paraphrase Smokey the Bear, remember, only you can prevent skin cancer.



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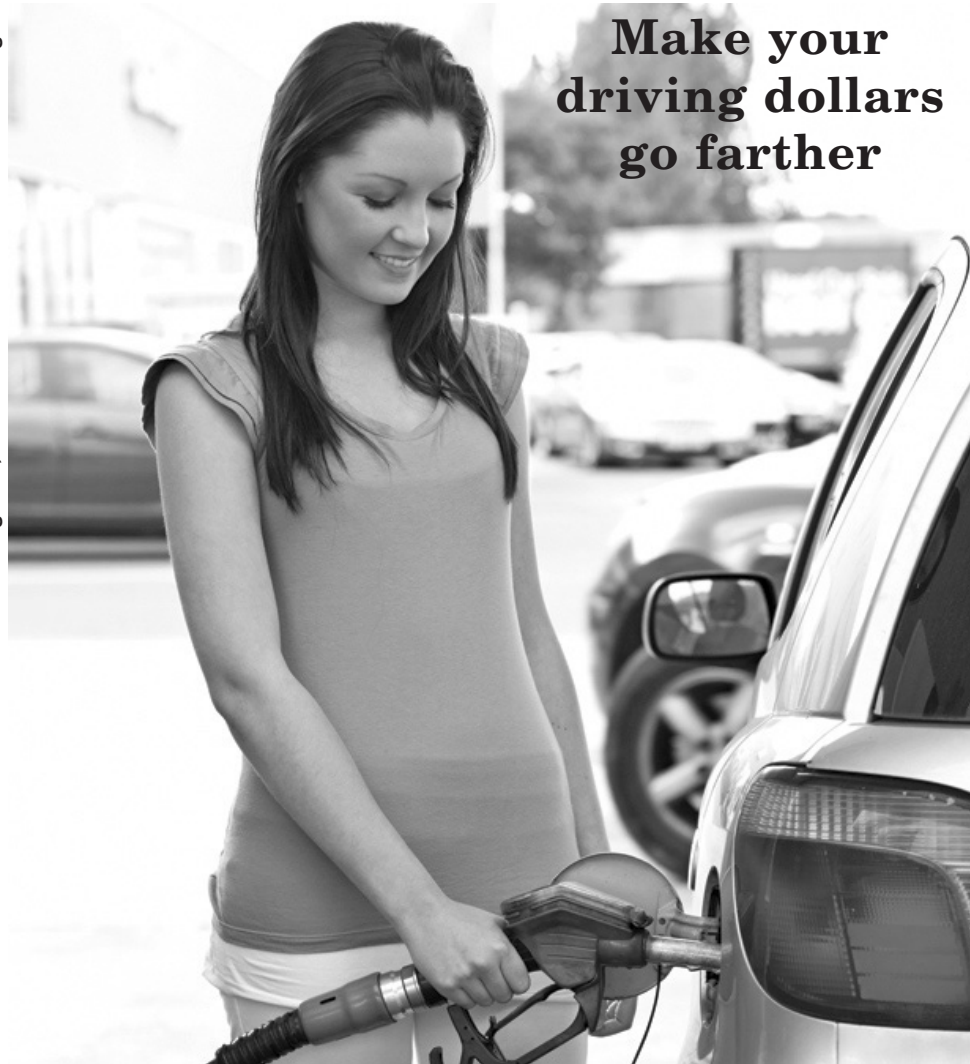
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Automotive

(NAPSA) — From daily commuting to summer road trips, the amount of time we spend driving adds up quickly...and so can travel costs. However, a few good driving habits can help put the brakes on unnecessary spending and get you on the road to savings:

- Watch your speed. A faster trip may be less fuel efficient. When traveling at speeds above 50 mph, gas mileage tends to decrease rapidly.

- Lose weight in your car. Every extra 100 pounds can reduce fuel efficiency by up to 2 percent, so keep your trunk clear of unnecessary items.

- Find gas pumps that pay you back. Some stations, like participating BP stations, allow you to save on future fill-ups.

- Avoid idling. When parked, shut off your engine to save fuel. An idling engine can consume up to a half gallon of fuel per hour.

- Inflate for a smoother ride. Keep your tires at the proper pressure to get up to 3.3 percent better gas mileage.

- Choose quality gasoline. Fill up with a quality fuel, which can help your car get a few more miles per tank when compared to low-detergent gasoline.

- Rack up a more efficient ride. Use a removable roof or bicycle rack and install it only when needed. By avoiding the extra bulk, you'll minimize aerodynamic drag—the air and wind resistance your vehicle must overcome to accelerate and maintain a constant speed.

- Cruise cautiously. Use the cruise control on long stretches of highway driving when it's safe to do so, which can help save fuel by helping your car maintain a steady speed. Driving aggressively by rapid acceleration and braking uses more gas.



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Volunteers: Where Would We Be Without Them?

by Jan Case Andrews

Salutations. Sweet summertime is in full swing as evidenced by the cropping up of roadside stands plump full of local fruits and vegetables.

I love a simple dinner of Bacon, Lettuce and Tomato sandwiches. I actually had the best BLT I have ever eaten the other day and it was by far the best BLT not because of some special ingredient or new fangled Food Network-tweaked recipe. It was the best BLT because it was bought and paid for by my teenage daughter Abigail with proceeds from her own paycheck. I will savor every morsel and remember that BLT for a long time.

Abigail, who favors anything fried or bought from a vendor on wheels

as her favorite summertime food, was able to enjoy a sampling of a few of her summertime favorites when we attended the annual Fourth on the Third celebration held in Fort Plain. We look forward to going every year and have always enjoyed the food, bingo, the ear-shattering booms and the colorful light show from the fireworks, and visiting with friends and neighbors we only get to see occasionally in passing.

This year, I happened to run into a very dear friend of mine from my childhood. I plunked my chair down and caught up with Terri Sousa and her husband, Mark. Mark is the son of a farmer who used to frequent Case's Mill, and Terri worked in the mill office in the mid-to-late 80s, right around high school and college graduation time. (Sorry guys just gave away our ages!!)

We had lots of catching

up to do. I took great delight in hearing about their first grandchild, who of course is the cutest baby ever, while I mused about the trials and tribulations of raising a teenager. After the obligatory rounds of "How is everybody?" we started talking about current events and how the Valley has been subjected to its share of strange happenings — the recent plane crash in the Adirondacks and now the massive flooding in the village and surrounding communities.

Mark and Terri could offer a very clear perspective on the plane crash since it just about happened in their back yard and since Mark is the chief of the Rockwood Garoga Lassellville Volunteer Fire Department. The fire department was actively involved in locating and recovering the crash victims.

I sat there spellbound and in awe of them, posi-

tively convinced I could never muster the courage and fortitude to do what they do. They of course knew the outcome was not going to be good, but they were determined to complete the task. While listening to their story of dogged determination, it occurred to me how awesome these people are, and how lucky the residents of their community are to have them on call.

At the end of the day, these two folks whom I have known for years actually made a huge difference in the lives of others. Strangers they may or may never meet could lay their lost family members to rest, simply because Mark and Terri and the rest of the volunteer squad did what was expected of them and persevered through a terrible tragedy.

Modest as they are, they would scoff and say that is just what they do as volunteers. Well, I think they are not giving themselves enough credit, and I think that is a recurring theme among most volunteers.

It also occurred to me after hearing their heroic tales that I could, and should, do more. I should learn some basic first aid. I should be better prepared so that when there's an emergency I can respond and make a difference. But then I remember when I try to doctor even the tiniest cut, it can make me queasy, so perhaps I'll have to find other substantive ways to get involved.

Luckily, there are many

ways we can all make a difference. This was evidenced recently in Fort Plain when the flood waters caused catastrophic damage to local homes and businesses. People showed up in droves, with buckets, shovels and even horses. The horses carried the Amish, who brought many helping hands to pitch in and lighten some of the burden on our local residents.

They unselfishly gave what they could — strong hands and sturdy backs to shovel and clean. Some of my friends used their connections on Facebook to rally folks and spur them to action. They raised community awareness of the devastation by posting photos, and they made themselves accessible to help gather information and communicate the needs of residents and businesses.

Hopefully, our beloved valley won't soon experience such tragedies as extreme as the plane crash and flood, but we all can rest assured, based on personal experience, that selfless volunteers will always be there to respond if and when these events do occur.

I try to teach Abigail that there are chances every day to make a difference in people's lives. When we come home, we often find our elderly neighbor, a recent widower, alone in his yard, so we take a minute to say hi and ask him how his day is going. That makes him smile, which makes us smile. That is one very small way we can make a difference, and while it is in no way comparable to the acts of volunteers in the Rockwood Garoga

Lassellville Volunteer squad or to the many folks in Fort Plain after the flood, it still achieves the same desired effect and results.

So, a hearty thank you goes out to the many gracious volunteers in and around Fort Plain for forging ahead with plans to hold the Third on the Fourth event. It was important for us to have a brief distraction, spend time with our family and friends during a difficult time, and be reminded of how awesome we are and what a difference we have the potential to make in each other's lives.

Continuing the effort, Lee Publications is proud to sponsor a community fund raising event to assist those in the community who have suffered the loss of property and personal possessions. In the coming weeks, look for information in this publication about this community outreach event, which will be held on Aug. 17, from 9 a.m.-4 p.m., at Lee Publications in Palatine Bridge. The daylong event features a flea market, barbecue, arts and crafts, live music, food and attractions. All proceeds will be used for community outreach activities that support individuals in need of food, clothing and shelter.

If you've been looking to do more to help a community in need, like I have, here's a golden opportunity. I look forward to seeing you there.



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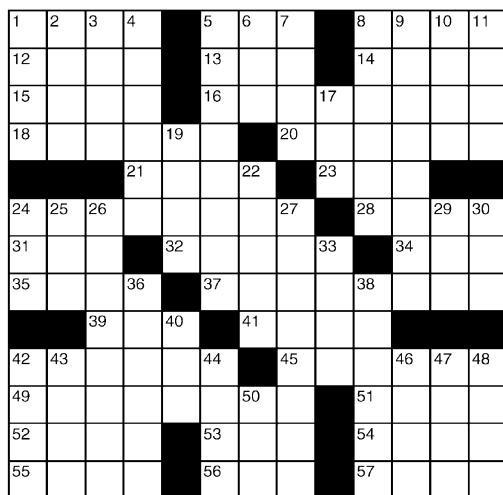
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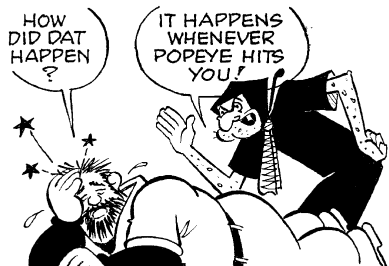
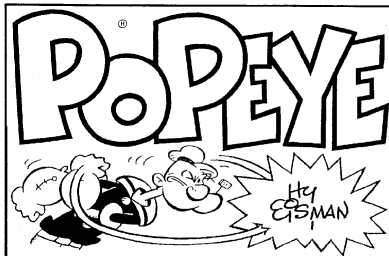
ACROSS

- 1 Gets a glimpse of
- 5 Tree fluid
- 8 One of the Three Bears
- 12 "Gone With the Wind" plantation
- 13 Actress Carrere
- 14 Letter jumble (Abbr.)
- 15 "Yeah, right!"
- 16 Dig
- 18 Soothe
- 20 On an angle
- 21 Tiers
- 23 Homer's interjection
- 24 Rough calculation
- 28 Outlet
- 31 "Humbug!"
- 32 "Top Chef" network
- 34 Cattle call?
- 35 Bjorn of tennis lore
- 37 Weaken
- 39 Anger
- 41 Leg joint
- 42 Party souvenirs
- 45 Standard
- 49 Move to another country
- 51 Crimson



- 2 Tide, for short
- 52 -a-ling
- 53 Auto fuel
- 54 From the beginning
- 55 Nervous
- 56 Tummy muscles
- 57 Camera part
- DOWN
- 1 Impale
- 2 Facility
- 3 Rocker
- 4 Clapton
- 4 Jungle expedition
- 5 Good glasses
- 6 --en-
- 7 Treaty
- 8 "Conditioned reflex" doctor
- 9 Curse
- 10 Cracker spread
- 11 Elderly
- 17 Help
- 19 Bausch's partner
- 22 Reeked
- 24 Recede
- 25 -- Paulo, Brazil
- 26 Prosperous
- 27 Uniformity
- 29 "To be or --"
- 30 Sock part
- 33 Sandwich cookie
- 36 Needing more sleep, maybe
- 38 Oral
- 40 Make a mistake
- 42 Big party
- 43 In the thick of
- 44 Long story
- 46 Horse's neck hair
- 47 Prayer ending
- 48 Legislations
- 50 Bill

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Amber Waves



by Dave T. Phipps

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Solution time: 21 mins.
Answers
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Early to bed can take effort at summer's end

by Melissa Rayworth, Associated Press

Parents, you can already picture those first mornings of the school year: the challenge of dragging cranky kids out of their beds at dawn after two months of mellow summer mornings.

Each year, many of us swear we'll do it differently. We will listen to the experts. We will adjust our children's bedtimes back to a school-year schedule as soon as August arrives. We will work with biology, not against it, by dimming the lights and drawing the curtains in

the evenings. We will remember the power of a good bedtime routine.

It does sound wonderful.

But each year, many families embrace the spontaneity of summer and the long, light evenings, ditching routines and enjoying late nights with the kids. Or maybe we really do try to get them to bed early, but Little League baseball games run late and vacations to other time zones make it impossible.

Then we try to get our kids up early for the first day of school and their

bodies naturally rebel. It's never easy to be "waking up at the time you're biologically ready to be asleep," says Dr. Peter Franzen, child sleep expert and assistant professor of psychiatry at the University of Pittsburgh's Sleep Medicine Institute.

Lack of sleep can affect kids' ability to learn, to remember and to handle emotions, he says.

So here are some tips for getting them back to a sensible bedtime:

Begin adjusting bedtime at least two weeks before classes begin, says family sleep counselor

Dana Obleman, founder of the Sleep Sense system for getting babies and toddlers to sleep well.

"You don't have to jump into going to bed at 7:30 and being really strict," she says. "But do an evaluation of where the bedtime has been falling and move back toward that by about 15 minutes every third night."

For young kids, the most effective routine includes a warm bath and reading a favorite book. Skip television, which has a stimulating effect.

With older children, Obleman suggests having a sit-down meeting two weeks before school begins. Discuss the importance of being rested during the first weeks of school.

Plan a solid bedtime routine together, making sure they understand how much sleep is necessary. Children, from toddlers to adolescents, need 10 to 12 hours of solid nighttime sleep, Obleman says. Teens are likely to need at least 9 hours.

"People say, 'If my child



got eight hours, that's adequate.' And it might be adequate," Obleman says. "But you want to be giving them great, awesome restful sleep at night."

Once you've chosen a

bedtime, agree to turn off electronic screens one hour earlier, because the light from these devices signals our bodies to stay awake, Franzen says.

A regular bedtime routine triggers a child's natural urge to sleep, and also creates treasured memories of quiet moments with mom and dad, notes Lorraine Breffni, director of early childhood at Nova Southeastern University's Mailman Segal Center for Human Development, in Fort Lauderdale, FL.

For adolescents and teens, Breffni says, keep in mind that the time they "go to bed" may not be close to the time they actually fall asleep. So make sure older students understand what time they should actually be asleep.

On the last mornings before school starts, you might even induce the kids to get up early by taking them out to breakfast at their favorite restaurants.

One final step, which can be especially tough on parents: Ideally, the whole family should go to bed early on those final nights. It may be hard to give up the late night hours you're accustomed to, but going to sleep earlier will benefit you as well as your kids.

So even if you won't kick back into an early bedtime routine until the night before school begins this year, says Breffni, make this the year you prioritize sleep for the whole family.



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Cranking the lever in the center tightens the rope running through a small iron pulley. This moves

page each week to see if you can figure out what the upcoming Whatchamacallit is!

The Country Preacher

by Dan West

What a disaster the recent overabundant rains brought to the Mohawk Valley area! What a mess it left. So many people will be a very long time recovering, and some may never recover completely. Isn't it interesting that when there is a natural tragedy we call it an "act of God" while for good things, we take credit for them ourselves.

Do you know that when God created the world and mankind, as recorded in Genesis 1, He created them to never end, never become ill or die? It wasn't until a human being went against what God had told him and did his own thing, that hard work, pain, illness and death were introduced, and Adam and Eve were expelled from their perfect life in the Garden of Eden (Genesis 3). Since we all are descendants of Adam and Eve, we all inherit the consequences.

In biblical terms, death is separation from God. So mankind's natural state is being separated from God. But, God Himself also paid the price for us so we could be received by Him. He sent His Son Jesus to pay the price for us by dying in our place.

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On Six Legs: Cabbage caterpillars loopy chewers

by Tom Turpin, professor of Entomology, Purdue University

There are more than 3,500 species of flowering plants included in the family Brassicaceae. Most gardeners are familiar with this plant family because of the crucifers that are sometimes called cole crops. Cabbage, broccoli, cauliflower and Brussels sprouts are common garden plants that are scientifically classified as Brassicaceae.

These garden crucifers end up on our tables in many ways. Corned beef and cabbage, sauerkraut and coleslaw are widespread usages of cab-

bage. Broccoli and cauliflower can be boiled, included in stir-fry recipes, or used as a fresh vegetable for dipping. I suspect that Brussels sprouts do not make the favorite-food list of many folks. But even the most hardened Brussels sprouts hater might like these little cabbages golden-crusted in olive oil and sprinkled with cheese or Dijon-braised.

Before we get to make a meal of any of the cole crops, we have to grow the plants. And that, as any gardener knows, means we are likely to encounter insects that feed on plants in the Brassicaceae family. Yes,

there are several species of insects that use the foliage of these plants as food. The list includes cutworms, flea beetles, beet armyworm, diamondback moth, cabbage maggot, cabbage looper and cabbage butterflies.

The worms that most people discover in their cabbage, or broccoli, are caterpillars of the cabbage looper or those of the cabbage butterflies. The caterpillars of these insects are smooth-bodied and green in color. Because they blend in with the plants on which they feed, people may not notice the worms until they come floating up when the food is being processed.

On occasion, caterpillars in cabbage or broccoli plants aren't discovered until the food is on the table. A worm in the food is sure to prompt a lively discussion. Such instances always remind me of the old joke that goes something like this: "What is worse than finding a worm in the ap-

ple you are eating?" The answer: "Finding half a worm in the apple that you are eating!"

Caterpillars of several species of butterflies feed

most parts of the world, including Australia and New Zealand. Because it isn't native to the United States, the insect is sometimes known as the

grasps the surface with two pair of fleshy protuberances called prolegs, situated near the rear end of the body. Then it raises the forepart of its



Cabbage butterfly
Photo credit: Univ. of California Davis

on cabbage. These are all white butterflies and are known popularly as cabbage butterflies. One is likely the most common butterfly in the world — at least that's the case today. This butterfly's scientific name is *Pieris rapae*. It was originally found in Europe, Asia and North Africa and sometime around 1860, the insect was introduced into North America. Today, it's found in

imported cabbageworm.

The other type of caterpillar often found on cabbage or in broccoli is called the cabbage looper. This caterpillar turns out to be a moth in the adult stage. There is an entire group of moths that are called loopers. The name reflects the way the caterpillars crawl. They move along in a looping motion that creates a loop with their body. The caterpillar

body off the surface and extends forward. Once its legs are on the surface, the proleg portion of the body is brought forward and a loop is formed.

There are other moth caterpillars that move in this looping motion as well. These are also sometimes called measuringworms, or inchworms, and are classified in the family Geometridae. One bit of folklore holds that if one of these worms crawls on you that you will be getting a new suit, because you are being "measured."

Every time I see a caterpillar crawling in a looping fashion, whether on the leaves of a cabbage plant or over a head of broccoli, I am reminded of the children's nursery rhyme song 'Loop de Loop.' It begins something like this: "Here we go loop de loop, here we go loop de lie."

The song was recorded by American pop singer Johnny Thunder and eventually became a sing-along for SpongeBob SquarePants. Here's the question. Do any of the kids watching SpongeBob and singing along with "Here we go loop de loop" know that they are describing the movement of a cabbage caterpillar?

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The Cats' House in San Diego closes, cats go east

by Sue Manning

LOS ANGELES, CA — They enjoyed the high life for years. Now eight cats accustomed to the creature comforts of a house that features an elevated feline freeway have not only been brought down to Earth, but squeezed into a 30-foot motorhome with the family Chihuahua.

Gus, Sam, Dave, Stella, Lili, Eddie, Zander, Willow and Sadie the Chihuahua are biding their time in the motorhome, which is parked in the driveway of the San Diego home known for a quarter century as "The Cats' House."

Bob Walker and Frances Mooney have sold the house. Escrow closed on July 3 and before the month is over, Walker, Mooney, cats and dog are moving to Fredericksburg, VA.

Walker and Mooney moved into the house in 1986 and turned it into a human-sized cat condo with 140 feet of elevated highway, tunnels, ramps, a spiral staircase, rest areas and scenic vistas. It even had a floor-to-ceiling scratching post.

The kitty thoroughfare remains but has been painted white like the rest of the house. The new owners don't have a cat.

It used to be a kaleidoscope of colors. Even the outside was purple.

Walker, 63, a photographer and builder, and Mooney, 61, an artist, shared the house.

Walker published eight photo books, including "The Cats' House." Over the years, the unusual home attracted over 50 film crews from around the world. At a book signing in 1996, more than 900 people showed up.

The couple was featured in a Chris Smith documentary, "Home Movie" shown at the 2001 Sundance Film Festival

and later released on DVD.

Walker, Mooney and the cats even had a line of postcards at Target.

Until five months ago, Walker said they thought they'd spend the rest of their lives in the four-bedroom, 1,500-square-foot home overlooking Mission Bay. Built in the 1950s, it was also Mooney's childhood home.

"Then we decided to go on a new adventure and move to the East Coast," Walker said.

Sadie, Zander and Willow are 3, so this will probably be the couple's last batch of cats, he said. Cats are 15- or 20-year commitments and

6 inch planks of Douglas fir. To accommodate the oldest members of the troupe, he added the 23-step spiral staircase into the TV room and a carpet-covered ramp into the bedroom.

Over the years, they've had 35 cats, though never more than a dozen at once.

They had eight litter boxes around the house and cleaned a lot, Walker said. In the motorhome, they don't have as much to clean, but there is only room for one litter box — on the shower floor — and they have to change it at least twice a day.

In Fredericksburg, they plan to buy a home and



they don't want to leave any behind.

Mooney "was always bonkers for cats," Walker said. On their wedding day in 1973, they adopted Beauregard, their first cat as a couple.

The ceiling superhighway started when they decided to divide the living room and dining room with a stained glass window. To keep cats from damaging the furniture, they added the floor-to-ceiling scratching post, wrapped with 395 feet of dyed pink sisal rope.

The cats loved it, Walker said, but after chasing each other up the scratching post and across a suspended beam, they had to stop abruptly.

The answer was tunnels and freeway extensions. Walker used 2-by-

build a bigger, better, longer, stronger and more artistic catwalk.

Walker said he's anxious to start on a two-story cat house, but he's a little worried about the slope challenge.

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What are the advantages of being a first time homebuyer?

Buying your first home can be an intimidating experience. There are numerous things to take into consideration, from finding the right house to financing. But, being a first time homebuyer does come with some advantages.

First time homebuyers often have access to special loan programs that can assist them in getting into a home more quickly and less expensively than those who have purchased homes previously. These programs offer first time buyers benefits such as low down payments,

subsidized interest, and a limit to the fees that a lender may charge them.

Lenders usually expect homebuyers to pay a down payment of as much as 20 percent. This can be prohibitive for those who are trying to purchase their first home. But first time homebuyer loans often offer a reduced down payment of anywhere from nothing to 3 percent. A down payment that low makes buying a first home much more accessible.

First time homebuyer loans may also feature a limit on the fees that the

lender may charge. Like the reduced down payments, this is made possible by government mortgage insurance available to new homeowners. For an annual premium, HUD insures your mortgage, reducing the risk to the lender. This results in the ability to charge lower fees and down payments while remaining profitable.

Low-income first time homebuyers may qualify for subsidized interest programs. This means that a third party pays the interest on your loan. These programs

can make your mortgage payments more affordable and enable you to pay off the mortgage more quickly. While the government is one of the most frequent subsidizers of loans, they can also be subsidized by charities, organizations, or even individuals.

First time homebuyer programs are generally available only to people who are going to live in the home they purchase as their primary residence. The home will also have to be in good condition with no safety hazards present. And

due to the fact that these programs are designed for those in need, there is a limit on the value of the homes you can purchase through these programs.

First time homebuyers can take advantage of numerous programs to assist them in owning their first home. From

lowered down payments to subsidized interest, first time homeownership has become much more affordable. There is no time like the present to make your dream of owning your own home a reality.

Source: Sir William Johnson Realty



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Chow Line: Watermelon tasty, nutritious

by Martha Filipic

My favorite fruit is watermelon. Since it's so watery, does it offer much nutrition?

You're correct that watermelon is "watery." In fact, it's more than 90 percent water. Still, two cups of diced watermelon (about 10 ounces) offers 38 percent of the vitamin C you need in a day, 32 percent of vitamin A, as well as a small amount of protein and fiber, and all for a mere 85 calories.

Watermelon is also a good source of lycopene, a phytonutrient that gives your favorite fruit (as well as tomatoes and pink grapefruit) its red color. Lycopene protects against prostate cancer and possibly other cancers, and also protects cells from damage associated with heart disease.

In addition, citrulline in watermelon is converted into arginine, an amino acid that plays a key role in cell division, wound healing, and the removal of ammonia in the body.

Watermelon also offers some potassium, which is helpful because most Americans don't get enough of it. Potassium helps control blood pressure and possibly prevent strokes.

Part of the challenge

with watermelon is choosing one that's ripe. That's not always easy to figure out, according to "Selecting, Storing and Serving Ohio Melons" (<http://go.osu.edu/melon>) from Ohio State University Extension. Here are some suggestions from the fact sheet:

- Examine the rind and find the spot where the melon had been resting on the ground — it should be yellow-white. If

it's white or pale green, it was picked too early.

- Scratch the surface of the rind with your thumbnail. If the outer layer slips back with little resistance showing the green-white under the rind, the watermelon is ripe. If all you get is a darker depressed line, the melon isn't ripe.

- When purchasing cut watermelon, look for more red flesh and less white rind to find ripier

melons. White seeds usually indicate the melon was picked too early — unless you're looking at a seedless watermelon. In that case, any white seeds you see are really just empty seed coats.

If you think your watermelon isn't quite ripe yet, keep it at room temperature for a few days. It will continue to ripen if it's not too mature. But only

whole, uncut watermelon should be left unrefrigerated. Once it's cut, watermelon needs to be kept at 40 degrees F or below.

Before cutting into watermelon (or any melon), be sure to thoroughly rinse it under clean running water. You may even want to scrub it with a soft-bristled brush while rinsing. This will help remove any contaminants

on the rind that could spread to the fruit inside when you slice through it.

Chow Line is a service of Ohio State University's College of Food, Agricultural, and Environmental Sciences and its outreach and research arms, Ohio State University Extension and the Ohio Agricultural Research and Development Center.

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DIGITS:

32 percent keep a household budget

by Jennifer Agiesta

It was an oft-invoked

image on last year's campaign trail: The typ-

ical American couple, sitting around the kitchen table making a budget to ensure their bills were paid and spending hadn't gotten out of control. Candidates of both parties decried the federal government for failing to complete this most basic of financial tasks, citing a growing national debt and wide deficit as evidence of fiscal irresponsibility.

Turns out, most Americans don't do it either.

A poll from Gallup shows that 32 percent of Americans put together a budget each month to track income and expenditures, and just 30 percent have a long-term financial plan laying out savings and investment goals.

Those with higher incomes or college degrees were a bit more likely to say they regularly put together a budget, though less than half in those groups said they keep close tabs on their financial life. Only about a quarter with a high school diploma or less say they do.

And, as rare as they suggest budgeting may be, the results of the poll could even look a little better than reality. People want to be seen as

good citizens, so when they're asked by a pollster whether they do things that are generally seen as positive, good-person activities, they fudge a little. Pollsters call this "social desirability bias," and a great example of it is voting. Without fail, more people tell pollsters that they turn out to vote than actually do.

The way Gallup phrased the question highlights one way to fight social desirability

bias. Its detail leaves little wiggle room for people to say "yes" unless they really keep a budget. Pollsters asked if the respondent or their spouse "prepare a detailed written or computerized household budget each month that tracks your income and expenditures," a rather high — and specific — bar.

Compare that to a Pew Social Trends poll conducted a few years back. The Pew poll asked, "Do you have a budget to guide your household expenses or don't you rely on a formal budget?" Described in those broader terms, 48 percent of Americans said they kept a budget.

And despite the frequent political invocation of a budgeted family, Gallup's finding may not reflect a new trend in Americans' financial behavior. A 1951 Gallup survey showed that only 40 percent of Americans said they had "a budget for household expenses."

That poll asked those who didn't maintain a budget why they skipped it. The most frequent response? We spend it all anyhow.



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by Samantha Mazzotta
Patching damaged hardwood floor

Q: You recently published instructions on lifting out small dents from hardwood floors and furniture. My question is, how do you deal with larger damage, like gouges and small holes? — Chet in NYC

A: As long as the wood isn't severely damaged, such as a cracked or broken board, and just has a few gouges, small holes or large dents that won't steam out, you can patch and smooth the damaged areas.

For this job you'll need fine-grit sandpaper, wood putty or wood patching compound, a putty knife and wood restorer. You also might need a hammer and a nail set (a large nail-like tool, not a bunch

of nails) to tap loose nails down below the wood surface, should they need it.

Clear debris and dirt away from the areas to be repaired. Check the wood for splinters or other damage, and look for nail or screw heads poking up. Use a nail set and hammer to tap the nails down below the surface. If a nail won't go or stay down, or if it sits loosely, remove it and hammer a



fresh nail into the wood about a half-inch down the board edge from the old nail hole. Add that nail hole to your patch list.

Using a putty knife, fill the gouged areas, small holes and the newly created holes where you tapped down errant nails with patching compound or wood putty. Work on one spot at a time, using the putty knife to force the compound into the

spot and pressing the blade down until it lies flat on the floorboard. Scrape away excess compound from the edges, feathering outward.

Let the patched areas dry completely, usually at least a day. Once dry, sand each patch with fine-grit sandpaper until the compound is flush with the board surface. Sweep away the sanding debris and wipe the area with a damp, not wet,

cloth.

Finally, apply wood restorer to each patched area, working one at a time, until the patch blends in with the rest of the floor.

HOME TIP: Hardwood floors need only sweeping, vacuuming and an

occasional damp mop to clean them. For more thorough cleaning and conditioning, look for a hardwood floor cleaning solution.

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SC teenager educating children about snakes

by Bertram Rantin

COLUMBIA, SC — Fourteen-year-old Spencer Jordan's young audience offered a mixture of silence and excited chatter as he pulled one reptile after another from his home-grown animal kingdom.

"We're going to start with the bearded dragon (translation: desert lizard)," he told a wide-eyed group of youngsters recently at Saluda Shoals Park. "They are very docile, so they're very nice to hold."

The teenager should know.

Since getting his first ball python, Buddy, when he was in the first grade, the rising Irmo High School freshman has developed a growing interest in the field of herpetology — the study of amphibians, reptiles, turtles and crocodilians — and a passion for sharing that interest with others. For the past two years, he has visited Saluda Shoals every other Monday during the summer to teach basic lessons about reptiles to other teens and pre-teens. The lessons

have primarily centered on snakes, which he believes too often are misunderstood.

"Snakes often get a bad reputation," Spencer said last Monday between his two morning sessions. "People don't have to like them. They just need to respect them because they do serve a very important role in the ecosystem. Would you rather have 100 mice or one snake?"

the years).

"I don't want to be the person who handles those (venomous) kinds of snakes," he said. "I know people who have them. The thing is, if you make one mistake with them, you could die."

But he said those species are not the more prevalent in this area, and he gave his visitors the opportunity to touch and handle the lavender corn snake, western hog-

two red-footed tortoises, a leopard tortoise, a bearded dragon, two corn snakes, a western hog-nose snake, two ball pythons, a tarantula, and two water turtles. He regularly rescues and relocates snakes from the yards and pools of friends and neighbors before any harm can come to them.

Spencer's father, Mark Jordan, is also into herpetology and said his son comes by his interest naturally.

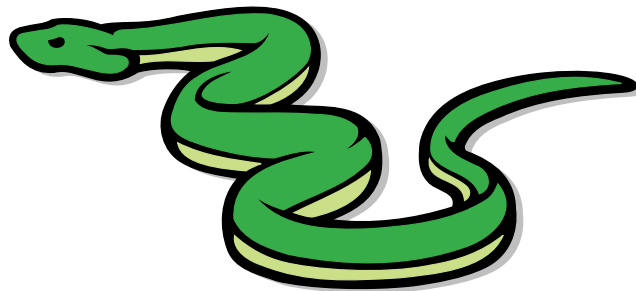
"It blossomed when he got older and got more snakes (after Buddy, now 10 years old). I told him a while back, 'no more snakes,'" the elder Jordan said. "That was about five snakes ago."

Jeanette Wells, the environmental educational center director at Saluda Shoals, praised the young teacher for his volunteer outreach and said his instruction likely was more meaningful for many of the youngsters because it came from a peer.

"They can see a child's passion, even if they're not interested in the same area," Wells said. "It's just that 'I can do' attitude that comes about."

Spencer plans to study herpetology after graduation, but in the meantime he's enjoying the opportunity to help educate others.

"I'd really like to be able to do it more in schools," he said. "I love that people will come in (one of the sessions) afraid of snakes and 30 minutes later they're asking to hold everything."



During the roughly half-hour presentations, the teenager talks about such things as the diet, physical traits and temperament of various reptiles and the ideal habitats of various species. He's careful to note the differences between venomous and non-venomous snakes and states a strong preference for the latter (he's been bitten about 10 times over

nose and ball python he had brought along with him.

"This is probably the nicest snake," he said as some eager participants lined up to touch the 3-foot corn snake.

"Wow. That was so cool," one youngster said after a close-up glimpse.

"That was creepy," countered another.

Spencer's home collection of reptiles includes

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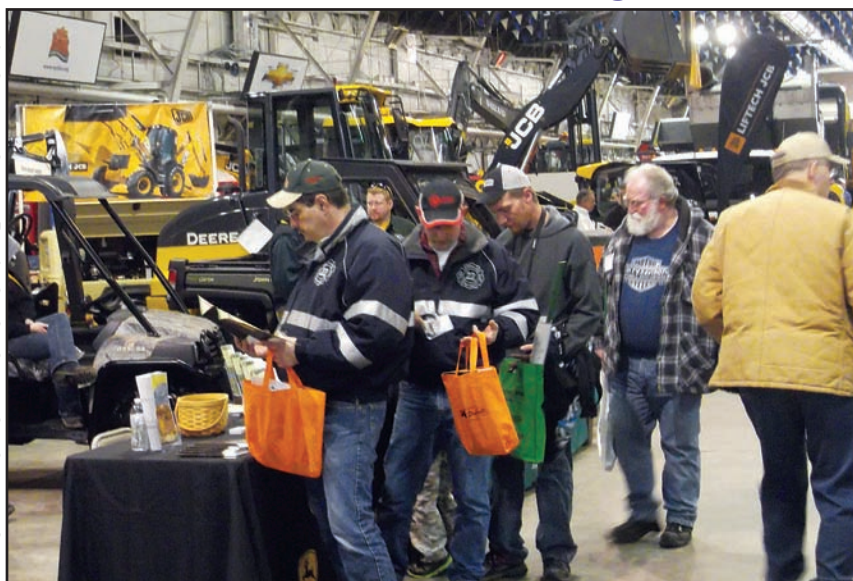
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