

# EDITOR

Just Good Reading

Complimentary

First  
Issue of

DECEMBER  
2014

*Christmas  
Shopping*  
COUNTDOWN

*Think  
Local  
First*

*Matthew 2:11 - And when they were come  
into the house, they saw the young child with  
Mary his mother, and fell down, and  
worshipped him: and when they had opened  
their treasures, they presented unto him gifts;  
gold, and frankincense, and myrrh.*

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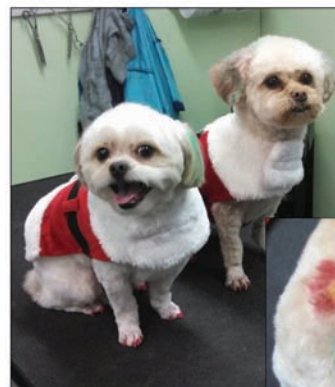
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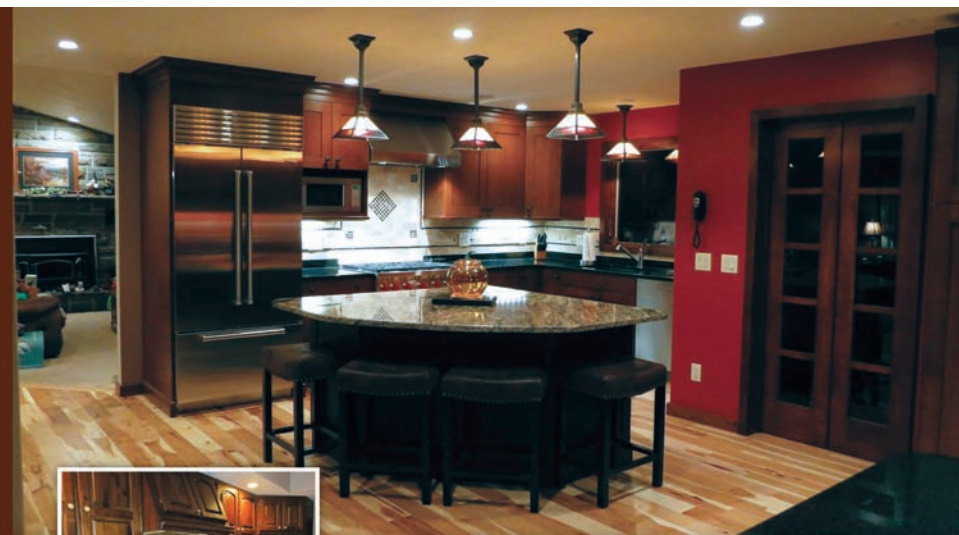
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# Back to Basics: Gifts That Inspire the Imagination

(Family Features)

Though it may seem that all of the high-demand gift items this season require batteries and a level of tech savvy only the younger generation can boast, there are actually many great options that let you encourage the kids on your list to get back to basics and get unplugged.

According to research by Common Sense Media, kids under eight spend nearly two hours of every day on screen time - that is, using a tablet, computer or mobile device, watching TV, etc. While some of that usage is dedicated to educational games and content, the prevalence of media use among kids is distracting them from one of childhood's greatest gifts: the freedom to let their imaginations soar.

Kids whose imaginative play is fostered and supported show numerous health and developmental advantages, ranging from increased levels of fitness and coordination to higher self-esteem and an improved ability to apply the information they learn.

This holiday season, look for gifts that inspire kids to embrace pretend play:

### Blocks

It doesn't get much more basic than building blocks when it comes to setting the imagination free. Skip the sets that come with specific instructions and opt instead for blocks that encourage free-form play and construction. Small and mid-sized plastic pieces let kids create miniature versions of nearly anything their minds can conjure. On the flip side, jumbo cardboard blocks let children create environments they can physically engage with, such as life-size playhouses.

### Figurines

There are many figurines and customizable accessories and environments available to tickle kids' imagination. From auto service stations and



race tracks to dollhouses and pet boutiques, little ones can explore and create for hours. For example, the Calico Critters toy line provides hours of wholesome and imaginative play. These adorable, high-quality miniature families of animals are paired with a selection of environments ranging from homes to shops to restaurants, along with complementary furnishings and accessories. These settings are similar to those in a child's life, making them more relatable and fun. For more information, visit [www.calicocritters.com](http://www.calicocritters.com).

### Dress up

Whether you assemble a collection of whimsical treasures from thrift shops or rely on the costumes and sets available at retail stores, clothing that allows a child to adopt a new persona is an instant way to encourage the imagination. Costumes depicting familiar characters let kids act out their favorite screen-time scenes in real life, while a unique mish-mash of items lets them create unique scenarios to explore.

### Books

Good old-fashioned books help expose kids to new worlds. Choose-your-own-

adventure books, in which the reader helps direct the flow of the story line, are a great choice for engaging kids directly as they imagine their way through the story line. More traditional books introduce concepts, characters and scenarios that provide hours of play as kids act out the new ideas they discover.

### Crafting sets

From create-your-own jewelry to color-to-complete playhouses and spaceships, crafty gifts let kids explore their artistic side and experiment with creating tangible representations of their imagination. You can choose from prepackaged sets at many retailers, or crafting stores provide a diverse selection of unfinished items to pair with the appropriate tools.

Toys and games that encourage pretend play let kids create, explore and imagine in a stress-free environment where they set the rules and boundaries. These gifts, which encourage kids to unplug and embrace a whole new world of wholesome play, are the kind you can feel truly great about giving.

### A Gift That Keeps Giving

Encouraging kids to explore the world and learn through imaginative play has numerous benefits for their overall well-being. Giving gifts that encourage kids to use their imagination helps boost numerous long-term development skills.

### Social development

Creating characters and scripting scenes, whether alone or through play with others, teaches a child to consider other perspectives and fosters the growth of empathy and understanding.

### Language

Being allowed to create their own play environment, versus those delivered on a screen, forces children to rely on their vocabulary and practice using the words they've learned both informally and formally. Solitary play offers the benefit of allowing a child to practice these skills,

while pretend play with peers encourages clear and effective communication with others.

### Problem solving

It's never too early for a child to begin developing cognitive thinking skills that allow them to effectively trouble-shoot and resolve problems. Even a simple play activity, such as contemplating what items from the dress-up drawer should be packed for an imaginary vacation, lets a little one begin to understand how to identify

a challenge and create meaningful solutions.

### Relationships

Playing with others is a natural way for kids to forge meaningful bonds with other children, and with the adults in their lives. Imaginary play nurtures and lets children practice critical relationship-building skills such as communication. What's more, interacting through pretend play gives kids a shared experience that shapes a bond with their partner in play.■



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# Beef Up Your Holidays

(Family Features)

For many families, gathering around the table is as treasured a holiday tradition as gathering around the tree to exchange gifts with loved ones. With universal appeal, cuts of tender, juicy beef are ideal for a wide range of family-friendly dishes - from appetizers to special occasion holiday entrees.

If your seasonal celebrations and commitments have you pinched for time, opt for the convenience of home delivery. Starting with premium products, such as those available from Omaha Steaks, lets you create the perfect meal every time. Each cut of beef is perfectly aged and flash-frozen at its peak of flavor and tenderness, and delivered right to your door with a 100 percent quality guarantee.

There are as many ways to prepare beef as there are cuts to choose from. The best approach depends on the type of flavor you want to achieve, and how you'll ultimately serve the dish. One popular option that creates robust, hearty flavors perfect for holiday feasts is braising. This celebrated technique is featured in this Omaha Steaks family recipe for Braised Beef Brisket. Or, add some pre-dinner bites to your holiday spread with Bacon Wrapped Tenderloin Tip Appetizers, a savory recipe that is sure to be a hit among guests.

Find these and more beef preparation tips and recipes at [www.omahasteaks.com](http://www.omahasteaks.com).

### Braising Tips

◆ Braising (from the French word *braiser*) is a combination cooking method that uses both moist and dry heats. Typically, the food is first seared at a high temperature, then finished in a covered pot or

pan at a lower temperature while sitting in some amount of liquid, which may also add flavor.

- ◆ The purpose of braising is to break down the connecting tissues, enhancing the meat's tenderness.
- ◆ Some examples of cuts that are typically braised include:
  - ◆ Chuck (Chuck Eye Roast, Chuck Arm Roast, Chuck Shoulder Roast, Short Ribs)
  - ◆ Brisket (Whole Brisket, Brisket Flat Roast, Brisket Point Roast)
  - ◆ Shank (Cross Cut Shanks, Whole Beef Shanks)
  - ◆ Round (Top Round Roast, Bottom Round Roast, Eye Round Roast, Boneless Rump Roast)
- ◆ First brown your roast using a large pan and some oil over high heat, seasoning the protein first.
- ◆ Once the roast is browned, deglaze the pan using wine or some of the liquid that will be used in the braising process, to capture drippings from the pan that are loaded with flavor.
- ◆ Once the roast is browned you will want to place it, along with all the liquid including the pan drippings, in a Dutch oven or deep roasting pan. It is very important to cover the top of the pan as tightly as possible so steam and pressure will build up during the oven cooking process.
- ◆ The liquid for the braising process can vary depending on the dish you're trying to make. For example, barbecue sauce would be used for a barbecue brisket, and beef broth would be used for a pot roast. Usually if using a thick liquid such as barbecue sauce you will want to thin it down with wine, broth or water. It will thicken as it cooks, and if it gets too thick it will burn.

◆ You can also experiment with putting root vegetables in the braising pan along with your roast to create a complete meal and enhance the flavor.

◆ The oven part of the process is usually done at 250°F and can vary in



Beef 12

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Beef from 12

time from 3 to 8 hours, depending on what cut is being braised and how big it is. A general rule of thumb is that the protein will shred easily with a fork when it is properly braised.

Braised Beef Brisket

This recipe has graced the holiday table of the Simon family, the owners of Omaha Steaks, for generations.

Prep time: 30 minutes  
Cook time 8 hours  
Servings: 6-8

- 1 Omaha Steaks Brisket (3 pounds)

- 2 tablespoons canola oil
- 4 teaspoons Omaha Steaks All Natural Seasoning
- 2 cups diced yellow onion
- 2 tablespoons fresh chopped garlic
- 1 cup bottled chili sauce
- 1 package dry onion soup mix
- 1/2 cup beef broth
- 1/4 cup soy sauce
- 1/2 cup red wine

Thaw brisket overnight in refrigerator.  
Heat canola oil in large pan.  
Blot brisket dry with clean paper towel and generously season each side with 2 teaspoons seasoning.  
Brown brisket in hot oil on both sides for about 2-4 minutes each side. Remove brisket from pan and place in crock pot, raised side braising pan or Dutch oven. Add onion and garlic to hot oil and cook until transparent. Add remaining ingredients and bring to a boil. Pour sauce into crock pot, raised side braising pan or Dutch oven.  
If using crock pot, cook on low for 6-8 hours. If using braising pan or Dutch oven, cover tightly with foil or lid and place in oven at 250°F for 6-8 hours. Serve the same day or cool overnight in refrigerator before slicing and reheating in sauce.

Bacon Wrapped Tenderloin Tip Appetizer

Prep time: 20 minutes (plus time for thawing)  
Cook time: 6 minutes  
Servings: Approximately 32 pieces

- 3 pounds Omaha Steaks Tenderloin Steak Tips (#670)
- 32 Omaha Steaks Precooked Bacon Slices (#177)
- 1 jar Omaha Steaks All Natural Seasoning (#1141)
- Round wood toothpicks

Thaw steak tips and bacon overnight in refrigerator.  
Preheat oven to 450°F degrees.  
Sprinkle each tenderloin tip with seasoning.  
Wrap a slice of bacon around each tenderloin tip and push a toothpick through to secure bacon.  
Place bacon-wrapped tips on baking sheet. Bake for 3 minutes; flip and bake an additional 2-3 minutes.  
Serve immediately. ■



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By S.D. Shapiro

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

Courtesy is dead. Dig a hole and bury it because it is gone. We lost it to the 20th century. Maybe the 1960's was the last it was seen?

Thank you (forget please) were the first casualty. They are no longer needed. When the waitress at the big chain restaurant takes your order for their latest half priced over fried appetizers it is not uncommon to hear, "Gimme an order of cheese sticks." No please. No thank you.

The little wave in traffic and other little courtesies have fallen by the wayside too. You hardly ever receive the little wave from other drivers. You may have let them into a long line of traffic or allowed them to go first and you get nothing for your trouble. No wave. No nothing.

We have metaphors and figures of speech that are based on courtesy. "Tip of the hat" which is a way to recognize people was based on, literally, doffing your cap in recognition of passing someone. You do not have that anymore. If you are lucky you will get a grunt and a nod. Holding the door open harkens back to the days of chivalry but in modern times it barely an afterthought. Ladies watch as doors slam shut on them. On the same hand, the same ladies skip saying, "thank you," when the door is held. It is a vicious cycle.

Our cellular phones are a major contributor to the war on courtesy. We are always checking our phones. You have to be reminded to turn them off at the beginning of a movie so you don't

## What would your mother say? ~Courtesy

disturb the other viewers. Dinners are interrupted by bleeps and bings as we're alerted to what is happening on our phones. Actual conversations are interrupted by texts and tweets. Next time you are out to eat take a look around the restaurant and see how many people are mesmerized by their phones.

Invitations have also lost the battle. They have been relegated to Facebook invites and electronic invitations. Forget R.S.V.P. which takes some thought and a little energy; now you just double click. The digital characters are a cold replacement of your scrawling handwriting. Thank you notes are gone too. Just send a text to your great aunt for the birthday gift. Various sources say that you have up to a year to send a thank you note. A year? To say thank you? Get home and write those thank you notes.

The funny thing about common courtesy is, just like common sense, it has



gone extinct because we simply stopped using it. Life is too fast paced to stop and say, "thank you." It takes too much time to hold a door for somebody. We skip "please" because it is too many characters on our smart phones. Just like common sense, if we use a little courtesy it will, hopefully, become commonplace again.

When it comes down to courtesy it is like common sense. It takes some hard work and brain power to make it happen but life is so much nicer when you have it. Stop and think, "What would my mother say?" She would say, "Mind your p's and q's and dot your i's and cross your t's and say, thank you." ■



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# When Push comes to Shove

By Terry Berkson

It was about the middle of August this year when I noticed that one of my hens was looking lethargic. Her tail was down. Her head was drooping and her eyes were closed much of the time. Every once in a while she'd perk up and look like she was struggling. She appeared

to be a bit on the heavy side which surprised me because I had been careful not to feed too much corn which I read diminishes egg production. I consulted my antique Eschelman's "Everything You Need to Know about Chickens" book and came away with the idea that by her appearance and the way she was behaving the hen was egg bound. This was

not surprising because the eggs my Golden Comets have been producing this year are so big that I can't close them into a box that is labeled, Extra Large. Maybe the additional weight she was carrying was blocking a big egg from coming down the pike. The book made several suggestions. One was to put her in a warm place that would enable her to relax and hopefully pass the egg. Another was to put her over a steaming pan of water. Another was to massage the chicken's undercarriage working the hen's innards towards the vent. I tried the steaming tub idea but in no time the water cooled and left the hen sitting there with a, "What's up dock," expression in her demeanor.

As a last resort I called my friend and local expert, Chicken McNulty, to see if he had any ideas. When I told him what I had already done that didn't work he suggested that I try to break up the egg while it was still inside the chicken! He said this could work but it could also kill the hen. "Maybe I'll let nature take its course," I told him. McNulty also suggested that I lubricate the vent using a squirt can loaded with cooking oil. I thanked him for the advice but when I hung up I decided that I didn't want to get that personal. Instead,



I modified the steaming tub operation by filling an old Windex bottle with warm water and spraying it directly at the vent. This I thought would be a lot more effective than some steam drifting up towards the problem. When I grew tired of working the handle of the Windex bottle I got my reluctant wife, Alice, to relieve me. Between the both of us the procedure went on for a couple of hours—along with some spousal complaints—but without success.

The chicken appeared to like all the extra attention.

She even seemed to bond to me—when I let her go free—by waddling behind as I made my way from the coop to the house. At one point when I was sitting at a table on our back deck she jumped up on a chair to join me. But, the egg I was hoping she'd lay never appeared and in spite of her perky behavior due to all the attention, she soon regressed to her earlier sluggish condition.

Waddy, that's what I began to call her; languished for a few days without producing the egg and then one morn-

ing I went out to find her dead in the laying box.

McNulty phoned to ask, "How ya doin' with that chicken?"

"She passed away," I told him.

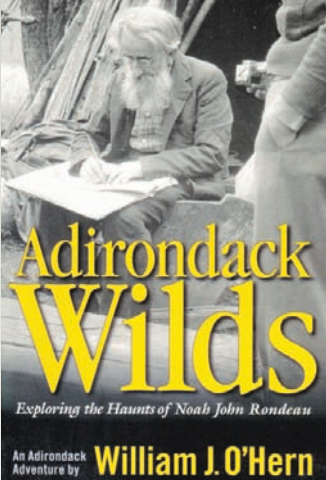
"Did ya take my advice about breaking the egg or injectin' oil?"

"No," I answered sheepishly.

"Well," he said in a huff. "When push comes to shove, you just don't make it as a chicken farmer!" ■

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## The origin of Baby New Year

Baby New Year can be traced to 600 B.C. in Greece and Egypt. Historians note that Greeks believed Dionysus, their God of fertility and wine, was reborn every New Year as a spirit of fertility and luck. Greeks would celebrate with parades featuring a baby in a cradle to represent the birth of Dionysus.

Ancient Egyptians used a baby as a symbol to represent rebirth as well. The child symbolized the birth of the new year and the passing of the old one.

Over the years, the tradition of Baby New Year has taken on another meaning as well. Some people believe the baby begins as an infant in January and then quickly ages until he is elderly at the end of December. Some stories

even suggest Baby New Year ages until he becomes Father Time.

Early Christians did not like the tradition of Baby New Year, feeling it was a pagan celebration. However, the Church eventually revised its standing when it saw how much people stood behind the imagery of a baby representing rebirth. The Christian Church allowed members to celebrate the new year with a baby, and it was believed the practice symbolized the birth and hope offered by baby Jesus.

Baby New Year symbolism has even been used for marketing purposes. Retailers realized the cherubic image would attract consumers, which is why it is now used to promote New Year's sales. ■



# Kumon Method is the largest supplemental education program in the world

By Jorge L. Hernandez

To Gerald Greene, children are his business. Greene's Kumon Math & Reading Center in New Hartford on Commercial Drive caters to nurturing young minds.

"My business is developing children's potential through a unique educational method that has its roots in oriental educational philosophy," center owner and chief instructor Greene says.

It's been a 23-year enchantment for the New Hartford resident, formerly of Verona, starting and working at his supplemental educational facility.

"The Kumon Method was developed by Toru Kumon, who was a high school math teacher in Japan," Greene says. "When his oldest son did poorly on an arithmetic test in the second grade Kumon developed a series of worksheets for his son to practice on daily to help him develop math skills."

**"Teach a child fractions and he succeeds at fractions. Make a child a better learner and he succeeds at life."**

By the time the boy was in sixth grade he had completed a curriculum that covered high school math. His father then shared the worksheets he developed for his son with neighborhood children, and they also made marked progress in math skills.

Greene says that it was at that point in 1958 that Kumon decided to open a franchise center in Japan of his method that eventually included teaching reading skills. In 1983, Kumon centers came to North America.

Today, the Kumon Method is the largest supplemental education program in the world with centers in 48 countries and an enrollment of more than 4 million students. In North America there are 1,700 centers attended by 200,000 children.

The program targets both remediation and enrichment, Greene says, and begins with a philosophy that all children have unseen, untapped po-



**Kumon Center of New Hartford owner and chief instructor Gerald Greene.**

tential to learn and to grow. The goal of the Kumon Method is to provide each child with the tools, plan and guidance to achieve that potential, he says.

The center's mission also is helping children become better learners for life, not just boosting test scores, Greene says. "Kumon focuses on empowering children to become self-learners," he notes.

Greene, 61, comes from a family of educators himself. He graduated from V-V-S High school, where he was a National Merit Scholarship semi-finalist, earned a B.S. in Business from Cornell University and an M.A. in Psychology from Kona University.

At about the same time he started his own Kumon Center in 1991, he started working for Oneida-Herkimer-Madison BOCES on Middle Settlement Road as a work-study coordinator and administrator, retiring after 20 years of service. Prior to that Greene also taught English in Japan for four years, which is where he developed an interest in Kumon.

Why does he believe in the Kumon Method? "I really enjoy seeing students make progress in their math and reading skills," Greene says. "What I especially like is seeing students develop confidence in themselves and realizing that they can do more than they thought possible."

Greene took that very love of the Kumon philosophy of his children's business to heart. "I am a parent and although all my children are grown now, they all did Kumon when they were students in school and it helped them tremendously," he confesses.

The chief instructor firmly believes the skills taught at his center relate directly to life in the long run. "As Kumon himself stated, 'Teach a child fractions and he succeeds at fractions. Make a child a better learner and he succeeds at life,'" Greene

concludes.

In a subsequent issue of "Editor" magazine, look for a view of a day in the life at the Kumon Center watching children become active learners. ■



**Students busy at work at the Kumon Center of New Hartford.**

## Cut the costs of holiday travel

· Book a budget-friendly rental. The holiday season is a busy time of year for rental car agencies, and holiday travelers who are late to reserve their vehicles may find themselves driving gas guzzlers for the duration of their trip. When booking your automobile rental this holiday season, do your best to reserve a car early so you have access to the agency's entire inventory and not just what's left on the lot. If you do not specifically reserve a fuel-efficient vehicle, you might be stuck with a large SUV or another car or truck that costs a lot at the pump.

· Bring along your own food. Food is another oft-overlooked expense of holiday travel. If you're flying, try to eat before you leave for the airport or look up the airport and/or airline regulations to determine if you can bring your own food. Food purchased at the airport or on the airplane will be more expensive and is often more unhealthy than meals you can prepare at home. When driving, pack a cooler instead of relying on truck stop eateries, which tend to be fast food restaurants.

· Split hosting duties. If you want to save money but are accustomed to traveling to visit family and friends during the holiday season, then

consider hosting a gathering at your own home. Friends and family likely won't scoff at being relieved of some of their annual hosting duties, and you can limit the cost of your travel to just one trip instead of multiple trips.

· Share lodging. If you are used to staying in hotels when traveling for the holiday season, then you may want to share a hotel room with family members who also stay in hotels. Lodging costs tend to be very expensive during the holiday season, but splitting such costs with a friend or family member can help you stay within budget. ■

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# Father Of The Man

By Terry Berkson

Not long ago I received a wedding announcement from my cousin Francine who lives in Savigny Sur Orge which is a twenty minute train ride from Paris, France. She said that her son Ben had finally married his girlfriend who he had been living with for ten years. The girl, Isabelle, is a doctor and comes from a small French village where there hadn't been a wedding for 17 years, so theirs was a grand occasion where almost the entire population attended. Ben and Isabelle work for Doctors Without Borders and have made friends in many countries from which about 130 people attended. Francine wrote that the wedding party walked along cobblestone paths accompanied by musicians who played instruments dating from the middle ages. The reception was held at an old castle and because a majority of the guests were from Latin America much of the music was from Mexico and Brazil.

News of this wedding has brought on a whole constellation of memories. While in the army I sent a letter to My Aunt Ruta from Richfield Springs who was staying with Francine when she lived in Mexico. As an afterthought I wrote on the outside of the envelope, Francine: read. She answered and we have been writing to each other for more than 40 years. When I was a kid she gave me my first book.

As a young woman, Francine had been traveling in Mexico with her parents and her small son Jonathan. She met Jean, a Frenchman, who was a flying aficionado and would do anything to be in the air. When I later met him he told me of his adventures piloting for different governments in South America. "One day I'd be flying a high official around. The next day there'd be a coup and I'd find myself in jail!"

The day Francine met him, Jean had been flying a crop duster and later stopped to have a drink in an outdoor cafe. She was taken by his Walter Pigeon looks and cavalier attitude. The planes he flew weren't exactly cream puffs. They were tired birds subject to shoddy maintenance and cobbled repairs.

"I flew by the seat of my pants, Jean said. We whittled down wooden splints to make needles for the carburetor." Not surprisingly, Jean crashed his crop duster the day after Francine met him. One of the wings of the plane had twisted leaving it to tumble toward the ground. He survived the crash but was dragged from the plane with almost every bone in his

body broken. Doctors didn't expect him to live. A leg was amputated and one side of his face was grossly distorted. When Francine heard of the crash she went to the hospital and stayed with him from that time on. After many months Jean's condition improved but he was always in pain and what was left of his amputated leg never healed properly requiring periodic operations. They eventually got married, had another child, Benito, and later left Mexico for France. That's where I first met Jean back in 1970. Francine was on a walking tour of Ireland and had left him in the care of friends. We shared some wine bathed meals together.

The next visit to Savigny was in 1973 when Alice and I were on our honeymoon. Francine and Jean were there and so was their son Ben who was now 15. I think Francine's first son was in the military at the time. It was a very warm visit where many of their friends came to their house to meet the cousins from America.

Ben seemed very pleased to be in the company of relatives he had never met before. The next day he ran all the way home from school to try and catch us before we left. He burst in the door all out of breath. I was impressed because at fifteen, kids usually try to act cool and not impressed with mere relatives. I never forgot his sincere open display of connection and warmth.

So, now this kid, who ran all the way home, has recently walked his woman, Isabelle, down the isle. I would think she has made a good catch. Unfortunately, his father, Jean, died long before the wedding. Though I haven't seen Ben for 30 years, I know that he turned out okay. After all, the boy is the father of the man. It seems fitting that with his having such a caring mother and a daring father, who needed so much medical attention that he would be working with his wife for an organization like Doctors Without Borders. ■



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# Ali Linz

By Diego Phillips

If living well is indeed the best revenge, then Ali-Linz Home and Accessories in Clinton is your one-stop shopping emporium to indulge in affordable yet luxurious home appointments.

Located on West Park Row in the village, the quaint mortar and brick shop on the historic shopping district has a variety of gifts for the home, antiques, rugs, lighting, artwork and candles, as well as gifts for that special someone, says owner Bobbie Paravati of Clinton.

We also offer cards, paper products, wine accessories, as well as some apparel items, she says. To boost that array of goods, Bobbie also helps customers plan for interior design for the home with furniture, wallpaper and fabric either at the shop or on-site by appointment.

Daughters were the basis for the shop's Ali-Linz name. It's a combination of my daughter's name Allison--and my business partner's daughter's name Lindsey, Bobbie says. She and her associate Kim Kershaw, now deceased, owned separate home interior and jewelry stores on Williams Street before merging into Ali-Linz.

At Bobbie's seven-year-old business, further high-end names can be dropped: Dash and Albert rugs, Sophie Conran dishware by Portmeirion, Vietri dishware from Italy, pewter and ceramic serving pieces from Arte Italica, and wallpaper by Thibaut, Ralph Lauren, Gramery, Seabrook, Carlisle and Morris. Prospective brides can register at Ali-Linz, where gifts are also perfect for what Bobbie calls girlfriend shopping.

Prices, Bobbie says, are

affordable to everyone. Smaller items, like cards and candles are \$2.50 and we offer furniture pieces that can run into \$1,000, she says. Among the most popular sales: Candles and soaps would have to top the list as far as small pick-up items. This year, cashmere dress toppers also have been very popular, she says.

Upcoming events include Lady's Night on Dec. 11th and Men's Night on Dec. 18th. We offer a unique shopping experience and travel far and wide to ensure we have items that can't be found elsewhere locally, Bobbie says. We will custom order anything the customer is looking for, if I can find it.

It's the love of the hunt for buying and shopping that Bobbie says keeps her motivated. I love the whole process, from going to the gift shows and seeing the variety of items available, personally

selecting the items that will fit my business and those that will appeal to my customers, she says. To her, the thrill continues when her customers find an item in her shop and say they have just the right spot for it.

Though the local business climate remains potentially bright, Bobbie says she frets about the effects of on-line shopping. Small businesses will have to be more creative in the future to help motivate customers to come in, she notes.

Bobbie says she will do her part by creating the best personal buying experience for her customers in a place she loves. I have lived in the village for over 30 years and think Clinton is a wonderful place to live, raise a family and do business, she says. The only thing that could make Clinton better was if we were on the ocean!



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# hello AGAIN

*thoughts from our  
publisher, Fred Lee*

Is it too early too be thinking about a New Year's Resolution? It is more than probable that millions of American women will choose as their new again resolution (get that, new again) to become a slimmer, healthier, prettier gal. How will they accomplish this dream? The answer is refusing all kinds of desserts – especially candy. Well ladies, I can tell you before hand, the decks are stacked against your resolution.

Two huge American candy-manufacturing companies are geared up to fill every sweet tooth from the Atlantic to the Pacific. I never seem to win when I gamble, but I'm willing to bet the two giant candy companies, with all of their ah-gotcha-know-how, will win. Your enemies are named Mars, Inc. and Hershey Company. Mars, Inc. recently opened up their first new candy factory in 35 years to feed your unstoppable appetite for sweets. The Mars company claims their new \$270 million plant with two production lines can produce over 8 million Snickers candy bars and 39 million Peanut M&M's every day.

If that is not bad enough, the Hershey Company – the largest candy manufacturer – has 36% of the Candy market, while Mars has 28%. These two giants dominate the candy market with a combined share of nearly two thirds.

Have you read that chocolate is actually good for your health? Who do you think is promoting that health improvement suggestion? Could it be Mars, Inc or Hershey Co? My bet is their sturdy chocolate sugar coated fingers have joined together to convince you their products are actually lifesaving and the more you buy the more life you will save.

Now stop and consider this: if most of the weight conscious ladies in this country stop eating chocolate where will Mars, Inc. get rid of their millions and millions of chocolate candies they produce each day? Will Hershey fair any better?

While the ladies lose weight candy makers will lose their jobs. Are the ladies of this country actually in control of our economic

structure? My advice to the men folks – buy your wife a bunch of M&M's and a good supply of Hershey chocolates.

Don't you have at least a little concern for Mars, Inc. and the world famous Hershey bar producers?

While we men folk seldom enter into a lose weight resolution we do end up suffering – but in an opposite way. When our ladies keep on talking about food, it causes men to also think about food and we eat even more than normal and put on additional weight.

Thanksgiving Day has come and gone. Christmas eve and Christmas morning is just around the corner. Santa will be back at his home at the North Pole. Rudolph will be found in Santa's garage having his red nose batteries charged. I wonder, when flying around the world does Rudolf ever have a loose connection or have corrosion cause his red nose to fail?

It has been announced that Cornell University researchers have identified a family of microbes called Christensenellaceae that appears to help people stay lean. Apparently the Cornell University teams suggest that having an abundance of these microbes sufficient to help people stay lean may be genetic.

Some day it may be possible to have the Christensenellaceae clan adopt us! It was suggested also that rising rates of obesity may be due in part to increased use of antibiotics and that antibiotics may be wiping out good bacteria.

I'm sure that on occasion you have wondered who

is really in charge of the "business" of the United States. It would appear that the head person in charge of the "Yes we will spend," is working overtime. His counterpart in charge of the "No we will not spend," quit with so many of the Obama staff quitters.

At any rate – maybe the "Don't Spend" department never did exist.

Can you imagine this? Cancer is one of the deadliest enemies and most costly this country has ever faced. Our federal government allocates about \$12 and a half billion annually to fight cancer. I believe the death count of American citizens caused by cancer is over 300,000. That is three hundred thousand U.S. citizens each and every year.

Have you ever heard of the F-35 fighter jet airplane? No – but you certainly know of some family who has been torn apart by cancer.

The F-35 has now cost you and me and our family of U.S. citizens over \$400 billion. It seems to be a military leader in other countries is more important than saving members of our own families. Mr. Obama – members of Congress – along with military leaders – come on, have a heart. Stop spending where it does not save Americans and save our own people.

\$12.5 billion to stop cancer and \$400 billion for an airplane that cannot be trusted to turn properly in flight and remains grounded? Come on, think.

Isn't love grand? Henry stood at the edge of Niagara Falls when his son came near him and said, "Mommy says for you to come away from the falls or give me your wallet and the sandwiches for lunch."

Paddy was asked by his city cousin, "Why is a pint of Irish cream so much more than a half gallon of milk?" "Simple," Paddy said, "it cost more to train the cows to sit on small bottles."

When the president was caught in another lie, a reporter asked, "Mr. President, what have you got to say about this?" He answered, "It's filed under executive privilege."

On the not-so-light side:

Why has our president decided to ignore the honored and proven way of governing by establishing laws via Congress and the President of the United States? What is his motive? It would appear his intention is step on/shove around the men and women we voted into office to represent all of the American citizens. How can his fellow party members stand for him ignoring their honored positions?

I have great faith in our Christ-honoring Christmas season and day. Are we going to be forced by a few non-believers to celebrate a Christ-less Christmas? I doubt that our Heavenly Father will ignore this insult. I know I can't. I trust this time of year will be a Merry Christmas time for you and your loved ones, and not A Christ-ignoring, Happy Holiday.

Fred Lee



## Chocolate Peppermint Crinkles

Prep time: 30 minutes  
Chill time: 1 hour or overnight  
Cook time: 8-10 minutes per batch

Yield: 6 dozen cookies

- 2 1/4 cups all-purpose flour
- 1/4 cup unsweetened cocoa powder
- 1 1/2 teaspoons baking powder
- 1/2 teaspoon salt
- 2 cups granulated sugar
- 1 package (12 ounces) or 2 cups semisweet chocolate chips, melted, cooled
- 3 eggs, room temperature
- 1/2 cup vegetable oil
- 1 teaspoon peppermint extract or vanilla
- 1/3 cup powdered sugar, sifted
- 1/4 cup crushed peppermint candies or candy canes
- 1/3 cup granulated sugar, for rolling

Mix flour, cocoa powder, baking powder and salt in large bowl

Combine sugar, cooled chocolate, eggs, oil and peppermint extract in mixer bowl. Beat on medium speed until blended. Gradually add flour mixture, beating on low speed until blended.

Refrigerate, covered, until firm enough to shape, about 1 hour or overnight.

Heat oven to 350°F.

Mix powdered sugar and crushed candy in small bowl. Work with 1/3 of dough at a time, keeping remaining dough refrigerated. Shape dough into 1-inch balls; roll in granulated sugar first and then in crushed candy mixture. Place 2 inches apart on parchment paper-lined or ungreased baking sheets.

Bake in oven until lightly browned, 8-10 minutes. Cool on baking sheets 1-2 minutes. Remove to wire racks; cool completely.

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## Prep Your Devices for Travel

(Family Features)

The busiest travel weekend of the year is just around the corner and a smart traveler knows that before you hit the road here in the U.S. or head overseas, you do some planning and prep. Wardrobe, medications, itinerary- but what about your phone? Have you made sure you're maximizing your phone's usefulness and minimizing your costs? These travel prep tips will help you get the most out of your phone and help you save money.

### Get the Right Gear

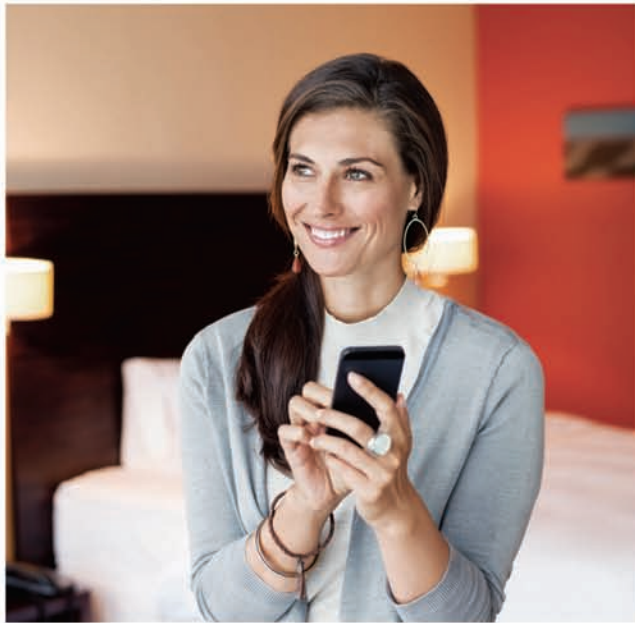
Smartphone? Tablet? Both? - Depending on the length of your trip, consider whether you need to bring all your devices, or just a few. Today's smartphones are mini-computers with access to maps, powerful mini-cameras, and tons of entertainment apps. If you want to travel light, consider leaving the camera and tablet at home and invest in upgrading to a larger screened smartphone like the Samsung Galaxy S5 or the LG G3.

Chargers - For overseas travel, invest in an extra charger with an international plug for the region where you are traveling or look for adapters that will let you charge in multiple countries. You may want to look for one with a surge protector built in. Other options are wireless charging pads or USB battery packs. Check out T-Mobile.com for the best travel accessories for your device.

### Check Your Data Plan

You'll probably use a lot more data than usual when you're traveling. Make sure you have the right data plan to cover those map downloads and Facebook photo posts. Internationally, calling and texting back home can be expensive and can quickly add up to hundreds of dollars a day or more. To call and text while traveling, you have a few options:

Check your plan - Call your network provider and find out what you already pay for and if you need to do anything to beef up your data. If you have a Simple



Choice plan from T-Mobile, unlimited data and texting is already included in your plan at no additional cost in 120+ countries and destinations.

Turn Off Data Roaming - If you're not with T-Mobile, avoid hefty fees by turning off data roaming on your phone under "settings". It will save you money, but severely limits your communication options.

Use Wi-Fi - Whether traveling in the U.S. or abroad, Wi-Fi is pretty much everywhere in the world and many of today's new smartphones are equipped with Wi-Fi Calling capabilities. In the U.S., you can use Wi-

Fi at coffee shops, hotels and even campsites. When traveling abroad, use local Wi-Fi to make unlimited, free calls back to the States from virtually anywhere. You can also boost your Wi-Fi coverage at home with a T-Mobile Personal CellSpot to make sure you get full-bar coverage.

### Stock up On Apps

As always, make sure your phone is loaded up with the right apps for the best connection everywhere you go.

Free Wi-Fi Finder - You'll never be without the proper

connection with this useful app, which scans your current location for Wi-Fi hotspots nearby.

GoGo Talk and Text - Stay in touch in flight! GoGo is offering free, unlimited texting and visual voicemail access on all U.S.-based airline flights exclusively to T-Mobile customers.

HopStop - Get all your public transportation options at your fingertips. You'll find information on metros and buses, biking and walking directions, and maps to help you get around. ■

*If all difficulties were known at the outset of a long journey, most of us would never start out at all.*  
~ Dan Rather

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## For the love of family... Krizia Martin, Clinton

By Diego Phillips



It's the love of family and tradition that come first to the current owners of the Krizia Martin boutique on historic West Park Row in Clinton.

Sisters Corrine Gates of Clinton and Gail Welch of San Diego, CA, are the standard bearers for the eight-year-old luxury clothing shop named for its founder, Christin Martin.

Christin chose the name Krizia for her store because it's the Polish version of her first name.

"With a dream to integrate the things she loved into the village she loved, our sister Christin Martin opened her landmark store in 2006," Corrine says. "Her passion for life, family and friends, her generosity, elegance and grace are all expressed through the stylish and timeless lines of clothing and giftware she chose."

But then tragedy threw a hurdle into that young founder's life. "While she was able to see her dream come to fruition, Chris' life was cut short with a diagnosis of leukemia," Corrine says.

After her death, the two remaining sisters took over the shop. Today, the sisters and family members keep Christin's dream alive, carrying on the mission she started.

The elegant store interior features distinctive clothing for women, men and children and giftware from some of the finest companies in the world, including Lilly Pulitzer, Vineyard Vines, Patagonia, Barbour, Lacoste, Joules, Simon Pearce, Juliska and Mariposa.

"We offer a personalized boutique shopping experience," Corrine notes. Other services include complimentary gift wrapping, gift certificates, a Wish List and a Gift Registry.

The most popular items sold include Vineyard Vines

sheep shirts, alpaca socks, Barbour waxed cotton jackets and Patagonia outerwear. Prices range from \$5 to \$500.

"We're open from Black Friday until Christmas seven days a week," Corrine says of meeting her customers' holiday shopping needs. Upcoming events include Ladies Night Out on Thursday, Dec. 11, and Men's Night on Thursday, Dec. 18.

commerce site."

Corinne relates a tale from one of those satisfied customers. "One of our regular customers says it best: 'When someone walks into a party with a Krizia Martin bag, you just know you're going to love what's inside. It means someone wants you to feel special, because Krizia Martin has the gifts you just can't find anywhere else.'"

The sisters plan to stay abreast of the current trends in the industry by using social media and extending their Internet presence. Those plans include "increasing connectivity with our customers across the U.S. by enhancing our mobile app and promoting strong business partnerships locally by collaborating on special events to attract customers and give back to the community," Corrine says.

She concludes that for the fashion industry to be sustainable economically, it must be sustainable not only socially but environmentally as well. "We are proud to carry products from companies that actively demonstrate this concept," Corinne says. "All of us should be challenged to look beyond the near term and work to create the kind of positive world we'd like to see in the future."

On this writer's holiday wish list from Krizia Martin's for his wife and daughter: a dozen or so of the alpaca socks he keeps hearing and hearing about. And there's also a must-have wool scarf and hat.... ■

***The elegant store interior features distinctive clothing for women, men and children and giftware from some of the finest companies in the world, including Lilly Pulitzer, Vineyard Vines, Patagonia, Barbour, Lacoste, Joules, Simon Pearce, Juliska and Mariposa.***

Integrity in their work comes first at Krizia Martin's both onsite on the Internet. "We pride ourselves on personal service and getting to know our customers' tastes," Corrine says. "Customers from our website tell us we have the best personal interaction and attention to detail that they've ever had from an internet

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# BBG's

By Diego Phillips

If you ever find that you can't come home again, just follow in the footsteps of BBG's co-owner Chris Carleo of Whitesboro.

After a distinguished banking and accounting career in New York City since 1984, she and her business co-owner, Donna Vivero from Queens, say they opted for the big time of the Mohawk Valley. Donna's background includes a degree in the fine arts and a two-decades-long experience planning conventions for a non-profit agency.

We came back to show Central New Yorkers that you can have fun and run a good solid business built on treating customers with respect, Chris says.

The result: Beers, Bites and Games — the popular BBG's bar, snack and game emporium at 4951 Commercial Drive in Yorkville.

Here's what to expect on a first-time visit to BBG's: a 3,500-square-

foot open space that includes a restaurant seating area on one side and a gaming floor on the other. You can watch your friends or kids from any place in the building, Donna says.

The back of the building also boasts a 20-foot long L-shaped bar. The back wall of the bar—with 18 beer taps—is also the cooler wall, which allows the beer and lines to be housed inside the cooler, Chris says. This gives us the ideal temperature for the beer, she adds. There's also a VIP section above the bar that overlooks the entire space.

Specialties of the fun bar include the signature dishes Buffalo Chicken Meatballs and Croissant Bread pudding, among many other tasty bites, a rotating selection of craft beers and 12-foot TV screens with HD projectors. That's the best way to catch the SU games and Sunday Ticket, Donna says.

This month marks the second anniversary of the business. Why do the

owners do it? We decided we wanted to be our own bosses. We spent over a year researching different areas and businesses and BBG's grew from ideas on what we liked to do when we went out, Chris says.

Special events range from a jazz night to a Brushes and Bubbly monthly. Chris and Donna like to spotlight micro-breweries and local products. Craft beer has been huge in New York City and has been taking off in Upstate, Donna says.

Future expansion includes showcasing more of the craft beers of the area with tastings and broadening the entertainment and sports options. We want to have more league play and rotate more live entertainment and events, Chris says.

The owners believe the bar and restaurant industry will always be relevant. This industry will continue to evolve, attempting new food profiles, new flavors and new ingredients, Chris says. We hope to be part of it and



add to it what we can.

And Chris says that coming back home is where it all starts. It's a community where everyone is connected to each other in one way or another. We look out for each other, she says. It is one of the few places where by the end of dinner, you discover that the waitress is your high school friend's son or daughter, or the person at the bar is your neighbor's best friend. It's a constant community connection.

So in Chris's and Donna's eyes, going to BBG's is just like being at home, but with a fun twist. It's a Chucky Cheese for adults, but still great for the whole family, Chris concludes. ■

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Pictured are BBG's co-owners Donna Vivero, left, and Chris Carleo

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# It's ALL about the mind, body and spirit

## *The Acai Berry and its magical colon cleansing ability, what's all this talk?*

by **Malissa Allen**

For several years now acai berry has become famous, even being labeled the "perfect food from nature." Numerous articles are reporting the health benefits of the acai colon cleanse.

The berry has gained the spotlight for claiming responsibility for helping millions with weight loss,

assisting with body ailments and the slowing of aging. But, how much truth is really behind the claims?

The answer to all these inquiries is, well, it sort of does. The companies that are highly promoting that the Acai Berry actually does clean the colon is a bit misleading.

Why? Well, because there isn't such a thing as an acai colon cleanse per se'. The story began due to the berries offering detoxification agents, and many of the toxins originate and are found in the colon.

The Acai Berry has helped with detoxing the colon just not the total cleansing many reporters have written.

However, the colon cleanse will not accomplish the same results as a colon cleanse specialty product. Cleansing the colon does have its good points to it, it just requires a bit more than the acai berry.

### Pros

When it comes to the positive effects that the Acai Berry has on the body and its benefits of the gift from nature, the list becomes very long.

Although the Acai Berry is great for detoxing the body, suggesting that a full colon cleanse will occur is simply untrue. There are however many benefits such as;

- 1). Rapid and easy weight loss.
- 2). Fat metabolized at a higher rate.
- 3). Energy levels increase
- 4). Stronger and healthier immune system
- 5). Circulatory system improvement
- 6). Heart health, increasing
- 7). Cancer fighter
- 8). Clearer and better focused thinking
- 9). Looking younger which causes feeling younger and more active

### Cons

As with every product on the market with every pro usually there stands an ad-

verse con waiting in line. The Acai Berry colon cleanse is no different.

### Some of its negative points are:

Vomiting and diarrhea: Beings the berry's main function is to clean your system out of excess waste it does this by giving your bowels and colon an extra workout.

Because the supplement acts as a laxative the individual can quickly become dehydrated leading to headaches, nausea and body cramps. Ignoring these symptoms can lead to more severe symptoms such as an imbalance in the body's electrolytes.

### Headaches and throwing up

Taking the acai cleanse can lead to having constant headaches, as well as nausea and throwing up. Again, dehydration being the culprit, due to the excessive amounts of liquids leaving the body.

The four types of headaches you may experience are;  
1). Muscle contractions  
2). Vascular  
3). Inflammatory  
4). Traction

More severe headaches lead to nausea and throwing up causing dizziness and fainting spells.

The reaction may occur within seconds of taking the supplement, or it could be hours, even days later with symptoms ranging from mild to severe.

If you have an allergy to berries more than likely, you will experience an allergic reaction to the Acai Berry as well.

### Weight loss

Although, no medical research has noted that the Acai Berry causes weight loss many individuals have reported losing weight while cleansing the colon.

If you are overweight, this may not seem so bad, but for those that are either underweight or suffer from an eating disorder this could lead to more serious problems.

However, most of the weight loss has been accredited to water and waste loss instead of actual fat due to the supplement being a laxative type product.

### Conclusion

As with most supplements there isn't enough research backing the story behind the cleansing of the colon by any other means than simply removing toxins and bacteria that have made their home in your colon.

It does have its positive results as well as promoting adverse reactions in the body. As with anything, taking the acai berry products in moderation is highly advised.

It is best to consult with your physician prior to starting a diet and/or cleansing or detoxing your body with any chemical or supplements. ■



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# Perfection

By David Griffin  
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I was taken to the orphanage on Christmas night. We had started off for supper at Aunt Sue's over snow covered roads. Dad drove us through the dark, the tires crunching on frozen snow as the old Ford slowly pushed beams of yellow light down an empty gray road. I was already missing the Christmas toys I'd left at home, but was hungry for the cold turkey sandwiches my aunt served each year.

My ten year old big brother was in the front seat and I was in the back, the normal

building, blackened with age. Above us lights shone from dozens of windows, all against a black sky holding a billion stars. Before I could say, "Where are we?" my father hopped out of the car, reached in back, grabbed the cardboard carton and, laughing, threw the blanket over my head. I pulled it off just in time to see a box full of gaily wrapped Christmas presents carried up the steps of St. Joseph's Orphanage. I admit being disappointed I wasn't getting one more present on that festive day. Selfishly, I felt the same way each year after when we made the delivery. I suppose I should have been happy

anything down to the store. Sometimes, he made assumptions about what we boys no longer needed. He was the tidy sort, unlike his sons. I have to say my Dad was a pretty selfless man. He was grateful for everything the world provided him, working all his life, scrimping and not saving much, preferring to give it away.

More than just money, my father often gave his time and his help. At the newspaper, he worked with a young fellow named Don, whose wife suffered from post partum depression after the birth of twin girls. One afternoon, at wit's end, she put the babies

out as he slowly got some courage back. Years later, Don told me my father saved his life.

As Dad got older, he began to show a few flaws in his character. The man I thought was perfect turned out to be human. As I gained in years, feeling splendidly faultless myself, I noticed his shortcomings more than mine until I survived my own children's adolescent behaviors. Anyone who raises teenagers and still feels above reproach suffers a grave mental disturbance.

As he grew more philosophical, I felt comfortable asking him where his sense of giving came from. I thought he would deny it or, if not, he'd mention his religion or maybe a mentor from long ago who had influenced him.

"My father," he said. He was a very generous man. This surprised me. From what I knew of Grandpa, he would not have often set a good example.

I have sometimes wished my heart was as big as Dad's, but I seldom compared myself to him. We were two different people, and besides, I would have lost. He set a good example for his

sons, but he wasn't perfect, and that allowed me to not expect perfection of myself. I sometimes walked in his footsteps and other times a good distance to the side. But I hope to have set an example a few times in my life. Those who live with me have seen my warts. So did my Dad, but he laughed and threw a blanket of love over them. ■



arrangement to keep us separated when we got tired and grouchy toward the end of a long day. I asked Dad at least three times what was under the old blanket covering the large box beside me, but he didn't answer, except to tell me to leave it alone. Halfway to Aunt Sue's house, Dad abruptly turned the car left up a long steep driveway, surprising my brother and me. In a few moments we came to a tall brick

on those Christmas nights to not be dropped off with the gifts.

My father had a big heart. In addition to the city's orphanages, he had a life-long devotion to the St. Vincent de Paul store for the needy in Utica. My brothers and I would joke, "Hide it, or Dad will give it away to St. Vincent's!" As teens, we cornered him and made him promise he'd check with us before taking

down for a nap and wrote a note saying it was either her or the babies. She didn't want to kill them. Don found her body when he came home from work. He couldn't imagine how he would care for two girls and had thoughts of following his wife to her grave. My father spent each evening with Don over the space of a few weeks, helping with the infants. Dad sat listening to the young father cry it

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# A Bad Hair Day Story with a Happy Ending

by **Troy Bishopp, The Grass Whisperer**

My friend Kathy Voth is going through a bit of upheaval as she left her beloved Loveland, Colorado with its majestic mountains and country roads for the hot, irrigated climate of Tucson, Arizona because her husband Peter got a new job. Adding to the stress of moving and navigating a bustling city, she got an epic bad haircut at the new salon in town. Bad hair day: Ain't nobody got time for that!

Being in a house with four ladies for the better part of my life, I could feel her pain because I've had to lend a sympathetic ear or shoulder more than a few times when a

haircut doesn't go as planned. I'm reminded of a quote by Cat Deeley who said, Everybody has a bad hair day, but us girls still like to be told we look nice even if we don't feel like we do.

In re-creating the hair hack job incident, Kathy surmised she might have discovered 3 culprits for her loss of locks: She wasn't too clear at describing what she wanted; she should never get her hair cut by the same person who just cut her husband's hair and if you DO get your hair cut by the same person who cuts your husband's hair, NEVER joke that maybe you should both have the same hairstyle.

The Saturday morning

scene at the salon is bustling as the couple arrives together. She sits in a chair near Peter and watches him get a trim while looking through magazines to get an idea of what she might like. That's when she made an offhanded joke about getting the same style as her husband. Really, it was just a joke and she thought everyone was pretty clear on that. In fact, Peter said, "Don't even joke about that!"

She found a picture of Emma Stone (or was it Emma Watson?) with short hair and said, "There, that's something like what I have, but shorter. Make me Emma Stone." By then, Peter was done and she got situated in the chair so the

stylist and she could talk about the cut.

Here's how Kathy described what happened next:

"I told the stylist, I'd like it shorter in back, and then it's so thick that it gets really bushy when it grows out so I'd like to thin that out and then I really want to keep the length in front," said Kathy. Also, I like how it looks when it goes behind my ears. Oh, and I have a cowlick here and here. And I used to worry about showing my ears, but I'm ok with that now." She swears that's what she said!

The stylist decides to do a dry cut because when people are nervous it lets them see the results sooner. Kathy goes along with it because she's never cut hair. The stylist starts cutting the back while Peter goes out to make some calls on his phone. She says she's going to make the back shorter and then do some undercutting to reduce the volume.

When she's done with the back and moving to the front right side, Kathy sees her first problem. She forgot to point out that her right ear is bigger and sticks out more than the left ear. As she cuts, she gets it just the right

**Bad Hair 27**

## Before





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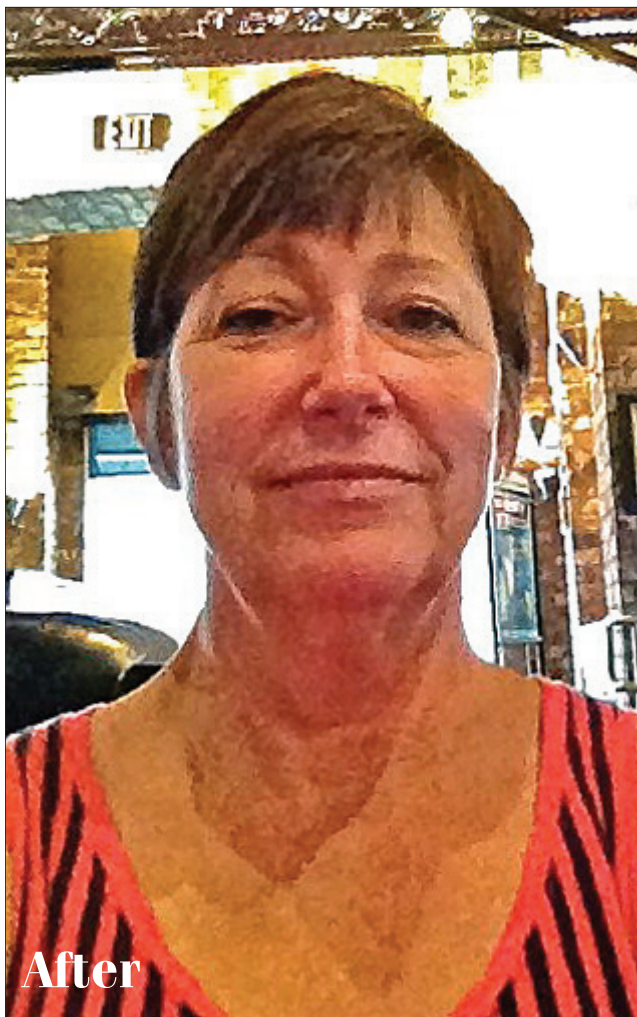


**Bad Hair from 26**

length that the hair sticks out at the top of the ear instead of falling nicely

the middle of the back of my head down to my neck.

When the styling is



like it should. Apparently the solution was to make it shorter, and shorter, and even shorter. Then she tries to match the left side to that.

I was trying to make conversation, says Kathy. And I learn that she's an intern who cuts hair only on Saturdays as part of the salon's training program. She'll be done with her 2 years in November. I'm still not nervous. She seems so confident.

After a shampoo they head back to the chair to work on a messy hairstyle, as this chic-look is something Kathy mentioned liking. But at this point, Kathy says, my head was feeling very weird. I don't know how to describe it. It was like a kind of buzzy feeling from

to rearrange it a bit and then her hand travels to the back of her head.

OH. MY. GOD. Kathy thinks. I have no hair back there. It's like 1/2 an inch long MAX. OH. MY. GOD.

Peter sees her panic. He's been watching for the last 30 minutes from the adjacent chair. He immediately says, "Kathy, it looks really great! I really like it! You look awesome! I know you're worried about the length right now, but in a couple days, you're going to really like it. I promise. It's great!" The youngster stylist points out how the new boy haircut is very feminine.

The stylist and Peter walk her to the front of the salon, one on either side, like they'll support her if she falls over from hair shock. The owner is at the front and says, "Your hair looks great! You look great!" In obvious dismay, she ushers a weak thank you, all the time trying to behave normally and not act like someone

whose head has just been shaved.

Kathy decided that the only choice she had was to rock it the best she could. The good news is she can save money on haircuts and it takes almost no time at all to get ready. And if it is doing something embarrassing (like standing straight up when she gets out of bed), Kathy just runs

some water on it and smooths it out.

Now, 4 months later, Kathy is used to her new hair. The beautiful thing about my hair is that I suddenly feel free and when I look at pictures of me with long hair I think I just don't look right.

Kathy says that some folks ask her if she was angry when she got her

bad haircut. No, she says. I was just shocked. And now it's all turned out for the best. I just think it was a funny way to get to this point.

Life is an endless struggle full of frustrations and challenges but eventually you find a hair style you like

~ Unknown author ■

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## 'Tis the Season to Safeguard Your Identity

(Family Features)

The hustle and bustle of the holiday season is an exciting time. But from the crowded malls to the big online markdowns, a silent threat lurks - one with the ability to wipe out your good financial standing and make it a not-so-jolly holiday for you and your family.

Just as you would assess your holiday gift budget, it's equally important to

status of your identity, taking special precautions to help safeguard your information.

### Giving information is inevitable

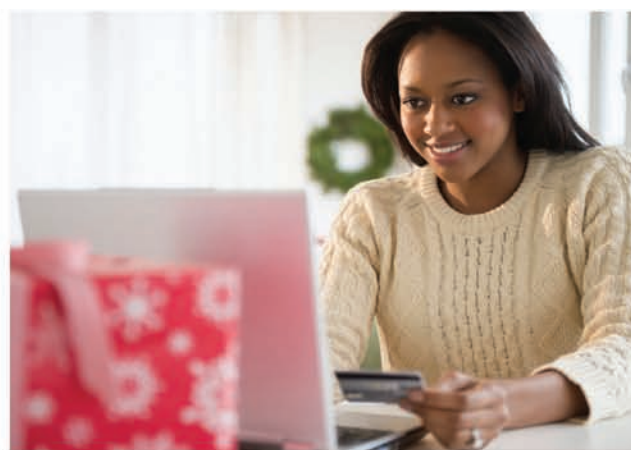
In the digital world, sharing your identity to obtain credit, make online holiday purchases or even receive coupons is commonplace and necessary - but it opens the door to new risks. Today, data breaches are frequent and they can put your

wrong hands.

In fact, a new study of more than 1,200 consumers conducted by Morpace on behalf of LifeLock, a comprehensive identity theft protection service, found that almost two-thirds (64 percent) of data breach victims experienced it within the last 12 months. And while data breaches can certainly cause considerable damage to someone's financial standing, the stakes in identity theft are exponentially higher.

The survey also found that about half of respondents who experienced identity theft do not know how their information was obtained. While most people assume these criminal acts occur to only those with an online presence, anyone can be a target. Even unique, permanent credentials, such as Social Security numbers and birthdates, can live online regardless of an owner's physical presence or real-world activity.

Identity theft can have uncontrollable and



significant long-term financial implications, with thieves going as far as opening a bank loan, or committing tax fraud in your name.

### Take protective measures

The specialists at LifeLock offer these tips to help protect you while shopping this holiday season:

- Know where your info goes. Many online stores offer helpful apps for quicker, more efficient holiday shopping. Before you download any app, make sure it comes from a reputable source. Copycat apps exist which, once downloaded, may capture your personal

information and use it for fraudulent purchases. Overall, it is important to know where your information is being stored - whether on your device, the hard drive of your computer or in a file at home.

- Be vigilant on public Wi-Fi. Whether at your local coffee shop or while traveling, do not transact on public Wi-Fi and be wary of any passwords you enter. It's always safer if you can wait until you get to a secure or private network.

- Change passwords frequently. Make sure the passwords you use when setting up accounts with

online merchants are complex and difficult for a thief to figure out. It is always a good idea to change passwords on a regular basis - especially with banks, email accounts and social networking sites - to add an extra layer of protection to your personal data.

- Consider using a credit card. When you choose your debit card over your credit card, you may be exposing yourself to more risk. The most you'd have to pay for unauthorized use of your credit card is \$50, no matter when you report it. If you report your debit card lost or stolen more than two days after you learn about the loss or theft, but less than 60 days after your statement is sent, you could lose up to \$500. And if you wait more than 60 days after your statement is sent, you could be out all the money taken from your account.

As a consumer educated on identity theft, you'll have some peace of mind and be more able to focus on the fun of the shopping season. For more information, visit LifeLock.com. ■

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# Lights



by Al Dorantes

In the ubiquitous holiday classic movie, national lampoon s Christmas vacation Clark W. Griswold calls for, 250 strands of lights; 100 individual bulbs per strand for a grand total of 25,000 imported Italian twinkle lights. It was just the start of the Griswold s family Christmas. Some families try to follow suit. Christmas lights have become a huge part of the holiday tradition.

Every year, just after Halloween, I get the call from my mother. We need your help with the Christmas lights.

I sigh deeply every time. It's not simply hanging up a string of lights and calling it a day. It is a process. An all day process. It is work. There are 2 twenty five foot high trees and dozens of led displays; Santa Claus, elves, reindeer; presents, cursive script spelling out, Merry Christmas, and more. Lights need to be attached to frames and frames need to be placed in the lawn or on the house. Each light has its place.

The trees alone have thousands of led bulbs and they all need to be checked before the trees are put up. The strings of lights are attached to the top of the poles; each strand raised like a flag. Each connection is reinforced with electrical tape and each strand attached to the frame at the base of the tree. A pair of stars sit atop each tree and each star has its own set of lights wires, connections, and bulbs.

Once the trees are raised the other decorations have to be put up. The illuminated wreath on the front of the house requires a ladder. The ladder is hauled out from the garage. Up the ladder I go dragging the 50 pound wreath with me. Every time the ladder wiggles I mutter under my breath. Reindeer pull a sleigh and all their lights need to be checked before that display is mounted in the side yard. The cherry tree gets a blanket of lights. Half a dozen Christmas trees dot the yard and each one is secured to the ground with steaks and guy-wires. The guy wires mean that the yard needs to be raked beforehand because raking is

impossible once all the wires and power cords are in place.

It is an all day project just putting the trees up. And, even though we do it every year, something always goes wrong. One year I put the poles of the big trees together backward and the whole thing had to come down, come apart, and get put back together the correct way. Every little snafu results in a barrage of curse words and gesticulations reserved for the most heinous events.

At least this year the weather cooperated and we had a beautiful day, sunny skies, and mild temperatures. We have put the decorations up in the pouring rain or freezing cold. Nothing goes together easily in the cold. As the temperature drops the cursing goes up.

In the end, after the complaining, the curse words, and the hard work I know helping with the lights is the right thing. I once asked my mother why she puts up all the lights every year. The electric bill alone would deter most people. She said simply, The kids love

them. During the holiday season between thanksgiving and Christmas hundreds of cars pass the house. You can see smiling little faces looking at the lights. Adults too!

There are certain traditions that each family has. Some families go caroling and some go sledding. We put up enough lights to be seen from a satellite in geosynchronous orbit. We turn on the Christmas lights between dinner and pie on Thanksgiving Day. It has become a tradition. It is important to hold on to these traditions. Hold on to them as long as possible because it is traditions that tie us all together.

Merry Christmas! If you miss it. It is the house are in Herkimer drive by that glows. ■ and take a look; you can t

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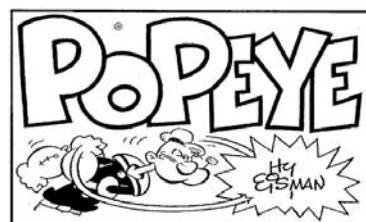


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## Amber Waves



by Dave T. Phipps

*Change is the law of life.  
And those who look only  
to the past or present are  
certain to miss the future.*  
~ John F. Kennedy

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

Answer

Weekly SUDOKU

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

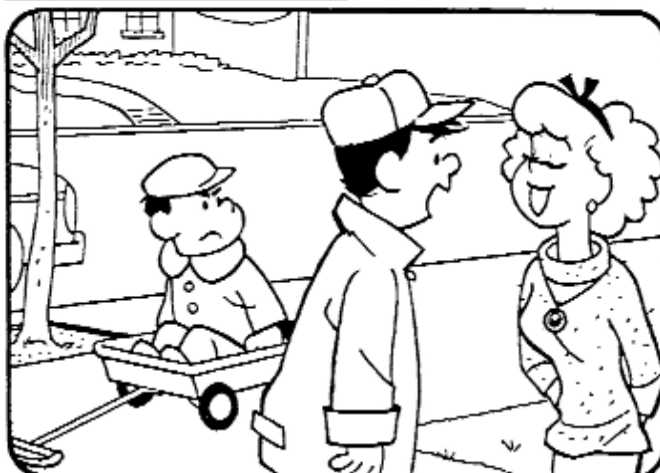
Solution time: 25 mins.

Answers

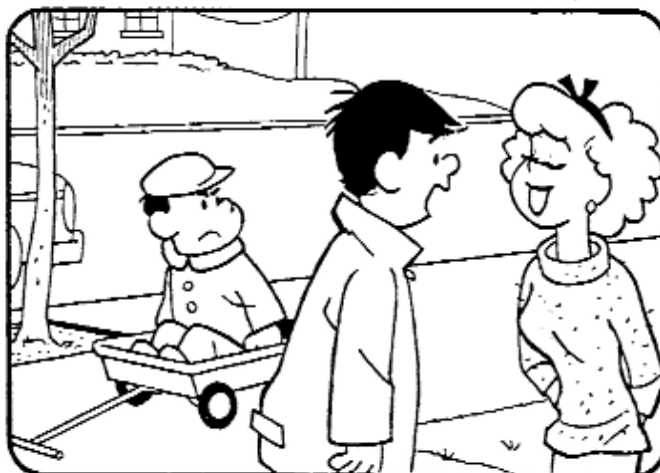
King Crossword

## HOCUS-FOCUS

BY HENRY BOLTOFF



Find at least six differences in details between panels.



DIFFERENCES: 1. Path is missing. 2. Collar is different. 3. Wagon handle is different. 4. Cap is missing. 5. Cuff is missing. 6. Pendant is missing.

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## King Crossword

### ACROSS

- 1 Church section
- 5 Pump up the volume
- 8 Blue hue
- 12 Columns' crossers
- 13 Grazing land
- 14 Crooned
- 15 One use for a GPS
- 17 Tresses
- 18 Boredom
- 19 Volcanic spewings
- 21 Faucet problem
- 24 Squid squirt
- 25 Mexican money
- 28 Transaction
- 30 Eisenhower
- 33 X rating?
- 34 Point of view
- 35 Yuletide beverage
- 36 — carte
- 37 Novice
- 38 Exchange premium
- 39 Bookkeeper (Abbr.)
- 41 Winter forecast
- 43 Two-piece suit
- 46 Marconi's medium
- 50 Actress Falco

1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11
12					13				14	
15				16					17	
18							19	20		
			21		22	23		24		
25	26	27			28	29			30	31
32				34					35	
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			39	40			41	42		
43	44				45			46	47	48
49					51	52	53			
54					55				56	
57					58				59	

- 51 Controversial oil-extraction method
- 54 Landlord's due
- 55 Enjoyment
- 56 Always
- 57 Lady —
- 58 Still
- 59 Stupefy
- 6 Chaps
- 7 Senate staffer
- 8 Pale
- 9 Duck-speak
- 10 One
- 11 Taj Mahal city
- 16 White wine cocktail
- 20 Leave at the altar
- 22 One way to stand by
- 23 Bosc and Bartlett
- 25 Sch. org.
- 26 Conger, for one
- 27 Between-meals
- 29 Soon
- 31 Pond carp
- 32 Id counter-part
- 34 Musial of baseball
- 38 Blew reveille
- 40 Michelangelo masterwork
- 42 Killer whale
- 43 Floating ice mass
- 44 Notion
- 45 Unsettled
- 47 Prima donna
- 48 Don Juan's mother
- 49 Shrek, e.g.
- 52 Regret
- 53 Pismire

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## Weekly SUDOKU

by Linda Thistle

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

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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## Chase Chills Away with Cozy Crafts

### (Family Features)

Let the blustery winds blow while you stay warm inside and while away the wintry hours with cozy crafts that keep you warm.

Start by updating your favorite reading chair or couch with comfy new pillows that invite you to grab a blanket and burrow in tight. Easy Envelope Pillow Covers, a project from the crafting experts at Jo-Ann Fabric and Craft Stores, combine velour and faux fur fabric for a great texture you can't wait to snuggle into.

Once you're tucked in tight, chase the chill away with a mug filled with your favorite coffee, cocoa or cider. Sip in style with a DIY Scalloped Sharpie Mug. These pretty pieces also make great gifts, especially when filled with bite-size treats and wrapped with a shimmering ribbon. Or if you're planning on entertaining, make several in different colors to help your guests keep tabs on their own toasty beverages.

### Easy Envelope Pillow Covers

Project courtesy of Marie Chorak at Blooming Homestead

Crafting time: 1-2 hours

Skill level: Some experience necessary

### Supplies and Tools:

3/4 yard velour upholstery fabric

Rotary cutter/mat

Ruler

Sewing machine

Basic sewing supplies

Thread to match fabrics

4 wooden buttons

24-inch-by-24-inch pillow insert

1/2 yard faux fur fabric

12-inch-by-18-inch pillow insert



**Basic Envelope Pillow Cover:** Trim velour fabric to 25 inches by 54 inches with rotary cutter on mat. Fold over fabric on 25-inch ends and hem.

Fold length of fabric onto itself, right sides together, and measure a 24-inch square. Pin to hold it together. Sew each open edge using a straight seam with 1/2-inch seam allowance.

Remove pins and turn cover right side out.

Using coordinating thread, sew buttons onto outside flap enclosure for added embellishment.

Place cover over pillow insert.

**Faux Fur Envelope Pillow:** 1. Repeat steps above, starting with faux fur fabric trimmed to 19 inches by 30 inches.

### DIY Scalloped Sharpie Mug

Project courtesy of Mallory Nikolaus at Classy Clutter

Crafting time: 1-2 hours

Skill level: No experience necessary



### Supplies and Tools:

Ceramic mug

Gold Sharpie Permanent Marker

Bottle cap (approximately 1-inch diameter)

Rubbing alcohol

Cotton balls  
Candy

Clear cellophane gift wrap

Ribbon

Starting at the top of the mug, trace semi-circles with permanent marker in a scallop pattern, using the bottle cap as a guide.

Repeat until you reach desired number of scalloped rows. Add dots to scallop pattern if desired.

Use alcohol and cotton balls to dab away mistakes, if needed.

Fill mug with candy. Wrap mug with clear cellophane gift wrap and gather open ends at top; secure with ribbon. ■

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# Pack of Lies

By David Griffin  
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It's a wonder my ten year old lungs survived Christmas dinner at Aunt Margaret's home in the 1950s. Coal miners would have cleaner chest x-rays than any of us kids and adults who together inhaled at least a carton of cigarette smoke throughout the festive dinner and the long afternoon of desserts and exchanging gifts that followed. My mother smoked. Grandma, Aunt Margaret, and Uncle Harry, too. Great Aunt Rose, Uncle Bob and the Gearys who lived next door. On their way out to dinner at their daughter's house in Ilion, the Gearys stopped by to wish us Merry Christmas, leaving behind their contribution to the growing toxic plume of tar and nicotine.

We thought nothing of it. No regard to the health haz-

ard marred the celebration of the day. The Surgeon General was asleep through the 50s, or wasn't born yet, and the danger of first or second hand cigarette smoke was somehow not important to the media moguls who depended so much on tobacco for their advertising revenue. A popular magazine ad of the day pictured a physician smoking while he held up a pack of his favorite cigarettes. And yet, everyone knew someone who could no longer breathe well after years of smoking.

As the meal began the smoking lamp dimmed and flickered out. The air cleared slightly as the ham and roast of beef and turkey and mashed potatoes and gravy and squash and rutabaga and peas and cranberries and biscuits and mint jelly were brought from the kitchen and heaped on the dining room table.

As the smoke abated and the food began to arrive, I sat in famished anticipation, waiting for my mother to let go of my arm and allow me to reach for whatever dish came my way in the merry-go-round of food about to be set in motion.

Uncle Harry pronounced the blessing. He was given the task because he was a bachelor. True, the logic of that is not apparent, but neither were a hundred other family traditions I'd always meant to ask about.

Uncle Harry's way of saying the grace always intrigued me, especially when he was drinking. Polishing off his third high ball before dinner at half past noon, he stubbed out a Lucky Strike cigarette in the gold inlaid ashtray beside his dinner plate and began his invocation.

Voices around the table subsided as he raised his

arms above his head, bringing them about in a great circle to touch his finger tips together far above his head, as if he was performing an impromptu field sobriety test. His arms then dropped to his chest as his hands found each other and folded in prayer.

And now, he intoned, we thank the Great God Jehovah and all his angels. And His son, Little Baby Jesus. And all the saints, from Albert to Zachary, as well as all the Prophets, too numerous to name, but they know who they are. And, uh we wish everyone around this table a joyous season of gift-returning. And we wish all of you a fine dinner on Margaret's fine China. Eat hearty and stop when you get to the plate. Uh live a long life. Amen, and please pass the turnips.

The food now began to travel around the table and I practically inhaled a serving from each dish as it arrived. I loved every kind of food and

wasn't at all picky. I was always a good eater. I still am.

Dinner over, the Luckies and Camels and Chesterfields and Pall Malls and Old Golds came out. The snaps and clicks of all the Zippo lighters firing off one after another sounded like a company of riflemen cocking their weapons. As I worked on my dessert of cherry pie, smoke rolled across the table and reminded me of a Civil War battle film I had seen in our fourth grade class. My mind's eye saw soldiers stumbling through the woods, banging into trees, hacking and coughing as they struggled to find a breath of air.

There were no casualties here on this Christmas day, but the long-term effect of all that smoke had consequences. Despite his command to live a long life, Uncle Harry did not himself survive to a ripe old age. He suffered a fatal heart attack at age 50. The week

before, he told my Mom his chest felt tight and he would switch to a milder brand of cigarettes. But that didn't halt the rush of the prophets coming to meet him at heaven's gate, nor all the saints from A to Z following close behind. At his funeral, old friends and relatives gathered to remember a dear friend and brother and uncle. They slapped each other on the back in greeting and told the same old family stories, a harmless pack of lies that glossed over the hurt and loss and struggle and stumbling in all human life. Most of this hail-fellow camaraderie took place outside where they could smoke. Inside by the casket were those of us too young for tobacco. We were old enough to learn bad habits from our elders, but not smart enough to heed advice from the dead. Right before our eyes was a lesson that few of us were noting. Some lies came twenty to a pack. ■



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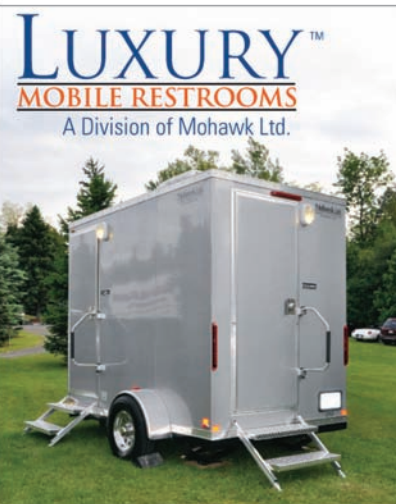


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