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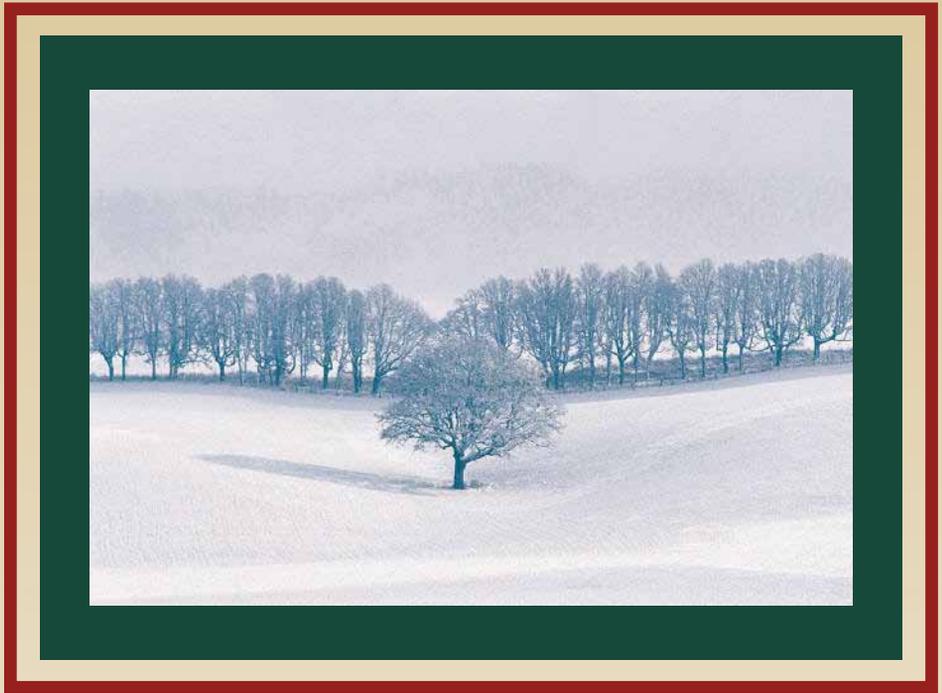
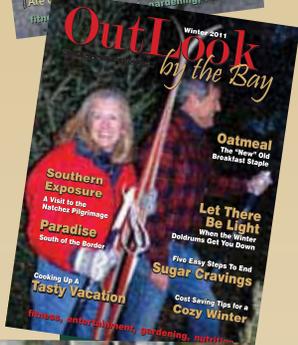
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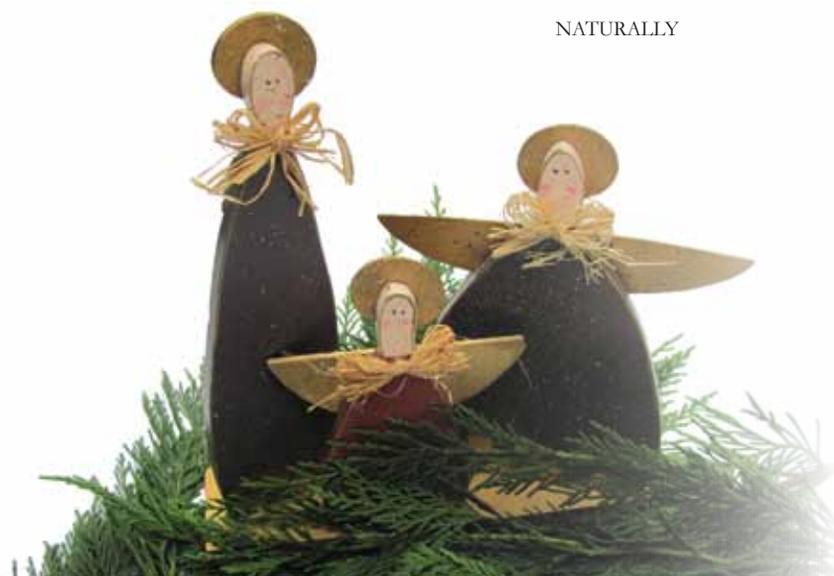


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ON THE COVER:

Preparing the mantle for the holidays at BayWoods of Annapolis are Dorothy Andrews one of the very first residents and who has played a pivotal role at BayWoods along with Barbara Guinee, from Reston, VA, who recently made BayWoods her new home. Both are looking forward to discovering all that Annapolis and the Chesapeake Bay have to offer in retirement living.

OutLook

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Did you know that the most challenging part of aging is that life no longer holds any surprises? That's what the two older ladies at the next table were chatting about while we were enjoying lunch recently at a local restaurant. This prompted my companion and me to ask, "How can that be?" We felt like we were surprised -- maybe delighted would be the operative word -- by most daily events. One of my friend's comments was how could she not be surprised or delighted when her granddaughter, during a recent visit, wrapped her arms around her neck, planted a sticky kiss on her cheek and said that they had the same eyes.

Here we are approaching the holidays with surprises around every corner, just waiting to be revealed -- like last year when a neighbor who we never see enough of dropped off a stollen. It's the traditional Christmas bread of Germany. We're not sure how she knew, but stollen is a family custom and it's both time-consuming and difficult to make. What an unexpected surprise to receive one still warm from the oven, relieving us of the chore of creating one. Then there was the surprise when a distant brother and wife, with whom we hadn't connected with in years, chose to join us for Thanksgiving. To top that, he cooked the turkey, which may have been the best we've ever enjoyed. And then how 'bout the surprise of the grandchildren deciding we needed to eat our turkey and all the trimmings outside -- just like the Pilgrims, they said. They set up a table, decorated it with Autumn leaves and the few remaining mums. The weather held and it was delightful.

My friend Jane is often surprised by the connections that she makes with people she meets, much like six degrees of separation. We discovered early on in our friendship that she was married in New Hampshire in a rather remote church. With some prompting she shared the name. I recognized it instantly. It was the church where my grandfather had been the rector.

Then there's the fun surprise of the thoughtful gifts from grandchildren who very carefully select just the right thing. Last year, it was birdseed because they knew of our fondness for watching visitors to our feeders through the Winter. Or when a good friend brought over a Norfolk Island pine with one gold star on the top. Here it is one year later, it's still alive, which is perhaps the biggest surprise. Having grandchildren provides more surprises than one could ever imagine: their rapid growth, their interpretations of what takes place around them, how traits from the family line begin to manifest themselves, their interest and delight in something explained to them, the similarities to their parents when they were young and the very pleasant surprise of observing their generosity and kindness toward others.

When travelling, there seems to be a surprise around every corner. The discovery of a quiet nook, or finding a friend who shares your enthusiasm for a foreign treasure, or finding something awe-inspiring that the guidebook didn't mention. Then there's the delight in finding treasures that are unique to different communities such as excellent local theaters like the Oquanquat Playhouse in Maine, which we recently discovered.

Taking a class is always a surprise, especially at this age when we've seen and heard most everything. But how nice it is to be surprised by what we didn't know. How about when we receive a note that someone took the time to handwrite to thank us for something we'd forgotten about. There's also the surprise when you realize how much some small gesture meant to someone such as the Christmas basket filled with goodies that we delivered to a single mom one year. Or the surprise when observing the generosity of the people who quietly slip money into the Salvation Army's Christmas kettle.

Sometimes the simplest things provide fun surprises: flowers given for no real reason. Just, "Here Mom, I thought you'd like these." Or how about finally coming close to mastering a much-needed program on the computer, or a friend saying, "C'mon I'll buy you lunch," or running into an old friend and taking the time to catch up.

Surprises that happen almost daily should be enjoyed and savored. It was sad to overhear that conversation at the next table, but perhaps it was necessary to give us pause to review what we have. And isn't this the best season of all to enjoy all the unexpected surprises that we love to give or to share, as well as those we receive?



Tecla

LETTERS to the editor

OUTSOURCING

In this year of chaos and energy-draining stresses we all seem to be having, the article on "Outsourcing" (page 14, Fall edition) by Kater provided a guilt-free option to many of us who are dealing with these types of choices. Our time these days and at our stage of life is precious and the concept of outsourcing chores makes great sense. I especially like the idea of co-op cooking and dining. I know so many boomers who are single, live and eat alone and might really enjoy sharing meals together if we just give it a chance. Who knows, the food and companionship might just improve our quality of life and could develop into close friendships.

Please keep your magazine going! A great treasure for us 60-some kids.

*J. DiPrimio
Baltimore*

GPS

In life we sometimes encounter incongruous situations, unintended and innocent as they may be. But on occasion, they do occur. The Fall issue of *Outlook by the Bay* created such an intriguing enigma!

Read the words describing the scene On the Cover, then turn the page and read the lead editorial, "Never Lose Your Way Again."

It would seem that both the writer of the "On the Cover" explanation and the proof reader, if indeed there was one for such a short paragraph, both flunked Maryland geography in grade school! The Potomac River and the Susquehanna River never meet, anyplace! The river that begins with an "S" that does join with the Potomac River at their confluence is the Shenandoah River.

The humor of the situation comes when one reads the ending of the first paragraph in the lead editorial, when the GPS would utter in that annoying voice "Recalculate!"

Man-made errors occur in life, but no tragedy will come from this one. I don't believe God is going to relocate either river.

*Best regards,
J. Ferguson*

(Oops, this resulted from sleeping through 8th grade geography.)

SHADE PLANTS

I am writing to give you additional deer-resistant shade plants. These are hardy plants that the deer --at least today -- do

not eat in my yard. However, if they are hungry enough, deer will even give plastic a try.

Shade-friendly bedding plants include bacopa, bleeding heart, helleborus, (poisonous to deer), lamium, lily of the valley, pachysandra, vinca minor and Virginia bluebells.

Shade-friendly shrubs: mock orange, forsythia, honeysuckle, mountain laurel, rose of sharon, spiraea and viburnum.

*Marla M.
Annapolis*

YOUNG READERS

Love this magazine! Wanted to let you know that not just "Bay boomers" read it. One afternoon my 10-year-old granddaughter was looking through the Summer 2012 edition at my house. Later, as we were driving together she said, "Look, gram, there are people in that lake paddle boarding like they were doing in your magazine!" And sure enough, they were.

*SJ
Virginia Beach*



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FIGHT FATIGUE THIS SEASON

By Shoring up Your Adrenals

By Susan Singleton

You can barely drag yourself out of bed each morning, yet you have trouble going to sleep at night. Maybe you need coffee in the morning and crave sweets around 3 p.m. for a pick-me-up. And you feel like you are on a treadmill, running from school to work to errands to home, never getting a break. Sound familiar? You may be burning out your adrenal glands.

Adrenal fatigue is a collection of symptoms that arise when the adrenals are unable to produce enough stress-coping hormones. You might be suffering from adrenal fatigue if you have trouble waking up in the morning, rely on caffeine and sugar to keep you going, and generally feel unwell.

Why are adrenals important?

The adrenal glands help regulate stress, whether physical, emotional or psychological. Adrenals release hormones that regulate energy production and storage, immune function and inflammatory response, heart rate, muscle tone and other processes that enable you to cope with stress.

When your adrenals burn out, you're more susceptible to headaches, overall weakness, colds, allergies and respiratory infections, weight gain, lower sex drive, reduced concentration and difficulties in relationships at work or at home. Adrenal fatigue has also been linked to autoimmune disorders, diabetes, post-traumatic stress disorder, alcoholism and drug abuse.

How can you heal your adrenal functioning? Here are four essential ways to stop adrenal gland fatigue:

Breathe. This is the simplest and most profound change you can make to relax even when life is at its most hectic. Commit to a regular practice of diaphragmatic breathing. Start by scheduling time into your daily calendar to breathe. Even if it's just five minutes every afternoon, make sure to stick with your appointments.

Be Grateful. An attitude of gratitude melts away stress. Being thankful for everything that you have in your life will help you stay positive and feel good. If you need structure, keep a daily gratitude journal. Writing down what you're grateful for takes just 10 minutes and can increase your overall well-being significantly.

Take Supplements. Adaptogens are herbs that help the body adapt to stress by fine-tuning the stress response. You should work with an herbalist to find the right formula for you. Some herbs that your herbalist may recommend include Withania and Rhodiola (for worries), Siberian ginseng (alleviates female fatigue), Panax ginseng and Astragalus (for extreme exhaustion) and dandelion leaves (for fluid retention).

Because stressed systems tend to lose a lot of nutrients, adrenals also fare well when supported by vitamin B and vitamin C. Make sure to find a high-quality supplement.

Remember, supplements cannot replace a poor diet. Of course, you want to make sure that you're eating high-quality foods that you'd recognize in nature.

Eat Well. Reduce or eliminate caffeine and sugar. If you're relying on them, it may be painful at first to take these out of your diet. But in the long run, you'll feel much better and your adrenals will thank you for it, too. You can reduce caffeine by cutting back gradually: make your morning cup of coffee half-decaf until you can go all decaf or cut back to tea. Add sweet vegetables to your menu – like cooked carrots, onions, parsnips and butternut squash – to wean yourself off sugar. It may be tough at first, but your energy levels should soar.

Susan, a certified holistic health counselor, can be reached at Susan@HealthyLifeConsulting.com

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Make a Difference

By Kamilah Tadlock

Volunteering during the holidays is a great way to show the community and your loved ones how much you care. Every year, there are hundreds of people in Maryland who are not able to give presents to their children on Hanukkah or cook a turkey for a Christmas meal. This is not limited to the homeless population. It affects many ordinary working families in different ways. Volunteering and giving back to the community is a way to help families to have the opportunity to not worry and enjoy the holidays.

One way to provide these opportunities is to volunteer at your local church or shelter that offers holiday meals or join a local drive to collect presents for children. These activities are not confined to the holidays. Helping throughout the Winter season can make a huge difference in the lives of thousands of people.

If your schedule does not allow time for volunteering during the holidays, make a donation to fulfill this need. This also makes for a great holiday gift. You can make a charitable donation in the name of your loved ones or friends.

If you don't have disposable income available to donate money or buy food and toys, there are options for alternative holiday volunteering like "no-cost gifts." One would be to provide holiday entertainment to residents in assisted living homes, group homes or to people who are not able to leave their own homes due to illness. Another possibility is to create a clothing, food, or toy drive that will benefit the less fortunate. The possibilities are endless.

On the bright side, holidays are the most popular time to volunteer every year. On the downside, people may feel volunteering isn't needed the rest of the year. Truth is, the needs continue and organizations operate year-round and will continue to need volunteers throughout the year.

So, from the Volunteer Center, we wish you happy holidays and we wish that you jumpstart your volunteering campaign this Winter season and make it your New Year's resolution to continue giving back to the community year-round. A holiday volunteer guide will be posted on www.VolunteerAnneArundel.org/Resources Check it out.

Visit these websites for organizations needing holiday help:

SARAH'S HOUSE - www.catholiccharities-md.org/sarahs-house The mission at Sarah's House is to provide safe shelter, daily meals and personal, as well as professional, casework support for those in need.

MAKE-A-WISH FOUNDATION OF THE MID-ATLANTIC - www.midatlantic.wish.org This nonprofit grants the wishes of children with life-threatening medical conditions to enrich the human experience with hope, strength and joy.

HAPPY HELPERS FOR THE HOMELESS - <http://happyhelpersforthehomeless.webs.com> Happy Helpers is a nonprofit organization that provides food, toiletries and clothing to the hungry and homeless. Volunteers as young as 6 are needed Saturdays and Sundays to assist in distributing items and bag lunches.

ARUNDEL MEDICAL CENTER - www.aahs.org/volunteer/ The AAMC Auxiliary was established as a volunteer group to serve the hospital. Auxiliary volunteers are an integral part of AAMC's mission of providing patient-centered, high-quality health care services to our community.

HOLIDAY SHARING PROGRAM - <http://dhr.maryland.gov/county/ann/pdf/holid.pdf> This program matches donors with recipients, making it possible to serve families and seniors during the holidays each year.

ANNE ARUNDEL COUNTY FOOD BANK - <http://aafoodbank.org/> Founded in 1988, its mission is to fight hunger by assuring that all county citizens in need have access to food and other necessities. Plan your own food drive. Especially needed are volunteers with pick-up trucks to get and deliver food donations during the day.

LIGHT HOUSE SHELTER - www.annapolislighthouse.org/ Both a facility and a program, Light House is located in a new 24,000-square-foot facility, providing emergency shelter and transitional housing for individuals and families who are homeless as well as permanent supportive housing for women. Volunteers 18 and over are needed for a variety of duties.

H.O.P.E. - Inc. www.hopeforall.us/ This is an all-volunteer nonprofit Christian ministry serving families in need in northern Anne Arundel County and Baltimore and also the Appalachian region by collecting and distributing donated school supplies, household goods, furniture and clothing.

Start Planning Your Family Reunion Now

By Leah Lancione

In this day and age when everybody seems to function on autopilot as if they are schedule-keeping, multi-tasking machines, it's easy for family connections to deteriorate. Email, Facebook and other social media give the impression that communication still exists, but they cannot replace face-to-face interaction. That is one of the many reasons family reunions are customs that are more important than ever to preserving family bonds.

As Winter approaches and colder temps provide an excuse for staying indoors, consider turning off the television or putting aside your crossword puzzle to plan a family reunion for the Spring or Summer. You can kill two birds with one stone by putting a little note in your Christmas cards enlisting help. By delegating tasks, more can be accomplished for such a big event that will surely involve interstate travel as well as activities for all ages. From the food to the accommodations and events there is a lot to do.

Never fear, there are online organizations available just to help you coordinate your family extravaganza. One in particular, National Reunion Services (www.national-reunions.com), is a virtual one-stop shop that can provide name badges, phone support, invitations, decorations, entertainment, venue search, merchandise (like matching shirts or souvenir bottles) and more. On the other hand, use the site as a model for the type of research and coordination you need to do without professional assistance.

If at all possible, try to organize a preliminary meeting (with anyone who can participate) either in person or even via a Skype conference call (visit www.skype.com/intl/en-us/features/allfeatures/conference-calls for instructions). This initial meeting should cover confirming addresses, narrowing down possible dates and locations and assigning tasks. Such duties include sending out the invitations, researching and reserving a venue, exploring entertainment prospects, i.e., a deejay or band, or some type of entertainment like a clown, magician or balloon artist, and food details, i.e., catered, restaurant or potluck style.

The site <http://family-reunion.com> is a great resource for organizing the event from beginning to end and even includes a comprehensive checklist and resource guide. It is chock full of creative and helpful tips for making the reunion a fun and memo-

rable experience for all—from theme ideas and recipes to games, budget suggestions, the guest list and giveaways or mementos.

A theme is a great way to tie everything together and to inspire participation. For instance, if the theme is a Hawaiian luau, the dress code could be aloha shirts and leis, the food Kalua pork and tropical fruit kabobs, the entertainment hula dancing and much more. The possibilities are endless: a fiesta, all sports or Olympics, family heritage, western and fun in the sun, especially if there's a beach or pool nearby.

Regardless of the theme or entertainment, try to get everybody involved. Set the tone of the reunion from the get-go by having the emcee -- preferably an outgoing family member -- introduce each family represented during the welcome address. As an icebreaker, present attendees with lighthearted award certificates. **Familyreunion.com** suggests the following:

- The oldest and youngest family members
- Who traveled the shortest and longest distances
- Youngest grandparents
- Couple with the most children or grandchildren

Another useful website is <http://familyreunionhelper.com> which features many icebreaker games to get everyone reacquainted. Before you jump right into relay races and tag football, think about games and activities that familiarize everyone with names and families. This site also offers the opportunity to pick a theme and purchase a complete reunion package through a CD or digital copy.

Another initial planning objective must be setting the budget and raising or collecting money for the reunion. The planning committee must decide up front how to go about paying for the festivities. Specifically, should individuals or families contribute a certain amount, or are families willing to hold fundraisers (think, yard or bake sales) to cover all the costs?

Think of all the fun you'll have engaging your sisters, brothers, aunts and cousins in the reunion planning. Then, as ideas start to formalize, the anticipation of seeing loved ones not seen in years will build and carry you to the day of the event! Despite all the time, research and preparation involved, you will never regret reestablishing family ties.





Christmas in St. Michaels

A ONE-OF-A-KIND SMALL TOWN HOLIDAY EVENT

By Karen Burger

If shopping in an overcrowded, frenzied mall or sitting at your computer ordering Uncle George a cardigan sweater for Christmas doesn't exactly put you in the holiday spirit, you should consider planning a December weekend getaway to St. Michaels. This picturesque little town of about 1,200 people on Maryland's Eastern Shore will be lit up with holiday lights and filled with small-town Christmas cheer that will remind you of what the real spirit of Christmas is all about.

Less than 50 miles beyond the Bay Bridge, St. Michaels is easy to reach by car and has lodging in the area to suit most budgets. The Christmas in St. Michael's annual event will take place this year on Dec. 7, 8 and 9. It is an all-volunteer charity event the proceeds of which benefit local nonprofit organizations.

If you arrive on Friday, Dec. 7, go to the marketplace at the Granite Lodge on St. Mary's Square between noon and 3 p.m. to get the best selection of the wonderful handmade items for sale. The marketplace will offer handcrafted scarves and shawls, handmade jewelry, hand-sewn decorator and holiday pillows, handmade American Doll outfits and delicious gourmet food treats, among many other specialty offerings. The marketplace will also be open on Saturday and Sunday.

While you're on St. Mary's Square, take a few minutes to visit the gingerbread house display at the Woman's Club of St. Michaels. The variety of gingerbread houses is amazing, and many of them will be for sale. The display is also open on Saturday and Sunday.

Get an early start Saturday if you want to get your pick of live holiday arrangements, gift treasures and homemade goodies at Christ Church's Christmas Bazaar on Willow Street from 9 a.m. to noon.

Anyone who's been to Christmas in St. Michaels knows that the Talbot Street parade, starting at 10:30 a.m. on Saturday, is not to be missed. More than 50 groups, including bands, floats, antique cars and horse-drawn carriages will appear in the parade. And, of course, Santa and Mrs. Claus will be there.

If you're visiting with children or grandchildren, don't miss the popular Santa's wonderland following the parade at the St. Michaels School complex that ends at 2:30 p.m. Here children can visit and be photographed with Santa, participate in activities and shop in the secret Santa shop.

A highlight of the weekend is the tour of homes. Open Saturday from noon to 5 p.m. and Sunday from 11 a.m. to 4 p.m., the historic homes and beautiful waterfront estates, decorated exquisitely for Christmas, are a real treat. Tickets are \$25 if purchased in advance and \$30 during the event.

You'll need to eat to keep up your strength while shopping and touring homes, so consider going to the old-fashioned Eastern Shore Christmas dinner at Union United Methodist Church Parish Hall on Fremont Street. The church will be serving a delicious holiday meal with all the trimmings from 11 a.m. to 3 p.m. Also at the church, starting at 1:30 p.m., is a special performance of gospel music and Christmas spirituals performed by the Jackson Jubilee Singers.

When checking out the many specialty shops, look for the "2012 Christmas in St. Michaels" collector's ornament, which features a rockfish, the Maryland state fish. It's available in many stores at \$20.

On Sunday, you can fit in some of the activities you missed on Friday and Saturday, such as seeing the remaining homes on the house tour or visiting the marketplace on St. Mary's Square and other great shops. If possible, stay for the final event of the weekend, the Celebration of Choirs at Union United Methodist Church at 6 p.m. Choirs from local churches join together to present classic holiday music.

For more information about Christmas in St. Michaels, including lodging and ticket information, go to www.christmasinstmichaels.org or call 410.745.0745.

Christmas in St. Michael's was founded in 1987. Its purpose is to provide funding to local nonprofit groups that serve the community. It has raised more than \$1 million in its 26-year history.



NOT JUST MORE STUFF

Intangible Holiday Gift Ideas

By Kater Leatherman

In light of the grim reality of our economy, intangible gifts just might be the perfect answer to spending less this holiday season. Intangible gifts are appealing because they have the staying power of experiences and memories attached to them. And since they are usually consumed or used in one sitting, they are more eco-friendly.

Whether tangible or intangible, the secret to effective gift giving is to pay attention. Listen for clues from those who you are shopping for -- their interests or where they like to spend time. Perhaps a used book store, hardware store, local coffee shop, yoga studio, bakery, wine store or gym. Tickets to concerts, movies or shows and sporting events are usually a hit. Check out <http://annapolis.exploremd.us/events/> to find upcoming live music and tickets. Not sure what their tastes are? Go to Ticketmaster.com and click "merchandise" for a gift card which can be used for a wide variety of events.

Many people don't take the time or want to spend the money to nurture themselves. So, give a gift certificate for a massage or facial. Pair it with a luxurious scented hand or foot cream. Or gather a few interesting food items from the grocery store and put them in an attractive basket. How about purchasing a skill such as a computer guru to come and clean up their electronics, or a home decorator for a day, or a house cleaner to lend a hand, or chef to come and prepare a meal for the next dinner party.

Children, fortunately, are fairly easy to impress. Give an age-appropriate child a certificate for a manicure or pedicure. To make it even more special, treat yourself to one and do it with them. Most kids love to go to aquariums, amusement parks or hands-on museums. If you have an interesting talent, make something with them; there is no better gift than the gift of your time.

Gifts for teens are a bit trickier. They want stuff that is specific, so it's probably best to put your cold hard cash into buying them a gift card and letting them get what they want. Technology, video game and music stores with the latest "must haves" are sure to please.

On a romantic note, why not plan a weekend getaway (travel is at the top of most women's gift lists). If you have kids, ask your parents or in-laws if they want to add to the gift package by taking care of them. You can also choose an activity that you and your partner have considered trying, such as skiing, cooking or kayaking. The lessons to learn the new skill together are the gift. Homemade coupon books are also great fun to give. Ideas include a foot and hand massage, a date night out, a trip to the ice cream store, a picnic, a car wash or whatever else you can think of.

How about gifts that keep on giving such as a magazine subscription. Yes, it's tangible, but it is also something that can easily be recycled when the next one arrives. For a comprehensive listing of magazines, go online to Amazon magazine directory. You might also consider a one-year membership to a fitness center for someone who has been talking about wanting to get in shape.

And now, for the person who has everything, make a donation to their favorite charity, pick up a gift certificate to their favorite restaurant or make them a home-cooked meal.

As for you? If you are right-sizing your life by scaling back, the thought of adding more stuff might feel like backpedaling. Besides, who needs one more thing to dust, fix, figure out, store or take care of? So ask for intangible gifts and you will more than likely get what you want and perhaps begin to find material balance.

*Kater Leatherman is a professional organizer, homestager and budget redecorator. For more information or to purchase her latest book, *Making Peace With Your Stuff*, go to www.katerleatherman.com*



What in the World is a CCRC?

By Gladys J. Smith

You may have heard this term used by some in the senior housing industry, but do you know what CCRC stands for? CCRC is an acronym for Continuing Care Retirement Community. A CCRC is a community catering to the needs of adults through every phase of retirement living by providing an array of residency options.

One very popular option is **independent living**. Apartments, condos and even cottages are available for those in the 60-plus club who are living actively and independently. These units are purchased just as one might purchase a home on the open market. Some communities even offer leasing options. The appeal of independent living is that one can reap the benefits of home ownership without the maintenance and upkeep required of a single family home. Retirees and those approaching retirement age are in the midst of a built-in peer group and have a wealth of engaging activities at their doorstep.

These days many of the elderly are living at home with family members. **Respite/vacation care** is a viable option for those in this situation whose family may be traveling for business or simply need a reprieve. Many who need assistance while their family is away may take advantage of this option which provides them with 24-hour care by licensed nurses and nursing assistants. A significant advantage of this arrangement over in-home care is the guarantee of staff presence no matter the time of day or night, whatever the weather, or any other circumstances that might interfere with continuous staffing. Family members can relax knowing that their loved one is being cared for consistently by qualified professionals.

Another instance in which some may take advantage of a temporary stay at a CCRC is after they've been hospitalized for surgery, a stroke or other type of illness. Often their condition will require a short period of **in-patient rehab care**. These individuals can receive physical, occupational and speech therapy services along with a period of recuperation and strengthening in between their discharge from the hospital and their return to the demands of home. For the vast majority, insurance

such as Medicare and a secondary provider cover much of the cost of their care.

A fourth option offered by CCRCs is **assisted living**. For those who need assistance with the normal activities of daily living, assisted living provides that help within a comfortable, home-like setting. Nurses and nursing assistants are available to provide help and general supervision with medications and activities such as bathing, dressing, grooming, transferring, bathroom needs, etc. These communities offer a wide array of activities seven days a week to keep residents active and engaged in new ventures and with their long-time interests. Some CCRCs are pet-friendly and will welcome your four-legged friends to come in along with you.

So what is a CCRC? A CCRC is a **continuing care retirement community** that offers a variety of options. So whether you are fully active and independent, in need of some assistance, or require a short rehab stay or are looking for a little respite, a CCRC is a great place to be. Stop by today at one of your local CCRCs today.

Gladys is the health care representative at BayWoods of Annapolis and can be reached at 443.837.0025 or gsmith@baywoodsofannapolis.com



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Working at Home: Myths, Truths and Advice

By Melissa Conroy

If you are sick of commuting to work every day, considering a new career change or toying with the idea of your own business, working at home can be a very attractive option. **TeleworkResearchNetwork.com** says more than 3 million telecommuting Americans list their home as their primary workplace. To that number, add all the self-employed workers counted by the US Bureau of Labor -- 15.3 percent of the US population in 2009. All together, there are millions of folks who can wake up on a bone-freezing, snowy Monday and simply shuffle down the hall to start their workday.

When someone mentions "working from home," it often conjures up an image of a pajama-clad person happily pecking out emails with a big mug of coffee in hand. However, the realities can be far less cozy. There are both positive and negative features of this style of working and before you start setting up an office in your spare bedroom, it is wise to consider these factors.

First, let's take a look at some of the great aspects about making home your primary workplace:

Flexibility: If you do your best work at 10 p.m. and an 8 a.m. start time is sheer torture, working from home lets you arrange your schedule to best suit your needs.

Cost savings: At one point, I was spending up to 90 minutes and two to three tanks of gas a week commuting to my full-time job. Now that I work at home, I have those 90 minutes to spend as I please and I fill up maybe once a week. Also, if you work at home you tend to spend less on convenience food, professional clothing and eating out.

Lack of personnel conflict: Any office will have a certain amount of drama, politics and unpleasantness to wade through. Keep your office in your home, and you will bypass most of it.

Time management: Most office jobs inherently have busywork and downtime built into them. When you work from home, you can often be more effective with your time

However, don't throw away your business suits quite yet. Here are some of the lesser-known drawbacks to working at home.

Unending work day: When your office is three feet from your bedroom, you can very easily find yourself checking your email at 7 a.m. and not shutting down for the day until 11:35 p.m. It is very hard to separate your career from your personal life when your job literally shares living space with you.

Increased demands: If you work at home, people often assume that you have the freedom to do as you please and you can easily find yourself besieged with requests, favors and demands from friends and family during normal work hours.

Distraction: Working from home is often hailed as the solution for mothers of young children, but trying to write a report or finish a conference call when little ones are running around is quite a challenge. Most homes are full of chores that need to be done, and it is a great temptation to knock off work for the after-

noon so you can clean the kitchen or repaint the fence. Working at home means taking on extra discipline and not becoming distracted by other responsibilities.

Isolation: It can be lonely being by yourself all day, and you can find yourself missing the comradery of the office. After days of working out of your home office, you might start feeling a little house-bound. Weekends often lose their meaning when spending all day at home is what you do Monday through Friday.

Sloppiness: If you are not careful, you may end up schlepping around your house with greasy hair and wearing an old bathrobe decorated with cheese puff dust and ranch dressing stains. Social niceties such as eating at consistent times, dressing properly, grooming, wearing shoes and sitting up straight often go out the window when you work at home.

Weight concerns: At home, most of what you need is only a few steps away, so you can easily find yourself quite sedentary and gaining weight as a consequence.

.....

When you consider all the options, working at home may be a good career path for you, whether it be switching to telecommuting three times a week or starting your own business in your basement. As you prepare for work at home, here are a few suggestions to keep you on task.

Set a schedule: Have a set time for when you wake up, start working, take breaks, etc. Staying on a schedule keeps you focused and motivated. Working at home can be a disaster if you are not disciplined and organized, so stay on task.

Guard your work time: Just because you can work in the evening doesn't mean you automatically have to give up your afternoon work session to take a neighbor to the doctor or babysit your grandchild. You have work to do, so don't let people take advantage of your flexibility.

Stand when you can: At least a couple hours a day, I put my laptop on my kitchen counter and work while standing to keep myself from sitting all day long. Try to keep moving throughout the day to prevent stiffness and potential weight gain.

Power down: You simply must have an actual "quitting time" for your own sake. Close the shop down at a reasonable time: Turn off your computer, close your office door and step away from your work. Also, take at least one day off per week; working seven days a week will only contribute to burnout.

Working from home can give you the flexibility you are looking for, allow you to finally act on that business plan you have been dreaming of for years or rid yourself of a long and boring commute. While not everyone is best-suited to making home their workplace, you may find that working this way is a beneficial and life-changing step.

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What To Do When Your Nest is no longer empty

By Leah Lancione

You're supposed to be enjoying retirement, spending your days painting or writing a memoir and weekends traveling to local getaways or visiting grandkids. You are not supposed to be once again doing laundry, cooking dinner and cleaning up someone else's messes. So what do you do when the empty nest suddenly fills up again? In layman's terms, how do you cope with your grown child (with or without their own kids) when they move back home? With the current economic downturn, "boomerang" kids have become something of a phenomenon.

Forbes magazine (www.forbes.com) reports that "approximately 13 percent of adult children between 18 and 29 move back in with their parents after an attempt to live alone," a primary cause being the financial difficulties associated with living in a recession, which grown children exhibit recession or no recession. (If you *Launch* yet, rent it.)

If the thought of cohabiting doesn't sound as appealing to after he or she first "flew the ground rules so that everyone promise and some sacrifice. may once again have to serve as now have to store furniture and boxes, but it doesn't mean your world has to be turned upside down. Your hard-earned retired life is not ending. You are just sharing space and support—possibly emotional and financial—with a loved one in need.

First, you must remember that your child has grown up. You are not required to step back into "mother bear" mode. That is, the apron strings are still severed, so you don't *have* to tend to his or her every need. Micromanaging is not allowed.

Just the same, this new "old" living arrangement is not an opportunity for your child to freeload or take advantage either. If you don't want to charge rent, at the very least, chore-sharing is a must.

“...your man cave may now have to store furniture and boxes, but it doesn't mean your world has to be turned upside down.”

That said, there are instances in what is called "failure to launch," haven't seen the movie *Failure to*

tating with a son or daughter you as it may have a few weeks coop," then it is time to set some can live in harmony. Yes, com-Sure, your scrapbooking room a bedroom or your man cave may



Action, enthusiasm and perseverance pave the way to success.

The Family Education website (<http://life.familyeducation.com>) emphasizes the importance of being on “the same page.” In an article entitled, “How to Live with Your Adult Child” the writer asserts, “Living together will take compromises on both parts, and it will be easier if you keep lines of communication open and set expectations beforehand.”

So the first step is to have a tête-à-tête before the suitcases are unpacked. Though you’re not expected to “lay down the law” like you did when your boomerang child was a teenager, setting age-appropriate boundaries are recommended. Such “boundaries” may focus on possible length of stay, sharing grocery expenses or meal preparation, chore sharing and your stance on house guests, parties, drinking and smoking.

Now, let's get back to the issue of collecting rent. According to CNN *Money Magazine* Senior Editor Walter Updegrave, “there's no one-size-fits-all answer to this question. It's largely a judgment call that comes down to specific circumstances and what you (and your child) are trying to achieve.” (<http://money.cnn.com>).

Essentially, the decision is yours: Is your main objective to encourage your child to learn money management, or do you want to offer complete financial assistance in an effort to help pay off school loans or save for a new place? A nice compromise could be charging rent, but stashing it away each month so that at the end of the “stay” you can present the child with a nice little “nest egg.” Again, choose what’s best for you and your family; just make sure to be clear up front about expectations.

Once the issue of rent is settled, make sure you agree on the chore duties. It is reasonable to expect your boarder to maintain a clean living space, do their own laundry, chip in with cooking and help with yard work. Some parenting experts even suggest creating a contract that is signed.

Lastly, insist that all lines of communication are open; if your child violates the living agreement, or you find yourself desperately searching the “For Rent” classifieds, it’s time to have a talk. Don’t let resentment build up, creating a tense living environment. Also try to be receptive when your boarder comes to you asking for some

flexibility. Remember that it is hard for any adult to give up some of their autonomy.

Also, consider the benefits of this arrangement -- having a multigenerational home again. The website **Grandparents.com** features a “survival guide” for multigenerational living, explaining that the assumption that it is an “emotionally traumatic hardship” is a myth. The site reveals many folks confess they love having family together and being needed again. For others it brings a new sense of purpose to their days and possibly some added mental stimulation.

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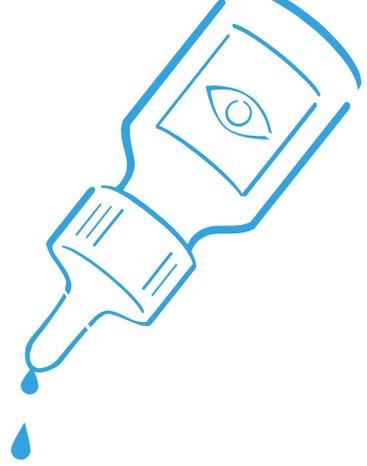
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GLAUCOMA

treatment options



By Michael J. Dodd, MD

After describing the definition of glaucoma and its different categories in the Fall issue of *Outlook by the Bay*, I will now describe treatment options. Glaucoma can be defined as an eye disease characterized by elevated eye pressure, which over time can damage the optic nerve and cause loss of side (peripheral) vision. Eye pressure is also referred to as intraocular pressure or IOP.

To help understand glaucoma and its treatment, it helps to know some of the mechanics that control eye pressure. The front part of the eye is filled with a clear, water-like fluid called aqueous. It is constantly produced day and night by a tissue behind the iris called the ciliary epithelium. There must be an outlet for this fluid or the eye pressure would rapidly rise. The outlet is a spongy tissue located just in front of the iris root. This tissue is called the “trabecular meshwork” or TM. The TM encircles the inside of the eye for 360 degrees and the aqueous fluid percolates through this tissue into the tiny veins in the eye. There is a balance between the amount of aqueous produced and the amount which exits the eye. In this situation the eye has normal IOP. But if there is any disturbance in the TM, the IOP can rise and result in glaucoma.

The most common type of glaucoma is known as chronic open-angle glaucoma (COAG). Patients with this condition have elevated IOP, some loss of peripheral vision and signs of damage to the optic nerve. The goal of treatment is to lower IOP to a level that prevents further damage to the optic nerve. Usually a 20 percent lowering of IOP from baseline is adequate to prevent vision loss. Eye drops are the first line of treatment to lower IOP. It is beyond the scope of this article to get into the details of the many medications

available for COAG. In general, the drops either reduce the production of aqueous or accelerate its removal from the eye through the TM. Most prescription drops are used once or twice per day. They need to be used indefinitely.

Some patients have loss of side vision and optic nerve damage, but have normal IOP. We call this “normal pressure glaucoma.” It appears that patients with normal pressure glaucoma have very sensitive optic nerves. Prescription eye drops are also used to treat this condition.

What if the IOP does not get lowered by 20 percent with one eye medication? The next step is to add a second eye medication, usually one that effects a different mode of action than the first drop. In the uncommon situation where the IOP remains high in spite of two types of eye drops, either a third drop or laser therapy can be offered.

There are two types of laser treatments available to treat COAG: argon laser trabeculoplasty (ALT) and selective laser trabeculoplasty (SLT). These laser treatments are both very safe (no surgical opening is made in the eye) and brief (taking only 5 minutes to complete the treatment). About 80 percent of patients have successful lowering of pressure after laser therapy. The treatment consists of placing topical anesthetics in the eye and placing a special therapeutic contact lens with a built-in mirror onto the eye. The mirror allows inspection of the TM for 360 degrees. The laser light is focused on the TM and a foot pedal is engaged by the doctor to deliver laser energy to the TM. This energy opens the microscopic channels in the TM. A full 360-degree circle of TM is treated in one or two sessions. There is little discomfort for the patient and there are no restrictions after

the treatment. Patients typically stay on their glaucoma drops. Most patients have a good response which lasts five years or longer. If the IOP creeps up after five years, the SLT can be repeated.

Laser therapy does not adequately lower IOP in a small percentage of patients. For these individuals surgery can be done. This procedure is known as a filtering operation. This must be performed in an operating room. A tiny surgical opening is made in the eye to allow aqueous to flow out into a protected space (subconjunctival space). This procedure is very effective in lowering IOP. The recovery is slower and there are restrictions on the patient’s activity. Fortunately, filtering surgery is rarely necessary.

While this brief overview of treatment options for COAG and normal pressure glaucoma may be helpful, if you have glaucoma, your ophthalmologist can give you more details.

Dr. Dodd is a practicing ophthalmologist at Maryland Eye Associates and an instructor at the University of Maryland Department of Ophthalmology. He can be reached at 410.224.4550 or mjddmd1@gmail.com

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VISIT A CHRISTMAS TREE FARM TO START A NEW TRADITION

By Joanne R. Alloway

Christmas trees symbolize peace and harmony, of sharing with family and friends. The fun and enjoyment of decorating your tree can result in a magical vision of beauty and pride. But where will your tree come from? From a box in which wired plastic stems fit into a pole, pretending to be the real deal? Or will it come from a Christmas tree farm where you can start a new tradition with family and friends?

Several years ago, my friend and I took our three college-age children, who had balked at helping decorate any tree, to a Christmas tree farm. They came only because we told them if they wanted a tree in the house at all, they'd better join us.

We arrived at the farm warmly dressed and wearing boots on a chilly November Saturday. First we decided what type of trees we wanted and there were many to choose from, including white pine, blue spruce, Douglas fir, Fraser fir and concolor fir. Remember, size is deceiving. In the field, the trees look smaller than they will in your home.

After meandering through the fields we eventually found our ideal trees; the farm provides saws to cut them. Their staff helped with shaking and baling the tree. Shaking trees frees them of critters that might still be inside the trees such as spiders, mice or squirrels.

While they did this, we went to the gift shop where free hot chocolate was offered to warm us up. The shop sold handmade holiday décor as background Christmas music played. We met a family making their sixth visit who said it wouldn't be Christmas without their tradition of cutting down their own tree.

We discussed this "new tradition" possibility with our kids on the way home. They surprised us by saying they loved it. For next year they wanted to bring some friends, the more the merrier!

At home, we hosed the tree down for any remaining dirt and critters and let it stand outside for a few days. Once in the living room, its wondrous scent filled the house. That evening we invited good friends over for pizza and tree trimming. The tree was gorgeous and by early December, two neighbors went together to cut their trees.

Depending on how much time you have, there are many farms where you can cut your own tree. Some Christmas tree farms offer hay rides, sleigh rides, gift shops, Santa visits and even

petting zoos. Most farms are family-run businesses. Most don't have websites; many don't take credit cards. All are open on weekends and close by dusk. Some are open during the week. It's best to call first if you have questions. Here are some to choose from.

According to Darrell Dockery, co-partner of **Friendship Tree Farm** in Owings, "Our employees (trees) are always there and so are we, despite the weather." They offer 30 years of experience making good memories. With 10,000-plus trees on site, they open Nov. 23. Credit cards accepted. Friendshiptrees@aol.com Call 410.741.5712

Closer to town, visit **Masque Farm** in Annapolis. "The farm will open the first weekend in December," says Robert Giffen of the family farm. Theirs is a smaller farm, but it would still be an experience to find a great tree without having to search for too long, especially with young children. Trees are all \$50 regardless of size or height. Call 410.757.4454

For a day in the country, head out to Mechanicsville to **Quailfield Farm**, an hour's ride from Annapolis. This family-owned farm offers four tree varieties. Co-owner Karin Bailey says, "Many people select trees early, tag them, and pick them up when they're ready to decorate." www.quailfieldfarm.com Call 301.884.4062

Or go toward western Howard County to **Tridelfia Lake View Farm** in Glenelg. TLV offers photos with Santa on Saturday and Sunday, a gift shop and other activities on the 100-acre farm. Tree cutting starts Nov. 23. Credit cards accepted. www.tlvtreefarm.com Call 410.489.4460

Across the Bay Bridge in Centreville, **Blue Heron Christmas Tree Farm** offers weekend hayrides, weather permitting. A gift shop sells items to benefit local charities. Free warm apple cider and candy canes for customers. Credit Cards accepted. Tree cutting begins Nov. 23. www.blueherontreefarm.com Call 410.758.0405

For a list of other tree farms log onto <http://pickyourownchristmastree.org/MDxmastrees.php>

Starting a new holiday tradition takes a little planning, but your friends or family members might want to put some magic back into the holidays. We did.



Why Do Some People Never Get Sick?

Tips and Tricks from the Uber Healthy



By Leah Lancione

Now that the peak of flu season is approaching, let's try to find out why some people never get a sniffle while the rest of us suffer through the same miserable cold each year. Just as there are countless factors that may contribute to a person getting a cold or the flu, it's often just as challenging to pinpoint what someone does or doesn't do to not get sick. Do they just have good genes? Are they closet germaphobes or health nuts? Do they practice voodoo? According to some recent reports on the subject, there are some specific practices people follow—some rational and others off-the-wall—that they allege keep them from ever getting sick.

Just as it's hard to conclude why someone does or doesn't get sick, it's just as hard to forecast potential health emergencies and provide fool-proof preventative measures. And while the Center for Disease Control (CDC) annually communicates the importance of getting a flu shot, it also admits the timing, severity and length of the outbreak is unpredictable. The season, which most commonly peaks in the U.S. in January or February (though it can begin as early as October), "depends on many factors, including what influenza viruses are spreading, whether they match the viruses in the vaccine and how many people get the vaccine (www.cdc.gov/flu/

[about/season/flu-season-2012-2013.htm](#)).

So do these "uber-healthy" folks know how to protect themselves better than everyone else or do they have a secret potion that keeps them from catching colds or contracting viruses? Are the rest of us destined to endure the same cough or fever year after year?

The answer: maybe not. *New York Times* best-selling Author Gene Stone recently published *The Secrets of People Who Never Get Sick*, in which he investigates the tips of 25 people who claim to be healthy all the time. Some of the secrets range from practicing yoga, eating a plant-based diet and napping, to taking Chinese herbs, cultivating spirituality, minimizing stress and stretching. The secrets have a physical, emotional, environmental, exercise or food-related basis—and all are evaluated against "sound medical science."

The health website WebMD also features an article entitled, "Secrets of Super-Healthy People," that examines the healthy habits of three people, providing analysis by health and nutrition experts. For one individual, the secret to continual wellness lies in gargling regularly with an antiseptic mouthwash while another credits meditation and good sleep habits. Additionally, the article shares the science behind the "apple a day keeps the doctor

away" adage. Apparently, the natural antioxidant quercetin, which is also found in green tea and broccoli, boosts immunity.

Interestingly enough, the WebMD article also probes the assertions of individuals who believe that a "mind over matter" attitude and stress reduction lead to a stronger defense system overall making them resistant to sickness.

All the articles or books on diet, staying healthy and feeling younger prescribe a set of directives. Some are obvious, like exercising and eating healthy, while others are bizarre. Instead of focusing on the tips that should be common sense, let's take a look at a few peculiar secrets endorsed by the eternally healthy folks featured in Mr. Stone's bestselling book:



Keep pH levels in balance. By monitoring your body's pH through testing urine, i.e., with litmus paper to ensure it lingers around seven on a scale of 0-14 after a meal. Also advised is a diet of more alkaline foods like "fruits and vegetables and less processed food, sugar and refined carbohydrates" as well as drinking four liters of water a day.



Photo: Liz West



Photo: Sean Buchan

2

Ingest raw garlic. “Allicin, garlic’s most potent active constituent, reduces blood pressure and triglyceride and cholesterol levels. It also inhibits coronary artery calcification, helping to reduce formation of plaque.” Garlic is also an antioxidant that kills harmful free radicals in the bloodstream.

3

Take cold showers. A frigid morning shower every day is a form of “hydrotherapy” that increases circulation, strengthens the immune system and even tightens skin without drying it out.

4

Lift weights. In addition to helping decrease body fat, lifting weights is an aerobic exercise that “reduces the risk of premature death, heart disease, high blood pressure, high cholesterol, colon and breast cancer, diabetes and depression.” It is also essential for seniors in “helping to develop lean muscle mass and bone strength and maintain a high metabolic rate.”

5

Drink brewer’s yeast daily. Used in bread making, winemaking and the fermentation of beer, brewer’s yeast “contains a treasure trove of B vitamins, is protein-rich and a good source of selenium, copper, iron, zinc and other minerals.”



Who would’ve thought that taking a cold shower would help keep your immune system strong—especially during the cold Winter months? And, checking your pH after every meal? If these tips seem too unusual, there are more described in Gene Stone’s book as well in countless online and print health magazine articles.

You just have to find what works for you. One thing is for sure—washing your hands frequently is vitally important when trying to prevent a cold or the flu. Even America’s favorite TV doctor, Dr. Oz, recommends “washing your hands (up to your wrists or elbows) often and thoroughly with antibacterial soap and warm water for at least 15-20 seconds.” Maybe by trying one or two health tips and adopting a stronger resolve to maintain healthy habits we’ll all remain cold- and flu-free in 2013.

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Lights of Christmas

By Kathryn Marchi



One of my fondest memories of Christmas was when my dad would pile us in the family car and drive around our neighborhood, looking at Christmas lights. Carrying on the tradition, I have taken my children and grandchildren on the same outings in our area. Over time, however, we have expanded our journey and activities to places farther away from our neighborhood. No longer are we simply "driving by" these places. We are now parking the car and exploring on foot.

The following is a list compiled by friends and family of favorite, not-to-be-missed sites to visit during this season.

National Christmas Tree and Pageant of Peace Washington, D.C.

Always a thrill, plan on visiting the National Christmas Tree that is surrounded by 56 smaller decorated trees representing the 50 states and territories. Other seasonal displays can be seen during this annual three-week celebration. Illumination of the trees lasts from dusk until 11 p.m. through Jan. 1. www.thenationaltree.org

Arlington National Cemetery Arlington, Virginia

An awe-inspiring sight of some 5,000 Christmas wreathes, placed on the headstones on Dec. 15 by volunteers. Wreathes are supplied by the Worchester Wreath Company from Worchester, Me. www.wreathesacrossamerica.org

Winterthur Museum Winterthur, Delaware

Walk through the historic home of H.F. du Pont and his family to explore displays of American holidays past. Find beautifully decorated Christmas trees, holiday food displays and wander through an indoor version of a Winter wonderland. www.winterthur.org

Zoolights at the National Zoo Washington, D.C.

A Winter holiday event during December, featuring light displays of zoo animals, Winter-themed activities and holiday treats. www.nationalzoo.si.edu/

Festival of Lights at the Mormon Tabernacle Kensington, Maryland

Open to all during the Christmas season, the church and its grounds are adorned with thousands of sparkling Christmas lights. Enjoy live concerts, a live outdoor nativity scene as well as indoor exhibits in the visitor's center. <http://dctemplelights.lds.org/>

Annamarie Garden Christmas Lights Solomons, Maryland

Walk through glittering woods designed for the Christmas season. View handmade light sculptures of mythical beasts, wild animals, pirates and illuminated works of art. Open the month of December, weather permitting. www.annmariegar-den.org/

Hamden Christmas Street Holiday Show Baltimore, Maryland

During December, park your car and stroll through the neighborhood of Hamden on 34th Street where residents decorate their

homes, trees and sidewalks with beautiful Christmas lights. www.Christmasstreet.com/

Christmas in St. Michaels St. Michael's, Maryland

An annual event from Dec. 7-9 features events that include a tour of homes, breakfast with Santa, holiday music and the largest holiday parade on Maryland's Eastern Shore. www.ChristmasinStMichaels.org

Christmas in Gettysburg Gettysburg, Pennsylvania

Christmas celebrations abound in this historical town during the holiday season, including historical house tours, concerts, light displays, parades and Christmas feasts. www.gettysburg.travel/visitor/todo_holiday.asp

More information can be easily found on the Internet. Simply Google Christmas and the area that you would like to visit.

CHRISTMAS

in

St. Michaels

3 days of Holiday Fun
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parade • treats • marketplace
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www.christmasinstmichaels.org



6

NEW YEAR'S RESOLUTIONS (THAT ANYONE CAN KEEP)

IN JUST A FEW SHORT WEEKS the new year begins and like most of us, you may have been contemplating what you could do to improve your life or the lives of others. Here are a few resolutions that our readers have shared with us that could potentially make a significant difference in the coming year.

1. KEEP IN TOUCH. Stay in communication with family and friends. With all the wonders of the electronic age such as Facebook, emails and cell phones we have no excuse. And remember handwritten notes? They make more of an impression now than they ever did and everyone loves to receive mail.

2. UNCLUTTER. Start with your desk and from there move to a closet. Think of the people who could benefit from your donation of used clothing or the school that would be delighted to receive office supplies that you purchased and thought you were going to use. Envision a clutter-free existence. (www.katerleatherman.com)

3. LOSE 10 POUNDS. Start there - It's a small number, we should all be able to accomplish that much. Put a date on it - 10 pounds by Valentine's Day. It can be as simple as avoiding anything white: sugar, flour, bread, potatoes. There are many excellent substitutes.

4. HELP SOMEONE. This can be as easy as making a monthly donation to your favorite group or volunteering once

a week at a school, hospital or volunteer center (www.volunteerannearundel.org/) There are even trips available that focus on volunteer opportunities.

5. TAKE UP A NEW HOBBY. What have you always wanted to do? Play piano, read the great works, study Chinese, take up bridge, teach a class? (shawguides.com) We all have something we've thought would be fun to do once we had the time. What are you waiting for?

6. MAKE FRIENDS. Can there be anything more fun than going to breakfast or lunch with a group of like-minded people or even going for a walk or playing tennis or golf? Make the effort to meet new people. Studies show that socially connected people live longer (www.marylandseniorcenters.com/) If you make the effort, you just may be helping out someone who is a bit reticent and has been waiting to be included.

This is the year you could make a significant difference, both in your life and in the lives of others. Go ahead and give it chance.

Learn how to make
possibilities...possible.
Every time you use the phone.

If physical challenges make it difficult for you to use the telephone, you may qualify for FREE assistive telephone equipment through the Maryland Accessible Telecommunications program.

Even though you may be able to carry on a conversation with someone in person, you may have difficulty communicating by standard telephone. The Maryland Accessible Telecommunications (MAT) program, a service of Maryland Relay, provides assistive telecommunications equipment—free of charge—to people who qualify. Training on how to use the equipment is available.

To learn more about the free equipment, including hands-free phones, amplified phones, voice activated phones and more, simply call Maryland Relay Customer Service at **1-800-552-7724**. You may also visit our website, www.mdrelay.org. Click on Free Equipment for more information on how to apply.



IT'S POSSIBLE

Serve a Side Dish of History this Thanksgiving: *a Recipe for Rolls from America's Early Years*

By Tracy Leonard

Turkey, dressing, pumpkin pie, football, family and friends – many of our Thanksgiving traditions hark back, not just to the Pilgrims, but to Colonial harvest celebrations throughout the 17th and 18th centuries. Turkey, pumpkins, bread and game all found a place at the feast when early Marylanders celebrated a bountiful crop. This year, do your cooking with a nod to the fare of Colonial Marylanders with a basket of rolls from an early American recipe. These rolls take only a few minutes to mix and invoke culinary traditions of the past.

Farming formed the foundation of Maryland's Colonial economy and many people raised corn and tobacco on plantations. While colonists did not celebrate Thanksgiving as we now know it, an abundant harvest often led to merry get-togethers with plentiful food and drink, bonfires and games. Neighbors gathered to feast, often traveling between plantations along the rivers and creeks that connected them. Children may have played tag and blind man's bluff while men engaged in competitions or card games. The bounty of the land -- corn, apples, squash, wild game and cider -- featured prominently in these feasts, and celebrants likely cooked both old favorites and special treats.

At Historic St. Mary's City, the site of Maryland's first settlement, living history interpreters recreate what life may have been like in 17th century Maryland, including how colonists cooked. Seventeenth century Marylanders ate what they grew. They commonly made corn bread, corn mush and roast pork and seasoned these dishes with herbs such as basil and thyme. Colonial cooking used more spices and less sugar than our cooking today. Colonists brought seeds with them and ate a variety of meat, vegetables and wild game.

Colonists cooked recipes that had been handed down orally from generation to generation over an open fire or a hearth with cast iron pots and bake ovens. Another way colonists would bake bread and cook stews was in Dutch ovens, which they would bury in the

fire. To bake bread, they would build a hot fire, place a Dutch oven lined with stones in the fire, and when the oven was hot, they would put their pan of bread inside, cover it with the lid, and heap more coals on top. Stackable Dutch ovens enabled colonists to cook bread, stews or other dishes simultaneously.

By the late 1600s, wheat and sugar were imported more frequently into Maryland, and within a few decades, chocolate had appeared. Special occasions called for special dishes, and Colonial Marylanders may have cooked with unusual or expensive ingredients. It is believed that sweet treats like tarts, cookies and fruit cakes were baked.

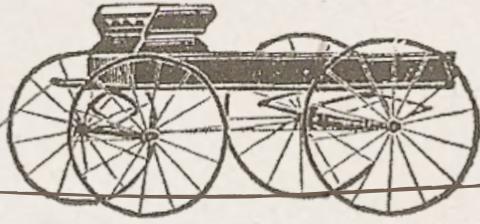
During meals, people used rolls to sop up juices from the food and to push food around, just as we still do. The following recipe, from Mary Randolph's recipe for French rolls in her 1824 cookbook *The Virginia Housewife*, updates Randolph's instructions to "sift a quart of flour, add a little salt, a spoonful of yeast, two eggs well beaten, and half a pint of milk" with modern measurements and no-knead techniques popularized by Jim Lahey and others.

Mary Randolph's French Rolls

- 2 3/4 cups of unbleached all-purpose flour (13 ounces)
- 1 1/2 tsp. of salt
- 1 tsp. of yeast
- 1 1/4 cups of warm milk
- 2 eggs, well beaten

The day before baking, mix the dry ingredients together in a large bowl. Then add the milk and eggs and stir everything together, making sure that the dough is consistently wet and thoroughly mixed. Cover the bowl with plastic wrap and refrigerate overnight.

The next morning, preheat the oven to 425 F. Grease a 12-cup muffin pan. Take the bread dough out of the refrigerator. With a spoon, take a piece of dough the size of a lime out of the bowl, shape it roughly into a ball and place it into the muffin pan. When the oven is hot, bake the rolls for 22 minutes or until they are golden. Take them out of the oven and let them cool. For added richness, you can brush the rolls with some melted butter.



Ask the Undertaker

By Ryan Helfenbein

The holidays are a time when we eat great home-cooked meals, visit with extended family members and scatter our loved ones cremated remains. What? That's right, the holidays have proven to be a very popular time for that final goodbye as loved ones are already gathered together anyway. Studies show that two out of five families who elect cremation plan to use scattering as their final goodbye. That said, where is ash scattering prohibited?

Living as close to the water as most of us do, many of our families who elect to scatter ashes plan to do so in the tributaries of the Chesapeake Bay. Before you gas up that boat and ice down the beverages, you should know that it is against state and federal laws. The Environmental Protection Agency and the state of Maryland prohibit scattering of cremated remains in waters closer than three nautical miles from land and in waters less than one hundred fathoms (600 feet) deep. Those of us who grew up having to learn the deepest point of the Chesapeake Bay to satisfy our middle school science teachers (Bloody Point), know that even this location is not a suitable depth.

But what about the reef program offered by the company Eternal Reefs out of Florida? Can't they put cremains into a reef ball and place them in the Chesapeake Bay? Prior to April of this year, yes. However, it was reported by the state of Maryland on April 26 that, "MD DNR Fisheries Service will no longer allow the placement of human remains incorporated into manmade structures onto sites permitted to the Maryland DNR Fisheries Service. This includes all sites in Chesapeake Bay and state waters of the Atlantic Ocean (within three nautical miles of the shoreline). Furthermore, it will be the Maryland DNR Fisheries Service policy to oppose the placement of manmade

structures integrated with human remains on non-DNR permitted sites within the waters of Maryland."

OK, so I can't legally place the cremains into the local areas of the Chesapeake Bay. Then what can I do? Fortunately, there is a company by the name of Atlantic Scattering that offers assistance to the families seeking water scattering as the final resting place for a loved one's cremains. This organization is based in Maryland and scatters cremated remains in accordance with the state and federal laws. They provide the family with photos and/or video of the sunset scattering service on the Atlantic Ocean and provide certification, with a map, that includes GPS coordinates as to the placement of the cremains. All cremains are contained in a biodegradable receptacle prior to placement into the water.

Another option for this holiday season is airborne scattering. A pilot at Tribute Aviation provides scattering from his airplane using a unique device that contains the cremated remains on his plane's wing. With a push of a button from a family member in the cockpit, cremains

are released over the designated area. He provides aerial scattering in the mountainous areas of West Virginia to offshore waters in the Atlantic. In addition, Tribute Aviation also provides options of high altitude and even loop-the-loops and rolls during the scattering process. A one-of-a-kind means of scattering indeed! Tribute Aviation's contact information is www.tribute-aviation.com

As the gift-giving season knocks on our door, perhaps a trip to the mountains of West Virginia or a cruise in the Atlantic should be considered for those planning an ash scattering. Whichever it may be, please be sure to take a moment to double-check into specific area regulations or simply contact a local undertaker in that area.

Ryan, owner/supervising mortician and preplanning counselor at Lasting Tributes on Bestgate Road in Annapolis, offers area residents solutions to high-cost funerals. He can be reached at 410.897.4852 or Ryan@LastingTributesFuneralCare.com

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GETTING OVER

By Melissa Conroy

Maybe it's the half-painted bookshelf that has been sitting in your garage for a year. Or that pile of dusty French books you bought a decade ago and haven't touched since. It could be the Christmas cards that are three years overdue or the exercise program you have been meaning to start or that family reunion that has never actually happened. All of us, whether we are young or old, choleric or phlegmatic, northern or southern, have our own private struggle against inertia. It's one thing to have a goal or plan. Goals are ridiculously easy to set, but acting upon them is much more of a challenge.

The good news is, however, that you can finally get that bathroom renovated, visit that country you have always wanted to see, or walk that charity 5K your city is hosting. Inertia can be overcome, and your life will change dramatically when you finally decide to step forward and take action. Often, you are the only person standing in your way. With some simple steps, you can bust out of your rut and reach your goals.

If you struggle with inertia, the first thing to ask yourself is why. It is easy to blame yourself when you do not follow through on your goals or aspirations, and to be honest, sometimes you deserve the blame. It is very easy to fall into patterns of laziness or habit and to choose the path of less resistance. But there are a variety of other reasons such as poor planning, unrealistic expectations or lack of time. If you are wanting to kick inertia out of your life, here are some tips to identify problem spots and move forward.

1. *Avoid unrealistic expectations:* As Americans, we often have the mindset that we can do anything we set our minds to. This attitude, however, often leads to people becoming overwhelmed and disappointed. One of the first steps you need to take before starting a project is to estimate if it can be achieved. Carefully evaluate your skills and strengths, consider what time and money you have at your disposal, and ask yourself honestly if this is a reasonable goal for you.

2. *Keep it simple:* Keep this maxim in mind: "It is better to do a few things well than many things poorly." It would be foolish to launch a new business at the same time you begin training for a marathon! This sounds obvious, but many people overload themselves with far too many projects, goals and aspirations and then berate

themselves for failing to achieve everything. Another good rule of thumb is this: "When you add something, drop something." Don't continue to pile on more and more tasks, responsibilities and activities on your plate without letting go of some things and focus on quality over quantity.

3. *Make a plan:* When you have a specific goal in mind, treat it like a potential business. Write up a plan, create a time frame and outline the steps you need to take. Inertia often happens when people feel overwhelmed by what they want to accomplish. Breaking everything down into manageable steps can help you realize that your goal is achievable and this will encourage you to pursue it.

4. *Tackle disorganization:* People who are habitual goal-reachers tend to be organized, methodical individuals. Organization helps people maximize their hours and make the most efficient use of their time. If you tend to be on the disorganized side, it would probably help you to spend some time becoming a better organized person before attempting your next project.

5. *Avoid distraction:* Our world is awash with distractions, from that *Dirty Jobs* marathon to the new clutch of cute grandchildren pictures on Facebook. However, you can easily fritter away precious hours a day on trivial pursuits and mindless entertainment. Getting rid of your television can free up hours a day for more enriching, interesting activities. If you are working on a project at home, try unplugging your Internet router and hiding your smartphone in your glove compartment to significantly cut down on distraction. Don't believe the lies about multitasking – trying to do several things at once leads to poor quality work and frustration.

6. *Reward yourself:* Giving yourself rewards when you accomplish goals or steps to the goal is a great way of encouraging yourself to follow through. Maybe you and your spouse could treat yourselves to a cruise if you reach your weight goal or you could buy that new five iron when you finish resurfacing the kitchen floor?

THE HUMPH

The only difference between a rut and a grave is depth

7.

Follow through in all areas of life:

The different areas of our lives tend to spill over into each other. If you want to overcome inertia and finish the goals you set for yourself, take a good look at all areas of your life and ask yourself how good you are at follow-through overall. Do you keep your word? Are your bills paid on time? Can your friends count on you? If you take pains to cultivate yourself as a person who follows through, keeps promises and can be depended upon, inertia will naturally become easier to overcome.

8.

Find cheerleaders: Even the most self-

starting, dedicated person still needs support and encouragement from others. Find a “fan group” who will cheer you on and celebrate with you. Also, if you surround yourself with people who are good at achieving goals, their influence will be extremely helpful.

9.

Work through setback: Nothing good comes without struggle. It's easy to get discouraged when the going gets tough or an unexpected monkey wrench is thrown into your plans. However,

setbacks and problems are all part of achieving a goal, so expect them to happen, plan for them and keep plugging.

10.

Finish what you started. The good news is that the more you follow through, the easier it becomes to do so. Achieving simple goals

like making your bed every day or turning off the computer by 9 p.m. every evening help set the foundation for completing bigger goals. Make it a point to always complete what you start, even if you lose interest in what you are doing. This is one of the best ways to develop good inertia-overcoming skills.

We all struggle with follow-through, and it is certainly a lot easier to just keep going through the motions of life in the comfortable groove we set for ourselves. But life is much more enjoyable, exciting and entertaining if we set and accomplish goals for ourselves.



gifts

FROM YOUR KITCHEN

By Louise Whiteside

What's your fondest memory of a Christmas past? Friends and family gathered around a glittering tree? Wide-eyed children opening the gifts they've wished for? Feasting on a succulent turkey dinner at a table with your loved ones? All beautiful memories. But when I daydream about yuletide seasons gone by, my thoughts wander to two or three neighbors who would come to our door each holiday season, bearing plates of homemade gingerbread men or leaving foil-wrapped loaves of homemade cranberry or pumpkin bread in our mailbox. To me, edible treats are not only welcome gifts during the holiday season, they also speak volumes without words. They seem to say, "I cared enough to give you the ultimate personal gift: something I created with my own hands."

Sweet treats from your kitchen make wonderful gifts for the hostess who has graciously invited you to her home; for the co-worker who helped you complete that massive project; for the next-door neighbor who walked your dog while you were on vacation; for a son, daughter or grandchild serving in the military; or for anyone who is special to you.

PACKAGE YOUR GIFT BEAUTIFULLY

Packaging your delectable gift can be as much fun as creating it. Let your imagination go wild. Browse through your favorite thrift shop or dollar store for interesting bowls, baskets, glasses and jars. Check the craft department of your local variety store for lush satin and velvet ribbons, whimsical scrapbooking paper and seasonal stickers. Your gift recipient will love a wicker basket lined with a festive dish towel or dinner napkin, and brimming with your homemade pound

cake or biscotti. Fill a champagne glass with your special candy, wrap the glass in colorful cellophane and tie a grosgrain ribbon around the stem. Try wrapping your favorite cookies in parchment or waxed paper and placing them in giant-sized coffee mugs. Fill a glass jar with your homemade preserves or chutney, and top it with a beautiful bow and a recipe card. Fill decorative bottles with your own herb vinegars, and label them with the name of each vinegar.

Your favorite treats will be cherished when shared with those you love. Tasty gifts from your kitchen are a delicious way to say, "Happy holidays!"

Here are two easy recipe ideas for great gift-giving:

RUM BALLS

- 1 cup finely crushed vanilla wafers
- 1 cup confectioners' sugar
- 1-1/2 cups chopped pecans, divided
- 2 Tbs. cocoa
- 2 Tbs. light corn syrup
- 1/4 cup dark rum
- 1/4 cup fine granulated sugar

Combine cookie crumbs, confectioners' sugar, 1 cup chopped pecans and cocoa. Add corn syrup and rum, and mix well. Shape into one-inch balls. Roll half in granulated sugar and remainder in 1/2 cup chopped nuts. Makes two dozen.

* Rum Balls dusted with granulated sugar

REFRIGERATOR COOKIES

- 1 cup packed brown sugar
- 1 cup butter, melted
- 1 egg
- 3 cups flour
- 1 tsp. cinnamon
- 1/2 tsp. baking soda
- 1/2 tsp. salt
- 1 cup chopped nuts (optional)

In a mixing bowl, combine brown sugar and melted butter. Beat in egg. Add dry ingredients. Roll into a long roll, and wrap in waxed paper. Refrigerate overnight. Remove waxed paper and slice. Sprinkle with tiny candies or colored sugar, if desired. Bake at 375 degrees for six to eight minutes. Makes two to three dozen.

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photo: Dana Moos

Legal Insights



This column presents general information regarding estate and disability planning and probate. It is not intended to create an attorney-client relationship or constitute legal advice to its readers. Individuals with legal concerns should consult with an attorney for advice regarding their specific circumstances.

Ah, (or perhaps argh!) the holiday season is upon us. As of this writing, nearly two weeks before Halloween, some of the big box stores have already put up garlands, bows and lights. When the festivities start so early in the season, it is not hard to understand how easily one can lose track of the true meaning of *the season of giving*. Ticking off names on the gift list moves to the forefront of people's minds and charitable giving to the back. Whether it's through local contributions or in a charitable trust via your overall estate plan, giving back to an organization dear to you, or to those in need around you, can be arranged much more easily than you think.

In fact, a testamentary trust, which is outlined in a person's will and comes into play after death, can take care of two significant priorities most people reading this article will have; taking care of loved ones and making a difference to the community around us. Using a family of dad, mom, and two adult children as an example, when dad has his will drawn up, he can provide for mom, then the children and finally, the charity of his choice. The trust would indicate that when dad passes away, he leaves assets in trust for mom's enjoyment during her lifetime. Then when mom passes away, the children can have the use of the assets during their lifetime and at a specified point during their lives, or at their passing, the remainder of the trust can be distributed to a charity predetermined by dad when he created his estate plan. Alternately, when making such a plan, dad can stipulate that mom or children, whoever is the last family recipient of such a trust, can choose the ultimate charitable beneficiary. This also has the added appeal of engaging family members in the process of giving back to the community. At the same time, for an estate over \$1 million dollars, a testamentary trust can also provide protection against state and federal estate taxes.

Living trusts, i.e., trusts created during a person's own lifetime, can also serve the same purpose and have similar benefits. Most people are familiar with the type known as a revocable trust (one that can be revoked by the maker) at any time. It is touted as avoiding the supposedly onerous probate process. As an aside, probate is not as problematic as some would think, provided a person has done proper estate planning ahead of time. But this point is best left for another column. For our purposes here, within the realm of living trusts, are the type known as charitable remainder trusts (CRTs). Using the dad, mom and

two children example used previously, CRTs can also serve dad's purpose of providing for mom, posterity and giving back to the community. CRTs also have the potential benefit of providing protection against state and federal estate taxes. In CRTs, which aren't revocable, but do have similarities to annuities, dad could designate a charity as the upfront recipient of trust funds. The charity would receive trust funds for a designated period of time, and when that time is up, dad and his heirs would get the remainder. Alternately, dad could create a CRT in which he and mom (and maybe the children) get the benefit up front of the funds for a certain number of years, at the end of which, the chosen charity would receive whatever remains in the trust. Either way, a CRT not only supports dad and his family, but also gives to a charitable cause important to all of them.

If you are considering a CRT though, you should discuss it with a financial planner first because some of the investment benefits of CRTs, like annuities, are tied to current interest rates. With the rates at record lows, the interest return on a CRT isn't what it was when rates were higher.

Still, and especially as we are now in the thick of the holiday season, CRTs and testamentary trusts can both truly make it a season of giving, and all without having to wait in line for gift wrapping.

Jennifer Langone is a Maryland attorney with a practice focused on estates and trusts. She can be reached at JEL@langonelaw.net or 410.280.0442

Bay Bytes

If you would like to become a volunteer observer of natural phenomena such as the seasonal habits of the fauna and flora in your area, log onto www.usanpn.org/ where you can assist in collecting data used to understand changes in our environment.

Old age is always ten years more than your current age.

Houseplants

FOR YOUR GOOD HEALTH

By Neil Moran

It may come as no surprise that houseplants can filter the air we breathe. However, it may surprise you just how well they can filter some real bad stuff that fouls up our air.

NASA, in conjunction with the Associated Landscape Contractors of America (ALCA), performed an extensive study to decide if astronauts should take houseplants with them to outer space. By the looks of the study, the answer is yes. Houseplants can remove a number of nasty chemicals found in spaceships, including formaldehyde and benzene, two known carcinogens.

Here in the Bay area, houseplants serve a vital role in keeping the air clean in our homes and workplaces.

DOWN-TO-EARTH TIPS FOR GROWING HEALTHY HOUSEPLANTS

The key to growing air-purifying houseplants is proper placement and consistent care. In general, houseplants like to be placed in areas with humidity around 45 percent, which is a desirable humidity range for most homes. What doesn't work is an environment that is extremely dry, such as placement near electric heaters and the like. Conversely, they won't thrive where cold drafts prevail.

LIGHT REQUIREMENTS

Houseplants have different requirements for light, but most prefer filtered light over direct sunlight. If a south-facing window is your choice for plant placement, a thin, partially transparent curtain will help filter the harsh light, especially in Summer when our days are much longer and the sun is much more intense. Some plants, like geraniums and hibiscus, will actually thrive in the direct sunlight, while rubber plants will do better in a shady corner.

WATERING

Many people often proclaim, "give me a houseplant and I'll kill it." Or, if a plant looks sickly or the leaves are turning yellow, they insist it needs fertilizer. Most likely, the culprit is overwatering or underwatering. The ideal method of watering most houseplants is to provide a good soaking of room temperature water, let it dry out and water again. There are exceptions to the rule: African Violets and Poinsettias enjoy a constantly moist growing medium.

Always provide good drainage. Remove any decorative baskets or plastic wrap your houseplants came in from the store or garden center. Also, check to make sure that there are drainage holes in the bottom of the pot. And while it's fine to set plastic coasters under the pots to catch excess water, don't let standing water accumulate. The cold water in the trays is as harmful as not providing proper drainage. Finally, pick a good time to water and try to stick with it. A weekly schedule is ideal. If you miss a week your houseplants won't die, but with several weeks of neglect you'll be accused of being a plant killer.

GROWING YOUR HOUSEPLANTS

Houseplants will benefit from a quality houseplant growing medium. The mix should be a loose, sterile blend of soilless ingredients, including sphagnum peat moss, perlite and vermiculite. I like to "bulk up" this mixture by tossing in a few of my own ingredients. Lately, I've been adding a handful of fine clay used for potting bonsai, to help retain moisture.

A light feeding of a houseplant fertilizer will keep your plants looking nice and green by helping to fend off insect and disease problems. I usually use a slow-release fertilizer that will keep them fed over about a three-month period, or a light, monthly feeding of a fertilizer specifically formulated for houseplants.



Have you noticed that now the days are long and the years are short?

PESTS AND DISEASE

The first line of defense for insects and disease is prevention. This is particularly true of disease problems like fungus and mildew, which are much easier to prevent than treat. Keep your plants healthy by following the tips in this article. And always use sterile mixes for potting and repotting and keep leaf litter cleaned up. Also, be careful of bringing plants in from outdoors or from a friend down the street. Infestations are common from these sources and can be easily avoided. Fungus problems, like powdery mildew can be controlled by treating with a fungicide as a preventative measure.

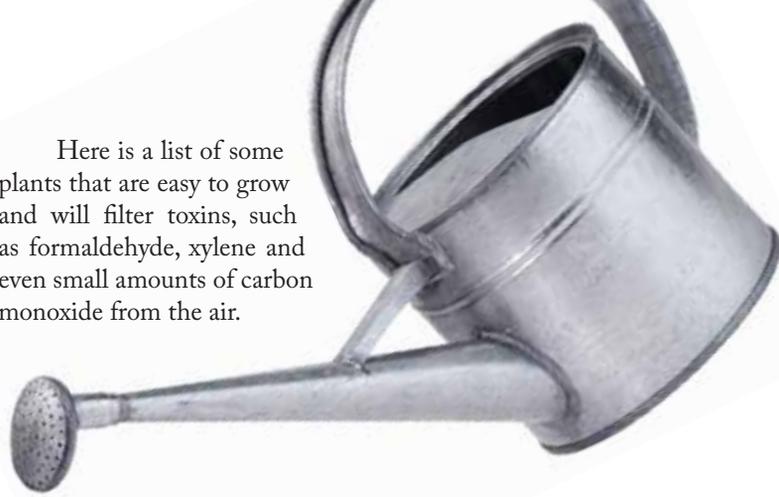
Despite your best efforts, it is still quite possible to be plagued by insect and disease. At least with insects we “know who is showing up for dinner,” as I used to say when I managed a greenhouse. There’s about a half dozen insects that will try to undermine your efforts to grow nice houseplants.

Aphids, spider mites and scale, are common sucking type pests that will go after your houseplants. The tell-tale sign of an infestation of these critters is a sticky substance on the leaves. Aphids, a very tiny soft-shelled insect, will appear as a cluster under the leaves and around the stems. A spider mite infestation is evidenced by thin webbing throughout the upper portion of the plant. Spider mites thrive in warm, dry conditions.

Scale is a hard-shell insect that appears as brown spots, mostly on the leaves. Schefflera is particularly susceptible to scale. To a lesser degree, you may encounter white flies and thrips, at least we did in the greenhouse. You can use a plant-based insecticide containing pyrethrum to control these bugs.

A good initial treatment for all of the above infestations is to take the plant outdoors in warm weather and wash the insects off with warm water. Once dry, spray the plant with a plant-based insecticide, such as that containing pyrethrum. Safer and GardensAlive are two companies that sell plant-based pesticides. Quarantine the infested plant from your other houseplants. Severe infestations may warrant discarding the plant.

Here is a list of some plants that are easy to grow and will filter toxins, such as formaldehyde, xylene and even small amounts of carbon monoxide from the air.



- Spider plant (*Chlorophytum comosum*)
- Boston fern (*Nephrolepis exaltata bostoniensis*)
- Marginata (*Dracaena marginata*)
- Peace lily (*Spathiphyllum*)
- Chinese evergreen (*Aglaonema modestum*)
- Golden pothos (*Epipremnum aureum*)
- Areca palm (*Chrysalidocarpus lutescens*)
- English ivy (*Hedera helix*)
- Snake plant (*Sansevieria trifasciata*)
- Aloe vera (*Aloe barbadensis*)

Source: <http://www.environmentalgraffiti.com/air-quality/news-10-fabulous-houseplants-absorbs-indoor-pollution?image=6>

Resource for more information on houseplants and specific care instructions:

(my personal favorite)

The House Plant Expert by Dr. D. G. Hessayon

Neil, a horticulturist and garden writer, can be found on his blog at <http://northcountrygardening.blogspot.com>

ANTIETAM NATIONAL BATTLEFIELD ILLUMINATED

If you've never taken the time to visit Antietam for the luminary display, perhaps this is the year to pack up some friends or family and take in this breathtaking event. Located approximately two hours from the Annapolis area, there will be 23,000 luminaries (paper bags with candles inside) lit on Dec. 1 at 6 p.m. Each flame commemorates the life of a soldier killed, wounded or missing during the Battle of Antietam. Cars using only their parking lights are invited to wind their way along an almost five-mile drive through the nearly 12-acre site. The reverence and quiet that it instills is something you won't soon forget. Be aware that the visitor center will be closed and that the line can be up to two hours long. The event is free, but contributions are accepted at the entry. For more information, log onto www.nps.gov/anti/playourvisit/luminary.htm

Photo by Keith Snyder

FAVORITE AND Fabulous finds

By Victoria Duncan

Let's face it, at this point in life, we don't want another knickknack or useless gadget. And we don't want to give those things to others, either. One friend jokes that if it hangs, sits or stands, she doesn't want it. Her husband worries that he might be the next thing to get the boot since he sometimes does all three! But occasionally we come across some products or services that are too functional, useful and, well, just too fabulous to pass up. So, here are a few gift ideas:

Snake Oil for Aches and Pains

No stinkin' snakes here! In fact, no snake products are used to manufacture these fragrant essential oils boasting anti-inflammatory properties. Rather the name was coined as a humorous throwback to the old-time snake oil that was touted as a cure-all. These modern day formulas, designed to chase away your aches and pains, are an aromatic blend of natural, vegetarian oils, beeswax, pure essential oils and vitamin E that are paraben and formaldehyde-free.

Original Formula Snake Oil boasts a blend of peppermint, chamomile, lavender, clove, ginger and marjoram formulated to bite back the pain of everything from minor burns to fibromyalgia to arthritis. *Sidewinder* sports a fresh scent and is designed to soothe sore, tired and overworked muscles. *Intended for Women, Rosy Boa* is a custom blend of spicy oils with a touch of rose to delight your senses as it soothes away discomfort.

Priced from \$7.95 each, consider all three of these for yourself or for your favorite knitter, athlete or avid gardener. Order at www.snakeoil-shop.com or by phone at 918.809.7432. (Special for *Outlook* readers: Order by Dec. 31 using the code OUTLOOK20 and receive 20 percent off your total purchase price.)

Boomer Explores Annapolis

Delight that special grandchild with a whimsical book, written and illustrated by local Annapolis residents. Author Angelique Clarke targeted the tale of Boomer, an adventurous pup, to children in grades K-5. However, even younger children will be enchanted by the colorful and playful illustrations of nationally recognized cartoonist Jim Hunt.

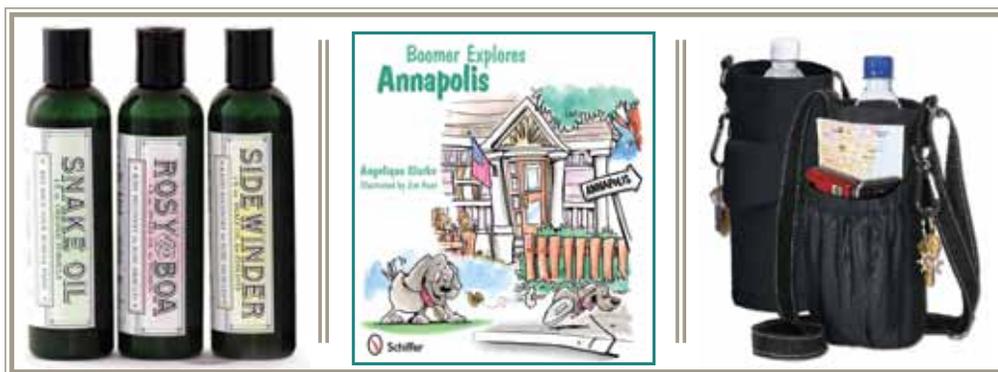
If your grandchildren live out of town, tempt them into visiting soon so they can retrace the wanderings of Boomer as he explores the picturesque streets of Annapolis. If you are lucky enough to have local loved ones, they'll learn about the history in their own backyard, such as the Maryland State House and City Dock, as they follow Boomer's mischievous adventures. Want to have it autographed just for that favorite child? Email Angelique, who is also available for author readings, directly at anclarke@comcast.net

It's priced at \$12.95 and available in historic Annapolis at the Annapolis Bookstore on Maryland Avenue or at the Museum Store near City Dock. You can also get it at Barnes & Noble in Harbor Center or from your favorite online book retailer.

Go Caddy

Grab and go to the park, gym, sporting event, cruise or tourist attraction with this versatile and well-designed water bottle holder, which is really so much more than that. This multipurpose carrier frees up your hands as it holds your favorite beverage, ID, cell phone, money, sunglasses, map, keys and more. Manufactured out of Microfiber for durability, this little gem will pack flat in your suitcase, if you dare to be without it, and will simplify and organize your on-the-go life. It comes in three colors (black, brown or red) and makes a perfect gift. The company also offers the Golf Caddy, which is designed to clip to a golf bag. It might not improve your game but will keep you organized as you scoot around the course.

Both the Go Caddy and the Golf Caddy are priced at \$19.95, plus shipping and handling. It is available at www.bvtproducts.com or by calling 727.834.8944.



How to Leave Your Life Story in Color



By Jas Saini

After working for a lot of corporations in various capacities, I decided to take it easy and retire. Just when I was trying to figure out what to do after retirement, a family member passed away.

Among other things, he left a box full of photos with descriptions, and a box of typed text on loose sheets. Reading through the content, it was clear that he had written his life story, but didn't know how to put it all together into book form. Everyone in the family was eager and ready to read the big manuscript.

Reluctantly, I agreed to the project and then there became an accidental custom book publisher. Luckily business proposals had been part of my professional life, so I began the process of assimilating all the information. After working nonstop for three months, scanning the photos and text pages, we finally had a hardcover book with jacket. It turned out to be a colorful life story. Suddenly, other family members also wanted to get their stories published.

It quickly became clear that everyone's story is very interesting and sooner or later, very important to someone else. Also, it's not necessary to be famous to write a story. Every story is different and unique. It is also a great legacy for family, kids and grandkids. And, these days with families spread out so much, no one takes time for

the oral history tradition anymore. Luckily technology is available to self-publish, print and bind your own book. It's also possible to print your book in limited quantities.

Many have said, "I don't know how to write." Keep in mind no one is a born writer. There is no right or wrong way to write your own book, only your way. Everyone has their own style. Write as you think and talk. Every storybook and its outline structure are also different and unique. Plus this is your book and story; you get to decide what is in it.

"How do I get started?" is frequently the first question. To begin, you have to get a fast computer with lots of memory, scanner and printer with word processing or graphics publishing software. Then collect only the photos from your albums and boxes that are relevant to tell the story. Collect any journals, diaries, baby books, graduation books and any other documents that you can fall back on for recollection of dates and events.

Create main chapter headers and subheads to break the book into sections. Start writing your story and start scanning photos at 300dpi. Combine the two, using your software and put it all together in a layout. Publish and distribute it as a gift to the family and friends, as an e-book or

a printed version. If you lack expertise in certain area, you can always outsource that section.

These days, online self-publishers also provide paperback or hardcover options. They provide all different shapes and sizes of books, different grades of papers, different style wizard templates and different prices based upon options. Again it all depends upon what you are trying to do and your expertise in using online templates.

Also be aware of copyright issues if you use someone else's material. Get written approval if it is someone else's photos and material. Give credit in the book to the source if using their work. Don't forget to put your own copyright notice on your book.

If you get stuck, look into the specifics in the help section of the software package that you are using. You can also go online and search for specific issues on search engines and benefit from others' experience. This would make the perfect gift for the holidays so take the time to gather all those pictures and put together the story of your life for others to enjoy.

Jas Saini is a self-book publishing consultant, who can be reached at sainistrand@gmail.com

photos by Lee Cannon

Reaching a destination is more about which path you choose.



10 THINGS YOU PROBABLY DON'T KNOW ABOUT CHRISTMAS TREES

Since the early 7th century, Christians and many pagans have been celebrating Christmas with a tree according to some historians. Often the center of the entire celebration, the Christmas tree probably originated in Germany. It's a tradition that most families adhere to year after year, decorating it in their own unique way. Here are just a few interesting facts about this long-held tradition.

1. Christmas trees take an average of seven to 10 years to mature to the popular height of 6 feet. However, it can take up to 15 years with an average of seven before it's harvested.

2. In 2002, approximately 20 percent of United States households had a real tree, almost 50 percent had an artificial tree and the remaining 30 percent had no tree.

3. Tinsel, first made in Germany in the 1600s, was originally created from silver. Because it tarnished easily, lead was added to the mix. Later when lead toxicity became known, plastic tinsel was introduced.

4. Thomas Edison's assistant, Edward Johnson, came up with the idea of electric lights for Christmas trees in 1882, just three years after Edison perfected the light bulb. Johnson's lights replaced the hazardous candles that had typically been used.

5. In the first week, a fresh tree in your home will consume as much as a quart of water per day.

6. Although the first Christmas tree probably appeared in Germany, the first decorated tree appeared in Latvia in the early 16th century.

7. Eighty-five percent of artificial trees are manufactured in China. On average, the homeowner keeps it for six to nine years before disposing of it. It can take hundreds of years to disintegrate in a landfill.

8. According to the Maryland Department of Agriculture, when you buy a tree directly from a farmer, that dollar will circulate through the local economy four times, which strengthens our communities. A real Christmas tree is biodegradable, which means it can be easily recycled for mulch and other purposes such as preventing soil erosion.

9. Early European trees were decorated with lit candles, apples, nuts and homemade cookies. Early Americans used paper, fabric and tin for decorations.

10. In part because Christmas trees had some pagan origins, English Puritans condemned the tradition of Yule logs, holly, mistletoe and the like. Oliver Cromwell preached against "the heathen tradition" of Christmas carols, decorated trees or joyful expressions that desecrated "that sacred event."

For even more information on Christmas trees, log onto www.christmasarchives.com/trees.html



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Season's Greenings

from the Botanic Gardens

By Tricia Herban

It is fitting that the National Botanic Garden is located just blocks from the nation's capitol at the end of the mall in Washington. This unique site provides a focal point for the study, preservation and development of plants from throughout this country and abroad. The slogan "Saving plants -- Enriching Lives" identifies the garden as much more than a location for research and it is in that context, that this discussion takes place.

A visit to the conservatory is an ideal way to get out of one's own world for a few hours. The soaring iron bands that hold its glass roof, reach up to the sky to house the tallest palm trees. Step inside that space and breathe the air of the tropics or the desert or a rainforest. Surround yourself with 28,944 square feet of growing space housing two courtyard gardens and 10 garden rooms.

Founded by an act of Congress in 1820, the Botanic Garden was the fulfillment of George Washington's vision of a place that would demonstrate and promote the value of plants to the entire country. In fact, it is one of the oldest such gardens in the country. And most unusual, the garden is actually recognized as a museum and accredited by the American Association of Museums. Its artifacts "are the living treasures of the plant world. The towering leaves, graceful flowers, delicate seeds and exotic fruits of plants at their peak are displayed artfully through the historic conservatory."

The museum's aspirations are global. It is "dedicated to demonstrating the aesthetic, cultural, economic, therapeutic and ecological importance of plants to the well-being of humankind." And as it focuses on the 21st century, the emphasis on preservation goes hand in hand with sustainability and the preservation of species under environmental threat.

Permanent exhibits and gardens open year round include: *economic and ethno-botanical plants* used in products that provide our fibers, food, beverages, cosmetics and other aspects of cultivated life; *a jungle* in which a tropical rainforest rises to 93 feet; displays of *ways that plants have adapted over time*; *a primeval garden* reconstructing the Jurassic landscape of ferns and plant groups that have survived for 150 million years; *the Hawaiian landscape* where species have adapted to a remote volcanic environment; *world deserts*; *medicinal plants* from around the world; *rare and endangered species*; and *plants in culture*, which presents sensory displays of therapy, ornament, music, ceremony and language.

This may all sound very academic, but think blossoms. Think flowers. Think beautiful ferns and blooming cactus, bromeliads tucked in tree branches and graceful sedum crawling among rocks. Think of a warm interior on a blustery day. Yes, think orchids! Some 5,000 varieties are in the collection with literally hundreds on display at any one time.

Rotating gallery displays make the glassed-in gardens a continuing delight, year round. A special holiday tradition is the

exhibition titled "Season's Greenings," running this year from Nov. 22 to Jan. 1, 2013. "The Conservatory will be adorned with wreaths, garlands, living ornaments and filled with model trains, buildings made entirely from plant materials and a vast collection of poinsettias..." according to Botanic Garden press releases. Continuing the theme of natural materials, the East Gallery will present a complete "Enchanted Forest" with model trains running through a woods filled with fairies and their mysterious houses.

Meanwhile the West Gallery will showcase one of the largest indoor decorated trees in Washington. The Garden Court will again present models of major Washington landmarks made entirely of plant materials.

Clearly, there could be no bad time to visit the National Botanic Garden. The Winter holidays are an ideal time. But in warmer weather, other areas of the site will beckon as well. The National Garden adjacent to the conservatory offers a Rose Garden, the Regional Garden of Mid-Atlantic Plants, a Butterfly Garden and the First Ladies Garden. And further, just across Independence Avenue, Bartholdi Park holds a variety of not-to-be missed themed gardens presenting plants and designs suitable for the home setting.

Additional Information

Location: 100 Maryland Ave. SW, Washington, DC 20001
(address for GPS)

Getting there: Orange or Blue lines Metro to
Federal Center Southwest

Admission: Free

Hours: Open 10-5 daily including all weekends
and holidays.

Accessibility: Wheelchairs are available, but not all spaces
are accessible.

Gift shop: None

Restaurant: None. In warm weather outdoor table seating
is provided for those bringing food.

photo by Liz West



THE UNCLUTTERED LIFE

By the Rev. Dr. Harold B. Wright, II

I hear a lot of people talking about downsizing these days, downsizing from a large, multi-bedroom, multi-floor, multi-acre residence to a smaller, more compact home, condo or apartment. It's a natural impulse once the kids are grown and living on their own, when the taxes and yardwork get to be too much or when age challenges us to reduce our responsibilities. Downsizing from closets that are cluttered and crammed to a closet in which a coat could actually hang freely or one that might even be empty. Imagine that. Downsizing from a size 42 to size 34 in clothes, recognizing the value and benefits of a healthier, leaner, slimmer weight. Downsizing from a gas-guzzling car to a more efficient, perhaps even hybrid vehicle as the price of gas continues to rise. Downsizing from responsibilities and commitments to various organizations and groups to free our calendars for more leisurely and flexible time. Downsizing from the pressures and chaos of a crowded, overstuffed life to a simpler, gentler experience.

Isn't that what downsizing really is? Moving away from all the stuff and size and quantity that we accumulate and acquire that clogs our arteries, our closets and our daily lives? Moving away from as much as we can get, toward a life that is built on simplicity and a better understanding of the difference between wanting and needing. Moving away from quantity in favor of quality, and stepping back into a world and lifestyle that isn't cluttered by size and scope and status as a measure of success. Downsizing is a movement to a simpler life in mind, body and spirit.

These are days in which downsizing hardly seems to be the pattern, however. We will stuff ourselves with Thanksgiving turkey, and indebt ourselves to have a bountiful harvest of presents given and received during the holidays, over-decorate our homes and yards almost to the point of being gaudy and tacky and eat and drink in excess at gatherings. It almost suggests implicitly that the quantity of food, stuffing, frivolity and stuff will somehow be an accurate reflection of our sense of gratitude and celebration. It seems almost sacrilege to suggest that we eat less on Thanksgiving or give less during the holidays. These are not always downsizing days.

Perhaps that is precisely my point: that in the super-sizing of everything from our milkshakes to our houses to our bodies, we've lost sight and sense of life itself in some ways and places. When life gets so cluttered and crowded and scheduled with things to do, places to go and people to see, we often are so busy with life that we stop living. And while all the world around us is urging us and encouraging

us to buy more, spend more, get more, do more, I want to urge and encourage us to do exactly the opposite – to be counter-cultural yet ever so much more living-centered. It's more than pausing to smell the roses, listening to a bird sing, watching the waves roll in, turning your face into a gentle breeze or sitting beneath a soaring oak tree and having a quiet moment – as valuable and important as these are. I am suggesting we deliberately and intentionally move away from the busyness that captures us and move toward living a simpler, easier, gentler way. We need to re-prioritize what's important and vital to living and let the rest stand aside.

These upcoming holiday seasons are a good time to start. Plan and practice times and places for genuine gratitude and thanksgiving for the blessings in your life. Maybe it will mean fewer bowls of food or pieces of pie on the menu, or a football game not watched. But it might mean reading again the stories of the Pilgrims who joined with their native neighbors in giving thanks for life and sustenance during a hard, cold Winter. Maybe find a way to express that gratitude in a concrete way by offering to help serve someone else at a soup kitchen or homeless shelter. Limit your parties, your gifts, your decorations, your frantic schedules so that you can have an evening to simply sit and enjoy a favorite story, write a note to an old friend with whom you've lost touch, or have a warm cup of cider, eggnog or wine. Find a way and time and place to step back from the hustle and bustle of a world getting into a holiday frenzy to take a deep breath, remember the reasons for these days, and live fully enough so that gratitude and celebration are at the heart and soul of who and what you are and do. Don't let the holidays overwhelm and overtake you. Downsize, so that you can return to the core of what living is all about, so well-focused and observed in these special times.

Downsizing then has an incredible upside to it. We can downsize all that extraneous stuff in our life and world and discover that we've upsized our lives. Fill your days and lives with peace and tranquility, gratitude and celebration, joy and hope, energy and space for living itself.

So excuse me now. I have a closet to clean out, a walk to take and a book to read. Have a blessed living!

The Rev. Dr. Harold B. Wright, II is the senior pastor of Calvary United Methodist Church, 301 Rowe Boulevard, Annapolis, MD 21401. He can be reached at chipw@calumc.org or 410.268.1776

Chorale Presents Programs



By Kathryn Marchi

Folks who love to sing can always find a chorale or chorus to sing with in their area. It's a very satisfying and fun experience to be able to perform in front of appreciative audiences.

One such musical organization is the Queen Anne's Chorale located in Centreville on Maryland's Eastern Shore. The chorale of more than 60 voices has presented quality music to audiences throughout the area. This year the chorale will celebrate its 25th anniversary season.

Since its founding, The Queen Anne's Chorale has striven for excellence in its musicianship by presenting such great classical works as the Brahms' *Requiem*, Mozart's *Requiem*, Vivaldi's *Gloria*, Schubert's *Mass in G*, Benjamin Britten's *Ceremony of Carols*, Bach's *Christmas Oratorio*, Beethoven's *Mass in C*, and Morten Lauridsen's "*Lux Aeterna*", among others. The chorale has also presented music from Broadway, folk music, jazz, spirituals, gospel, pop, blues and ballads, along with seasonal and other similar music. In addition, the chorale has pursued collaborations with guest artists such as Stef Scaggiari, Rene' Hernandez, trumpeter from the Baltimore Symphony Orchestra, lyric-dramatic baritone Thomas Beard, The Kent Island Big Band, The Chesapeake Youth Symphony Orchestra, The Lodontowne Symphony Orchestra and other community choruses.

On **Dec. 1**, the chorale will collaborate with the "*Capital Ringers*," to present its "*Annual Holiday Concert*." The program will include sacred and secular holiday selections themed around bells. The audience will be invited to participate.

On **Apr. 27, 2013**, a special 25th anniversary celebration "*From Stage and Screen*" will be performed with a program inspired by stage and screen musical repertoire.

Both concerts will be performed at the Todd Performing Arts Center at Chesapeake College in Wye Mills. More information about Queen Anne's Chorale can be found by calling 410.822.2484 or visiting www.qachorale.org

Choruses and chorales such as Queen Anne's are available throughout the area (see accompanying list). If one can't be found in your town and you would enjoy a group sing, why not get one started?

Kathryn, a member of the Queen Anne's Chorale, is currently serving on the board of directors and can be reached at marchi-wre@mris.com

Area Chorale

Annapolis Chorale, Annapolis
www.annapolischorale.org

Easton Choral Arts Society, Easton
www.eastonchoralarts.com

Chester River Chorale, Chestertown
www.chesterriverchorale.org

Encore, Anne Arundel Community
College, Arnold
www.encorecreativity.org

Central Maryland Chorale, Laurel
www.centralmarylandchorale.com

Sweet Adelines International,
barbershop harmony for women
www.region19sai.org

Bay Country Chorus, barbershop
harmony for men, Easton
www.baycountrychorus.org



Fuzzy, Cute and Very Destructive

By Penelope Folsom

They're fuzzy and look cuddly. Their antics will make you laugh, but they're not only eating all that bird seed that you put out, but they're often destroying your feeders in the process. With Winter approaching when we get back to feeding our feathered friends, what can be done about the chronic problem of squirrels? If they'd limit their meals to what's dropped on the ground it wouldn't be so bad, but they also eat the bird feeder too, whether it be wood or plastic. These pound and one-half creatures are even capable of gnawing through the "squirrel proof" wire protective cage. Hopelessly destructive, these critters like a challenge and whether they're hanging upside down from the wire holding the feeder or reaching in with one paw to secure a tempting morsel of sunflower seeds, they are part of your life if you have birdfeeders.

There are ways to fight back. But buying squirrel-proof feeders is no guarantee that they're going to go away. They'll just consider it a challenge to outsmart the engineer who designed them. Quite frankly, I've never found a squirrel-proof feeder and suspect there is no such creation. Most bird lovers have a few tricks up their sleeve that seem to work at least partially, here's a sampling:

1 Use safflower seed. It's slightly more expensive and not sold in every store, but it does discourage squirrels, although a hungry squirrel doesn't really care and will eat it regardless.

2 Hot Pepper. Squirrels do not like this in their food. Birds ignore it for the most part. Sprinkle into the bird seed in the feeder and it just might work.

3 Pets. A bit drastic perhaps, but those furry little rodents will often give the scent of Fido a wide berth.

4 Feeders with weight limits. These are sold at various specialty shops and they do discourage squirrels, but give them enough time and they'll figure it out.

5 Relocation. Moving the feeder to an area that the squirrels would find difficult to negotiate such as on a pole at least 10 feet high, preferably more, away from trees, decks or wires that they can jump from.

6 Baffles. This can work if their usual route is up a pole to the feeder. Sold at most farm supply stores, they're worth the investment, but the feeder will still need to be placed away from jump-off points.

7 Food. It is possible to divert them temporarily at least with their own food such as corn sold at farm supply stores.

8 Milorganite. This is a byproduct that is used as fertilizer. It will deter deer and sprinkling it below a feeder has been known to at least slow down the influx of hungry squirrels.

As much fun as they are to watch, squirrels cause millions of dollars in damage every year and have been known to chew through wires, causing extensive power outages requiring expensive repairs. Be careful that they don't get into your house through attic vents. As anyone who has ever had this problem can attest – they can do serious damage. Damage that's been compared to what rats can do, which includes gnawing through doors and chewing on wires and ripping through insulation. Regardless of the chosen method, there's no guaranteed way to keep squirrels from competing with your feathered friends for food. The solution may be to just resolve to sit back and enjoy the show before trying the next "solution."



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Photo by Terren

A Legacy to a Friend

By Leslie Schwartz

Amyotrophic lateral sclerosis (ALS), often referred to as “Lou Gehrig’s disease,” is a progressive, fatal neuromuscular disease that attacks nerve cells and pathways in the brain and spinal cord. Motor neurons, among the largest of all nerve cells, reach from the brain to the spinal cord and from the spinal cord to the muscles throughout the body with connections to the brain. When they die, as with ALS, the ability of the brain to start and control muscle movement dies with them. With all voluntary muscle action affected, patients in the later stages are totally paralyzed; yet through it all, their minds remain unaffected.

ALS is one of the most devastating of disorders affecting the functions of nerves and muscles. According to current data, the incidence of ALS is about six to eight per 100,000. Thus, some 5,000 people in the U.S. are newly diagnosed with ALS each year.

With recent advances in research and improved medical care, many ALS patients are living longer and more productive lives. Half of all affected live at least three years or more after diagnosis. Twenty percent live five years or more; up to 10 percent will survive more than 10 years. Early symptoms vary with each individual, but they usually include tripping, dropping things, abnormal fatigue of the arms and/or legs, slurred speech, muscle cramps, twitches and uncontrollable periods of laughing or crying.

As the weakening and paralysis continue to spread to the muscles in the trunk of the body, the disease eventually affects swallowing, chewing and breathing. When the breathing muscles are attacked, the patient faces permanent ventilator support in order to survive.

Since ALS attacks only motor neurons, the senses of sight, touch, hearing, taste and smell and muscles of the eyes and bladder are generally not affected. The mind is not impaired and remains sharp despite the progressive degeneration of the body.

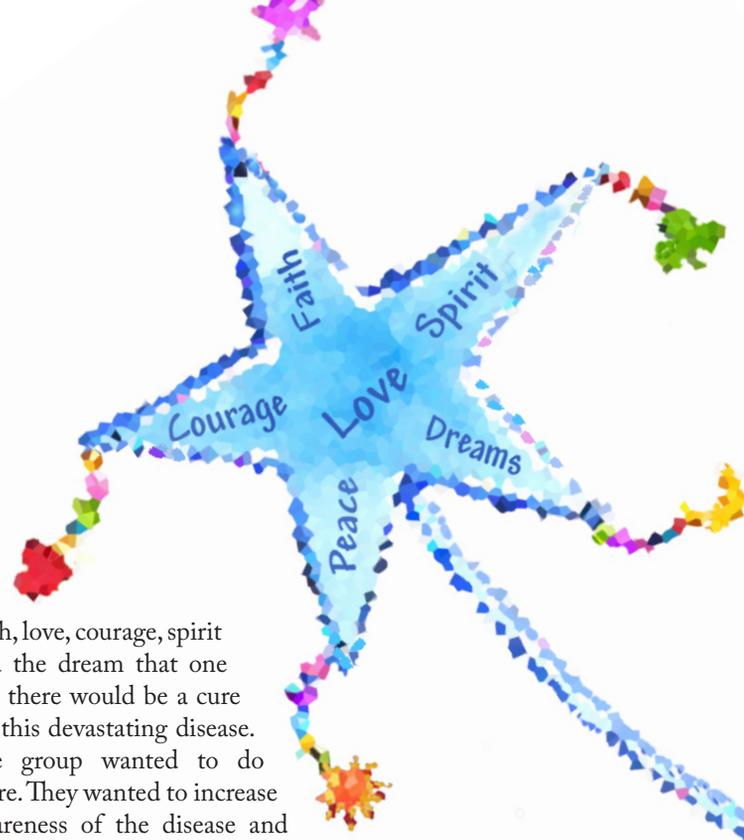
Although there is not yet a cure for ALS, much can be done not only to help patients live with the disease, but to live more productively and independently. The concept of ALS as a hopeless disease is fast giving way to an approach that emphasizes the treatment of a patient’s symptoms. This can improve the quality of life for the patient and help her develop a positive attitude about being part of the management care team.

Unlike some people, Nancy Wright of Annapolis, received a quick diagnosis of ALS. Her symptoms began with a droop in her big toe, followed by stumbling and ultimately tumbling to the ground. Mrs. Wright weakened quickly and in a matter of months went from using a cane, to a walker to a wheelchair. Mrs. Wright’s daughter, Nancy Kriebel, and her friends sent Mrs. Wright a magical-looking wand. The wand was a symbol of the

faith, love, courage, spirit and the dream that one day there would be a cure for this devastating disease. The group wanted to do more. They wanted to increase awareness of the disease and the free programs provided by the ALS Association, DC/MD/VA Chapter, to local patients and families. Ultimately, they wanted to find a cure.

Now in its 10th anniversary year, the ALS Artisan Boutique has raised over \$150,000 and touched countless families. This year’s event will be held on Sunday, Dec. 2, at the Sheraton Annapolis Hotel from 10 a.m. to 5 p.m. The event is free and open to the public. More than 55 regional artists will offer handcrafted jewelry, original children’s clothing and accessories, pottery, paintings and more. In addition, the event will include door prizes, raffles, a silent auction, refreshments and an appearance by Lisa McCue, an illustrator of children’s books including the Corduroy series. Books will be available for signing. If you cannot attend, but would like to help, donations can be made to the ALS Association at 1221 Buckingham Road, Arnold, MD 21012. For more information, email leslieschwartz3@gmail.com

The ALS Association is the only national not-for-profit voluntary health organization whose sole mission is to find a cure for this disease, as well as improve living with ALS. For more information, call 301.978.9855 or visit www.ALSinfo.org



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Books: Old, New and Obscure

THE WAYWARD BUS

By John Steinbeck

Penguin Books, New York (1947)

Most of us think of John Steinbeck with mixed emotions. If you had to read his epic novel *The Grapes of Wrath* in high school, you probably groan and think of a long complicated book that you had to outline and analyze and then be tested. But if you like to read the classic books of our time, give Steinbeck another chance. He was a prolific writer, producing books of a little over a hundred pages that can be read in a couple of hours, such as one of his most famous novels, *Of Mice and Men*, to unforgettable classics such as *East of Eden*. John Steinbeck died in 1968 after winning a Nobel Prize in 1962.

The Wayward Bus, which is not one of his better-known works, was one of the best examples of descriptive writing that I have read in a long time. His depiction of the characters in the book makes the reader feel that you know them or have known someone like them. His description of the scenes, starting with the rather worn café to the countryside in which the story takes place, puts the reader right there with the characters.

And quite an assortment of characters there are. As in many of Steinbeck's novels, it takes place in California, in the town of Rebel Corners an inland valley of southern California. Here we are introduced to Alice and Jose Chicoy and their motley crew of employees. The description of Mrs. Chicoy – “wide hipped and sag-chested and walked well back on her heels” -- sets the tone for the type of people you will meet that come and go in this lunchroom. Jose Chicoy, who is described as “a fine steady man, part Mexican and part Irish, perhaps fifty years old, with clear black eyes, a good head of hair and a dark and handsome face,” runs the garage when he is not driving “Sweetheart,” his old aluminum saggy-sided bus.

“Pimples” Carson, who whines to be called “Kit” and constantly eats cakes and pies, is his sidekick. He will remind you of the pimple-faced, girl-crazy teenager that we all knew in school.

Norma, the very plain, shy, gawky waitress who works in the café is another stereotype of the celebrity-obsessed young girl whom we all have met. As Alice Chicoy puts it, all the pretty waitresses run off with one of the patrons within a few days and that leaves plain Norma behind.

When the bus is ready to take its run to Mexico, other characters join the scene. There is the Pritchard family with its self-important father, sugary sweet mother and rebel daughter, and an exotic dancer who gives herself the name of Camille Oakes after seeing a Camel cigarettes ad on the lunchroom wall and the Oak trees outside the window. Also entering the scene is Ernest Horton, a salesman whose “face was sharp, like a puppy’s face, a small carefully trimmed mustache rode his upper lip like a caterpillar.” Can’t you just picture him? He sells gag gifts, including fake toes that look like they’ve been crushed and are oozing blood. His newest idea is a silk lapel and white stripes to attach to a dark suit to make it look like a tuxedo.

As if this isn’t enough, entering the motley crew is a cantankerous, tall stooped old man named Mr. Van Brunt. His constant complaining and threats add another aspect to the story.

Now put all these characters on an old bus that is heading to Mexico during a torrential rainstorm that threatens to wash out the two bridges that have to be crossed. The interaction among these characters makes *The Wayward Bus* hard to put down. One can’t help but wonder how it will all come together in the end. Let’s just say that some facades of the personalities involved are very different than what we expect as they experience situations over which they have no control. Steinbeck ends it quite satisfactorily; you don’t feel like he just wanted to get it finished to meet a deadline as you do with some authors.

The genius of Steinbeck will probably convince you that maybe that English teacher back in high school knew what he

was talking about when *The Grapes of Wrath* was assigned. It might entice you to read more Steinbeck works to experience his incredible ability to envelop the reader in the tale.

~ Peggy Kiefer

CHRISTMAS TRAIN

By David Baldacci

Warner Books, New York (2002)

Since I am a devoted “train buff,” the title of this book caught my attention immediately. I also am a fan of David Baldacci, so I didn’t see how I could lose.

I found that this book is not like the other Baldacci books I have read. Those tended to be thrillers filled with intrigue. But this book does have its share of twists and turns, with many subplots.

Christmas Train concerns a disillusioned journalist who is forced to take the train to get from Washington, D.C., to Los Angeles to meet his girl friend for a Christmas ski trip to Lake Tahoe. This sounds like a pretty tame story, but Tom Langdon has no idea of the adventures, interesting people and holiday magic that are awaiting him.

We are introduced to train crew members, an arrogant Hollywood producer, a nervous young couple running away to get married against their parents’ wishes, a former girl friend, a flamboyant director and his equally flamboyant assistant and a thief. I think you get the idea that this novel has many themes, stories and rather incredulous adventures within its 288 pages. It is a quick read, and could get you in the holiday spirit in spite of yourself. There is even an avalanche, trapping the train in a Winter storm.

I found *Christmas Train* to be a fun book to curl up with and read in a short amount of time. You just have to recognize

that it is pure Hollywood, and I could see it made into a movie. It reminded me a little bit of *Murder on the Orient Express*, even though there was no murder in this one. The ending is rather unbelievable, as is a lot of the story, but that is probably what made it enjoyable. You close the book with a smile on your face, and isn’t that what you want with a holiday book?

~ Peggy Kiefer

BEHIND THE BEAUTIFUL FOREVERS

By Katherine Boo

Random House (2012)

Written by Pulitzer Prize winner Katherine Boo after three years of in-depth research, this work of narrative nonfiction reads like a novel that keeps you coming back for more. The real-life stories of Abdul, Manju, Asha and others who live in the makeshift slum shadows of the Mumbai airport will work their way into your heart and linger long after you read the last page. Although their circumstances amid squalor that, insulated from a distance, we find hard to fully imagine, the struggles and triumphs they have are those that we all can appreciate.

The author brings a clear and objective eye as she recounts the drama and heartbreak of a handful of these inhabitants of modern-day India as they strive toward a better life for themselves and their families. Well-written, this book is both gritty and haunting. While certainly not a light read, it succeeds at being informative, compassionate and at giving a face to how the flicker of hope survives in an atmosphere of hopelessness. If you enjoyed the movie, *Slum Dog Millionaire*, this book is the real deal. It would also make a fine gift for anyone interested in contemporary global culture or for the creative nonfiction aficionado.

~ Victoria Duncan

Flying Wish Paper For Your Holidays

By S. Horgan

"Contented with little, wishing for more ..."

We like to think that’s not who we are, but the truth is, we spend a good part of our lives discontented and wishing for more. We wish for new cars and bigger kitchens, great vacations and faster boats. More hair. Less fat.

We know we should be planning, not wishing. We should be prepared to work for what we want. And yet, we still *want* and wish it would just happen. Isn’t that what makes us work harder and push for more?

But what about those wishes that can’t be earned or bought. What about the wish that your spouse heals from an illness, that your children don’t forget about us, that we all live in peace and harmony. There’s not much we can physically do to achieve these wishes.

Try release. Let the wish go.

Introducing *Flying Wish Paper*. This clever package allows you to write your wish on a square of paper, roll it into a tube, light it with a match (included) and the wish magically lifts off and rises into the air. It’s actually pretty amazing. The idea of passing your wish to a higher power or to the universe is powerful and can be healing.

Flying Wish Paper can be lit inside, at a dinner party, for a friend’s birthday or just about anywhere you want to carry out the act of letting your private wish go.

Try it. Write it, light it and release it! Then move on and make it happen.

Editors note: Flying Wish Paper can be purchased at Paper in the Park in Severna Park.





HE COOKS!

— holiday fare —

By Mat Herban

One of the fun things about hors d'oeuvres is that they are so versatile. You can serve them before a meal or they can become the meal itself if you offer a variety. With today's lifestyle of grazing this is becoming quite common. And these tasty snacks are ideal for potlucks. You can take them or organize a potluck dinner based around them. The key is to have a variety of salty and sweet, protein and starch, vegetable and meat or fish. Of course the range is infinite, from celery stuffed with plain cream cheese to the equally easy cracker topped with cream cheese and a smoked oyster straight from the can. Speaking of cream cheese, most recipes taste the same with any fat content, however, the less fat the cream cheese has, the softer it is and the softer the spread or dip will be. Depending on your floor covering and where you will be serving, it is sometimes a good idea to consider the messiness of a prospective food. Drippy dips or salsas may not look good on your carpet after the party is over. But outdoors on the grass, anything goes.

AVOCADO DIP

This is *not* your usual guacamole, but it is wonderful, especially if the original corn-flavored Fritos are served as the accompaniment. And, it is about as easy as it gets.

8 oz. cream cheese (low fat is fine)
1 cup peeled, avocado
1 1/2 tsp. lemon juice
1 1/2 tsp. onion juice
3/4 tsp. salt

Place all ingredients in food processor or blender and blend until smooth. Immediately place dip in a storage (or serving) container and place plastic wrap directly on the top, smoothing out any air bubbles. The plastic wrap will keep it from turning brown from contact with the air.

SPICED NUTS

These nuts are a family favorite for eating and gift-giving as they are quick to make and they keep, refrigerated or frozen, almost forever. They can also be used to enhance a tossed salad.

4 cups pecans or walnuts (whole or in large pieces)
1 lightly beaten egg white

The basic process for making the nuts is that you lightly beat the egg white in a large bowl. Then you throw in the nuts and toss them until they are well covered with egg white -- the glue that holds the seasoning to the nuts. After that, mix up your seasonings in a small bowl and, while tossing the nuts, sprinkle in the seasonings. Spread the seasoned nuts on a greased cookie sheet and bake for 30 minutes at 300 degrees. Of course, you can double the recipe, but be sure that the nuts are in one layer on the cookie sheet. Use an additional sheet if necessary. Once the nuts are baked, give the sheet a little twist and they will come loose. You may need to break up some of the clumps, but that is it. When the nuts are cool, they can be packed in plastic bags or Tupperware. Do refrigerate them if they won't be used up in a week.

VERSION ONE: SWEETENED NUTS

1/4 cup sugar
1 1/2 tsp. cinnamon
1/8 tsp. allspice
1/4 tsp. nutmeg

VERSION TWO: SPICED NUTS

2-3 Tbs. purchased Creole seasoning

SMOKED FISH SPREAD

This favorite begins with a trip to the fish department at Graul's Market where they carry smoked blue fish. Sometimes the blue fish is peppered and sometimes not. Depending on your preference for things spicy, either one can be used. Preferring less spicy in our house, we purchase whatever they have and then, if necessary, scrape off as much of the pepper as possible. If you have a choice of pieces when you are buying, the thicker pieces are more tender.

1/2 lb. smoked blue fish (skin removed)**
5 oz. cream cheese (low fat is fine)
1/3 cup Hellman's mayonnaise

** For a milder flavored spread, discard most of the dark brown fish--about two-thirds will be light colored and the remaining is usually darker, softer and more oily. It is fine to use the top skin. Although may become a bit tough in the smoking process, it gets pulverized during the mixing process and is unnoticeable.

Process all ingredients until smooth. This makes at least one cup. Serve on any plain cracker such as original Triscuits or stone ground wheat crackers. This can make an elegant canapé when served on a slice of cucumber or a cherry tomato with the top sliced off.

THREE-CHEESE SAVORY PUMPKIN SPREAD

This appetizer could double as a dessert or be served as an intermezzo course due to the intermingling of flavors. The basic spread is savory, but it is served on something sweet. This is the perfect holiday appetizer.

1 Tbs. butter
1/2 cup chopped pecans
12 oz. cream cheese (any kind)
1 1/2 cups shredded sharp cheddar (Cracker Barrel or similar)
1/2 cup crumbled blue cheese
1 cup pure pumpkin, not the preflavored filling for a pie
2 cloves minced garlic
2 Tbs. sherry (sweet or dry)
Ginger snaps
Apple slices (dip in lemon water to prevent browning)

Melt butter in a small pan and saute pecans until golden, about one minute. Cool. In a medium-sized bowl, beat the remaining ingredients until creamy (cream cheese, cheddar cheese, blue cheese, pumpkin, garlic and sherry). Place in a serving bowl and garnish the top with the reserved chopped pecans. Cover and chill several hours for flavors to blend. While this could be served with anything, the ginger snaps, a sweetened oatmeal cracker or apple slices really are the perfect accompaniment.

**FREE
ADMISSION**



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*featuring 55 fine artists,
a raffle, and a silent auction
to benefit patients and families
battling Lou Gehrig's disease*

Sunday, December 2, 2012

*Sheraton Hotel in Annapolis, MD
10 AM - 5 PM*

www.ALSinfo.org

TAKE CHARGE

FOR A SIMPLER, STRESS-LESS HOLIDAY SEASON

By Kater Leatherman

Bring on the holidays, but with a little less stress, please.

With all that's going on in the world and with our already busy schedules and the holiday parties, events and activities, we need a take-charge attitude to avoid physical exhaustion, financial strain and family pressures. Even the goodness in life can trigger stress and leave us feeling overwhelmed.

But first, let's highlight what is in our favor. People tend to be jollier this time of year. Life softens around the edges and with it our compassion and patience emerges. It's also easier to put the world's troubles on the back burner as the memories, festivities, rituals and traditions bloom into full swing.

One key is to get organized. Think of the holidays as a project, one that at least requires making a list. Start planning early and break things down into manageable chunks of time. Remember: inch by inch is a cinch, yard by yard is hard. And don't feel like you have to do it all. Enlist the help of others.

Next, the gifts. For kids, think less stuff, but better stuff. For adults, think about not exchanging holiday presents unless you really want to. Some might find this idea unsettling, even unthinkable. Others may be relieved, as if all they needed was permission to skip it. Still others might choose to strike a more sensible balance for themselves. One way to simplify holiday shopping is to give everyone on your list one thing that has universal appeal - a book, gift certificate, homemade food item or something that pampers.

Set boundaries -- limits that you create to identify what feels reasonable. For example, keep your favorite two or three holiday traditions and leave out the rest. Instead of getting a fresh-cut tree (and dragging out every ornament you own), buy a small rosemary bush and add a few favorites. If decorating your whole house feels overwhelming, pick the room where you spend the most time and concentrate your efforts there.

Cut back on your cooking and baking obligations. Let go of any expectations that command perfection. Supplement a few traditional recipes for simpler fare, i.e., sweet potatoes baked in their jackets, steamed vegetables seasoned with brown butter, poached fruit in wine. To lighten your load, consider asking others to contribute to the meal.

Now, about sending holiday cards. If it feels like one more thing on your list, then don't do it. Cards are gradually disappearing, so fewer people are expecting to receive them, including one from you. Why not choose to send all the moms you know a Mother's Day card when it will be so much more appreciated and at a time of year when life is less hectic?

Your body doesn't care if it's the holiday season, so continue to exercise regularly. Even with all the irresistible food, practice moderation. Get plenty of rest and, during the day, pause to recharge your batteries. To stay centered and calm, breathe deeply, and do it often. All of this will keep stress to a minimum and leave you in better form for the new year.

As you move through the labyrinth of the holidays, take charge by saying yes to less - less commercialism, less self-imposed obligations, less fuss. Strive to balance what makes you happy with what you enjoy doing with your family. And, as much as possible, avoid negative people, places and situations. After all, this is the most wonderful time of the year.

Kater is a professional organizer and yoga teacher. For more information or to purchase her new book, [Making Peace With Your Stuff](#), go to www.katerleatherman.com

Everyone has something to offer. Why not go out and share what you have.



HATING THE HOLIDAYS

Simply put, I dislike the holidays. No, make that I hate the whole ball of wax. I had a miserable childhood with Christmases pulled between two divorced parents. Nothing happy there. As an adult, Christmas just means too much work and expense, false merriment and bad memories. Each year, I dread the season and just wish that I could sleep from mid-November straight through to January. Am I the only person who feels this way? Spare me the advice to simplify, delegate and to plan ahead. Instead, tell me how to just get through another year. And how do I answer people who insist on asking me if I'm ready for Christmas and then followup with questions such as, "Did you have a good Christmas?" If I tell them the truth, they act like I'm crazy. Am I?

You certainly are not alone, although you seem to be more in touch with your discordant feelings for the holidays than many people might be. However, most therapists will tell you that their schedules are seasonally jammed with people struggling with depression and anxiety brought on or exacerbated by expectations for joy and happiness that seem to be out of reach. Add to that those who are grieving, facing serious illness or dealing with financial setbacks, and the number of people just trying to keep their heads above water during a season when our

culture tells them they *should* be happy, and the number skyrockets.

However, the question remains: What are you going to do about it? The usual advice you cite is, indeed, often insufficient. Simplifying, delegating and organizing can only take you so far if you really are hurting. Yet sleeping through the season is not possible. Well, not unless you have some sort of catastrophic medical condition, which I'm sure is not on your Christmas wish list!

How about striving for simple acceptance? Like a wave on the horizon, Christmas approaches, peaks and recedes. In other words, this will pass and you will live through it. You might not like it, but continuing to rail against it will only increase your unhappiness. There is a Cherokee legend about a grandfather teaching his grandson about life. He uses the metaphor of a fight between two wolves as the struggle that sometimes goes on inside us. One wolf is anger, envy, sorrow, regret, self-pity, guilt, resentment, etc. The other wolf is joy, peace, love, hope, serenity, humility, kindness, benevolence, empathy, generosity, truth, compassion and faith. When his grandson asks which wolf will win the fight, the grandfather quietly answers, "The one you feed."

During this holiday season, decide which wolf you want to feed. I hope you

choose the second wolf and, perhaps, name him "Serenity" or whatever adjective seems to fit. Challenge yourself to find one small way to feed him daily and record your efforts in a journal to serve as a guide for future holidays. For example, do you like to read? Treat yourself to that best-seller that you'd usually wait to buy until it comes out in paperback. Dine by candlelight in observation of the Winter solstice. Volunteer to shelve books at the B.I.G. (Books for International Goodwill) Warehouse or at the local library. Lower your expectation from the neon holiday message exclaiming "Joy" to a quiet one that whispers "Acceptance."

Even in dire circumstances, we always have the right to choose our attitude. Viktor Frankl, the famed psychiatrist who wrote *Man's Search for Meaning*, was imprisoned at Auschwitz during the Holocaust. From that experience, he created logotherapy -- a branch of psychotherapy that focuses upon finding meaning in all forms of existence. In one of his book's most memorable passages, he wrote, "Everything can be taken from a man but the last of human freedoms, the right to choose one's attitude in any given set of circumstances—the right to choose one's own way."

Your choice. Those are important words. Christmas will come no matter what, but you can change your attitude from dread to acceptance. Not joy maybe, but just a peaceful acceptance. Ride out the wave, feed the wise wolf and let it pass. And afterward when you are asked, "How was your Christmas?" simply reply in a cheery voice, "Acceptable, just the way I like it."

Vicki is a licensed professional counselor and welcomes your questions. She can be reached at Victoria2write@aol.com

HOLIDAY QUIZ ACROSTIC SOLUTION

Which U.S. president banned Christmas trees from the White House? After his son smuggled one in, the president sent him for a lecture from an eminent forester. The forester, however, defied the cutting of Christmas trees.

CHRISTMAS: THEODORE ROOSEVELT

| | |
|----|-------------------|
| M. | Ornaments |
| L. | Effrent |
| K. | Heih |
| J. | Three French Hens |
| I. | Subcommittee |
| H. | Arce |
| G. | Midnight |
| F. | Thermometer |
| E. | Santa Claus |
| D. | Inrush |
| C. | Rife |
| B. | Holists |
| A. | Coif |
| N. | Dasher |
| O. | Offish |
| P. | Reindeer |
| Q. | Ernst |
| R. | Rooftop |
| S. | Odds |
| T. | Output |
| U. | Sweeten |
| V. | Ewing |
| W. | Vehement |
| X. | Ered |
| Y. | Lights |
| Z. | Tweeds |

ELIMINATING THE YUCKS

Naturally

By Leah Lacione

From leaky faucets to moldy bathroom tiles, there is an unspoken list of pesky problems that nag every homeowner. Some may just be a seasonal nuisance while others disturb the peace incessantly. If you're like me, you've tried every brand name cleaner, critter-repellant and stain remover with, more often than not, nominal results. To make matters worse, regardless of a tactic's success rate, these store-bought brands are often harmful to the environment and our bodies. Here are some all-natural, eco-friendly recommendations for dealing with some common household cleanups:

Dark Scuffs on Walls and Doors

Those gray or black scuff marks or smudges on the wall, whether they are caused by furniture rubbing against the wall or simply daily wear and tear, the discolorations are undesirable. They make the home's interior appear grimy and old. Instead of pursuing the usual plan of attack with a bottle of bleach-based cleaning product, opt for a staple you probably already have in your kitchen—white vinegar. According to www.thenest.com by combin-

ing white vinegar and water in a half-and-half solution and applying it to the marks with an abrasive sponge, that will do the trick. The site recommends going easy on scrubbing to avoid damaging paint.

Smelly Garbage Disposal

A garbage disposal that reeks of last night's leftovers can be nauseating. If the kitchen is supposed to be a place where family gathers together to break bread and enjoy each other's company, the surroundings should not be repulsive from a malodorous garbage disposal. Though a stinky disposal may signal it is not doing the job right, there are methods of disposing of the foul odors. One natural, age-old solution is to cut up a lemon or any citrus fruit into small pieces and to grind it up in the disposal until it's pulverized and unleashes an agreeable scent.

According to www.momsgoinggreenblog.com "baking soda is another

natural and effective odor eliminator." The site advises pouring a box down the drain while running warm water to "neutralize" odors. For enduring smells, let the baking soda linger in the drain overnight before rinsing with warm water in the morning.

Unwanted House Guests (Like Cockroaches)

Unfortunately, according to Orkin, Winter is the time homeowners need to "be vigilant for inside dwellers" such as cockroaches.

Though it's probably a smart idea to show a brave face when your grandchild squeals at the sight of a cockroach scurrying across the floor, it is OK to secretly plot their removal from your home. However, instead of pulling the bottle of roach killer from the cabinet, consider taking a nontoxic (to you, not the critter) approach by using borax, sugar and flour. According to www.greenlivingtips.com these are environmentally friendly ways to eradicate cockroaches:

Combine one part borax, two parts flour and half part confectionary sugar and add water. Mix ingredients into a dough to place where cockroaches frequent.

Place a small container of water with a teaspoon of oil where the roaches seem to lurk. They will climb in and drown.



🌿 Sprinkle borax powder where the roaches are active as it will collect on their bodies, be licked off and then kill them.

Mildew or Mold Stains on Porcelain and Tile:

Nothing ruins your refreshing morning shower more quickly than the appearance of mildew on the bathroom tiles. Stains or mildew that form on porcelain and tiles can be removed with baking soda and water, lemon juice or vinegar or homemade disinfectant. The **dailygreen.com** offers these tips with natural cleaners:

🌿 Dust surfaces with baking soda and then scrub with a moist sponge or cloth. Add kosher salt for more heavy-duty grime.

🌿 Spray mildew or other stains with lemon juice or vinegar and let it stand for a few minutes before scrubbing with a stiff brush.

🌿 Create a homemade disinfectant by mixing two cups of water, three tablespoons of liquid soap and 20 to 30 drops of tea tree oil.

The dailygreen.com website also recommends squirting vodka on mold and letting it sit for 15 minutes and then scrubbing it away with an old toothbrush.

Crayon on the Walls

If you're a grandparent, especially one who has little ones visiting frequently, you undoubtedly have seen a fair share of crayon marks on walls, tabletops and other unwelcome places. Well, never fear. *Reader's Digest* (www.rd.com/home/8-ways-to-clean-crayon-from-walls) offers recommendations for naturally removing your young Picasso's mishaps:

🌿 Dab some mayonnaise on the crayon marks, let it soak for several minutes and then wipe it clean with a damp cloth.

🌿 Smear non-gel toothpaste onto the crayon marks and scrub with an old toothbrush, rag or scrub brush. Finally, rinse with water.

Dust

For most people, the sight of dust in the home means it's time to get out the Pledge. Dust, however, is not just unsightly; it can pose a serious threat to health. Not only is it an allergy trigger, the Environmental Working Group (EWG) says "dust bunnies" contain toxic chemicals. The group's website reports the chemicals and outdoor pollutants that enter the home via doors, windows and on shoes wind up as dust. This dust that settles in the house is comprised of "pet dander, fungal spores, tiny particles, soil tracked in on your feet, carpet fibers, human hair and skin, you name it." The EWG cited a recent study that "identified 66 endocrine-disrupting compounds in household dust tests, including flame retardants, home-use pesticides, and phthalates."

Though extra dust lingering about the house can be a sign of a bigger problem like a clogged ventilation system or ductwork that isn't sealed properly, there are a few simple ways to combat dust buildup on a daily—or at least weekly—basis without being exposed to harsh, abrasive chemicals. In addition to cleaning air filters regularly and purchasing an air cleaner, other practices can reduce dust circulation:

🌿 Change and clean bedding

🌿 Shake area rugs and furniture cushions outdoors

🌿 Clean counter tops and furniture surfaces with a damp cloth (the electrostatic force will keep dust steady so removal is efficient)

🌿 At a minimum, vacuum weekly (use a vacuum with an allergen filtration feature)

🌿 Use lambs wool to remove dust and olive oil to polish wood

For more dusting techniques that are safe and eco-friendly, visit <http://tlc.howstuffworks.com> or www.professorshouse.com The Organic Consumers Association also lists toxic household cleaning supplies and safe and natural alternatives at www.organicconsumers.org/articles/article_279.cfm

Clogged Drain

The last common household problem is a clogged drain. This is an issue that, for some, means enlisting the help of a "snake," spending a lot of money on expensive and toxic (to humans and the environment) drain cleaners or calling a plumber. A simple technique that may be a natural and money-saving remedy for stopped-up kitchen and bathroom drains: baking soda and vinegar. The Bargaineering website (www.bargaineering.com) provides the following instructions:

🌿 Pour a cup of baking soda into the clogged drain.

🌿 Then, try pouring a cup (or as much as possible) of vinegar down the drain and plug it up before the effervescing liquid escapes. (The baking soda mixed with the vinegar forms carbon dioxide and sodium acetate, which will be forced down the drain with the bubbles, cleaning and clearing the clog).

🌿 Afterward, pour hot water down the drain to flush the loosened gunk away. Repeat as necessary.



The next time one of these issues arises, remember that there may be a simple solution to the problem that may require you to look no further than your kitchen cabinets. Once you have faced the challenge head-on with a natural approach, give yourself a pat on the back for taking another step toward reducing your carbon footprint!

Bay Bytes

On the road - can't find a loo?
Download the app Sit or Squat
from Charmin' or go to their
website at www.sitorsquat.com/
They've got you covered.

BAY CREATURES: *The Poor, Misunderstood Barnacle*

By Henry S. Parker

Like a lot of everyday Bay creatures, barnacles get a bum rap. And they're totally misunderstood.

Take their appearance: hard-shelled, no sign of the actual soft-bodied animal within. Mollusk, right? No. In fact, barnacles are crustaceans, far more closely related to lobsters and crabs than to clams and oysters. If you were to remove a barnacle from its calcareous covering you would see a joint-legged creature that resembles a tiny shrimp.

And don't we all know that barnacles are a scourge, fouling boat bottoms, clogging underwater pipes and encrusting pilings and piers? True enough, but barnacles are also a vital component of marine ecosystems. They filter particles from the water and serve as a rich food source for other sea creatures. They are even useful to humans (more about that shortly).

Then there is the idea that barnacles—small, sessile, so abundant that they're taken for granted—can't be very interesting. But Charles Darwin spent eight years of his life studying these animals. His barnacle research laid the foundation for his theory of evolution and natural selection. Even if you're not a naturalist, you can discover that barnacles are fascinating. Just place a barnacle-encrusted rock in a small glass tank, add some ground oatmeal, and watch the animals emerge from their volcano-like shells to filter the food particles with their feathery appendages.

Ready for a little barnacle natural history? They comprise scores of species worldwide, falling into two major categories: acorn barnacles and goose barnacles. Chesapeake Bay is home to four species of acorn barnacles that are found in near-fresh to salty sea water. Goose or stalked barnacles inhabit the open ocean where they are usually attached to floating wood

or ships' hulls in long hanging stalks. Why the name? A charming, but false, legend claims that goose barnacles hatch into barnacle geese.

The hard covering of barnacles consists of overlapping shell plates made of calcium carbonate (limestone). An opening at the top is protected by a bipartite retractable valve that slides back when the animal is ready to emerge. As they protrude from the shell opening, barnacles feed on tiny plankton and organic particles, sweeping the water with their bristly legs.

Barnacles have both male and

Now about barnacles and humans. First, the downside. Barnacles are really, really good at colonizing underwater surfaces. Yacht owners are only too familiar with the rigors of removing these uninvited guests from boat bottoms. The impact on ship owners and coastal power plants is even more severe. Barnacles can corrode metal surfaces and clog pipes. The drag from a barnacle-fouled ship bottom can increase fuel costs by up to 30 percent. The overall cost of controlling barnacle growth in the shipping, fishing and power industries runs into billions of dollars annually. Fortunately, a concerted research effort—much of it funded by the U.S. Navy—has helped elucidate barnacle behavior, including why they settle where they do in such dense clusters (chemical cues are involved). The ultimate goal is to develop cost-effective, nontoxic fouling control methods.

The upside? Barnacles play an important role in monitoring marine pollution. They readily accumulate large concentrations of poisonous heavy metals like lead, copper, cadmium and zinc, as well as

organic pollutants like PCBs. By measuring concentrations of toxins in barnacle populations, scientists can identify highly polluted areas. And the very qualities that make barnacles such efficient and steadfast settlers have drawn the attention of the biotechnology industry. The hope is that synthetic versions of the amazingly strong and water-resistant barnacle adhesive can be developed for biomedical applications. Imagine being able to use a barnacle-type glue instead of sutures in surgery.

So the next time you cut your feet on a cluster of sharp barnacles or struggle to clean them from your boat hull, try to refrain from cursing these poor, misunderstood creatures. They just may be good for your health.



Close-up of large and small barnacles, Bodega Bay, C.A. Photo credit: Dr. Dwayne Meadows, National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration, National Marine Fisheries Service. <http://www.photolib.noaa.gov/htmls/fish4579.htm>

female organs. No, they can't mate with themselves. Fertilization occurs when one barnacle extends its sperm tube into a neighbor's female organ. (*Film at six.*) Spawning occurs in mid-to-late Spring. Free-swimming larvae, if they can avoid being eaten by young fish and other predators, soon settle onto hard surfaces. There they secrete an adhesive to firmly attach themselves, develop shell plates and grow into adults. Even protected by their shell plates, barnacles aren't home free. Predatory flatworms can work their way inside; algae, sponges and other marine life can overgrow and smother them; and the temperature extremes or sometimes dry conditions that can characterize their shallow, intertidal habitats can kill them.

HOLIDAY QUIZ-ACROSTIC

| | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | |
|-----|---|-----|---|-----|---|-----|---|-----|---|-----|---|-----|----|-----|-----|-----|-----|-----|-----|-----|-----|-----|-----|-----|-----|-----|-----|----|-----|-----|-----|-----|-----|-----|-----|-----|-----|-----|-----|-----|---|
| | I | Z | 2 | N | 3 | I | 4 | H | 5 | D | | 6 | T | | 7 | U | | 8 | R | 9 | L | 10 | Q | 11 | D | 12 | O | 13 | X | 14 | I | 15 | D | 16 | G | | | | | | |
| 17 | I | 18 | E | 19 | J | 20 | U | 21 | V | 22 | G | | 23 | E | 24 | J | 25 | M | 26 | C | 27 | S | 28 | T | 29 | G | 30 | N | 31 | Z | | 32 | W | 33 | X | 34 | J | 35 | U | 36 | I |
| | | 37 | R | 38 | D | 39 | M | 40 | F | | | 41 | Z | 42 | J | 43 | L | | 44 | U | 45 | B | 46 | A | 47 | T | 48 | J | | 49 | G | 50 | O | 51 | I | 52 | E | 53 | P | | |
| 54 | E | 55 | L | 56 | U | 57 | F | 58 | P | | | 59 | K | 60 | B | 61 | J | | 62 | M | 63 | R | 64 | V | | 65 | Q | 66 | F | 67 | T | 68 | G | 69 | V | 70 | Y | 71 | X | 72 | S |
| | | 73 | T | 74 | G | 75 | J | | | 76 | D | 77 | J | | 78 | Y | 79 | J | 80 | L | | 81 | T | 82 | C | 83 | J | 84 | B | 85 | G | 86 | Z | 87 | F | 88 | M | 89 | I | | |
| 90 | H | 91 | I | 92 | W | 93 | R | | | 94 | F | 95 | P | 96 | I | | 97 | O | 98 | R | 99 | F | | 100 | M | | 101 | E | 102 | F | 103 | I | 104 | J | 105 | D | 106 | X | 107 | L | |
| | | 108 | L | 109 | P | 110 | F | 111 | M | | | 112 | H | 113 | L | | 114 | N | 115 | W | 116 | Y | 117 | P | 118 | X | 119 | E | 120 | K | | 121 | A | 122 | I | 123 | F | 124 | B | 125 | N |
| 126 | Q | 127 | U | 128 | R | | | 129 | F | 130 | O | 131 | M | | 132 | C | 133 | A | 134 | Q | 135 | Z | 136 | E | 137 | I | 138 | W | 139 | J | | 140 | Y | 141 | R | 142 | V | 143 | P | 144 | W |
| 145 | Z | 146 | N | | | 147 | P | 148 | K | 149 | J | 150 | U | 151 | M | 152 | N | 153 | W | 154 | S | | 155 | B | 156 | K | 157 | C | | 158 | A | 159 | E | 160 | M | 161 | L | 162 | V | 163 | Q |
| 164 | Y | | | 165 | S | 166 | O | | | 167 | J | 168 | W | 169 | H | 170 | G | 171 | Y | 172 | F | 173 | I | 174 | E | 175 | O | | 176 | E | 177 | J | 178 | P | 179 | W | 180 | B | | | |

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Directions

1. Read the definitions and supply the correct words over the numbered blanks.
2. Transfer the letters to the corresponding squares in the diagram.
3. Reading left to right, the completed diagram poses a trivia question. Words are separated by black squares.
4. Reading down, the first letters on the numbered blanks give the subject category followed by the answer to the trivia question.

- A. Hairdo
- B. Robberies
- C. Plentiful
- D. Sudden entrance
- E. Tim Allen role (2 wds.)
- F. Medicine cabinet staple
- G. Word E's ETA
- H. Parts of a circle
- I. Task force
- J. December 27 gift (3 wds.)
- K. Eighth letter of Hebrew alphabet
- L. Directed away from an organ
- M. Baubles
- N. Dancer's teammate
- O. Aloof
- P. Rudolph, e.g.
- Q. German artist (1891–1976)
- R. Word E's landing pad
- S. Likelihood
- T. Production
- U. Appease
- V. Dallas dynasty
- W. Ardent
- X. Goofed
- Y. Christmas decorations
- Z. Harris and Donegal, e.g.

| | | | | | | | | | | | |
|-----|-----|-----|-----|-----|-----|-----|-----|-----|-----|----|----|
| 158 | 133 | 46 | 121 | | | | | | | | |
| 45 | 124 | 60 | 180 | 155 | 84 | | | | | | |
| 82 | 26 | 132 | 157 | | | | | | | | |
| 76 | 15 | 38 | 105 | 11 | 5 | | | | | | |
| 136 | 54 | 119 | 176 | 18 | 23 | 101 | 174 | 159 | 52 | | |
| 172 | 94 | 87 | 123 | 66 | 110 | 40 | 102 | 129 | 57 | 99 | |
| 29 | 85 | 22 | 74 | 170 | 68 | 49 | 16 | | | | |
| 112 | 169 | 4 | 90 | | | | | | | | |
| 36 | 51 | 17 | 103 | 122 | 173 | 96 | 3 | 89 | 137 | 14 | 91 |
| 104 | 42 | 139 | 34 | 75 | 149 | 177 | 48 | 77 | 167 | 24 | 79 |
| | 83 | 19 | 61 | | | | | | | | |
| 156 | 148 | 120 | 59 | | | | | | | | |
| 80 | 108 | 55 | 43 | 9 | 107 | 113 | 161 | | | | |
| 39 | 25 | 88 | 100 | 111 | 131 | 151 | 160 | 62 | | | |
| 152 | 30 | 125 | 2 | 114 | 146 | | | | | | |
| 50 | 166 | 97 | 12 | 175 | 130 | | | | | | |
| 109 | 53 | 95 | 117 | 147 | 143 | 178 | 58 | | | | |
| 10 | 134 | 163 | 65 | 126 | | | | | | | |
| 128 | 63 | 141 | 37 | 93 | 98 | 8 | | | | | |
| 165 | 154 | 72 | 27 | | | | | | | | |
| 73 | 67 | 28 | 81 | 6 | 47 | | | | | | |
| 7 | 44 | 150 | 35 | 56 | 127 | 20 | | | | | |
| 21 | 142 | 162 | 64 | 69 | | | | | | | |
| 144 | 138 | 168 | 179 | 115 | 153 | 92 | 32 | | | | |
| 118 | 33 | 106 | 71 | 13 | | | | | | | |
| 70 | 116 | 164 | 140 | 78 | 171 | | | | | | |
| 41 | 1 | 135 | 145 | 86 | 31 | | | | | | |

Please visit amazon.com to order Sheila's book, **Quiz-Acrostics: Challenging Acrostic Puzzles with a Trivia Twist**, published by Puzzleworm. Sheila can be reached at acrostics@aol.com or visit her web site: www.quiz-acrostics.com.

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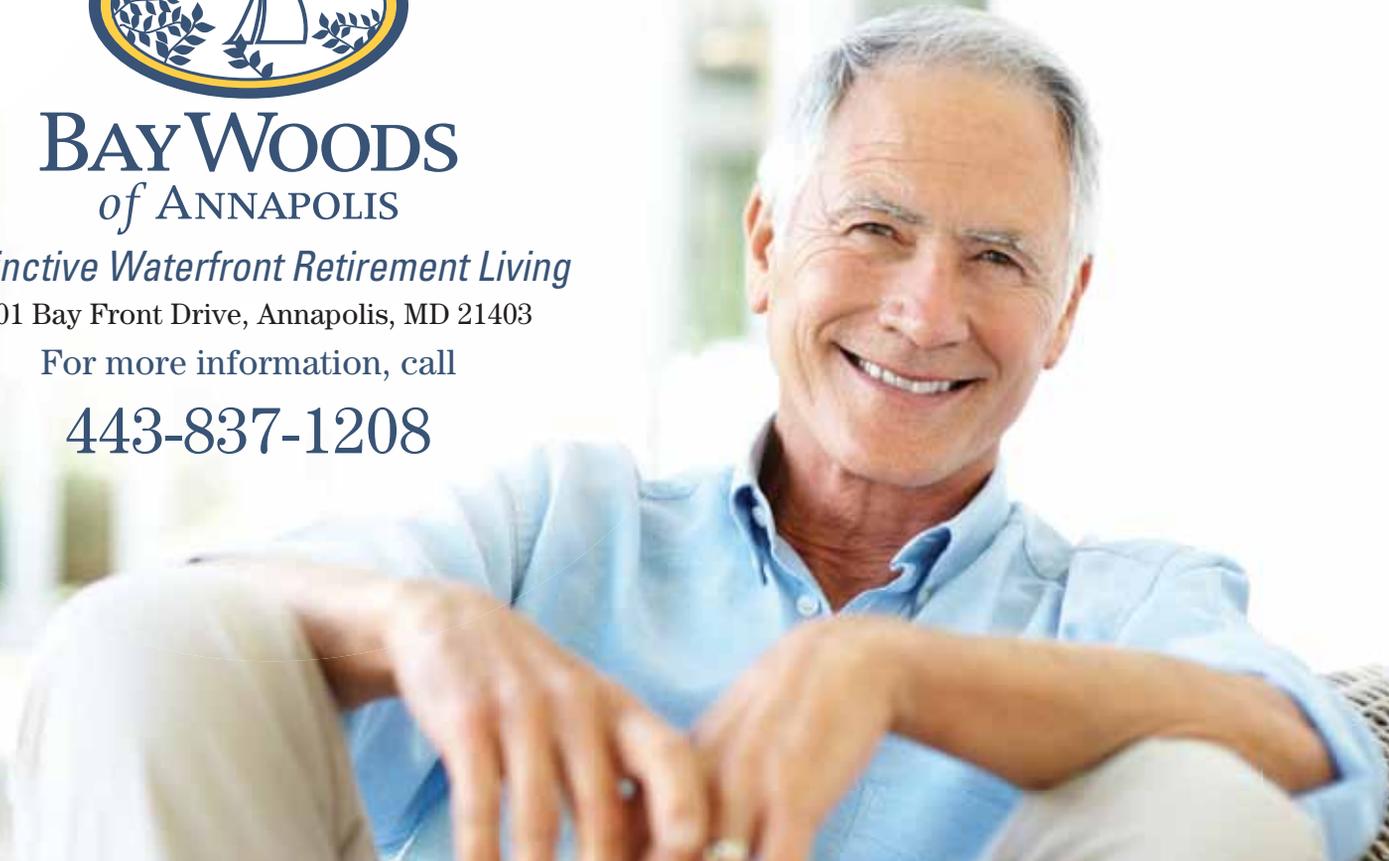
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