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ON THE COVER:

Steve Klyce and wife Marguerite McDonald spent a recent holiday with family in the Bay area. Having relocated to the Northeast after the devastating effects of Hurricane Katrina, Steve retired as a professor at the Louisiana State University School of Medicine and continues his academic activities as an adjunct professor at Mt Sinai in Manhattan. Marguerite, a practicing ophthalmologist, is also a clinical professor at New York University and Tulane. Busy in research, consulting and publishing, she and Steve travel, play tennis, sail in Long Island Sound and ski whenever possible.

OutLook *by the Bay*

For the Bay Boomer and Beyond...

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Subscriptions	S. Hill OutLookbytheBay@aol.com \$24.95 per year bimonthly (6 issues)
Contact	OutLook by the Bay 626C Admiral Drive #608 Annapolis, MD 21401 410 849-3000

ISSN#1948-044X

OutLook by the Bay is distributed throughout Anne Arundel County, in sections of the Eastern Shore and Baltimore. It is available free of charge in seniors centers, county libraries, hotels, coffee shops, doctor offices, supermarkets, senior communities, book stores, restaurants, private clubs, real estate offices, health clubs, hospitals and at all of our advertisers and is mailed to select homes in the Bay area.

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Winter has moved in to the mid-Atlantic region. Not a favorite time for many people in this area. It's cold. The days can be endlessly overcast with only an infrequent snowstorm or ice storm to break up the monotony and add some adventure to the whole scene. But what a nice time of year to go off and discover something new, preferably in a warmer climate. Like many people of this grand age, I'm trying to pull a bucket list together of every place I still need to visit. I'm trying to be more in touch and learn more about the world around us. For traveling, it now seems that it's almost more fun to explore the 48 contiguous states, which isn't particularly difficult and doesn't take endless planning. It's been our experience that there are more adventures within driving distance than when flying off to some far-off land.

Winter is not only a great time to get away, but such a great time to take up some new wacky hobby or to enroll in an enrichment course that serves absolutely no purpose. My friend Gail took a spinning class this Fall, the kind where an old-fashioned spinning wheel is used. She took the course for no better reason than she wanted to know how the wool got from the sheep's wooly coat to the sweater she wore. She thoroughly enjoyed the course offered at the Campbell School and, no, she won't be buying a spinning wheel or raising sheep over in Heritage Harbor, but there's a satisfaction in having learned about that very ancient skill. Gail met lots of people from everywhere and had a week filled with fun and adventure in a corner of the country with which she was unfamiliar.



Pouring over the countless catalogs that arrive in our mailbox in the Fall, we're tempted to sign up for one or two courses during the cold months such as the Joshua Tree Rock Climbing School that's offered in that wonderful small park in a remote corner of California or the one-week surf camp in Santa Cruz, well maybe not. But there's a Gourmet Retreat at CasaLana in Napa Valley and a five-day writers retreat in Sedona and a one-week tennis camp in Boca Raton, which could work. Hilton Head offers a five-day art school year round. And if staying in the lower 48 doesn't work, there's always a variety of inexpensive language schools such as Instituto Hemingway, which offers Spanish immersion classes in various locations year round throughout Spain. There are also very inexpensive cruises departing from Florida practically daily that offer classes on lots of low-key but interesting topics. And with all of the experience that people of our age have had, why not be the teacher instead of the student? Such places as Chautauqua (in cold upstate New York), could work during the Summer months, or pick up a gig on a cruise ship www.cruiseshipjob.com/instructors or through any school that offers continuing education classes.

The Shaw Guide, accessed online, provides the longest list ever seen of classes, seminars, volunteer vacations, even entire semesters, on an impressive variety of subjects in areas throughout the world. Do I need any of these courses? I think not. My resume is already chock full and most things on it are so ancient that most employers would have a hard time deciphering exactly what it is that's listed. Hopefully, however, there's no need to update it at this point in life. Any further accomplishments will be achieved, as Gail did, for personal curiosity or satisfaction. Or maybe just 'cause it will add some interest to my obituary.

So during these frigid months, wouldn't it be great to go learn something new or teach something from your field of expertise. What a great way to enjoy the Winter off in a faraway place that promises sunshine and warm weather. There's not a better occasion or a better way to combine two delightful pastimes: travel and learning.

Debra



Michael J. Dodd, M.D.



Kathleen H. Miller, M.D.



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Your Thoughts

LETTERS to the editor



REDUCING CLUTTER

For years we've been trying to cut back on our Christmas collection but only seem to add more and more to a burgeoning assortment of knick knacks and treasures. We're downsizing to a condo this year and started the long process of reducing a lifetime collection of "stuff." We began this Christmas by giving many of our decorations to the young ones in our family who are setting up their own homes. They love it as it's helped to offset the cost of holiday decorations and we get to admire them in someone else's home. Thanks for a wonderful magazine. We look forward to each issue.

A. Davis, Severn

HOLIDAY TRADITIONS

I copied the article on holiday traditions and sent it off to family members to give them pause before messing with what we've been doing for the past 30 years. The best part was that it opened conversation as to why we do things the way we do and whether or not we should continue with what has always been.

Thank you,
Alicia W., Easton

LIFELONG LEARNING

I found your two articles in the Fall 2011 *Outlook by the Bay* to be so thoughtful and timely.

I would like to send you some information about the Peer Learning Partnership or PLP, a group of over 250 lifelong learners, who meet for classes and year-long discussion groups at the Arnold campus of Anne Arundel Community College.

Many thanks.

*Angela S.
VP & chair, marketing & public relations
Peer Learning Partnership
Anne Arundel Community College
E: angelasmookler@comcast.net*

APPS

Very much enjoyed the article on apps in the holiday *Outlook*. Very well written, good job!

E. Huggins, Annapolis

SEEING WELL

Thank you for an excellent article by Dr. Dodd in the holiday edition of *OutLook*. I will pass it on to my children as they too need to be aware of the problems of the aging eyes.

Elizabeth W., Edgewater

BLUE CHRISTMAS

Thank you for the thoughtful, insightful and humorous piece on getting through Christmas. Not everyone has the family and fun and good times that are panned on TV and radio and in every store that one sets foot in from Halloween on. It's nice to know that there are ways of getting through what can only be described as a very trying time for some of us. Your article helped many of us I'm sure.

MaryEllen W., Davidsonville

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BEWARE OF HEALTH SCAMS

*That Can Affect Your Pocketbook
and Your Well-Being*

By Robert G. Graw, Jr., M.D.

Snake oil salesmen have been around for decades, if not centuries, and modern technology has allowed them to be even more professional in their attempts to sell hype to the unsuspecting public. Unfortunately, seniors are often the targets of such scams.

The universal appeal of products that promise longevity, vigor or a cure-all makes it easy to fall for persuasive sales pitches. After all, who wouldn't want a miracle product to increase life expectancy?

More than a way to lose money, health scams can be dangerous. They may interfere with medications prescribed by your doctor and can even prevent people from getting the legitimate medical treatment they need. Many of these treatments have not been through clinical trials or approved by the Food and Drug Administration (FDA), which is the best way for scientists and doctors to measure their effectiveness.

A recent heartbreaking example is the story of Steve Jobs, the entrepreneurial visionary who co-founded Apple, Inc. Jobs was diagnosed with pancreatic

cancer in 2003 and delayed receiving potentially lifesaving surgery for several months in favor of a concoction of non-medical remedies. Before his death a few months ago, Jobs acknowledged his earlier attempt at self-healing that included herbal cures and online treatments that cost him valuable time.

It's easy to fall for sales pitches that promise quick fixes and false hope. For many seniors, the remedy of swiftly relieving pain or costing less money than traditional treatments is too irresistible to pass up. By preying on people who are hurting or scared for their future health, scam artists can sell their ideas and products.

Furthermore, there are now more ways than ever to push untested products. Television infomercials, printed advertisements, direct mail solicitations and the Internet all provide opportunities to sell miracle cures with overnight magic.

Anti-aging medications have gained popularity, but it's important to remember that aging is a normal process and nothing has ever been proven to reverse it. Dietary supplements and special treatments are often promoted to somehow suspend the natural progression of growing older.

Questionable health products are often advertised to cure diseases that have no cure, such as arthritis, diabetes and dementia. Vitamins and minerals, amino acids and enzymes and herbs are sold alongside magnets and copper bracelets. But, while some herbal, nontraditional remedies have been shown to help certain symptoms, none of these products are scientifically known to cure any type of disease.

Even dubious health insurance plans exist. Some companies target people who either cannot afford standard insurance or have a pre-existing condition that

prevents them from receiving it. Then, they over-promise coverage.

Trust your instincts when you consider buying a new product for your health. Be wary of outlandish claims and understand the media that carry these advertisements don't always check to make sure they are correct.

Look for red flags when blanket statements are made about making people feel instantly better. Read the fine print at the bottom of print ads or on your television screen. Tricks used by scammers include: a quick or painless cure; a secret formula; testimonials from satisfied customers; a money-back, no-risk guarantee; additional free gifts or giveaways; a limited supply of the product; requiring advance payment; and claims to heal a disease that has not been previously cured by conventional science.

The two government agencies that work to protect the public from health scams are the Federal Trade Commission, which monitors fraud, and the Food and Drug Administration, which oversees the safety of prescription medicine, medical devices, food, cosmetics and radiation-emitting products.

Lastly, your doctor is the single best resource for your health concerns. If you have questions about a product that piques your interest, talk to your doctor first.

Above all, remember the tried-and-true measures for good health in the golden years. Stay active, keep a healthy diet, limit alcohol and avoid tobacco products are still the best advice for seniors.

Dr. Graw, a grandfather of four, is a practicing physician and the founder and CEO of Right-time Medical Care. He can be reached at rgraw@myrighttime.com

Enjoy your life - it has an expiration date.

KEEPING THE 20-SOMETHINGS FROM DRIVING YOU CRAZY

By Terry Portis

Sometimes people forget that a key word in the term "middle-aged" is the word middle, as in "stuck in the middle." We find ourselves in the middle of various other generations, sometimes living and working with up to four different age groups. On the positive side, this gives us a unique perspective; on the negative side, we can be frustrated by how people view themselves and the world.

I find that people in their 20s are an increasingly important part of my life and work. Those in their 20s are part of a generation known as the millennials, born between 1980 and 2000. The millennial and baby boomer generations are equal in size and will be the dominant adult groups as this century moves forward.

If we understand some of the broad characteristics of the millennials, it can help us get along with them better, and perhaps reduce our frustration level. We can either balk at these characteristics, or we can use what we know to build better relationships. Building better relationships ultimately allows us to share our experiences and help them take over after we have moved on.

The need for continuous feedback.

More than any other group, those in their 20s want ongoing feedback on how they are doing in work and life. One supervisor sent a newly hired young adult into the archives of a company to pull files that were needed for reference. The person quit because of having worked for four hours straight and no one had checked to let him know how he was doing. The middle-aged supervisor never dreamed this would happen.

They feel a need to be constantly connected.

Millennials have grown up constantly connected, especially by cell phones and social media sites like Facebook. Connections to people can be and often is achieved

within seconds at anytime day or night. While many of us like to disconnect, disconnection for a millennial can cause feelings of anxiety, if not outright panic. If you doubt this, ask to borrow their cell phone for two or three days and see what kind of reaction you get.

Life and work should be flexible and mobile.

A recent study by Cisco found that 56 percent of recent college graduates would not take a job that did not allow them to access Facebook during work hours. This same study found that 70 percent of today's college students think that being in an office on a regular basis is unnecessary. In other words, relating to people, accessing information and being productive does not require being tied to a desk at work or home. Technology allows communication and work to be done anywhere and any place.

Learning and hoping.

A good characteristic of many millennials is that they are more hopeful than other generations. Those who are more cynical may suggest that this is because they have not had a lot of life experience yet. Still, staying hopeful despite world conditions is not a bad place to be.

Another characteristic is that millennials have a love of learning. They already consider themselves lifelong learners. They go into a job expecting it to be a place where they can learn.

We might ask ourselves if millennials are that different from us, or if the realities of the world they grew up in are different. If we grew up knowing nothing but rapidly improving and easily accessible technology, wouldn't we want to have it with us at all times? If we grew up in a world where you know about every news story within minutes of its happening, would we be satisfied with a printed paper that had news that was 24 hours old?

In the book *The Millennials*, authors Thom and Jess Rainer write: "For certain we are convinced this generation will make its mark. How will we receive them? How will we channel their ambitions and impatience? How will we work with them in greater service and healthy reconciliation? We better be ready."

Dr. Terry Portis, director of the Center on Aging at Anne Arundel Community College, holds a doctorate in counseling psychology and can be reached at tdportis@aacc.edu

Bits & Bytes

If the instruction booklet that came with your holiday gift has already been misplaced check out [www.manualsonline.com](http://manualsonline.com) for an endless library of manuals both old and new that can be printed right at your desk.

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IT'S POSSIBLE.

Creative Ways to Cure the "Winter Blues"

By Leah Lancione

According to the Mayo Clinic, seasonal affective disorder (SAD) is "a type of depression that occurs at the same time every year. Most people with the disorder have symptoms in the Fall that continue through the Winter months. The depression causes moodiness and lack of energy."

OK, even if your problem isn't that extreme, it's easy to have a form of "Winter blues" late in the season. Since the cold temperatures and snowy days keep most folks indoors, it's quite common to start pining for Spring and Summer.

If you're sick and tired of feeling trapped in your house without any fresh air or leisurely exercise, it's time to get creative with your indoor routine.

Have you ever thought of scrapbooking? Well, the dreadful days of Winter are perfect for staying inside, clipping old photographs from past holidays or vacations and pasting them into a scrapbook. If you think you're not artistic enough don't worry; there is a plethora of websites that teach beginners techniques for making one-of-a-kind creations. You can spend hours conceiving of creative ways to pay homage to, say, your wedding anniversary celebration, grandkids' births, your retirement party or your kids' weddings. Instead of stuffing photographs in an album that sits on the shelf, a scrapbook will become something you show off to friends because

you can add personal touches like captions and mementos to every page. Another good idea is to dig up old photographs and baby pictures to create miniscrapbooks to give to your children. Before you know it, you'll be an expert on die cutting, cut-outs, stamping, punches, ribbon and other unique embellishments.

Another option, though it may appear to be a chore at first, is to do some Spring cleaning early. No, don't try washing all the windows or power washing the siding. Instead, think about organizing the pantry or closets. A dreary Winter day is the perfect time to sift through pantry items that have passed their expiration date or go through all your drawers and closets for articles of clothing and other items that can be donated to charities like the Salvation Army or AMVETS (American Veterans). By Springtime, when it's time to switch your wardrobe from cold to warm weather garments, you will have cut the job in half.

Both the Salvation Army and AMVETS will gladly come to your home to pick up bags of donated items placed at the curbside. In just one afternoon you will have managed to tidy up your house, get a jumpstart on the big Spring cleaning and even do a good deed. An added benefit is that by donating items to charity, you get a tax write-off.

Another fun idea is throw a Winter picnic—indoors of course. Create a menu of Winter comfort foods like chili, Winter soups, e.g., butternut squash, minestrone, or Italian wedding, etc., pot pies, twice-baked potatoes, hot chocolate with marshmallows, herbal tea and crumpets, hot fondues.

Decorate the table with a flannel or wool (preferably plaid) blanket instead of a table cloth to invoke the picnic atmosphere, use thermoses instead of glasses and fill a picnic basket with hot rolls or biscuits. Pull the shades up so you can see the gray skies and trees whipping in the wind while you and your mates are warm and cozy inside. After dessert of something like a hot fruit cobbler or a hot-fudge sundae with a warm café au lait, move the

party into the living room for a game of charades to work off the calories and get the blood circulating.

If a dinner party and charades aren't your style, what about having an old movie marathon? When was the last time you watched Doris Day in *Pillow Talk* or Audrey Hepburn in *Breakfast at Tiffany's* or *Roman Holiday*? To heighten the intensity, add a few Alfred Hitchcock classic thrillers like *Rear Window* or *Vertigo*. Pop some popcorn, fill some snack dishes with movie-type goodies like Twizzlers, Gummy Bears, M&Ms or Snowcaps and cuddle up on the couch or recliner. To further create the home cinematic experience, close the curtains, turn off the lights, crank up the volume on the TV.

As you try out these ideas for curing the Winter blues, and conjure up some of your own, just remember that before you know it, the cold days of Winter will soon make way for the warmer weather.

RESOURCES:

For info on SAD and any number of other ailments, go to www.mayoclinic.com

To find tutorials and supplies you'll need for scrapbooking, try: www.everything-about-scrapbooking.com and www.scrapbookin.com

At www.AMVET.com and www.salvationarmyusa.org you can learn more about items these organizations will accept.

To access menu ideas and recipes, see www.foodandwine.com/slideshows/winter-comfort-food or www.countryliving.com/cooking/about-food/winter-comfort-food-0103



Making Sure that Soap Ingredients 'Come Clean'

By Leah Lancione

Wikipedia says soap "in chemistry, is a salt of a fatty acid. Soaps are mainly used as surfactants for washing, bathing, and cleaning, but they are also used in textile spinning and are important components of lubricants." Yes, we know a bar of soap is used for cleaning our bodies. It's in our showers and bath tubs and by our kitchen and bath sinks. It can be altered to be in liquid form or molded into a bar of varying shape, size, smell and color.

The online site Discovery Health found at health.howstuffworks.com/skin-care/cleansing/products/bar-soap-liquid-soap asserts that "at a very basic level there is no real difference" between bar soap and liquid soap. All types of true soap are composed of the same essential components—alkali salts of fatty acids and detergent properties." The site does reveal, however, that both have their separate advantages and disadvantages. Bar soap is often considered harsher than liquid soap because it can strip the skin of necessary moisture and damage surface cells. On the other hand, liquid soap often has added dyes and fragrances that can be harmful or irritating to skin. With that said, what are the ingredients that cleanse our skin and eliminate germs?

The Food & Drug Administration (FDA) discloses that there aren't many "true" soaps on the market. The ones that are, have to be labeled "pure" and are regulated by the Consumer Product Safety Commission. While soaps were made from animal fats and wood ash in the past, "most body cleansers are actually synthetic detergent products." "True" soap that is made to be moisturizing or deodorizing has to meet FDA requirements for a cosmetic and list all ingredients. If the soap is made with an-

tibacterial, anti-acne or antiperspirant properties it is considered a drug and must also list all ingredients for consumers.

Soap is still made by combining fats and oils with an alkaline material to form an organic compound called a stearate. Other additives, like dye and fragrances, are combined to enhance the soap properties. So, the basic ingredients are: fats (plant oils or animal fats), alkalines (lye, sodium hydroxide or ammonium hydroxide and sodium carbonate), glycerin (a skin softener), antibacterial agents usually triclocarban (an antibacterial and antifungal), pine oil or an ammonium compound, abrasives (e.g., calcite, feldspar, quartz or sand), preservatives and cosmetic additives, according to the website www.livestrong.com

The health website WebMD says the ingredient Triclosan, which is often added to soap (and other consumer products) to inhibit bacterial contamination, is being investigated by the FDA because though "it is not currently known to be hazardous to humans," some studies on animals have demonstrated that it "alters hormone regulation." Studies have also revealed that Triclosan may make bacteria resistant to antibiotics. The FDA has been reviewing this ingredient and will present findings in 2012.

So whether you choose to use a moisturizing soap like Dove or an antibacterial like Dial it's important to check out the ingredients in that bar or body wash by visiting www.cosmeticsinfo.org. Enter the name of the ingredient for a description and other important product safety information.



By Linda Pferrara

You've decided it's time to get away. It doesn't matter what time of year it is. You are anxiously in need of some much desired "away" time. But one of the constant disincentives to travel is the need to pack for a trip and to know the requirements. It takes work to decide what to take with you. There is always the fear of, "What if I don't bring enough?"

My advice is to take only what is essential and what you will really use. Most people take far too much, and suffer the inconvenience of having to drag all their bags and personal belongings around, but never using much of what they are lugging. When packing, you need to be very critical and relentless in minimizing what you take. Take it or leave it!

There are decisions to be made initially that dictate what to bring. Where are you going? What time of year is it? How long is the trip? What activities and entertainment do you plan? And finally, what is the weather forecast for your destination? Be sure to access www.weather.com one of many excellent sources for daily and weekly weather at your destination.

More to consider: Your activities might be outdoor or indoor functions. Are you hiking, biking, skiing, touring or just relaxing to get away. Museums? Art shows? Are all activities adult functions? Is formal clothing needed? Are grandchildren involved in your trip, requiring a more active schedule? All of these factors affect your packing decisions. It is important as a first step to make a list of everything you need before you begin selecting clothes.

Let's begin. What size suitcase are you taking for the trip? People are amazed that my husband and I take one suitcase and a small carry-on for all of our belongings. Last summer that was it for two weeks in Europe. How? Coordinate your wardrobe around a color theme for your destination, allowing you to mix and match. As an example, I took one pair of black slacks and a black skirt and had five tops and a jacket, accessorizing with scarves and belts. I wore an outfit on the plane that could be immediately used if for some reason the luggage was delayed. My husband took two slacks and five shirts with two sweaters. He wore a jacket on the plane as is his custom. (It definitely gets you better service and treatment.)

Now that you have everything laid out that you are going to bring, choose what suitcases and carryon bags are suitable for your trip. Next, begin the most effective packing step. How well you do this step determines the ease and convenience of your unpacking and repacking at your destinations. Begin by placing your clothes on hangers, and put them length wise in the

suitcase. Alternate between horizontal and vertical placement to prevent wrinkling. It works! When you arrive at your destination, your clothes should quickly be hung in the closet. In this way unpacking at your destination takes three minutes, and the clothes are ready to wear. You can begin enjoying your vacation immediately.

For the ladies, take only what is necessary for cosmetics. Remember if you use carry-on luggage that there is a limitation on the ounces that can be carried onto the plane. I put my cosmetics in a medium Ziploc bag. My husband brings a shaving kit bag that also contains a small medicine kit with aspirin, sunscreen, antiseptic ointments, basic first-aid items, etc. Keep in mind your need for prescription medicines. In addition, consider the need for camera and gifts, and don't forget the all-important airline tickets or maps. The right amount of cash and personal checks should be carried to supplement credit cards and ATM cards. Another important point! Remove all nonessential items from your wallets and purses that won't be needed on the trip. That means much less needs to be replaced in the unfortunate case of losing a wallet or purse.

It is prudent to have extra copies of key documents stored separately in your possession. These include your health insurance cards, credit cards, driver's license and passports. These duplicates are important just in case the originals are lost or stolen. One last thing: If you are leaving your car at an airport, keep your keys in your pocket, not in the suitcase. If you arrive home at the airport and your luggage is delayed, that mistake can cost you an expensive cab ride home.

You are now packed and ready to go. Enjoy each day, and relish the journey.

Linda is a frequent traveler, both internationally and within the USA. These tips result from numerous packing and travel experiences. She can be reached at Lmferrara68@comcast.net



Take it or Leave it! The Art of Packing Your Suitcase for a Long Trip

If not now - when?

Reinvesting Dividends – Can Pay Off –

By William W. Giles

When you invest in stocks, you want their prices to go up. But, of course, you can't control the rise and fall of stock prices. There is a key element of investing that you can control — the number of shares you own. And in the long run, share ownership may be more important than rising stock prices in determining your long-term investment success.

You might think that the advice of "buy more shares" is easier said than done. After all, not everyone can easily find a lot of extra money to invest. But you don't need access to vast wealth to increase your share ownership; you just need to consistently reinvest your stock dividends.

Just how important are reinvested dividends to wealth accumulation, as compared to capital gains (the increase in stock prices)? Over the 135-year period from 1871 through 2003, owning stocks and reinvesting the dividends produced 97 percent of all stock market returns, with only 3 percent coming from capital gains, according to a major study done by Dr. Jeremy Siegel, one of the world's leading researchers on stock market performance. Other studies have also pointed to the importance of dividends as a component of total returns.

What are the implications of this disparity between the effectiveness of dividend reinvestment versus that of capital gains? First of all, it suggests that you may not want to spend an undue amount of time and effort in chasing after "hot" stocks, hoping for big capital gains. For one thing, by the time you buy these stocks, they may already be cooling off, but even more importantly, your focus on achieving large capital gains may not be the best use of your financial resources. Ultimately, the power of dividend reinvestment means, not surprisingly, that you may be able to help yourself if you look for quality dividend-paying stocks — and then reinvest the dividends, month after month and year after year.

With just a little research, you can find stocks that have paid — and even increased — dividends for many years in a row. (Keep in mind, though, that not all stocks will pay dividends, and even those that do can reduce or discontinue them at any time. Dividend reinvestment does not ensure a profit or protect against loss.) So, to help boost your share ownership, consider reinvesting the dividends back into the stock, rather than taking them as cash payments.

If you do choose to reinvest your dividends, though, you will need to look to other types of investments to provide you with income, assuming you need some income from your portfolio, which may become more necessary during your retirement years. Your financial adviser can help you determine the appropriate investments to help provide this income. In any case, if you can do without the current income provided by dividends, give careful consideration to reinvesting them. Dividend reinvestment is not a glamorous investment strategy, and it won't help you "get rich quick," but it can help you make steady progress toward your long-term financial goals. That's a key dividend in itself.

This article was written by Edward Jones for use by your local Edward Jones Financial Advisor and submitted by William W. Giles, financial adviser. For more information please email or call William.Giles@edwardjones.com or 410.360.4230.



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Time to Go Downhill?

Explore the Nearby mid-Atlantic Region's Ski Resorts

By Leah Lancione

For those who haven't skied or snowboarded before, it's never too late to learn a Wintertime sport that combines skill, a love of the outdoors and a bit of courage. According to the Snow Sports Industries America (SIA), "more than 20.5 million Americans are active participants in snow sports." With a celebrated resort in Maryland and a handful only a couple hours away in Virginia and Pennsylvania, maybe 2012 is the year for you to become a ski "bunny." From Wisp to Whitetail and Massanutten to Liberty, there's a Winter wonderland waiting to be explored.

Websites like On the Snow provide snow reports, information on resorts as well as recommendations for gear and other resources. Just type in the location of interest by region and snow forecasts, ticket and rental prices, hours of operation, as well as ratings and reviews, are available for each resort. DC Ski also offers details on outdoor recreation in addition to re-

sort descriptions and event listings for the mid-Atlantic region.

Once the idea of a Winter getaway rouses your adventurous spirit, do a little research and pick the resort that best fits your desires and budget. The following overviews pertain to ski resorts that are within a two- to three-hour drive:

Maryland

Wisp Resort (www.wispresort.com) in Deep Creek Lake (Garrett County) offers visitors 132 acres of ski terrain, more than 30 slopes and trails and a 700-foot vertical drop. Thanks to a "world renowned" energy-efficient snowmaker, the season (for Winter activities) extends from late November to early Spring. The slopes range from beginner to advanced, and additional parks are available for freestyle sports and family and kid-friendly fun. Such recreational delights include ice skating, snowboarding and even a mountain roller coaster.

The Wisp Resort Hotel also features a heated indoor pool and Jacuzzi, among other amenities, to give visitors a warm respite from the cold outdoor activities that go beyond skiing, i.e., tubing, snowmobiling, snowshoeing and cross country skiing. Ski and boarding lessons are available for kids and adults.

Lift tickets range from \$29 to \$120 depending on age, the day of the week and time of day and season. Discounted

rates for middle-of-the-week passes as well as package deals are available.

Virginia

Virginia is home to four ski resorts, three of which are within a three-hour drive: Bryce, Massanutten and Wintergreen resorts.

Bryce Resort

Bryce Resort (www.bryceresort.com), in Basye Va., is a good choice for beginner skiers and families since the terrain is less demanding. The 500-foot vertical drop is less daunting to novice skiers and boarders. To accommodate "newbies" and families, the resort focuses on teaching and maintains a tamer atmosphere than the other resorts. Consequently, Bryce was named "Most Family-Friendly Resort" in the mid-Atlantic/Southeast region for 2010 and also claims to be the best place to learn how to ski.

According to the resort website, Bryce opened in 1909 as a Summer retreat called Bryce's Mountain Resort. Then, in the late 1960s, the slopes were opened and it has been a popular Winter getaway for skiing, tubing and boarding ever since, although year-round activities still exist. Since it is just a two-hour drive from the D.C. Metro, visitors can experience the majestic Allegheny Mountains and Shenandoah Valley for a memorable weekend escape.



Bryce gives discounts to senior citizens and package deals for first-time skiers or snowboarders are also available.

Wintergreen Resort

Wintergreen Resort (www.wintergreenresort.com), is another four-seasons "hotspot" that is just under three hours away by car. Nestled in the Blue Ridge Mountains, the resort has more than 125 of 11,000 acres of terrain for snow sports, 26 slopes and trails and a summit of 3,515 feet with a vertical drop of 1,003 feet. In addition to the high altitude, a state-of-the-art snowmaking system helps keep top quality snow on the ground. Wintergreen claims to be the only ski resort on the East Coast where 100 percent of the terrain is covered by an automated snowmaking system.

The resort is also home to two tubing parks, including one of the largest in the state, a half-pipe for snowboarders and ice skating. Lessons for individuals and groups of all ages and abilities are available. Another nice perk is the Wintergarden Spa -- perfect for pampering after a long day of hitting the slopes. A fitness and aquatics facility also features indoor and outdoor pools, hot tubs, saunas and steam rooms.

Deals like, "stay two nights get the third free" are available as well discounted lift ticket and rental rates for senior citizens.

Massanutten Resort

Just two hours and 10 minutes from D.C., in Harrisonburg, Va., you'll find Massanutten (www.massresort.com), another four-season resort that has a little bit of everything. In addition to being the "mountain playground" with the highest vertical drop in Maryland, Virginia and Pennsylvania at 1,100 feet, the resort boasts a 900-foot-long hill for snow tubing, two recreation facilities, a spa, ice skating and an indoor/outdoor water park.

In addition to views of the Blue Ridge Mountains from Massanutten Peak, the resort has 70 acres of trails and two terrain parks suitable for all skill levels. Massanutten is often the region's first ski area to open for visitors (in mid to late November) and the last to close.

With family-fun amenities galore and a full line-up of weekly events, Massanutten predicts "a 100 percent chance for fun." Massanutten also offers discounted pass and rental rates for senior citizens.

Pennsylvania

Pennsylvania is home to more than 20 ski resorts, a few of which are within a short driving distance from the D.C. metro area.

Liberty Mountain

Liberty Mountain Resort (www.skiliberty.com), in Carroll Valley, Pa., is one of the closest options as it is just an hour and 35 minutes from D.C. The resort has 16 trails for all levels of skiers and snowboarders, a vertical drop of 620 feet, three terrain parks, 14 lanes for snow tubing in the expansive Boulder Ridge, and guaranteed snow thanks to a computerized snowmaking system.

Liberty is proud of its award-winning *Learn to Ski and Snowboard* and *Mountain Passport* programs. Liberty Mountain Hotel offers lodging and ski-and-stay packages. In addition, seniors (age 65 and over) receive 50 percent off lift tickets (midweek and in nonpeak season). Prices range from \$46 to \$125, depending on whether it's the weekend or mid-week.

Since Liberty is the closest resort on the list, it may be the perfect choice for a day trip. A nice added feature is that all visitors are afforded a basket check service so you can place your belongings in a bin for \$5 and return as many times as needed throughout the day. This is a useful amenity for day trippers who don't have a room to store valuables while romping in the snow.

Roundtop Mountain Resort

Roundtop Mountain Resort (www.skiroundtop.com/index.htm) is two hours and 10 minutes away in Lewisberry, Pa. The four-season resort features a 600-foot vertical drop, 16 trails (some of which curve down the mountain as opposed to the usual straight slopes) as well as a snow tubing and snowboarding park.

Depending on the time of year, day of the week and duration of stay, rates range from \$20 to \$100 for packages. The resort also features discounted "ladies day" and "men's day" as well as military rates and other special deals.

This resort also offers free parking, a basket check and lockers.

Whitetail Resort

Just an hour and 45 minutes from the D.C. area, Whitetail Resort (www.skiwhitetail.com) in Mercersburg, Va., has 23 trails, a 935-foot vertical drop, lighting on expert terrain, a half-pipe for snowboarding and a snow tubing park.

Guests are offered a free ski check. Ticket prices range from \$20 to over a \$100, depending on the package, the day and the season (peak or nonpeak). Senior citizens (age 65 and over) receive a 50 percent off price midweek during the nonpeak season. Military personnel also receive discounted rates.

Snow Time, Inc., owns Liberty Mountain, Ski Roundtop and Whitetail resorts, allowing it to offer loyal guests the Advantage card, a discount and frequent-visitor pass, valid at all three resorts.

Information for this story was gathered from the resorts' websites, DC Ski www.dcski.com/resorts/index.php and www.onthesnow.com Once you become an avid skier or snowboarder, check out the following clubs for seniors: www.go50.org/ and www.70pluskicloud.org/



he cooks!

(Sweet Treats)



By Mat Herban

As Valentine's Day approaches, it's fun to think of a special dessert-type treat to offer and the first one suggested here is especially versatile. Not too sweet for breakfast, but luscious served with a generous helping of whipped cream at the end of any meal. It is not too heavy either, so it would be the perfect finish to a rich meal of filet with bordelaise sauce! We first came across cherry almond cake in a German bakery while living in Columbus, Ohio.

Cherry Almond Cake

Preheat the oven to 350. Butter and flour a 10" spring form pan.

1 can sour cherries, drain but reserve juices. There should be 1/2 cup juice, but if not enough, add water.

1 cup unsalted almonds (skins can still be on them)

1 cup plus 2 Tbs. all-purpose flour

1 tsp. baking powder

1/4 tsp. salt

1 1/2 sticks softened butter

1/4 cup plus 1 Tbs. granulated sugar

3 large eggs, separated

1 tsp. vanilla

1/4 tsp. almond extract

Confectioners' sugar for dusting cake top

In a food processor, grind the almonds with the flour, baking powder and salt. Remove to a bowl. Then in the processor, cream the butter with 3/4 cup granulated sugar until light and fluffy. Add the eggs yolks one at a time, beating well after each addition. Add the flour mixture, the vanilla, almond extract and the 1/2 cup reserved cherry juice. (Note: When you add the cherry juice, the batter will darken, but when the cake is baked, it will look just fine.) In a small bowl, beat egg whites until

they just hold stiff peaks. Stir 1/4 of whites into batter to lighten it, then fold the remaining whites into the batter.

Turn the batter into the pan. Smooth the top and drop the cherries on top, distributing them evenly and pressing them in lightly. Sprinkle the top with the remaining 1 Tbs. granulated sugar. Bake in the middle of the oven for 1 hour or until a tester comes out clean. Let the cake cool in the pan. When cool, run a knife around the edges, remove the sides and then run a knife under the bottom of the cake and slide it onto a serving plate. Dust the top with confectioners' sugar just before serving. The flavor is best if the cake is served at room temperature. If desired, garnish with whipped cream flavored with a dash of vanilla and 1-2 tablespoons of confectioners' sugar.

To store the cake, wrap it in plastic wrap to keep the air out and refrigerate. It will keep about three days.

For an extra special effect, place a paper doily over the top of the cake, or make one yourself by folding paper and cutting it out like a snowflake, and then sprinkle the cake with confectioners' sugar. This is easy to do by placing a few spoonfuls of sugar in a strainer and then shaking the strainer over the cake. Carefully lift the paper off the cake so that the pattern on the top of the cake remains undisturbed

Almond Thumb Print Cookies

Another dessert option is this rich sugar cookie flavored with cherry jam. These could become addictive and would pair beautifully with a rich chocolate or mocha ice cream--or the chocoholics among us.

Preheat the oven to 350. Butter/grease a cookie sheet.

1 cup unsalted almonds (skins can still be on them)

2 sticks butter

1 cup confectioners' sugar

1 egg yolk

3 oz. cream cheese (low fat or regular)

1 1/2 tsp. vanilla extract

1 tsp. lemon zest

2 1/2 cups flour

1/4 tsp. baking powder

1/2 tsp. baking soda

cherry jam

In a processor, grind almonds until fine, but stop before they become a paste--you will be rolling the cookies in the almonds later. Put almonds in a small bowl. In the processor, cream butter and confectioners' sugar, then beat in egg yolk. When well-mixed, beat in cream cheese, vanilla and lemon zest. When combined, add flour, baking powder and baking soda. Make dough into 1" balls with your hands then roll in almonds and place on greased cookie sheet 1 1/2" apart. Using your thumb, make a generous indentation in the top of each cookie. With a teaspoon, fill the indentation with a cherry and some of the sugar syrup from the jam.

Bake 9-12 minutes or until the cookies just start to look golden. Remove cookies from the cookie sheet and let cool on a rack. Store refrigerated in an airtight tin or plastic container. For maximum flavor, serve at room temperature.



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.



My daughter suggested that I put her name on my checking account. What should I do?

Confused Mom

It is unclear from your question if your daughter is proposing that you add her as a joint owner of your account or whether she is suggesting that you open a convenience account, whereby you authorize her to just write checks from your account.

Although Maryland law permits convenience accounts to be established, not all banks are willing to offer such a convenience. You need to inquire with the bank where you have an account established to ascertain whether it offers convenience accounts. If not, and you prefer such an arrangement, maybe it is time for you to look for another bank.

If on the other hand, your daughter is suggesting that you add her as a joint owner of your account, you will be granting ownership of the money in that account to her. That is, as a joint owner, your daughter would have the legal right to withdraw all of the money in that account, and if she were to file a petition for bankruptcy or become involved in a divorce, the joint account would be subject to the claims of her creditors and spouse.

Although I generally counsel people against putting someone else's name on their bank account, under some circumstances, joint accounts are useful. For example, I have found when handling the administration of probate estates that it is less stressful for a personal representative to pay probate fees and unpaid funeral, cremation and burial expenses, which usually require payment shortly after death, if they have access to money held in a joint account.

If you decide that you prefer to name your daughter as a joint owner of your bank account, however, it is important that you evaluate the likelihood of her becoming involved in a divorce or bankruptcy, or creditor's claim, and more importantly that you trust that she will spend the money in the joint account for your

benefit during your lifetime and upon your death she will use the money to pay probate fees and other expenses, and not for her own benefit, as she would be entitled to do so under the law as a joint owner of the account. Additionally, federal gift tax rules must be complied with when you add your daughter as a joint owner of your bank account.

I recently moved to Maryland from New York. Do I need to have a Maryland Last Will and Testament prepared for me?

Curious

Generally, if the Will that was prepared for you in New York, was prepared in accordance with the laws of that state, your Will will be upheld in Maryland.

Despite the foregoing, however, you may want to have a new Will prepared for you in Maryland. For example, if upon reviewing your Will you find that it does not name your current intended beneficiaries, or there are other provisions which no longer reflect your wishes, you may wish to have a new Will prepared.

Also, your New York Will most likely contains references to New York law. For example, most Wills refer to the laws of the State where the Will was written, when reciting what powers are granted to a personal representative. Although the foregoing reference would probably not defeat the effectiveness of a Will, if a ques-

tion should arise as to what specific powers were granted, in all likelihood New York law would need to be referenced. More significantly, however, is that the terminology used in Wills may differ among states. For example, in Maryland a reference in a Will to a person's "child" or "children," does not include stepchildren, foster children or grandchildren, whereas the words "descendant," and sometimes "issue," includes grandchildren and other lineal descendants.

Most Wills also contain a provision providing that in the event that all persons named in your Will to receive your property do not survive you, that your property will be distributed as if you had died "intestate," that is, without a Will. Again, the laws of states vary as to who is to receive your property in the event you die without a Will.

In summary, although your out-of-state Will, if properly executed, may be effective in Maryland, it is advisable for you to have a Maryland attorney review your Will to be certain that it fully and clearly states your wishes.

Valerie A. Rocco, P.C., is an estate planning, probate and elder law attorney with more than 30 years experience. Her responses to questions are based upon Maryland law. Ms. Rocco may be contacted at 410.266.1009 (Annapolis) or 410.997.4228 (Columbia), or visit her website at www.SeniorsAdviser.com

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New Plants for the Flower Garden

Perusing Seed Catalogs - a Favorite Winter Diversion

By Neil Moran

One of my favorite Winter pastimes, after the holiday rush and hoopla, is to browse through the garden catalogs that accumulate in a corner of our dining room. This year, however, I turned to the online catalogs to see what is new and exciting for the New Year. I found not only some cool new offerings, but handy store locators, that with the click of a button will tell you where in the Bay area to find these new varieties of plants.

Here are some new shrub and perennial flower offerings, plus the way to find them this spring at a garden center near you.

Positively Perennials

Have you ever wished you could look into a crystal ball and see what new perennials are going to be arriving in your area? Well, you can do just that at the Walters Gardens website at www.waltersgardens.com Walter's Garden is the largest wholesaler of perennials in North America. Each year they offer more than 100 new varieties of perennial flowers.

At the Walters website you will find detailed photos and descriptions of their new and current perennial offerings and a store locator that will direct you to area retailers who carry their perennials, which are often sold under the Proven Winners brand.

For instance, punch in the zip code for Annapolis, and you'll find 12 listings of retailers within 50 miles of the city who carry the Walters selection. You can contact specific retailers to see if they have in stock some of the perennials featured on the Walters website.

Now that I've told you how to find these beautiful selections, let's take a look at what's new at Walters and further down the road at Spring Meadow Nursery.

Baptisia DECADENCE 'Blueberry Sundae.' This particular variety of false indigo is touted as being "more vibrant and compact" than a previous offering. I like Baptisia because it is easy to grow and has a shrub-like habit and bluish-green foliage that stands out nicely, without overreaching.

Despite the relatively short bloom period, I've come to love the columbines (*Aquilegia*). These shade-loving plants with pretty droopy flowers are a nice way to herald Spring in around the Bay area. Keep an eye out at your retail garden centers for these new offerings: *Aquilegia* "Blue Bird" and *Aquilegia* "Goldfinch." Need I describe the colors of these new offerings?

If you're looking to dazzle, consider Walters' new Echinacea "Flame Thrower." The bright, burnt-orange flowers will certainly stand out in a garden of bold colors.

Shrubs to Love

Just like the latest smartphone or other gadget, plant breeders are always looking for ways to improve on plants. With shrubs they look to improve on appearance, hardiness, disease control and other important plant characteristics. These new shrub offerings from Spring Meadow Nurseries are smart choices for any gardeners in zones 5 and above.

Double Play Big Bang Spirea, which will be sold under the Proven

Winners brand name, promises to produce "massive pink flowers of a size never seen before on a spiraea." And it's not just about the flowers: The foliage "glows orange" in the Spring before turning a bright yellow. It is deer-resistant and grows to three feet. These aren't your mother's spireas!

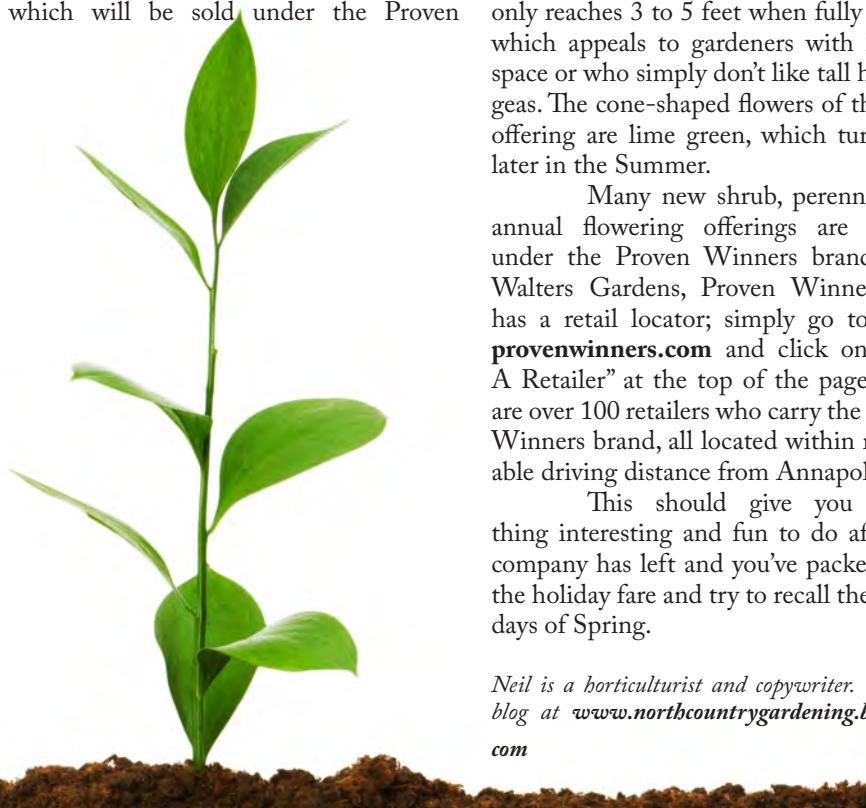
Are rhododendrons more appealing to your plant palette? Bloom-A-Thon Reblooming Azalea is just like the name sounds, more bloom for your buck. These babies will start blooming in April around your Bay home or cottage, then rebloom in early July and continue right through Fall until finally succumbing to a hard frost. They come in four flavors, or rather colors, including white, red, pink and lavender. The evergreen foliage is "disease resistant and maintains excellent foliage year-round."

Hydrangeas have a wide appeal among gardeners, which is probably why Proven Winners has introduced Little Lime Hardy Hydrangea (*Hydrangea paniculata*). This new offering has the same color and other characteristics of the popular 'Limelight' hydrangea. However, it only reaches 3 to 5 feet when fully grown, which appeals to gardeners with limited space or who simply don't like tall hydrangeas. The cone-shaped flowers of this new offering are lime green, which turn pink later in the Summer.

Many new shrub, perennial and annual flowering offerings are carried under the Proven Winners brand. Like Walters Gardens, Proven Winners also has a retail locator; simply go to www.provenwinners.com and click on "Find A Retailer" at the top of the page. There are over 100 retailers who carry the Proven Winners brand, all located within reasonable driving distance from Annapolis.

This should give you something interesting and fun to do after the company has left and you've packed away the holiday fare and try to recall the balmy days of Spring.

Neil is a horticulturist and copywriter. Visit his blog at www.northcountrygardening.blogspot.com



BUTTER is BETTER

By Melissa Conroy

"Your cholesterol has got to come down some," your doctor informs you. Sighing, you think of what this means: more exercise, lots of vegetables and no more juicy prime ribs. Butter certainly has to go in favor of something lighter to spread on your toast and baked potatoes. Or is that last admonition true? In the quest to eat healthier food, many people shun real butter in favor of margarine and other spreads, but these substitutes are not always as healthy as you might think. Butter is much more natural and better choice.

Butter is actually an ancient food that originated well before humans started domesticating cattle. Thanks to goats and sheep, people have been churning butter since about 3,500 B.C. and butter has been used as a food item, medicinal treatment, lamp oil and even offered to the gods as Indian people did with *gee* (clarified butter). Butter is made from cream, and cream contains butterfat globules which are surrounded by membranes that keep the fat from meshing together. Churning the cream breaks apart the membranes and allows the fat to join together. Most likely, butter was discovered thousands of years ago when someone opened up the sack of milk he was carrying around to find that the agitation of his movements had created a tasty treat.

Margarine got its start in 1813 when the French chemist Michel Eugène Chevreul discovered margaric acid, a saturated fatty acid which became the basis for margarine. Margarine became commercially available in 1869, but it was slow to catch on in the world. Canada banned margarine from 1886-1948, and the U.S. taxed margarine heavily, which hindered sales. But WWI brought severe dairy shortages, and margarine rose in popularity. In recent decades, concerns about fat consumption and obesity have further spurred margarine sales. Today, the average grocery store contains a far larger display of margarine and other butter substitutes than it does butter.

The main concern people have about butter is its fat content. A tablespoon of butter has 11 grams of fat (including 7 grams of saturated fat) and 100

calories. In contrast, a tablespoon of light *I Can't Believe It's Not Butter* has only 5 grams of fat (including 1.5 grams of saturated fat) and 45 calories. There are substitute butter spreads such as Benecol which contains plant stanol esters, an ingredient said to reduce cholesterol. Since there are so many low-fat alternatives to butter, it's no wonder that many people prefer margarine to the real thing.

However, fat and calories are only part of the equation. Making margarine is a complicated process, and the steps involved to produce that tub of yellow spread are not very appetizing. Margarine is made from processed vegetable oil, but the oils can be anything from soybean to cottonseed. After being pressed from the seeds, the oil is treated with a caustic soda solution: This removes free fatty acids along with nutrition and vitamins. Then the oil is often bleached to remove unwanted coloration until it becomes odorless and tasteless.

After being prepared, the oil is usually treated with hydrogen to make it become more solid and shelf-stable. Unfortunately, treating fat with hydrogen produces trans fat, a substance that is best not to consume in high quantities. Although a tub of butter substitute may claim it's "trans fat free," bear in mind that according to the Food and Drug Administration, a food item can be labeled as "trans fat free" if it contains less than .5 grams of trans fat per serving. The words "partially hydrogenated vegetable oil" and "vegetable shortening" indicate that what you are eating has trans fat in it. In general, a good rule of thumb is that the more solid the margarine, the more trans fat it contains, so a stick of margarine has more trans fat than soft spread in a tub.

In order to treat oil with hydrogen, a process called a nickle catalyst is used, and the Agency for Toxic Substance and Disease Registry names nickle as a known human carcinogen. Cadmium is also used as a hardening agent for margarine, but it is much more toxic than nickle, all the more reason to use butter instead.

In the end, the problem with margarine is that it undergoes so many

processes before it ends up on your toast, and many of these steps involve things that you decidedly do not want to put in your mouth. This doesn't give you free rein to pour half a cup of melted butter on your mashed potatoes and, yes, you should avoid the infamous "Fried Butter on a Stick" that was debuted at a Texas state fair in 2009. But butter is free of hydrogen and nickle, has only two ingredients (salt and cream) and is not highly processed. Enjoy it in moderation and avoid all the mystery ingredients lurking in that stick of margarine.

For a fun project with your grandchildren, why not make some butter? The process is quite simple and does not involve a lot of time. Here's what you need to do:

- 1) Half fill a sealed jar with heavy cream and add a few dashes of salt (optional). Shake it vigorously until the butterfat breaks down and begins to stick together.

OR

Put 16 ounces of heavy cream in a mixing bowl and salt (if desired) and beat with an electric mixer until it looks like scrambled eggs.

- 2) Pour off the watery liquid and knead the butter under cold water for several minutes – this works out any remaining buttermilk and keeps the butter from spoiling.

- 3) Refrigerate

I have very fond memories of making butter in my third grade class. We passed around several jars of cream and took turns shaking the jar to the tune of this old butter making song:

*Come, butter, come
 Come, butter, come
 Come in a lump
 As big as a bump
 I'll meet you by the lake
 With a big jelly cake
 Come, butter, come
 Come, butter, come"*



Life Lessons

FROM THE BAY IN WINTER

By Nancy Lincoln Reynolds, associate pastor

We are not alone. The Bay, its wetlands, shorelines and mainland are home to thousands of very different species. However, we are all guided by the same seasons of life and bonded together by the same Creator. Our habitats may differ dramatically, but the lessons we take from the Bay are the same: appreciation for each other and trust in the one who made us. Either by instinct or by faith, we have learned to be neighbors and to be guided by the principles of nature. Nonhuman species may have homes primarily on land or entirely in the water, but we share with them in the miraculous cycle of life that births, grows and dies and then begins again. Winter reminds me of this reliable cycle and the necessity of trust involved in accepting it.

There are at least two lessons I have learned from the Bay in Winter. The first involves accepting others who are not like me. Winter on the Bay is especially good at teaching this. Most of us grew up on, "Never judge a book by its cover," but we do it anyway. If we don't understand or like what we see on the outside, we may ignore or condemn or fear it. We make assumptions about another being based on what can be seen on the outside and don't bother to delve any deeper. This year I carefully watched the Bay and Fall foliage yield its miracle of colors like a prelude to the bleakness of Winter that quickly took its place. The leafless trees and lifeless grasses now stand as silhouettes and frozen frameworks shocked into immobility and a visible silence. The color is gone. I know, intellectually, that they have not died and that an important rejuvenation is occur-

ring, even though it does not look that way. Appearance is, after all, deceptive.

Nonhuman residents of the Bay have a knack for living side by side. They seem to understand implicitly the importance of cooperation and "getting along," no matter how different they may appear from one another. (How can one possibly compare a horseshoe crab to a blue heron?) They convey a kind of nonjudgmental neighborliness and seem to respect each other even while honoring clear territories. This business of judging others based on appearance, even when there is not a perceived threat, may be unique to the human species. And we are usually mistaken about the "insides" of another being when we do this. Learning from the nonhuman inhabitants of the Bay, we may expand our visions and suspend our judgment to include awareness of everyone, everywhere. This is good religious sentiment as well as good common sense. It is a solid reflection of the Creator's intention and carries us easily into environmental advocacy and a world of globalization.

The second lesson I have learned from the Bay in Winter has to do with trust. Many of us also grew up on The Byrds', "To everything, turn, turn, turn, there is a season and a time for every purpose under heaven." When the season of Winter comes, life seems suspended as the cold drives us inside our homes for places of warmth and protection. The non-human Bay residents share the experience and likewise respond, some burrowing down and adopting a dormant mindset while others head for warmer climates. The starkness of Winter shocks the world

around us into a stubborn stillness that belies the vital force still residing inside all living things. We cannot see "life" and perhaps we are not meant to see it because it is a sacred process. I don't know. Only God knows. But we are compelled to accept the process, trusting that there is purpose and goodness in the outcome. We trust that life still goes on even though we do not see it happening. We can learn "trust" from the inhabitants of the Bay who will inevitably return, renewed and invigorated, in the Spring.

"Winter," as metaphor, comes to each of us personally in various forms of change: aging, loss, illness. Such changes are as inevitable as the seasons themselves. But the same life-giving force that is within others continues in us as well. Not all Winters are harsh and freeze over completely, although I do hear tales of driving across the Bay on ice. But when they do, we may take these lessons of acceptance and trust from the Bay, yielding to the season and hiding away in the one who made and protects us still. All of us can allow ourselves to be sheltered whether by instinct or by faith. As the Old Testament psalmist declares, we can trust and be confident in the overflowing peace and promise of the one who guards us still, in all the seasons of our lives, all the way home.

Nancy is the associate pastor at Wood Presbyterian Church in Severna Park. She is a licensed professional counselor and can be reached at nreynolds@woodschurch.org or 410.647.2550



with friends

By Cynthia Rott

Words with Friends is the hot Scrabble game actor Alec Baldwin couldn't pull himself away from recently until the flight crew had *words with him*, kicking him off the plane. Identical to old-fashioned Scrabble, this is the game that can be played with anyone, regardless of what time zone they are in. Play your word, click a button and wait for the opponent's move. It can be played live with the other person responding immediately, or at your convenience over the course of days or even weeks. The game board is just as you remember the traditional Scrabble board, except instead of picking more letters out of a box, the letters automatically refill after each play. Also a remaining letter count is posted so you are acutely aware at all times of how many more chances you have to beat your opponent's score.

This game is a free app that can be put on your iPhone, or can be accessed through Facebook. There is a \$2.99 version, but I am content with the free one, even if it does show advertisements.

Don't even try to play *Words with Friends* alone, as the name suggests. Facebook does make it very easy to begin a game with friends. Currently I have two games running, one

with an old college friend in Michigan and one with a seldom-seen cousin in Massachusetts. Most mornings I get up, and with coffee in hand, check my email and then play one word with each of my opponents.

My competitive nature has me thinking quite hard to play the maximum point word possible. It only takes about five minutes, since my opponents and I are on opposite schedules. Most days I play one word, some days more, and some days I skip it, but the game is patient and always there. When I sign on to Facebook, I can quickly ascertain if one of my opponents has played.

Playing letters is simple, just drag the letters to the appropriate spot, preferably a triple word score. But don't try to cheat. The game will not let you play a word that is not in its dictionary -- even if it appears in another dictionary. Try it, it's free and there is a bit of pride in beating an old college chum with a word like "quiz" on a triple word score.

Cindy can be contacted at cmrott@aol.com

Bits & Bytes

If you haven't logged onto the Anne Arundel County Library site yet, you're in for a treat. www.aacpl.net is not only the place to reserve a book or video, but it will answer questions, help with research and even provide instructions to download a book.

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NEW YEAR'S RESOLUTION IDEAS FOR FITNESS

(NOT JUST THE GYM ANYMORE!)

By Joanne R. Alloway

Those pesky new year's resolutions! How often have yours included a diet plan or a gym membership to lose weight or get in shape? We've all tried to start fresh in a new year, but joining the gym yourself can be lonely. You might go sporadically or not at all because it's hard to get there if you're not motivated. So why not try something more interesting and fun that does not commit you to a contract? There are activities that help us burn calories and get fit while having fun. Plus, we can go with and work out with others -- some accountability and camaraderie helps *keep* us going!

One such activity is a **ZUMBA** class. Perhaps you've heard of it, but aren't sure what it is? Around for 10 years, but popular since 2007, Zumba is more a dance party than any boring exercise! Remember jazzercise? Think of Zumba like jazzercise to Latin music -- combining aerobic and fitness dance moves like salsa, hip hop, calypso, flamenco and martial arts. This one-hour class will make you sweat, and if you do it wholeheartedly can burn about 415 calories. Classes range from beginner to extreme and even aqua Zumba. All levels utilize the entire body for a total workout. So find a few friends and go! Men and women are welcome. Check below for class locations or view Basic Steps demo first; then you'll be fired up to go! www.youtube.com/watch?v=qsSrq3HBa7A

PILATES AND YOGA -- not new, but really good overall body activities that focus on the core muscle groups: abdominal, oblique and lower back. They improve balance and control by strengthening your core. Pilates provides participants with an hour of slow dynamic movements. Classes usually take place on mats; however some studios also have Pilates machines and reformers, that help you into the required positions. Classes, for men and women are very effective. Pilates is great for shaping up, chronic pain and for rehabilitation from injuries. For a list of classes offered in Anne Arundel County log onto www.aacounty.org/RecParks/recreation/adultprograms.cfm. Many area gyms and studios also have classes. At some studios, the more friends you bring, the lower the cost per session. So, it pays to go with friends! **YOGA** is great for fitness and great for the mind, for stress reduction, overall healing and well-being. There are many

types of yoga; decide what you'd enjoy most -- hot yoga, meditative yoga, kundalini yoga, beginner's yoga, yoga for men, etc. At most local studios, you can "drop in" to see if it's a good fit. What could be more fun than to drop in and try out a new kind of yoga in 2012? Most gyms and studios offer both Pilates and yoga classes.

While Plates and Yoga are reserved and quiet, **POLE DANCING** is not and it is new! It is a growing trend in fitness for women, having gained popularity in recent years; the sport now touts regional and national competitions. Three studios in the county provide fitness training and can be reviewed at www.exposefitness.com According to Rachal Frank, owner of the Annapolis studio, "Our workouts provide great strength-training and toning exercises. The average age is 40, but ages range from 18 – 80. Being slender is not important, getting fit is." Workouts incorporate anaerobic on the pole and aerobic on mats and chairs. Other benefits include flexibility, improved body image and increased confidence. "Most women come with friends at least to start. No men or kids allowed inside and no expensive contracts,"

CARDIO KICKBOXING classes are a fairly new, powerful and quick way to rev up metabolism, shape up and burn calories fast. They offer kickboxing moves set to funky music, and in some classes students even wear the gloves. It's an excellent cardio workout for men and women. For a demo, log onto: www.youtube.com/watch?v=20RaCqharLk&feature=related

OPEN GYM for basketball and volleyball is available through AA County, especially for men over 40. Don't forget the invigorating workout we get from **ICE SKATING** -- available at Quiet Waters Park, 410.222.1711 and Glen Burnie Town Center 410.222.7313 ice rinks. Both locations now offer group lessons. But go with those of your ability for more fun.

With many fitness options, we don't have to resort to going solo to a gym; branch out and try whatever helps you stick with the program you will enjoy. Happy New Year!

Joanne R. Alloway is an author and freelance writer and can be reached at www.allowayswords.com

ZUMBA:

www.aacounty.org/RecParks/recreation/adultprograms.cfm
www.zumba-classlocator.com/USA/Maryland/maryland-zumba-class-locator.html

PILATES AND YOGA:

www.aacounty.org/RecParks/recreation/adultprograms.cfm
www.yellowbook.com/yellow.pages.what=yoga, and+pilate s+classes&where=anne+arundel+county%20md&page=3

POLE DANCING:

www.bodytalk.com/locations

CARDIO KICKBOXING:

www.aacounty.org/RecParks/recreation/adultprograms.cfm
www.cardiokickboxing.com/locations.htm

BASKETBALL / VOLLEYBALL:

www.aacounty.org/RecParks/recreation/adultprograms.cfm

Consider the urgency of now.



OVER-SUNNED?

Treat Sunburn the Natural Way

By Louise Whiteside

Remember those glorious days of fun in the sun? We'd slather ourselves with baby oil and lie on the beach for hours on end, with rock and roll music blaring nearby. Later we'd beam when someone would exclaim, "What a beautiful tan! You look so healthy!"

Not anymore! Unfortunately, science has demonstrated to us that the suntans (and worse, the sunburns) of our

youth have taken their toll in the form of skin cancer and premature aging of our skin.

And now Winter has arrived. Of course we reason, there's no worry about the over-effects of sun while we're out skiing or even walking in freezing weather. Wrong! In fact the glistening white snow reflects the sun's rays directly onto our exposed skin and can cause as much damage as can the Summer sun.

That's the bad news. Luckily, by now, we've trained ourselves to protect our skin from further damage by applying sunscreen, wearing sun glasses and limiting exposure to the sun between the hours of 10 a.m. and 3 p.m., when the sun's rays are the strongest.

Older and wiser, yes. But suppose one day you're having so much fun on the slopes that you lose track of your exposure time or perhaps you forget to reapply sunscreen after going for another run. You start to feel that familiar tight, hot sensation on your face. You know it's too late; you have a nasty sunburn!

What to do? Maybe there isn't a pharmacy close by. Or you might not care for chemical sunburn treatments, which may be expensive or could cause additional skin irritation. Or perhaps, like me, you just prefer to use "natural" products. Whatever your preferences, the following homespun remedies have offered fast relief and have proven to be effective for others:

1. The simplest treatment: Soak the sunburned areas in cold (not freezing) water or apply cold compresses.
2. Grind up a cup of oatmeal in a food processor and add it to a tub of lukewarm water for a soothing bath.
3. Soak a cloth in a pot of cooled green tea and apply it to the burned areas.
4. Brew, then chill, a pot of peppermint tea and use it as a compress.
5. Rub the sunburned areas gently with a slice of cucumber or potato.
6. Soak paper towels in white vinegar and apply them to the burned areas.
7. Mix baking soda and white vinegar to make a paste, and slather it over the burned areas.
8. Apply a light coating of aloe vera to burned skin, using either a fresh cutting from the plant or the gel form.

The bottom line: The best treatment for sunburn (or other sun damage) is prevention. Protect your skin with sunscreen (SPF-15 or higher), and don proper attire before your day on the slopes.

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// Internet Travel Planning //

By Pat Jurgens

For many of us, the lure of the unknown is hard to resist. What is it that spurs us to pack our bags, get on a plane or ship and go miles away from everything familiar? Is it the excitement of new places, people and experiences? Or just the need to get away. Maybe in part it's the sense that life is now shorter than ever, and we'd better go "while we still can." With instantaneous Internet information, there are more easily accessed possibilities than ever before.

The excitement of an active vacation draws those who are young at heart. You can ride on a zip line in the rain forest of Costa Rica, kayak in the Puget Sound, go rafting in the Grand Canyon, or hike to Machu Picchu in Peru. How about biking in China or a walking tour in Ireland? The choices are endless.

Eco tours are an environmentally friendly way to see the world. They focus on sustainable tourism in the natural world. You can explore archaeological ruins in Central America, go whale watching off the New Zealand coast, trek with gorillas in Africa, snorkel on a Brazilian reef or ride horses in a Costa Rican rain forest. An eco tour works in harmony with the land and people, employing locals and using local goods, services and accommodations. Destinations are likely to be remote and wild.

Travel is always a learning experience in one way or another and an educational tour is bound to stimulate your brain, while you enjoy time with like-minded people. You're taken out of your comfort zone and opened to new ideas, new perspectives and new people. Educational travel is perfect for those who want to understand the history, culture and customs of a country or region. Lectures by

local experts and discussions are an integral part of the experience.

Focused vacations are popular for those who want to concentrate on one kind of experience or skill. A few ideas: study Spanish in Oaxaca, Mexico; learn the art of Italian cooking in Tuscany or go bird watching in the Caribbean. A week of yoga, writing, meditation, art, scuba diving or whatever your favorite interest can be found in many beautiful and exotic locations.

Relax and Enjoy

Many of us yearn for a getaway vacation, where we can settle back in the sun with a cool drink and relax. Beach vacations are the traditional antidote to a cold northern Winter. Many people make annual pilgrimages to Hilton Head, Myrtle Beach, Siesta Key, Sanibel Island and many other locations to the south. The coasts of Louisiana, Texas and California are popular destinations, as are the Baja and coasts of Mexico, Belize and Costa Rica. More recently the beaches of Thailand and Malaysia have lured Americans and Europeans alike.

Ask yourself: Do I prefer an all-inclusive resort package that provides airfare, hotel, meals and drinks in the price? Or do I want to find my own slice of heaven and pay as I go? If you're a do-it-yourselfer, you'll need time and patience researching on the Internet. The amount of information is overwhelming, but with persistence you'll pay less and hopefully find what you

want. Or you can give a travel agent your preferences and budget limit, and let her narrow the field of choices and plan your trip. It's a matter of how much time, effort and money you are willing to spend in the process

Does a cruise beckon in your future? There are large ships and small ships. You can cruise around the world for six months, to Nassau over a long weekend and anything in between. A myriad of cruise companies create many choices and costs vary considerably. Discounts of 50 percent or more can be found, particularly over holidays and off-season. Some companies are all-inclusive, while others more commonly charge extra for land excursions. Then there's insurance to be considered, as well as accommodations at the arrival and departure city. A cruise can be a major investment, but when you find one that suits you, you can unpack just once and relax with all your needs met onboard. This is luxury travel, with a variety of food to tempt your palate 24-7, onboard entertainment, personal services and shopping.



Small ships take passengers on more individual itineraries to specialized destinations. The advantage is fewer people, greater identification with the destination land and people; a downside can be higher cost.

River cruises are increasingly popular. You can sail down the Rhine and the Danube, the Amazon, the Yangtze or the Nile. You can view the countryside as your boat gently moves along, stopping at places of interest. It's a combination of land tour and water transport – the best of both worlds.

Something for Everyone

The mountains provide a different kind of relaxing vacation. How many of us recall family vacations at a cabin in our youth? Swimming in a lake, cooking hamburgers over an open fire and roasting marshmallows as the stars came out are happy memories. Many old cabins are for rent. Mountain resorts in the Adirondacks, Catskills and Appalachian Mountains provide meals, horseback riding, hiking trails and a variety of pastimes to enjoy. National parks in the West provide a sunny Winter alternative with lodge and cabin accommodations. Whether you are vacationing as a couple or planning a family reunion, rustic mountain holidays are never outdated. The key is to make your reservations early, sometimes a year in advance.

Many travelers are most comfortable in a place that feels like a home. Vacation rentals are now available all over the world. It may be a condo rented when the family doesn't use it, or an investment property that's a full-time rental. Some allow pets; others don't. Be sure to sign an

agreement, know if utilities are included, if the deposit is refundable and what the cancellation terms are.

Home exchange organizations provide listings of properties, photos and dates available. You pay a fee to join and then arrange to swap houses on your own. You can shop for groceries, meet neighbors and explore the locale as if you lived there. Many people find this as a money-smart way to travel the world.

To volunteer is to have a completely different kind of travel experience. You enter into the life of a place or culture by working there. Generally, basic accommodations and meals are provided. You pay a fee plus your transportation costs to get to the site. You can volunteer in the U.S. by building houses through Habitat for Humanity or birthing lambs at Heifer International. Nonprofit organizations called NGOs recruit volunteers worldwide. Time periods may be anything from several weeks to six months. You can teach English to hill tribe children in Thailand, as I did last year, or care for orphans, build water systems in rural villages, help women make and sell their textiles and provide computer assistance. Whatever your professional and personal skills, they can be used. To share your knowledge and experience with others is very satisfying. In the process you learn about another way of life and challenge yourself to adapt to new situations.

There are so many ways to see and experience the world and there isn't a better time than now to get out there and explore the possibilities.

Pat is a writer who has traveled abroad on student exchanges, as a volunteer, with her family and on solo adventures. She can be contacted at 4louis@comcast.net

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- www.adventuretravel.com
- www.oattravel.com
- www.backroads.com
- www.gapadventures.com

For eco and learning vacations, try:

- www.ecotours.com
- www.ecotourdirectory.com
- www.nathab.com
- www.eldertreks.com
- www.roadscholar.org
- www.smithsonianjourneys.org
- www.get.com
- www.heifer.org

Getaway option sites:

- www.travelzoo.com for weekly special deals
- www.applevacations.com for all-inclusive vacations
- www.kayak.com for cost comparisons
- www.united.com or other airline websites
- www.tripadvisor.com for accommodation reviews

Large and small ships, oceans and rivers:

- www.hollandamerica.com
- www.princess.com
- www.celebritycruises.com
- www.vacationstogo.com
- www.expeditions.com
- www.travelwithachallenge.com
- www.vikingrivercruises.com
- www.tauck.com/river-cruises
- www.avalonwaterways.com
- www.gct.com

Higher up:

- www.ymcarockies.org
- www.great.smoky.mountains.national-park.com
- www.bryce.canyon.national-park.com

Rent or exchange homes:

- www.vrbo.com
- www.craigslist.org
- www.seniorhomeexchange.com
- www.intervac.com
- www.exchangehomes.com

CROSSWORDS:

If You Do Them, You Can Make Them

“There seems to be something about doing crosswords that keeps people young,
or at least keeps them thinking young.”

- Marc Romano in *Crossworld, One Man's Journey into America's Crossword Obsession*

By Mick Rood

I started doing crosswords regularly about 15 years ago. Thought it would keep my mind alert. The jury is out on whether it worked for me and others who want it to be so. Studies are leaning in favor of crosswords, at least in terms of it helping to stave off dementia, but findings are by no means conclusive. So we'll just keep that warm and fuzzy feeling about the confounding grids in front of us, just as Marc Romano did. His book, by the way, is an engaging, quick read about the world of those who make highly competitive careers out of crossword contests and publishing. (*Crossworld*, Broadway Books, New York, 2005)

But if doing these puzzles preserves or improves the mind, what about creating them? That certainly would tighten up the old synapses. I have completed three Sunday newspaper-size puzzles in the last year, finding them daunting to be sure, but achievable. They also get a bit easier as you go along.

Should you decide to try it, here are some suggestions as you embark on the art of crossword construction:

1 Don't use this exercise to dazzle everyone with your obscure vocabulary or even more obscure mastering of facts that no one has ever heard of. We know you

probably looked up those tough ones just to show off. The idea, whether the puzzle is pro caliber or easy, is to give the crossworder a fighting chance to complete the puzzle.

2 On the other hand, it's OK to ask for the author of a remote quotation from time to time. Before they panic at the sight of a scary quote, crossword players know that there are only so many famous writers to be found in puzzles. Example: You may not know who wrote, “Abandon all hope, ye who enter here!” Answer: Dante, who like a few dozen others, has a last name that's short, with two or more vowels and useful consonants. (The nature of the quotation in question is a hellish good clue as well.) If it's a hockey question with a three-letter answer, try Orr right away. If it's a baseball family question with four letters, try Alou first. They show up all too often.

3 Perhaps most importantly, try to keep the difficulty level of the puzzle consistent. Most of us seniors would know “Arte” is the answer to Johnson on “Laugh-In.” Most of us probably don't know what nycophobia is, however. (Fear of the dark, dummy.) Nothing ticks off a puzzler more than running into lack of consistency in puzzles. This is one of the strengths of puzzle guru Will Shortz, whose editing of *New York Times* puzzles is often considered the standard. Even when the puzzles get more difficult as the week advances, he seems to make them internally consistent in terms of toughness.

4 It's hard to make answers fit in the space allotted in your grid. But the questions you use are often the key to the

difficulty of constructing a good puzzle. If the question is vague, the answer will be harder to come by. If the question can elicit a double or triple meaning, it will keep your solver guessing. If your clue is “short cut” with a four-letter answer, the player can first rule out such a short word meaning the quickest way to get somewhere. But the player now has to figure out whether you are referring to a hairstyle (say, “crew”) or a manner of cutting something (say, “snip”).

5 Once you get started, if you are finding it difficult, don't give up. As with many other things, the Internet, just in the last decade, has made it a much easier task. You can Google synonyms and antonyms in a flash. Sites provide you words starting with three letters you select to fit in that impossible hole in your grid. Ready-made grids are provided. Fact-checking is a breeze with the computer. Cyberspace help abounds.

With that in mind, here are a few out of the dozens of sites out there that may fit your crossword software needs. Crossword Compiler claims to be the site the pros use and Crossword Man helps you crack tough puzzles, a surefire way to learn the wily ways of puzzle makers. You have to pay at those sites, but Eclipse Crossword and other websites provide free software to build simple puzzles.

For just starting out, however, it might be best to go to www.printable-direct.com/blank-crossword-template.htm for blank grids that allow you to build a puzzle from scratch with old-fashioned pencil, eraser and paper. Then you can plunge into the business of translating your rough draft to a publishable cross.

Bits & Bytes

www.TheFreeDictionary.com as the name suggests is a free online dictionary that not only provides definitions, but a thesaurus, translator and many other goodies too much fun to be missed.

COLORADO - UTAH Loop Auto Trip

By Pat Jurgens

When the icy Bay breezes have you yearning for a warmer climate, think of the West with its hot dry wind and daytime temps hovering in the 60s to 80s F, both Spring and Fall. Shoulder seasons are the best time to visit eastern Utah and southwest Colorado as Summer temperatures often exceed 100 degrees. Discover historic mining towns, ancient Pueblo ruins and magnificent, colorful rock formations. Wolf Creek and Vail Passes are four-lane highways open all year round, but it's always prudent to check highway weather reports before heading to high country. Try this one-week auto trip for an up-close view of much that the area has to offer.

Day 1: Denver to Durango (two nights)

From Denver, with its panoramic views of the snow-covered Rockies, take U.S. Highway 285 west in a southerly direction into the mountains. The whole texture of the landscape changes from flat plain to evergreen forest and close-in mountain views.

At Kenosha Pass pause to take in the view of the wide valley of South Park, site of 1860s gold camps, and perhaps walk along the Colorado Trail that crosses the highway at the top of the pass. Down in the valley you'll pass the historic towns of Alma and Fairplay. For an authentic western experience, add an extra day to your trip with an overnight at the Hand Hotel B&B in Fairplay (reputed to be haunted) and visit South Park City, a restored mining town. Continue south on U.S. 285 to Montevista, or take state Route 17 straight south stopping at Great Sand Dunes National Park. A Golden Age Passport for free entrance to any national park can be obtained by any U.S. citizen 62 years old and above.

Drive west on U.S. 160 over scenic Wolf Creek Pass to Pagosa Springs, where outdoor hot spring pools await. Continue west to Durango, an eight-hour drive from the Denver airport, if you drive straight through.

Day 2: Durango & Silverton Narrow Gauge Railroad Excursion

If mountain scenery and a ride on the Durango & Silverton Narrow Gauge Railroad strike your fancy, book tickets ahead. It's an all-day excursion, 3 and a half hours each way. Or you can take the bus one direction and have more time in Silverton, a mining town high in the San Juan Mountains. For an historic Durango hotel, bed down at the Strater Hotel or the General Palmer. If economy is a factor, the Comfort Inn is a good choice and includes a hot breakfast buffet.

Day 3: Durango to Mesa Verde National Park (one night)

Next day travel west a short jump to visit Mesa Verde National Park to see the cliff dwellings of the Anasazi people, staying overnight there or in Cortez, Colo.

Day 4: Mesa Verde/Cortez to Moab, UT (two nights)

Drive northwest on U.S. 491 to Monticello, then north on U.S. 191 to Moab. This town has become a mecca for biking enthusiasts and is a good base for visiting both Canyonlands and Arches national parks. You can rent bicycles in town and find a variety of food at different eateries. Try Buck's Grill House, la Hacienda, and the Moab Brewery. Hampton Inn and Ramada are among the choices of good motels.

If you get there by early afternoon, drive into the Needles area of Canyonlands to see extensive spires of red sandstone before you get to Moab. Alternatively from north of town access Canyonland's Island in the Sky region and enjoy the many scenic overlooks. Both areas can be viewed from the car.

Day 5: Arches National Park

Rise early and get to the park about 7 a.m. to see the best color on the rock formations. There are pleasant short walks to many different arches. The North and South Windows area and Landscape Arch are particularly interesting.

Day 6: Moab to Glenwood Springs, CO (one night)

Can't look at one more scenic view? Head east on I-70 north of Moab and back to the Colorado mountains. A four-hour drive lands you at Glenwood Springs where you are sure to enjoy "taking the waters" at the historic Hot Springs Pool and Spa. Book a room at the Hot Springs Lodge that includes free swim passes both days and continental breakfast.

Day 7: Glenwood Springs to Denver (four-hour drive)

After a morning soak in the pool drive east on I-70 through breathtaking Glenwood Canyon and then to the slopes of the Rockies. You'll travel across Vail Pass to Lake Dillon, through the Eisenhower Tunnel that burrows under the Continental Divide, and on past quaint Georgetown, historic Idaho Springs and down to the high plains of Denver.

The magnificent open spaces and tall blue sky of Colorado and Utah will lure you back again.

Pat and her husband live in Colorado and enjoy traveling in the area. She can be reached at 4louses@comcast.net

WEBSITES THAT WILL HELP YOU ON THIS TRIP:

- Day 1 - www.handhotel.com
www.wikitravel1.org/en/Great_Sand_Dunes_National_Park
www.pagosahotsprings.com
- Day 2 - www.durangotrain.com
www.strater.com
www.generalpalmer.com
www.comfortinn.com
- Day 3 - www.visitmesaverde.com
www.nationalparkreservations.com/mesaverde_farview.php
www.coloradoholiday.com
- Day 4 - www.hamptoninn.hilton.com/moab
www.ramadainnmoab.com
- Day 5 - www.nps.gov/cany/planyourvisit/index.htm
www.nps.gov/arch/index.htm
- Day 6 - www.hotspringspool.com

Am I AT RISK for Diabetes?

By Louise Whiteside

Diabetes is the common term for *diabetes mellitus*, a condition in which the body's blood sugar is higher than normal. In Type 1 diabetes (sometimes called "juvenile onset"), the pancreas no longer produces insulin. In Type 2 diabetes (once known as "adult onset"), the body produces insulin, but becomes resistant to it. Here, we will address the most common form of diabetes, Type 2.

It's estimated that over 20 million people in the United States have Type 2 diabetes, and only approximately one-third are aware of it. Complications of the disease include a significantly higher-than-average risk of coronary artery disease and stroke.



How do I know if I'm at risk for diabetes?

1. If you have an "apple-shaped" body, i.e., if your fat is distributed around your middle, you are more at risk than a person with a "pear-shaped" body, i.e., a thinner waist and bigger hips and thighs.
2. If you have high blood pressure;
3. If your blood triglycerides are higher than the normal range;
4. If your blood HDL (the "good" cholesterol) is lower than the normal range;
5. If your insulin resistance (fasting blood glucose) is higher than the normal range.

Is family history significant?

Diabetes can be inherited from close family members. However, risk depends more on environmental factors such as eating excessive amounts of fats and refined carbohydrates, taking in too little fiber and getting too little exercise.

How can I minimize my risk of Type 2 diabetes?

1. Lose weight.
2. Increase physical activity.
3. Limit alcohol intake.
4. Stop smoking.
5. Reduce intake of saturated fats, processed foods and refined carbohydrates such as bread, crackers, chips, snack foods, pastries and sweetened drinks.
6. Increase intake of whole grains, fruits and vegetables.
7. Eat less fast food.
8. Cut intake of high fructose corn syrup.

How is diabetes diagnosed?

There are multiple blood tests used to diagnose Type 2 diabetes, but the most reliable method is the checking of hemoglobin A1C in the blood. This test gives an indication of mean blood glucose over the past three months.

Are there any helpful dietary supplements I can take to minimize my risk?

Some supplements which can possibly reduce the effects of high blood sugar, whether or not medication has been

prescribed, are chromium, vanadium and simple cinnamon from your spice rack. Check with your doctor for recommendations.

The good news is that most cases of Type 2 diabetes can be controlled with a few lifestyle changes. Studies have shown that a common sense approach to diet, physical activity and weight maintenance will often eliminate the need for medication.

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One choice can change your life - are you ready to make that choice?

A Brief History: MODERN CATARACT SURGERY

By Michael J. Dodd, MD

One of the great marvels of medicine today is the incredible success of cataract surgery. It is not known who performed the first cataract surgery in history. It most certainly was thousands of years ago. Good candidates for the first surgery are ancient Egyptians, Babylonians or Indians. Egyptians were excellent with human anatomy because of their experience with mummification. Ancient discoveries in Egypt suggest that more than 3,000 years ago they were performing a type of cataract operation known as "couching." Physicians in other cultures may have been couching in the same ancient era.

To understand cataract surgery, it is helpful to appreciate a little eye anatomy. The eye is, of course, a closed sphere about one inch in diameter. The clear front "windshield" is the cornea. Behind the cornea is a space called the anterior chamber, which is filled with clear fluid. Next is the iris which gives a person brown, blue or green eyes. In the center of the iris is the pupil (opening) which allows light to pass to the back of the eye to the retina.

Lens Starts Out Flexible

Just behind the iris is the natural "crystalline" lens. It is not visible when looking at a person's eye without special instruments. The lens is about the size of an M&M candy. In youth it is quite flexible. It is suspended in the eye by hundreds of tiny string-like attachments called "zonules." These in turn are attached to a circular muscle behind the iris called the "ciliary muscle." The function of the lens is to allow the eye to focus clearly at different distances. For readers under the age of 45 this means you can see well across a field or down the road when driving and nearby objects while reading or sewing. The lens does this focusing by changing shape, getting thinner for distant objects or thicker for nearer objects. The ciliary muscles, via the zonules, achieve this changing of shape of the lens.

As we get to the mid 40s in age the lens becomes less elastic and reading glasses become necessary to see clearly near by. Continued aging leads to cloudiness and color changes in the lens. This is an early cataract. If left unattended, the lens will eventually turn white (become a

mature cataract). Very little light can penetrate a mature cataract and the patient becomes blind. Incidentally, the term cataract means "waterfall" in Latin. Ancient people who looked at individuals with white pupils (mature cataracts) noted they had a waterfall in their eye.

Ancient doctors performed "couching" of the cataract by taking a small knife (hopefully cleaned with some agent) and pushed it into the eye dislodging the white lens back into the vitreous space (most of the eye is filled with a gel-like, clear vitreous). If successful, the pupil was now clear to allow light into the eye again and the white lens floated in the vitreous out of the visual pathway.

Problems with Early Technique

There were, however, multiple problems with this technique. The first is that there must have been a very high rate of infection, which in most cases would destroy useful vision. Second, if no infection occurred and the eye healed, the image the patient would see was extremely blurry. This was because the total optics of the eye was dramatically changed without the focusing power of the natural lens.

Not much changed until the French surgeon, Jaques Daviel, documented an operation in which he removed the cloudy lens in 1747. This required making a fairly large incision to squeeze out the 12mm-wide cataract. The incision then had to be closed with several tiny stitches. This was an improvement over couching, but required great surgical skill, a well-sedated patient (this surgery may have taken an hour or more to perform) and suture material. It did not solve the infection problem or the extreme blurry vision.

Incredibly, the changes that occurred between the 1700s and the modern era were not significant. When I first learned cataract surgery in the mid 1970s, the standard technique was to make a large incision and remove the cataract in one piece with a cryo extractor (freezing tip) and then use two or three sutures to close the eye. After surgery the patient wore thick, heavy glasses to focus.

The modern revolution in cataract surgery took place in London during World War II. Harold Ridley, an ophthal-

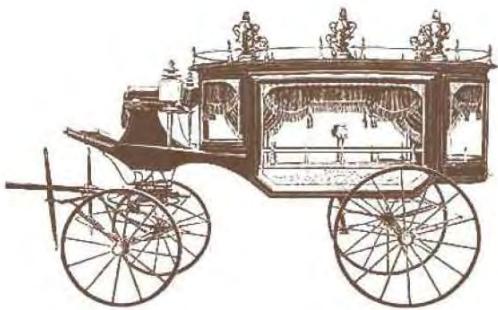
mologist, was performing a routine cataract extraction while being observed by a medical student. The student asked why Dr. Ridley did not put in an artificial glass or plastic lens in the eye to restore the focusing after the cataract was removed. No one had ever put a foreign body into the eye before.

Question Prompts Search

This simple question started Ridley on a search. He later developed the first intraocular lens for cataract surgery. He puzzled over what material he should use. He came up with an interesting solution. During the war he saw many Royal Air Force pilots who had eye injuries while involved in air combat. Many of the pilots had fragments from the canopy of the aircraft lodged in their eyes. Ridley had observed that if the canopy were made of glass, these foreign bodies were not tolerated by the eye and over time the eye would become very inflamed and lose useful vision. But if the canopy was made of plastic (acrylic) the eyes did not develop inflammation and retained useful vision. His first lens implant was made of acrylic. It looked like a clear M&M candy.

Unfortunately, Ridley's first patients did not do well because the implants were large and relatively heavy and difficult to hold in place. But this experience got other European ophthalmologists to initiate the study and production of other smaller lens implants. The first lens implant performed in the United States was in 1952 at the Wills Eye Hospital in Philadelphia. It took the FDA until 1981 to approve lens implants as "safe and effective." Today, lens implants are produced with extremely great precision and reliability and allow our patients superb post-op visual acuity.

Dr. Dodd is an instructor at the University of Maryland Department of Ophthalmology and gives volunteer lectures at the Anne Arundel Community College Nursing Department. Dr. Dodd dedicates this article to Dr. Marguerite McDonald, a well-known and respected cataract surgeon who appears on the cover of this issue. Dr. Dodd can be reached at his Annapolis office at 410.224.4550 or mjdmd1@gmail.com



Ask the Undertaker

By Ryan Helfenbein

I have readers and clients who tell me that the best gift their parents ever gave them was taking the time to preplan their own funerals. The parents had made all the arrangements as well as prepaying for everything. These folks know that losing your parents is one of the worst times in your life and that you might not be capable of making important decisions in the best way possible. Those who have decided to preplan their funerals typically wonder about how to go about it. Here is the first group of commonly asked questions about preplanned funerals and their answers. Another batch will appear in the early Spring issue of *Outlook by the Bay*.

- - -

1. Who should do this “preplanning?”

Everyone. Preplans are designed to cover many possible hiccups from occurring in the future. First, you are able to record these directions and detail exactly what is to be done for the future. Second, signatures on what is called a “preneed contract” are good forever, meaning the instructions made, to be fulfilled in the future, will in fact be performed the way you have stated. Most importantly, it provides a time to be educated on a major financial decision that we all must make one day.

2. Do I need to set up an appointment or, as my husband isn’t well, can I get someone to come to us?

It is preferred that one contacts their funeral home to make a time to visit, but it is not necessary to meet there. The undertaker, however, should offer to come to your home, if that is what works the best. Discussing the topic is difficult enough, entering the funeral home might just be a bit over the top for some.

3. What if we are not sure exactly what we want? Should we wait until we have a better idea before making preplans?

Often people aren’t sure of what they want, so one of the best ways to determine this is for you and your spouse to sit down with an undertaker and learn what the funeral home will be able to offer you. It will also acquaint you with an idea of costs, what is necessary and what is not, and finally what documents and information will be needed. In addition, it provides an opportunity to “interview” that funeral home and undertaker.

4. Who should get copies of my plans -- children, lawyer, executor?

Some funeral homes will only provide a single piece of paper showing the “goods and services,” an itemized list of what the undertaker determined you will need based on the plan designed. However, you should expect to receive copies of your plans in understandable terms, which can be given to any person you feel should be

included. My recommendation is to let children know about these plans. This provides an opportunity to discuss what you’d like before they need to make big decisions.

5. I might need time to make all of the decisions. Is there a list of things I’ll need to think about?

This is actually the No. 1 reason why everyone should begin to plan in advance, so you can educate yourself about this major financial decision before being forced to make it. Undertakers should provide you with enough information so that you can take it home to make an informed choice.

6. Can I prearrange all of the details? I really don’t want that scoundrel brother-in-law of mine to be a pall-bearer?

Absolutely. I’ve had families make plans all the way down to what they are going to wear. This is yet another major reason why people decide to make plans in advance, so they can be sure to record what they want and exactly the way they want it. If there are certain family members that you would like to be pallbearers, then so be it. This would be on record. However, do be sure to select a few more than the customary six as one never knows what the future may hold.

7. What if I want to be buried in a far-off graveyard in the Midwest where I was raised? Do you arrange that? What assurance do I have that this will take place?

Undertakers today have a network of funeral service providers all across the world. Local family-owned firms typically use family-owned firms, while corporate firms use corporate firms. Regardless, your local undertaker can arrange everything for you in advance and see that all the proper contacts are made so that when the time comes, it is simply a phone call to your home town undertaker. This assurance comes with the agreement made between you and the undertaker in what is called a "preneed contract." On this contract it has (and if it doesn't, don't sign it) what is called a "performance guarantee." This guarantee states that the funeral firm will in fact carry out the wishes stated in that preneed contract.

8. What happens if I prearrange with you and then we move to Seattle? How will the funeral home out there know about my prearrangement?

To give the short answer, it is all in how the preplans were done with the undertaker. Be aware that it is not necessary to use the firm with which you preplan. The plan that you create is designed for you, to be used at any funeral home of your choosing, and designed to see that your plan is carried out no matter where you are in the future. When this process is done appropriately, your family can be assured that no matter where you might move, your plans have been organized so that any undertaker across this nation can accept and carry out your plans.

9. Can I decide on a different funeral home after I've prepaid with one here in Annapolis?

Yes, all preplans are fully transferable to any funeral home. Again, as long as the plans have been made properly (as stated in question 7), you can use any funeral home of your choosing. When you meet with your undertaker, be sure that you have in writing what is called a "freedom of choice guarantee." Without this guarantee, you should not move forward with those plans. It should be stated in writing that you have

the right to use any funeral home of your choice.

10. Can I choose where I want my funeral to take place? Graveside, church or synagogue, my living room or in the funeral home?

Yes, your choice all the way down to what songs you want to have sung at your service. You can also modify your plans at any time if things should change. For example, you could switch churches or you could decide later to hold services at a funeral home rather than at the gravesite. And yes, your own living room is an option as well.

11. What happens to my money if the funeral home where I've made the plans should move or go out of business?

Again, let me direct you back to question 7. Also, there are two popular methods of prepayment that we are finding in Maryland funeral homes that consumers should be made aware of. One is the funeral home will place your money with a local bank and the other would be in what is called "preneed insurance." It may be wise to investigate the first as problems have surfaced with this method due to the fact that the funeral home name is connected to that money. With pre-paid insurance, the funeral home has no way of accessing the money. The one particular preneed insurance product I always recommend is called Forethought. They are the pioneers of preneed insurance. Through this program, an individual is offered guaranteed protection, ensuring that those monies will be there for the use of funeral or cremation services only, no mat-

ter what funeral home is used or what may occur with the funeral home that made the plans for you.

12. What would happen if my final day occurred in some remote area? How do they get me back home?

This is another reason we find people moving forward with preplanning. If death occurs elsewhere, if the undertaker did his due diligence, he provides the family with an ID card that is kept in one's wallet or purse that becomes a reference point for the survivor. The family then contacts the funeral home where the plans were made with the number on the ID card, and the funeral home simply carries out their wishes as presented in their preplans. The funeral industry is basically one big family network. We would contact our representative in that remote area (yes, no matter what country or state) and we then request their services on our behalf to see that the individual is transported home. If the planning process was done correctly, the family would not incur any additional funeral home charges from the outside funeral provider.

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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It's Not Too Late to WINTERIZE Your Home

By Leah Lancione

For some, winterizing a home sounds like a ghastly chore like Spring cleaning. But it's absolutely necessary if you want to avoid costly repairs and huge energy bills. Although it would be prudent to winterize your home in late Fall before any snow or biting cold arrives, it's still a task that can be done during the Winter months. We're talking about disconnecting hoses, cleaning and storing garden tools, employing draft snakes, adding valances to curtains or blinds, adding insulation to attics, tasks that can keep you warm throughout the Winter season.

Though it may really be too late in the season to install storm windows, you can check all windows to make sure they are shut tight and, if necessary, caulk cracks that let cold air enter the house. Do the same for any areas of the house that appear to let cold air in like basements, crawl spaces, attics, garages and even under kitchen and bathroom cabinets.

For windows and doors that have drafts, a quick and easy solution is to buy or make, and insert, a draft snake. According to "The Daily Green: A Consumer's Guide to Green" from **Good Housekeeping.com**, U.S. Department of Energy statistics reveal that "drafts can waste 5 to 30 percent of your energy use." The site instructs "draft dodgers" to either buy a premade draft snake or do it yourself and make one with a rolled up old towel or by filling fabric with sand, rice or kitty litter and placing them at the foot of the door or window.

The Do It Yourself network (www.diynetwork.com/how-to/how-to-weather-strip-your-home/index.html) offers step-by-step instructions for weather stripping windows and doors.

Also, if you didn't clean the gutters in the Fall, have someone do it right away so snow and ice won't further bear down on gutters that are full of debris and leaves. And, while the ladder is out, have

tree branches trimmed back that could possibly come loose and damage the home during strong winds or Wintry weather.

Home repair guru Bob Vila recommends that homeowners with a sump pump test it and also flush their water heater and check for any leaks. He also warns folks to clean the dryer vent. His checklist also includes: using binoculars to inspect the roof, examining shingles or siding, and checking skylights, vents and chimneys for possible repairs. He also says to switch out and clean screens and to replace them with storm windows if you haven't already.

The Reader's Digest "Do-It-Yourself Guide to Preventing Costly Home Repairs" also provides a list of ways to winterize a home and keep out the cold. Suggestions include vacuuming duct openings for forced-air heating systems and purchasing a supply of air filters to last through the Winter.

Home Maintenance for Dummies directs homeowners to put insulation around all accessible water pipes to prevent them from freezing when the temperature drops. Preformed, tubular foam pipe can be purchased at a hardware store and easily slit open and placed onto pipes.

Another way to keep out the cold is to add insulation in the attic if it's needed. If you can see your joists in the attic, you don't have enough insulation. Regardless of the climate conditions you live in, in the U.S. you need a minimum of 12 inches of insulation in your attic.

John Gates' *Home Almanac: Maintaining Your House Month by Month* is a helpful tool for learning what chores should be done each month. One of the tips for February is to add a valence to window treatments if they're not present already. Gates says that they "provide 'dead air' space, which is an important insulating component. "Without a valance, curtains and blinds can actually create a reverse chimney effect when they are drawn," he says. The book also points out the importance of keeping curtains and blinds open during the day to let sunlight naturally warm the home, and shutting them immediately after the sun goes down.

Lastly, make sure snow and ice-clearing equipment is in good shape and stored in the home or garage for easy access.

If you want to understand patience and strength look at an oak tree.

TRAVELING ELECTRONICS

By Scudder Sodergreen

The holidays have come and gone and now you're probably looking to get out of the area for a much-needed and deserved vacation. So you go into your car and realize that your grandchildren have poured their hot chocolate over the map when you took them downtown. You realize your vacation could pretty much be over before it begins. But then your spouse states the blatantly obvious: "It's the 21st century."

Maps are more or less outdated tools as far as travelling goes. They certainly have their perks, but they're big and hard to follow and refolding them is more of a challenge than most people want. We now have digital maps and even if you don't have one of the following gizmos, directions are available online.

Today much of the electronics that have any sort of wireless reception signal can show you were to go. The question is how well do they do their job. Over the holidays, I was made aware of two things: 1) bringing a book is a good thing in case of number two which is 2) a GPS sometimes assumes that you would like to take the scenic route on the perimeter of this country. My research says that the Garmin GPS is the best device available if you keep it updated and working. And if you want to

get really technical, the Garmin Nuvi 1450LMT is the best if you have \$400 leftover from the holidays. My preference is to avoid the iPod or iPhone GPS as I've been directed to very unusual destinations on more than one occasion.

Generally, the idea of a GPS is that you type in your destination and it will give you the fastest route (hopefully) with restaurants, tourist traps and shopping opportunities on the way and in the vicinity of your destination. There is also the smartphone (not including iPhone) where the GPS program is also reliable and in my experience, almost as good as the Garmin. The downside to that you pay for it monthly. One thing that needs to be done periodically is to keep your GPS updated, or it will send you miles out of your way. I have no idea how or what the logic is behind it, but it will happen. I have lived it.

Once you begin using one of these electronic gadgets you'll question the very existence of paper maps, although mine are still in the glove compartment. Some things just can't be easily given up.

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Bits & Bytes

If curiosity has you searching for explanations of the how and why of stuff such as how a stain remover works or what to look for when buying a laptop or methods for playing solitaire, access www.howstuffworks.com



Vegas: A GIRLS' (OR GUYS') GETAWAY

By Peggy Kiefer

If you like glitter, nonstop activities, lavish shows and a large selection of restaurants plus nonstop fun and activities, Las Vegas is a great place for the girls or even more fun for the guys to escape for a few days or even longer, if time allows.

Looking for a good price? Try the Southwest Airline packages. They include airfare from a variety of locations, a hotel and other amenities that differ depending on the package chosen. One thing you definitely will not need is a car. The traffic is horrendous day and night, though it does tend to slow down a bit around 3 a.m.

A friend and I recently spent five fun-filled and busy days exploring much of what Las Vegas has to offer. We discovered that there are other areas outside of the busy city to explore if you want to get away from the hustle and bustle for a while. The Red Rock Canyon National Conservation Area, with its spectacular scenery, is an easy side trip. One could either rent a car for the day or take an organized bus excursion. The Hoover Dam is a popular choice for a day's outing and the bus excursion

leaves daily, with many choices of length of trip and amenities. My friend and I chose one which gave an extra tour of the power plant at the dam as well as a stop at a chocolate factory. Another choice is a long day trip to the Grand Canyon, which could include the new Indian Bridge out over the canyon.

In the city itself there are many entertainment choices such as Madame Tussaud's wax museum located next to the Venetian Hotel and Casino. Of course, practically all of the casino hotels have their own entertainment besides gambling. The Paris has the Eiffel Tower and there's a 5-acre indoor theme park at Circus. The art exhibits at the Bellagio are worth a visit as is the auto collection at the Imperial Palace. Also to be enjoyed is the canal ride at the Venetian, the very authentic-looking New York New York street scene, plus its rollercoaster and other rides. Not to be missed is the CSI experience at the MGM Grand, the water show at the Bellagio, the pirate act at Treasure Island, plus many lounge acts, both free and for a cover

charge or drink minimum.

Just walking "The Strip," which is Las Vegas Boulevard, location of the largest and grandest hotel casinos, is entertaining. Going into the various casinos, even if you don't gamble, is an eye-opening experience. Every casino has its own personality, some gaudy, some elegant, some tacky, but all interesting in their own way.

Taking the bus to the old downtown Fremont Street area is another option. This is where Las Vegas began; the older hotel casinos, such as the Golden Nugget and Fitzgeralds, are still there. Every night there is a light/sound show called the Fremont experience, which is another free show to enjoy. The restaurants and hotels are less expensive there, but not as elegant as those on The Strip.

Take a Chance

We can't forget the reason that many people come to Las Vegas -- the

gambling. There is something for everyone. It is incredible to see the choice of slot machines, plus gambling table choices, such as blackjack, Keno, roulette and craps. My friend and I are not the big-time gamblers they are looking for, so we spent most of our time at the penny slots. Yes, believe it or not, there are penny slot machines, as well as nickel, dime, quarter and dollar machines. There's always a good choice of the penny slot machines. We tried them at every casino we visited, and we visited most of them on The Strip as well as those in the downtown area. Needless to say, gambling at the low-cost machines meant we didn't make (or lose) much money.

Our money was better spent at the variety shows. Take your choice -- the high-price Cirque du Soleil shows, of which there are currently six, or all the way down to lower-priced comedy shows. Discount ticket outlets are located all over the city, but it is difficult to get a break on the most popular shows such as Celine Dion and Elton John. Even discounted, they are more than \$100. But for the lower-priced shows, such as the *Australian Bee Gees*, the comedy *Defending the Caveman*, or the famous revue shows with beautiful costumes, celebrity impersonators and lively dancing, discounts can be found.

How about public transportation? The airport is close to The Strip, so it is about the same price for more than one person to take a taxi to your hotel as a shuttle service, which will stop several times. There is also bus service that goes up and down The Strip and to downtown that runs about every 15 to 20 minutes. It is more economical to buy a 24-hour pass if you plan to use it more than once. There is also a monorail, which is not very convenient.

Meal Time

Many people think of buffets when they think of Las Vegas. They are still there, to be sure, but we could not find any that are still free. There are discounted prices, but they are usually for lesser quality. Currently there are more than 60 hotel buffets from very simple spreads to the super deluxe. Of course, you will find that the better buffets are at the more lavish hotel casinos and have prices to match. But for the Las Vegas experience of all you can eat, buffets are still available.

There is also a wide choice of very good (and sometimes expensive) res-

taurants not only at the casino, but also along The Strip. For a sweet taste delight, try Serendipity, which has the so-called "famous" frozen hot chocolate, which we thought was just a frozen chocolate dessert. Most casinos also have a choice of moderately priced cafes along with the buffets and gourmet restaurants.

Are the famous wedding chapels still there? They sure are, and are located all over the city. Some of the more unique ones are booked over a year in advance. And we thought of Vegas as a place for a last-minute getaway wedding.

Let's not forget shopping. A short drive or bus ride from The Strip, are premium outlets. There are many well-known stores to choose from including Chicos, The Loft, Coach, Clark Shoes, etc. They are the usual stores found at many outlets, but are a fun activity for the dedicated shopper. If you are looking for more upscale choices, the City Center shopping center and the more deluxe hotels have shops such as Gucci and Louis Vuitton. There are also the usual choices of rather tacky souvenir shops with the often-found magnets, shot glasses and T-shirts if you need an inexpensive gift to take home.

A caveat about the weather: The Summer season is a sizzler in Las Vegas. The temperatures can soar well over 100 degrees. True, it is dry heat, but it feels like an oven and forces you into air-conditioned casinos. The Fall is an ideal time to visit, as is Spring. Winter can be "iffy." It is technically the "rainy" season and can be relatively cold. It is a desert area, so the temperatures can drop substantially at night.

Finally, how do you get there? It is a long drive from the East Coast, but there are nonstop flights to Las Vegas from Baltimore. If you shop around for discount prices and are flexible in your dates of travel, there are often good airfares. If you are over 65, Southwest Airlines always has a senior fare that is less than regular fare, but usually more than the lowest Internet airfare. Southwest has very few restrictions and can be cancelled with no

penalty and applied to any trip within the next year.

So, when you are thinking of a getaway, think of "The City That Never Sleeps." Not the best place for children or grandchildren, but it will give adults an experience to remember for a long time.

Peggy can be reached at kinseykiefer@aol.com

Additional Information

For up-to-date information on Las Vegas, since it changes regularly, a website to visit is 247Vegas.com for show information or tickets in advance.

Every hotel casino has its own website for more detailed information. For trip package information, go to SouthwestVacations.com

For general information including packages and shows, see www.lasvegas.com



Valentine's Day Gifts: CREATIVE, CHOCOLATY, AND DELICIOUS

By Melissa Conroy

There it was in all its splendor: several dozen red roses, clouds of baby's breath and twisted tree limbs spilling artfully out of a three-foot vase. The perfect Valentine's Day gift for your beloved, provided you had \$900 to spend on the extravagant floral arrangement recently spotted at the local grocery store. Granted, it was gorgeous, but there are many cheaper and more meaningful ways to celebrate cupid's holiday this year, and they start in your kitchen.

As the season of hearts and chocolates approaches, celebrate it with some of my favorite chocolate-themed treats devised after years of experimenting in the kitchen. They are

guaranteed to bring a sparkle to the eye of your loved ones and will assure that this year's Valentine's Day is full of good cheer and warm fuzziness.

However, there is a very, very important caveat that must be offered before reaching for your whisk: Do not make any substitutions at all for any ingredients or tools called for here. Each recipe has been carefully calibrated for maximum love appeal and happiness-generating potential. Altering any of the recipes will lower their effectiveness. Follow the recipes to the letter and make this Valentine's Day wonderful!

Tuxedo Strawberries

Ingredients

1 Scharffen Berger 99 percent dark chocolate baking bar, available at cooking supply stores or on www.scharffenberger.com
1 Ghirardelli white chocolate baking bar
1 container of the most perfect strawberries you can find available, with stems attached

(Make sure you have a toothpick or clean unused artist paintbrush.)

1. Rinse strawberries and carefully pat dry or let air dry. Too much moisture on the berries and the chocolate will not attach properly.
2. Set a piece of wax paper on the counter and have the toothpick or a new artist paintbrush ready.
3. Prepare chocolate for melting. Chop half the dark chocolate bar into small pieces and place in a microwave-proof bowl. Do the same for the white chocolate bar.
4. Microwave each bowl for 30 seconds, then stir. Repeat process until chocolate is melted. Be very careful that the chocolate does not become overheated. If there are only a few lumps left, stir until melted.

5. Carefully dip a strawberry into the white chocolate until it is covered up almost to the stem. Take it out and let it drip dry for a minute or two until the chocolate begins to harden. The white chocolate coating forms the "shirt" of your tuxedo strawberry.
6. Rotate the strawberry so that it is at an angle and dip it in the dark chocolate. Repeat on the other side. The dark chocolate forms the "coat" part of the tuxedo strawberry, so you need to make sure to dip the strawberry in chocolate on both sides so that only a V of white chocolate is showing.
7. Set the strawberry on the wax paper to dry. Repeat until you have made as many as you want.
8. Now it's time to add the buttons and bow tie. With a toothpick or a clean, new artist paintbrush, put a few dots of dark chocolate on the white "shirt" of each tuxedo strawberry to form buttons and draw on a little bowtie. You can also draw on a little boutonniere with white chocolate if you have an extra brush.
9. For best results, eat them soon after preparing. The berries will start to go bad after a few days on the counter, but refrigerating them will make drops of moisture appear on the chocolate, so it is best to eat them right away.

Chocolate Heaven Bars

Ingredients

4 ounces of Scharffen Berger 99 percent dark chocolate, available at cooking supply stores or on www.scharffenberger.com
1 cup of unsalted butter at room temperature
2 cups white sugar
4 eggs
1 cup flour
1 tsp. real vanilla extract (not imitation)
20 ounces semi-sweet chocolate chips
2 cups shredded coconut
1 1/2 cup chopped pecans
14 ounces sweetened condensed milk

1. Preheat oven to 350 and grease a 9x12 baking pan.
2. Chop the chocolate into small pieces and place in a microwave-proof bowl. Microwave for 30 seconds, then stir. Repeat process until chocolate is melted. Be very careful that the chocolate does not become overheated. If there are only a few lumps left, stir until melted. Let cool slightly.
3. Cream butter and sugar together thoroughly. Add eggs and vanilla, beat well.
4. Add melted chocolate and whisk together very well.
5. Add flour and mix.
6. Add 1 cup of the chocolate chips, reserving the rest.
7. Spread the mixture in the baking pan. Sprinkle the coconut, pecans and the rest of the chocolate chips over it.
8. Open the can of condensed milk and drizzle evenly over the mixture.
9. Bake for 1 hour.

Cupid will be yours to command when you make these wonderful chocolate desserts for your sweetie this Valentine's Day. The connection between love and chocolate is centuries old, so get baking and have a wonderful Valentine's Day!

CRUISING solo

By Kater Leatherman

They call themselves Queens of the Road and are among a growing number of women over 50 who are choosing to travel alone. "The Queens" are members of an organization called Sisters on the Fly (SOTF) www.Sistersonthefly.com who take their vacations in RVs, leaving their partners, spouses or children behind. In fact, over the past two years, women have surpassed men in the statistics measuring the total number who travel alone. And they're going on foot, in cars, by train or via cruise ships.

Certainly, one motivating force behind getting away is the need to decompress from busy lives. Some go to explore the landscape of their soul while others want to see if they can do nothing and be satisfied traveling solo. Whatever the reason, in order to travel alone, you must have the ability to enjoy your own company without feeling self-conscious.

Although I have traveled alone before, recently I embarked on my first solo cruise. While singles cruises are available, they're usually geared to a younger crowd and, if you're not looking for a partner, it probably won't be a good fit. One huge disadvantage of cruising alone is that you will have to pay double for a cabin. This is not necessarily a deal breaker, but one that you need to know.

In July 2011, when the Royal Caribbean's Enchantment of the Seas left Baltimore bound for the New England coast toward Canada, there were more than 2,200 people onboard. Once checked in and on the ship, most passengers mill around in search of their stateroom before making a beeline for the buffet restaurant on Deck 12. When traveling alone, mealtime on cruise ships is a great way to connect with others. Even though many people are intrigued by women who travel alone, you will still have to initiate most conversations.

At dinner, if you're lucky, everyone at your assigned table will click. If not, ask the captain to reseat you after the first night. With a bit of courage, you can always move around each night, looking for an empty seat and asking the people around the table if you can join them. Of course, you can always eat alone in the buffet dining room or order room service.

Throughout the voyage, the difference between tuning in and dropping out is as close as your next choice. Areas on the ship that are less frenetic include the library, the solarium, the spa and, of course, your stateroom. When you want to engage with others, head for the swimming pool/Jacuzzi, gym, casino or retail shops.

Nothing, however, compares to the excursion days when the ship empties out and only a smattering of folks remain onboard. For some of us, it requires too much effort to stand in line to board a tour bus, shop for souvenirs or get on a rocking

boat to whale watch when no one can guarantee that you'll see one. Besides, we're more than happy to luxuriate in the spaciousness of the ship.

Traveling alone has numerous benefits including the ability to do what you want when you want to without having to accommodate anyone's preferences and schedules. While it takes confidence, most agree that safety is the number one concern. Obviously, hiking the Appalachian Trail by yourself has more risks than spending your vacation at a resort spa.

Even though traveling by yourself is not for everyone, when all is said and done, it is better to be alone than to wish you were alone.

Kater is a home stager, professional organizer, columnist and yoga instructor. She also leads declutter support groups. Contact her at: katerleatherman@gmail.com or www.katerleatherman.com

The advertisement features a photograph of a two-story building with a red roof and white trim, identified as "The Gardens of Annapolis". A speech bubble graphic on the left side contains the text: "Maintenance Free Rental Retirement Living Enjoy luxury living without the hassles of homeownership." To the right of the photo, the text reads: "The Gardens of Annapolis" followed by "A SENIOR RENTAL Community For Active Adults Age 62 and Better". Below this, contact information is provided: "The Gardens of Annapolis 931 Edgewood Road | Annapolis, MD 21403 410-295-5644 | Email: gardens@covepm.com". At the bottom, directions are given: "Directions from the Washington, DC metropolitan area: Take US-50 E towards Annapolis/Bay Bridge. Take Exit 22, MD-665/Aris T. Allen Blvd. Stay on Exit 22/MD665 for 3 miles when it becomes Forest Drive East. Continue on Forest Drive for 2.7 miles to left on Edgewood Road." A small "Equal Housing Opportunity" logo is located in the top right corner of the ad area.

Winter is not the time to hibernate. Get out there and find new adventures.

BOOK REVIEWS

Old, New and Obscure

THE SHARPER YOUR KNIFE, THE LESS YOU CRY

By Kathleen Flinn

Penguin Books, New York (2007)

If you saw and enjoyed the movie "Julie and Julia," or are a fan of the books *My Life in France* by Julia Child and *Eat, Pray, Love* by Elizabeth Gilbert, this is the book for you.

Kathleen Flinn tells a funny but inspiring story of her trials and tribulations working her way through the Le Cordon Bleu cooking school in Paris, France. First, she thanks the boss at her very stressful corporate job for eliminating her position after she returns from a vacation. Because of this turn of events in her life, she takes all of her savings and at the age of 36 moves to Paris to pursue her dream of attending this prestigious cooking school.

An amazing collection of characters is profiled in *The Sharper Your Knife, the Less You Cry*. Demanding chefs, competitive classmates and her own very basic French (she calls it "wretchedly inadequate"), put her on a roller coaster of ups and downs on the way to a diploma.

This is a tale of learning the ins and outs of basic sauces, how to bone chickens, how to keep a soufflé from falling and the proper way to dice and chop, as well as coping with unfamiliar ingredients and cooking supplies. But interspersed with that is her love affair with a very forgiving man who later follows Kathleen to Paris, lives with her and encourages her efforts through many tears and traumas. She gives

him much of the credit for her success in sticking with a very demanding curriculum as well as very temperamental chefs.

What is particularly amazing is that the author has no aspirations to be a chef when she finishes all the classes. She simply wants to be a better cook as she enjoys good food and the preparation of it. She actually is a writer by profession and wrote this book as she progressed through the school.

What does she mean by the title? No, it is not about cutting yourself with a dull knife as I originally surmised, but refers to chopping onions.

For all the cooks and lovers of good food who read this book, you will be rewarded with many tantalizing recipes that are presented throughout the chapters.

As Julia Child would say, "Bon Appétit!"

~ Peggy Kiefer

NORTH RIVER

By Pete Hamill,

Back Bay Books/Little, Brown and Co., Boston (2007)

North River by Pete Hamill is a book for those from New York City and those who like to read about New York City and those who consider themselves aficionados of the city. Pete Hamill has written several novels about life in New York, but *North River* is based on life during the Great Depression.

The main character, John Delaney, is a struggling doctor who aspires to be a surgeon, but suffers wounds in World War I and settles for setting up his practice in the area of the city where he will treat the poor and the struggling. He has alienated his wife and neglected his daughter by volunteering to serve in the war. When he returns home the damage is done with his wife, Molly, but he manages to regain the affections of his daughter, Grace, who is very spoiled by her guilty father.

The main plot of *North River* develops when young Grace marries a man whom John has never seen. She has a three-year-old child, Carlo, who is left on John's doorstep while Grace is traveling around Europe and Asia searching for her lost husband. Having never even met the child, one can only imagine the panic Dr. Delaney must have felt in this situation. Here is where the plot gets a bit unbelievable. He quickly finds a young Sicilian named Rose to care for Carlo. (Anyone who has been in the position of finding a nanny or childcare giver might find this hard to believe.)

Woven into the plot of *North River* is the gangster element of the time, Tammany Hall, which more or less ruled over the politics of New York City. Problems develop for John when he saves a gangster's life and is confronted with the anger of a rival gang.

It is very interesting to see how

Rose and John turn Carlo, who doesn't even speak English when he arrives, into an American child. Also of interest is how Hamill charmingly handles the Irish and Italian cultures of that time and the stories of his needy and unpaying patients.

The ending, which I will leave readers to discover, is somewhat predictable, but also satisfying. *North River* is a fast-moving book, which should leave most readers with a good feel for that period in our country's history and an appreciation of the author's ability to convey believable and likeable characters without being preachy or judgmental.

~ Peggy Kiefer

DEATH ON A GOLDEN ISLE

By John Reisinger

Glyphworks Publishing (2011)

Eastern Shore detectives have been featured in mysteries before, but in his new Max Hurlock series, local author John Reisinger has added a twist: All the stories take place in the Roaring '20s and all are based on real cases.

"I got the idea while researching my last book, *Master Detective*, Reisinger says. "Many true cases make good mysteries. The Roaring 20s, with Prohibition, bootleggers, flappers and speakeasies is a fascinating period, so why not combine the two with a down home Eastern Shore detective? In the back of each book I provide details of the real case on which the story is based."

In *Death on a Golden Isle*, just released, Max Hurlock and his magazine-writer wife Allison travel from St Michaels to Jekyll Island Georgia to investigate a poisoning at America's most exclusive club, and in the soon-to-be-released *Death of a Flapper*, they will tackle a double murder in a locked room. Future reality-inspired adventures will find Max and Allison investigating a murder in a Chesapeake Bay lighthouse and the murder of New York's most eligible bachelor in his Manhattan mansion.

After rubbing elbows with the rich and famous (as well as the homicidal), Max and Allison are always happy to head back to the Chesapeake Bay. Who wouldn't be?

~ Barbara Gorsuch

COLOSSUS: HOOVER DAM AND THE MAKING OF THE AMERICAN CENTURY

By Michael Hiltzik

Simon & Shuster, New York (2010)

Hoover Dam, also known to many as Boulder Dam, is one of the icons of

American history. It did not reign long (less than 10 years) as the world's tallest dam, but it has a symbolic importance that has lasted much longer than holding that distinction. Michael Hiltzik, winner of the Pulitzer Prize, brings us right into the history of the conception, construction, problems and lasting legacy of this American landmark in this lengthy but fascinating piece of nonfiction.

The author writes in *Colossus*: "It stands today as the perfect melding of form and function, a landmark of engineering, architecture and muscular industry."

We are taken through the endless politicking that took place before the dam could be started. Seven states were battling over the water rights to the Colorado River, an unpredictable and deadly body of water that could range from a tranquil stream to a raging torrent, washing away crops and destroying property. Four presidents were involved in the planning and construction of the dam: Theodore Roosevelt conceived of the idea, Calvin Coolidge signed its authorization into law, Herbert Hoover launched its construction and Franklin Delano Roosevelt dedicated it.

Since the dam was built during the worst economic crisis of our nation's history, it symbolized what could be done with determination, patience and incredible engineering skill, considering all this was done without the benefit of computers.

Even the name caused controversy, as there were many who vehemently opposed naming the dam after Herbert Hoover, who became a very unpopular president.

But Hoover (previously Boulder) Dam not only provided water to a thirsty Southwest, but also provided dependable hydroelectric power. It has made possible the tremendous growth of the cities of Los Angeles, Phoenix, Las Vegas, Salt Lake City, Denver and San Diego.

We are introduced to a number of eccentric, intelligent and driven men who managed to finish the dam in 1936, two years before the scheduled completion date. Project manager Frank "Hurry-Up" Crowe was a relentless driver of the men to work a 24-hour schedule, sacrificing their safety and comfort. Amazingly enough, the project's death toll stands at only 114, although it is believed many more died because illness-caused deaths were covered up. Despite the legend, by the way, the author says there are no bodies buried beneath the concrete.

As amazing as the construction of Hoover Dam was, less than 10 years after its completion, it developed leaks that took nine years and \$2 million to fix.

For a wonderful slice of history, don't miss this extraordinary novel *Colossus, the Making of the American Century*. And next time you visit Las Vegas, you can join the thousands of tourists who take time out from city life to visit this nearby piece of American history.

~ Peggy Kiefer

FROM PAPERBOY TO BOOMER

By Rich Babbitt

Boomers are not the only group who will relate to this clever book written by Rich Babbitt. Many of us from the "Silent Generation" of 1940s will also appreciate the lessons found within its pages.

When Babbitt wrote this book, it was intended as a Christmas gift to his two brothers. As he penned each chapter, it became clear to him that his message was just as valuable to others as well.

A very quick read, the book outlines 10 skill sets that shape the way today's leaders need to operate. Among these are perseverance, work standards, people skills, planning, multi-tasking, equipment maintenance and repair, basic business skills, budgets and cash flow, leadership and training.

Babbitt contends that his boomer generation unknowingly and informally learned these 10 skills from their simple jobs of delivering newspapers and mowing lawns. From these jobs, Babbitt describes how youngsters in his youth learned self confidence and self motivation. In turn, they established the foundation of labor skills and a work ethic needed in their future employment.

It's safe to say that today's business and corporate world should stand up and take note of the life lessons learned in this book. The skill sets are not all that new, but they certainly could be implemented as training tools for new employees. Educators would be well served to include them in their curriculum development as well.

Rich Babbitt directly attributes his personal successes in management and sales to the early days when he had his paper route and lawn mowing "businesses." Indeed, he validates what boomers already know and encourages others to learn the same skill sets.

~ Kathryn Marchi

BRING IN THE CLOWN!

By Kathryn Marchi

Who has not enjoyed watching clowns at a circus? They are always smiling and never fail to delight us with their antics and noises. But did you know that clowns are not always in a circus? Indeed, they can perform in just about any venue. And you'd be surprised at the people whose pleasure it is to put on makeup and costume and "clown around."

Donald O'Bannon, better known as "OB," is a professional clown, but he did not start out that way. His first career was in the United States Navy, where he worked as an aviation metalsmith for 10 years and then in Naval security until retirement. With computer skills learned in the Navy, OB was then hired by the University of Oregon to work with computer hardware interfacing. Later, hired by Gonzaga University, he continued in the same field. Eventually he earned an associate's degree in electrical engineering and later received an engineering degree. So, the question is, how did OB become a clown?

Born in Nebraska, OB and his grandfather were always making jokes and otherwise entertaining each other, especially at family gatherings. His uncle was a diver and also a cheerleader at the University of Nebraska. He was a natural at tumbling and gymnastics. OB inherited these qualities. Noticing that children responded to him in a positive way, clowning seemed to be a natural extension.

To that end, OB enrolled in a "clown" course at the local community college where he learned the requirements for clowning.

FOUR BASIC REQUIREMENTS OF CLOWNING:

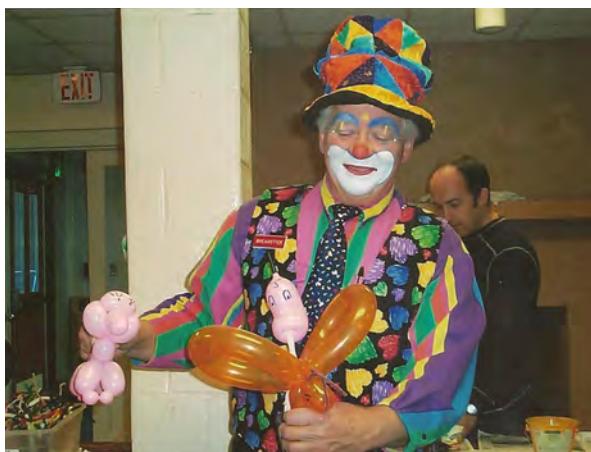
1. Improvisation
2. Respect for the space of others
3. No physical contact
4. Uniqueness

THERE ARE THREE BASIC CLOWN CHARACTERS:

1. White face or cone head, dressed in a one-piece suit of either pink or white.
2. Augusta clown, an elegant fellow, dressed in dignified attire of vest, bow tie, shoes and normal face tone with lipstick.
3. Character clown, dressed and made up in eclectic fashion, and easily adaptable for any type of show.

OB became a character clown as a tribute to his "mentor" Red Skelton, which allowed him to dress and make himself up in many colorful ways. Basically, he wears two vests, rainbow suspenders, black-and-white-striped tuxedo pants or blouse pants with long stockings, adding bright shirts and multicolored ties to the mix. Topping off his outfit, he will either wear a top hat or a large, colorful one. With blue eyebrows, a heart on his right cheek which denotes his "love" side and a blue teardrop on the other signifying his "sad" side, and a mouth outlined in blue, with red lips, a painted nose and eyes lined with yellow and black with white dots, his makeup is complete.

Naming himself Breadstick, he began his clown career in 1991 by volunteering to work at the annual egg hunt



in Spokane. This was followed by the St. Patrick's Day parade, Lilac Festival and Memorial Day activities. Along with the usual clown antics, OB learned juggling, working marionette puppets and face painting.

Originally receiving only tips, he soon was hired for corporate and other group parties. Loving every minute of his new career path, he was developing a devoted following.

Not too long ago while cruising to the Panama Canal, OB met his current companion who happened to be from Annapolis. In 2002, he moved to her town and continued his professional clowning at First Night in Annapolis, as well as performing at Quiet Waters Park, the Fleet Reserve Club and St. Patrick's Day parade in Baltimore, just to name a few.

From June through October, OB and his companion climb into their RV and leave on a cross country trip, visiting friends and family and clowning along the way. OB can occasionally be found on a street corner with his dog Licorice Stick where he twists and turns balloons into colorful animals for the amusement and entertainment of the residents. Tips help defray the cost of the trip.

Obviously having fun along the way, OB's actual destination is Oregon, where for the past 18 years, he has performed in the Pendleton, Oregon Roundup. From there, it's off to Spokane to work at schools, the local park and the county fair.

OB's reputation as a clown precedes him each year and he is always busy. His sense of fun has become his passion. For OB, having found a way to bring pleasure to others, while traveling and visiting family and friends, is the ideal for retirement.



By Gail Fowler

Now that the holidays have passed, are you by any chance thinking you may have eaten just a little more, or exercised a little less, than you would have liked? Would you believe there are apps for your smartphone that can help you get back on track? You can find some very useful tools for both diet and general fitness in your app store. My favorite for recording walks is **RunKeeper**. It's free and an easy-to-use app that tracks whatever outdoor activity you choose; walking, running, cycling, rowing, skiing, as well as a host of others. Once you press "start," it measures your total distance, time, overall pace and how many calories you've burned.

When you're finished, you can even see a map of the route you've taken (just be sure to have your location services turned on). If you choose, the app can also provide audio cues along the way, announcing your elapsed time, distance and current pace. It's your fitness friend. And with the voice prompts enabled, you'll always have company along the way.

A good app to help with nutrition goals is **LoseIt!** It supports any personalized weight loss plan (or gain, if you so choose). You input your current weight, desired weight and how much you'd like to lose in a week (anywhere from 1/2 pound to two pounds), and it will calculate a daily calorie budget. Then just enter what you eat and the program computes the calories, shows you how many you've consumed so far that day and how many you have remaining. You also get a week-by-week tracking report. Enter your exercise for the day and it will adjust your calorie allowance accordingly. This app is based on the popular **Loseit.com** website, and is free.

MyFitnessPal is another well designed, free and easy-to-use app for tracking calories. It has a very large data base, with calories and nutrients for more than 1.1 million foods. On

your iPhone, **iMapMyRide** and **iMapMyRun** are also popular fitness apps geared specifically to cyclists and runners.

While these apps can't do your exercising or close the refrigerator door for you, they are a great way to record your goals and track your progress on whatever fitness plan you choose. So go to your app store and check them out. You have everything to gain, so to speak.

Gail is a retired IT professional living in Annapolis. She can be reached at GTFowler@gmail.com





ART VIEW:

The Textile Museum is Not to be Missed



By Tricia Herban

Washington, D.C., is home to a world-class museum that many have never heard of: The Textile Museum. Located on S Street, a few blocks from Dupont Circle, the elegant mansion by John Russell Pope houses a collection of more than 19,000 objects dating from 3,000 B.C. to the present. Museum founder George Hewitt Myers lived in the home on S Street and started the collection with 275 rugs and 60 related textiles in 1915.

In the 86 years since its founding, the museum has specialized in the textile arts of the Near East, Central Asia, East and Southeast Asia, Africa and the indigenous cultures of the Americas. Exhibitions range from subjects as unusual as nomadic tent bands to carpets.

A push on the large front door is an "open sesame" into another world, a world of elegance and refinement. The suggested admission price is modest and the front desk is staffed by an attendant ready to answer questions and provide directions.

Moving up the stairs to the right, one encounters a side hallway that offers the opportunity to view select objects up close. Farther on, the main exhibit area consists of several rooms fitted with benches for easy sitting, appropriate to extended viewing. Objects are always beautifully displayed. A recent, groundbreaking exhibition, "Colors of the Oasis: Central Asian Ikats," featured magnificent hand-dyed robes, each restored and conserved for lasting preservation and mounted on special armatures designed to fit each object.

The rooms were filled with festive attire from Uzbekistan. Robes were shown from the front and from the back. Some were suspended from the ceiling. The brilliant colors filled the room like a flock of butterflies. But this was much more than a display of beautiful objects as the wall texts and an accompanying publication provided extensive detail about the culture they reflect and their techniques of manufacturing them. It is breathtaking to see such treasures.

Research is a specialty of the museum. Scholars and textile enthusiasts alike may read and learn at the Arthur D. Jenkins library of Textile Arts, one of the world's foremost resources for the study of textiles. When an object is acquired, it is subjected to a rigorous examination which determines the way it will be stored—whether rolled, laid flat or hung. Museum curators have developed a "passive mount" methodology for storing small or fragmented textiles so that they can be stacked flat in a pressure-free environment. Each passive mount is custom-fitted to the object it protects.

The public is invited to the museum on a regular basis. Saturday morning activities include a popular "Rug & Textile Appreciation" series, where staff members join area collectors and experts in the discussion of a particular textile type. The public is invited to bring in "clean, vacuumed" examples to show. In addition, the curatorial staff is available to provide advice on the best conservation and storage of each piece.

A related program offers the opportunity for visitors

to bring their own textiles to museum staff to learn more about them. "Ask-a-Curator, Ask-a-Conservator" takes place the first Wednesday of each month, September through May. It is important to bear in mind, however, that the museum does not deal with textiles from North America.

Children are very important to the future of art appreciation and collecting. The Textile Museum offers a variety of programs for schools and families as well as a hands-on educational room where it is possible to learn about fabric weaving, dyes and dying, and the process involved in making a knotted carpet. This friendly space is large enough to accommodate a group all at one time. In addition "Arts for Families" programs are offered one Saturday a month at 2 p.m. These educational opportunities are specially designed to be interactive and entertaining. Website information includes the ages that each session is designed for.

The Textile Museum and George Washington University have embarked upon a partnership that will allow the museum to move into an expanded state-of-the-art exhibition space at G and 21st streets in 2014. Sharing a 35,000-square-foot space with the GWU Museum will mean that more of the textile holdings will be available for viewing. Ford W. Bell, president of the American Association of Museums has said, "This is truly a unique collaboration. By combining resources, these institutions increase their reach and impact while the Textile Museum maintains the reputation and identity it has established over the last eight decades."

Until all expansion plans are complete, the museum will continue at the S Street site. The current exhibit, showing through Feb. 12, is "Weaving Abstraction: Kuba Textiles and the Woven Art of Central Africa." Following that, "Dragons, Nagas and Creatures of the Deep" will run from Feb. 3, through Jan. 6, 2013. This exhibit focuses on fantastic creatures as they appear in textiles from the 16th century to the present, showing "how stories of serpent-like creatures with celestial powers found colorful expression" in fabrics from around the world. Riveting legends and imaginative images of dragons await.

One of the best aspects of the Textile Museum is the museum shop. This small space houses a library of textile-related publications as well as shelves of pillow covers, table cloths, curtains and bedspreads. There are silk scarves and jackets, embroidered coats and jewelry. Unique gifts and personal indulgences abound. It is possible to purchase items on line as well as at the site.

Location: 2320 S St., NW, Washington, DC 20008

Hours: Tuesday-Saturday, 10 a.m.-5 p.m., Sunday 1-5 p.m.
Closed Mondays, federal holidays and Dec. 24.

Contact: 202 667-0441 or www.textilemuseum.org

Admission: \$8 suggested.

Getting there: Metro Dupont Circle, Q Street Exit.

As one year ends and another begins, I feel haunted by the “coulda, shoulda, wouldas.” I’ve made so many mistakes that resulted in a disappointing marriage and a lackluster career. Maybe if I’d had some breaks and encouragement, I would have done better. If I could do things over, I’d make different choices but it’s too late for that now that I am in my latter years. Sometimes, I read the obituaries and cringe when I think how little of substance will be written in mine. I read about successful people or watch them on television and berate myself for not doing more with my life. How can I resolve these feelings of failure?

Signed Regrets

For many of us, the dawning of a new year heralds in a time of taking stock. And in our senior years, it is a natural task to look back and review our life’s trajectory. In fact, doing so can suffuse our lives with deep meaning and satisfaction. Or in your case, it can lead to feelings of loss and despair.

What makes the difference? Simply, it is attitude, our way of looking at the world. You’ve fallen into some unhealthy thinking patterns and are viewing your life through this negative lens. No wonder you feel discouraged. Fortunately, these habits most definitely can be changed—at any age. The benefits to your well-being make it worth the effort that it will take to alter your long-standing patterns of thinking.

My first recommendation is that you stop using others as a yardstick to measure your self-worth. Doing so, in essence, is comparing someone’s outside to your own inside. You do not know their limitations, failures and disappointments because you are only seeing the window dressing. Such a comparison is faulty, unfair and damaging to your own self-image.

Next, work on accepting your past choices. Life is about learning. In order to learn, we must make mistakes, much as a toddler does when he is learning to walk. Accepting our human frailty and errors of judgment is critical to our mental health. When we reframe our self-criticism to the notion that we did the best that we could, given our circumstances, we let ourselves off the futile hook of self-condemnation.

Finally, address your patterns of negative thinking. The school of therapy that deals with learning to change negative thought patterns is called cognitive behavioral therapy (CBT). Health professionals

recognize it as a highly effective treatment for low self-image issues such as you describe. It is also appropriate for issues such as mood disorders, anxiety disorders, eating disorders and substance abuse. To learn more, investigate some of the many books on the market that teach these skills. For example, any of the *Feeling Good* books by David Burns are excellent. There is even a *Dummie’s Guide to Cognitive Behavioral Therapy* that provides detailed information and examples.

However, be warned. You are trying to change long-standing patterns of behavior and going it alone can be overwhelming. Rather than giving up and having one more thing to beat yourself up over, I suggest that you find a therapist skilled in cognitive behavioral therapy. Ask upfront for their experience with CBT and insist on setting goals and sticking to them.

To get you started on your path to more positive thinking, pay attention to your self-talk. That’s what we tell ourselves about everything from a situation to our own behavior. It’s our interpretation of the world and our place within it. These thoughts may be rational, based on fact, or they may be irrational, based on incomplete or false evaluations. And they may be positive or negative. What you want to do is to stop those negative blurbs in their tracks.

As a good reminder, wear a rubber band on your wrist. Every time you compare yourself to someone else, snap that rubber band and loudly say, “Stop.”

Re-direct your thoughts to a pos-

itive angle. For example, tell yourself something like, “Every day I’m getting better at appreciating what I do well.” Negative thinking is a habit and like all bad habits, it can be changed. It just takes practice.

Dwelling on regrets is a certain way to drain all of the happiness and joy available to you in the present moment. Instead, invest in yourself today. Learn these valuable skills to make the rest of your life become a positive force. Are you a good friend? A caring parent? A reliable volunteer? Everyone has strengths and gifts. You’ve done many things right because you’ve made it to this stage of life. Letting go of those regrets will free you to find your strengths and to live a life of resilience and renewal.

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

Bits & Bytes

For help as you wade through endless and impossible-to-decipher medical bills, go to www.simplee.com where medical language is clarified and where you can keep a list of what's been paid and all your medical information in one easy-to-navigate site.

OUR FAVORITE *Wintery Walks*

January and February are wonderful months to get out there and enjoy all that the frozen world has to offer. It's a great time to take a hike, and with most of the Fall foliage gone, it's a good time to catch glimpses of wildlife. Bundle up with your best woolies and a pair of good non-slip boots, call some friends, pack a thermos of hot chocolate, a few cookies and you're off! Most parks have picnic tables and some with open shelters, which offer a wonderful place to take a short break. Of course, it's always worth checking the hunting season at www.dnr.state.md.us/huntersguide/ before visiting any of the parks.



BALTIMORE AND ANNAPOLIS TRAIL

Annapolis to Glen Burnie

410.222.6244

www.aacounty.org/RecParks/parks/trails/bandamap.cfm

LOCATION: Various entry points. Parallels Route 2

COST: Free

TRAILS: North-south paved trail 13.3 miles. The connector trail around BWI is an additional 12.4 miles.

HISTORY: For 81 years the trail was the railroad bed connecting Baltimore to Annapolis. Now a very popular walking and biking trail, it was purchased by the county in 1979.

POSSIBLE SIGHTINGS: Winter birds, deer, raccoons and squirrels.

BLACKWATER NATIONAL WILDLIFE REFUGE

2145 Key Wallace Drive, Cambridge, MD 21613 • 410.228.2677

www.friendsofblackwater.org

LOCATION: 12 miles south of Cambridge

COST: \$3 per vehicle. Free with Golden Eagle Pass

TRAILS: Four popular walking trails from 1/3 mile to 2.7 miles long are located along Wildlife Drive, the paved loop.

HISTORY: A 27,000-acre refuge was set up in 1933 as a haven for migratory waterfowl.

POSSIBLE SIGHTINGS: Bald eagles are regularly spotted as well as lots of waterfowl, Delmarva fox squirrels and owls

CALVERT CLIFFS STATE PARK

9500 H. G. Truman Road, Lusby, Maryland • 301.743.7613

www.dnr.state.md.us/publiclands/southern/calvertcliffs.html

LOCATION: 14 miles south of Prince Frederick on Rtes 2/4

COST: \$5 per car. Free with Maryland State Park senior pass.

TRAILS: 14 miles of unpaved, mostly interconnecting trails

HISTORY: Over 1,000 acres edged by the Chesapeake and cliffs where the most extensive assemblage of Miocene fossils in the eastern United States are found.

POSSIBLE SIGHTINGS: Deer, eagles and very large beavers.

CEDARVILLE STATE FOREST

10201 Bee Oak Road, Brandywine, MD 20613 • 301.888.1410

www.dnr.state.md.us/publiclands/southern/cedarville.asp

LOCATION: off Cedarville Road in Prince George County

COST: \$3 per vehicle. Free over 65.

HISTORY: Land was purchased by the state during the 1930s to eventually form a 3,510 acre state forest. In the '50s, up to 3,600 pounds of charcoal were produced each week. A charcoal kiln still stands on the Heritage Trail.

TRAILS: Five trails ranging from 2 to 7 miles in length with numerous creeks, marshes, and a pond along the route.

POSSIBLE SIGHTINGS: Rabbits, fox and deer.

EASTERN NECK WILDLIFE REFUGE

1730 Eastern Neck Road, Rock Hall, MD 21661 • 410.639.7056

www.fws.gov/northeast/easternneck/

LOCATION: Mouth of the Chester River. Six miles from Rock Hall.

COST: No fees

HISTORY: A 2,285 acre refuge was established in 1962 for migratory and wintering waterfowl.

TRAILS: Six miles of unpaved trails as well as a boardwalk through woods, wetland and along the marshes. Lots of great Bay and Chester River viewing opportunities.

POSSIBLE SIGHTINGS: Eagles, White tailed deer, beaver, red fox, raccoons, muskrats, plus over 30 species of waterfowl.

PATUXENT RESEARCH REFUGE

10901 Scarlet Tanager Loop, Laurel, MD 20708 • 301.497.5760

www.patuxent.fws.gov

LOCATION: Rte. 295 to Powder Mill Road, halfway between

OLYMPICS: CHAMONIX, FRANCE	
A.	Oddity
M.	Often
B.	Luges
C.	Yaws
D.	Meet the Parents
E.	Past tense
F.	Fit to be tied
G.	Chowpatty
H.	Slaalom
I.	Nitrate
J.	Cavitation
K.	Cinnammon stone
L.	Mohawks
M.	New freestyle
N.	Often
O.	In the wind
P.	Xenia
Q.	Ice skates
R.	Reindeer
S.	Attentive
T.	Slalom
U.	Cinnamom
V.	Empowered
W.	Altirst
X.	Hebridic
Y.	Whist
Z.	Althirst

this competition take place?
dominated by Scandinavian athletes. Where did
Games consisted of sixteen events that were
Nineteen Twenty-Four," the First Winter Olympic
known at the time as "International Sports Week

QUIZ-ACROSTIC SOLUTION

Baltimore and Washington.

COST: Free

HISTORY: Established in 1936 from an original 2,670 acres to 12,750 acres for the protection and study of wildlife.

TRAILS: Numerous woodland trails totaling four miles pass through forests and along lake shores. An outstanding Visitor's Center is available to tour.

POSSIBLE SIGHTINGS: White tailed deer, bald eagles, red foxes and great horned owls.

ST. MARY'S RIVER STATE PARK

c/o Point Lookout State Park

1175 Point Lookout Road, Scotland, MD 20687

www.dnr.state.md.us/publiclands/southern/stmarysriver.asp
or www.stateparks.com/saint_marys_river.html

LOCATION: Separated into two areas, Sites 1 and 2. The Site 1 area holds the 250-acre St. Mary's Lake. Located along Maryland Route 5, between Leonardtown and Great Mills.

COST: \$3 per car

HISTORY: From 3,000 B.C., several different Indian tribes occupied the area as evidenced by the artifacts still being found.

TRAILS: An 11.5-mile trail encircles St. Mary's Lake. Eight miles is the shortest route around the lake. First-time hikers should allow extra time for unintentional but interesting detours.

POSSIBLE SIGHTINGS: This park is remote and not well traveled giving the hiker more of an opportunity for wild life sightings including many species of migratory birds.

SANDY POINT STATE PARK

1100 East College Parkway

Annapolis, MD 21401

www.dnr.state.md.us/publiclands/southern/sandypoint.html

LOCATION: Annapolis western terminus of the Bay Bridge, off U.S. Routes 50/301

COST: \$3 per vehicle

HISTORY: Opened in 1952 as a recreational park with 786 acres.

TRAILS: Two short trails but combined with fire roads and beach walks can total up to 5 miles or more.

POSSIBLE SIGHTINGS: White tailed deer, migratory ducks and Canada geese.

TUCKAHOE STATE PARK

13070 Crouse Mill Road

Queen Anne, MD 21657 • 410.820.1668

www.dnr.state.med.us/publiclands/eastern/tuckahoe.html

LOCATON: Rt. 50 east from the Bay Bridge, then 8 miles East on 404 to Rte. 480 and then Eveland Road.

COST: No fee

HISTORY: Formerly the home of the Nanticoke Indians, now a 3,800-acre park with a 60-acre lake. Crouse Mill Road, the entrance road was the location of a gristmill from 1876 to 1920.

TRAILS: 15 miles of forested trails, varying in length from .25 to 4.5 miles that can be combined for longer hikes. A wonderful 3.5 mile trail interpretive trail passes through the adjoining Adkins Arboretum.

POSSIBLE SIGHTINGS: White tailed deer, owls, muskrats and foxes.



WINTER

on the Bay



Photo: Andrew Lincoln

Every Winter, usually in the depths of December, ice slips into Chesapeake Bay. A thin skim rims the quiet creeks and then spreads outward, covering gelid waters with a glistening frozen blanket. Successive calm, subfreezing days may lock up entire coves. Rarely, several weeks of unusual cold will overlay the whole Bay with a lid of solid ice.

The last big Bay freeze was in 1977. It was so frigid for so long that ice formed a layer up to three feet thick from the estuary's upper reaches to the mouth of the Patuxent River. The frozen surface of the Chesapeake became a Winter playground—and even a shortcut for pedestrians and motorists.

Will global warming end such freeze-ups? Not necessarily. Last Winter was one of the chilliest on record for the mid-Atlantic region, and the cold came early—icebreakers began clearing shipping lanes in December. While the Bay never completely froze over, prolonged low temperatures caused widespread fish kills and the death of nearly one-third of Maryland's adult crabs.

These events are unusual. In normal, more moderate Winters, the Bay's year-round denizens weather the cold quite well. After all, they have adapted to survive in an estuarine environment whose conditions—including temperature—may vary widely even during a single day. Coping strategies include the sealed-up, impermeable shells of clams and oysters, lowered metabolic rates, reduced feeding activity, and, in some cold-water fish, the presence of antifreeze-like molecules in the blood. If all else fails, marine animals can move to a more benign environment: Mollusks can burrow into a protective layer of mud,

and fish can swim to deeper waters where temperatures are warmer and more stable than those on the surface. But if cold and ice come too quickly or if escape takes too long, animals may be trapped in shallow waters and become vulnerable to freezing or scouring by jagged plates of moving ice.

The process of ice formation can actually help to protect aquatic organisms from Winter stress. To understand this requires a little knowledge of physics and chemistry -- the horror! But the lesson will be short and painless: When fresh water cools at atmospheric pressure, its density increases until the water temperature drops to 4 degrees Celsius (about 39 degrees Fahrenheit) -- the temperature of maximum density for fresh water. Below that temperature ice crystals begin to develop, spreading the water molecules farther apart and slightly reducing the water's density until an insulating barrier of solid surface ice forms at zero degrees Celsius (32 degrees Fahrenheit). This means that freshwater ice actually floats on warmer, denser water below. That's a good thing. If fresh water kept getting denser as it got colder, ice would form from the bottom up in lakes and ponds and few resident creatures could survive a harsh Winter.

Ice formation in seawater is a bit more complicated. The presence of salt lowers the temperature at which the water will freeze. In the open ocean, where salinity averages 35 parts per thousand (3.5 percent), the temperature must drop to nearly minus 2 degrees Celsius (about 29 degrees Fahrenheit) before ice will form. Even so, sea ice, like freshwater ice, forms a protective, insulating barrier for the marine life below it.

Semi-landlocked and diluted by copious amounts of fresh water from the surrounding land, Chesapeake Bay is far less salty than the open ocean. Salinity at the surface is virtually zero where rivers and streams enter the estuary. Only at the Bay's mouth does the salt content approximate that of the open sea. Thus most of the Chesapeake's waters will freeze at a slightly higher temperature than that of the Atlantic Ocean. Can you guess where in the Bay ice will first form when the temperature drops?

Sometime this Winter, if you live near the Bay, wander down to a protected cove on a still morning after a prolonged cold snap. Chances are the cove will be ice-covered and the scene will resemble a glacial, lifeless wasteland. But you will know better. You will know that beneath that frozen surface life still carries on, biding its time until the warming days return.

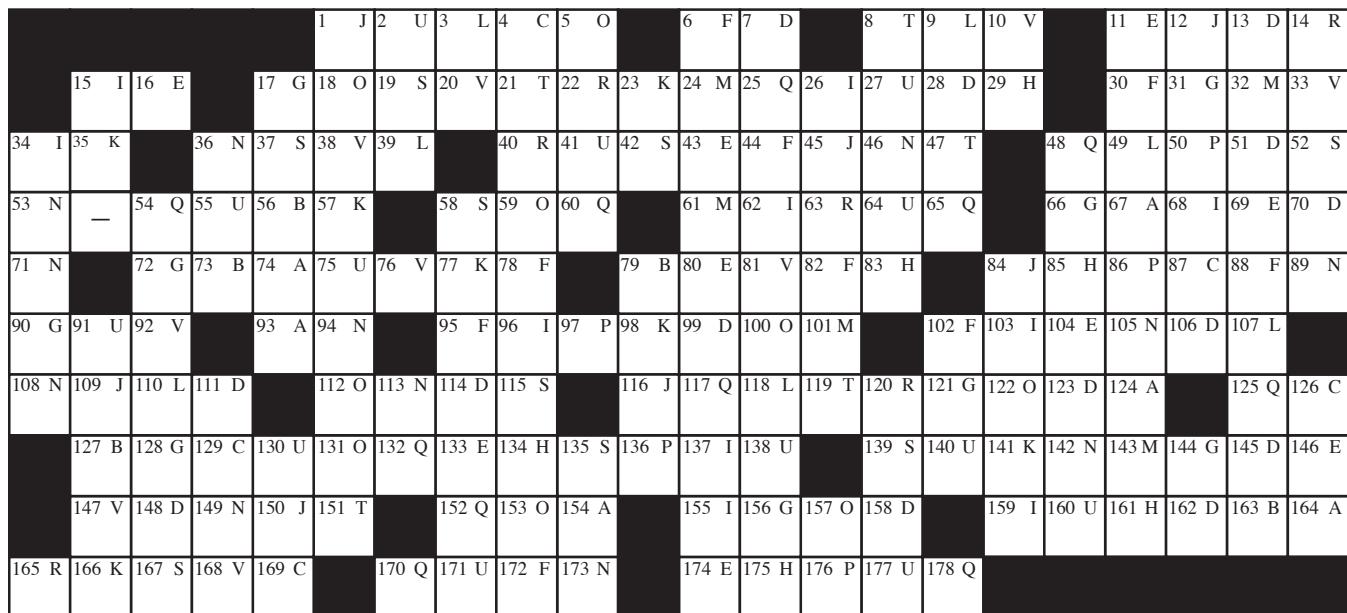
Henry S. Parker can be reached at hspshp@gmail.com

Bits & Bytes

For assistance on your retirement or pension plan, check into www.pensionhelp.org where help is available to answer questions such as what happened to the retirement plan from a previous employer that may have been lost or forgotten.

There isn't a better time to explore new opportunities than now.

WINTER QUIZ-ACROSTIC



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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.

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.

A. 4-leaf clover, e.g.

93 124 154 67 164 74

B. Racing sleds

73 56 79 163 127

C. Signs of boredom

126 129 4 169 87

D. 2000 Robert DeNiro comedy (3 wds.)

13 70 99 7 106 148 123 162 28 114

E. *Ran, ate, talked* are examples of this (2 wds.)

145 51 111 158

174 80 16 69 11 104 133 146 43

F. Sasha Cohen's equipment (2 wds.)

88 78 102 95 172 6 44 82 30

G. Small beach in Mumbai

128 156 72 66 31 121 90 144 17

H. Downhill skiing race

83 175 134 29 85 161

I. Formation of bubblelike gaps

159 137 103 62 34 15 155 96 26 68

J. Speed skater Chad _____

109 45 116 150 12 84 1

K. Eager

23 166 141 77 57 35 98

L. Figure skating maneuvers

118 3 9 110 49 39 107

M. Frequently

32 61 24 143 101

N. A current type of skiing (2 wds.)

105 46 36 94 71 113 173 89 108 53 142 149

O. About to happen (3 wds.)

153 18 122 59 100 112 157 5 131

P. Ohio city

97 50 86 136 176

Q. Good and mad (4 wds.)

54 25 48 65 117 125 178 170 132 60 152

R. Enzyme used in making cheese

63 14 22 120 165 40

S. Devoted

139 52 19 115 42 58 167 135 37

T. Saltpeter

47 119 8 151 21

U. Essonite (2 wds.)

177 41 27 130 171 75 160 2 64 140

V. Authorized

55 138 91

10 81 76 168 147 38 33 20 92

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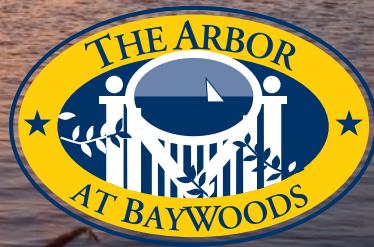
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