



# Radish

HEALTHY LIVING FROM THE GROUND UP

*Sasha*

2013 Radish magazine  
Pet of the Year

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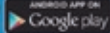
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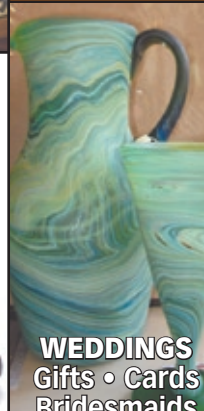
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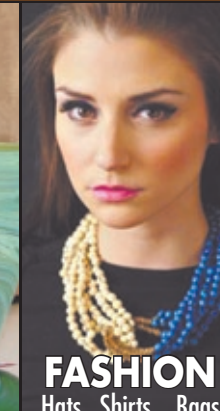
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# from the editor



Radish editor Sarah J. Gardner with Deborah Pond and her dog Sasha at the 2013 Healthy Living Fair.  
(Photo by John Greenwood / Radish)

You might think the toughest thing about the Healthy Living Fair would be the months of preparation that go into it ahead of time — working out the lineup of events on stage; figuring out how many tables and chairs and tents are needed for all the booths; coordinating the logistics of getting bicycles, canoes, solar ovens, live alpacas and an entire city bus in place before the fair opens. But no. I can tell you from experience the biggest challenge is the Pet of the Year contest.

Why? There are so many great pet owners who come to the fair each year and inspire us with the healthy ways they care for their furry friends. Just narrowing the pets down to a group of finalists is difficult enough. I don't envy the crowd at all, which chooses the winning pet by popular applause. Talk about your tough choices! And yet each year, as if by some special sense, the folks who attend the fair and watch the Pet of the Year contest manage to choose just the right pets and pet owners to be featured in our August issue. This year's winner, Sasha, is no exception. As you'll read on page 12, not only is she well cared for by her owners, they have learned a thing or two from her about holistic eating. We couldn't have picked a better dog to be featured as our fifth annual Pet of the Year.

It seems like there is a special serendipity that comes with pets — just as we don't know which pet will grace our cover when we start planning the August issue, in many ways you don't know what you're going to get when you bring a pet home. I think about my own cat, Nebuchadnezzar. When I first considered adopting a pet, I asked my sister, who works at an animal clinic, to keep her eyes out for a short-haired female cat with a friendly disposition. She sent me a long-haired, half-feral male kitten with a surly streak. As is typical for Maine Coon cats, he grew to weigh a whopping 18 pounds, despite my sister's assurances he was most likely the runt of the litter.

In my wildest dreams I couldn't have imagined a cat like Nebu, and yet now, 13 years later, the hardest thing to imagine is what my life would have been like if I had gotten the cat I asked for. Along the way, I feel like Nebu taught me a little something about happiness: You can't always predict what shape it's going to take. And really, would you want to? By being open to life's unexpected pleasures, we free ourselves to encounter happiness a lot more often.

— Sarah J. Gardner  
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HEALTHY LIVING FROM THE GROUND UP

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# the grapevine

## From our readers

**Exploring Milan Bottoms (July 2013):** "I was very impressed with the professionalism and courtesy demonstrated by you and your team. Good press coverage is essential for the success of any BioBlitz and yours was exemplary. Providing round-the-clock, 24-hour coverage was no simple undertaking, and I think you all did an excellent job. ...

"Here in the lab we are still busy sorting through the insect samples we brought back from Milan Bottoms and the number of species is still growing. A lot of people were surprised by just how many insect species can be found in such a small area, and it's great that we had the opportunity to demonstrate this to the public. Invertebrates are so important ecologically and yet often play second fiddle to large and charismatic vertebrates when it comes to conservation efforts. This BioBlitz and others like it allow us to emphasize just how important these animals are."

— *Dr. Sam W. Heads, Illinois Natural History Survey*

**Worth its salt (July 2013):** "Absolutely loved your article on flavored salts in the July issue! I can't wait to make some of them and share with my friends!"

— *Julie Hunt*

**Along the Wapsi (July 2013):** "Dennis Murphy and his park staff do a great job of maintaining the park, including the historic structures, on a very limited budget. I hope Iowans appreciate the fact that admission to Wapsi State Park is free and treat the park with the reverence it deserves. Thanks for the mention!"

— *Dave DeWitte, Stone City, Iowa*

**Move, stretch, hope (July 2013):** "I was thrilled to see the article on the Delay the Disease Parkinson's exercise program. I wanted to let you and your readers know that the Delay the Disease program is also offered at the Bettendorf Family YMCA. Classes are held on Tuesday and Thursday from 11:15 a.m. to 12:15 p.m. This program is free to members of the Y and to nonmembers for \$30/8 weeks (16 classes)."

— *Marli Apt, fitness coordinator, Scott County Family Y, Bettendorf Branch*

Can't get enough of Radish? Thanks to Friends of Radish, this month you can find the magazine at the **Illinois Renewable Energy Fair**, 10 a.m. to 5 p.m. Saturday, Aug. 17, and 10 a.m. to 4 p.m. Sunday, Aug. 18, at the Ogle County Fairgrounds, 1440 N. Limekiln Road, Oregon, Ill. For more information, visit [illinoisrenew.org](http://illinoisrenew.org).

To discover more upcoming events of interest, see the events calendar at [radishmagazine.com](http://radishmagazine.com).

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# healthy living from the ground up

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Sasha, the winner of the 2013 Radish Pet of the Year competition. (Photo by Todd Welvaert / Radish)

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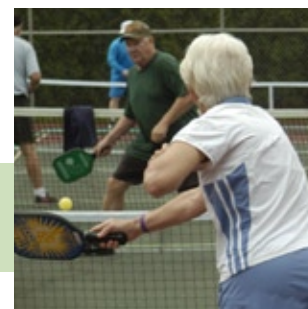
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## radishmagazine.com

The handmade blankets, lovingly referred to as “binkies” by the volunteers who make them, are many children’s first gifts. A tangible proof the world isn’t as cold and lonely a place as it may seem. It’s a thought that brings a smile to Nancy Hyman’s face. As the Quad City Binky Patrol coordinator, she oversees the volunteer effort that puts nearly 800 binkies in the hands of those who need them every year.

healthy living

# Chill out

Places to escape the everyday hustle and bustle

By Radish staff

It's the time of year when summer schedules reach a fever pitch. The weekends are packed and weekdays aren't much better. There are vacations to get ready for, vacations to get caught up from, and school supplies to buy. And all the while, it feels like the temperature keeps on climbing.

Whew! That's a lot of stress! Is it any wonder that August can be a challenging month in which to keep your cool? We recently asked some of our Radish writers to share where they like to slip off to when the pressure starts mounting — nearby spots that help soothe a frazzled mind and restore a sense of equilibrium. Have a favorite place of your own to step away for an hour? Tweet it to us at #RadishRejuvenate.



A view of the Mississippi River from the Elizabeth Haines Wintergarden. (Photo by Todd Welvaert / Radish)

## Discover a different perspective

Two stories above street level in downtown Davenport, you'll find one of my favorite places in all of the Quad-Cities: the Elizabeth Haines Wintergarden in the Figge Art Museum. Tucked away on a landing between staircases at the back of the museum, the wintergarden is a narrow area that feels anything but. A sweeping bank of

windows looks out over the Mississippi River and fills the space with light, while a pair of low couches along the back wall invite you to sit for a minute and take in the view. The serene space is infused with a quiet sense of remove from the world outside.

We often equate the busyness of day-to-day living with stress, but what has struck me time and time again while sitting in the wintergarden is the

beauty of all the small activities that fill a city with life. I have stood at the windows and watched fishermen set out their lines as pelicans float by on the river. I have witnessed teenagers congregate from different points in LeClaire Park and then disperse again, while families with young children and elderly couples stroll by on the bike path. I even have been entranced by the cars that slow to a halt at the traffic light on River Drive, as I try to

imagine where the drivers have come from and where their errands might take them — strangers sitting quietly, for the space of a red light, side by side, before their paths diverge.

All these lives being lived, all these intersections between activities: If only for a moment, how wonderful to have a space that invites us to step back and take it all in.

— Sarah J. Gardner



## Get away from it all without going far

For me, the best place to cool down has always been by the water — maybe it's because I'm an Aquarius. There's almost always a good breeze and you can always stick your toes in the water while watching boats go by and waiting for the next person on a tube or water skis to wipe out. While the Quad-Cities has plenty of water, the number of beaches to play on is rather small. I'm lucky enough to live near a perfect place to cool off and have fun — Dynamite Island.

If you're not a boater, you may not have heard of it. It's located on the Mississippi River, near Campbell's Island

on the Iowa side of the river. It's a tiny island, maybe the size of an average house and yard in town. The water is very shallow around the island, maybe knee deep to an adult, and the shallow part extends quite a distance out into the river. Boats of all kinds pull up and drop anchor. Kids run around, splashing each other, while the adults sit in the water or on lawn chairs in the water, enjoying a cool drink. Even if you don't know any of the other boaters, a friendly camaraderie reigns there. Whenever I hear the song "Good Time" by Owl City and Carly Rae Jepsen, I think of summer days at Dynamite Island: "Doesn't matter when, it's always a good time then."

— Sharon Wren

## Find clarity in simplified surroundings

At Prairiewoods Franciscan Spirituality Center in Hiawatha, Iowa, there's always something to do. But my favorite thing by far is to rent a straw-bale hermitage for a two-night stay and just read or write.

I should clarify when I say write: I mean longhand in a journal — not on my computer. The electricity comes from solar energy and only powers things like lamps. I love taking a break from my computer, which means taking a break from answering emails and wasting time on Facebook. I can bring my own food or pay extra and eat delicious meals prepared with local, organic ingredients right at Prairiewoods.

Outside, my favorite place to be on this 70-acre property is the sand-and-brick labyrinth. When I've needed clarity, I often find a labyrinth to walk. A labyrinth offers just one windy path with no way to get lost. The idea is that when you walk a labyrinth, you lose track of time, of direction, of the noise of the world and the noise in your head. Reaching the labyrinth's center is a metaphor for arriving at your own. The labyrinth may not be the ideal place to cool off from the summer's heat, but it's the perfect place to remind me not to sweat the stuff of life.

— Annie L. Scholl



The labyrinth at Prairiewoods Franciscan Spirituality Center. (Photo by Todd Welvaert / Radish)

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healthy living

# Keeping it clean

## Q-C residents volunteer in 10th annual Xstream Cleanup

By Becky Langdon

For nine years, citizens of the Quad-Cities have been working to keep our creeks, drainage ways and rivers clean through an annual effort called Xstream Cleanup. This August, the event is on pace to reach a big milestone: 1 million pounds of trash removed from our community.

What kind of trash? For starters, that number includes more than 18,000 tires, 315 pieces of furniture, 246 bicycles and 218 appliances from 43 sites around the Quad-Cities.

The stats are impressive, but the initiative is about much more than just picking up trash. Fundamentally, Xstream Cleanup is about water quality, because everything eventually flows downhill and into our waterways.

"This is the water that we drink," says Brandy Welvaert, communications

coordinator at the Waste Commission of Scott County. "This is the water that we bathe in. This water is the lifeblood of our community. If we don't take care of it, that can have serious consequences."

Welvaert (who, full disclosure, is also a former editor of Radish) says that she hopes by educating the community about proper waste disposal we reach a point where there isn't much to clean up. "The best Xstream Cleanup in some ways would be no Xstream Cleanup because the community would already be so clean that we wouldn't need it," she says. "But as long as we do, I'm glad we have the support of the communities and volunteers to do it."

At the heart of Xstream Cleanup are dedicated volunteers. Without community participation, much of the trash removed likely would still be in our waterways. Radish recently spoke with three volunteers to find out what motivates them to lend a hand.



Curtis Lundy, Tammi Slack and Jason Waldorf pose near Duck Creek in Bettendorf. (Photos by Chet Strange and Paul Colletti / Radish)

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## A clean, safe place to play

Curtis Lundy, board chairman for both Xstream Cleanup and Living Lands & Waters, got involved in stream-related activities in the 1990s. “I was just riding along Duck Creek on the Fourth of July one time and I just began to wonder, is Duck Creek safe to be in?” he says. “I saw kids there playing.”

After that experience, he connected with junior high and high school teachers and their classes to do water sampling in the stream. They gathered interesting data, but it wasn’t until 2003 that he and Chad Pregracke, founder of Living Lands & Waters, organized the Duck Creek Cleanup. The event was so successful, they wanted to expand the cleanup beyond Davenport and Bettendorf. With the help of Scott County Waste Commission and other local organizations, the first Xstream Cleanup was born in 2004.

Lundy is quick to give credit to the many businesses who give money, the site coordinators, and all the volunteers. Even after doing it for 10 years, he’s still impressed by the level of participation. He says, “Some of us do a little work, and then all of the sudden on average you have almost 1,500 people every year. Seeing the results is rewarding.”

## Clearing away public eyesores

Jason Waldorf and his wife own a bar and grill on the Wapsipinicon River called the Lucky Frog. On his way to work every day, he used to drive by an area with a buildup of trash and old tires. “It was an eyesore,” he says.

At Waldorf’s request in 2011, the site became an official Xstream Cleanup site with Waldorf as the site coordinator. The first year they pulled out 300 tires, two whole cars, and an old pickup truck, plus 100 bags of trash. “It was nice to find out that we could create our own site,” says Waldorf.

Although they have had great support at the site, Waldorf says they can always use more hands. The work is actually more time consuming now than it was in the beginning. Most of the bigger pieces of waste have been removed, and the smaller pieces take a lot more time. There is still plenty of work to be done to get the area to the pristine state Waldorf envisions.

The river is “something we all enjoy and use, so we want it to be clean and pristine for everyone,” says Waldorf. “We want to make sure it’s safe.”

## Coming together as a community

Tammy Slack found out about the opportunity to help with Xstream Cleanup through a mass emailing that went out at the Waste Water Treatment Center of Davenport where she worked. As someone who grew up loving the outdoors and swimming in Duck Creek, it was a natural fit for her to get involved. For the last five years now, she and her children have participated.

“What’s really awesome about it is that there are so many community members that come together to help keep our area clean,” she says.

Slack serves as one of the site coordinators on the day of the event. She sees it as a great activity for the whole family to do and a way to help make sure her kids have the same opportunities to enjoy the outdoors that she did growing up. “I teach my kids that littering is not a good thing,” she says. “I explain to them why — if it gets in the river it can travel anywhere.”

*Becky Langdon is a frequent Radish contributor.*

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grower of the month

# Salt Fork Farms

Cultivating good food and a sense of community



Eric and Eve Menzel of Salt Fork Farms. (Photo by Mary Blackwood)

By Mary Blackwood

“Community” is a word that has many meanings for Eric Menzel of Salt Fork Farms. There’s the community of farmers, of neighbors, of customers. And then there’s the soil and the food he raises, a community of another sort: The crops must work together with rain, nutrients, oxygen, sun and microbes in order to thrive.

Salt Fork Farms, located on five acres in Solon, Iowa, is cultivated by Eric and his wife, Eve, but the creek it is named after flows in Illinois. How did that come to be? In 2005, while Eric was attending graduate school in Illinois, he decided to establish the first Salt Fork Farms, named after a tributary of the Vermilion River. As a long-time professional cook, he was drawn to the undertaking by the food itself.

Two years later he returned to Iowa, where he had been raised since the age of 7. He brought the farm with him, re-establishing it on new ground and keeping the evocative name. At the same time, he and Eve began building their family. They got married and had a son, Milo, now 3. Another baby is on the way. Eric remains the principal farmer, while Eve, who supports the family with a full-time job in the nonprofit sector, is the accountant and writes many of the entertaining blog entries on the farm’s website ([saltforkfarms.com](http://saltforkfarms.com)).

Both parents are happy to raise their children in the farming life. “They don’t have to become farmers,” says Eric, “but I’m glad they are growing up in that culture, learning the lessons and knowledge that come from it.” The children will have direct experience with how food grows and how it gets from the ground to the table. They will know the differences between naturally grown crops and GMOs, between local sourcing and food that is shipped from another country.

## Partnering with the land and other growers

The countryside around Solon is verdant, its green hills rolling to the horizon, interspersed with thick stands of trees, hidden creeks and cultivated fields. Most of these fields, like most of Iowa’s farmland, grow a single crop on acre after acre of land. In the satellite view of the area northeast of town, however, Salt Fork Farms stands out from its neighbors.



While the surrounding land is a quilt of large farms with monoculture planting, Salt Fork Farms is readily identifiable as a neat plot of three acres under cultivation, planted in stripes of clearly demarcated beds of an appealing diversity of crops — strawberries, kale, chard, okra, eggplants, peppers, spinach, lettuce, tomatoes, cucumbers, garlic, scallions, turnips, kohlrabi, carrots, beets, broccoli, pumpkins, cauliflower, many varieties of Asian greens, many culinary herbs, and that's not even the full list.

Besides the crops grown on the farm's acreage, egg-laying chickens are kept at a neighbor's farm, where there is also an apple orchard. Eric helps out on the neighbor's farm and sells some of that produce through Salt Fork Farms, adding to the diversity of offerings.

Farming in this old-fashioned way is, Eric acknowledges, difficult and time consuming. He isn't interested in competing with other farmers, though. There is not enough supply of this kind of food to keep up with demand. Instead he wants to get more people involved in organic and biodiverse farming so that they can support one another in growing healthy food and getting the farm-fresh produce out to their community of local customers. "We can help each other to raise the bar on the quality of what we're producing," Eric says. "My role in the community is to partner with others to enhance what they do." In turn, the other growers share their skills and knowledge with him.

## Taking a different approach

Salt Fork Farms is not certified as organic, since getting certified is expensive and time-consuming, but thanks to the relationships the Menzels have developed with their customers, Eric says, "Our customers know exactly how we are growing the food, without chemicals, pesticides or fertilizers."

The CSA at Salt Fork Farms uses a different twist than most out there. Most farms prepare boxes for their CSA members, putting into each box what is available at the farm that week. Sometimes that means the customer gets lots of turnips or lettuce or whatever is most abundant at the farm at that time. Eric thinks this can cause wastefulness. What if the customer doesn't like turnips?

Instead, Eric has embraced another model: Each customer gets a certain amount of credit based on the share that customer buys. The customer then visits the Salt Fork Farms booth at the farmers' market and selects only what is wanted, and the selections are charged to that customer's credit.

Another treat for CSA members is Farm Day each autumn, when they are welcomed to the farm for a hearty meal and a tour of the fields, the greenhouse and the orchard. The event is social but the Menzels may give a demonstration or talk about some topic of interest.

The overarching goal of Salt Fork Farms is to share their philosophy, recipes and techniques with their customers. "Our activities reflect what people can do at home with cooking and food-preserving practices, building up their kitchen through the seasonality of the farm," says Eric.

Future projects include nurturing more fruits and berries, as well as creating a licensed kitchen that can be used by others who want to prepare and preserve their own food. The kitchen would help use the farm's surpluses better, and allow Salt Fork Farms to offer prepared yet healthy food for customers who are too busy to make their own meals.

*Mary Blackwood is a regular Radish contributor.*

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Photos by Laura Dowd, Executive Director of Local Foods Connection:  
[www.localfoodsconnection.org](http://www.localfoodsconnection.org)

By Seth Schroeder

When Maria Pond first met Sasha, a Great Pyrenees, the dog was emaciated. Maria, who was working for the Scott County Humane Society at the time, says Sasha was skin and bone with no fat and was losing fur from lack of nutrition.

The 1-year-old dog was starving, but Maria could tell she also had been nursing. Sasha had been trying to take care of three puppies. But with so few resources available, they died before the Humane Society arrived.

But Maria could still save Sasha.

"When I put her in the truck she gave me a kiss," Maria says. "It was like she was saying, 'Thank you for saving me.'" Maria says the situation made her so sad she called her parents asking them to help her save Sasha.

Gary Pond, Maria's father, says when he and his wife, Deborah Pond, arrived at the shelter, Sasha looked like she was ready to die. Maria says she convinced her parents that Sasha was special, and they agreed to foster her until the shelter found a new home for her.

Deborah says that changed after Sasha got her shots and was groomed for the first time. "She came home and had ribbons in her hair and everything, and we just kind of fell in love with her," she says.

Sasha now has lived with Gary and Deborah for 10 years. They say she has a beautiful personality and is very laid back. The Ponds also have a golden retriever named Faith Ann, and the two dogs get along very well.

The Ponds say though Sasha can look big and intimidating, she is almost always a gentle white giant. Maria recalls a time when Sasha picked up a bunny in her mouth and just held it. When Maria asked her to put it down, she did so safely.

"I said, 'Oh my gosh, you didn't even kill the bunny,'" Maria says.

Despite Sasha's gentle nature, the Ponds say a Great Pyrenees is not a dog for everyone. In addition to their nocturnal nature, they also develop a thick, weather-resistant coat that sheds. During the summer, the ponds have Sasha groomed so she has shorter hair and can deal with the heat more easily.

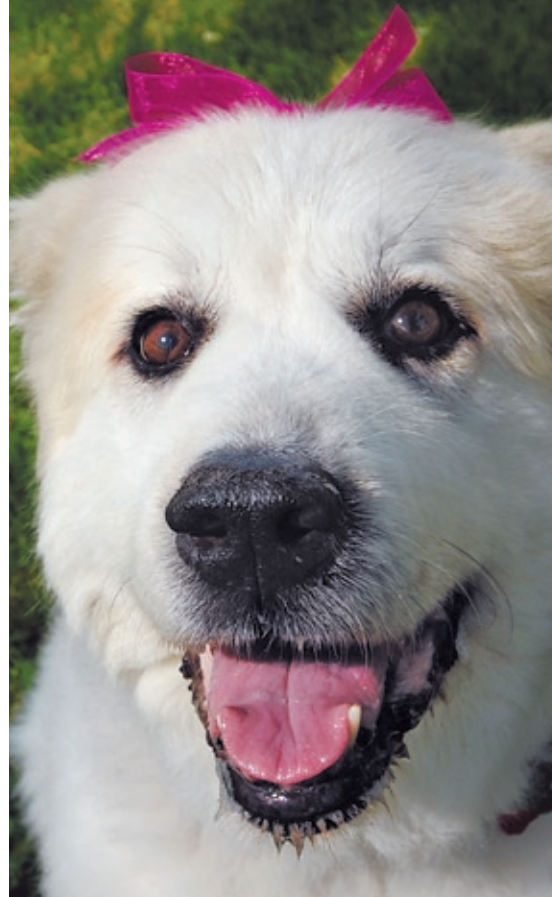
Gary says Sasha also sheds less than other dogs because they feed her holistic dog food consisting of chicken and brown rice. She also eats berries and vegetables.

When they first got Sasha, the Ponds say they paid particularly close attention to her nutrition in order to help her to get her strength back. They say they put raw eggs in her food in order to help her coat grow back, and Dr. Fred Mulch, an

pet of the year

# Say hi to Sasha

Family dog brings holistic eating home



animal chiropractor and veterinarian at Whitehaven Veterinary Center in Davenport, recommended they use holistic dog food to help her recover.

Mulch explained most dog food has a lot of corn added, which is not good for a dog's diet. Holistic dog foods do not have these additives, and he suggested dogs with a holistic type of diet suffer from fewer long-term problems like inflammation and ear conditions. Raw foods such as uncooked vegetables, fruits and meat also can be good for a dog's diet, he said.

The Ponds say though holistic dog food can initially cost more, it can last longer because their dogs do not have to eat as much of it. They also say Sasha has had very few health problems or surgeries since they started caring for her, which they partially attribute to her diet.

The Ponds say as they paid more attention to Sasha's nutrition and health, they learned ways to keep themselves healthier as well. They say they started paying more attention to the labels on their own food. "I think this is how we are supposed to eat," Deborah says, recalling the realization that their diet could be healthier, too.

In a subsequent interview, Mulch said eating a healthier diet for both dogs and humans is all about preventing future health problems.

The family's healthy eating habits now even extend to trying to eat more of what they grow in their garden. That is, "if our golden will let us," jokes Deborah. "She goes and picks the garden."

The Ponds say they take Sasha to Mulch also because Sasha is a larger dog and they tend to develop joint problems, especially later in life. Even though Sasha is around 10 or 11 (the average lifespan of a Great Pyrenees), the Ponds say the chiropractic treatments have kept Sasha energetic and young. "She doesn't look 11," Gary says.

They say Sasha has given them an enjoyable 10 years of their life that they would not change for the world. "We're glad our daughter found her and saved her," Gary says.

Maria says her parents have always been dog people and even put their pets before themselves. She says her dad will go out in rain or snow in order to make sure the dogs get their two walks a day.

Maria says it breaks her heart to think of the good dogs who will not get the opportunity to find a good home, as Sasha did. "There's something to be said about saving a dog," she says. "There's something about a shelter dog. They are the most thankful because they are glad to be out of that situation."

*Seth Schroeder makes his Radish debut this month.*



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health & fitness

# Play pickleball

## Popular, accessible sport finds fans on Q-C courts

By Ann Ring

**I**t's like badminton on steroids," joked Dean Easterlund, of Davenport. Someone on a YouTube video compared it to life-size ping-pong. However you see it, pickleball, one America's fastest growing pastimes, is changing our parks' and retirement villages' landscape.

Similar to tennis but easier to learn, pickleball first started out in the mid-1960s as a simple backyard game. Today, pickleball is played outdoors or indoors, with two or four players on a netted court (with a lower net than tennis), using paddles similar to ping-pong and a perforated ball resembling a whiffle ball. Games are usually played to 11 points. With a shorter learning curve than tennis, a court size that's one-third smaller than tennis, and a slower moving ball, pickleball is one activity that the entire family can play together, including grandma and grandpa. Seniors — many of whom are just now learning it — love it, and their grandkids already know it from gym classes.

"It's not as hard on your legs as tennis," said Barb Cline, 69, of Bettendorf, who learned the game five years ago from friends who wintered in The Villages, Fla., an area known as the pickleball capital of the world. "I would say the average age in our pickleball group is 68, but we've had kids in high school join us and middle-age people," said Cline. Part of its popularity is because, especially in doubles, there's even less excursion, but you're still exercising, and the smaller court makes a difference, too. Like ping-pong, the idea is to focus on the ball's placement and accuracy. Compared to golf or tennis, learning the game can be less frustrating.

On the day Easterlund graciously provided me with a free lesson on a tennis court in Northwest Park in Davenport, four players enjoying pickleball next to us varied in gender and age, from high school through middle age. We were all beginners, except for Easterlund, who's been playing for over two

years and served one year as an appointed pickleball ambassador, assigned to promote the sport and the USA Pickleball Association (USAPA) in the Quad-Cities.

Thanks to the Davenport Park Board, we all enjoyed playing on tennis courts where pickleball boundaries were clearly marked in blue. In 2008, local pickleball players persuaded the Davenport Park Board to convert two existing tennis courts at Northwest Park by simply painting regulatory pickleball lines in a different color on tennis courts. This way, both tennis and pickleball enthusiasts can play on the same surface.

"Davenport and Bettendorf Park Boards have been very encouraging," said Easterlund. "They want to nurture and grow the sport." All of Northwest Park's tennis courts have since been converted, along with other tennis courts throughout the Quad-Cities and beyond. Both Easterlund and Cline said the Bettendorf Park Board approved funds to build six dedicated pickleball courts at Kiwanis Park

later this year, and the Davenport Park Board is very interested in doing the same when funding becomes available.

During inclement weather and this wet spring, Davenport's Beyond the Baseline and Bettendorf's Fitness Center opened their doors for pickleball players, and more indoor sites in Moline and Rock Island are being pursued.

Both Cline and Easterlund are part of a group pursuing a nonprofit pickleball organization, calling it perhaps the Quad Cities Pickleball Club. "This sport is so popular, it's growing everywhere," said Easterlund. "We hope to continue growing the sport and host tournaments and special events."

The appeal of the sport goes a long way toward explaining the popularity. Said Easterlund, "It gets you off the couch and exercising without thinking about exercising."

*Ann Ring is a frequent Radish contributor. In the Quad-Cities, Dean Easterlund provides free pickleball lessons and can be reached at [dean.easterlund@gmail.com](mailto:dean.easterlund@gmail.com). To locate your pickleball ambassador and court sites throughout the U.S., visit the USA Pickleball Association's website at [usapa.org](http://usapa.org).*



Sharon Brooks of Bettendorf returns a pickleball volley. (Photo by Gary Krambeck / Radish)



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# A.M. veggies

Get a delicious jump on your daily vegetable servings



By Sarah J. Gardner

Chances are you've seen the slogan: "Strive for five," as in, strive to get five servings of fruits and vegetables a day. Even though I enjoy a lot of produce as part of my usual diet, I'll admit the first time I saw that suggestion I blinked in disbelief and thought, "A day?!" There is no way around it, that's a lot of broccoli.

Of course, the point isn't to eat five servings of broccoli, but a variety of fruits and vegetables. The exact daily amount varies from person to person and depends on a number of factors, including age, weight and gender (to calculate your own personal target, visit [choosemyplate.gov/myplate/index.aspx](http://choosemyplate.gov/myplate/index.aspx)), but as a rule of thumb, five servings a day is a good target for most healthy adults.

It's also a target that can feel a bit out of reach, particularly if you (like a lot of Americans) do most of your vegetable eating at dinner. It gets a whole lot more manageable if you think about spreading out those servings through the day: a salad or some carrot sticks with lunch; a piece of fruit for a midday snack; a

vegetable side and some fruit at dinner, and voila! You are one breakfast away from getting in all five servings.

It turns out breakfast really is the key. Miss a serving then, and it feels like playing catch up the rest of the day. Although fruit may seem like the natural pairing with breakfast, the ratio of fruits-to-vegetables in those five daily servings actually tilts toward two fruits and three vegetables. That means getting in a vegetable serving first thing is one way to make it easy on yourself the rest of the day.

"Easy" really is the key word, isn't it? I suspect it's not just a general aversion to vegetables that keeps us from tossing them onto the breakfast plate. It's also that vegetables take work. Even cutting them up to eat raw takes a bit more effort than tilting a box of cereal toward a bowl. And yet, as the following recipes demonstrate, easy and enticing breakfast dishes can be made with vegetables — with results so colorful, that bowl of cereal might just start seeming drab in comparison.

*Sarah J. Gardner is the editor of Radish.*



## ROASTED RED PEPPER BREAKFAST SANDWICH

4 English muffins  
2 ounces goat  
cheese,  
Neufchâtel, or  
other cream  
cheese  
1/3 cup almond slivers  
1 jar roasted red  
peppers\*

While the English muffins are toasting, warm a small skillet over medium heat and add almond slivers. Stir the almonds two or three times until they just start to brown and give off a faint roasted-nut aroma (approximately 1-2 minutes). Immediately remove almonds from heat and transfer from the skillet to a plate to cool.

To assemble sandwiches, spread goat cheese or other cream cheese on either half a toasted English muffin. Sprinkle toasted almonds over one half of the muffin, and on the other half, lay 1 or 2 peppers pulled from the jar. Combine the two halves. Enjoy immediately or take with you — sandwich holds up very well on the go.

*\*Note: You can always roast your own peppers for this recipe, but for the sake of keeping things simple in the morning rush, a jar of roasted red peppers can be a worthwhile convenience.*

## HUEVOS RANCHEROS

4-6 corn tortillas  
Canola oil as needed  
for toasting tortillas  
1/2 cup shredded  
cheese  
4-6 eggs  
Salt and pepper, to  
taste  
1 can black beans,  
drained  
1 jar salsa  
1 bunch cilantro,  
leaves roughly  
chopped

In a medium skillet over medium-high heat, warm 2 tablespoons of oil. When the oil just begins to shimmer (but before it smokes), add a corn tortilla. Check after 30 seconds and flip over once the bottom side begins to brown. While the opposite side browns, sprinkle shredded cheese on top and allow to melt. Remove toasted tortilla to a plate.

Meanwhile, in a small skillet over medium heat, warm 1 tablespoon of oil. When oil starts to shimmer, crack an egg into the skillet and cook it over-easy style. Add salt and pepper to the egg as it cooks.

To assemble, spoon some black beans over the melted cheese on the tortilla. Cover with an equal amount of salsa. Top with the over-easy egg and garnish with cilantro sprinkled on top. Serve immediately.

Continue to add oil to the skillets as needed to continue to toast tortillas, fry eggs, and assemble additional plates of huevos rancheros.

## SPINACH BERRY SMOOTHIE

1 cup plain yogurt  
1 cup spinach leaves, loosely packed  
1/2 cup frozen strawberries, raspberries, blackberries  
(or a combination of all three) or 1/2 ripe banana  
1/2 cup frozen blueberries  
1/2 cup or more milk (dairy, soy, almond or other)

Combine all ingredients in a blender, cover with a lid, and whirl until smooth. Add more milk as needed to achieve desired consistency. Divide between two glasses and enjoy.



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# Ease and grace

## Learning to move comfortably through Feldenkrais

By Annie L. Scholl

Judi Clinton and Terri Wiebold both know the value of Feldenkrais. Wait, Felden-what?

Feldenkrais, as in the Feldenkrais Method. According to the website [feldenkrais.com](http://feldenkrais.com), it is a practice designed to help people move with less effort through day-to-day activities. Named after its originator, the Russian-born physicist Dr. Moshe Feldenkrais, the Feldenkrais Method is said to increase ease and range of motion; improve flexibility and coordination; and rediscover an innate capacity for graceful, efficient movement.

The lessons are offered in two ways. Awareness-through-movement lessons are usually taught in a group setting with the teacher leading participants through a sequence of movements while they are sitting or lying on a floor or while standing or sitting in a chair. Lessons generally last from 30 to 60 minutes and can vary in difficulty and complexity.

Private Feldenkrais lessons are called functional-integration lessons. They are tailored to individual student needs and involve the teacher guiding the student through words and gentle touching. The student is fully clothed and lies on a table or in a sitting or standing position. Props, such as pillows and blankets, might be used for support or to help with certain movements.

It's not like yoga or tai chi, Clinton emphasizes. In fact, it's not stretching at all, she says.

"It's more about releasing into the floor, being supported by the floor or chair, and exploring movement," says Clinton, who is certified to teach awareness-through-movement classes in the Iowa City/Coralville area and incorporates many Feldenkrais movement methods in her work with private clients ([rolfiowa.com](http://rolfiowa.com)).

Two years ago, Clinton underwent two open-heart surgeries. When she couldn't get back to her regular forms of exercise, like aerobics, swimming and yoga, she started doing awareness through movement, one of the forms of Feldenkrais.



Judi Clinton leading students through a Feldenkrais exercise. (Photo by Mark Tade)

"It is a way of repatterning our habitual ways of walking, sitting and breathing," explains Clinton. "By doing small, slow, easy movements, the body learns flexibility automatically. It is a deep interaction between bones, neuromuscular systems, joint, diaphragm and the brain."

Benefits, she says, include recovery from physical and emotional trauma, relief from chronic pain and stress, better balance and posture, and a more efficient use of the body.

She sometimes uses it for relief from bursitis in her shoulder, too, she says. "I might move that wrist, elbow, shoulder and my head in very small movements, doing each separately, and then combining them and breathing easily to work around my sticky shoulder." She adds that she looks for the easiest way to make the movement and avoids doing anything that would cause discomfort.

"There's a lot of rest in between the moves," Clinton notes. "Pain is often a result of something stuck, the loss of mobility in a joint. These small movements sneak up on the tight place and begin to send impulses of gentle movement through the joint."

Terri Wiebold, a certified holistic nurse who is in private practice in North Liberty, was recovering from a broken lower back when she learned about Feldenkrais from Clinton. Wiebold was drawn to it because of stiffness, tightness and limited motion caused by being in a back brace for 10 weeks to heal the fracture that occurred when she fell onto a cement floor.

With the slow, gentle movements of Feldenkrais, she was able to release the limited mobility in her back and get back to walking, riding her bike, and yoga. "I was able to return to the level I had been before the fall."

Even though Wiebold's injury was three years ago, she still does the Feldenkrais movements several times a week to maintain flexibility and movement in her spine.

"It is easy, simple and relaxing," she says, adding it complements her other efforts to maintain her health and feel good. She recommends Feldenkrais for everyone, especially those who carry stress in their bodies.

"I feel it keeps me younger and able to do more," says Wiebold, 65. "Long term, I feel the exercises assist in releasing bodily stress and keep me feeling younger."

*Annie L. Scholl is a frequent Radish contributor.*



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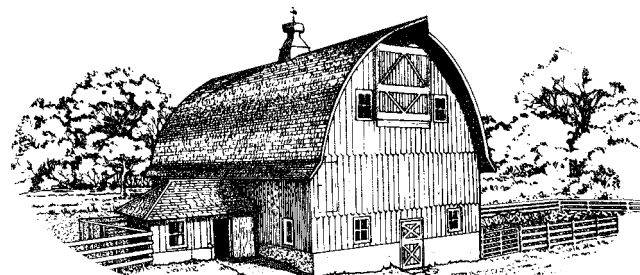
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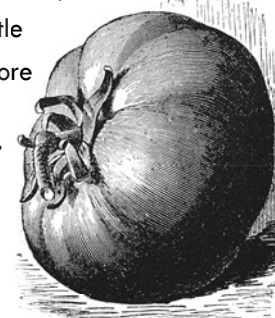
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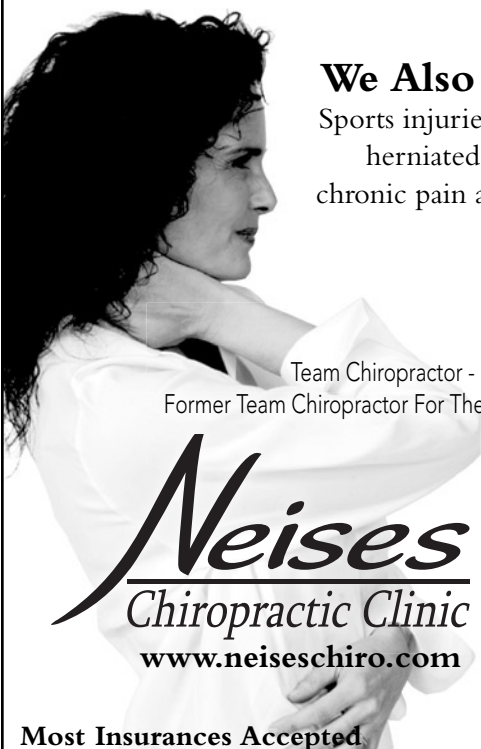


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food

# Quinoa? You bet!

## Versatile, protein-packed seed stars in this easy salad

By Laura Anderson Shaw

I'm not exactly what you would call domestic. I'm better at making messes than I am at cleaning them up, and the only thing I'm really good at doing in the kitchen is eating. But telling your friends or family that frozen pizza and mac and cheese are your specialties when you invite them over for dinner or join them at a cookout is sort of frowned upon.

Enter the easy quinoa salad. It is everything I'd hope to find in a side dish, wrapped up and tied with a delicious and slightly tangy bow. It's chock full of vegetables, so it is rich with color and vitamins and looks pretty in a bowl; it's dressed with olive oil — a healthy oil and good fat! — and lime juice; and its base is quinoa, a grain-like seed that has a bit of a nutty flavor to it.

I first became interested in cooking more with quinoa (pronounced KEEN-wah) when my husband became a vegetarian. When you try to make

vegetables the star of the meal, minute rice and pasta get very old very quickly. Not only does quinoa add some welcome variety to the mix, it also is unique in being a complete protein, so it does not need to be combined with a legume the way rice or other grains do to offer all the essential amino acids needed for good nutrition.

Because my culinary skills (and tastes, unfortunately) are that of a picky 12 year old's, I'm not very adventurous in the kitchen. My family and friends have suffered for this, I suppose, so I've learned to make the best of it: buy precooked quinoa, chop up some vegetables and call it a side.

The easy quinoa salad makes a wonderfully light yet filling dish. Thankfully for people like me, it also is nearly impossible to mess up. It requires a little cooking of the quinoa itself, unless you buy it already cooked, at which point the most time consuming part of the dish is chopping the vegetables.

Another plus is that no matter what you choose

to add or swap, such as black beans or black olives, you really can't go wrong, just increase the amount of quinoa you use to keep the ratio right.

The recipe calls for a green bell pepper, but try a red or orange one to change up the flavor and appearance. Really dig cucumber? Add more than just half. Prefer red onions or full-sized tomatoes? Go ahead and swap!

The dish's role in a meal also is quite versatile. Spoon it onto a bed of lettuce or spinach to round out a lunch, or load it into tortillas and serve with tortilla chips and salsa for a new take on a taco dinner.

On its own, the salad is vegetarian-friendly. For the carnivores, cooked, chopped-up chicken breast nicely complements the dish.

The next time you've got to whip up a dish in a rush or you simply are bored with your typical meals, try whipping some up. Your taste buds will thank you.

*Laura Anderson Shaw is a writer on staff with Radish.*



Paul Colletti / Radish

### Easy Quinoa Veggie Salad

- |   |                                  |
|---|----------------------------------|
| 1½ cups cooked quinoa (or ½ cup uncooked) | 1 cup cherry tomatoes, chopped   |
| ¼ cup olive oil                           | 2-3 green onions, finely chopped |
| 1 lime, juiced                            | 1 bell pepper, chopped           |
| ½ cucumber, chopped                       | Salt and pepper to taste         |

If you are not using prepared quinoa (available in the health food section of the grocery, by the rice and other grains), rinse uncooked quinoa in a mesh strainer for two minutes. Drain and transfer quinoa to a saucepan. Drizzle lightly with a little olive oil and toast over medium heat for 1 minute, stirring constantly. Add 1 cup water, raise heat to high, and bring to a boil. Turn heat down to low, cover pot, and simmer for 15 minutes. Do not stir! Remove from heat and allow quinoa to rest for 5 minutes more, then transfer to a bowl and place in the refrigerator to cool, about one hour.

When ready to assemble, prepare dressing by pouring the olive oil into a bowl. Squeeze the lime juice into the oil and stir. Pour over cooled quinoa and add in the cucumber, cherry tomatoes, green onions and bell pepper. Toss mixture to coat. Serve immediately or chill in the refrigerator.



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outdoors

# Apple River Canyon

## Scenery makes northwest Illinois park a great destination

By Will Hoyer

It is not too hard to guess what the primary attraction is in Apple River Canyon State Park. Carved through limestone, dolomite and shale, the cliffs along the river are the work of countless centuries. Arriving at the park, located about 40 minutes east of Galena, Ill., by way of Highway 20, I began the long descent into the canyon and pulled into a picnic area along the river. As most visitors do, I began by walking down to the river, camera in hand. In many places lichen- and moss-covered cliffs rose straight up out of the waters, swollen from recent storms. After snapping the requisite pictures from the picnic area I headed off to explore the park's trails.

I began with a hike along the River Route Trail, which climbed up to an overlook above the valley before descending a rain-slicked trail back to the river. There, several fly fishers were waist deep in the cold waters of the river chasing the rainbow trout that the Illinois Department of Natural Resources releases in the spring when conditions allow. Later in the season, as the waters warm, smallmouth bass, sunfish and crappie become the fish of choice in the river. While the river's waters look like they would be excellent for paddling or tubing, boats of all sorts are prohibited in the park and a barbed wire across the river at one of the park boundaries underscores the danger — fast flowing water plus dangerous currents plus barbed wire is not a good combination.

While climbing back out of the valley on the trail I noticed just how green things were. The woods in this part of the state were not very green last summer in the midst of the drought, but this year the forest was as green as green can be. The park is home to at least 14 varieties of ferns as well as more than 500 different herbaceous plant species and 165 varieties of flowers.

Another trail — the Pine Ridge Trail — winds above the canyon through stands of stately white pines planted by the Civilian Conservation Corps as a part of President Roosevelt's New Deal in the 1930s. The Pine Ridge trail, like all the trails in the park, is not long (the park brochure says that the five trails in the park average 1.5 miles in length), but it is a nice choice for a short hike and is not too strenuous. While I didn't have my kids in tow on this trip, I think this would be an excellent park for the whole family to enjoy some time walking through the woods.

While I was visiting mid-week before most schools were out and saw only a handful of people, the park does get busy. Holiday weekends in the summer are, of course, the time to expect lots of park visitors, but longtime park ranger Steve Meyer says most of the remaining year's campsites are still available, and winter camping opportunities are offered in the Walnut Grove Youth Group camping area near the park office.

Anyone seeking a quiet, inexpensive place to camp should certainly check out the campground, one of the features that makes Apple River Canyon particularly



A view of a bridge over the Apple River that gives its name to Apple River Canyon State Park in Jo Daviess County, Ill. (Photo by Will Hoyer / Radish)

appealing. Perched high on a bluff above the river, the 49 spacious sites offer no electricity, but they are well spaced and afford much more privacy than sites in most campgrounds I have visited. Some offer direct access to the Primrose Trail, which climbs steeply up from a picnic area to the campground and then winds along the bluff top and crosses a small stream before reaching the far end of the park. Camp sites are reservable through Reserve America ([reserveamerica.com](http://reserveamerica.com)).

I would recommend stopping in the park office when you first arrive at the park to pick up information, a map and advice from the rangers on duty. There, I happened to talk to Meyer, who has spent 40 years working in the park. You get a lot of knowledge about a place in 40 years, and he was very willing to share his thoughts and wisdom about the place he has spent his life and made his home.

I'm not ready to make Apple River Canyon State Park my home, but if it were it would make for a beautiful one. Instead, I'll just keep it high on my list of area parks to return to and explore some more.

*Will Hoyer is a regular Radish contributor. For more information about Apple River Canyon State Park visit [dnr.state.il.us](http://dnr.state.il.us) or call 815-745-3302.*



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# Keep those cobs

When freezing sweet corn, give corncob broth a whirl



By Sarah J. Gardner

It could easily be my earliest memory of food preservation: sitting around a weather-beaten picnic table in my grandparents' backyard, shucking sweet corn with my cousins, while inside the kitchen, my mother, grandmother and aunts cut the kernels from the cobs and divided them among freezer bags to store for the winter. Even now there is something about the efficient zip of the corn husk as it's torn away from the ear that just says summer to me.

As for the pearly kernels frozen to be enjoyed later, let's just say it's hard for your average holiday gift to compete with this little taste of August heat in the heart of winter. That's why this month you'll find me down at the farmers' market carting armloads of sweet corn homeward. A few of those ears I'll enjoy that night, hot from the grill and slathered in butter. But the bulk are destined to be shucked, cut and frozen.

It's a project that takes relatively little effort and has a payoff that lasts for months. If you've ever tasted peaches-and-cream corn frozen at home at the peek of freshness, you know the store-bought bags of frozen corn come out a little starchy in comparison. The process for freezing corn is simple. Perhaps the trickiest part is removing the strands of silk from each ear, and as my family memory demonstrates, even that is a task a child can handle.

Once they've been shucked, the ears of corn should be blanched in a pot of boiling water for four minutes, after which they are plunged into a large bowl or sink full of icy water to halt the cooking process. Once cooled, the kernels can be cut from the cob and either packed directly into freezer bags or plastic containers (best if you plan to store in small amounts that can be thawed and used all at once), or spread in a single layer on a cookie sheet and placed in the freezer for a night, then packed frozen into containers for long-term storage (best if you plan to use large storage containers and take the corn out a handful at a time).

For many years, that was where the process ended for me, until I discovered the delights of corncob broth. It's a thrifty way to get the most out of your corn purchase, but it's also a method for making an extremely tasty veggie broth for soups. I know "tasty" and "veggie broth" are words that don't often appear side by side. Veggie broth is a serviceable kitchen creation but, unlike chicken or beef broth, it doesn't seem all that savory on its own. There's just something about it that — let's be honest — seems a bit dingy. You'd never want to drink it plain. So I was more than a little blown away to discover corncob broth, a honey-colored concoction that makes a wonderful base for soups. Dare I say it, this light, sweet broth borders on being effervescent. I confess I've been guilty more than once of freezing more corn than I need just to have the cobs to make more broth. What can I say? It's just that delicious.

*Sarah J. Gardner is the editor of Radish.*

## Corncob broth

**10-12 corncobs, kernels removed**  
**2 carrots, halved**  
**1 onion, quartered**  
**1 bay leaf**

**½ teaspoon peppercorns**  
**Pinch of salt**  
**A few sprigs of fresh herbs such as thyme or oregano (optional)**

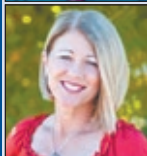
Place all ingredients in a large stockpot and add water to cover by 1 inch. Bring to a low boil over high heat, then immediately reduce heat and keep at a bare simmer for 40 minutes to 1 hour. This is a delicate broth, so a low cooking temperature is key. Once cooled, strain and discard solids, then transfer broth to glass or plastic jars for storage (leaving 2 inches of head space in any containers you plan to freeze). Keep in a refrigerator and use within one week, or store frozen for up to 6 months.



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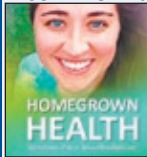


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health & fitness

# Ready, set, go

## Preparing to run a marathon? Tips from experts

By Chris Greene

It's been determined that it takes the average person 2,000 steps to run one mile, so it follows that to run a marathon, one needs only to perform that process 26.2 times. No so hard, right? 2,000 steps. 2,000 more. Keep repeating. Marathon completed. It sounds simple enough, but running a marathon can be grueling, and it takes preparation.

"It's been said that you run a marathon in two parts — the first 20 miles and the last six," says Quad Cities Marathon race director Joe Moreno.

The upcoming QC Marathon runs through Moline, Rock Island, Davenport, Bettendorf and Arsenal Island on Sept. 22. If standing on the sidelines inspires you to try a marathon yourself, you don't have to wait until next year to begin training.

Getting started can be tough, but like anything else in life, you have to take that first step. It's a good idea to talk to your physician before beginning to train, especially if you have any health issues. From there, it's time to choose your marathon.

"The most important thing, if you decide you want to take on the challenge of the marathon, is to commit to a race and fill out an application," says Rick McGrath, QC Marathon assistant race director. "It's great to have one in your own backyard for your first one — The Quad Cities Marathon. But it's also great to pick out a destination marathon. It gives you an opportunity to go places you've never been and see things you've never seen."

For your first marathon, you may want to choose one that isn't a "first annual." As a marathon newbie, it's helpful to run an established marathon that has its course support firmly in place, like plenty of water stations available.

Once you've chosen your marathon, it's time to get to work. Training programs vary, but most suggest beginning anywhere from 15 to 18 weeks before the race.

"It's all about two words: determination and distance," Moreno says. "You're going to put in



A LOT of miles. All too often it's easy to get up to 15 miles or so, for example, and then start to wonder if you can do it."

To help keep that determination high, both men suggest joining a training group. In the Quad-Cities, there is a marathon training group that meets several times a week to train together. On Sundays, they tackle a long run, and on Tuesdays, they meet at Augustana College to practice pacing and work on speed. There are also many online training programs for those who prefer a more "do-it-yourself" approach. All programs, whether online or in a group format, will gradually increase the distance you run and then taper before the marathon to give your body a chance to rest and prepare.

---

### Upcoming marathons

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**Door County Fall 50:** Oct. 26, [fall50.com](http://fall50.com)

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To avoid those aches and pains, you also need to be mindful of your body. "You can't maintain long hours at work and lack of sleep and then train for a marathon," says Moreno. "Nutrition, diet, sleep habits, work habits — all of that comes into play."

When the day of the marathon arrives, it all comes down to you. "Regardless of training, conditioning and camaraderie, come race day, there will be a time when you'll need to turn to your inner self and dig deep to help you reach your goal. I believe anyone can cover the marathon distance, but if it were easy, everyone would be doing it," says McGrath. "It may be a once-in-your-lifetime thing, or you may get hooked on it like me, but regardless, once you've crossed the marathon finish line, you'll be a marathoner, and NO ONE will be able to take that away from you."

*Chris Greene is a writer on staff with Radish.*



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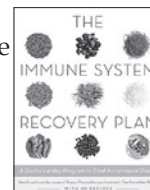


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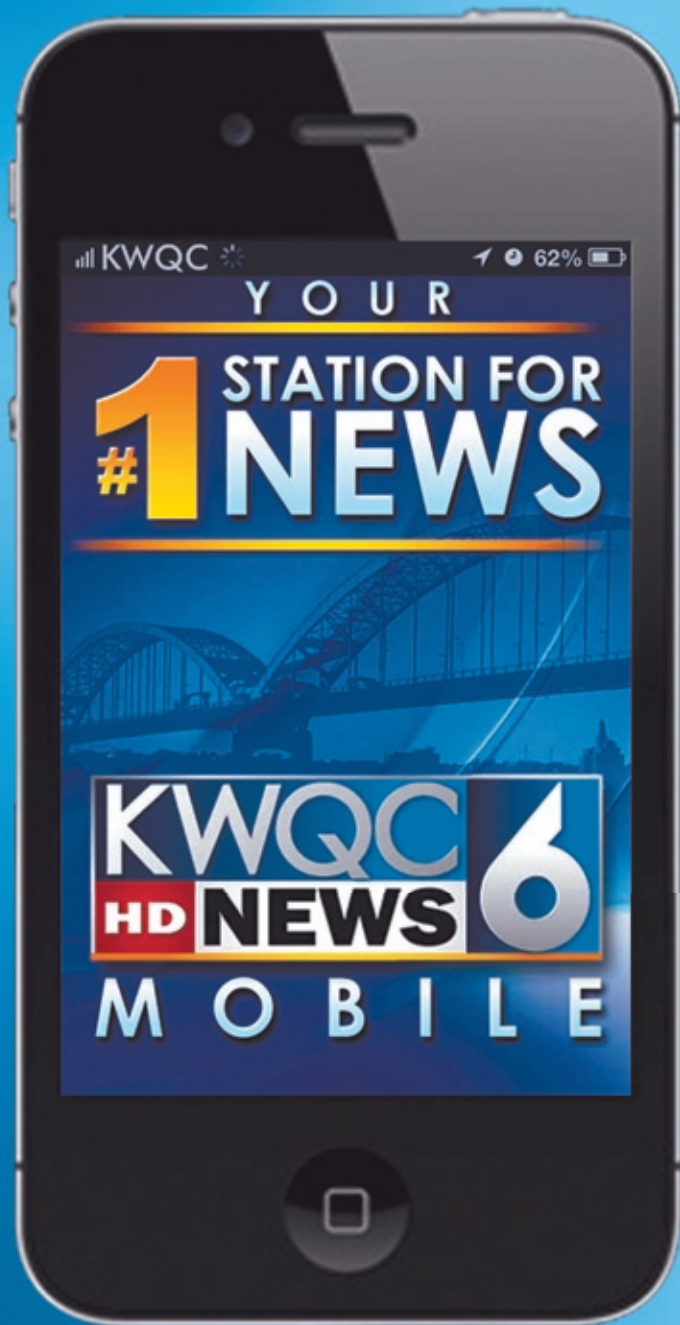
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food for thought

# Letting go of labels

## Parenting from the heart rather than a set playbook

By Leslie Klipsch

It was while running on the indoor track at my local YMCA that I realized what I had become. It was fairly obvious, in fact. Three times a week, my children would bounce balls in the kids' gym while I ran on the track directly above them, keeping a watchful eye on their actions from a good story up. Around and around I circled, all the while monitoring their play. Hovering there, I found myself studying their every move while my inner analysis kept pace. "He's got impressive dribbling skills." "Yikes. We need to work on sharing." "Could she fall off of that slide?" In the most literal sense, I was a helicopter parent.

It stopped me dead on the track.

We love to label people, and parenting styles have provided much fodder in the discussion of best child-rearing practices over the course of time. In 2011, "helicopter parent" (a parent who is overly involved in the life of his or her child) was added to the Merriam-Webster Dictionary. And though I think some of my helicopter instincts may be spot on, I don't want to let worry hold my children back from becoming healthy and independent people who learn from their mistakes and are allowed to enjoy the adventure of childhood.

The "helicopter parent" is quite the opposite of the "free-range parent," a designation that came about when Lenore Skenazy, a mother in New York, allowed her 9-year-old to ride the subway unaccompanied and wrote an article about it in 2008, causing all kinds of heated dialogue. A "free-range" parent might not worry too much about feeding their kids organic grape juice or lose any sleep about letting them run around the neighborhood for a few hours. They also might leave their child at the park for a morning, as suggested on Skenazy's blog last May in a much-talked-about post titled, "Take Our Children to the Park ... and Leave Them There Day."

"The crime rate in America is back to where it was in the early '70s. Crime was going up then, and it peaked around 20 years later. By the mid-'90s it was coming down and continues to do so," wrote Skenazy on FreeRangeKids.org. "So the strange fact ... is that if YOU were playing outside in the '70s or '80s, your kids today are safer than you were! I know it doesn't feel that way." She goes on to mention a poll revealing that the majority feels crime is going up when actually it's going down.

I find both the helicopter and free-range labels slightly disparaging, but understand why we have conversations about the pros and cons of each — we're talking about our precious offspring after all, and we all want what's best for our kids. In the 24/7

media climate that we live in, it's hard to make room for the good news as Skenazy presents it.

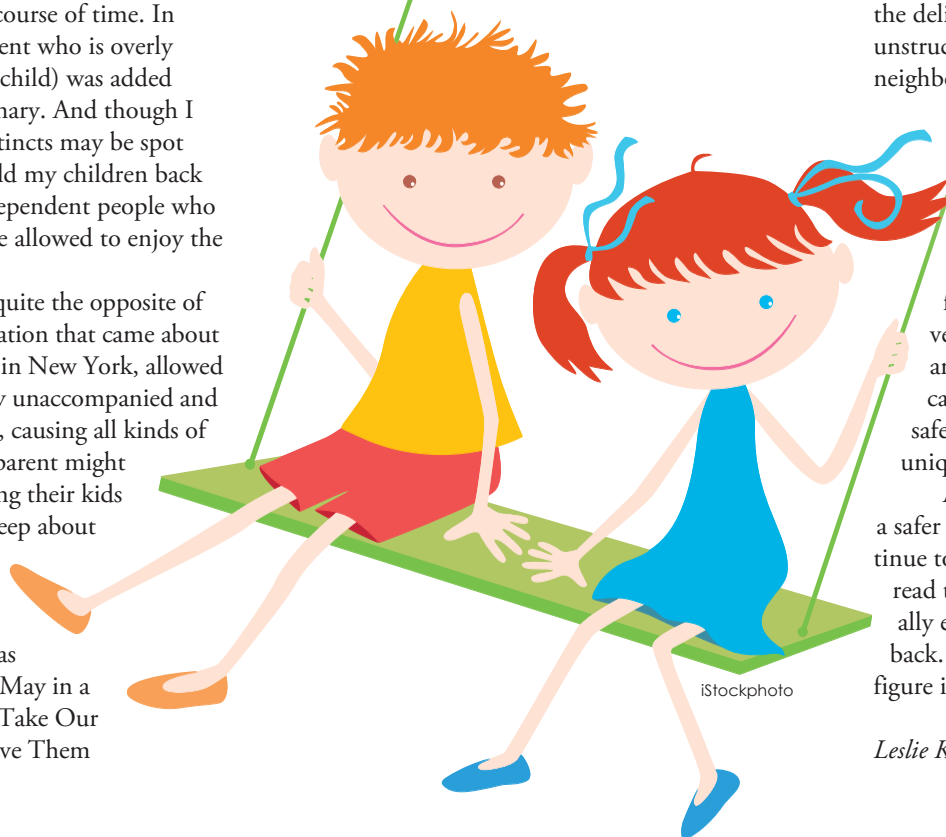
Some of us might feel comfortable leaving our 8-year-old at a park while we run errands. Perhaps this is because he or she has a history of good judgment and the park is in a neighborhood we consider safe. And some of us will find nothing wrong with texting our college-age offspring multiple times a day. Maybe it's through this constant communication that that particular relationship works best.

Guess who has fed her children solely nonprocessed snacks from muffin tins (and written about it for this very magazine)? That was me. And guess who allowed her 6-year-old to ride around the block on his bike, but only when toting a walkie-talkie so that he could be in constant communication? Also me. Admittedly, these are helicopter tendencies. But, to the delight of my inner free-ranger, I also insist on unstructured play, let my kids get bored, trust my neighbors, and re-evaluate how much and what kind of freedom each child is capable of.

The rub begins when we start making judgment on one another's choices, rather than admit that we are all trudging through the same wilderness together. Parenting is a duty that presses firmly on our hearts, so it's no surprise conversations seem to bring some heat and labels are applied. But other than in the most extreme cases, we're not likely to fully agree on what's safe or what's senseless because we all bring unique experiences and perspectives to the table.

As we send our kids back to school this year in a safer world than we might have realized, we'll continue to make the choices we believe are best. We'll read the research and compare notes. We'll gradually expand boundaries, evaluate, loosen up or pull back. We'll keep running circles, doing our best to figure it out — and that's OK.

*Leslie Klipsch is a frequent Radish contributor.*



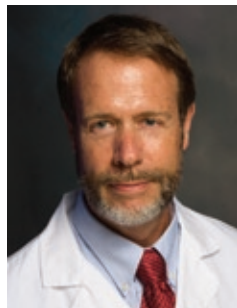
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