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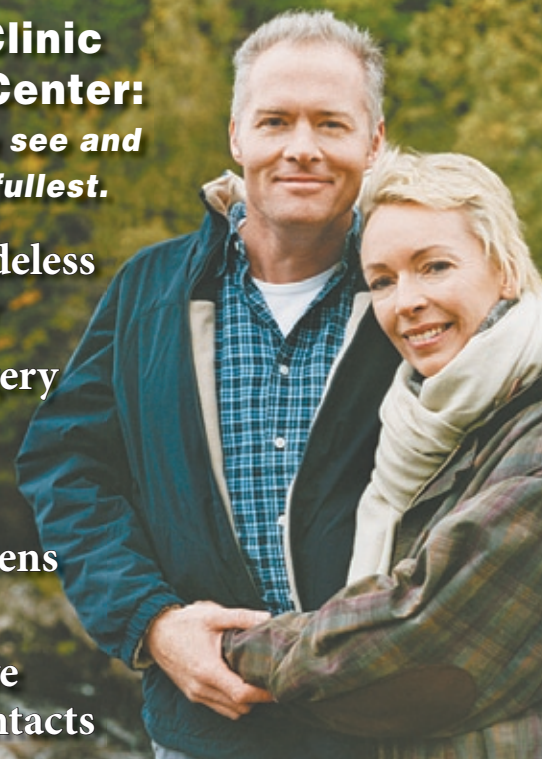
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from the editor



Radish editor Sarah J. Gardner holds a photo of her grandparents, Jean and Carl Federer. (Photo by Gary Krambeck / Radish)

The recipe box I inherited from my mother is full of delights — index cards worn soft from being passed down from my grandmother to my mother to me, notes on dishes both humble and elaborate — though I confess my favorite scrap of paper in the whole collection isn't a recipe at all. It's a note I found tucked in the back. In it my grandmother gives my mother tips on painting the rooms in our house, talks about taking lunch out for the men working in the fields, and expresses dismay that my grandfather has gone to town and left her alone on the farm. "I'll stay put here and serve him instant potatoes for dinner, ha!" she writes. I can hear my grandmother giggling each time I see the underline she drew beneath the word "instant."

I appreciate the value my grandmother placed on all things homemade as much as I appreciate her sense of humor. After all, the time we invest in gifts is part of what makes them special. Just as instant potatoes must inevitably pale in comparison to potatoes made from scratch that scent the kitchen as they are boiled and mashed for dinner, so too do gifts hastily snatched from a store shelf lack that little something extra special that a gift has when made by someone who loves us.

Time, of course, is at a premium for us all. Between work and family obligations, trying to keep fit and get dinner on the table, there is usually more to do than hours to do it in. The holiday season only amplifies this. Luckily, the time we take to make something for someone else is often a gift to ourselves as well, a little break in our busy schedules to catch our breath and exercise our talents. In this issue of Radish, you'll find ideas for unexpected treats that can be made in your own kitchen, an article on area craft studios offering classes, and a preview of an upcoming craft show full of hip, handmade items to inspire you (and perhaps provide a few unique stocking stuffers).

Despite occasional bouts of instant mashed potatoes, my grandparents spent 51 years together happily married. The most treasured gift they ever made for me was a loving place to be every Christmas Eve. To this day, my best definition of holiday cheer is the memory of being ushered into the warmth of their home on those wind-swept December evenings, proof that time together is itself a gift — everything else, as Mom would say, is just a little extra tinsel on the tree.

— Sarah J. Gardner
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Radish
HEALTHY LIVING FROM THE GROUND UP

Number 12, Volume 7
December 2011

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Radish is a monthly guide to improving your health through the natural foods, products, resources and services of Western Illinois and Eastern Iowa. It is distributed by Moline Dispatch Publishing Co., L.L.C., 1720 5th Ave., Moline, IL, 61265; (309) 757-5041; Fax: (309) 797-0317. To subscribe, send a personal check or credit card information for \$19.95 for one year (\$29.95 for two years) to Radish, 1720 5th Ave., Moline, IL, 61265. No part of this publication may be reprinted or otherwise reproduced without written permission. Send editorial correspondence to Editor, Radish, 1720 5th Ave., Moline, IL, 61265, or e-mail editor@radishmagazine.com. For a list of editorial submission guidelines, visit www.radishmagazine.com.



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the grapevine

From our readers

Noah's Ark (Nov. 2011): "This was the nicest and cleanest shelter I have ever seen. The animals are treated like they are their own. The staff is the best. The dog pens are never dirty. The dogs get to go outside to a pen for fresh air. They have a bigger pen for them to run in. The cats have their own room and can roam in the room. They have a cat door. They can go outside in a enclosed area with toys and climbing trees. The animals have the best care. I heart this shelter!"

— Norma Thye, Burlington, Iowa

Eat, play, laugh (Nov. 2011): "It's great to know that these simple games still are being played — no electronic gadgets needed!"

— Shan, Saskatchewan, Canada

Make it a mousse! (Nov. 2011): "This is sooooo good. The graham cracker recipe is wonderful too."

— Arlene, Rock Island

Nov. 2011: Each month I get a box of Radish for my store. They always disappear quickly, but this month's flew off the table in record time. ... Thanks for a quality publication."

— Donna Duvall, Dubuque, Iowa

On the Road with Radish

You can find Radish at the following community events. Pick up back issues of Radish, chat with Radish representatives, and learn more about efforts towards healthy living in our area.

- **Holiday movie showing and gift swap**, 6 to 8:30 p.m. Tuesday, Dec. 6, at the Congregation of the Humility of

Mary, 820 W. Central Park Ave., Davenport. Read more about this event on page 28.

- **Indoor winter market**, 8 a.m. to 1 p.m. Saturday, Dec. 10, at the Freight House Farmers' Market, 421 W. River Drive, Davenport.

- **Slow Food Quad Cities holiday potluck**, 11:30 a.m. Saturday, Dec. 10, at St. John's Lutheran Church, 4501 7th Ave., Rock Island. Anyone is welcome to bring a dish and attend. For more information and to reserve a spot, contact slowfoodqc@gmail.com.

- **QC-VEG vegetarian holiday potluck**, 6 p.m. Sunday, Dec. 11, at Faith United Church, 1630 W. 38th St., Davenport. Read more about this event on page 26.



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healthy living from the ground up

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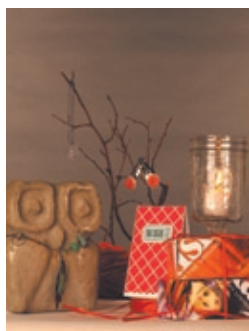
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A hip holiday art and craft fair with fresh design ideas.

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A sample of goods — all locally made — from the upcoming Handmade City fair. (Photo by Paul Colletti)

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Her T-shirt identifies Kathy Johnson as a "Mother Hen," and she plans to get a bumper sticker that says "My pets make my breakfast." Watch a video of Johnson and her pet hens and read more about this resident of Silvis, Ill., who has advocated changing a city ordinance that bans backyard chickens on radishmagazine.com.



healthy living

Routes to relief

Methods to treat and even prevent sinus pressure

By Nicole Lauer

Ice cream deprivation, needles in the face and water up the nose may sound like torture, but for those suffering from the congestion, headaches and vise-like pressure caused by inflammation of the sinuses, such remedies could spell relief. For some, dietary changes, acupuncture, sinus massage, nasal cleanses — or a combination of more than one of these remedies — could prove just the ticket to alleviate sinus pain.

Nutrition

The most benign sinus therapy is to reconsider what you eat. Dr. Jenny Sechler at Hampton Health & Wellness, in Hampton, Ill., says two of the biggest culprits behind allergies and sinus issues are wheat, because it is often an irritant to the body, and dairy, because it increases mucus production which leads to congestion. She challenges clients to 14 days of avoiding both.

“I do this for all my new clients. On the 15th day, they can eat all the wheat and dairy they want to,” she says. When that results in the return of physical discomfort, the light bulb goes on.

Sechler, a nurse practitioner and chiropractor, says giving up favorite foods can be a challenge, but those that stick it out either cut down or never go back because they realize they feel so much better.

“It really depends on how serious of an issue you have. Some people probably can go have a night of dinner and be fine,” she says.

Acupuncture

The idea of inserting needles into one’s face may not sound appealing, but Alexander Torres, of Elements Acupuncture and Wellness in Davenport, says the simple answer is that acupuncture does not hurt and can provide a lot of relief.

He says about 20 of the thin needles used in acupuncture could fit into the opening of a typical



Acupuncturist Alexander Torres administers a sinus treatment for his patient. (Photo by Todd Welvaert / Radish)

hypodermic needle used at the doctor’s office. The sensation can be described as an ache or like a light mosquito bite.

“If it was that bad, I wouldn’t have a job,” he says.

Acupuncture for sinus relief is in hot demand, according to Torres, a state licensed and nationally board-certified acupuncturist and herbalist.

“Monday through Friday, people come in for allergies,” says Torres. “Allergies and sinus is huge with acupuncture.”

Linda Handley of Ancient Wisdom Acupuncture, Bettendorf, says she also is kept busy by allergy and sinus sufferers. Handley says needles inserted in the face can relieve pain and pressure and help everything open up to drain.

Handley says she typically combines

acupuncture with herbal and dietary suggestions and self-teachings — such as pressure points clients can massage on their own.

“If you use all three, you get your results pretty quickly,” she says.

Both Torres and Handley say before the needle placing can begin, they need to discuss a client’s needs and learn more about their concerns. Torres says he typically starts with four treatments, which, combined with two adjunct treatments — such as massage — costs \$330.

Handley says if she sees someone more than once per week, her fee for the first treatment is \$55 and subsequent treatments in the same week are \$40. Discounts are available for seniors, and veterans are treated at no charge, she says.

Sinus massage

Amanda Mousel, a massage therapist at Indigo Wellness in Moline, says the 30-minute sinus massage offered at Indigo has takers of all ages and at all times of year, but “especially during the season change when people get clogged up.”

During the treatment, a steamed towel is wrapped around a client’s face and chest, and then the massage therapist presses pressure points in the muscles around the neck, ears and face to induce relief. The treatment costs \$25 and two treatments may be required before a person starts to feel better.

Mousel, who says her sinus massage training was in addition to her standard massage training, says she has never had sinus massage performed on her. “I have been told it works,” she says. “I’ve been praised for it.”

Mousel says the treatment is recommended twice per seasonal change for those in need.

Nasal cleanse

Cirissa Bentley, an employee of Greatest Grains in Davenport, is a nasal cleanse devotee as both a frequent user and promoter. “I recommend them to people all the time,” she says.

Nasal cleanses, or nasal irrigation, work by pouring a saline solution into one nostril and allowing the liquid to flow through the nasal cavity into the other nostril, washing out mucus and allergens along the way. According to WebMD, results can be seen after one or two times, but long-term use can make a real impact on sinus symptoms and quality of life.

The Neti Pot, which looks like a small teapot, is a popular option and can be purchased at Greatest Grains for \$16. A travel model, made of plastic instead of the traditional ceramic, is \$14.

Bentley says she prefers a similar option, NasalCare, because it comes in a squeeze bottle that doesn’t require her to tilt her head to use. “I’ve used it for well over a year now and I’ve always had really bad allergies,” she says. “It’s helped me anytime I’m congested.”

She says the NasalCare starter kit is about \$20 and comes with an 8-ounce bottle and 20 packets of what she called “swish sticks.” Each packet is mixed with water to make 8 ounces of washing solution.

Bentley says she can understand why nasal cleanses can make some people squeamish. “I almost drowned a couple times when I was young so the idea of putting water up my nose wasn’t very appealing,” she says.

She says the best advice for those who share her same concern is to make a “ka” sound and hold it in the throat to completely block off the wind pipe. Another trick, she says, is to do the nasal cleanse in the shower to avoid worrying about the mess of runoff.

“It wasn’t as bad as I thought it was going to be, and it’s actually a little enjoyable,” says Bentley.

Nicole Lauer was previously the education reporter for The Dispatch and The Rock Island Argus and now freelances when her daughter’s nap times and baby whims allow.



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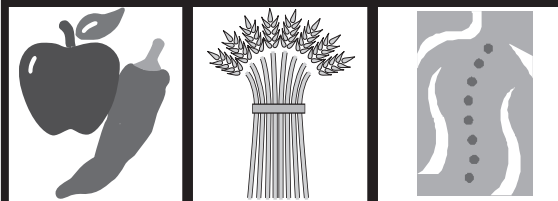
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healthy living

Tickle taste buds

Gifts from the kitchen to make and give this season

By Sarah J. Gardner

Let's face it. Cooking up a good holiday gift is hard. Tasty tidbits abound at this time of year. Between the office parties, school functions, cookie exchanges, holiday meals with one side of the family and then holiday meals with the other, baked goods given as gifts can get lost in a haze of sugar. No wonder so many Mason jars of homemade cookie mix can be found intact as countertop decorations months later. After all that gustatory merriment, who rushes to bake one more tray of cookies?

And yet, I confess, I love to give gifts from the

kitchen. Unlike a vase or a sweater, I never worry if a baked gift is going to fit the recipient's home decor or be the right size. Nor do I lose sleep weighing the odds it will be one more needless gadget cluttering up someone else's cupboard. In the frenzied holiday season, baked goods are a true gift of time and talent — something that says even in your most hectic moments, the people you love are worth a little effort and attention.

The key as I see it is to think outside the holidays. Although cookies and other sweets seem like an obvious choice, a gift that can be enjoyed in the quieter weeks ahead has the ability to transcend the

traditional holiday fare. The same goes for treats that take it easy on the sugar.

For your holiday gift giving, I offer three of my favorite recipes: mellified walnuts, ginger syrup and sugarplums. All make use of healthful ingredients — walnuts are rich in fiber, high in B vitamins, and have been shown to aid in lowering cholesterol; ginger is prized for its ability to soothe stomachs, useful in an indulgent season; and the dried fruit in sugarplums features an old-fashioned sweetness in contrast to the refined sugars more often on offer this time of year.

Sarah J. Gardner is editor of Radish.



Sugarplums, Ginger Syrup and Mellified Walnuts are all simple treats to prepare, make elegant gifts to give and can be enjoyed beyond the holidays. (Photos by Gary Krambeck / Radish)

Ginger Syrup and Candied Ginger

½ pound ginger (8 ounces), about 2 large knobs, peeled
2 cups granulated sugar, plus ¼ cup extra for coating
the ginger pieces
2 cups water

Thinly slice the ginger. In a medium-size heavy saucepan, combine the sugar and the water over medium heat, stirring until the sugar is mostly dissolved. Add the ginger slices. Simmer over medium heat for one hour, checking on the ginger slices occasionally to make sure they aren't drying out and that the water isn't evaporating too quickly.

When the ginger is done (it will be soft), remove with a slotted spoon. Toss the ginger pieces and the remaining sugar in a plastic bag to coat. Then, spread them out in a single layer on a sheet of wax paper. Let dry overnight.

Let the ginger syrup cool, then refrigerate. If you want a thicker ginger syrup, continue to cook over medium-low heat. Makes about 1½ cups ginger syrup, which can keep up to three months in the refrigerator.

Poured over pancakes and waffles, the syrup adds pleasant warmth at the breakfast table, and as a sweetener it can be a versatile addition to many beverages, including sparkling water, vodka and tea.

— *Recipe adapted from brooklynfarmhouse.com.*

Mellified Walnuts

1 pound walnut halves or pieces
1 pound honey

A clean glass jar with a tight-fitting lid

There are no exact measurements in this recipe, which begins with fitting as many of the walnut halves or pieces as you can into the jar. Once they come within ¼ inch of the rim, begin pouring honey into the jar to fill the spaces between the nuts. Tap the jar against the countertop gently to help remove air bubbles, and add enough honey to top the nuts. Screw the lid onto the jar and store in a cabinet; check on it the next day and add more honey as needed to cover the nuts, which may have settled overnight. The walnuts and honey are shelf-stable and can be stored in a cupboard. They are ready to give as a gift in a week and can be enjoyed as a topping for oatmeal or ice cream.

Sugarplums

4 cups (about 16 ounces) chopped, pitted dates	3 tablespoons dried orange peel
2½ cups coarsely chopped pistachio nuts	2 tablespoons ground ginger
1 cup coarsely chopped dried apricots	1 tablespoon ground cloves
1 cup coarsely chopped dried figs	2 tablespoons ground mace
⅓ cup brandy	1½ teaspoons ground cinnamon
4 tablespoons apricot preserves	1½ cups raw cane sugar
	100 whole cloves for the stems (optional)

Place all the ingredients except the sugar and cloves in a food processor and rapidly pulse the machine on and off for 1 to 2 minutes, or until the mixture is very evenly ground into a doughy paste and begins to pull away from the sides of the work bowl. Empty the mixture onto a clean work surface and knead it by hand for 2 minutes to completely blend all the ingredients. Wrap the sugarplum mixture tightly in plastic wrap and refrigerate it for 2 hours or overnight.

Place teaspoon-sized scoops of the chilled sugarplum mixture between your palms. Roll the scoops into smooth balls to resemble small plums. Roll the plums in the cane sugar and, optionally, insert a whole clove into one end of each sugarplum to be a "stem." (You may want to skip adding the stems if you will not be present to warn your recipients not to eat them.) Lay the sugarplums out on a baking sheet lined with parchment and allow them to firm up in a cool, dry place overnight. Store the sugarplums in single layers in airtight containers at room temperature. Can be kept for up to 2 weeks or frozen for longer storage.

— *Recipe adapted from*
"Gourmet Gifts" by Dinah Corley



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Keepin' it classy

Have more DIY spirit than ability? There's a class for that!

By Leslie Klipsch

At The Adventure Orange D.I.Y. Boutique in the Village of East Davenport, you can purchase unique handmade clothing and accessories. Or, you can take matters into your own hands and sign up for a class to learn to sew an apron, make mittens or bend an old vinyl record into a bracelet. At Home Ec. Workshop in downtown Iowa City, similar opportunities await. Purchase fabrics, fibers and craft supplies in the front of the store and learn to knit a scarf, screen print a T-shirt, or piece a quilt in the back.

Learning a craft — whether it's sewing or screen printing or anything in between — has many advantages. It typically makes good economic sense. It's also environmentally friendly as much of the material needed can be re-used from another source. Since we tend to value the things we make ourselves over the ones we pluck off a shelf at the store, chances are good we'll take better care of a handmade item.

As a consumer of handmade items and an enthusiast of the one-of-a-kind, I know all of this is true. But as a relatively new crafter and someone severely lacking in fine motor skills (let's just say I could never be a surgeon), I have had concerns that my DIY ability might have peaked with making bath salts. That is, until I heard about the array of area classes meant to guide and instruct. With a few crafty friends, I recently enjoyed an evening class at The Adventure Orange Studio in East Moline, where I learned to make felted flower hair pins and brooches. Now, equipped with a few new skills and a bit more confidence, the world of DIY beckons.

Both Anne Brown, whose Adventure Orange shares a storefront with Mint Green in Davenport and has studio space in East Moline, and Alisa Weinstein, who co-owns Iowa City's Home Ec. Workshop with Codi Josephson, say that many of the people who sign up for their classes are those who are interested in handmade and DIY goods but were never taught the skills needed to complete a project. Brown says she sees a lot of women in their mid-20s



Adventure Orange owner Ann Brown stands over the shoulder of writer Leslie Klipsch, offering encouragement and advice, during a recent felted flower class. (Photos by John Greenwood / Radish)

who do not know how to sew but are interested in making up for lost time.

Weinstein has met a number of Home Ec. patrons who have come to cherish an item made by a grandmother or aunt or someone special and want to learn the skill that they haven't previously had the chance to learn or simply weren't interested in learning before. "More and more people want to be more self-sufficient and to learn skills that they can use on a daily basis," Weinstein says. "Whether it's sewing or knitting or whatever, making something is a satisfying thing to do."

Out of the dozen or so of us gathered at The Adventure Orange Studio, many of us fell into a similar category. Though both Home Ec. and The Adventure Orange offer more technically advanced

classes (as well as private sewing lessons), the felted flower class was laid-back and beginner friendly. The studio was warm and calm with soft music and the scent of coffee and coconut wafers. Brown's teaching approach was thorough, yet nonintimidating.

"I have always had the capacity to get across the information that people need to complete a project and I feel very comfortable in a classroom setting," says Brown. "When I teach, I try to be flexible and

'When you make something yourself, it carries much more meaning.'

encourage people to be creative. I try to give solid instruction without showing too many examples. That way what people end up with is truly their own."

In our felted flower class, Brown gave participants basic technical instruction, but then provided the freedom to explore our own tastes. As we worked she circled the table to answer individual questions, dole out compliments, and offer advice and encouragement.

"When you make something yourself, it carries much more meaning. I love sharing what I know and what I do with others so that they can experience it as well," she told me later.



Because of the importance that Home Ec.'s Weinstein and Josephson place on instruction, they've structured their business hours to accommodate the questions of blossoming crafters. In addition to evening and weekend classes, Home Ec. offers informal workshop hours in which experts are available to answer the questions of anyone who drops in with a project.

"We're used to teaching," Weinstein says. "We are always willing to help people with whatever they're working on."

On Thursday afternoons Home Ec. hosts a group of elementary school girls who cozy up next to the in-store coffee bar and practice knitting. On Saturday mornings you'll find more experienced knitters, ranging in age from early-20s through 60-plus, gathered together for a light breakfast. "It's fun to watch the knitting needles going while people are chatting with and listening to one another," Weinstein remarks, noting how much she enjoys seeing people who may not normally cross paths connect over their craft.



Additionally, both The Adventure Orange and Home Ec. studios accommodate private parties in which they provide studio space, material and instruction. Baby-shower attendees might custom screen print onesies and birthday party-goers might make a pillow case or embellish a handbag. These gatherings of friends are both celebratory and productive — which are exactly the elements of the felted flower class that I enjoyed the most. I spent an evening with two good friends and met several other delightful, creative women. We enjoyed laughing and talking, all the while doing something with our hands.

Another participant seated down the long table from me summed it up best. Judging from the laughter and chatter coming from her end of the room, it's safe to say that Carla Lott enjoyed the evening of crafting with her 33-year-old daughter and 13-year-old granddaughter. With a threaded needle in one hand and a beautiful felted brooch in the other, she declared, "There's never enough time to enjoy together."

Leslie Klipsch is a writer, editor and mother of three who enjoys cooking, eating, reading, crafting and spending time with her family.

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Handmade City

A hip holiday art and craft fair with fresh design ideas

By Laura Anderson Shaw

It began with a simple idea. Two crafty friends — Rose Noble of Galena and Leah Sprott of Moline — had been selling handmade goods online but wanted customers to have a chance to do more than read a product description and flip through a few photos. What if customers could see and handle their clever creations? What if Noble and Sprott could talk to them in person about the things they had made?

What they needed was a craft sale. The two set off in search of a “hip and affordable craft show in the Quad-Cities area,” something that would be the perfect fit to showcase their work, but came up short. The bazaars they found locally didn’t really mesh with the items they were making, and the ones that were a good fit were generally too far away and too expensive to enter.

The duo didn’t let that stop them. After all, they already had made the crafts. Why not also make a

craft fair? “Since no one else was doing it, I decided to take on the challenge of setting one up myself,” Noble explains.

After she found a venue to hold the show, she threw together a group of 13 vendors as kind of a last-minute deal, and put together a website. “From there, it just kind of grew,” she says.

Thus was born the Handmade City holiday art and craft show in 2010, an event that was so successful, it was quickly followed by a second show in the spring. That event swelled to 20 vendors. The upcoming holiday show, which will be held from 11 a.m. to 4 p.m. Dec. 3 at Rozz-Tox, 2108 3rd Ave., Rock Island, has grown even further and will showcase 23 vendors.

To participate in Handmade City, vendors go through a juried selection process, which Noble says ensures items sold fit a certain aesthetic and quality. It also helps solve the problem of a high number of applicants paired with the limited amount of vendor space.

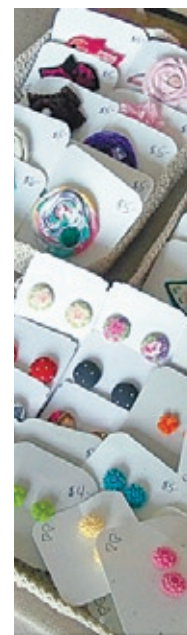
“I kind of want it to be this indie, DIY, more hip craft show,” Noble says. There are so many “traditional” arts and crafts shows, she says, and while she appreciates all things handmade, she just doesn’t “think it really fits with what Handmade City wants to represent and promote.”

Numerous handmade goodies will be available at the Handmade City show, including plush toys for children and pets; baby clothes; jewelry (including unique artisan silver jewelry); letter press and handmade holiday cards; and accessories. “Basically, things you would not see at a traditional craft show at all,” Noble says.

Noble says that you won’t find anything at the show that has been mass produced. That means Handmade City crafters and artists have been busy putting on their crafting caps and getting to work. After all, booths arrayed with unique items don’t just happen — they require hours of work and plenty of attention to detail. Just ask these hardworking Handmade City artisans.



Items at the Handmade City event held earlier this year featured an array of handmade goods, including pet toys, dresses and shirts, and hair accessories. (Submitted)





Aimee Marie Ortlieb, of Bettendorf, is a single, work-at-home mom. Find her Dilly Baby line of children's and babies' gift items at the show, or online at etsy.com/shop/dillybaby, or www.dillybaby.com.

Her craft: "I began sewing at a very young age because my mom loved to sew. I wanted a way to continue to be in design and fashion while being at home with my children," and Dilly Baby was born, she says.

Her goods: eco-friendly reusable snack bags; change 'n go diaper changing sets; crayon wallets and their adult counterpart, organizers.

Mary Immesoete, of Moline, is a Quad-Cities native graphic designer who enjoys antiquing and gardening. Find her line at lilsqueeks.com and at the show.

Her craft: "I started my business focusing on pets because I absolutely adore animals and the joy they can bring to your life. My cat, Pimm, used to enjoy 'helping' any time I was crafting, so my business is named after him," she says, adding that Pimm would squeak when he jumped.

Her goods: felt kitty toys (including the ever-popular fried egg); collars and leashes; doggy-bag holders; squeaky furry dog bones and recycled denim squeak toys.



Rose Noble, of Galena, Ill., is a graphic designer by day and a self-proclaimed jack-of-all-trades by night. She also is the lead organizer for HMC. Check her out at ladynoble.com and at the show.

Her craft: "I have been drawing for as long as I can remember. I am mostly a self-taught artist, but my mother, older brother, and trace and color books fueled my love for art."

"My goal as an artist is to merge my fine-art drawing skills with my love for clean, sharp graphic design. This carries over into my jewelry as well. I am more drawn towards simple clever designs."

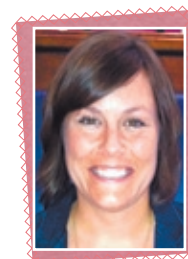
Her goods: art prints and posters; clever gifts; and jewelry.



Andie Douglas, of Rock Island, had a dream of owning a boutique design studio and shop. Now a senior communications specialist at a Quad-Cities area company, with a degree in graphic design, her dream is realized through her hobby, which birthed her line, Doug, Jack and Me. Find her at the show and online at dougjackandme.blogspot.com.

Her craft: "I love designing on my MacBook, but hand-making cards has always been something I enjoy. Give me some paper scraps and rubber cement and I'll be happy for hours. My style is simple with a dose of humor."

Her goods: handmade cards, calendar journals, quotable wooden key chains.



Laura Anderson Shaw is a writer and crafter who makes jewelry and hair accessories under the moniker Miss Maehem. For more information, visit handmadecity.org.



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Slumber on

A doctor's advice on getting a good night's rest

By Ann Ring

After the day is done and night has closed in, we yawn once or twice as we climb into bed, snap off the nightstand light, and drift off to a good eight hours of restful sleep. Ah, if only life were so simple.

No matter what age, from babies to seniors, we all regularly need a decent night's sleep. Instead, millions of us are not getting enough. While sleep patterns typically change as we age, we may increasingly find it more difficult to fall sleep, stay asleep, or both.

Dr. Stephen Rasmus, medical director for Genesis Health System Sleep Center in Davenport, lists common sleep problems: insomnia, restless leg syndrome (RLS), periodic limb movement disorder, narcolepsy, sleep walking, night terrors, sleep related breathing disorders (SRBD) like obstructive sleep apnea, and bruxism (teeth grinding). "Out of all of these, the most common we see are sleep apnea and insomnia," he says.

Other problems associated with sleep interruption are the result of side effects from medications; medical conditions such as arthritis and acid reflux; menopause; shift work; anxiety or depression; poor sleep environment; and a sedentary life style. Research also shows that women tend to sleep more on average but sleep less deeply and are more prone to sleep disorders, including insomnia.

Most patients at Genesis' sleep clinic are treated for obstructive apnea, which is a repeated on/off upper airway blockage during sleep. Men suffer from it more commonly than women, and it is more common in men who are obese. Not everyone who snores has sleep apnea, and not everyone who has sleep apnea snores. Sleep apnea can be deadly, increasing the risk of heart attacks, strokes, high blood pressure and auto accidents.

Most likely a partner will notice breathing problems much sooner than the patient. Such was the case with Jim Riedesel, 81, of Davenport. "When I was 75 years old, my wife Helen, a retired nurse, noticed I was having problems while I slept, like snoring, gasping for air in my sleep, and I felt tired in the afternoon, which was unusual." Riedesel (who is fit otherwise) underwent a sleep study at Genesis Sleep Center, where Dr. Akshay Mahadevia diagnosed sleep apnea. Riedesel was provided with a BiPAP, or bilevel positive airway pressure machine, developed from the more common CPAP, or continuous positive airway machine. Both provide air pressure with a mask to keep the airway open for more restful sleep.

Although the machine does its job, Riedesel is going to return to the sleep center for a refitting, which is common. On the other hand, Helen Riedesel, 76, has no problems sleeping, except "going to the bathroom during the night," she laughs. Due to years of having to be on-call, she still wakes up early. "Sometimes at 4 or 5 in morning," she says. "Sometimes I get up, sometimes I don't."

Proper "sleep hygiene," or rituals, are important throughout one's life,



iStockphoto

says Rasmus. These should begin at birth and include abiding to a regular bedtime, proper room temperature (cooler rather than warmer), and a darkened sleeping space. He advises, "Try to value your sleep."

Remedies abound for sleep disturbances, including medications, nonpharmacological strategies, and supplements. Rasmus never recommends over-the-counter sleep aids. "Most of these contain an antihistamine and can have a 12-hour life," he says, "so if you take one at night, then at 10 a.m. the next morning, three-fourths of that drug is still in your system." He adds that taking these pills can become habitual and can exasperate your disorder. "Shorter acting prescriptions are more effective."

Behavioral interventions include installing light-proof blinds and/or white noise; removing electronics; eating healthy and exercising (but not within two hours of bedtime); limiting caffeine intake; deep breathing; abiding to a regular bedtime; listening to music; and reading. Dietary supplements include melatonin, valerian, chamomile, tryptophan, magnesium, and pure L-theanine. Because there can be a wide difference in medical philosophies, it may be best to first consult with a medical professional who suits your own values and beliefs in treating your medical issues. "Keep in mind," notes Rasmus, "nothing works for everyone."

Frequent contributor Ann Ring is an independent grant writer, grant researcher and freelance journalist living in Illinois.



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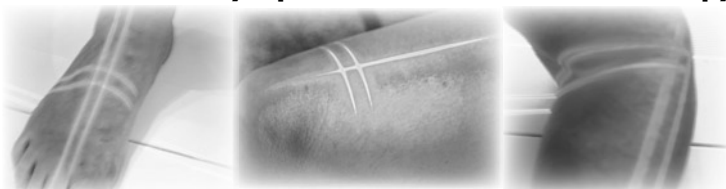
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food

Tiny, tasty seeds

A surprising nutritional powerhouse in small packaging

By Erin Alderson

My first experience with eating hemp coincided with a new-found love of yogurt. Every week I would buy new kinds of granola to use as topping for my yogurt. The week I tried the hemp granola, I fell in love. From there I bought hemp seeds and began to experiment adding hemp into recipes. Hemp is a key staple in my quest to find the best way to add as many nutrients into my daily diet as I can.

"Hemp?" you may ask. Hemp and especially hemp seeds often get bad publicity because hemp and marijuana belong to the same plant family. However, they are scientifically different and cultivated in separate ways. Hemp seeds are the edible part of the hemp plant and once shelled can be eaten whole, pressed into oil, ground into milk and even milled into protein powder. Sold in many supermarkets and health stores, usually near the flax seeds and grains, hemp seeds have a flavor akin to that of a pine nut, only slightly sweeter. Since hemp seeds are

small, about the size of a sesame seed, they are used as garnishes or baked into dishes to add a sweet hint of nuttiness.

Tasty as they are, however, the flavor of hemp seeds is not the main reason I continue to add them to foods and recipes. As a vegetarian, I am very conscience of the right balance of nutrients I need in my diet. Hemp is an easily digestible, high-quality, plant-based protein. Three tablespoons of hemp pack 10 grams of protein. Hemp also contains all of the 20 amino acids, including the nine essential amino acids that our body cannot produce. Moreover, hemp has the perfect one-to-three balance of omega-3 to omega-6 acids. These fatty acids are essential for a healthy cardiovascular system, glowing skin and a strong immune system. For such a small seed, it packs a big nutritional punch!

Illinois resident Erin Alderson makes her Radish debut this month. To read an additional recipe Erin developed for Cherry Hemp Granola, visit radishmagazine.com.

Pumpkin Hemp Cookies

1 cup whole wheat	½ teaspoon salt
pastry flour	1 teaspoon nutmeg
1 cup ground hemp	½ cup butter,
seeds	softened
1 teaspoon baking	½ cup brown sugar
soda	½ cup natural sugar
1 teaspoon baking	1 cup pumpkin
powder	puree
1 tablespoon	1 egg
cinnamon	1 teaspoon vanilla

Preheat oven to 375 degrees. Using a nut or coffee grinder, grind hemp seeds to resemble a course meal (about 15-30 seconds). Whisk together ground hemp seeds, flour, baking soda, baking powder and salt; set aside.

In a mixer using the paddle attachment, beat butter and sugars together. (If you don't have a mixer, beat by hand — just make sure your butter is soft but not melted.) Add in pumpkin and continue to mix until pumpkin, butter and sugars are combined. Next add in egg, vanilla, cinnamon and nutmeg. Continue to beat, scraping sides if need be. Finally add in hemp mixture and beat until dough comes together and the hemp mixture is incorporated. Do not over-beat.

Cover a baking tray with a piece of parchment paper. Using a cookie scoop (or a large spoon) scoop cookies and place 2 inches apart from each other.

Bake for 15-20 minutes (for large cookies) or until cookie springs back slightly (as if baking a cupcake). Remove from oven and let cool for five minutes, then transfer to a rack to finish cooling.



Photo by Erin Alderson

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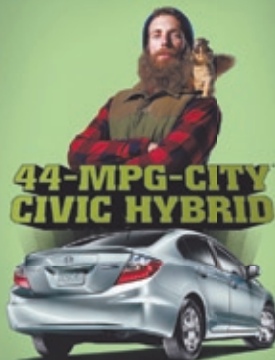
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body, mind & soul

Noble silence

Dhamma Pakasa offers meditation experience

By Evan Harris

Looks can be deceiving. From the outside, the Dhamma Pakasa campus outside Rockford, Ill., easily could pass for any number of rural properties outside the Quad-Cities. Old farm buildings stand at one end. Cropland surrounds it. The grounds are pleasantly overgrown in all the right ways, with trees and native grasses. Even the center itself looks homey and unobtrusive.

Inside, though, is a unique opportunity to explore a meditation practice. Of course, there are meditation centers and groups in the Quad-Cities and surrounding area. The appeal of Dhamma Pakasa is that it is a residential center, offering immersive training and practice. And there is no cost. The center is run entirely on volunteerism and donations from past students.

Run by the Dhamma organization (dhamma.org), a secular entity dedicated to teaching Vipassana meditation, the retreat center is one of more than 100 such centers worldwide. “Vipassana” means to see things as they really are. Described as an art of living, it is the quintessential Buddhist meditative practice. There are a number of styles of Vipassana, and the one taught by the Dhamma organization is purported to be the actual practice taught by the historical Buddha.

I have practiced sitting meditation for a number of years — sometimes, when I’m lucky, with a teacher, though mostly on my own — but I was interested in deepening my practice. This is what drew me to the center. New students to Dhamma Pakasa take a 10-day course. They must commit to living on campus for the full duration of the retreat, completely removed from outside obligations and responsibilities.

During that time, students also have to commit to observing “noble silence” — no speaking, gesturing or communication of any form, except with designated staff. Noble silence commences quickly. On the evening I arrived, it began after a brief orientation.

At 4 a.m. the next morning the bell sounded and the schedule started, consisting of roughly 11 hours of sitting meditation broken up by meals, breaks and an evening discourse. I was disoriented at first, but the routine is posted everywhere. Bells at designated times keep everyone on schedule, and I quickly learned where to be when. Day by day, hour by hour, it is a seamless, well-oiled machine.

The course consists of three steps. First is simple moral conduct. Easy enough: no killing, stealing, lying or the like for the duration of the course. This calms the mind. Second is basic concentration, focusing on the flow of breath as it enters and leaves the nostrils. This imparts some control over the mind. Finally, after a few days, I learned the actual Vipassana technique, described on the organization’s website as “observing sensations throughout the body, understanding their nature, and developing equanimity by learning not to react to them.” This gradually teaches the mind to be balanced, aware and serene, breaking the habitual pattern of reaction.



The Dhamma Pakasa retreat house in Rockford, Ill. (Submitted)

Sitting for long periods is necessary to develop concentration, but not easy. The course was described as “hard work” and lived up to the billing. The first few days felt like something of a boot camp, and I exhausted every potential configuration of cushions in an effort to find comfort. It was a shock and the learning curve was steep, but blessedly fast. By the third day it was clear that while the body certainly ached, the real culprit was the mind, suddenly starved of its rich diet of distraction, howling and rattling the cages.

As the acute agitation waned, I found the Vipassana practice to be simple and appealing. It was not abstract or esoteric. It was not about visualizing yantras or moving energy through chakras. It was right in the very bone and tissue of the body, how it feels moment to moment, always changing, and how, with practice, I can have a choice about making a problem out of these sensations or not.

The rest of the course established and sophisticated the practice, which began to flow sporadically, even easily. This is no quick fix or instant enlightenment, but the lightness and ease of mind at course’s end was unmistakable. Continued practice outside the bubble of Dhamma Pakasa is another challenge but, I think, not an insurmountable one. An “art of living,” after all, can only take place in the midst of life.

Evan Harris is a yoga instructor and co-owner of tapas yoga shala. For more information on Dhamma Pakasa, visit www.pakasa.dhamma.org.

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outdoors

Warm all over

Essential winter wear for staying active outdoors

By Chris Greene

In years past, bundling up to head out into the cold often left outdoor enthusiasts feeling a bit like the kid who can't put his arms down in "A Christmas Story." Times have changed, however, and recent innovations in fabrics have brought us a variety of options that make enjoying your outdoor pastimes much easier and a lot more fun.

"One thing most people have heard of is Gore-Tex, which is a very thin membrane that is waterproof, wind proof and breathable. Gore-Tex is a fabric you see universal to all sports," says Matt Ostrom, owner of Active Endeavors in Davenport.

Often that Gore-Tex shell is a part of a coat or jacket, so it cannot be removed or worn separately. Ostrom says that is fine for very cold conditions, but not so good when conditions are a bit warmer and you don't need as much insulation.

In cold weather, Ostrom recommends an insulating layer worn underneath that shell. This can be a jacket, sweatshirt or wool layer. "Down insulation is very

warm for its weight and is easily packed. It is super warm and durable, but it loses its insulating abilities if wet," Ostrom says.

If that is a concern, there are lots of synthetic materials that imitate down, says Ostrom. "One of these is PrimaLoft, which is the best synthetic out there. It's super warm, but not very bulky."

Even wool has come a long way. Today's wool can be used as a great insulating layer without the scratchiness of years past. "Most wool is now soft. It feels great, but it is more expensive," Ostrom says.

It's so soft, in fact, that it can also be used for the base layer, also called the next-to-skin layer. This is extremely important in colder climates because that moisture can settle on your skin and cause you to become chilled. "This is different than your insulating layer. It's not really for insulation, but for pulling moisture away from your body," explains Ostrom.

In addition to the body, we also need to think about the head, hands and feet. "Most people want something that looks nice and is warm. Always keep in mind that wicking ability, or the ability to pull moisture away from the body, is important. Runners especially worry about that — their concern is usually more about function over form," says Ostrom.

For cyclists, there is also specialized head gear, including something called a balaclava, which covers the face, top of the head and ears. "Your cycling helmet goes over it. There are varying thicknesses available. You almost need two — one for moderate weather, and one for super cold," explains Bruce Grell of Healthy Habits in Bettendorf.

Cyclists also must be mindful of their hands. "You want to make sure your gloves are windproof — that's a big deal when you're cycling. You can layer your gloves, and some gloves even come in two layers" says Grell.

Rock Island Bike and Hike manager Phil Maess also recommends heated handlebar grips. "They are very expensive, but very nice, especially if you commute on your bike. Then they are almost a must," he says.

For footwear, there is a variety of sock and shoe options. The experts agree that keeping your feet dry is key. Use moisture wicking material including synthetics or wool. "There are insulated shoes available with everything from sheepskin to PrimaLoft, and this can be used in everything from hiking boots to running shoes to construction workers' boots," says Ostrom.

A few key things that all three outfitters agree upon is that it is important to remember that you get what you pay for, and talking to those in the industry helps.

"Get the right gear and get out there and enjoy winter. With the technology out there, you can stay warm without being overly bulky, and you can really enjoy the outdoors," Ostrom says.



Active Endeavors manager Tim Phares shows off some of the gear which will help keep you warm this winter. (Photo by Todd Welvaert / Radish)

Radish contributor Chris Greene enjoys skiing when the winter weather arrives.

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good business

The Farmer's Table

Chef invites diners to bring their appetites to the farm

By Ann Scholl Rinehart

Chef Chris Grebner had a seed of an idea: What if he gave people the opportunity to sit at the same dinner table and share a meal with the very farmers who grew the food they were eating?

What Grebner, 28, discovered in conversations with owners of small, local, sustainable farms is that his idea had merit. To a person, the farmers expressed a desire to know the people who were consuming their food. Those conversations led Grebner to start The Farmer's Table.

Here's how it works: Grebner plans the menu and where the dinner will be held. He then bases his dinner on the products grown there and at neighboring farms. For example, in October, he held a dinner at Sawyer Beef in Princeton, Iowa. Nostalgia Farms, Kalona Organics and Fae Ridge Farm all provided food for the event, in addition to Sawyer Beef itself. The result was a menu that included beef involtini, cabbage and root vegetables; pumpkin, crème fraîche, gremolata and marrow toast; and apple and brandied fruit tarts.

Guests for the meal ate at tables set in one of the Sawyer barns. Neal Sawyer says he and the other guests at the meal enjoyed the opportunity to eat beef prepared in ways they might not have tried otherwise. "Before each dish is served, Chef Grebner tries to tell everybody about where it's from and how he prepared it," says Sawyer.

Reservations for the dinners are made at Grebner's website, thefarmerstable.us. Typically, each dinner seats 15 to 30 people. He purchases products for the dinner from farmers in a 30- to 50-mile radius of his North Liberty, Iowa, home. Grebner charges \$40 per person for the four- to six-course meals. "I'm trying to keep it inexpensive," he says. "I don't like the idea of good, well-prepared food being only for the elite."

Grebner, who worked at restaurants and catering companies in Portland, Ore., after graduating

with honors from Portland's Le Cordon Bleu College of Culinary Arts in 2009, calls The Farmer's Table "the most rewarding culinary work I've done."

"It's hard to put words to it. When you have a



Chef Chris Grebner by a table set in a barn at Sawyer Beef.
(Photo by John Greenwood / Radish)

meal and you see people go into conversation about food — and things about food that matter — with complete strangers, it's extremely rewarding to be part of that."

Grebner graduated from Webster City High School in 2001. He and his wife, DeeAnn, a nurse at the University of Iowa Hospitals and Clinics, married in 2004. While the couple lived in Portland, Grebner started a business called Spoon & Fork Personal Chef Service, an undertaking that involves "anything you can think of that you do in the kitchen, from weekly meals to dinner parties to in-home cooking classes."

He's continued that business since moving back to Iowa last November. As a personal chef, Grebner does the grocery shopping and brings his own equipment — pots, pans, knives — into people's homes to create ready-to-eat custom meals. Again, he uses fresh, locally produced products in his meals. He even does the clean up.

"After working in restaurants, I enjoyed getting closer to the source of the food — the farmers — and the guests, too," he says. "I always enjoyed being around people and servicing people. There's something to be said about the intimacy found at the dinner table that's made culinary work worth it for me."

He wanted to move back to Iowa in part because he felt he could make more of an impact here than in Portland. "I had the feeling everything had been done in Portland," he explains. "I felt I didn't have much to offer to further change there. I wanted to move to a place that was familiar but that needed some work and was still changing. Iowa City felt like a good place for that."

He's having good success with his businesses. "People are definitely interested," he says, adding that his dinners through The Farmer's Table usually sell out. In the future, he hopes to own a home in the country where he could host dinners. Like the food he uses in his dishes, he's letting his business grow organically.

Ann Scholl Rinehart is a freelance writer and photographer living in Betram, Iowa.

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eating well

Sweet relief

The hidden health benefits of holiday spices

By Julie Barton

It's hard to imagine a festive winter holiday without the aroma of baking wafting through our homes. Certain spices — such as allspice, cinnamon, cloves, nutmeg and vanilla — claim the holidays as their own. But did you know indulgent holiday spices also have a history as natural remedies? Pour another cup of eggnog, bring back that plate of gingerbread men, and enjoy the benefits as you read on!

+ Allspice. Many people believe allspice is a mixture of cinnamon, cloves, and nutmeg, hence the name, but it is actually the dried fruit of a small evergreen plant. It is especially delicious in cakes, cookies and pies.

The eugenol components of allspice's fruit not only provide an unusual aroma but supposedly also can ease digestive symptoms such as diarrhea, nausea and vomiting, and reduce gas. This fragrant spice purportedly acts as a relaxant to aid stomach cramps and conversely acts as a stimulant to aid digestion. Allspice also has been used to treat bacterial and fungal infections as well as coughs, chills, bronchitis and depression.

+ Cinnamon. One of the oldest and most widely used spices, cinnamon has a variety of uses and is a staple in most household spice racks. It is made from the bark of a cinnamon tree, which rolls up into what is commonly known as a cinnamon stick during the drying process. Easily recognized by its aroma, cinnamon adds warm sweetness to fruit pies — it pairs especially well with apples.

The next time you're enjoying that slice of cinnamon apple pie, you could be treating a number of ailments. Preliminary results from studies have indicated that cinnamon has antifungal, antibacterial and antiparasitic properties. Cinnamon has been found to be effective in fighting yeast infections, stomach ulcers and head lice.

+ Cloves. One of the earliest spices to be traded, cloves are native to Indonesia and are actually dried flower buds. Ground cloves are used in baking and are most often found in gingerbread, spice and fruit cakes, raisin or nut bars. Cloves add a kick to pumpkin pie, a traditional holiday favorite.

According to information from Whole Foods, like allspice, cloves also contain significant amounts of eugenol. In the United States, eugenol extracts from clove often have been used as a mild anesthetic in dentistry with root canal therapy, temporary fillings, and general gum pain. For these beneficial effects, you'll also find clove oil in some over-the-counter sore throat sprays and mouth washes.

+ Nutmeg. The word is out on nutmeg, used in everything from pudding to cookies. The grated, dried seeds of a tree, nutmeg has been shown to soothe stomachs, regulate your gastrointestinal tract, help you sleep, relieve toothaches, and zap zits. (Mix a little milk with ground nutmeg to form a paste, then apply it

to the trouble spot. Its anti-inflammatory effects will help reduce the redness and puffiness.) Another possible benefit of this spicy little nugget? It can get you in the mood for love. There is little research to support the claim, but sex therapists have long recommended nutmeg as an aphrodisiac.

+ Vanilla. Introduced to Europe by the Spanish conquistador, Hernándo Cortés, vanilla has a rich history and a richer flavor. It comes in three forms: whole pod, powder and extract. It is one of the most widely used ingredients in the kitchen, and pure vanilla is one of the more expensive ingredients used in baking.

Vanilla is unique in that it is beneficial through both aromatherapy and ingestion. Vanilla can be used to help calm the stomach when you are feeling nauseous. Some studies have shown that the scent of vanilla extract alone may assist people trying to lose weight, and that it is a stress reducer. It also has been written that the use of vanilla extract may help women regulate menstruation.

Writer Julie Barton's holiday traditions include baking cookies and quoting from the movie "Elf."



Photo by Gary Krambeck / Radish

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eating well

Dish it up

Food and fellowship featured at QC-VEG potlucks

By Sarah Ford

As more and more Americans embrace the idea that “you are what you eat,” they are seeking experiences and groups that support them in the quest for nourishment. QC-VEG is a group that caters to that need for community.

Begun in October 2009, the initial potlucks were held at the home of organizer Mitch Tollerud. As QC-VEG evolved, the potlucks relocated to Faith United Church, 1630 W. 38th St., Davenport. According to their flyer, QC-VEG is dedicated to providing resources and support to “anyone at any stage of being a vegetarian (vegans, ovo/lacto vegetarians, flexitarians, or omnivores who eat vegetarian once in a while).” Potlucks are held at 6 p.m. the second Sunday of every month.

For the potluck I attended, 18 guests arrived — as did the dogs Dingo and Lucy — providing plenty of food to sample and savor. The group cultivates a welcoming and cordial atmosphere. There are no membership fees or reservation requirements; diners simply show up with something to share. It’s not every day that cooking one dish (a frog-eye salad, in my case) yields a plethora of delectable foods to choose from, especially of the vegetarian variety.

After group introductions, dinner commenced. The menu for the feast included pastas; breads; salads; homemade salsa; locally grown vegetables such as parsnips, carrots, squashes and beans; and fresh-picked concord grapes. One of the vegan items I tried was the seitan, or “vegetarian wheat meat,” which resembles sausage. One of my favorites was acorn squash drizzled with locally made blueberry jam. I’m sure I could taste the love and attention baked into each dish.

“My favorite part is eating 17 kinds of good foods without having to cook them all,” said Julia Natvig of Davenport, who graced the group with seitan and broccoli in peanut sauce on spaghetti noodles.

‘It’s awareness of what we’re eating and being involved with the food.’

It turned out that only half of the potluckers were vegetarian or vegan, while the other half just value local foods, eating less meat and being conscious of their food choices. Despite the various reasons for showing up, tasty food is what brought an eclectic group together on a Sunday evening.

“It’s awareness of what we’re eating and being involved with the food. There’s intersecting values here — people are vegetarian or vegan for different reasons, whether for their health, the environment, or ethical or spiritual purposes,” said Tollerud.

Jade Kai and her fiancé Marcus Ferguson, of Davenport, have attended every potluck, finding it a place to meet people, get new recipes and find fellowship. The



QC-VEG potluck attendees enjoy a meal. (Photo by Gary Krambeck / Radish)

couple prepared toasted kale with coconut shreds, and baked pasta with peppers, tomatoes, pesto and cheese.

Pam Kaufman of Davenport brought, as she put it, “Everyone’s favorite, Brussels sprouts!” They were the tastiest I’ve ever had, enhanced with butter, pine nuts, apples, salt and pepper. Kaufman also provided a “big honkin’ squash” stuffed with rice, tomatoes, peppers, onion, garlic and apples, and she was prepared to send the leftovers with anyone who was willing.

Jeff and Pam Hunt of Rock Island have attended the potlucks for 10 months, as part of their lifestyle change to eat wholesome foods and try new vegan recipes. “The people and the food bring us back,” said Jeff.

While food may be the initial draw to the gathering, the sense of community, conversation, and sharing of ideas and recipes creates a connection that encourages continual participation. Over the course of dinner, I heard discussions on meditation, hypnotherapy, green maize, apple orchards, local economies and businesses that accommodate the vegetarian lifestyle.

The exchange of culinary delights, though, is the cornerstone of the group. “Food unites people; it’s our common ground. We eat with awareness and connect with local groups and farmers,” noted Janet Darmour-Paul.

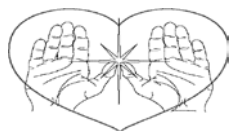
Sarah Ford lives in Port Byron, Ill., and loves exploring the outdoors and eating well with her son, Isaiah.

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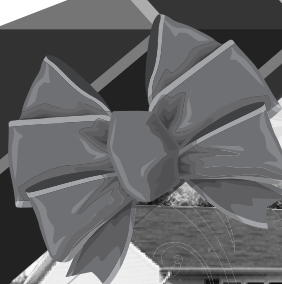
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No price tags attached: Holiday gift swap encourages giving without spending

By Sarah J. Gardner

For many people, holiday gift swaps come with a bit of a stigma. Not so the sisters of the Congregation of the Humility of Mary. Where others might see the pitfalls of one too many gag gifts, the sisters see an opportunity. Done the right way, a gift swap is a chance to participate in the spirit of giving while avoiding some of the ills of consumerism. It all comes down to how you go about it.

“The whole idea is not to spend money on new things, not to contribute to the glut of disposable goods,” explains Lisa Martin, who works for CHM and helps organize the annual gift swap hosted at the Humility of Mary Center each December.

For their event, the sisters invite community members to bring new or gently used items from home — “something someone else might like to find wrapped under a tree,” says Martin — and exchange it for another perfectly usable item brought by someone else. The items shouldn’t be chipped or used looking, and clothing items should still have a tag, says Martin.

What makes the event different from a white elephant-style gift exchange, Martin explains, is that you are looking for gifts for someone else. Just like with any other holiday shopping excursion, you are putting time and thought into what you select, and you are taking it home to wrap it up nicely.

“The only difference is no money is exchanged,” says Martin, only holiday cheer.

As part of their annual gift swap, the nuns bake cookies to serve. They also select a film to screen. This year they will be showing “The Story of Broke: Why There is Still Plenty of Money to Build a Better Future,” a short, animated film by activist Annie Leonard that challenges prevailing rhetoric that America doesn’t have money to address pressing civic and environmental issues.

Because the film is about better ways the country could be using its money, it is a perfect fit for an event designed to help people spend less on the holidays, says Martin.

This year the CHM holiday gift swap will be held from 6 to 8:30 p.m. Dec. 6 at the Humility of Mary Center, 820 W. Central Park Ave., Davenport. Anyone is welcome to attend.

Can’t make it? No problem, says Martin. You can always host a similar event yourself. “You can think of it as a new angle on your regular holiday party. You can still have cocktails, serve food, but with an added element of the gift exchange,” says Martin. “You just need to have the spirit of the season!”



Sister Johanna Rickl and Sister Carla Takes of the Congregation of the Humility of Mary bless a holiday tree. (Submitted)

Sarah J. Gardner is Radish editor. For more information on the upcoming CHM holiday movie and gift swap event, contact Lisa Martin at lmartin@chmiowa.org.

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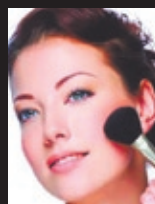
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eating well

Once labelled a 'bad fat,' coconut oil is again finding fans among healthy eaters

By Chris Greene

Warm beaches. Palm trees. The scent of coconut wafting through the air. Stuck in the throes of another Midwest winter, it may be good to know even if we can only dream of escaping to a sunny paradise, we can still reap some of the benefits of life in the tropics through coconut oil.

Touted as beneficial for weight loss, boosted immunity, healthier hair and skin, improved digestion, stress relief, prevention of heart disease and cancer, stronger bones and lower blood pressure, coconut oil is turning up again in the diets of the health conscious.

According to Hy-Vee dietician Stacy Mitchell, it's the fat in coconut oil that was looked upon as unhealthy, contributing to the negative perception that prevailed in the past.

"Coconut oil is high in saturated fat, and saturated fat is always considered a no-no. However, since it is coming from a plant source instead of an animal source, our bodies metabolize it more like an unsaturated — which is much healthier and less artery-clogging," she explains.

"Coconut oil is mainly made up of medium-chain triglycerides (MCTs), which are shorter than long-chain triglycerides (LCT) found in other fats and oils," Mitchell says. "Saturated fats are advised to be limited in the diet due to their link to heart disease. Saturated fat has been shown to increase lousy (LDL) cholesterol."

When cooking with coconut oil, it can be substituted for other solid fats like butter, lard or shortening, says fellow Hy-Vee dietician Dawn Blocklinger. If heated to 78 degrees, it can be used as a liquid fat to replace oil. When substituted as either a solid or liquid, coconut oil can be used cup for cup in any recipe.

Mitchell says that although the health benefits are exciting, it's best to remember to use caution. "It's still a fat, and too much of anything can be harmful — everything in moderation!" says Mitchell. "As with any health-benefiting food, they can all have these great claims, so don't go too crazy."

Although some say "virgin" coconut oil is a healthier choice to use, Mitchell says that's a fine line. "Some coconut-oil products are referred to as 'virgin' coconut oil — the term has come to mean that the oil is generally unprocessed, but there is no standard for the meaning of 'virgin' coconut oil," Mitchell says.

Not biting? That's OK. Coconut oil also has benefits when it is used topically. It can be applied to the skin to soften it or soothe inflammation. It can also be massaged into the scalp to improve the condition of the hair or used as a massage oil for the body. The aromatic effect of the oil also is supposed to help with stress relief.



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Frequent Radish contributor Chris Greene enjoys cooking, gardening, running, volunteering and reading.

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food for thought

Savor the season

Remember, the heart of the holidays is not a to-do list

By Becky Langdon

A few years ago while I was working full time for an advertising agency, my boss presented me with an unusual challenge. It was late fall. We had been presented white bandanas printed with Asian calligraphy as souvenirs from a company dinner. My boss turned to me and said that if I wore that bandana on my head to work the next day until noon, he would give me the rest of the day off. He knew my introverted nature, and this was a dare.

Our office dress code was business professional. Amid the confident strides of men and women in suits, ties, pantyhose and heels, I would be strolling into conference rooms with a goofy bandana on my head. The image was nothing short of embarrassing, yet the enticement of a half-day off early in the holiday season free from any obligations was stronger than I could refuse. I wore the bandana.

My time off that day was glorious. The preceding weeks had been jam-packed with work and social obligations, and the coming weeks promised similar activities. Those extra few hours gave me my first chance to savor the season — to notice the beauty of newly bare trees glazed with ice, to window-shop without the urgency of needing to check people off my gift list, and even to bake sugar cookies from scratch. That silly bandana was a wake-up call. In the stress of trying to get things done and keep up with life, I was missing it.

The holiday season can often feel like a sprint, with New Year's Day being the finish line. As life has gotten busier each year, I try to remind myself that the end of the year is not a race, nor a laundry list of things that need to get done. I try to find time and ways to savor the season — the weather, the festivities, the cooking, the decorating, the gift giving — all of it.

It's not easy. On top of Thanksgiving and Christmas, my mother, father, brother, father-in-law, niece and I all have birthdays between Nov. 13 and Dec. 19. Add to that office parties, social parties, church events and traveling to see out-of-town family, and sometimes it's hard to find time to breathe, let alone savor

In the stress of trying to get things done and keep up with life, I was missing it.

anything. That's why my husband and I have made a conscious effort to simplify where we can, let go of some expectations, and leave room in our schedules for spontaneity. If we don't have time to take a spur-of-the-moment drive to Wild Cat Den State Park or the Mississippi Palisades to see the changing of the seasons, we have probably overcommitted ourselves. If we don't have time to pour our creative energy into that special handmade gift, we're missing out on some of the most enjoyable moments of the season.



Becky Langdon and son Jacob. (Photo by John Greenwood / Radish)

Not only do I want to embrace and enjoy the uniqueness of this time of year — everything from the smell of turkey in the oven to the exertion of shoveling our driveway — I also want to savor people. Sometimes that means letting go of commitments. A few years ago, my family and I realized that our Thanksgiving plans had grown too large as families expanded. We would drive eight hours, crowd together with 30 family members in one house, and leave feeling like we hadn't spent much time with anyone. Together with my husband's immediate family we made a decision to stop sharing the holiday with the entire extended family and keep Thanksgiving intimate among just eight of us. Then we found other points in the year to spend time with the rest of the family. Breaking with tradition isn't always easy, especially when family expectations are involved, but it gave us the freedom we needed to make that time more meaningful.

I hope to make this season meaningful as well. My husband and I have continued to simplify our plans and let go of expectations. Now I'm looking forward to sharing the delights of the season with my 2-year-old son. We have to relish the moments that we can. After all, with another baby due Dec. 24 this year, I'm guessing the chaos is just beginning.

Becky Langdon is a writer and editor living in Davenport. She enjoys baking, reading, biking, writing fiction and spending time outdoors.



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