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Photo by Patrick Traylor / Radish



One warm afternoon last fall, Radish photo intern Patrick Traylor and I loaded up the company car with gear and typed the address of Kalmar Kolours Alpacas in Alpha, Ill., into his iPhone. Randy and Janet Larson generously had invited us to the farm to meet a few of the animals they raise for themselves and for others, and we couldn’t have asked for better weather or more knowledgeable guides. While Pat’s artful photographs provide a glimpse into the life of the alpaca — just look at the cover shot of Maggie, a trophy-winning beauty, the photo above and the pics on pages 10-11 — what they don’t tell you is how I fell in love that day. With the alpacas, of course.

Randy told us that alpacas hum when they’re nervous. Then we heard them. It’s a meditative drone of a song, somehow sweet enough to make you want to reach out and hug one of the animals — or at least buy a blanket made from its fleece, which could be nice right about now!

Yet February’s cold weather doesn’t have to keep you indoors and under wraps. In this issue, you also will find stories about where to go to get some exercise and have fun. Check out Sharon Wren’s story about Jedi Yoga on page 34, then flip to page 24 for five great events to get you moving with your family.

You’ll also want to turn to page 28 to read Spencer Rabe’s story about how to make the switch from analog to digital TV more green. Spencer is responsible for the layout and design of Radish, and now he is contributing as a writer, as well.

Finally, you can read Reverend Roger Butts’ reflective essay on the power of love to renew us (page 40). It will challenge and inspire you to take the message of Valentine’s Day beyond the flowers and stuffed animals.

However, if you happen to know that a new stuffed animal is in the cards for you this Valentine’s Day, you could request an ultra-soft teddy bear made of alpaca fleece. They’re a lot less expensive and take up less space than a whole alpaca — not that I looked into it or anything.

— Brandy Welvaert
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Number 2, Volume 5
February 2009

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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 and distribution sites, visit www.radishmagazine.com.



Radish uses soy-based ink and recycled content in its newsprint and is 100 percent recyclable.

contributors



The Rev. Roger Butts is the minister of the Unitarian Church in Davenport, Iowa. He and his partner, Marta Fioriti, have three children and two black labs. While not playing on the floor, he works on a doctoral project in theology and blogs at progressqc.blogspot.com. In time for Valentine’s Day, he shares his thoughts on love and personal regeneration on page 40.



Jeni Tackett is a registered dietitian who enjoys writing about healthy lifestyle changes. She lives in East Moline, Ill., with her husband Nathan, son Noah, daughter Lily, and dog Jack. She enjoys running and walking outside and was inspired by her husband to train for her first triathlon this year. Jeni specializes in counseling clients on heart healthy, weight loss, diabetic and vegetarian diets and works at both Trinity Medical Center and the Two Rivers YMCA in the Quad-Cities. Read her story about how she and a group of friends tried a vegan diet for six weeks on page 26.



Jim Earles of Dubuque, Iowa, is a Kundalini Yoga teacher who also has a passion for nutrition. Jim also is a stay-at-home dad and homeschool teacher for his children and is the co-publisher (along with his wife, Amber) of the Dubuque Health-Ready Guide, a listing of producers, businesses and individuals who provide the Dubuque area with natural goods and holistic services. Read his story about Dubuque’s curbside composting program on page 9.



Evan Harris lives Cambridge, Ill. In addition to his writing ventures, he is a founder, owner and instructor, with his wife, Kelly, at Tapas Yoga Shala in Davenport. The prospect of renovating the studio’s space lead him to consider green construction and design, and eventually to the expertise of Genius Loci in Bishop Hill, Ill. When not writing, Evan enjoys the night sky, vegetarian cooking and putting his legs behind his head. Read his story about Genius Loci on page 12.



Sharon Wren of East Moline, Ill., is a part-time church secretary, part-time freelance writer and full-time mom of two energetic boys. Last year, her husband, Bud, converted a truck to run on golf-cart batteries. This year, he’s working on a car for her. Sharon enjoys cooking and surfing the Internet for ways to live a more full, green life. Read her story about Jedi Yoga on page 34.

Also appearing in Radish this month is regular contributor Jonathan Turner (“Walking nerd” promotes getting there two feet at a time,” page 17.)

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the grapevine

WQPT becomes a Friend of Radish!

WQPT Quad-Cities PBS has joined The Friends of Radish, a special group of community-minded businesses and organizations whose long-term support helps Radish share information about healthy living.

Since 1983 WQPT has provided the Quad-Cities and surrounding areas with television programming over the airwaves and through cable connections, but that’s not all. WQPT also offers non-broadcast educational services as well as college credit through Black Hawk College, Moline.

You can find out more about WQPT and the other Friends of Radish — Trinity Regional Health System, Metro and Zimmerman Honda — this month at the following On the Road with Radish events. Here’s what’s happening:

- From 7 to 8:30 p.m. Feb. 5, Father Robert “Bud” Grant, director of general education and associate professor of theology at St. Ambrose University, Davenport, will present “An Ethic of Sacrifice for the Earth.” Grant will speak at St. Mary Monastery, 2200 88th Ave. W., Rock Island. The event is free and

open to everyone. A freewill offering will be collected. For more information, call (309) 283-2100 or visit smmsisters.org.

- Healthy food will be the topic from 9 a.m. to 1 p.m. Feb. 7 at the Hy-Vee Healthy Living Fair in the Club Room at Hy-Vee, 2900 Devils Glen Road, Bettendorf, Iowa. The event will feature healthy cooking tips, recipes, nutrition information, samples and giveaways. Admission is free.

- A Winter Fun Day for the whole family will be held from 9 a.m. to 2 p.m. Feb. 21 at the Wapsi River Environmental Education Center, 31555 52nd Ave., Dixon, Iowa. The day will include snowshoeing, skiing and more. For details and information for making reservations, turn to page 24.



From our readers

QC TAG, you’re it! (Jan. 2009): “TAG is a great group with a fantastic message. Keep it up! More are sure to come along for the ride (or walk).

— Conrad, Davenport

Positive energy: Great article! Keep up the good work!

— Chris Horan, Phoenix, Ariz.

Send your comments about Radish magazine to editor@radishmagazine.com or write to Radish, 1720 5th Ave., Moline, IL 61265.



It’s American Heart Month: Find your sole-mate and hit the ground walking

If you’re having trouble sticking with your New Year’s health resolutions — or if you’re setting goals now — consider stepping out for a walk. Yes, even in the cold. You’ll find a list of great places to walk this month at radishmagazine.com.

According to the American Heart Association (AHA), walking is the fitness activity with the lowest drop-out rate. And walking, even for just 30 minutes a day, is enough to improve your heart health.

That’s why the AHA launched Start!, a new walking program with an online component that lets you find a walking buddy where you live at mystartonline.org. At the Web site, you can keep a walking log, plot routes with your personal map and keep track of your meal information in a personal nutrition diary. The Web site is free to use and is available to both individuals and groups.



McClatchy

For more information about the health effects of walking, visit americanheart.org and click on the Start! link. To join MyStart!, visit mystartonline.org.

Coming in March...

- How to be a ‘frugalista’
- Giant Goose Conservation Area
- Sunrise Acres Bakery
- Saying ‘no’ to toxins: One woman’s story
- Greening your congregation
- Environmental Film Fest 4

healthy living from the ground up

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Maggie the alpaca at Kalmar Kolors Alpacas in Alpha, Ill. (Photo by Patrick Traylor/ Radish)

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healthy living

The \$25 Challenge

Can you make it stretch for seven days of meals?

By Brandy Welvaert

If you had just \$25 to spend on food for seven days, what would you eat? River Bend Foodbank in Moline, Ill., last fall encouraged individuals to find out by taking the \$25 Challenge.

Why \$25? Because thousands of people in Illinois and beyond spend that amount — and only that — on groceries.

“The \$25 amount is something that we’ve had a lot of discussion on,” says Caren Laughlin, marketing director for River Bend, which is part of the Illinois Food Bank Association (IFBA).

For people in a particular low-income group, \$25 is the average amount of money available to feed each person in a family, according to the IFBA. While some families spend more, \$25 is an accurate average for the Quad-Cities area, Laughlin says.

Laughlin sent me a sample shopping list (lower right) after she called to ask me to take the challenge. And so I entered the grocery store with the money, the list and a resolve to find healthier foods than those on it. (I had a particular beef with the mac and cheese and the canned goods.)

Shopping was really, really tough. Just getting enough food for a week on less than \$25 was hard. (I already had spent part of the \$25 at the farmers’ market.) Buying nutritious foods was even harder. And nutritious foods that actually tasted good? My list of “tastes-good” foods now includes homemade-bean-spread sandwiches — an asset when you care about fiber and nutrients but have less to spend on food than you spend on a week’s worth of gas for your car.

The price of gas, among other things, is to blame for sucking down many families’ food budgets,

leaving less money for the groceries that cost more now than ever, Laughlin says.

While food prices have increased 4 percent in a year, spikes for some food staples have been far more dramatic. Eggs cost 50 percent more than they did last year, and a loaf of bread costs 32 percent more than it did in 2005, according to an Associated Press report.

For River Bend, this means less food flowing in from wholesalers, distributors, retailers and other organizations — and therefore less to distribute to people through food pantries.

And more people — especially working families — are visiting pantries now, Laughlin says.

“That’s one thing that’s kind of misunderstood,” she says. “It is a lot of working families and especially a lot of working moms with kids who are not making enough money. Other pantry-users are

working couples who are making minimum wage — there’s a lot of those folks — and a lot of elderly people. That’s who we’re seeing.”

According to River Bend’s parent organization, Feeding America, about half of nonelderly families who use food banks are working.

With less food to give and more people who need it, “it’s a double whammy” for food banks nationwide, Laughlin says, adding that “people trying to make it on minimum wage are having a harder time now than ever.”

While it’s possible to eat for a week on \$25, it’s hard to buy a variety of healthy, filling foods. I found this to be true in my own experience, and it turns out that research backs it up.

In fact, compared to other groups, impoverished people and those with the least education have the highest rates of obesity, according to a January 2004 study in the American Journal for Clinical Nutrition.

For me, the \$25 Challenge was just an adventure. For others, it’s reality, plain and simple.

In simplified terms, the study revealed that it’s easier, tastier and, more importantly, cheaper to get full on junk foods than it is to eat a “prudent” diet based on lean proteins, vegetables and fruit.

As much as I tried to eat healthy all week, I did buy several packets of ramen noodles. A college standby, ramen fills the belly in a pinch, but it’s a salty and surprisingly fatty indulgence.

In the end, I failed at the budget despite my best efforts. I blew it on day six, a Friday, when I returned home from work feeling tired, grouchy and resentful about the two-day-old pork that was supposed to be dinner. I was so sick of eating leftovers, I’d have rather gone hungry.

I considered going hungry. My husband encouraged me to stick to the budget, but it was over. I drove downtown to my favorite taco house, feeling at once exuberant about yummy tacos and terrible about my personal failure.

For me, the \$25 Challenge was just an adventure — a seven-day test to find out whether I could eat for less. For thousands of people in Illinois and beyond, the \$25 Challenge is reality, plain and simple.

Consider: One-third of people who have visited a food bank have had to decide whether to pay a utility bill or buy groceries. One-third have chosen between paying for shelter or paying for food. Another third have had to decide between medication and food.

Lucky for me, I didn’t go hungry. But if the prospect of hunger teaches anything, it’s that you never want to be without something to eat. And you never want anyone else to be without it, either.

Read a longer version of this story online at radishmagazine.com, where you’ll find a list of food banks where you can donate. Learn more about the \$25 Challenge online at feedingillinois.org.



Paul Colletti / Radish

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body, mind & soul

Give your skin a treat

This Valentine’s Day, pamper yourself with chocolate

By Janice Cox,
From The Herb Companion

Here’s some surprising news: Chocolate is good for your skin! Many of us grew up with the concept that chocolate causes blemishes. Instead, scientists now have discovered that chocolate can contain more anti-oxidants per cup than red wine or green tea. In fact, certain compounds in chocolate even help smooth the skin and decrease its sensitivity to the sun.

Chocolate is good for your skin because of its high content of cocoa butter, which is a natural skin softener and conditioner. It is also an antioxidant, which means it prevents free radical damage to your skin and protects its natural elasticity. To receive the full benefit, choose commercial products or recipes with chocolate, cocoa and cocoa butter as the main ingredients. Also, dark chocolate seems to be much more effective than milk chocolate or white chocolate.

Chocolate is considered dark if it contains at least 35 percent cocoa.

In skin care, chocolate, cocoa and cocoa butter are all excellent moisturizers. Chocolate also contains caffeine, which can stimulate your circulation and give your skin a healthy glow when used in a massage cream or body scrub. The scent of chocolate releases serotonin, the same hormone that we experience when falling in love, and one that promotes happy feelings and reduces stress. So next time you have a craving for something sweet, enjoy a bit of chocolate with the bonus of better skin and a better mood. Here are some cocoa-based recipes to create at home.

Excerpted from The Herb Companion magazine, a national magazine devoted to growing, cooking and healing with herbs. Read other articles at www.HerbCompanion.com or call (800) 456-5835 to subscribe. Copyright 2008 by Ogden Publications Inc.



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Hot Cocoa Bath

Milk baths are classic beauty basics. They are effective because the lactic acid in milk helps soften and soothe the skin.

- 2 cups chocolate milk
- 1 tablespoon honey
- 2 tablespoons mild liquid soap

Stir together all ingredients. Pour under the running water as you fill your tub. Bathe and relax for 15 to 20 minutes.

Mocha Facial Mask

The milk and espresso contain natural food acids that help rid your skin of surface debris and dead skin cells, while the chocolate or cocoa powder helps condition and soothe your complexion.

- 4 tablespoons finely ground espresso or coffee
- 4 tablespoons cocoa powder
- 8 tablespoons whole milk

Mix together all ingredients until you have a smooth paste. Spread over a clean face and neck, avoiding the eye and mouth area. Let sit for 15 minutes and rinse well with warm water.

Cocoa Mint Foot Scrub

Invigorate your feet at the end of a tough day with this rich and minty scrub.

- 2 tablespoons cocoa butter, grated
- 2 tablespoons almond oil
- ½ cup raw sugar
- 4-5 drops peppermint essential oil

Gently heat cocoa butter and almond oil until cocoa butter melts; stir well. Add sugar and peppermint oil and mix. Massage into clean feet and rinse with warm water. If your feet are extremely dry, massage in a bit more cocoa butter and cover your feet with clean cotton socks for 15 to 20 minutes.

environment

Dubuque makes the most of food waste with curbside compost

By Jim Earles

So you’ve taken the initiative to seek out high-quality, nutritious food, perhaps even from a local vendor at the farmers’ market, but you didn’t quite get it all eaten up in time. What to do now?

The city of Dubuque has become the first in Iowa to answer this question by implementing curbside food scrap recycling — Dubuque’s GreenCart Program. The program allows Dubuque households, businesses and institutions a convenient way to compost unused food items, including leftover beverages and foods (even meat, meat products and bones), as well as greasy pizza boxes, paper napkins, plates and cups, Popsicle sticks, cut flowers, houseplants and compostable yard waste. Food scraps and yard waste are mixed together at the Dubuque Metropolitan Area Landfill, and anyone can buy the material after it’s compost. The city uses some of the compost for landscaping, too.

Would-be subscribers contact the Dubuque public works department and, for a fee that’s added to the city utility bill, two food scrap containers soon show up on the doorstep. Subscribers get a 2-gallon KitchenCatcher and a 12-gallon GreenCart for collecting food scraps. (Larger GreenCarts, in 48 or 64 gallon sizes, are available for businesses and institutional customers.)

The KitchenCatcher fits under the sink or on a counter top, and the GreenCart, with wheels and a handle, goes down to the curb each week with the garbage and recycling for pickup.

The GreenCart Program currently is available from the first full week of April through the last full week of November, and it has helped the city reduce unnecessary landfilling of compostable scraps, thereby reducing the methane pollution that these items otherwise would produce. A 2005 analysis by the Iowa Department of Natural Resources showed that 25 percent of what is set out as trash by the average Dubuque household could be turned into compost. Putting these materials into the landfill is throwing away a golden opportunity to recycle them into beneficial nourishment for gardens and landscaping.

The obvious challenge for such a program is the “smell factor.” Who wants to keep a bin of decaying food scraps on the counter or under the sink? Actually, most people find an acceptable trade-off because the trash can smells better when the decaying food goes into a KitchenCatcher, which regularly can be washed. The GreenCart, which holds most of the compostables, may stay outside with the trash cans.

With an innovative program such as this, the only problem becomes this: What if you don’t live in Dubuque? While backyard composting is a wonderful option in the meantime, you can contact your own city officials and tell them to follow Dubuque’s lead.



Jim Earles



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The warm fuzzies

Gentle and soft, alpacas are ‘the huggable investment’



Janet (left) and Randall Larson raise alpacas on their farm in Rio, Ill. At right, Larson shows how dense and soft alpaca fleece is. (Photos by Patrick Traylor / Radish)

By Brandy Welvaert

Randall Larson presses his hands against Maggie the alpaca’s impossibly soft side and pulls them apart to reveal just how dense and fluffy her fleece really is. This is the alpaca’s so-called blanket, “where the prime fiber comes from,” Larson says. The fleece on the animal’s sides, down to her tummy, is softest, easiest to work with and most costly.

Larson leads Maggie gently, and she follows. Yet she feels a bit nervous because he has separated her for the moment from the other Huacaya alpacas inside the fence. This explains why she’s humming in a low, soothing tone endearing to the human ear. The other alpacas hear her and respond, humming along and following her movements with dark, sparkling eyes.

brought the animals from Peru in 1985. Likely the descendants of vicuna, a member of the Camelid family, alpacas evolved in the Alta Plana in the South American countries now known as Bolivia, Chile and Peru, where they were used for fiber and for food, Larson says.

Today growers raise alpacas primarily for fiber, which insulates like wool yet is lighter in weight because each shaft has many tiny air pockets. For those with wool allergies, alpaca provides a less “itchy” alternative: While wool fibers appear scaly under a microscope, alpaca fiber looks much more smooth, accounting for its cashmere-like feel against the skin.

“Alpaca is one of those wonderful luxury fibers,” says Abi Hutchison, a spinner and fiber artist. “It’s a lovely addition to wool. It gives wool warmth and drape and elegance.”

In addition, “it comes in wonderful natural colors,” Hutchison says. There are 22 natural colors, to be exact. “And, of course, alpacas haven’t been bred to the kind of conformity that sheep have. You get a lot of variety from one animal to the next,” she adds.

Hutchison primarily works with wool, but she also uses 19th century tools to make yarn and roving — fibers twisted together and ready for spinning into thread or yarn — with alpaca, llama, silk and mohair. She does her spinning inside a straw-bale fiber mill that she built on her rural property in Letts, Iowa, and sells the fiber at the Iowa City Farmers’ Market in season and online at her Web site, prairiefiber.homestead.com. She also teaches fiber classes at Prairieland Herbs in Woodward, Iowa, west of Des Moines.

She likes to blend alpaca with other fibers because the one thing it doesn’t have, for all its

luxury, is memory. Although pure alpaca scarves, drapes and shawls are lovely, Hutchison says she never would make a 100-percent alpaca sweater — or any other garment that requires elasticity to hold its shape — because alpaca “doesn’t have a lot of spring to it.”

This may explain why you’ll find alpaca socks, gloves, mittens, pashminas, ponchos and hats at Heartland Criations Alpaca Farm Store in Rio, Ill. Criations is a play on the term for baby alpaca, cria, pronounced KREE-uh.

Alpacas can give birth any time of the year, but spring is the best time. Alpacas’ gestation period is 11 months, but the female alpaca can be re-bred just three weeks after giving birth. Also in spring, alpacas get a shearing. The Larsons send the fiber they collect to a center for processing into yarn and products, such as hats, mittens and alpaca teddy bears — the softest teddy bears anywhere.

This time of year, alpacas like Maggie and her cohort enjoy the snow and cold temperatures. Says Larson, “They don’t like it hot. They’re used to the Andes, where it freezes in the evening for 200 days a year.”

With their gentle natures, alpacas hook both hobbyists and business owners looking to turn a profit. Coupled with their gentle natures, alpacas’ herd mentality makes them easy to control. And though they have the ability to spit like camels, they rarely do. Alpacas don’t need bathing or brushing, and they use a community dung pile, which makes cleaning up after them a little bit easier than it is for other animals of comparable size.

The feel and warmth of alpaca fiber draw the fiber artist and the shopper to alpaca goods, but there’s more to natural fibers than meets the hand.

“They have a living quality to them. When you work with them, you can feel the life and the spring in them,” says Hutchison. “And there’s a connection to the people who raise the animals. Often people will become attached to the fleece from a particular animal, and they will want that fleece year after year.”

Though fiber from animals has been keeping people warm since prehistoric times, the prevalence of some fibers has waned as less expensive, synthetic fibers rose in popularity. These days, Hutchison sees a return to animal fibers like alpaca.

“I think that the appreciation for natural fibers is growing tremendously. Ten years ago, if you couldn’t throw it in the washer or dryer, no one wanted to look at it,” she says. “Now these natural fibers are priced competitively with high-end commercial yarns, and it’s become more appealing.”

For a list of retailers with alpaca goods, turn to Resources page 39.



Natural Alpaca fibers “have a living quality to them.
... you can feel the life and the spring in them.”

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Functional art

Tom Basler finds spirit and inspiration in used things

By Evan Harris

Spring still seems a long way off, but Tom Basler is thinking green. Then again, he thinks green most of the time and has for years. Basler has honed his skills in green building — the design, construction and maintenance of living and working spaces with energy efficient, eco-friendly, sustainable and salvaged materials. It’s a journey that began with an inborn need to build.

“I made my first chair when I was about 5 years old, and I’ve been making furniture ever since. As a child, I couldn’t help myself ... I was always making things. It’s like I’ve been hardwired to make art. I’ve always had an intense creative energy,” he says.



Tom Basler in his Bishop Hill, Ill., workshop. (Photos by Evan Harris / Radish)

“Intense creative energy” always has driven Basler, whose experience in art school led him to believe that the principles of art are only as good as the ability of the artist to put them into practice as he creates unique pieces — equally functional and aesthetically pleasing.

“Carpentry was a vehicle to make functional art. I sought out craftspeople to apprentice with, to learn the basics and then put my own twist on it,” he says.

This love of woodworking always has been at the center of Basler’s work. A walk through his home and workshop shows how love and work continue to blend in his creations: from a commissioned, one-of-a-kind handmade bureau to all varieties of colorful wooden toy tops, fashioned for fun on a whim. “I’m into tops lately,” he says.

“I realized that for my own health as well as the environment, I needed to use ... nontoxic materials.”

Years of varied apprenticeship and study have borne fruit for Basler. From Mission-style furniture to decorative/faux painting to cabinet-making and historic restoration carpentry, his studies have blossomed into a wide range of skills.

“In faux painting, I draw influences from nature, which have guided me in creating a faux marble technique and (in) working with color and creating realistic wood graining. My faux finish style has evolved as an inspiration from nature to techniques I refer to as ‘earth movements.’ ”

Basler’s work as an apprentice and carpenter sparked his interest in green building practices.

“Working in cabinet shops, breathing in toxic fumes, I realized that for my own health as well as the environment, I needed to use and be surrounded by non-toxic materials. Many of the green practices that I now use were inspired by this realization.”

After many years, Basler has seen his own realization crystallize into a movement and a personal vision. For example, he finds his original need to be surrounded by nontoxic materials met and exceeded by many of the interior finishing products today.

“One product I’m really excited about is American Clay Plaster, which I recently recommended and applied at a business in Davenport. American Clay has the lowest carbon footprint of any interior finish product. It manages moisture and mold and gives off healthful negative ions.” It is just this kind of combination of

natural beauty, durability and healthful qualities, Basler says, that make an original, sustainable building product.

His personal need for a non-toxic work environment was the impetus for big things for Basler. He began to recognize a need for non-toxic, sustainable materials in the contracting and construction fields. Hardly anyone was using salvaged goods at the time.



“I have always used salvaged materials whenever possible. Through the years I’ve witnessed much waste of natural resources, and I’ve always tried to create from others’ waste,” he says.

Basler’s intense, creative energy is alive and well. He seems able to make something beautiful and useful out of most any scrap materials, as his workshop, packed with both finished pieces and “future projects,” proves. Some materials unique to the Midwest are perfect candidates for this type of original, eco-conscious work. For example, reclaimed wood from old barns — whose size, shape and character is not found in new materials — is ideal for creating striking designs and one-of-a-kind furniture.

The deepening interest in sustainable practices that Basler personally experienced mirrors the growth of the green-building movement itself. The movement, a response to building practices that are detrimental to the environment, has existed for decades, and in the Midwest, it’s gathered much steam in the last 10 years with rapid innovation of products and services. Today ideas and materials once considered “alternative” often have been improved to work just as well or better than their traditional counterparts. With more and better green-building products entering the market all the time, Basler finds that more and more customers have a knowledge of and an interest in greening up their renovation projects.


Basler says that while some of the principles of green renovation have been slow to make inroads in the Midwest, that’s changing now, with more and more emphasis on renewable, sustainable, salvaged and “reclaimed” resources, cost- and energy-saving design, and overall harmony between structure and environment. In fact, green building is not only about the products and materials used, but about all aspects of creating a structure: design, orientation, landscaping, building operations and maintenance.

“It’s so exciting to be in the midst of the ‘golden age’ of renewable resources and design. I feel that I’ve been ahead of the trend by using reclaimed resources and products for years, and it’s so exciting that people now want these products and services.”

For years, Basler has promoted and provided these products and services independently, through local contractors and designers, and most recently through his Bishop Hill-based business, Genius Loci. Latin for “the spirit of the place,” Genius Loci brings together Basler’s many talents into one entity, offering design consultation, custom woodworking, furniture design and construction, interior finishes and an overall understanding of the potentials and principles of environmentally-conscious building.

“My work is not just basic, off-the-shelf stock ... it’s unique and customized to the individual and their home or business”

For more green-building supply outlets, turn to Resources page 39.



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Creativity connection

Study suggests area counties ripe for economic growth

By Brandy Welvaert

There are places in this world where being a “creative type” will earn you status as the odd man or woman out. But in many growing Iowa counties, you’ll fit right in if you’ve always felt unique. So says John Solow, associate professor of economics at the University of Iowa’s Henry Tippie College of Business, who studied the state and concluded that counties that tolerate difference have better prospects for economic growth.

The top five Iowa counties with a higher concentration of people who belong to the so-called creative class — those whose careers require them to do what Solow calls “non-repetitive problem solving” — are Johnson, Story, Linn, Polk and Scott, according to the 2008 study, “Creativity and Growth at the Micro Level: Evidence from Iowa Counties.” Furthermore, the research found a positive correlation between a county’s economic growth and its score on the Creativity Index.

Solow coauthored the study with former economics student Lauren A. Klich. Klich also is an artist, and the study was her idea. She brought the idea for the study to her teacher after reading Richard Florida’s 2003 book, “The Rise of the Creative Class,” in which the author argues that across America, places that embrace diversity also house members of the creative class, who perform “a wide variety of work in a wide variety of industries, from technology to entertainment, journalism to finance, high-end manufacturing to the arts. They do not consciously think of themselves as a class. Yet they share a common ethos that values creativity, individuality, difference and merit.”

The counties that score well are no surprise to Solow. Johnson and Story counties are home to universities, and Polk County has Des Moines, the most populous city in Iowa. Linn and Scott counties are home to Cedar Rapids and Davenport respectively, both metropolitan areas.

Although Iowa doesn’t rank highly compared to other states using Florida’s Creativity Index, Iowa City and Cedar Rapids do well. Both are among Florida’s top 10 small cities in America, notes Solow, whose



study in part sought to put Florida’s ideas to the test on a smaller scale.

While Florida’s Creativity Index hasn’t been without criticism, it’s a good indicator of tolerance, says Solow. “Creative types tend to be a little different, and they want to be tolerated,” he says. Tolerance, in turn, is a good indicator of the presence of the creative class, which values it.

Solow and Klich based their Creativity Index on census numbers of foreign-born people and gay and lesbian couples in a county, as did Florida. Solow explains, “The point is not that gay or lesbian couples are particularly creative, but that if a place is one where gay or lesbian people congregate, then it likely is tolerant. ... We can quibble with this, but in general I think (Florida) is onto something.”

The lesson in this for creative individuals and recent college grads may be that you don’t have to leave Iowa to find a place to fit in and put your skills to work. And for entities like businesses and local governments wanting to spur economic gain and population growth, the challenge may be to attract creative individuals by fostering tolerance and diversity in their communities. And yet, warns Solow, either or both of these conclusions could be wrong. While there’s a correlation between the Creativity Index and economic health, there’s no proof that one brings about the other.

Florida, however, argues that communities not only should build tolerance, but should “actively cultivate it, and invest in the lifestyle amenities that people really want and use often, as opposed to using financial incentives to attract companies, build professional sports stadiums, or develop retail complexes.” Solow says that farmers’ markets and other outlets for healthy, natural products and services might be counted among those lifestyle amenities.

Iowa’s most creative counties*

- | | |
|------------|---------------|
| 1. Johnson | 6. Jefferson |
| 2. Story | 7. Black Hawk |
| 3. Linn | 8. Dallas |
| 4. Polk | 9. Jasper |
| 5. Scott | 10. Woodbury |

For more information about Richard Florida’s research, visit creativeclass.com.

* Between 2000 and 2004, these counties’ populations grew by 2.84 percent. During the same period, the population for the 10 least creative counties in Iowa fell by 1.32 percent. Source: University of Iowa press release

Pallets for a better planet: Greystone Logistics recycles

By Laura Anderson

More than 30 million pounds of plastic was kept from landfills last year due to the efforts of Greystone Logistics, a company that makes shipping pallets from 100-percent recycled plastics.

Based in Tulsa, Okla., Greystone operates a production facility in Bettendorf, Iowa, says area manager Michelle Cullor.

For 20-plus years, Greystone Logistics has been producing the pallets entirely from recycled materials, and according to Cullor, it’s the only company that does so.

“Millions of acres of forests are utilized to meet the demand for wood pallets each year,” Cullor says. “Greystone uses post-consumer products to make a truly sustainable, green product that numerous major companies utilize for all their movements involving pallets.”

Cullor says that these particular pallets last seven to 10 times longer than wooden pallets. When a pallet breaks, Greystone uses the broken pieces. “We have a return policy that allows all of our customers to return broken plastic pallets for a credit towards new purchases,” Cullor says. “We then regrind the used pallet for a closed-loop manufacturing process.”

To get its finished product, Greystone buys plastic from a number of recyclers and major corporations. The plastic typically needs to have a heavy molecular weight, so items like large plastic barrels, car bumpers, flower pots, plastic buckets and playground equipment tend to work best.

These items then are ground up and made into tiny plastic pellets. Next, they are blended together in proportion and then can be melted and used in a compression molding process.

“This blending process has been developed over a time to make sure the finished goods are of the highest quality and durability that our customers expect,” Cullor says, adding that the process can be altered to meet special needs. Fire-retardant and freezer additives may be added.

“We estimate that we have provided nearly 4 million pallets” since opening, Cullor says.

In the future, Greystone would like to cooperate with local communities to collect their heavy plastics, she says. Though Greystone currently cannot accept dropped-off items, the company is hoping to work with other local businesses that could store large quantities of plastic material so it could be delivered to Greystone in bulk for processing.

For more information about Greystone Logistics, visit greystonelogistics.com.



Recycled plastics to become pallets. (Photo by Todd Mizener / Radish)



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Half fare	\$ 5.00 For 13 rides
Express (Tyson)	\$20.00 For 14 rides

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eating well

Small farms, real food

Kalona Organics embraces the natural flavors of dairy

By Laura Anderson

You don’t have to shop at a farmers’ market to know where your food comes from. The next time you’re shopping for organic milk and cheese in a Hy-Vee HealthMarket, for example, you could be buying organic foods raised by a farmer nearby.

Kalona Organics, of Kalona, Iowa, represents a collective of farms that make Hy-Vee brand organic products. The company works to help small farms and small manufacturing plants sell and market their products, according to Joanna Mouming, Kalona Organics marketing director.

Since it was established in 2005, Kalona Organics has represented small farms to distributors and stores. Its mission is to help get small producers “on their feet” so they can sell their products, Mouming says.

It all began when Bill and Pam Evans and their children moved to Kalona. According to the Kalona Organics Web site, the Evanses know each and every farmer with whom they work: “We visit their land. We know their families. We understand how and why they created their product.”

The organic products that you’ll find in Hy-Vee stores are the same as the products from Farmers’ All Natural Creamery, another brand name partially owned by Kalona Organics. Farmers’ milk comes largely from small, Amish and Mennonite family farms with average dairy herds of around 30 cows. The only difference in these products and the Hy-Vee brand products are the labels.

Farmers’ All Natural Creamery produces dairy products like butter, classic cheese, cottage cheese, Farmers’ Hen House organic eggs, Cultural Revolution organic yogurt and, of course, milk.

These aren’t your average organic dairy products, either. The milk, yogurt and cottage cheese all have distinctively different tastes and textures that separate them from other organic foods.

The milk is pasteurized at the lowest temperature allowable to meet pasteurization standards, Mouming says, adding that heating milk to higher temperatures changes it makeup — and its flavor. “We offer foods in as natural a state as possible,” she says.

Through overheating, “You’re really compromising the quality and the freshness of the product,” she says. Kalona’s milk tastes “much closer to farm-fresh milk because the cream is left in its whole state ... so the milk will naturally taste sweeter.”

The company’s cottage cheese also is heated to a low temperature and is non-homogenized, Mouming says. Unlike most cottage cheeses, Kalona’s has a different texture because it doesn’t contain gums.

“If you taste (the cottage cheese) alone or side by side with another kind, even if it’s organic, it’ll have those things. You can literally detect those gums,” Mouming says.



Organic dairy cows from small farms provide milk to Kalona Organics. (Photo by Tom Langden)



Cultural Revolution yogurt, too, is different. It’s free of additives like stabilizers that usually are used to thicken yogurt and contains one-third of the sugar that other yogurts have. This allows a person to taste the yogurt itself, Mouming says.

Customers “appreciate that purity in the food,” she adds. Most foods for sale in grocery stores have been “altered for so long, we don’t know what milk or yogurt is like, and (Kalona’s products) make it less confusing because all of the products represent what food was like before the industrialization of foods became so regular.”

Owner Bill Evans knows he’s doing good as the head of Kalona Organics. “It’s very rewarding being able to assist in the development and distribution of products that promote life,” he says. “This includes not only the health of the individual consumer, but also improving the way of life within the local community.

“Our business is genuinely based on the value of relationship. We connect the real people who produce foods with the real people who consume them. Our goal is to establish and nurture these vital connections.”

For more information about Kalona Organics, visit kalonaorganics.com.

health & fitness

‘Walking nerd’ promotes getting there two feet at a time

By Jonathan Turner

Wanna get healthy? Be a nerd and take a walk. Mark Fenton, the self-described “walking nerd,” wants Americans to encourage others to be healthy, serve as role models for their families, get more exercise and advocate more walkable, bike-friendly communities.

“We have a problem in our society. Everybody wants to talk about the obesity epidemic,” says Fenton, an author and speaker who competed in the 1984 and 1988 Olympic Trials in the 50-kilometer (31-mile) race-walk. He also was part of a 2006 team that hiked California’s 217-mile John Muir Trail in seven days, advancing an average of 31 miles a day.

While weight loss can result from regular exercise, the most pressing goals should be to eradicate physical inactivity and poor nutrition, he says. For more than 20 years, fewer than 25 percent of Americans have reported getting the recommended 30 minutes of daily exercise at least five days a week. Once people start getting more exercise, they experience less stress, lower blood pressure, better sleep and a feeling of being in control, Fenton says.

That 30 minutes a day can be broken into 10-minute increments, he explains. If weight loss is the goal, workouts should be one hour a day, five days a week. Adding just 20 minutes of moderate activity a day can result in the loss of three pounds a year.

Fenton also advises people to leave the car behind at least one trip per week in favor of walking, biking or taking mass transit.

Walk the walk

Self-proclaimed “walking nerd” Mark Fenton recommends that people improve health by walking. Here are his tips:

- Set goals that matter to you.
- Record and measure your progress to stay motivated.
- Avoid creating barriers to activity.
- Establish a routine, whether for a week or a lifetime.
- Make an exercise buddy for support and encouragement.
- Speak up, act up and step up to promote physical activity and communities that are inviting to exercise.



Mark Fenton (Submitted)

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17 Radish

food

Better popcorn

Tee Lee’s corn grows in Illinois, Iowa and Indiana

By Laura Anderson

In the bitter chill of winter, few things beat a night of staying in and snuggling up to watch a movie. And nothing goes better with a movie than popcorn, which begs the question: Do you know where your popcorn comes from? You could be buying popcorn grown close to home.

Tee Lee Popcorn of Shannon, Ill., is grown in Illinois, Iowa and Indiana. M.W. Thiele (pronounced Tee-lee) founded the company in 1946. Since then, Tee Lee has grown steadily, says Larry Hubbard, bulk supervisor/field operations.

Sold under the label Prime Time Microwave Popcorn, the corn is available in natural and butter light flavors as well as butter, extra butter and jalapeño butter.

“The cornerstone of Tee Lee’s success was the popcorn,” Hubbard says. “It’s exceptional popping performance, flavor and tender flakes were (of) a quality rarely found or appreciated in those days.”

In 1986, after Jim Weaver bought the company, it began to expand into one of the prime companies

in the industry, says Hubbard. Since the corn is grown close to where it’s packaged, the company saves on freight costs.

Freight costs also are lower for popcorn than regular corn, Hubbard says. Popcorn requires no special equipment, no drying cost and less fertilizer, he says.

Like all six types of corn, popcorn is a cereal grain, he says. It originates from a wild grass. “It’s scientific name is Zea mays everta, and it is the only type of corn to actually pop.”

Special “popplings” are bred for desirable traits, Hubbard says, like stalk strength, grain color and successful popping. Breeders use inbreeding to create hybrid seeds, which then are planted to grow the ears that produce kernels after pollination. “Once the ears have kernels, the maturity process continues until the entire plant is dry and brown,” he says.

Tee Lee’s popcorn is used in a number of snack food products from companies throughout the world, under many different labels and brands, Hubbard says. But most of the microwave popcorn is sold in the Midwest, South and near the East Coast. However, Tee Lee Popcorn has several overseas distributors as well, making it available in 45 countries, he says.

Hubbard says that company owner Jim Weaver grows a lot of the popcorn himself, and operates a store called the Blarney Stone in Shannon, Ill., with his family and Paul and Dianne Hansaker. The store carries all of the Tee Lee and Prime Time popcorns, as well as other items.

Tee Lee Popcorn is located at 101 W. Badger St., Shannon, Ill. For more information, call (800) 578-2363 or visit teeleepopcorn.com. Popcorn also can be purchased online at blarneystonepopcorn.com.



Super Spicy Popcorn Snack

This easy, low-calorie snack is sure to win you over on Super Bowl Sunday.

Butter-flavored cooking spray	¼ teaspoon ground black pepper
1½ teaspoons dry mustard	⅛ teaspoon cayenne pepper
1½ teaspoons Italian seasoning	

Combine mustard, Italian seasoning, black pepper and cayenne pepper in a small bowl; mix well.

Spray popcorn lightly with butter-flavored cooking spray; immediately sprinkle with seasonings and toss to coat and mix. If desired, place popcorn and seasonings in zip-style bag and shake to coat. Serves 4.

Kernels of truth

- Popcorn is the only kind of corn that pops.
- Popcorn is a whole-grain food.
- One cup of popcorn provides around 50 calories.
- Popcorn pops when its internal temperature reaches between 400 and 460 degrees. Heat turns moisture inside each kernel to steam; internal pressure can reach 135 pounds per square inch.

Source: The Popcorn Board

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The return of home ec

Thrift and humor define the new do-it-yourself ethos



Heather Kanzaki (far left) runs a sewing machine at The Adventure Orange in East Moline, Ill., owned by artist Anne Brown (far right). (Photos by Paul Colletti / Radish)
A knitting group meets at Home Ec. Workshop in Iowa City, which sells fabrics and knitting supplies (above). (Photos by Sarah Neighbors)

By Brandy Welvaert

In these financially tenuous times, home economics is making a comeback, but this isn't exactly your granny's crochet. Whether do-it-yourselfers take up knitting to stick a needle in the eye of winter boredom, sit down at the sewing machine to relieve stress or invent ways to recycle old sweaters into new teddy bears, they're saving money while having a whole lot of fun.

"Knitting, embroidery, screen-printing — these are artistic expressions. These activities seem to be infused with more fun now, rather than the duty of a wife or a chore," says Alisa Weinstein of Iowa City. This month Weinstein and her friend and business partner, Codi Josephson, are celebrating the one-year anniversary of the opening of Home Ec. Workshop, their craft-supply shop, workshop and kitch-enette rolled into one.

Josephson says that the desire to create is what drives her and most of Home Ec.'s customers to crafts and other projects, but she adds that DIY can save money, too — especially if the value of the finished item and the value of the entertainment it provides are taken into consideration.

"Creating is entertainment as well as making something to keep. ... The value is at least two-for-one if you look at it that way," she says. "A hat may cost you \$15 to make, and that's time well spent, especially if you go to a knitting or sewing group. You have had that social interaction."

In fact, the social element of DIY is a big attractor, and many people — both men and women — enjoy a social aspect to the arts that otherwise lend themselves to quiet. Gone are the days of the lone housewife, bent over her needlework, they say.

"I think there is a return to home economics with the added component of being fun, social activities — not just something that you do alone in your own home. That is one of the reasons we set up Home Ec. with a workshop and living room area and espresso bar: to help bring together a community," says Weinstein.

"Our average customer is someone who not only enjoy doing these activities, but they also enjoy admiring the work of other people," she adds.

Cost to use the workshop is \$6 per hour, which provides access to tools such as Bernina sewing machines, industrial irons, a cutting table and other tools, such as a rotary cutter and mats.

Both women are University of Iowa graduates and have been interested in fiber arts since they were children. Weinstein has a degree in theater education and was a costume stitcher at the university. Josephson currently is finishing up her master's degree in art education.

"We both have an education background, and that helps us with the classes we do," Josephson says.

While many DIY-ers buy new materials with which to work, others get the biggest thrill from recycling items they have on hand.

"We emphasize making things from other things," says Anne Brown, who in 2007 opened The Adventure Orange, a DIY boutique in East Moline, Ill. The shop provides an eclectic mix of finished pieces, from purses to wall-hangings to clothes, as well as some crafting materials. Brown and the cooperative of women who operate the shop, known as the Adventure Council, also offer classes that teach participants, for example, how to sew a skirt from a men's button-up shirt or how to make a shelf from vinyl records.

The Adventure Council consists of Brown, Jennifer Powell, Heather Kanzaki and Kathleen Tandy.

"Jennifer takes old wool sweaters and makes mittens out of them," says Brown, adding that people have dropped off entire wardrobes of old clothes to the boutique rather than taking them to Goodwill.

"There's something to being able to see that there is a second life in these clothes," she says. "And of course, necessity is the mother of invention. I think this is how people get into DIY. It's certainly the way that I got into it."

Home Ec. Workshop

Home Ec. Workshop, 207 N. Linn St., Iowa City, will offer the following classes in February. These are just a few of the classes listed online at homeecworkshop.com. Call (319) 337-4775 for details.

- Sock knitting: Feb. 1, 8 and 15, from 2:30 to 4:30 p.m.
- Mono-printing: Feb. 26, from 7 to 9 p.m.
- Felt doll-making: Feb. 26, from 7 to 8:30 p.m., and Feb 28, from 1 to 4 p.m.
- Lonely mitten (for kids): Feb. 20, from 6 to 8 p.m.
- Learn to sew pants: Feb. 28, from 1 to 5 p.m.

The Adventure Orange

The Adventure Orange, 833 15th Ave., East Moline, Ill., offers classes in sewing, applique, reading patterns, making jewelry, silk screen-ing, figure drawing, stretching canvas and more. For an updated list of classes, visit myspace.com/adventureorange and check the blog. Call (309) 912-1371 for details.

body, mind & soul

In the moment

Practicing mindfulness is good for your health

By Brandy Welvaert

Grace Guglemeyer is only 8 years old, but she knows it’s important to live in the moment. “My daughter will say to me, ‘Mom, we need to get out the “Now” tapes,’” says her mother, Michelle Guglemeyer, a massage therapist and yoga teacher who has taught workshops about Eckhart Tolle’s internationally best-selling book, “A New Earth” (2005).

Thanks in part to Oprah Winfrey’s book club and marketing machine, Tolle’s works — including a series of online seminars with Oprah last year — have reached millions of people, reintroducing age-old ideas about mindfulness and living in the present moment. Drawing from wide-ranging philosophical, literary and spiritual texts, Tolle’s work suggests that suffering happens because people imagine that the future will be better than now, which transforms every situation and every person they meet into a means to an end. Suffering — sadness, depression, anger, want — follows and feeds into a cycle.

It’s easy to see the downward spiral. Yet admonitions to “be present” are easier to repeat than they are to follow, says Steve Spring, who founded the Mindfulness Community of the Quad Cities and leads mindfulness group meetings in Davenport.

Guglemeyer agrees. “We hear about living in the present ... and about letting go, but we have little help making sense of these catch-phrases,” she says.

For starters, one might ask what it means to be fully present in any moment. For Eric Ringena of Iowa City, who studies Tolle and participates in a mindfulness group at the Iowa City Public Library, presence is something he feels rather than thinks.

“There are times when I slip into presence,” says Ringena, a retired cook. “The best way that I can explain it is that presence is a kind of calmness. Ever since I was a young person, I found myself to be a little bit wound up on the inside. When I feel present, I am calm.”

The inner calm that Ringena reports, in fact, is just one of the benefits of living mindfully. According



Michelle Guglemeyer studies mindfulness. (Photo by John Greenwood / Radish)

to several studies, mindfulness is an attribute of consciousness that promotes both psychological and physical well-being. People who practice mindfulness are better able to regulate their reactions in stressful situations than those who don’t, and they report feeling better emotionally, according to a 2003 study in the Journal of Personality and Psychology. In the same study, cancer patients practicing mindfulness reported fewer mood swings and stress.

In Iowa City, the University of Iowa Hospitals and Clinics’ Department of Psychiatry and Behavioral Health provides mindfulness-based treatment that includes non-religious meditation for psychological well-being and pain management.

Meditation is just one method for cultivating mindfulness, and it’s one practice that Spring and the

Mindfulness Community use. Not all forms of meditation require the practitioner to sit motionless, but all of them work as training for the mind. And training, it turns out, is what mindfulness requires.

“We tend to revert to our habit energies,” says Spring. “It is difficult to retool our hard-wired mechanics for dealing with situations and people. That is why group and individual practice of mindfulness is important. We gradually learn to allow observation before reaction — just as Tolle describes. The transformation that slowly evolves within as we skillfully practice is a letting go of our habit energies.”

“Being present isn’t a ‘natural’ state,” says Ringena. “It’s not the way I was raised. I’ve been practicing for two-and-a-half years, and I don’t have the ability to be present all the time. But the more time I am present, the better I feel.”

When meditation isn’t possible, deep breathing often helps him relax. “In my work situation, when I would start to get flustered, I would just turn away and do deep breathing,” he says.

Guglemeyer says that adjusting small things in life — like the volume of the TV — can help people become more mindful, too.

The bottom line? Living in the moment is a practice that must be taken up every day. It’s like Spring says. “It is easy to understand what to do. It is very difficult to actually do it. There is no way around diligent practice for learning to be truly present in this moment.”

Mindfulness resources

- Mindfulness Community of the Quad Cities: Weekly meetings and online offerings at mindfulnessqc.com.
- University of Iowa Hospitals and Clinics: Treatment and information; learn more at uihealthcare.com/depts/mindfulness or call (319) 384-5089.
- Eckhart Tolle group: Meetings at the Iowa City Public Library. Call Eric Ringena at (319) 384-5089.



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outdoors

Five for winter fun

Get yourself outside to beat cold-weather blahs

By Radish staff

February may find you under piles of blankets more often than hiking under the moon, but that doesn't mean there's not fun to be had outdoors this month. In fact, if you bundle up tight and open your eyes wide, you just might see something in nature that you'd never notice in a warmer season, when leaves and clouds block the view. Following are five places to find outdoor fun this month.

1 Hike by moonlight. Twilight Snowshoe Hikes will begin at 4:30 p.m. Feb. 6, 13, 20 and 27. Guides from Fever River Outfitters of Galena, Ill., will lead the 1½-hour hikes along the Galena River Trail to Buehler Wilderness Preserve, 18 acres donated for conservation by a former mayor of Galena. Snowshoes and headlamps are provided for the hike, and reservations are required. The cost is \$35 per person. To sign up in advance, call Fever River Outfitters at (815) 776-9425.

2 Sled, ski or snowshoe. A Winter Outdoor Sports Day will be held from 10 a.m. to 2 p.m. Feb. 7 at Scott County Park, off exit 191 on U.S. 61, near Davenport, Iowa. Meet at the Whispering Pines Shelter with your family for a day of snowshoeing, skiing and sledding. To register or for more information, call (563) 328-3286.

3 Ride a bike to Rippey. On the first Saturday in February each year, thousands of bike enthusiasts turn out for Perry's Bike Ride to Rippey — aptly abbreviated as BRR — a 24-mile round-trip between the towns of Perry and Rippey, Iowa. BRR also functions as a winter reunion for RAGBRAI, although everyone is invited. The day includes games, food and more. Registration is required at bikeiowa.com; the cost is \$30 in advance or \$35 on Feb. 7. (515) 465-4601.



Riders in the annual Bike Ride to Rippey in Perry, Iowa, brave snow and ice. (Submitted)

4 See the eagles. Bald Eagle Bus Tours will take off promptly at 8 a.m. Feb. 14 and 28 from the Stoney Creek Inn at 940 Galena Square Drive, Galena, Ill. This four-hour tour explores eagle wintering communities. Terrence Ingram of the Eagle Nature Foundation in Apple River, Ill. will lead the tours. Ingram has been watching birds for 60 years and will teach tour-goers about the bald eagle's habits, history and projected future. Eagles will be seen feeding and roosting. Reservations are required. Cost is \$75 for adults and \$50 for children under 17. To sign up, call (815) 594-2306; visit www.eaglenature.com for more information.

5 Play, eat, then play some more. A Winter Family Fun Day will be held 9 a.m. to 2 p.m. Feb. 21 at the Wapsi River Environmental Education Center near Dixon, Iowa. (The Wapsi center can be found 6 miles south of Wheatland or 1 mile northwest of Dixon, Iowa by taking County Road Y4E. Then turn north at 52nd Avenue and follow the signs for about 1 mile.) The day starts with a cross-country ski clinic, followed by crafts, snowman-building contest, scavenger hunt, chili lunch and a snowshoe nature hike. A limited number of skis and snowshoes are available; equipment reservations are required. Bring a mug for hot cocoa. Call (563) 328-3286 to sign up.

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eating well

Vegan for six weeks

How one dietitian and her friends gave up eating meat

By Jeni Tackett, RD, LD

Would you go vegan for six weeks if you could lose weight, improve your cholesterol levels and lower your blood pressure?

Several Quad-Citians (including me) took a six-week vegan challenge for better health. We swore off animal products including meats, eggs, dairy and, sadly, even chocolate. During the challenge, people reported feelings of hunger, satisfaction, increased energy and even frustration. In the end, all participants learned ways to improve their eating habits.

In the book “Eat to Live,” Dr. Joel Fuhrman presents a convincing case for a plant-based diet. He cites studies showing the benefits of increasing intake of plant foods for reducing cholesterol levels and diabetes and cancer risk. He challenges Americans to eat a plant-based diet for six weeks and insists on full commitment so that those who try it truly may see the benefits of a high-fiber, low-fat diet.

Dawn Kruse decided to change her eating habits and follow Dr. Fuhrman’s plan for better health. She inspired her husband, daughter, mother, sister, brother-in-law, sister-in-law and her dietitian friend (that’s me!) to join her on a quest for a healthier lifestyle.

I have to admit I was skeptical about going vegan in the beginning. I have been a vegetarian for 15 years, and I thought my eating habits

were good enough. I participated in the challenge to see if going vegan would improve my cholesterol levels.

Of course we ate a lot of fruits and vegetables. The result was a very high-fiber diet of approximately 60 to 70 grams of fiber per day — much higher than the recommended 25 to 35 grams of fiber per day. (Most Americans average just 12 grams of fiber per day.) Eating high-fiber foods causes increased fullness and satisfaction after meals.

Plant foods are more nutrient-dense than animal foods. Fruits and vegetables are low in calories but high in vitamins, minerals, fiber and phytochemicals. Increasing quantities of high-nutrient foods such as leafy greens, non-starchy vegetables, fresh fruits, beans and lentils along with some starchy vegetables, whole

grains and raw nuts and seeds, will result in better health and a feeling of fullness after meals and snacks.

During the challenge, we learned that planning is essential to success on a vegan diet. We brought our lunches and snacks to work. I set four fruits on my desk each morning and ate them as snacks throughout the day. Going out to eat was difficult, so we decreased how often we did it.


All of us experienced plenty of energy during the challenge. The participants who wanted to lose weight did so without feeling deprived. Many had increased energy and became accustomed to eating high-fiber, low-fat foods.

The results were different for each participant. Matt Kruse, Dawn’s husband, had an impressive improvement in his lipids. His total cholesterol went from 206 to 166 in just 6 weeks. My cholesterol stayed pretty much the same with a slight improvement in HDL (good cholesterol) and LDL (bad cholesterol). And although we had similar diet and exercise routines, our bodies reacted differently.

As a dietitian, I always am preaching the importance of increasing plant foods. I do not believe that everyone must eat a vegan diet to be healthy, but the challenge showed me that even my diet could use some improvement.

You can check out a blog about the challenge, complete with recipes, at 6weekveganchallenge.com.





Release your Potential!

Rock Island County Extension Programs & Events

Monday Morning Leadership Series Starts February 2nd
Learn eight key principals to leadership utilizing the best selling book by David Cottrell. Meets the First & Third Mondays, Feb 2 - May 18, 8 - 9 a.m.

Winter Ecology Series, Tues, February 10 - 24, Watch Tower Lodge
Learn what it takes to make your environment healthy for native wildlife, butterflies, bees, plants and more - 6:30 p.m., Black Hawk State Historic Site

Nursery School: Lessons in Gardening, Feb 28, i wireless Center
Grow in your knowledge of gardening! Choose from 16 classes with topics on perennial plants, starting seeds, food preservation, photography, edible landscaping, growing grapes, ornamental grasses, pests, and more.

NEW - 4-H YOUiversity From Dragonology to Drama, Gardening to Cooking this new series of classes helps youth plug into their passion through hands-on learning! Choose from Monday, Wednesday & Saturday sessions and dozens of topics!

National Issue Forums- Join in nonpartisan discussions to consider public policy and determine what we can do locally to make a difference.
February 26 - Making Ends Meet: Is There a Way to Help Working Americans?
March 26 - The Energy Problem: Choices for an Uncertain Future.

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technology

The switch to digital

Upgrading your TV doesn't have to be wasteful

By Spencer Rabe

Some of my oldest friends are going to die this month. The date even has been set for quite some time. Feb. 17. That's the day the great digital TV transition takes place.

Hopefully, by now, you know that your old TV really won't die. Sorry for the dramatics, but this is television we're talking about. Your set still will be capable of showing a DVD; it just won't be able to receive digital broadcasts. The past year has been filled with articles and public service announcements explaining the switch from analog broadcasts to digital. They've been hard to miss. But if you're still unclear on the details, here's what you need to know:

- If you receive your television signal through a satellite or cable company, you're already set.
 - If you rely on an antenna, you'll need a digital converter box to keep that old set alive and capable of receiving over-the-air broadcasts. (Newer TVs already have digital tuners that perform the same function.)
- If you already visited dtv2009.gov and applied for coupons (limit two per household) good for \$40 off eligible converter boxes, good for you. But maybe you didn't have time to apply or forgot about that old

13-inch in the kitchen. This wouldn't be Radish if we didn't ask: Is there a way to make your TV work without adding another piece of power-hungry electronics?

The answer is no. You're stuck with adding a digital pacemaker to keep that old set alive. But there are things you can do to act in a responsible fashion:

1. **Look for the Energy Star label.** Make sure your converter box meets the government's Energy Star requirements. There are going to be quite a few of these boxes out there (an estimated 22 million), and every little bit of energy-savings helps.
2. **Upgrade to an LCD.** If you've decided to use the digital switch as an excuse to upgrade your TV, choose LCD over plasma. While you would be better off just adding a converter box to your old cathode ray tube (CRT) TV when it comes to energy consumption, if you must "go big," LCDs are clearly more energy efficient than plasmas. CNET has an excellent guide online (reviews.cnet.com/tv-power-consumption/?tag=rbcontent;rbmtx) explaining television power consumption. The guide also includes tips for reducing energy costs, such as turning down the backlight of an LCD model.
3. **Ditch the extra sets.** Do you really need that third TV set that is rarely used if you have a

laptop? With a broadband Internet connection, it's increasingly easy to catch your favorite programs by purchase (iTunes, Amazon.com) or by ad-supported streaming (hulu.com, youtube.com and other network sites like abc.com). There's always reading, too.

4. **Recycle the old unit.** No matter which option you choose, don't throw away your old set. Not only are they being banned from many landfills, they contain a lot of harmful materials. See the list below for a nearby recycling option.

And if you really did procrastinate on getting a coupon to purchase a converter box — good luck. There is now a waiting list for coupons since the program ran out of funding. You just might find yourself reading a copy of Radish alongside one of my dead electronic friends.

Get more information on the digital transition at www.dtv.gov or dtv2009.gov, or turn to Resources page 39.



TV recycling options

Contact your recycling center to schedule a drop-off time before heading out with your TV.

- **Scott County/Rock Island County:** The Waste Commission of Scott County offers residents free electronic recycling through Feb. 27 at the Electronic Demanufacturing Facility, 1048 E. 59th St., Davenport, Iowa. Visit wastecom.com for more information.
- **McDonough/Mercer/Warren and other surrounding counties:** Tri-County Resource & Waste Management Council services eight counties including Mercer, Fulton, McDonough, Henry, Hancock, Knox, Warren and Schuyler. Fees vary by screen size. Visit tricountyresource.org for more information.

- **Johnson County:** The Iowa City Landfill & Recycling Center at 3900 Hebl Ave. SW, Iowa City, accepts electronics for residents of Johnson County and the towns of Kalona and Riverside. Fees vary by screen size. Visit icgov.org/default/?id=1613 for more information.
- **Jefferson, Keokuk and Washington counties:** Residents in these counties can utilize Semco Landfill, located at 29997 Hwy. 78 W., Richland, Iowa, for their TV recycling. Fees vary by screen size. Visit semcolandfill.com for more information.
- **Dubuque:** The Dubuque Metropolitan Area Solid Waste Agency accepts electronics for recycling at the Dubuque Metro Landfill, 14501 US Hwy. 20 W., Dubuque, Iowa. Fees vary by weight. Visit dmaswa.org/serviceselectronics.cfm for more information.

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By GateHouse News Service

You've conquered theme parks, hit the beaches, shopped big cities and stayed at all-inclusive resorts. Maybe it's time to take a break that feeds your farm-lovin' soul.

These days, more urbanites are flocking to America's farms, ranches and wineries to rediscover fresh air and outdoor fun. It's called agritourism.

The crossroads of tourism and agriculture, agritourism offers experiences that "connect an urban population back to the land," said Jane Eckert, president of Eckert AgriMarketing and editor of rural-bounty.com, an agritourism Web site.

Why is agritourism growing? Long popular in Europe, "farm-stay vacations are growing in the United States as new farmers and hobby farmers look for additional ways to make money on their small farms," said Karen Ritchie, president of the North American Association of Hobby Farmers.

People want a new experience, "an escape from the stress of traffic jams, office cubicles and car pooling. Parents want their children to know how food is grown and that milk actually comes from a cow — not cartons. Families enjoy a drive to the country and spending the day together, especially in these times," Eckert said.

Agritourism goes back to the late 1800s when urbanites would visit friends and families in the country to escape hectic city life. After World War II, people visited rural areas for a change of scenery.

Over time, agritourism as we know it evolved. A farmer sells sweet corn out of a pickup truck, makes some extra money and later opens a farm stand, Eckert said. Soon he's selling jams and jellies. Others take notice of his success and open and expand their farms, too.

With serious competition from large, corporate and foreign farms, family farmers can make ends meet by adding special activities for visitors, Eckert said. "Agritourism is actually saving thousands of small farms from extinction."

Farming for the weekend

Here are a few places where you can become a weekend farmer.

Garst Home Farm at Whiterock Resort

Where: 1390 Highway 141, Coon Rapids, Iowa

What you'll do: Take a tour of commercial or alternative agriculture, ice-fish, cook on a wood-burning stove, bird-watch, visit the buffalo herd and check out the family antiques.

Cost: Rooms cost from \$55 to \$105 per night. The Hollyhock cottage, equipped with a small farm kitchen, is \$140 per night. Weekly rates are available.

More info: farmresort.com or (712) 684-2964.

Farm House Bed and Breakfast

Where: 2866 270th St., Fredericksburg, Iowa

What you'll do:

Milk the cows, feed the chickens, gather eggs and fish on this working dairy farm and vineyard. About 90 heifers give birth each month; help bottle feed the calves.

Cost: Rooms range from \$70 to \$150.

More info: thefarmhousebb.com.



Submitted

Barn on the Bluff Bed & Breakfast

Where: 9194 Highway 13, Elkader, Iowa

What you'll do: Live in a real, 100-year-old post-and-beam barn. When you rent the barn, the whole place is yours. There are no chores to do, so build a fire in the fire-place and enjoy the quiet.

Cost: Rent the whole barn for \$400 per night for up to 8 people. It has three private bedrooms and a 30-by-60-foot hayloft has been converted into five levels for living and sleeping. Barn has three bathrooms. Some pets allowed.

More info: barnonthebluff.com or (563) 245-2820.

Country Heritage Bed & Breakfast

Where: 1034 Highway 3, Hampton, Iowa

What you'll do: See the baby lambs in the pasture and hunt or fish.

Cost: Rooms range from \$65 to \$90 per night.

More info: (641) 456-4036, (866) 456-4036 or countryheritagebb.com.



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homes

Clutter and your health

Get organized and you could feel a whole lot better

By lyna Bort Caruso, Natural Home Magazine

Clutter can be hazardous to your health. Aside from the obvious impact clutter has on a home’s aesthetics, it can affect your physical well-being, too. If home is where the heap is, you’ll be more stressed, less healthy and pretty irritable. If you clear up the clutter in a few key areas in your home, you’ll feel better fast. If it seems that the messes never end, remember to approach cleanup with a one-step-at-a-time attitude. Start with a particularly stuffed closet, then move to a larger area, such as a bathroom, working in sections. For example, attack the medicine cabinet first, then the cabinet under the sink — not everything at once. Here are a few tips to get you started.

Closets

Overstuffed closets make thorough cleaning impossible. Dust can infiltrate clothing fibers and trigger an allergic reaction. Exorcise the excess, and you’ll have room to attack the dust bunnies. Donate clothes in good condition to a thrift shop or homeless shelter or arrange for a pick-up from a favorite charity.

Bedroom

Bills, paperwork or exercise equipment in the bedroom attract negative energy that can sabotage rest and relaxation, says professional organizer Ariane Benefit of OrganizingForHealth.com. Everything in the bedroom should be geared to supporting sleep and giving your mind a chance to unwind.

Bathroom

A medicine cabinet full of expired drugs is the hallmark of a dysfunctional bathroom. Old medications lose their potency or, worse, make you ill. Ditch them, but don’t flush them — they could pose environmental hazards. Some pharmacies take back old meds to ensure proper disposal. Contact the Poison Control Center, (800) 222-1222, to find the best way to discard expired medicines in your area. While you’re at it, toss old cosmetics, which can cause breakouts and eye infections.

Family room

Packrat-itis is a condition that can aggravate sinusitis. If tables and floors are covered in toys, magazines and DVDs, the chances of a clean sweep are minuscule. Don’t just clear a path. Cut the glut from your home. List unused items on the Freecycle Network, the grassroots organization that allows you to recycle your

no-longer-wanted goods by offering them free to others (Freecycle.org), or list them for sale in your local newspaper.

Kitchen

Cleaning supplies left haphazardly on countertops emit low-level odors, which are troublesome to people with non-allergic asthma, says Jonathan A. Bernstein, M.D. Switch to nontoxic cleansers and stow them safely behind closed doors. Even cleaners with natural ingredients can have potentially irritating respiratory-system effects.

Excerpted from Natural Home, a national magazine that provides practical ideas, inspiring examples and expert opinions about healthy, ecologically sound, beautiful homes. To read more articles from Natural Home magazine, please visit www.NaturalHomeMagazine.com or call (800) 340-5846 to subscribe. Copyright 2007 by Ogden Publications Inc.



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This science club for kids ages 7-10 "explores" climate change through hands-on activities and games. \$9.

Grand Saturdays: Got Green?
9-11am, March 14
This grandparent/child event is all about going green, and includes breakfast, activities, and exhibit halls admission. \$5/child; \$7/grandparent/friend.

FIRST LEGO League: Climate Connections
1-4pm, March 21
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For more information or to register, call 324-1054, Ext. 242 or go online at www.putnam.org. Deadline is three days prior to each event.

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Yoga by lightsaber

Q-C yogini has the force to relax your kids — and you

By Sharon Wren

“Truly wonderful, the mind of a child is.” — Jedi Master Yoda, Star Wars

The bad thing about winter is that it’s often too cold for kids to go outside and let off some steam. If you’re looking for a new way to help them release some pent up energy, give Jedi yoga a try. Developed by Michelle Campbell of River City Yoga in Bettendorf, Iowa, Jedi Yoga is a unique system that incorporates lightsaber skills into yoga and meditation.

“It is designed to help teach children a way of developing focus and awareness of the breath while strengthening the body. This unique system helps children to learn or improve coordination, concentration and centeredness. It can be used alone or in balance with other sports, dance or martial arts,” Campbell says.

She came up with the concept during a pre-holidays visit with relatives. “My 3-year-old nephew and I were pretending to be Jedi. He was really getting rambunctious, and I needed a way to calm him down. So I began using my yoga teacher’s voice to calm him down, and our play took on the quality of a yoga class, holding positions and breathing. I had to think quick on my feet, so I invented names for common yoga poses so that he could relate to them. Then we meditated. He was calm but had released his extra energy, and I thought, “This could really serve kids, especially boys.”

Campbell, an Anusara yoga instructor, realized that Star Wars terms could help explain yoga terminology. “Like the stories of King Arthur, these characters or archetypes have something



Photos by Paul Colletti / Radish

to teach us, just as each pose can teach us a real life lesson. Take, for instance, Yoda. He is tiny but mighty and uses the Force with great ease to accomplish great things a person twice his size would find impossible. We use a pose that compacts our form and allows us to balance on our hands while our head and legs hover, as if levitating. It’s a truly exhilarating pose called crow or Bakasana in Sanskrit, but in Jedi Yoga, it’s Flying Yoda! Through storytelling and a little creativity, I

help the poses gain new meaning by interweaving real life lessons through fantasy.”

Leslie Klipsch of Davenport is a big fan of Jedi Yoga, as is her 4-year-old son, Oliver. He “looks forward to interacting with the other kids in the class, learning new poses and engaging in play weapons-training. I love the marriage between physicality and imagination. This nurtures my son’s creativity as well as gets his body moving.”

Like the Jedi training in the movies, Jedi Yoga isn’t only for boys. Say Campbell, “I have had several girls come and love Jedi Yoga, so it’s not limited to boys. Currently I have a mix of students who are from 5 to 12. I will soon be creating a preschool class on Tuesdays at 10:30 a.m. that parents and children can attend. Classes for older students are planned, too. We even have had adults asking about the class. As soon as I have a group of six people interested, I will create a class for them.”

If you’ve never seen the Star Wars movies, you still can get something out of the class, according to Campbell. “While folks who are Star Wars fans are most interested in taking classes, non-fans are certainly welcome as we are talking about archetypes, concepts that all people can relate to, such as the battle between good and evil. Eastern Indians have the Bhagavad Gita; we have Star Wars.”

The balance portion of Jedi Yoga also appeals to Klipsch. “It stresses an important message that there is good in the universe.”

Yoda likely would approve.

River City Yoga is located at 2491 53rd St., Bettendorf, Iowa. For more information, call (563) 271-0381.

rooting around

Tax breaks on green cars, energy: Get ’em while they last

Did you put off getting those new double-pane thermal windows or an energy-efficient hot water heater or furnace? From a tax perspective, your procrastination could save you money. Congress renewed the tax credit for energy improvements to homes but skipped the 2008 tax year. The credit will reappear for 2009. However, if you installed a small windmill to generate energy for your home, you may qualify for a credit for up to \$4,000 of the cost. Under the Residential Energy Efficient Property Credit, the credit is for 30 percent of the cost, including labor and materials, up to a maximum of \$2,000 for solar or geothermal installations, \$4,000 for wind, and \$500 for each one-half kilowatt of fuel cell capacity.

You also still can get a maximum tax credit of \$3,000 if you buy a hybrid car or light truck. However, with their growing popularity, many of the available credits are smaller, if they’re there at all. The credit begins phasing out after the manufacturer sells 60,000 qualifying vehicles, so a 2008 Toyota Prius won’t get you a rebate at all. (The credit is only available to original owners.) For 2009, Congress has added a tax credit for plug-in electric cars, up to \$7,500. Like the hybrid vehicle credit, these begin phasing out, but only after 250,000 vehicles are sold.

For a list of exact models and rebates available, visit www.irs.gov/newsroom/article/0,,id=157632,00.html. For more information about energy tax credits, visit energystar.gov/index.cfm?c=products.prtaxcredits.



Bruce Wood of ePower Synergies, Port Byron, Ill., shows off an electric car. (Submitted)

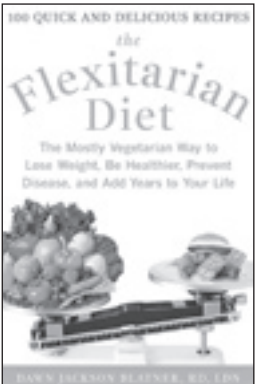
— Associated Press

Flexing for health: Flexitarians eat meat, just not lots

Mini-review: “The Flexitarian Diet,” by Dawn Jackson Blatner, RD LDN (McGraw-Hill, 2008)



Dawn Jackson Blatner’s “The Flexitarian Diet” is a good resource for those wanting to introduce more vegetables into their diets without giving up meat altogether. A flexitarian is primarily a vegetarian, but one whose diet is flexible enough to include some fish, meat and poultry. Blatner wrote this book in part because “there are too many appetizing, meaningful meat events in our lives to quit meat cold turkey,” and because she wanted to be able to participate in Sheboygan, Wisc.’s annual Brat Days or her family’s Thanksgiving dinner while still eating healthy foods.



Submitted

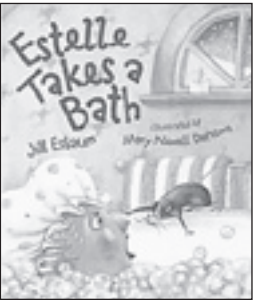
Blatner claims that we don’t actually crave meat, but umami (Japanese for “savory”), a fifth “taste” to add to the traditional list of sweet, salty, sour and bitter. Umami usually is accompanied by a texture we associate with meat, but which Blatner says can be approximated with legumes, nuts and seeds -- the “new meat” in one of her five Flex food groups. She includes helpful tips for choosing and preparing these foods for those who aren’t familiar with the wide variety of beans, vegetables and grains available. Blatner’s Five-Week Flex Meal Plan (breakfasts, lunches, dinners and snacks/desserts) is vegetarian-friendly, and she sometimes suggests nutritionally-equivalent meat substitutions for the “new meat” ingredients in the original recipes.

This practical book provides shopping and kitchen equipment lists in addition to tips on starting and maintaining an exercise program that is flexible (of course!), yet effective. I strongly recommend this book for anyone interested in a “mostly vegetarian” path to a healthy lifestyle.

— Sarah Kretz McDowell, Rock Island, Ill.

Freight House book-signing to leave kids squeaky-clean

The Davenport Freight House Farmers’ Market, 421 W. River Drive, will host a book-signing event from 8 a.m. to 1 p.m. Feb. 28 with Jill Esbaum, author of the children’s book, “Estelle Takes A Bath.” Librarian Samantha Wickstrom from the Davenport Public Library will read Esbaum’s book, and the author will sell copies and donate 40 percent of the proceeds to the farmers’ market. Attendees are encouraged to donate gently-used books for the library’s semi-annual sale. For more information, visit freighthousefarmersmarket.com or call (563) 888-2235.



Submitted

Readers’ theater brings ‘Farmscape’ to life

Based on interviews by Iowa State University students in Mary Swander’s English 557 creative writing class, “Farmscape” is a play that presents farm life as it really is. The play will be presented across Iowa, beginning with a showing at 7 p.m. Jan. 31 at the B.G. Voerkman Theatre, 927 4th Ave., Grinnell. Other shows will be held March 7 at the University of Northern Iowa, Cedar Falls; March 22 in Coon Rapids; April 2 at the Technology Center Lecture Hall, Clinton Community College, Clinton; and May 9 at the Iowa Book Festival, Adel. “Farmscape” is a readers’ theater production, with people from local theatre groups reading each character’s role with minimal costumes and props. Among the characters are an agribusiness farmer with 1,700 acres, a woman farmer with two acres of organic vegetables, a man who gave up row cropping and started a winery, a man who lost his farm in the farm crisis, a researcher from Monsanto who is developing genetically modified crops, and a couple on a century farm who started a hog confinement operation to save their farm.

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rooting around

Purple corn to color foods, cosmetics

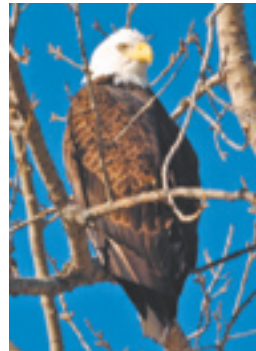
Amid questions about whether the synthetic substances used to color foods and cosmetics are safe, Suntava, a development-stage group in Minnesota, has created a natural, purple-corn hybrid that can be used as a coloring agent. According to the group, natural red dyes extracted from the corn, which is not genetically modified, could be used as an alternative to synthetic dyes found in many foods and cosmetics. Suntava says that while synthetic dyes have been ubiquitous in the food chain since the early 1900s, The Center for Science in the Public Interest has petitioned the FDA to ban the use of some synthetic dyes and to make the public more aware of the health concerns surrounding them. Meanwhile, the European Union has adopted legislation requiring labels be attached to products, warning consumers of the adverse effects of synthetic colorants on children. For more information, visit suntava.com.

Saddle up! Iowan hosts new series about horses on public TV

“Saddle Up with Dennis Brouse” is a new television series that celebrates the relationship between horse and human. It launched in January 2009 and airs from 2 to 2:30 p.m. Saturdays and from 2:30 to 3 p.m. Mondays on WQPT, Quad Cities Public Television. The 13-part series was shot in high-definition, and each episode will showcase a specific training question or situation that Mr. Brouse addresses and solves with a horse’s owner. For more about the show, visit saddleupwithdennisbrouse.com.

Corps of Engineers offers eagle-spotting tours

The Army Corps of Engineers will offer Eagle Watch and Clock Tower tours at 9:30 a.m., 11 a.m., and 1 p.m. at the Rock Island Arsenal on Saturdays and Sundays through Feb. 20. Tours are conducted from the Mississippi River Visitor Center at Lock and Dam 15, on the west end of the island. (Enter island through the Davenport or Moline entrances.) After a brief presentation, visitors will walk to the Clock Tower for an overview of the historical structure. A spotting scope to view eagles will be set up, but participants should bring binoculars if possible. The tour requires participants to climb several flights of stairs, and the Clock Tower is not heated. Because the tour takes visitors onto Arsenal Island, they should allow extra time for vehicle security checks, and those 16 and up will be required to show a picture ID. Tours are free, but reservations are required. Call (309) 794-5338.



John Greenwood / Radish

Lessons in gardening at Nursery School

The University of Illinois Extension and the Rock Island County Master Gardeners will present Nursery School: Lessons in Gardening, the annual event that features gardening seminars, vendors, raffles, a 4-H gardening program for kids and a chance to connect with other gardeners. The event will be held from 8 a.m. to 4 p.m. Feb. 28. Registration deadline is Feb. 21, and the cost to attend is \$45 for adults and \$25 for youth. Cost includes admission to nursery school, including four information sessions, as well as lunch. (Vegetarian option is available.) Local and regional experts will present information on topics such as native plants, container gardens, garden photography, growing grapes, food preservation and more. For more information or to register, visit extension.uiuc.edu/rockisland or call (309) 756-9978.



Attendees at the 2007 Nursery School study orchids. (File)

Free admission to exhibits about energy, agriculture at Family Museum in Bettendorf

The Family Museum, 2900 Learning Campus Drive, Bettendorf, offers free admission the first Monday night of each month from 5 to 8 p.m. The Family Museum’s exhibits include the energy-focused Watts Up with Energy? and Amazing Acres, which teaches kids about weather and agriculture. The Garden exhibit for kids under 5 lets them play in sand, build with blocks and explore the two-story Bear’s Playhouse. For more information about the museum, visit familymuseum.org or call (563) 344-4106.

Ecology series focuses on insects, plants

You can clobber the winter blahs with thoughts of spring from 6:30 to 8 p.m. Tuesday nights beginning Feb. 10 at Black Hawk State Historic Site, 1510 46th Ave., Rock Island, Ill. The Winter Ecology Series will include presentations from area experts on topics like bees, bugs, native plants and flowers. Classes will include “Flying Flowers” (Feb. 10), “Insects: Friends or Foes?” (Feb. 17) and “Green Gardening” (Feb. 24). Cost to attend is \$6 per class or \$15 for all three sessions. Children 17 and under get in free. Members of the Illinois Master Naturalists, RICSWCD QC Natural Area Guardians, and Citizens to Preserve Black Hawk Park Foundation also will be admitted for free. Pre-registration deadline is Feb. 6, but walk-ins are welcome. Snacks will be provided. If a class is postponed due to weather, it will be rescheduled for March 3. For more information or to register, visit visit.extension.uiuc.edu/rockisland or call (309) 756-9978.

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rooting around

Changing the meaning of ‘seasonal’

Imagine sitting down to a fresh winter spinach salad or snacking on a just-picked vine-ripe spring tomato. Thanks to a \$50,000 grant from the Ceres Foundation, Practical Farmers of Iowa (PFI) is helping farmers extend the season to make this a reality. Season-extension helps farmers increase the length of time each year that they can make money selling fresh produce, and it expands options for in-season eating for shoppers. In the next year, PFI will use the money to help farmers expand their growing seasons and to teach other farmers how to do the same. For more information, contact Sally Worley at (515) 232-5661 or sally@practicalfarmers.org.

Classes in herbal healing start this month

Midwest Botanicals will offer ongoing courses through 2009 for people who want to become certified herbalists. Classes begin in February and go through November and will be held at Heritage Natural Foods, 1317 6th Ave., Moline, Ill. Attendees will learn how herbs heal, formulas for specific conditions, and how to make herbal products. Classes will be held the first Saturday of each month from 10 a.m. to noon. Cost for the series of classes is \$300, which may be paid on a month-by-month basis with payments made one month in advance. Classes will be taught by Pamela Taylor, ND, a graduate of the National College of Naturopathic Medicine in Portland, Ore. Taylor is the author of “Simple Ways of Healing: A Textbook of Natural Therapies.” She has a private consulting practice in the Midwest and lectures and teaches on natural therapies. To sign up, call Midwest Botanicals at (309) 797-3367 or visit midwestbotanicals.com.

For your sweetie: Locally-made hot fudge sauce

Looking for a chocolatey, locally made gift for your sweetie this Valentine’s Day? Sidwell’s Legendary Gourmet Fudge Sauce might be the ticket. Every jar of Sidwell’s sauce is stirred by hand, and the recipe that the company uses today is based on an old family recipe. It includes dark chocolate that’s rich in antioxidants, real butter, sugar, cocoa powder, milk and cream. The Sidwell family’s history goes back more than 100 years in the dairy and ice cream business, according to head chef Dave Sidwell, and its ice-cream shop in Iowa City was known for its 5-cent cones in the 1950s. Today the family’s fudge sauce is made in North Liberty, Iowa, and it is available for online orders. Jars cost from \$6.95 for 8 ounces to \$8.95 for 12 ounces, plus shipping and handling. To order online, visit sidwellshotfudge.com. For more information, e-mail sidwell@sidwellshotfudge.com or call (319) 430-5434.



Submitted

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THE WARM FUZZIES

(Story on page 10)

Here’s where you can find fiber, yarn, garments and gifts made with warm, luxurious alpaca fiber.

- **Crazy Girl Yarn Shops**, 208 W. 2nd St., Muscatine, Iowa. (563) 263-9276; and 1150 5th St., Coralville, Iowa. (319) 341-9276. Or crazygirlyarnshop.com.
- **FiberWild**, 304 S. Main St., Galena, Ill. (815) 777-3550 or fiberwild.com.
- **Heartland Criations Alpacas Farm Store**, 2512 Knox Road 500 East, Rio, Il. (309) 483-3534, (309) 368-7354 or alpacanation.com.
- **Kalmar Kolors Alpacas**, Alpha, Ill. (309) 629-5402 or kalmarkolorsalpacas.com.
- **Prairie Arts Center**, 203 N. Bishop Hill St., Bishop Hill, Ill. (309) 927-3008 or bishophillartscouncil.com/Shops/PrairieArtsCenter.
- **The Knitting Shoppe**, 2141 Muscatine Ave., Iowa City. (319) 337-4920 or theknittingshoppe.com.

FUNCTIONAL ART

(Story on page 12)

- Looking for eco-conscious ways to revamp your home? Here are a few places to start.
- Bishop Hill, Ill.:**
- Contact Tom Basler of Genius Loci at (309) 525-0867 or thomas.basler@bishophill.com.
- Davenport, Iowa:**
- **Habitat ReStore**, 3629 Mississippi Ave. Hours are 10 a.m. to 7 p.m. Wednesdays, 10 a.m. to 5 p.m. Thursdays and Fridays, and 10 a.m. to 3 p.m. Saturdays. (563) 391-4949 or restoreqc.org.
- Fairfield, Iowa:**
- **Green Building Supply**, 508 N. 2nd St. Hours are 9 a.m. to 5 p.m. Mondays through Fridays and 9:30 a.m. to 1 p.m. Saturdays. (800) 405-0222 or greenbuildingsupply.com.
- Iowa City:**
- The Salvage Barn at the Iowa City Landfill. In February and March, it’s open from 9 a.m. to 1 p.m. the first and third Saturdays of the month. Beginning in April, it’s open every Saturday. (319) 351-1875 or ic-fhp.org/salvagebarn.html.
 - **Habitat ReStore**, 2401 Scott Boulevard S.E. Hours are noon to 6 p.m. Wednesdays through Fridays and 10 a.m. to 4 p.m. Saturdays. (319) 337-8949 or iowavalleyhabitat.org/restore.main.cfm.
- Online:**
- Check out greenhomeguide.com and thegreenguide.com.


THE SWITCH TO DIGITAL

(Story on page 28)

More information on recycling electronics and venues in Iowa can be found at www.iow-adnr.com/waste/recycling/ewaste.html.

E-waste facts provided by the Waste Commission of Scott County:

- The Electronic Demanufacturing Facility diverts more than 500 tons of e-waste from landfills each year.
- During the free e-waste period between Dec. 22, 2008, and Jan. 1, 2009, the facility received 82,714 pounds of electronic waste. Televisions accounted for 35,143 pounds. The same time period last year saw 42,135 pounds of e-waste recycled.



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food for thought

‘Totally turn to fire’

Let love renew and transform you this Valentine’s Day

By Rev. Roger Butts

Perhaps everything that may be said about love has been said, by everyone from Shakespeare and The Smiths to poets and writers of sacred literature. Nonetheless, the opportunity continually presents itself, at Valentine’s Day and beyond, to conjure up images and stories in our own lives of moments when love came to us with the promise of renewal and transformation.

Some life-giving images from my life and reading follow as an invitation to you to do likewise.

I love Catholic monk Thomas Merton, who lived in a Kentucky monastery. He eventually lived an even more cloistered existence in a little hermitage in the woods. Once while traveling, he watched passers-by in Louisville’s busiest commercial district. In that moment, he had a great epiphany: We are all brothers and sisters, related to one another in life’s unfolding story. Here is what he wrote about the experience, in simplified terms: I suddenly realized that I loved all these people, that we could not be alien to one another. I am keenly conscious not of their beauty (I hardly think I saw anyone really beautiful by special standards) but of their humanity. I wish I could stop each of them and tell them they shine bright as the sun.

And so, at Valentine’s Day, why not ask: In what way am I connected to all of humanity? How can that impact how I love and live?

Dr. Martin Luther King Jr., early in the struggle for civil rights, came to see the enormity of the task before him. He became afraid. He felt alone. He was ready to give up. The fire in his gut and his call to help form the beloved community that he envisioned pushed up against the reality of the violence and resistance he faced.

Why not turn to your beloved and say, “I am so glad you are here”?

One night at the kitchen table, he threw up his hands, deciding that he could not go on. And in that moment, he later said, the divine presence, the beloved, the spirit of life, came to him as if in a voice, saying, “Do not fear. You are not alone. So speak your truth. Stand for justice. I will be with you.” King resolved to continue because he saw that, though the road might be long and the way unclear, he was not alone. The fire, his passion for justice, returned.

This month, why not think about the way that life invites you to keep on, despite the odds? Why not think about the way that love insists that you are not alone?



iStockphoto

For the first four years of my ministry, I had a congregant named Gladys Hitchings. I knew Gladys when she was 101 until she died at 105. In those four years, she came to church precisely twice a year, when her “kids” (who were in their 70s) came to town. It was always a special treat when Gladys came to church because in the receiving line at the end of service, Gladys would wheel herself toward me. We held hands. She brought me into her face, and she whispered to me: “I am so glad you are here.” She did not know that much about me and my work. Rather, from a place of deep gratitude and unconditional love, she spoke of affirmation and grace: I am so glad you are here. The warmth of her smile I will never forget.

Why not turn to your beloved (a friend, spouse, child, parent or pet) and say, “I am so glad you are here”? How can you express the warmth of your deepest, unconditional appreciation and love for your beloved?

In her book, “Dakota: A Spiritual Geography,” Kathleen Norris tells a story from the desert fathers: One day Abbot Lot came to his teacher, Abbot Joseph, and said, “As best as I am able, I keep my fast, I keep my rule, I say my prayers. I keep my silent contemplation and strive to be void of all unnecessary distraction. But it is not enough. What shall I do?” At this, Abbot Joseph looked at his pupil and stretched his hands towards the heavens; momentarily his fingertips turned to fire. “Why not,” he asked, “turn totally to fire?”

This Valentine’s Day, remind yourself of your great passions. Ask: What brings me to life? How can I turn totally to fire?

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