Radish

HEALTHY LIVING FROM THE GROUND UP

Simply stunning winter skies

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FEBRUARY 2015

Heart health

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from the editor

Photo by Paul Colletti / Radish

I couldn't tell you the first — or even the last — time I read Mark Twain's "The Adventures of Huckleberry Finn." I can't remember how old I was when it was assigned to read in school or how many years passed before I checked it out of the library to read again. It doesn't matter. Some things just stick with you. Even now if you put the book in my hands I could find my favorite passage in under a minute.

It's a slim pair of sentences in chapter 19, where Huck describes traveling on the Mississippi River with Jim. They are in constant danger and can only be out on the water at night; even so, Huck declares, "It's lovely to live on a raft. We had the sky up there, all speckled with stars, and we used to lay on our backs and look up at them, and discuss about whether they was made or only just happened."

This passage has come back to me many times as I have lain under a wide and starry sky. There is just something about gazing into space, no matter what else is going on in your life, that makes your thoughts run to the big questions. What is our place among these stars? Where does the universe begin and end? How much more is out there that we have yet to discover?

We've come a long way in understanding some of these things since Mark Twain put pen to paper. We know now, for example, that our entire planet and everything on it — ourselves included — are made from the particle remnants of stars snuffed out long before our solar system formed. And we know that in the far distant future the star we orbit, our sun, will expand outward, spewing the particles of our planet into space again. Viewed this way, recycling isn't some idea that has come in vogue in the last half century, it's our cosmic heritage.

As this issue of Radish was getting ready to print, the newly discovered comet Lovejoy was passing by the constellation Orion in the early night sky, prompting me to grab my binoculars most clear evenings to get a glimpse. That the comet was discovered by an amateur astronomer using a backyard telescope made me all the more excited about the article we had been preparing for page 10 about winter stargazing. The stars are literally part of who we are; that anyone, anywhere, can look on them and discover something new, whether a celestial object or a profound truth, is a marvelous birthright.

— Sarah J. Gardner
editor@radishmagazine.com
Facebook.com/EditorSarahJGardner

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Gerald J. Taylor
PUBLISHER

Sarah J. Gardner
EDITOR
(309) 757-4905
editor@radishmagazine.com

Val Yazbec
CHIEF REVENUE OFFICER

Terry Wilson
NICHE PUBLICATIONS DIRECTOR
(309) 757-5041

Rachel Griffiths
ADVERTISING EXECUTIVE
(309) 721-3204

George Rashid
ADVERTISING EXECUTIVE
(309) 757-4926

Spencer Rabe
LAYOUT & DESIGN

PUBLISHED BY
Small Newspaper Group

Deborah Loeser Small
DIRECTOR OF SPECIAL PROJECTS

Joseph Lacaeyse
TREASURER

Robert Hill
VICE-PRESIDENT

Thomas P. Small
SENIOR VICE-PRESIDENT

Len R. Small
PRESIDENT

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the grapevine

From our readers

Healthy hives (Oct. 2014): "Tim (Wilbanks) presented two great classes. I am looking forward to the class in March."

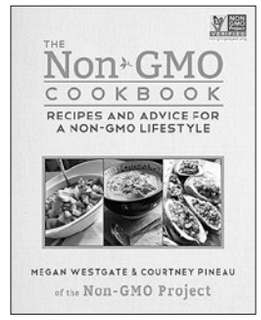
— Scott Fluegel, DeWitt

On the Road with Radish

We love to meet our readers! Thanks to Friends of Radish, you can find representatives of the magazine this month at the **Freight House Farmers' Market,** 8-10 a.m. Saturday, Feb. 14, 421 W. River Drive, Davenport. More information on this year-round market can be found at freighthousefarmersmarket.com.

To discover more upcoming events of interest, see the events calendar on the Radish website.

Radish reads: Accessible information about the impact of GMOs and recipes to avoid them



Submitted

Mini review: "The Non-GMO Cookbook — Recipes and Advice for a Non-GMO Lifestyle," by Megan Westgate & Courtney Pineau (2013, Skyhorse Publishing, 176 pages, $17)

This book is exactly what the title implies: wonderful recipes to try and great advice on making healthier choices and living life without GMOs. The authors talk about the Non-GMO Project and their verification program as well as the crops that are most "at risk" of being commercially produced in genetically engineered form. The book also includes a nice reference chart of substitutions to choose from and why it's important for us as human beings to take charge of our health and our food. It also covers the negative impacts that GMOs have already caused (and continue to create) throughout the entire planet.

Overall, the book was quite simple. It is a very easy read that helps you understand what GMOs are all about and argues how important it is to be aware of the negative impacts these unnatural crops — that exist in 80 percent of our food here in just the United States! — are causing, along with the herbicides and pesticides used with them. We have the power to take control of our food and avoid GMOs as much as possible. The more informed we are, the bigger impact we can make.

— Nicole Hagen, Bettendorf

healthy living from the ground up

features

6 **The good earth**
Our health is directly connected to the health of our soils.

8 **Winter plenty**
Make the most of what is at the farmers' market now.

10 **Looking up**
Clear skies in winter make for great stargazing.

16 **Take a hike!**
Tips to start planning now for your next big adventure.

in every issue

2 **from the editor**

3 **the grapevine**

on the cover

Quad Cities Astronomical Society members Dale Hendricks and Alison McCrary look skyward as the sun sets. (Photo by Paul Colletti/ Radish)

departments

12 **body, mind & soul**
Going deep: Relaxation, awareness combine in yoga nidra practice.

14 **outdoors**
Digging history: Metal-detecting takes Q-C enthusiast to historic dig.

20 **health & medicine**
From ahh to aha! The tongue can be a surprising health indicator.

22 **eating well**
Healthy choices: How to help kids make sense of nutrition labels.

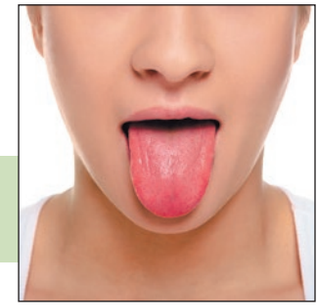
24 **food**
Waffle dinner: Savory recipe lets you skip the syrup, make it a meal.

26 **healthy communities**
Rebuilding together: HEART program enlists youth to rehab Dubuque homes.

28 **environment**
Eco-inspiration: Waterkeepers' mission makes for a fascinating novel.

30 **health & fitness**
En garde! No need to be. a swashbuckler to benefit from fencing.

32 **food for thought**
Matters of the heart: In more ways than one, how we live impacts our health.



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When it comes to carbon emissions and long-distance travel, buses have cars beat, boasting a much lower ratio of emissions per person. In January, Megabus announced they would begin offering service in the Quad-Cities to Chicago, Des Moines and Omaha, and eco-conscious Q-C travelers took notice. Read more about this newly-added, low-cost travel option on radishmagazine.com.

The good earth

Our health is directly connected to the health of our soils

By Cindy Hadish

It's essential to life as we know it, but most people take the Earth's soil for granted. Unless you're a farmer like Laura Krouse.

Krouse, owner of Abbe Hills Farm, has spent a lifetime learning about soil and the past 26 years improving it on her rolling fields in rural Mount Vernon.

"Every environmental issue you can think of is impacted by what we do with our soils," Krouse says, citing climate change and flooding, among examples. "Soil is so huge it impacts almost everything we do — what we eat, how we breathe and the water we drink — but yet we almost never think about it."

Globally, awareness is growing, with the U.N. General Assembly declaring 2015 as the International Year of Soils. Our soils are under threat from expanding cities, deforestation, unsustainable land use and management practices, pollution, overgrazing and climate change. "The current rate of soil degradation threatens the capacity to meet the needs of future generations," the assembly notes.

Ironically, that message will likely go unnoticed in the agricultural Midwest, Krouse says, citing habits that are difficult to change. Fall tilling, for example, has proven to have a negative impact on soil health, she says, but some farmers continue to use the practice.

Tilling leads to soil compaction and leaves the soil bare. "Soil does not like to be naked and exposed to the elements," Krouse says, noting that erosion can occur due to that exposure. Good soil condition also is better at absorbing water and provides other benefits compared to compacted soil, she notes.

Cover crops, such as oats, rye, clover or even radishes, can be planted from mid-August through September to serve as a living cover for the soil during winter months until spring planting. Krouse uses cover crops at Abbe Hills Farm, where she utilizes mostly organic practices and operates a CSA (Community Supported Agriculture) business.

A growing number of spots on her 72-acre farm are planted in vegetables, and in addition to cover crops, Krouse uses a five-year crop rotation on the land. Year

one is for gardens; year two in corn; year three is when alfalfa or oats are planted for a cover crop and in years four and five, the cover crop remains in place.

A former biology teacher at Cornell College in Mount Vernon, Krouse has both undergraduate and graduate degrees in agronomy and often gives presentations about natural resources, water quality and food.

The CSA families are frequent visitors to Abbe Hills and younger visitors are among the most enthusiastic when it comes to learning about soil, Krouse says. Children eagerly grab handfuls to feel the texture, which is an indicator of its health. Krouse says healthy soil should be soft, but not powdery, and looks, in a way, like cake crumbs of varying sizes and shapes.

The soil food web, a term increasingly discussed by proponents of organic foods, involves an entire underground ecosystem that teems with life when the soil is healthy, Krouse says. Microscopic organisms, tiny insects, fungi, worms and more create the complex food web, in which the waste products of one organism become food for another.


Laura Krouse. (Photo by Cindy Hadish / Radish)

"There's no pollution," Krouse says, quoting Francis Thicke, an Iowa organic dairy farmer who holds a Ph.D. in soil science and is one of Krouse's mentors. "Every bit of waste is someone else's food."

"Since farming began in Iowa we have lost half of our topsoil to erosion and more than half of our black organic matter to oxidation, so we have been deficit spending our ecological capital all these years," Thicke says. "Laura demonstrates that it is possible to farm in ways that not only do not deplete our natural resource base, but actually increase our ecological capital."

"Most of what's good for soil conservation is also good for soil health," Krouse says, noting that about half of soil is composed of air and water, with minerals making up about 45 percent and organic matter, 5 percent. "Roots need air and they need water and that particular combination is perfect for them," she says.

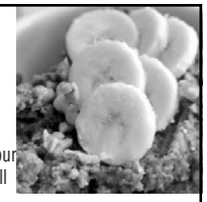
By using organic practices and avoiding chemicals that kill off the important organisms, Krouse says, farmers can build healthy soil that offers higher yields and healthier plants. "The better the organic matter and more living things in that soil, the better the tilth," she says, referring to the condition of the soil.

Even chickens at Abbe Hills Farm play a role in soil health, with their nutrient-rich manure composted before being used as a fertilizer.

Krouse says building healthy soil can extend to home gardens, as well. She noted that gardeners can keep their gardens covered with leaves or other mulch in the winter. Gardeners also can plant cover crops and ask their local garden center to carry small quantities of cover crop seed.

She knows that not everyone is as enthusiastic about soil as she is. Still, even people who aren't concerned about the soil's connection to environmental issues care about soil health when it comes to the fruits and vegetables they eat, Krouse says. "It is where our food comes from," she says. "Better quality food comes from better quality soil."

Radish contributor ***Cindy Hadish*** *writes about farmers' markets, gardening and the environment at homegrowniowan.com.*



Start your day off right with this quick and convenient breakfast recipe. For a slow-cooker breakfast, just put together the recipe the night before, set your slow-cooker on low, fall into a deep sleep and wake up to a delicious and nutritious meal.

Slow-Cooker Banana Bread Quinoa

(Makes 6 servings, ½ cup each)

All you need:
1 ½ ripe bananas
2 tablespoons chopped walnuts
3 tablespoons brown sugar
1 cup uncooked quinoa
1 cup low-fat or fat-free milk
1 cup water
1 ½ tablespoons butter, melted
½ teaspoon vanilla extract

All you do:
Mash the bananas in a bowl and set aside. In another bowl, mix together walnuts and brown sugar.
Pour quinoa, milk, water, butter and vanilla into a slow-cooker. Stir in the mashed bananas and walnut mixture.
Set slow cooker to the LOW setting, and let it cook overnight or 6-8 hours. If needed, add additional liquid or sugar to the mixture to taste. Serve warm with additional sliced bananas for garnish if desired.

Nutrition Information: Calories: 220, Fat: 6 g, Saturated Fat: 2 g, Sodium: 30 mg, Total Carbohydrate: 35 g, Fiber: 2g, Protein: 7g
Recipe adapted from: www.nutritionfor.us

Winter plenty

Make the most of what is at the farmers' market now

By Radish Staff

Although the words "farmers' market" can call to mind sunny stalls piled high with summer-ripe tomatoes and tender heads of lettuce, chilly temperatures and cloudy skies do not prevent a number of hearty local growers from continuing to bring their garden bounty to the winter markets that have taken root in our area in recent years.

True, these markets may be smaller than their summer counterparts, but they are still filled with an impressive range of food grown and produced locally for enthusiastic eaters.

What can you expect to find at these winter markets? We recently sent three Radish writers to the market stalls to find out exactly that, and asked each to share a recipe made with her purchases.

FREIGHT HOUSE FARMERS' MARKET

421 W. River Drive, Davenport
3-6 p.m. Tuesdays and 8 a.m.-1 p.m. Saturdays

WHAT WAS IN THE STALLS

Baby kale; butternut, acorn and delicata squash; red and yellow potatoes; onions and garlic; frozen cuts of beef and chicken; cheese and quark; farm-fresh eggs; local honey; and oats, wheat and rye. The market offerings also included a variety of "value-added" products, such as fresh-baked bread, scones, cookies and muffins; peanut butter and jams; sauerkraut and pickles; dried herbs and dip mixes.

With the purchases I made to fill up my market basket I was able to make a delicious frittata. Somewhat like a crustless quiche, a frittata can be sliced and served for simple but filling breakfast or lunch.
— Sarah J. Gardner

POTATO AND KALE FRITTATA

6 large eggs
1 cup whole milk
1 teaspoon salt
½ teaspoon pepper
2 tablespoons olive oil
8-10 small potatoes, cubed (roughly 2 cups)
1 small onion, chopped
2 cloves garlic, minced
2 cups firmly packed baby kale
⅓ cup quark
Hot sauce for serving (optional)

Preheat oven to 350 degrees. Whisk together eggs, milk, salt and pepper. In a large cast iron or non-stick skillet, heat 1 tablespoon oil over medium-high heat. Add potatoes and cook, stirring, until potatoes soften and start to crisp on the edges, about 10 minutes. Remove potatoes to a plate, heat another tablespoon of oil, and saute onion for 2-3 minutes, then add garlic and kale and cook 2-3 minutes more, until kale starts to wilt. Return potatoes to the pan and cover with egg mixture. Dollop spoonfuls of quark over the top.

Slide skillet into the oven on the middle rack and bake until eggs are set, approximately 10-14 minutes. Slice and serve with your favorite hot sauce, such as sriracha or Tabasco.

JOHNSON CO. FAIRGROUNDS WINTER FARMERS' MARKET

Fairgrounds Building C, 4261 Oak Crest Hill Road SE, Iowa City
11 a.m.-2 p.m. every second Sunday through April 26

WHAT WAS IN THE STALLS

Eggs; butternut squash; kale; radishes; turnips; new potatoes; and a variety of other heirloom vegetables. In addition, there were all manner of locally-produced goods like home-canned applesauce, frozen meats, wines and homemade candies.

The obvious next step was to take my purchases home and make a brunch like mom used to — potato pancakes! Also known as latkes, these pancakes are simple and comforting on a cold day, and oddly enough, the best garnish is applesauce. — *Mary Blackwood*

POTATO PANCAKES

1 pound new potatoes
1 small yellow onion
⅛ teaspoon black pepper
2½ teaspoons nutmeg
2 tablespoons unbleached flour
1 egg, lightly beaten

Peel and grate the potatoes and also the onion. A pinch of salt can be added if desired. Toss the potatoes, onion, pepper, nutmeg and flour together (gluten-free flour may be substituted for the wheat flour), then stir in the egg. Heat canola oil in a large skillet over medium heat. When a droplet of water sizzles upon being thrown into the skillet, drop the potato mixture into the skillet, about 1 tablespoon per pancake. Flatten with a spatula, preferably a nonstick one. Reduce the heat and cook pancakes about 5 minutes per side, until they are a crispy golden brown. Place the pancakes on a plate lined with a paper towel and serve immediately. Serves up to 4 people.

Photos by Paul Colletti / Radish

DUBUQUE WINTER FARMERS' MARKET

Colts Center, 1101 Central Ave., Dubuque
Every Saturday 9 a.m.-noon through April

WHAT WAS IN THE STALLS

Colorful squash; beets; carrots; onions; spinach and kale; fresh eggs; beef and pork; local honey; and walnuts, hazelnuts and chestnuts. In addition, there were fresh baked goods such as cinnamon rolls, cookies, bread, rum cakes, Belgian waffles and hot sandwiches. There were also pickles, jams and cheese.

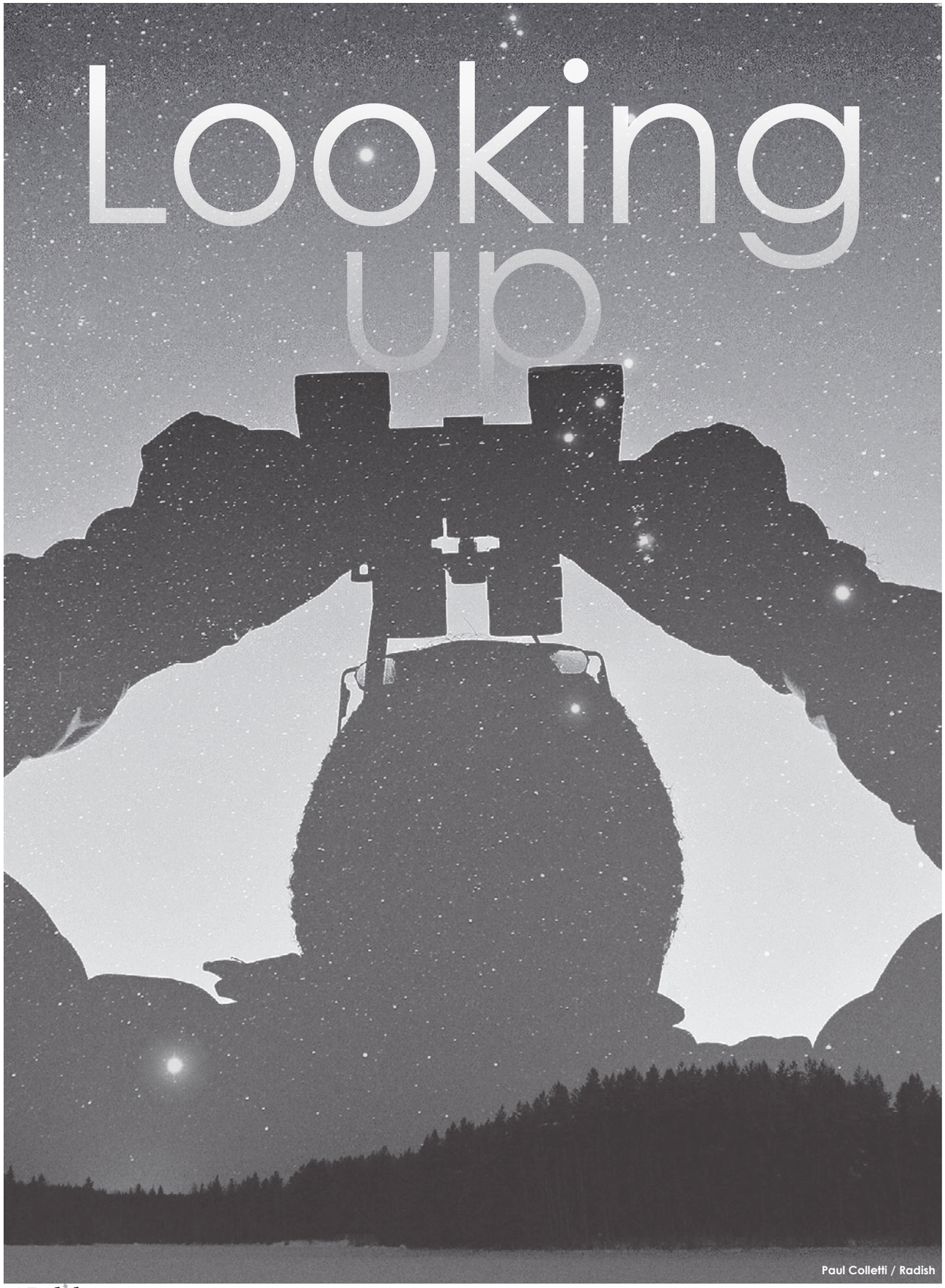
After picking up a few of my favorite winter produce and dairy items, I went home to make a delicious and hearty beet salad. This earthy salad pairs especially well with beef or portabello burgers. — *Christine Darr*

BEET AND BLUE CHEESE SALAD

4 large beets
3 tablespoons olive oil
1 tablespoon apple cider vinegar (or white wine vinegar)
½ teaspoon Dijon mustard
Salt and pepper to taste
½ cup crumbled blue cheese
⅓ cup toasted walnuts, roughly chopped
2 tablespoons fresh herbs, chopped (chives, parsley, or basil all work well)

Preheat oven to 400 degrees. Place the clean beets in a pan just big enough to hold them, cover the pan with foil, and bake until they are tender, approximately 45 minutes-1 hour, depending on the size of the beets. Let them cool until they can be handled, then slip the skin off with your hands or a paper towel. Wash off any remaining skins and chop up the beets into small wedges or slices and place into your salad bowl.

In a small jar, combine the oil, vinegar, mustard, salt and pepper. Put on the lid and shake until the ingredients are well combined. Pour over the beets and mix well. Add the blue cheese, nuts and herbs, then toss to coat. Taste again and adjust the salt and pepper if necessary.



Clear skies in winter make for great stargazing

By Anthony Watt

If you're looking for a good story to while away the winter hours and are willing to brave the cold, try the night sky. Several easily identifiable objects and constellations are in the frosty skies that can give beginners a taste of astronomy — and you don't need to have expensive equipment to do it.

There is much to see that is easily visible by just going outside at the right time and looking up. The constellations Orion, Canis Major — the big dog, which includes our brightest star, Sirius — and Taurus all cluster in the southern sky in winter.

"All that is going to be gorgeous viewing, and you aren't going to need a thing," says Dale Hendricks, president of the Quad Cities Astronomical Society.

There are a number of Quad-Cities astronomers and night-sky enthusiasts. For those who are willing to brave winter cold to see stars, they have some tips to make viewing more effective and more comfortable.

The winter can make for particularly good viewing because of the cold, say Hendricks and Karl Adlon, the past president of the astronomical society. During warmer parts of the year, atmospheric conditions make viewing less clear.

But winter is still winter, with other well-known, less-enjoyable traits. The veteran stargazers say to be prepared for the cold and bundle up. "No matter how warmly you think you dress

in winter, you're not," Hendricks says.

Dino Milani, of the Quad-Cities area Popular Astronomy Club, suggests sitting in the dark before going out, to allow your eyes to adjust for nighttime viewing.

He also recommends getting away from urban areas to get away from artificial lights, which make it harder to see anything. "Our night sky is polluted with light," Milani says.

To be sure of finding your way, a star chart can be handy, say Hendricks and Adlon. Charts are available in bookstores and online, and there are even smartphone apps that can help such as Star Walk (iOS, $2.99) and Night Sky Lite (Android, free).

Even more is visible with a little help from a pair of binoculars and a basic telescope. Using such equipment can enhance the experience and does not have to be an expensive proposition, Hendricks and Adlon say. Reliable equipment is readily available at a reasonable price.

They recommend keeping it simple when starting out — a basic refracting telescope, or a pair binoculars

"No matter how warmly you think you dress in winter, you're not."

at 35X7, 50X10 or 50X7. Bushnell is a brand they like. Getting something more expensive and complicated to use and maintain can be overwhelming for a novice, increasing the risk of the instrument ending up tucked somewhere and collecting dust, they say.

Adlon also suggested leaving equipment out for a little while so it will cool down and be closer to the outside temperature. This can help minimize fogging on the lenses.

Binoculars and basic telescopes can help you spot celestial objects hidden in familiar constellations. For example, within the sword of Orion, a fainter, vertical line of stars stretching below the three prominent stars in Orion's belt, is a stellar nursery.

One of those bright points that make the sword is actually the Orion Nebula, not a star, Lee Carkner, a professor in the Augustana College Department of Physics, says. Aim a small telescope at the middle part of Orion's sword to see it. In contrast to the stars around it, it will look like a fuzzy clump of light.

"Within this cloud new stars are being born to populate our Milky Way," says Carkner.

The solar system's largest planet, Jupiter, named after the Roman chief god, also will be visible near Orion in February.

To the naked eye, it will appear like a very bright star, but using binoculars, you'll be able to see some of the planetary disc, and also its four largest moons, Wayland Bauer, of the Popular Astronomy Club, says.

These moons, Io, Europa, Ganymede and Callisto, are named the Galilean moons after Galileo Galilei, who discovered them in 1610, using a telescope about as powerful as today's binoculars. The moons will appear as specks of light flanking the planet.

If you're looking for someone to go stargazing with or to learn more, visit the website of the Quad Cities Astronomical Society, 173.21.16.164/qcas, or the website for the Popular Astronomy club, pacastronomy.50megs.com, for upcoming events and more information.

*Contributor **Anthony Watt** is an unrepentant science geek. For a longer version of this article, including the **mythological stories** behind some of the winter constellations, visit radishmagazine.com.*

Going deep

Relaxation, awareness combine in yoga nidra practice

Yoga instructor Jennifer Vondracek. (Photo by Paul Colletti / Radish)

By Chris Cashion

When we think of yoga, it often conjures pictures of lithe figures contorting into complicated poses, but the physical side of the practice is only one aspect of yoga. The aspect that you don't see is what happens in the mind. Such is the case with nidra, a seemingly simple yoga practice with distinct benefits.

According to certified yoga instructor Jennifer Vondracek, nidra is "therapeutic guided relaxation that is highly restorative to the body through total body awareness." Vondracek leads a nidra class at Sol Yoga, 3340 E. Kimberly Road, Davenport, on Friday mornings.

In a nidra practice, participants typically lie on their mats as they would in savasana pose, close their eyes, and listen for cues from their instructor. "Yoga nidra is practiced with the physical body completely at ease, with the whole body supported by the surface on which it is resting upon. You simply lie back and listen," says Vondracek.

ParaYoga certified instructor Fannie Hungerford, who teaches at Heartland Yoga, 221 E. College St., Suite 213, Iowa City, says that guidance can come either from a live instructor or from a yoga nidra app or recording such as those available at yogainternational.com.

Participants are typically asked to mentally choose an intention, or San Culpa, at the beginning of the practice. The instructor then cues them to focus on various parts of the body. Yogis sink into what Hungerford refers to as a yogic sleep. "It's sleep, but with a slight trace of awareness. You hover in that space between wakefulness and sleep," she says.

It is within this space that Hungerford says the mind is able to address subconscious issues. "Because it combines a deeper awareness with relaxation, you are able to subconsciously delve into deep layers of stress, grief and hardships," Hungerford says.

In addition, the practice can be restorative. "Twenty minutes of yoga nidra is said to be more effective than a one-hour nap. Plus, you can 'wake up' without the 'nap hangover,'" Hungerford says.

While Vondracek adds that nidra is not intended to be a "cure" for anything, many practitioners report a wealth of benefits. "Research has shown that yoga nidra effectively reduces PTSD, depression, anxiety, insomnia, chronic pain, chemical dependency, and even low self-esteem. The benefits are unique to each person's experience and intention, but the potential benefits are infinite because you access a means to transforming both the body and the unconscious, and all of the space in between," she explains.

For Vondracek, nidra has proven to be a useful tool in dealing with the stresses of balancing career, motherhood and daily life. She says she will be a lifelong student of the practice.

"Of the 196 yoga sutras of Patanjali, only three have anything to do with the physical postures. The other 193 are about right living, and yoga is simply the science of right living," says Vondracek. "Yoga nidra is an awesome tool available to all of us so that we may stay connected to our authentic ground of being.

"Vibrant health, right action and inner knowing are fundamental to each of us, and yoga nidra helps me hit the reset button, relax, restore and be absolutely more mindful as I forever increase my awareness of living right."

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

Digging history

Metal-detecting takes Q-C enthusiast to historic dig

By Todd Welvaert

When Frank Juarez got a metal detector, it brought him a lot more than lost pocket change and the occasional bauble. It opened a door to history.

And that door recently led him to work alongside archaeologists in Virginia at a dig at the estate of our fourth president and "Father of the Constitution" James Madison.

Juarez retired from Case IH in East Moline in 2004 and started metal-detecting in 2005.

"I joined Iowa and Illinois Treasure Hunters Club; we meet the first Thursday of every month," he says. "I actually started so I wouldn't gain weight. I just needed something to do. I also do a little fishing. If I'm not doing one, I'm doing the other."

"At this time of the year, (club members) are doing research, looking for sites and tracking down property owners," he says. "In the spring, we will go out and ask permission to (use metal detectors) on the property. It's probably our number one rule: we always have permission to be on the property. We try to get out before the farmers put their crops in or after they get them out. Some of these fields used to be cities or towns. It's pretty interesting stuff."

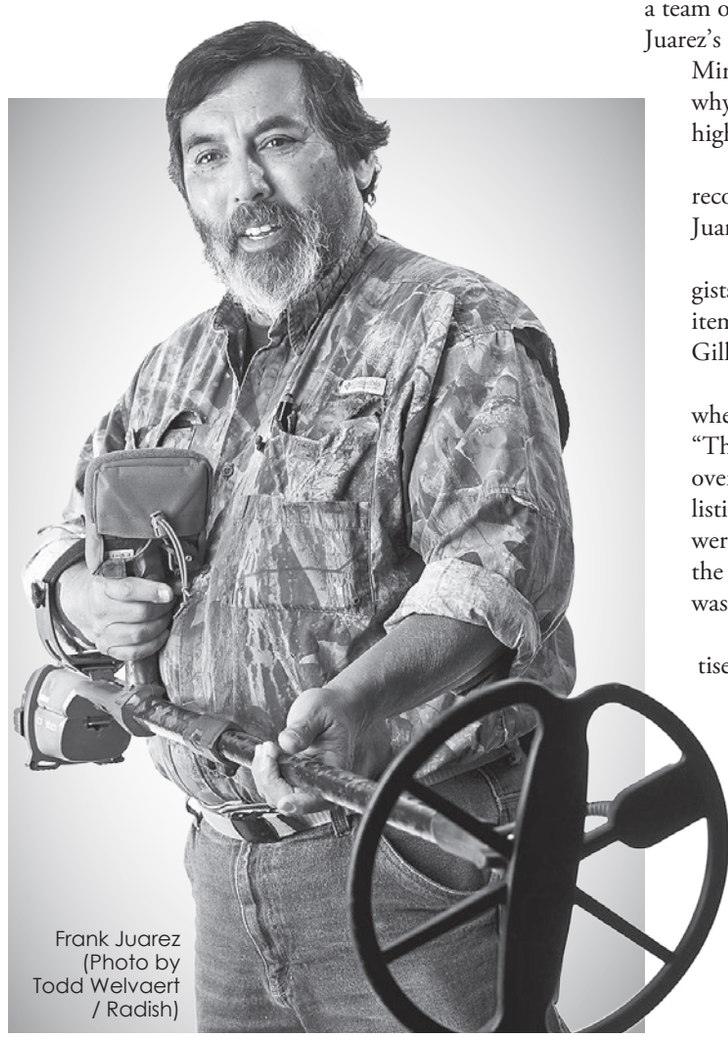
Juarez says it's customary for metal detector enthusiasts to offer the property owners anything found on their property; often it ends up going to local historical outfits.

"We just want it to get it out of the ground," Juarez says. "A lot of the fertilizers and chemicals farmers use on their fields really eats things like coins up. This history belongs where people can see it. We say 'we dig up the past for the future.' "

The club, which has about 100 members, also does service projects, raising donations for shelters or taking kids out and letting them do a little treasure hunting.

"Saint Mark's (Evangelical Lutheran Church) has a campground and we have the kids come out. It's a blast," he says. "We have ice cream and pop; we bury a few coins so they can have the fun of finding something. They make us cards; you look at some of them and just have to laugh. It's a good time."

One of the more interesting things Juarez has found is the guts to a wind-up Civil War-era timepiece. His "hunting buddy" Darwin Gillespie, of Port Byron, found a Civil War-era breastplate on a hunt in Kentucky.



Frank Juarez (Photo by Todd Welvaert / Radish)

"He's the luckiest guy I know," Juarez says. "That was a bucket-list find. He was so excited. It was beautiful. It was one of the best things he's ever found."

Last November, Juarez, Gillespie and Chuck Smalley, of Cordova, traveled to James Madison's Montpelier Estate in Virginia to work alongside a team of archaeologists studying the grounds. Juarez's $750 tuition was paid by a scholarship from MineLab, after he wrote a 500-word essay about why he wanted to be at the dig. MineLab makes high-end metal detectors.

"I just told them about why I thought recording this history was important," Juarez says.

At the site, they dug with the archaeologists, using scrapers and sifters to recover the items. Juarez found a stone arrowhead and Gillespie found the base of a glass goblet bottle.

"They have a map that shows a record of where everything was recovered," says Juarez. "There was also a classroom portion that went over how they do the work. They had a sheet listing the different kinds of nails and when they were used, so you could come up with a date on the structure by what kind of nails you found. It was really interesting."

MineLab got involved because the expertise of skilled metal-detectorists fits the needs of many archaeological research projects on historic sites.

"It was a great trip, and it's open to anyone who likes history," Juarez says. "I would encourage people to do it."

*Contributor **Todd Welveart** is a photographer whose work often appears in Radish. For more information on **MineLab** scholarships, visit minelab.com.*

Take a hike!

Tips to start planning now for your next big adventure

By Sarah J. Gardner

For many people who love to spend a weekend camping in a state park or an afternoon hiking the trails, the difference between that and spending a week backpacking in a national park or wilderness area can feel light years apart — and yet it's a tantalizing prospect, all the same.

Sure, you're going to cover more ground backpacking, and you're going to have to carry your tent further than from the car to the tent pad, but when you get right down to it, the biggest difference between day hiking and backpacking is the level of planning that goes into it. And that's good news, because planning can be a really fun part of the adventure. As you read about trails, ready your gear and plot your course, it's like getting to preview your vacation. What a great way to while away some winter months!

If you are looking to test your limits this year with a big hiking trip, here are some useful tips to make the most of the months ahead getting ready.

Do your research

One of the most overlooked pieces of camping gear out there is your library card. Our local libraries have an excellent stock of guidebooks that can allow you to read more about the places you'd like to go and, because they are grouped geographically, can lead you to other options. Several years ago, while checking out a book on Rocky Mountain National Park, I spotted another book on the nearby Indian Peaks Wilderness Area. I had never heard of it before, but it proved to be a great alternate destination, one that had equally beautiful trails but less traffic than the national park.

Once you settle on a destination, you can buy the best guidebook you came across to mark up and dog ear to your heart's content. It's also a good idea to talk with people who have been on similar hikes or even backpacked in the same area. We're fortunate to have a number of great outdoors clubs, including the Eagle View, Cedar Wapsi and Iowa City chapters of the Sierra Club and the Blackhawk Hiking Club, whose members are a treasure trove of hiking experience. Make plans to attend a meeting (or better yet, join

1. tent, fly and footprint in a stuff sack **2.** sleeping bag liner **3.** sleeping bag in
lets **10.** collapsible water container **11.** hand pump water filter and tubing **1**
and pot cozy **19.** cooking fuel **20.** backpacking stove **21.** water bottle **22.** hi
gear **30.** thermal and short sleeve shirts **31.** convertible hiking pants/shorts, h
38. biodegradable toilet paper **39.** repair kit for camping gear **40.** granola b

n a compression sack **4.** hiking boots **5.** sun hat and knit cap **6.** closed-cell foam sleeping pad **7.** tent poles **8.** tent stakes **9.** water purification tab-
2. camp shoes **13.** compass **14.** guide book, topo map and pencil **15.** pocket field guide **16.** rain poncho **17.** internal frame backpack **18.** cookware
iking poles **23.** Lexan eating utensils **24.** first aid kit **25.** waterproof matches **26.** dehydrated meals **27.** trowel **28.** pack towel **29.** mosquito net head-
iking skirt and bandana **32.** hiking socks **33.** emergency whistle **34.** insect repellent **35.** sunscreen **36.** beef jerky **37.** lip balm with sun protection
ars. Not pictured: backpack rain cover, rain pants and gaiters (Photo by John Greenwood / Radish)

them for an outing) and ask if anyone has advice for your trip. Chances are good you're going to meet someone who has been where you're going.

There are also great resources to be found online. You can start at the website for the National Park Service, nps.gov, and search for individual destinations by state. Each park's page is packed with information on weather conditions throughout the year, suggested gear lists, and procedures for obtaining a hiking permit. Other websites like gorp.com or trailspace.com provide useful reviews of hiking gear.

Buy a map

No, whatever maps are in your guidebook don't count. Nor do the paper maps handed out at the gates of national parks, though both of these can supplement the topographical map you are going to purchase. A good guidebook will tell you exactly which topo map covers your hiking area and where you can order it. You usually also can buy topo maps at park stores once you arrive, but I like having the map ahead of time to cross-reference with the guidebook as I plan my trip. It can give you a sense of the lay of the land in a way words just can't.

This piece of advice is so important, I'm going to say it again. Buy a map. I have come across lost hikers begging to use my map so many times I could fill an entire article with their stories, but I'll give you just one: Last summer as my husband and I were settling in for the night during a backpacking trip in Isle Royale National Park, a hiker stumbled into our site and asked if he could share our shelter.

He had gotten separated from his hiking party and had taken a wrong turn on the trail. He arrived at our site out of water, without a tent and totally exhausted. When we laid out our map the next day to help him figure out where he had come from and where he needed to go next, we figured out he had come within two-tenths of a mile of his destination before taking that ill-fated turn. He then walked 8 miles more — 8 miles! — on top of the 7 miles he had already traveled. Need I say what could have prevented this unfortunate turn of events? Buy a map.

Pack light

I have invoked this phrase "pack light, travel happy" so often in our journeys my husband has joked it would work as an epitaph on my tombstone. I would argue it's as good a metaphor for going through life as it is sound travel advice, but it is certainly never more true than on a hike: the more weight in your pack, the less you're going to like carrying it as the miles add up.

The standard advice in hiking is that your backpack should not weigh more than 50 pounds or roughly one-third of your body weight. If that sounds like way more (or, ahem, *weigh* more) than you would ever pack, you'd be surprised at how quickly all those tent stakes, cooking fuel canisters and change of clothes add up — especially water, which weighs over 2 pounds per liter.

For any day of hiking, you need to plan on carrying 2 liters of water per person, and even more than that if you aren't going to be near a water source by day's end. While you can't safely cut down on water, you can save on pack weight in other ways. Plan the amount of food you are going to carry carefully — take just enough meals for the days you'll be in the backcountry, plus one extra day for emergency rations. Cut the spine of your guidebook and carry only the sections that cover the area you are going to be in. Make peace with re-wearing socks.

The good news is that camping gear has gotten progressively lighter over the last several decades. I actually

get excited whenever I have to replace a piece of camping gear, because I know the new version is going to be several ounces (if not pounds) lighter. Just be careful to resist the temptation to use lighter gear as an excuse to pack more of it. Weight is one challenge, bulk is another. Believe me, when you are scrambling under a fallen log or squeezing between boulders, you'll be glad you didn't stuff your bag to capacity.

Start training now

The most obvious thing you can do to get ready for a big hike is to start taking little hikes. Weekend trips to local parks are great, but walks around your neighborhood also can be good, because you can take them regularly without having to carve out a lot of time to do so. We live in a great area to practice hiking thanks to all our rolling hills. Seek out varied terrain wherever you choose to walk, and you'll have your legs in shape in no time.

It's also useful to think about working in some exercises that strengthen the core muscles and upper body, such as doing some simple plank and push-up exercises. The goal isn't to be able to hike down the trail doing handstands, of course, but these muscle groups will enable you to carry your pack more comfortably — and the more comfortable you are, the more miles you can cover.

Finally, a great piece of advice was given to me years ago by a co-worker who spent several months each year setting up Eco Challenge courses: As the date of your hike approaches, load up your backpack with coils of rope and wear it while walking on a treadmill or stair machine at the gym. The rope will simulate the weight of a full pack and also the way that weight shifts as you move. It's a good way to build endurance and get used to the dynamics of your pack.

Do a dry run

Remember how fun it was as a kid to pitch a tent and spend a night sleeping in your backyard? Here's your chance to relive that little adventure and make sure everything is in working order for your big trip. Before you leave on your backpacking expedition, spend a night sleeping in your backyard or at a nearby campground. Use all of the gear — your tent, your sleeping bag, your stove, your water filter — that you plan to use on your upcoming trip, regardless of whether the gear is old or new.

My husband and I did this last year before leaving for our nine-day trek in Isle Royale. We learned two things in the process: We had a screech owl living in our own backyard and Ben's ground mat had a hole that leaked air. One of those things was interesting to find out, and the other allowed us to avert disaster. When we arrived on the island for our trip, it was with a new, leak-free mattress, and the nights it provided of comfortable sleep made all the difference when it was time to hoist the bags and head out for another day of hiking.

Learn and share

One of my favorite things about backpacking is just how friendly and helpful everyone is on the trail. That tends to be true of backpackers off the trail as well. Have a favorite bit of hiking advice yourself? Share your tips, either by sending them to editor@radishmagazine.com or posting them on facebook.com/radishmagazine, and be entered in a drawing to win some hiking goodies.

Sarah J. Gardner is the editor of Radish, an avid hiker, and a former outdoor adventure trips leader for a YMCA camp.

From ahh to aha! The tongue can be a surprising health indicator

By Annie L. Scholl

Ever since we were little, doctors have been asking us to stick out our tongues and say, "Ahhh." But while traditional Western medical doctors are likely only looking at our throats, acupuncturists and traditional Chinese medicine practitioners are inspecting our tongues. The reason?

"The tongue is kind of a microsystem," says Alice Spitzner Claussen, a licensed acupuncturist, Chinese medicine practitioner and owner of Twig & Needle Chinese Medicine in Iowa City. "It gives you an overview of the internal landscape of the body as a whole."

When you stick your tongue out for Spitzner Claussen, she's checking out your tongue's shape, size, color, coating and moisture. "All of these tell me about the spirit of the tongue," she explains. "Is it lively or does it look like dead meat? Is it flaccid? Is it tight? Is it really stiff? I also look underneath the tongue for veins."

What does a healthy tongue look like? First and foremost, it's pink or pale red, like fresh meat at the butcher counter. "You don't want it to be too red or too pale," she says. It should also be a nice size — not too big, not too small. "It should look like it fits in the mouth," Spitzner Claussen explains.

The tongue also should have a nice round shape to it. She also looks at both sides of the tongue for teeth marks, which are not ideal. The tongue should be moist, but not "sopping" wet. It also shouldn't be too dry. And when you stick your tongue out, it shouldn't tremble.

If you're heading to the mirror to stick out your tongue and you discover it doesn't look ideal — pink, lively, moist and with a thin white coat — don't fret. "Nobody has it," Spitzner Claussen says, except maybe little kids. That's because children, in general, haven't developed enough internal issues for them to show up on their tongues, she explains.

When you stick out your tongue to inspect it, don't hold it there for more than a couple of seconds at a time. "The longer your tongue is stuck out, it starts to turn slightly purple and it will get more swollen," Spitzner Claussen explains. So stick your tongue out, look at it, and pull it back in your mouth for a few seconds before you look at it again. Otherwise, you'll get the wrong results.

What should you mostly pay attention to? The coat is a big thing, Spitzner Claussen says. "If someone has a really thick coat on their tongue, you can be sure there's an imbalance in their system," she says. "There's a mismanagement of fluids. They might have a lot of phlegm in their system. Something. If someone has no coat, or a peeled patch on the tongue, that's what we call 'yin' deficiency."

"It's very easy to get that kind of yin deficiency if you're burning the candle at both ends, not sleeping enough, eating at odd hours, stressed, and not getting enough relaxation and downtime," she says. Women, she adds, by nature are more prone to yin deficiency than men.

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

iStockphoto

Want a healthy tongue, which essentially means a healthy body? Spitzner Claussen offers these tips:

- Get plenty of sleep: "People don't realize how important that is to the body."
- Don't eat late at night: "Eating late is really detrimental to the body." Her rule of thumb: Eat your last major meal three to four hours before bedtime.
- Eat cooked, warm foods: While raw food diets are all the rage, Spitzner Claussen isn't a fan. "People often don't realize those cold, raw foods are hard on the system. If you want to boost your digestion, eating cooked, warm foods is the easiest way to do that."
- Go easy on the usual suspects: flour, sugar, dairy. "They're not inherently evil," Spitzner Claussen says, "but if they're a huge part of your diet, it can cause problems."

If you're concerned about your health after looking at your tongue, Spitzner Claussen suggests seeing a traditional Chinese medicine practitioner for a thorough exam.

In Chinese medicine, she explains, there are the four examinations: questioning, observing, palpating, and listening/smelling. "The tongue is one part of a bigger picture," she says.

Healthy choices

How to help kids make sense of nutrition labels

By Laura Anderson Shaw

On our constant quest for better health, reading nutrition labels certainly can be a drag. Calories, sodium, fat, fiber, carbohydrates … so many numbers, so many benefits, so many drawbacks. If nutrition labels can be so difficult and overwhelming for adults to decipher, how in the world can you teach a child to understand them?

That's where Rock Island Hy-Vee dietitian Chrissy Watters comes in. "Nutrition labels can be both boring and confusing for kids — and adults, for that matter," Watters says. "The best thing parents or caregivers can do to teach nutrition is set a good example. Serve a balanced meal based on USDA's (the U.S. Department of Agriculture's) MyPlate. Let your kids see you eating broccoli and — heaven forbid — enjoying it!"

When you're shopping, Watters suggests letting children observe you reading the labels, which will give them the opportunity to ask about what you're doing. You can respond with something as simple as, "I'm reading this label on the side of our bread. It tells me what's in our bread so I can decide if it's going to be good for us," Watters says.

"This will be their first introduction to food labels. As they get older, take opportunities to explain each part of the label in more detail when your kids seem interested," she suggests.

But where on earth to start? Watters says begin at the top with the serving size. "Tell them this doesn't mean you are supposed to eat this much of the food, just that the rest of the label is based on this amount," she says.

"Then, pick one nutrient to focus on."

Watters says calories are a difficult concept for kids to grasp, so start with nutrients like sugar, sodium, fiber, vitamins and minerals. "Tell kids we want to look for small numbers next to sugar on the label, because too much sugar might make us sick," she says. "Or, vitamin C might help us feel better faster when we have a cold, so it's good to look for on the label."

When it comes to concepts like nutrition, Watters says kids respond well to hands-on learning. Drinks and snacks are fun for kids to compare, she says. She suggests kids look at the sugar content of several drinks, and "put them in order from lowest to highest.

"Take it one step further and have them read the ingredient label, too. Decide if each drink contains added sugar or not."

Here, you can teach kids an easy trick. Take the grams of sugar and divide it by four. "This gives you teaspoons of sugar," Watters says. Then, "let kids measure out (sugar) and compare this way instead of just looking at numbers."

Watters says in addition to the discussions parents have with their children about nutrition, they also can take advantage of things like complimentary scavenger hunts offered by Hy-Vee dietitians to teach label-reading and nutrition.

Kelly Thornburg of Davenport points to the sugar content in discussing a box of cereal with her son, Darick. (Photo by Gary Krambeck / Radish)

Or have a scavenger hunt of your own based on the NuVal nutritional scoring system. Foods receive a number from 1 to 100 based on their content. The NuVal numbers are listed on the shelf labels for each product. The higher the number, the better the nutrition, Watters says. "Ask kids to choose a cereal with a NuVal score higher than 30, or find a snack with a NuVal score above 80," which might lead you to the produce section, she says.

"If they ask why the score on a favorite food is so low or high, pull out those nutrition labels and compare together."

The U.S. Food and Drug Administration's website, fda.gov, also has a wealth of information available through its Read the Label youth outreach campaign, geared toward kids ages 9 to 13. The site includes printable guides, a video that covers where to locate key information on nutrition labels, and more.

"Helping your kids understand how to read the nutrition facts label on food packages is important. After all, the label is a tool for making food choices that they'll be able to use throughout their lives," the site states. "And the sooner they begin to Read the Label, the sooner they'll be making healthful choices when comparing foods."

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

Waffle dinner

Savory recipe lets you skip the syrup, make it a meal

By Sarah J. Gardner

Ask my husband a dish he loves, and he will say nacho pie. I know, because every year around this time I ask him what he would like to eat for his birthday dinner and every year his response is the same. It has become something of a running joke in our household, if only because his love of nacho pie is matched by my reluctance to make it.

Not that it's hard to do. Nacho pie, for the uninitiated, is a relic from our college years, the sort of dish you can make in the basement kitchen of a dorm without owning measuring cups or a mixing bowl. A can of refried beans is spread on the bottom of a pie plate, then topped with browned hamburger, a jar of salsa, and a fistful of shredded cheese. You bake it in the oven until the cheese melts and then serve it with nacho chips.

Easy enough — just not all that appealing. It's the kind of dish where every bite tastes the same, and you can't imagine a vegetable that would pair well with it. The funny thing is that as an eater, Ben tends toward more adventurous and healthy fare. I have overheard him extolling the virtues of a tofu scramble to visiting friends and known him to complain about the scanty portion of vegetables served at restaurants. If I had to guess, I'd wager the appeal of nacho pie has something to do with nostalgia and scarcity. Outside of his birthday, I never make it.

Of course, sometimes you just like what you like, and there's nothing wrong with that. Food nourishes on many levels. We look to the food we eat to provide a variety of nutrients to support our overall health, but it also connects us with the people at our table and with memories of our past.

All of which got me to wondering last year if I could find a way to update nacho pie so that it still retained some of the nostalgic appeal but also better reflected the ways we eat now. I started by swapping out the refried beans, which are often blended with lard and flour. In their place, I decided to use black beans, which are more toothsome and nutritious. Then I replaced the ground meat with shredded chicken. I kept the salsa but used some we had made ourselves to cut down on sodium, and I topped it all off with slices of avocado instead of cheese.

The real stroke of inspiration, though, was to forgo the nacho chips for a cornmeal waffle. This allowed me to cut out the deep-fried ingredient in nacho pie but still retain a bit of crunch. Like other waffles, savory waffles can be made ahead of time and frozen, then popped in the toaster when you're ready to eat one. They thaw out and crisp up all at the same time and can be used with other meals (they are excellent with chili, for example).

How did Ben react when I presented him on his birthday with a cornmeal waffle topped with chicken, black beans and salsa? He was chuffed — especially by the idea he wouldn't have to wait a whole year to eat it again.

Sarah J. Gardner is the editor of Radish.

Gary Krambeck / Radish

Crunchy Cornmeal Waffles

1¾ cups buttermilk
2 eggs
5 tablespoons butter, melted and cooled
1 cup frozen corn kernels
1½ cups all-purpose flour
1 cup yellow cornmeal
2 tablespoons baking powder
1 teaspoon baking soda
1 teaspoon salt
2 tablespoons minced fresh chives
1 tablespoon ground cumin
1 teaspoon chili powder

In a large mixing bowl, whisk together the buttermilk, eggs and butter. Add the corn kernels. In another bowl, blend together the remaining ingredients, then stir them into the buttermilk mixture until all ingredients are moistened. Allow to rest for 10 minutes to somewhat soften the cornmeal. Drop ⅓ cup of the batter onto a hot waffle iron and cook until the waffle stops steaming. Repeat with remaining batter. Yields 8-10 waffles.

Recipe adapted from King Arthur Flour

Rebuilding together

HEART program enlists youth to rehab Dubuque homes

By Jane Carlson

The heart of Dubuque beats a lot stronger these days thanks to a unique, cooperative program that rehabs historic homes in a blighted area and helps struggling teens get back on track toward high school graduation.

To date, more than 36 dilapidated, outdated properties — dating from the 1920s and earlier — in the city's Washington Neighborhood have been given complete mechanical and physical overhauls through the Housing Education and Rehabilitation Training, or HEART, program.

Chris Happ Olson, executive director of the Four Mounds Foundation, says the HEART program started in 2005 as an expansion of existing youth programming at the Four Mounds site outside of town, where students would work on a variety of projects, from prairie restoration to building furniture.

"It took what we had been doing at Four Mounds and brought it downtown to a neighborhood that was in need of reinvestment and attention," Olson says.

Based on Four Mounds' cooperative model of serving at-risk youth, HEART's partners also include the city of Dubuque, Dubuque community schools, and Four Oaks of Iowa, which provides classroom instruction and case management for students. Other partners include Juvenile Court Services, Dupaco Community Credit Union, and Northeast Iowa Community College.

One of Dubuque's oldest and most diverse areas, the Washington Neighborhood covers 55 blocks and many of the buildings date to the 19th century. HEART's efforts to help transform the area back into a vibrant neighborhood are part of a cooperative plan to concentrate housing where infrastructure and services already are located. This approach also relieves sprawl pressure and protects the surrounding natural environment from the encroachment of new developments, Olson says.

This is in stark contrast to other home-building programs that focus on building new homes, Olson says. HEART participants take existing structures and make them functional for a 21st-century lifestyle. For example, several 1880s brick row houses were renovated in the neighborhood. With assistance from another nonprofit, HEART built garages to go with them to make them more appealing to contemporary home buyers.

"Our focus is to get what we already have and make it livable and workable again," she says.

HEART serves as the contractor for the projects, so to speak, with the city of Dubuque, banks, and other benefactors serving as financiers. When the projects are completed, they are sold to families and individuals as part of a goal to increase home ownership in the city as well.

In addition to massive improvement of existing properties and pumping new energy into a once-fading neighborhood, the HEART program changes the courses of students' lives.

A student enrolled in HEART program contributes to a rehab project. (Submitted)

Open to students ages 16 and older enrolled in Dubuque community schools who are struggling in a conventional classroom environment, HEART gives at-risk teens individualized attention, practical and possible career-inspiring skills, and the chance to attain a high-school diploma.

"A lot of our students haven't been thinking about what's going to happen beyond graduation, or beyond tomorrow," Olson says.

The goal isn't necessarily to prepare students for careers in the building trades, although some do. More broadly, it's just to open doors for them. "Not all of them have an interest in construction, but they start to see opportunities," Olson says. "I think our young people are really proud of the work they have done in their community."

In 2015, HEART will be working with Dupaco Community Credit Union and Northern Iowa Community College on an enhancement to the program that will create savings programs and stipends specifically for setting career and education goals beyond high school graduation.

For more information on the HEART program, visit fourmounds.org, where it is listed under "Mission & Programs."

***Jane Carlson** is a frequent Radish contributor.*

Eco-inspiration

Waterkeepers' mission makes for a fascinating novel

By Leslie Klipsch

When local novelist Joan Mauch first came across the term "waterkeeper" while reading an article in the Moline Dispatch, she was intrigued. The article featured Art Norris, who was identified as the Quad-Cities' waterkeeper. "The term puzzled me as I had never heard it before," she recalls. "We had our very own waterkeeper? And what exactly was he doing with our water? To me it sounded a bit odd."

For someone who spends much of her time thinking about story, Mauch couldn't help but want to learn more, so she started digging. What she uncovered ultimately prompted her latest novel, "The Waterkeeper's Daughter," published last November.

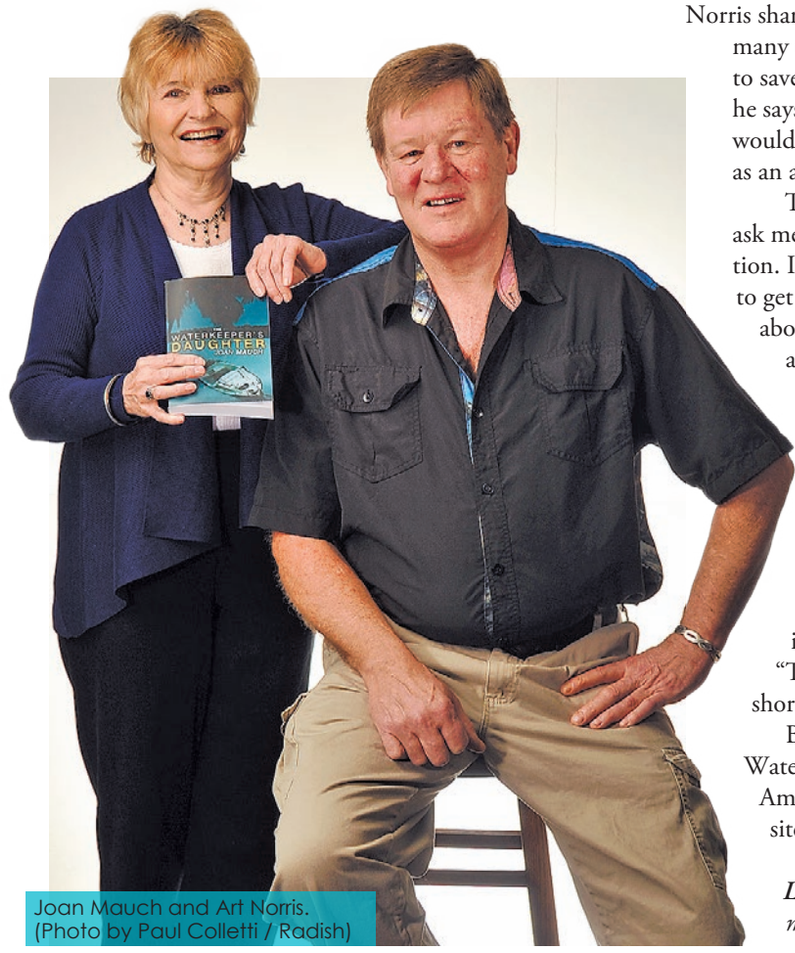
The term "waterkeeper" refers to an organization affiliated with the Waterkeeper Alliance, an international organization that unites almost 200 independent nonprofits funded by donations and grants. Ultimately, the purpose of the New York-based Water Keeper Alliance is to ensure that a community's right to clean water is upheld.

Marc Yaggi, director of global programs for the New York-based Waterkeeper Alliance, says waterkeepers wear a lot of hats including those of scientist, investigator and community advocate. According to its website, the alliance supports and empowers members to protect communities, ecosystems and water quality all over the globe.

As Norris describes it, his role in the Waterkeeper Alliance is to be the eyes and ears of the Mississippi River. He founded the Quad-Cities Waterkeeper in 2009 and keeps an office in the Harbor View building in Davenport. His duties include looking for water pollution issues — specifically those that impact the Mississippi from Clinton to Muscatine or any part of the Rock River — and finding ways to address the problems.

Norris believes the general public needs waterkeepers to oversee what official regulators are allowing. "Illinois has four of the most polluted rivers in the nation. Iowa has 624 lakes, rivers and streams unfit for human use. To me it's about leaving a better place for our children. They won't have much of a chance if we don't change this," he says, referring to problems such as the increasing amount of mercury and other chemicals in our water supply.

Mauch contacted Norris and learned, to her dismay, that regulatory authorities weren't always protecting our drinking water. "He said that in many cases they actually aid in covering up the polluter. It's all about money," she recalls. Norris expresses concern about pollution caused by continental companies and the lack of follow-through by those tasked with protecting the public.



Joan Mauch and Art Norris. (Photo by Paul Colletti / Radish)

"The Waterkeeper's Daughter" is a novel filled with mystery, revenge, and reconciliation, along with a brief look at the state of our nation's waterways. These themes also have been present Norris' life. One question Mauch asked Norris during her research was whether or not being a waterkeeper was dangerous. Norris shared that he'd been attacked and threatened many times due to his work. "We risk our lives to save our rivers. It's sad it has to be this way," he says, adding that perhaps Mauch's book would bring to light some of issues he has faced as an advocate for our fresh water supply.

This is Mauch's third novel. "People often ask me why I take on these big issues in my fiction. I tell them it's because it's a backdoor way to get people to think about them. They read about these issues in the newspaper or hear about them on TV, but often don't think much more about it. My books provide another chance to get readers thinking," she says.

Art Norris and Joan Mauch will appear in a joint presentation at the Bettendorf Library from 7 to 9 p.m. on Feb. 11. Norris will discuss the waterkeeper movement and how to get involved. Mauch will talk about writing "The Waterkeeper's Daughter" and give a short reading.

Both print and electronic copies of "The Waterkeeper's Daughter" can be purchased at Amazon, Barnes & Noble, and the press website, whiskeycreekpress.com.

__Leslie Klipsch__ is a frequent contributor. Find more of her writing at leslieklipsch.com.

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En garde!

No need to be a swashbuckler to benefit from fencing

By Chris Cashion

We've all seen the dashing, dueling figures in the movies, but not many of us really know what goes into the sport of fencing or what we could potentially get out of it — or even that fencing groups exist nearby.

Judy O'Donnell, director and head coach at the Iowa City Fencing Center, describes fencing as an Olympic sport which uses a foil, epee or saber to attack and defend. The word "fencing" comes from the word "defense" because fencers both attack and defend with a weapon.

O'Donnell says the benefits of fencing are plenty. "Mentally, fencing helps develop focus, confidence, and making quick decisions. It's great for people who have attention problems, because if your attention wanders, you get hit."

The level of focus required is part of the reason fencing is also a good stress reliever, explains O'Donnell. "When you run on a treadmill, you can spend the whole time anxious about whatever is going wrong in your life, but when you are fencing, you have to concentrate so that you are unable to worry about other things and you mentally get a break from your problems."

"Of course, exercise itself helps to relieve stress, and fencing is no exception to that. And fencers in general tend to be a nice group of people, which adds to the fun of the experience," she says.

There are lots of physical benefits, too. Because it's an individual sport, O'Donnell explains, each person gets out of it what they put into it — it can be a tremendous workout, or an individual can take it slowly, depending on his or her needs or abilities. Not surprisingly, one of the biggest physical benefits is improved balance.

Costs for the equipment can vary. O'Donnell says you can spend about $150 to purchase decent quality basics — a weapon, chest protector, plastron, jacket, mask and glove — or you could spend twice that on just a mask. It depends on how much you want to invest.

The Iowa City Fencing Center provides all equipment for fencers, so they are able to try out the sport for only the cost of the classes. According to O'Donnell, much of that equipment plays an important role: safety. "We wear lots of protective equipment, and contrary to popular belief, we NEVER use sharp weapons!" she says.

That protective equipment is part of the reason why fencing is one of the safest Olympic sports. In fact, says O'Donnell, "A recent study showed that you are much more likely to be injured playing one of those really dangerous sports like badminton, table tennis or curling than to get hurt fencing."

O'Donnell says the time commitment varies as well. "Some people come to the ICFC once a week for a 55-minute class; others are here five days a week training for three or more hours each day. It depends on how quickly you want to get good at it and what you want to get out of the sport," she says.

There also is no age limit for fencing. "We have students as young as 5 and as old as 80. We have separate classes for children and adults, as wells as a parent/child class for families interested in experiencing fencing together," O'Donnell says.

"Part of the beauty of fencing is that people can develop skills and styles to suit their bodies, so that someone in his 60s may be able to defeat college students in their prime. It's not just a contest of speed and skill, but also a contest of wits."

If you want to try fencing yourself, the center offers two-hour seminars each month to introduce newcomers to the sport. To learn more, visit iowacityfencingcenter.com.

__Chris Cashion__ is a writer on staff with Radish.

The General Store

food for thought

Matters of the heart

In more ways than one, how we live impacts our health

By Ann Ring

Recently, I've been thinking about matters of the heart. According to the U.S. Center for Disease Control, here are some alarming facts:

- About 600,000 people die of heart disease in the United States every year — that's one in every four deaths.
- Heart disease is the leading cause of death for both men and women. More than half of the deaths due to heart disease in 2009 were in men.
- Coronary heart disease is the most common type of heart disease, killing nearly 380,000 people annually.
- Every year about 720,000 Americans have a heart attack. Of these, 515,000 are first-time heart attacks and 205,000 happen in people who already have had a heart attack.
- Coronary heart disease alone costs the United States $108.9 billion each year. This total includes the cost of health care services, medications and lost productivity.

Even if we don't always want to abide by certain truths, a lot of us know what we can do to prevent heart disease, like exercise, eating a healthy diet, not smoking and avoiding secondhand smoke, getting regular check-ups (especially if you snore), learning how to manage stress, and maintaining a healthy weight.

I will admit, I'm one of the lucky ones: I have parents who, over the years, have for the most part taken care of their health and lived a healthy-heart lifestyle. My father quit smoking several decades ago and has exercised nearly his entire life, and my mom was successful in not only losing weight, but keeping it off for the rest of her life. In our household growing up, fresh fruit was always available for the taking and snacks like chips and cookies were kept at a minimum.

As a result, although I'm nowhere perfect, I too make sure fresh fruit is always available at home; purchase only 1-percent milk; eat lean red meat, chicken and turkey; try to eat non-starch vegetables daily; and have never strayed too many years without any exercise. Oh, there were some years in there where I smoked and being "heart healthy" wasn't at the top of my list of priorities, but for the most part my parents' ways rubbed off on me.

Now that I'm older — and, debatably, wiser — there is another matter of the heart I'm also concerned about these days. Let me give you a clue. Helen Keller has been quoted as saying, "The best and most beautiful things in the world cannot be seen or even touched. They must be felt with the heart."

Just as I have to care physically for my heart if I wish to have the best chance at living a long life, I also need to care for my heart emotionally if I'm to live a joyful, authentic and balanced life. Since this is a goal for myself, for me this means being mindful of how I spend my time, with whom I choose to spend my time, how I communicate my needs, how I deal with stress, how I interact with others, what I eat, and in general how I live out my life.

Seeing this written down looks and sounds a bit exhausting, but it's not really. Like many of you, I'm the last person who needs yet another to-do list. This isn't meant to be that. Instead, it's a shift from the way I've lived my life to a way of life I want to live in the form of being a little more authentic and aware of the choices I make.

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Turns out, I came across a recent study completed by Brown University which explored the potential connection between a person's sense of mindfulness and their cardiovascular health. The study found that those who are more aware of their feelings in the present moment also benefit from a healthier heart. This new data shows that mindfulness — a learned practice — "might be an effective behavioral intervention method for cardiovascular patients in the future."

When I set limits and make solid choices for myself physically, my heart benefits and I feel better. The same goes for taking care of myself in other ways. Since how we live our lives has a direct bearing on each other, making good choices for a healthy heart in every way possible is actually a life that represents what Radish is all about: healthy living from the ground up.

__Ann Ring__ is a frequent Radish contributor. For more ideas on ways to care for your heart health, visit the website for the __American Heart Association__, heart.org.

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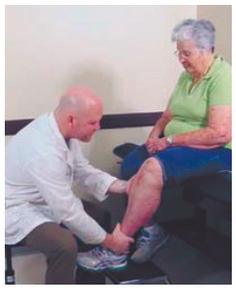

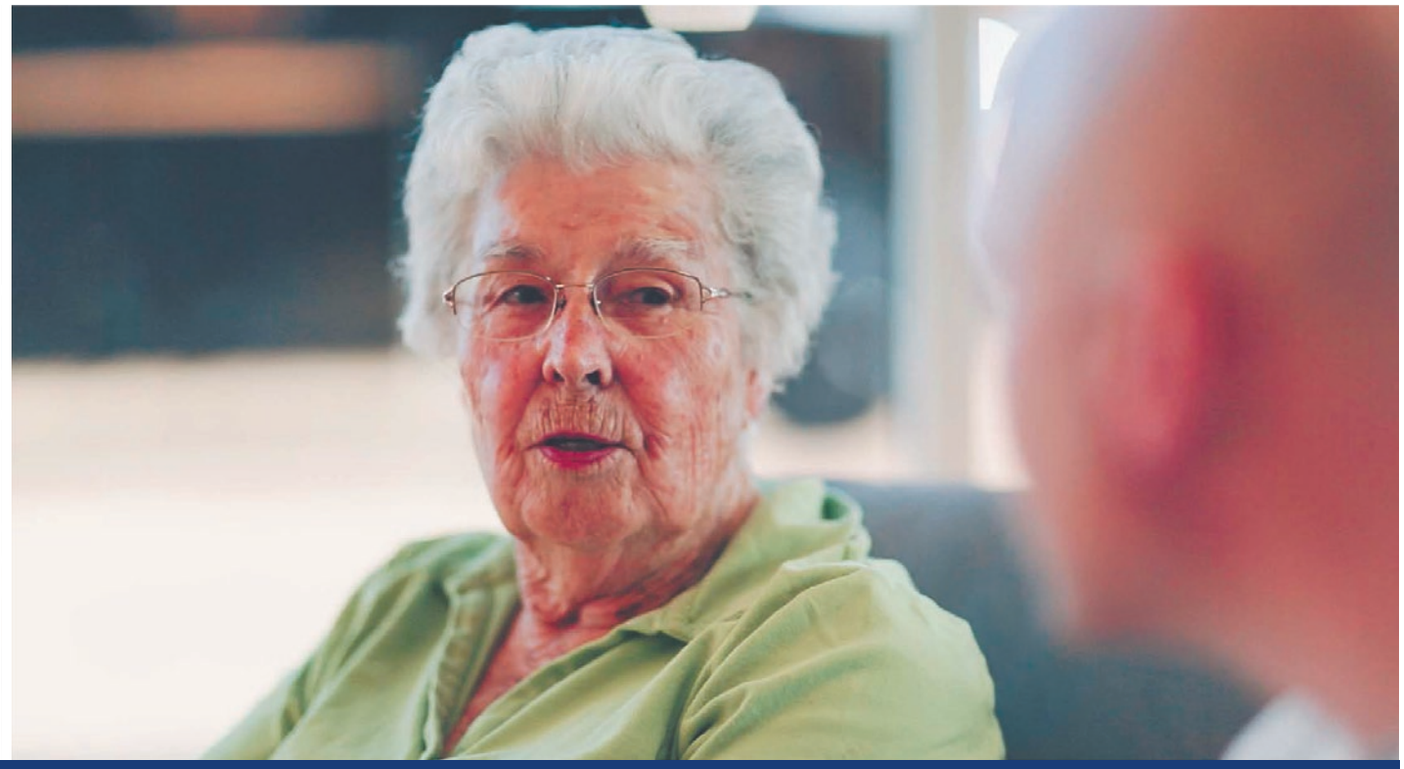

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