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from the editor



A full moon rises over the I-74 bridge, seen from Bettendorf. (Photo by Gary Krambeck / Radish)



And so we come to January, the beginning of another year. With the holiday din receding behind us, we start to look to the months ahead and all their promise of a fresh start. Even now, little by little, days will be getting longer, the nights slowly but surely shortening. Before we know it, it will be June.

I often find myself thinking about the moon at this time of year, perhaps because with no leaves on the trees, the night feels that much more filled with moonlight. It's a wonder to behold, isn't it? Pocked and battered, dismal, dusty and gray from one horizon to another — it's hard to think of a less likely candidate for radiance than the moon. And yet there are nights it glows so brightly, just to see a corner of it in your window fairly takes your breath away.

I find this encouraging. It's easy, especially in a dark season, to be overwhelmed when we think of things we'd like to do differently or changes we would like to help happen. Sometimes, situations seem so knocked about and hopeless, the shortcomings become all we can see. Working toward change, however, requires envisioning the luminous possibilities — the ability to remember the moon as a beacon in the night even as we set foot on its hardscrabble surface.

This month in our annual Radish awards issue we are pleased once again to recognize outstanding individuals and organizations in our communities who are able to do just that: see a brighter possibility and work toward it. From a garden educator in Iowa City, to students at Monmouth College and families living at New Hope Catholic Worker Farm, from the Waste Commission of Scott County to the Clinton County Conservation Board, we find so much in their stories to encourage and inspire. What better way to begin the year than to celebrate their efforts toward healthy living for themselves and their communities.

If you, too, are starting on a path toward positive change this month, don't be discouraged if the start seems slow and the outcome far off. In the words of poet Rainer Maria Rilke, "Let this darkness be a bell tower / and you the bell. As you ring / What batters you becomes your strength."

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

Number 1, Volume 9
January 2013

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



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the grapevine

From our readers

Beyond the banquet (Dec. 2012): "Oh, Leslie, you are so wise and generous to make me stop and consider everyday things from a new view. ... Thank you, thank you!"

— *Priscilla, Bettendorf, IA*

O tannenbaum (Dec. 2012): "This is a great business that involves the whole family!"

— *Marj Williams, Patterson, NY*

On the lookout (Dec. 2012): "Hey! I am an avid naturalist. I walk where no one dares. I see wildlife in the quiet. My most memorable was the little fox kittens playing during a early morning hike. I saw them, they did not see me. Wonderful."

— *Sandy*

"I wanted to express my LOVE for your 'from the editor' in the December 2012 issue. That short introduction to the issue was truly a gift in itself. The story of the boy receiving the sticks from his dad brought tears to my eyes (I'm a softy)."

— *Aimee Winslow-Low, Davenport, IA*

On the Road with Radish

Want more Radish? Thanks to Friends of Radish, you can find the magazine this month at the following events:

- **Quad Cities Birth Conference**, 9 a.m.-noon Saturday, Jan. 12, Villa Montessori School, 2100 48th St., Moline. Sponsored by the Baby

Matters Birth Coalition, this event will feature a variety of speakers presenting information on topics such as breast-feeding, comfort measures in labor, natural family planning, and home birth. Free and open to the public. For more information, visit quadcitiesbirthconference.com.

- **Oneota Film Festival**, Jan. 18-20, Luther College, 700 College Drive, Decorah, Iowa. This event features films on sustainable living, ecotourism, local economies, outdoor adventure and social justice, including the documentaries "We're Not Broke," "Where the Yellowstone Goes," "Elemental," "Escape Fire," "Watershed," and "High Ground." Admission to films, panels and seminars is free. For more information, visit oneotafilmfestival.com.

To discover more upcoming events of interest, see the events calendar at radishmagazine.com.

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healthy living from the ground up

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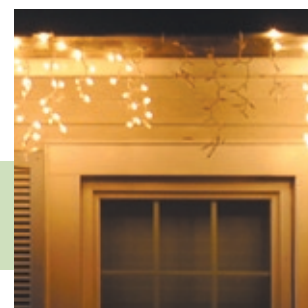
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Joseph Lappie, the artist who designed and created this year's Radish awards, is a printmaker and art instructor by trade. Watch him make one of the awards by hand using carved linoleum and basic printing tools in his studio at St. Ambrose University in Davenport, and listen to him talk about the process, in a video at radishmagazine.com.

radish award

Growing together

A group of students trade dorm life for a garden plot

By Jane Carlson

The Garden House at Monmouth College is just that — a two-story dwelling situated in front of the college's half-acre educational garden. But for the students who live in the house, the garden is much more than something growing in the backyard. These students have traded dorm life and cafeteria meal plans for the chance to live in the house and off the garden's harvest throughout the school year.

It's a lot of work, and not your average student's pastime, but the students are well aware of the rewards. "It's about food — where it comes from and how it tastes," says Kaitlyn Pfau of Naperville, Ill.

Inside the Garden House, amid the mismatched furniture and tie-dyed tapestries that typify many college abodes, there's a bookshelf in the living room filled with homemade tomato sauce, salsa, pear butter, barbecue sauce, pickles, and a giant jar of raw, organic honey.

A deep-freeze takes up a corner of the dining room beneath strings of bright red and yellow peppers hanging from the ceiling. The freezer bursts with everything from cabbage to acorn squash to roasted tomatoes to cantaloupe — all planted, nurtured, grown, picked, and preserved by the students.

The Monmouth College Educational Garden began in 2010, under the leadership of English professor Craig Watson and other collaborating faculty members from various disciplines, and was funded by a start-up grant from the college and, later, a grant from the Environmental Protection Agency.

The impressive organic garden includes herbs, berries, vegetables, fruit trees, a grape arbor, wildflowers, and native plants; seven beehives; a solar-powered rainwater irrigation system; compost bins supplemented with scraps from the college cafeteria; and a 13-foot solar dehydrator named Helios.

Faculty have incorporated garden-related courses into the curriculum and established partnerships with local schools and organizations to educate the community about local food and sustainability.



Fall 2012 semester residents of Monmouth College's Garden House include, from left, Connor Shields, Will Terrill, Kaitlyn Pfau, Allison Razo and Carli Alvarado. (Photo by Jane Carlson / Radish)

But those getting their hands the most dirty with garden work are the students. In the spring of 2011, a group of students applied to live in a garden-themed house adjacent to the burgeoning garden. They wanted to live there, work in the garden and practice sustainability by eating what they grew themselves. Their proposal was approved, and thus began the cycle of students working summers to weed and water, and pick and preserve, so that the students who would be living in the house come fall would have food to eat throughout the year.

Student Will Terrill of Sandwich, Ill., did not

work in the garden that first summer, but he was among the students who moved in the house in the fall of 2011 with a vow to eat a vegetarian diet comprised mainly of what had been preserved by the summer workers — a far cry from most college students' daily diets.

"We had our own learning curve," says Terrill. "Slowly we developed a network of people, books and websites that showed us a wealth of knowledge already in existence."

That knowledge carried over to the following spring's planting season, when the house's residents

helped determine what would be grown for the next harvest. The garden was tended through the summer months of 2012 by Terrill, Pfau and fellow student George Burnette of Washington, Ill. Together, they lived in the house, preserved the summer harvest, and took on notable additional projects to benefit the operation such as building a greenhouse mostly from salvaged materials.

This academic year, Terrill and Pfau, along with Connor Shields of Naperville, Ill., Allison Razo of Fairbury, Ill., and Carli Alvarado of Chicago, are living in the Garden House. The students contribute \$40 a month for bulk groceries to supplement the locally grown and preserved foods. They take turns cooking vegetarian meals for the group, churning out stir-fries, curries, pasta dishes, home-made breads and pizzas.

Pfau notes that the diversity of this year's harvest will make cooking and eating in the Garden House much more enjoyable. Last year, Pfau says, there was too much cabbage and too many radishes, and they struggled to work their way through gallons of pesto made from a bumper crop of basil.

This time around, they will be eating more eggplant, pole beans, okra and squash. The students also have learned to flash-freeze vegetables in smaller portions and are constantly honing their cooking and canning skills. Their tomato sauce, for instance, is better seasoned to their liking this year and their salsa is spicier.

The educational experience of the Garden House starts with gardening, continues with preserving and cooking, and extends to fellowship and outreach to the campus and the larger community. The students host a film and discussion series focused on sustainability, trade produce with other local gardeners, and always welcome visitors to the garden — and for dinner.

"When people eat with us here, they can taste what we are doing," says Terrill.

Because the students decide what to plant, they are deciding what they will eat many months later. When something goes wrong — such as the failure of most of the root crops this year — they vow to do it better next time, driven by the prospect of a more diverse and bountiful harvest to sustain them in the coming year.

They also keep detailed logs of their successes and failures in the garden and the kitchen so that future garden workers and Garden House residents can benefit from their experiences.

"We had a great deal to learn," says Terrill. "Most of us grew up with only a minor education in gardening or none at all. We were products of the industrial food system."

Now, they can talk shop about companion planting and they get excited about eggplant. Pfau considers cooking both a passion and a creative outlet, and Burnette is a self-professed food snob.

"I can't eat fast food anymore," he says. "It just makes me sick."

Jane Carlson is a regular Radish contributor. For more information on the Monmouth College Education Garden, visit mceducationalgarden.weebly.com.

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Don't call it dirt!

Scott Koepke teaches the value of what's at our feet

By Annie L. Scholl

When Scott Koepke was a young boy, he helped his maternal grandmother harvest green beans. While he didn't realize it at the time, he now says that simple act "planted a seed of awareness" in him about the gift of gardening.

That seed grew when he was training to serve in the Peace Corps in Senegal, West Africa, in 1986 just after graduating from Iowa State University.

"I had a light bulb moment," recalls Koepke, 50, Education Outreach Coordinator and Soilmates garden educator at New Pioneer Food Co-op in Iowa City. "I realized if I was lucky enough to be an old man, I'd want to get up every day and putter in the garden. Nothing makes me happier."

Koepke taught gardening in Senegal. From that experience, he returned to his home state of Iowa with "a new set of eyes, gratitudes and priorities" and wrote the "Soilmates" curriculum. It sat on a shelf until the mid-1990s when he presented it at Pierce Elementary in Cedar Rapids to a first-grade class his sister was teaching. "Something clicked. I found my niche," he says.

For about 14 years, he served as an "itinerant" guest speaker in the public schools, squeezing in teaching the Soilmates curriculum when his schedule as the grocery manager at New Pioneer allowed it. Koepke wept "tears of joy" when his general manager came to him in 2011 and asked if he would teach Soilmates full time for New Pioneer.

"I am so fortunate to be able to have the support I do from New Pi," Koepke says. "No other grocery store I know of has a full-time garden educator for kids on staff."

The Soilmates curriculum complements the core curricula in the

schools. It has an interactive aspect that includes school and community gardens and cafeteria food-waste diversion projects for compost conversion. Additionally, Koepke encourages students to consider how land, including their school grounds, could be used to grow food instead of grass.

Koepke also started and administers a grant program called the Seed Money Initiative. Through that, he trains high school students to be his "Soilmates Pioneers" — peer educators who go back to their former elementary schools to teach gardening.

During the 2011-2012 academic year, Koepke taught 7,900 students in 24 schools in Iowa City and the surrounding areas. He also teaches adult classes and is a guest lecturer at a variety of organizations and institutions, from Kirkwood Community College and Iowa State University Extension's Master Gardeners program to the Iowa Organic Conference and the Iowa City Public Library. His philosophy: "Have worms, will travel."

Future projects include a mobile demo garden on a trailer that Koepke plans to attach to his pickup truck; a soil submarine to study the sub-soil where students can have a visceral experience of crawling into the earth; a weeklong summer Soil Camp; and partnering with hospitals and social-service organizations to create community gardens for both the homeless and children who are ill.

"Gardening heals people. That's all I know," Koepke says.

Koepke also maintains a 400-square-foot garden at his Iowa City home and helps out in community gardens as time allows.

"I have a very sensual relationship with soil," he says. "Very few things in life give me more pleasure than holding it, smelling it, building it" from compost.

His most rewarding gardening experience has been the children's vegetable garden that the city of Iowa City allowed him to put in on the Pedestrian Mall in downtown. All of the produce grown is donated to Table to Table, a local food-rescue program.

"My fingernails are perpetually dirty from March through November. It's not dirt. It's soil," he says, referencing the rules he has for his classes: Soil can't be called dirt, and compost can't be called garbage.

"If I say I'm treating someone like dirt, it means I don't respect them. I need all of my students to develop a greater respect for preserving the living soil and making it healthier. When I see that a kid really understands that principle, I've done my job. If he or she then goes home to start a garden or compost pile, that's frosting on the cake."

Koepke says composting is his favorite activity because it teaches us that we can recycle food. "Old food becomes the nutrients for new food in a wonderful cycle," he says. "A statistic that blows kids away is that over half — some say 70 percent — of what we toss into the dump is potential compost/fertilizer."

Another focus of Koepke's work is public policy advocacy, including work on crop insurance reform and a cooperative initiative to help vegetable growers in seven Iowa counties compete against imported produce. He is president of the board of the Iowa Valley Food Co-op, vice president of the board of Field to Family, and a member of the Johnson County Board of Supervisors' Local Food Policy Council.

He's motivated by a "profound sense of urgency," says Koepke. "I feel that our culture has its collective head buried in the sand, assuming we have an infinite supply of resources we can use however we want without thinking clearly enough about the consequences of our actions."

Koepke lives a simple life, one that he has reduced to six words: work, dog, eat, read, sleep, repeat. He tries to model sustainable behavior in his life choices, from teaching children to nurture plants and soil to walking his dog for exercise to eating a balanced diet of as much minimally processed food as he can.

He doesn't refer to his life as "green" living, saying the word has been "co-opted" by commercial interests. "I'm not even sure what it means anymore," he says. "All I know is that we live on a planet with finite resources, many of which we are destroying. There are dozens and dozens of choices we make everyday that can either result in a net extraction or a regeneration of resources. From composting veggie scraps to driving less, simple acts lead to profound impacts."

Annie L. Scholl is a frequent Radish contributor.



Scott Koepke at work. (Submitted)

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Firsthand learning

CCCB educates, entertains and fosters exploration



School children get an up-close look at the Mississippi River through CCCB programs. (Submitted)

By Jean Eggemeyer

On scores of warm days last year, groups of school children excitedly boarded the Blue Heron pontoon boat docked on the backwaters of the Mississippi River at the Rock Creek Marina just south of Camanche, Iowa. The boat, operated by the Clinton County Conservation Board (CCCB), headed out for more than 160 cruises in 2012 to provide passengers a unique, up-close look at the natural and man-made river environment.

"It's really a wonderful, engaging program for kids," says Kristi Lueders, second-grade teacher at Whittier Elementary School in Clinton who takes her classes on a five-hour Blue Heron trip each spring. "Even though our town is right on the river, many of the kids have never been on it."

Piloted by naturalist guides, the Blue Heron explores the Mississippi and its backwaters, sloughs and banks from May into late fall. In many cases the excursions are free of charge. In operation since the fall of 2002, the CCCB's eco-cruises serve hundreds of school children, as well as outdoor groups, tourists and the general public. The boat holds up to 26 passengers at a time.

"We encourage people to get into close study of the wildlife we encounter," says Chuck Jacobsen, interpretive naturalist with the CCCB, a department of Clinton County, Iowa, government.

Depending on the season, passengers will see bald eagles, peregrine falcons,

osprey, reptiles, turtles, fish, plants and other wonders of the river. The boat lands on some tours to allow riders to hunt for rocks and shells and search for animal tracks.

"With kids, especially, we use nets to pull in insect larvae, crustaceans or fish so they can see them and touch them," says Jacobsen.

"It's interesting how the tour really fits in with our curriculum," adds Lueders. "The things we see and experience tie directly in with our social studies and science lessons and objectives."

For more than six years the Clinton County Conservation Foundation, partner to the CCCB, has been raising funds for an environmental education center, securing hundreds of thousands of dollars in grants and donations from more than 160 businesses and individuals. As a result, visitors can now enjoy an impressive new addition to the CCCB's resources before or after boarding the Blue Heron: the Mississippi River Eco Tourism Center, located near the Blue Heron dock.

Developed by a small group of staff and board members with a vision for a premier ecotourism destination, the center opened in April of 2012. "There are times that I find it hard to believe that we were able to accomplish such a monumental task," says Walt Wickham, CCCB executive director. "But we have a great board, a great foundation, fantastic staff and some terrific volunteers who all made it possible."

The 8,400-square-foot, fully-handicapped-accessible facility is designed to

encourage learning about the biological diversity in and around the Mississippi River. The structure includes an 8,000-gallon aquarium filled with fish species found in the river; a 30-person classroom/theater; a large community room available for public use; and a huge deck that overlooks the river 18 feet below.

"We've had a phenomenal, positive response from the public since opening," says Mark Roberts, CCCB environmental education coordinator. More than 150,000 people visited the center and the Rock Creek Marina and Campground complex in 2012, and that number is expected to rise as word spreads.

"One benefit of the center is that it provides a large, indoor venue to host school groups," explains Jacobsen. "That way, weather doesn't get in the way of continuing to educate and entertain our visitors."

Work is continuing on a large nature gallery that will be the focus of the building. The room will house interpretive displays of the wildlife of the Mississippi River ecosystem, local river history, and information about human uses of the river. The foundation is still welcoming donations that will be used to complete the displays and purchase furnishings for the gallery.

Staff members use the center to host numerous educational programs and events, including school and club outings; youth lock-ins; and a "Souper Sunday" speaker series that features a soup lunch and guest presenters.

"Our mission is to preserve natural resources and enhance the public enjoyment of those resources," explains Jacobsen. "We want to give people a better understanding of the outdoors so that they can enjoy it more freely and confidently."

The agency hosts numerous educational and recreational programs, including speaker programs; canoe and kayak trips; plant and animal identification walks; and cross country skiing and snowshoeing explorations. The CCCB reaches more than 30,000 people with its programming each year. "Most of our programs and services are free or are kept at a minimal cost," explains Jacobsen. "We try to keep the nature experience as accessible as possible."

Stewardship is an important value the CCCB staff works to instill within those they interact with. The agency's focus is on helping citizens maintain a healthy balance between the natural and man-made environments.

"Improving water quality is an important focus for me," says Jacobsen. "Through my programs, I'm hoping to increase awareness that what we do as individuals on land impacts water quality for our region and the millions of people who live downriver."

And now Jacobsen has another tool to help get that message across: sharing information on local species displayed in the new aquarium at the Mississippi River Eco Tourism Center.

"Firsthand learning is what we do best," sums up Roberts.

Writer Jean Eggemeyer makes her Radish debut this month.



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Responsible recycling

E-waste recycling in the Q-C first to meet R2 standards

By Becky Langdon

If you've ever recycled an old tube TV or outdated computer, you may not have thought about what happened to it after it left your hands — like, say, someone sending it through a massive two-story shredder. But there are people in the Quad-Cities who make it their job to ensure that electronics are not just recycled but recycled responsibly.

In 2012 Waste Commission of Scott County became the first public agency in the world to receive R2 certification, the leading industry standard for recycling electronics responsibly. The Commission's Electronic Demanufacturing Facility is one of 239 facilities worldwide as of July 2012 that have been R2 certified, and they are the only one in the state of Iowa.

The certification process took about 18 months and required third-party certification by Perry Johnson Registrars. Kurt Liske, communication specialist at the Waste Commission, says, "A lot of it wasn't necessarily putting new processes in place, but having the third party on the outside say that we're doing what we say we're doing."

According to R2 Solutions, the nonprofit established to promote R2 practices, getting certified means that a facility cares about the global

environment, they take environmental responsibilities seriously, they have a system of accountability in place for all electronic equipment, and they see data security as a top priority.

In terms of health and safety, one of the important functions R2 serves is identifying "focus materials," or materials that pose an environmental concern, and then outlining how to manage those materials to ensure environmental, worker and public health. Focus materials include devices containing mercury, batteries, circuit boards, cathode ray tubes (CRTs) and polychlorinated biphenyls (PCBs).

Meeting the environmental, health and safety requirements within a facility requires careful diligence, but R2 takes that diligence a step further. An R2 certified agency must work with only vendors and contractors who also handle waste responsibly. This requirement ensures that waste doesn't end up in a landfill or become an environmental problem downstream.

Brandy Welvaert, communication coordinator at the commission, says, "For us it's a huge responsibility and a lot of work to go after all the vendors and all the contractors and make sure that what they're doing is just as responsible as what we're doing. If they're not, we can't work with them because we're an R2-certified facility."



Thomas Haut and fellow Scott County Waste Commission employees work on dismantling electronics. (Photo by Todd Welvaert / Radish)

Data security, the third prong of R2 certification, may not pose a threat to worker safety or public health, but it's a critical part of the e-waste disposal process. Liske says one benefit of the data security standard is that it helps make people more comfortable with recycling electronics, which hopefully will lead to an increase in recycling. The Electronic Demanufacturing facility goes to great lengths to ensure the data contained in recycled devices is secure.

"It's a pretty impressive operation," Liske says. "We have a two-story high industrial shredder for electronics. When we get electronics in, we put them in a big cage and lock them up. We save up all that sensitive material until there's enough of it to warrant running the shredder."

In the past, Waste Commission of Scott County's recycling education and outreach efforts have focused largely on residential customers. In fact, 66 percent of their e-waste traditionally comes from that market. In obtaining R2 certification, the Commission hopes to increase the amount of e-waste they handle from businesses.

"Data security is important to businesses," says Liske. "It gives them peace of mind that we're doing this in a responsible manner." According to Liske, some customers even request to watch their hard drives go through the shredder and are very concerned with where the rest of the material is going.

The Commission has a goal of handling 2 million pounds of e-waste this year, an increase of more than 200,000 pounds over 2011. Welvaert says that obtaining R2 certification is just one of many ways they strive for continual improvement. "Waste Commission of Scott County is pretty progressive," she says. "If there's a new way that we can serve the community better and somebody here finds out about it, it's probably something we're going to look into."

In addition to managing the R2-certified Electronics Demanufacturing Facility, the Commission also operates the Scott Area Landfill, Scott Area Recycling Center, two household hazardous material facilities, and a public education program. Since going through the R2-certification process, Liske says they have applied many of the same practices to the landfill and recycling center as part of their goal of continual improvement.

Liske says one of the biggest misconceptions people have about Waste Commission of Scott County is how they receive their funding. "People are always asking, 'What's this going to cost?'" he says. "A lot of people think this is taxpayer funded. Taxpayers' dollars don't go here. It's entirely self-funded."

The good news for Quad-City residents is that recycling your electronics responsibly is easy, and in many cases free. Scott County and Rock Island County residents can recycle e-waste at the Electronics Demanufacturing Facility at no charge thanks to an annual environmental grant awarded to member communities by the Commission, and thanks to a contract with Rock Island County Waste Management Agency. All other residents who don't live in those counties and businesses can recycle their electronics for a 20 cents-per-pound fee for most electronics or a flat fee of \$15 for anything with a screen.

Becky Langdon is a frequent Radish contributor. To learn more, visit wastecom.com.

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New Hope Farm

A balance of sustainable agriculture, communal living

By Will Hoyer

Early winter. A time of quiet and rest. But at New Hope Catholic Work Farm, there's been plenty of activity. Residents were still busy watering and picking late-season greens growing in cold frames as of mid-November, collecting eggs and doing other chores — all while discussing the incredible sweetness of different varieties of squash that they had tried for the previous night's dinner, coordinating trips into Dubuque's Winter Farmers' Market, and wrangling not-quite-toddlers who were tormenting the chickens.

The New Hope Catholic Worker Farm is located just south of Dubuque in a quiet and picturesque valley. Owned by the husband and wife team of Rick Mihm and Mary Moody since 2001, the farm is an incredible resource for those want to learn more sustainable ways of growing food — and living.

Four couples and their kids live on the unique farm, which emphasizes wise stewardship of the land, dignified labor, communal living and education. Mihm and Moody have transformed the former pasture land into a farm that provides much of the food for the farm's residents as well as food for shelters in Dubuque. The farm also provides transitional housing for people recovering from drug and alcohol addictions.

In the past, New Hope has experimented with partnering with other small farms to offer a Community Supported Agriculture (CSA) program and has sold produce at local farmers' markets, but residents have chosen to focus on growing food for themselves while offering education and advice to other growers who are looking to learn about how to grow food — and live — in more sustainable ways.



New Hope Catholic Worker Farm (opposite page) and residents Francis Mihm, Micah Yoches, Peter Yoches, Mary Kay McDermott, Esther Mihm, Mary Moody, Rick Mihm, Patrick Mihm, Eric Cussen Angladam, Brenna Cussen Anglada, and Kevin, Nizhonja, Jenn and Elijah Schmidt. (Photo by Will Hoyer / Radish)

Farm residents like to have more than half of the food they eat come from the farm, and what doesn't come from the farm they try to purchase locally. According to Moody they do note at most every meal what they grew themselves. Foods grown on the farm include tomatoes, beans, potatoes, asparagus, garlic, apples, pears, melons, numerous types of berries, watercress and more.

New Hope residents also are able to forage in the woods above the farm for edible plants and morel mushrooms. The waters of a spring-fed pond also provide the occasional meal of fish. In addition the farm has over 40 laying chickens, a handful of fast-growing broilers, beehives and a couple cows that provide enough milk for the farm's residents each day. This year a few sheep were added to provide residents with wool for knitting and weaving.

It may not fit the mold of what people think of as a typical Midwestern farm, but New Hope isn't without a rich history. The farm is part of the Catholic Worker movement, begun in the United States during the Great

Depression by famed social activists Dorothy Day and Peter Maurin. The movement is more widely known for its houses of hospitality, which provide relief for those in need, but also has a number of farming communities built on the same principles of social justice.

Kevin Schmidt and his wife, Jen, have lived on the farm for three years. Schmidt believes that it is very difficult to eat truly healthy unless you grow the food yourself. As a substitute teacher, he can speak eloquently about the sorry state of kids' diets in schools and elsewhere (and many parents' diets are not any better!), but says that by being forced to eat largely according to the natural patterns of the

farm, New Hope residents eat better. "The energy we put into growing our food also grows us as people and keeps us healthy," he states, simply.

Why do the farm's residents choose to live in a way so far outside the "norm?" For Schmidt, the answer lies in the balance his family finds there. He says that "you can't find balance unless you have spiritual, physical and emotional balance, and this is a place that supports those needs."

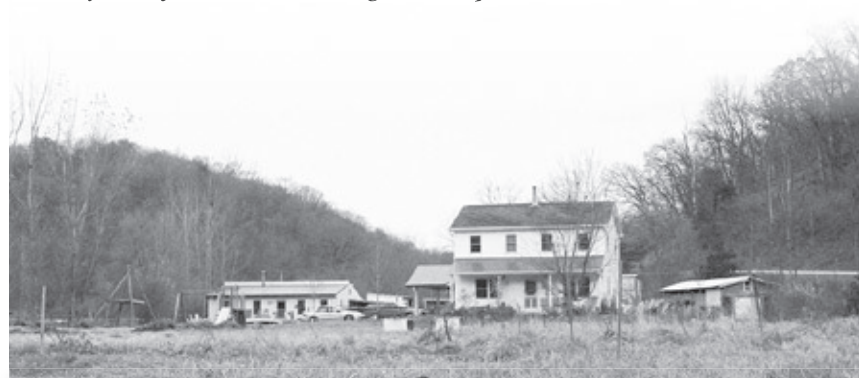
Other residents note that the ability to learn deeply about the land they live on, to live simple lives and to pursue the goal of self-sufficiency are powerful incentives to live where and how they do.

To that end, there is a small set of solar panels and a wind turbine on the farm. An old chest freezer looks out of place at the head of a waterway full of watercress, but cool spring water flows through the freezer keeping the interior at a constant cool temperature perfect for providing free refrigeration. Much of the material for the farm house and the other buildings on the farm has been reclaimed from other sources. The house is heated with wood from their woodlot and the farm's water comes from the springs located on the property, which held up even through this summer's record drought. Farm toilets are all composting toilets and cow manure provides the nutrients for next year's crops.

While residents of the farm aim to have as little impact on the environment as possible, sometimes Mother Nature impacts them. The residents of the farm got a chance to experience the power of water in 2011 when Tete des Morts Creek, which usually runs tranquilly through the farm, grew into a raging river one July night after 14 inches of rain were dumped from above. The flood washed away garden plots, swing sets, a trampoline and more. It also spread tons of limestone along the stream banks and re-routed the stream through the property. This past summer saw record drought which forced everyone to chip in to haul tons of water to the garden beds until a solar powered pump system was rigged up.

So what will the future bring for the New Hope Catholic Worker Farm? Moody hopes that everyone there will continue to glean as much knowledge as they can from their work on the land and that they can use the farm more and more as a learning center — a place where interested people can come and spend an hour, a day, a week or more learning new skills and ideas and ways to apply that knowledge on their own farms, school yards, community gardens or backyards.

Will Hoyer is a freelance writer living in Dubuque, Iowa.



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food

Share the warmth

Cozy up to a welcoming serving of vegetarian chili

By Sarah J. Gardner

If there is a winter dish more packed with love than chili, I don't know what it is. Nearly everyone has his or her own special recipe, recounted in affectionate detail. One person swears by a certain mix of spices, another speaks of hours spent checking on a slowly simmering pot. A third only nods and winks, guarding his recipe as a treasured family secret.

But it's not just that. Sure, there are fancier and more elaborate meals you could cook up, but the magic of chili is that it makes everyone feel right at home. Simply put, there isn't a more warm or welcoming dish to share with people you love. It's like being able to ladle cozy comfort right into a bowl.

Over the years, I've collected many chili recipes, each served with a side of fond memories of the person who gave it to me. There's my mom's recipe, a no-frills affair that cooks up quickly on a weeknight. Then there's the thick and hearty chili my college boyfriend served to introduce himself to my family (is it any wonder he's my husband now?), and the recipe for a smokey chipotle concoction given to me by a Texas river guide who took us rafting down the Rio Grande.

The magic of chili is that it makes everyone feel right at home.

Among my absolute favorite recipes, though, is a vegetarian sweet potato chili, prized in no small part because it was given to me by our beloved next door neighbor after we moved to Iowa. One day as I was returning home from work, she called to me from her deck. "Oh, Sarah, I've been eating the most wonderful chili! Stay right there." In the next minute she was at my door, pressing the recipe into my hand with assurances I would love it.

And I do. I really do — almost as much as I love that neighbor! Of course, like any chili aficionado, I've tinkered with the recipe a bit, adding my own canned salsa and, when the mood strikes, topping it with corn bread. But whenever I make it, I always think back to that early day in my new home, when the simple gift of chili made me feel so welcome in the neighborhood.

Now, of course, the memory of getting that chili recipe is tied up with many others, including a more recent recollection of a time I borrowed eggs from this same neighbor, assuring her I would replace them within a day. "Please don't pay me back," she said. "Let's just make this a neighborhood where we share things." Seasoned with such goodwill, how could any recipe go wrong?

Sarah J. Gardner is the editor of Radish magazine.



Paul Colletti / Radish

Overnight Sweet Potato Chili

- | | |
|--|--|
| 2 large sweet potatoes, peeled and cubed | 1 jar (16 ounces) of your favorite salsa |
| 1 large onion, chopped | 2 tablespoons chili powder |
| 1 green pepper, seeded and diced | 1 tablespoon unsweetened cocoa powder |
| 4 cloves garlic, peeled and diced | ½ teaspoon cinnamon |
| 1 can (15 ounces) black beans | Salt and pepper to taste |
| 1 can (15 ounces) kidney beans | |
| 1 can (14 ounces) tomatoes | |

Combine all ingredients in a slow cooker. Cover and cook for 7-8 hours on low (4-5 hours, high), until potatoes are tender.

Optional: To serve with baked cornbread topping, spoon chili into Mason jars or other tempered glass containers. Fill $\frac{2}{3}$ full. Prepare your favorite corn bread mix or recipe as usual, then dollop the corn bread batter on top of the chili in the jars, leaving a 1-inch space at the top. Bake in a preheated oven at 375 degrees for 20-25 minutes, until cornbread is set and starting to very slightly brown. Allow to cool somewhat before serving.

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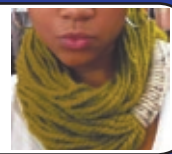
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health & fitness

10-minute fitness

Easy exercises you can work into your daily routine

By Chris Greene

Although health experts have long advised a full 30 minutes of exercise a day, recent studies suggest that a mere 10 minutes of exercise three times a day is enough to offer the same positive impact on our health as exercising for 30 continuous minutes. In fact, it might even be better, as it allows you to spread out your exercise throughout the day.

"Results take time, your body has to have time to adapt and change. And you don't always have to think of getting fit as 'exercise' — it's really about movement," says Jake Villhauer, personal training director at Core Fitness in Iowa City.

Just what can you do in those 10-minute bursts to get fit? Plenty, according to Villhauer and other local fitness professionals. Here are just a few of their ideas.

"Start with a small goal, say getting up 10 minutes earlier three days a week and exercising then. Maybe go outside for a walk or pick up a full laundry basket and walk up and down your stairs for 10 minutes. You can also do push-ups on your stairs."

Jen Foley, healthy lifestyles director, Two Rivers YMCA, Moline

"When you are in an office setting, you can use your desk for triceps dips. You can also do wall push-ups and wall sits. Wall sits have you sitting against a wall in a squat position at a right angle and holding for 10 to 15 seconds. You can also walk up and down stairs for a virtual StairMaster — go slower to work the quads and glutes. ... It's about moving the body, not necessarily running a marathon."

Nina Ko, ACSM, personal trainer, Core Fitness, Iowa City.

"Most of us think we need to feel the burn of a good abdominal crunch workout, but if you think about the shape we take during crunches, it actually accentuates the very forward flexed posture we are trying to get out of (from our workday)! So, think about quality, not quantity for Pilates, and yes, 10 minutes of isolated work could do the trick. The Pilates breath is important and actually facilitates the contraction of the transverse abdominal muscle we seek to strengthen. Here is how I instruct people to 'find' that muscle. When we are trying to fit into those very skinny jeans, we attempt to flatten our

tummies to button the waist. ... Flatten your belly on the exhale; squeeze the air out, activate the transverse ab and flatten the lower belly. So the work is ... inhale slightly, pooch the belly, exhale, pull the navel in."

Erin Phillips, assistant professor of occupational therapy, St. Ambrose University, Davenport.

"One idea is a wall press. Stand with your legs shoulder width apart and basically do a push-up on the wall. You can do them anywhere. You can do squats and lunges anywhere, even in front of the TV. If you're going from the living room to the kitchen, lunge your way there. You don't need any gadgets for these — just your own body weight. Mix it up however you want, but just get moving!"

Allison Mizer, healthy living director, Scott County Y, Davenport

"You can do shoulder rolls, which is especially good if you're sitting at a desk all day. You can also do a modified shoulder press by simply pushing your arms up over your head the way you would with weights — it's great for mobility and range of motion."

— Joan Rusk, wellness coordinator, Scott County Y, Davenport

"Change it up even if you're just going for a run or a walk. When you see a car, sprint to get to a stop sign before the car — make a game out of it."

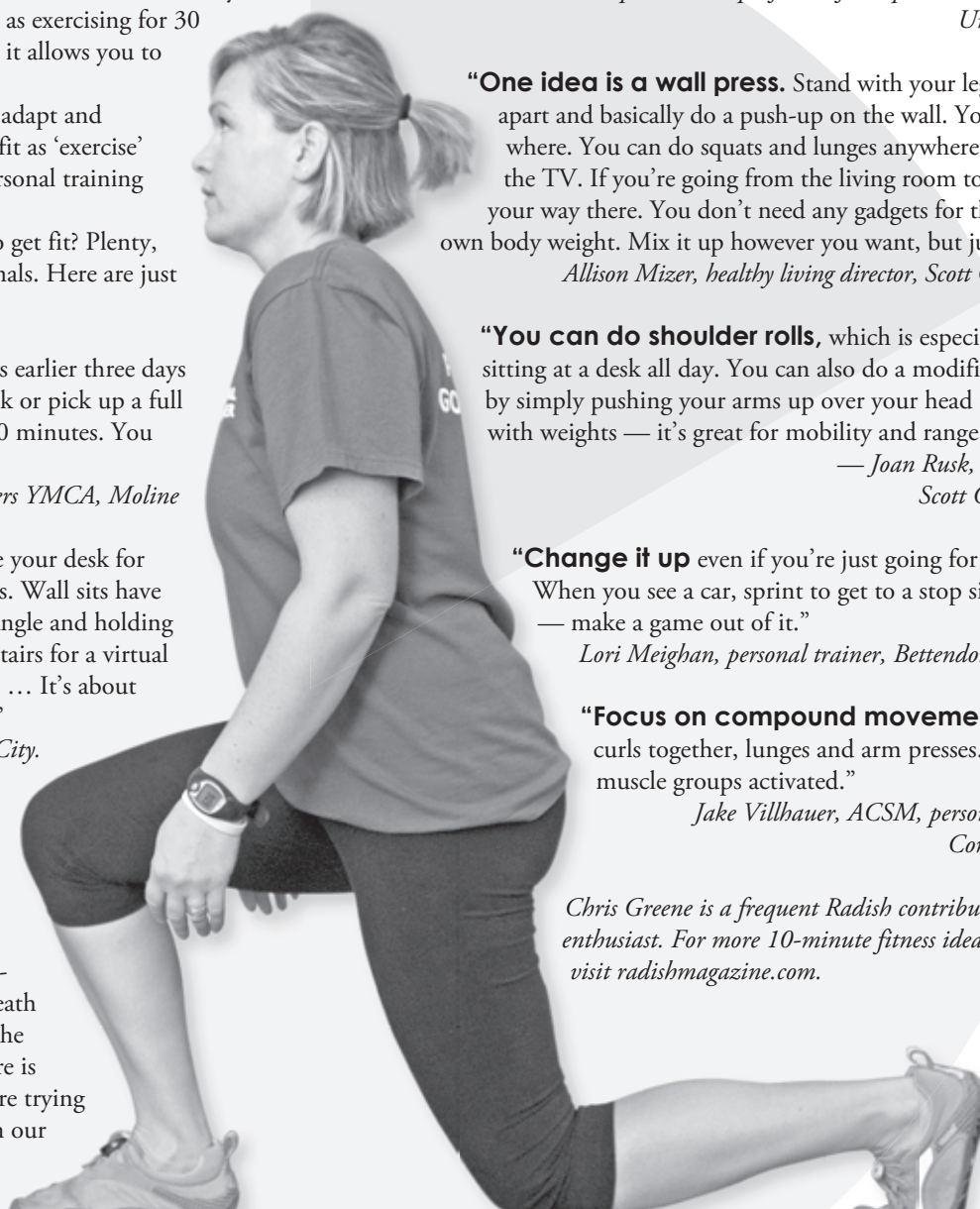
Lori Meighan, personal trainer, Bettendorf Life Fitness Center

"Focus on compound movements — squats and curls together, lunges and arm presses. Get multiple muscle groups activated."

Jake Villhauer, ACSM, personal training director, Core Fitness, Iowa City.

Chris Greene is a frequent Radish contributor and fitness enthusiast. For more 10-minute fitness ideas from the pros, visit radishmagazine.com.

Wellness coordinator Joan Rusk demonstrates a basic lunge. (Photo by Gary Krambeck / Radish)



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Meat-free dishes get their due at LeClaire cafe

By Julie Barton

It's a Tuesday night in LeClaire and there is an eclectic crowd in the Crane & Pelican Cafe. Two women, who appear to be close friends, sit at a table having a glass of wine and quietly laughing. An older couple, clearly regulars, comes in and greets the owner. It's date night for the people at the table next to the large-paned windows, and they pore over the menu, one here for a vegetarian meal and the other a confirmed carnivore. Fortunately for them, it's vegan and vegetarian night at the Crane & Pelican, so everyone can leave sated and happy.

The Crane & Pelican Cafe, overlooking downtown LeClaire, opened in 2009 in the renovated Dawley House, former home of a riverboat captain and a mortuary. Vegan and vegetarian night started the first winter the Crane & Pelican was open because owner Mandy Harvey felt the Quad-Cities restaurant scene was lacking in vegan-friendly restaurants.

"I knew from the beginning that the Crane & Pelican was going to be a vegetarian- and vegan-friendly restaurant because I was aware of how hard it is for vegans to find places to eat out," explains Harvey. "I have several good friends who are vegan, and it was important to me that they could come eat at my restaurant. Most places don't even know what vegan means, much less how to prepare delicious vegan meals."

For those unfamiliar with the terms, vegetarians don't eat meat, and vegans abstain from eating animals and animal byproducts, including dairy and eggs. For some, this can pose a cooking challenge, but Crane & Pelican chef Bud Benson sees endless possibilities. "I love our eggplant lasagna with fresh tomatoes and basil," Benson muses. "Any and all varieties of vegan pizzas are also delicious. On the dessert end, honey and toasted pine nut tarts ... mmm!"

Benson was hired as a cook during the holiday season of 2010, and is now head chef. He also tends a garden he uses as a source to fuel his edible creations, and finds using fresh-grown food from the garden and serving it to people as inspirational. His favorite vegan ingredient? The versatile tomato.

"I love tomatoes with all of their flavors, shapes and color," says Benson. "They're a great universal ingredient, and it's very difficult to find someone who doesn't appreciate fresh tomatoes used in any way in a dish."

Benson bases the vegan and vegetarian night menu on seasons and holidays, and he is dependent on what he can get that is fresh and local. He says it would surprise people to know that many of the ingredients used in the Crane & Pelican menu items come from a garden at the Crane & Pelican, or from friends of the restaurant who sell them their produce, particularly during spring, summer and fall months.

On the menu that cool Tuesday night? A smooth and silky baked sweet potato soup, shepherd's pie with beans and a baked mashed potato and crisped bread-crumbs crust, and a fabulous slice of pumpkin pie with a nondairy whipped



Pasta Della California, a vegetarian dish from the Crane & Pelican Cafe. (Photo by Gary Krambeck / Radish)

cream on top. Regular menu items, including meat dishes, were also available.

Several standard Crane & Pelican menu items, including corn fritters with a chipotle sauce and stuffed dates, first appeared on their vegan and vegetarian night menus and became crowd favorites that stuck.

"We have developed a very loyal following of people who aren't necessarily vegan, but people who like delicious and healthy meals," explains Harvey. "It's a challenge to cook vegan, but we enjoy researching new recipes and techniques."

When opening the Crane & Pelican, Harvey says her vision was to create a "comfort food" cafe where all of the food is made from scratch, and where good, affordable, local food is offered. She didn't want to venture into fine dining, but to instead have options that everyday people could enjoy, including her vegan friends, and to offer the elusive gathering place that suits their needs.

Says Harvey, "We have several groups who come to every vegan and vegetarian night, including families with vegans and meat eaters who don't get to eat out together much. Here at the Crane & Pelican, the carnivores can get a great, locally-raised steak, and the vegans can get a delicious three-course meal."

Julie Barton is a regular Radish contributor. For more information on the Crane & Pelican Cafe's vegan and vegetarian nights, visit craneandpelican.com.

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Pure awareness

TM offers a systematic approach to meditation

By Ann Ring

Picture a group of people meditating. They aren't chanting. They aren't counting a string of beads. They aren't burning incense or sitting in a contorted position. In fact, to the naked eye, they aren't doing much at all. And yet what they are practicing has immense benefit, as demonstrated by the relaxed faces and calm demeanor when they leave the room.

What you are picturing is Transcendental Meditation, practiced by 6 million people worldwide. It was launched as an international movement by Maharishi Mahesh Yogi of India, who embarked on several world tours beginning in 1959 to share the practice.

"The TM technique is easily learned and enjoyably practiced. It is done quietly twice daily for 20 minutes sitting comfortably in a chair," says David Magill, who, with his wife Claudia Magill, divides his time between Fairfield, Iowa, and the Quad-Cities, where they teach TM.

According to TM.org, the TM technique effortlessly "allows your mind to transcend, to settle inward beyond thought to experience the source of thought — pure awareness, also known as transcendental consciousness." Neuroscientists describe this as "restful alertness." It is the most silent and peaceful level of consciousness.

Says David, "Those who have practiced concentration types of meditation know this well — it's not easy to keep the mind from looking for something more attractive! The state of transcendental consciousness, the simplest state of awareness, is a state of maximum happiness and fulfillment. The TM technique uses this simple and powerful principle to allow the mind to slip into that transcendental state as easily as a diver slips into the water after taking the proper angle off a diving board."

The Magills were sent to the Quad-Cities because of a need. "There was no one here at the time teaching TM," says David. Both have been practicing TM since 1970. During that time, they have traveled the world to teach others TM and to advance their own training.

To ensure maximum effectiveness, Transcendental Meditation is taught by certified teachers like the Magills systematically — the same system handed down through centuries. TM can't be learned from a book or a video; every instructor teaches TM the same way, yet instruction is tailored to each pupil. Because students will have different experiences, questions and learning paces, the instructor is there as a guide.

"You can hear about it, but doing it is what makes the difference," says Claudia. "And the more you do it, the more of what Maharishi said makes sense. There's nothing that's been more fulfilling than teaching people Transcendental Meditation."

Since studies on TM's impact on the mind and body began in the 1970s, TM

has become one of the most scrutinized forms of meditation. More than one study has verified that heart-disease patients who practice TM have almost 50 percent lower rates of heart attacks, strokes and fatal cardiac events compared to similar patients who don't practice meditation. Other studies have examined the effects of TM on the brain, academic performance and emotional health.

While it is true that some of TM's 600 scientific studies took place at the Maharishi Foundation in Fairfield, Iowa (which wouldn't be unbiased), TM's official website, TM.org, lists a plethora of journals, publications, medical schools and universities that have conducted their own independent studies.

TM courses are not free, but participants can receive financial assistance, and tuition includes a lifetime follow-up program at any TM training center. Course fees go toward scholarships, teaching those in inner cities and on Native American reservations, impoverished students and programs for the homeless.

Standard course fees are \$90 down and \$90 per month for 18 months for adults. Also available are six- and 12-month plans, or a one-time payment of \$1,500. Various discounted plans are available for full-time students, couples learning TM together, and children learning with their parents.

Ann Ring is a frequent Radish contributor and student of TM.



Claudia and David Magill practicing TM. (Photo by Todd Welvaert / Radish)

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health & fitness

Shopping savvy

Aiming for healthier grocery decisions? Enlist a dietitian

By Laura Anderson Shaw

For the most part, I'm fairly OK at making healthy choices, but whenever I go to the grocery store, I have a sneaking suspicion that I could be doing better. Enter Chrissy Watters, a registered dietitian at the Rock Island Hy-Vee. After wandering the store with her, I now know how to choose a better TV dinner, how to cook a squash, and why "multigrain" bread isn't necessarily whole grain or "wheat" bread necessarily "whole wheat."

As recently noted by the New York Times, Hy-Vee is the only grocery chain in the country that posts a registered dietitian in nearly each of its 235 stores (in rural areas, a dietitian may serve a cluster of stores). The dietitians offer services such as nutritional counseling and free shopping tours, like the one I took.

Watters says the shopping tours, which take 20 to 30 minutes, are very popular. She typically conducts about eight a week. Her customers tend to be interested in learning more about healthy eating (like me), or how or what to eat after being diagnosed with a food allergy or diabetes. "That's what we're for. We are great follow-up care," Watters says.

We began our tour in the health market, followed by the dairy section where Watters explained the NuVal scoring system, an independent system developed by nutritionists and medical experts that is used at Hy-Vee stores and at a handful of others (check NuVal.com for availability).

Watters also taught me what to look for in nutrition labels in case I'm in another store that doesn't have NuVal scores available. (I now know to keep an eye on sodium, sugar and type of fat as well as things like fiber and protein. Watters said fats with short names are "bad," such as trans fat, while those with long names are good, such as "polyunsaturated" and "monounsaturated.")

Then, we stopped in the frozen fruit and veggies aisle. So long as you steer clear of fruits with added sugar and veggies with added sauces, "frozen vegetables and frozen fruit (are) equally nutritious as fresh," she said. Watters suggested adding frozen vegetables to canned soups and stir-fry dishes to bulk up meals and lower the sodium in each serving.

We then moved to another favorite aisle of mine: bread and pasta. I pointed out the wheat bread my husband and I often buy, and we read the label and saw that one of the first ingredients was "enriched wheat flour." That is "white flour,"



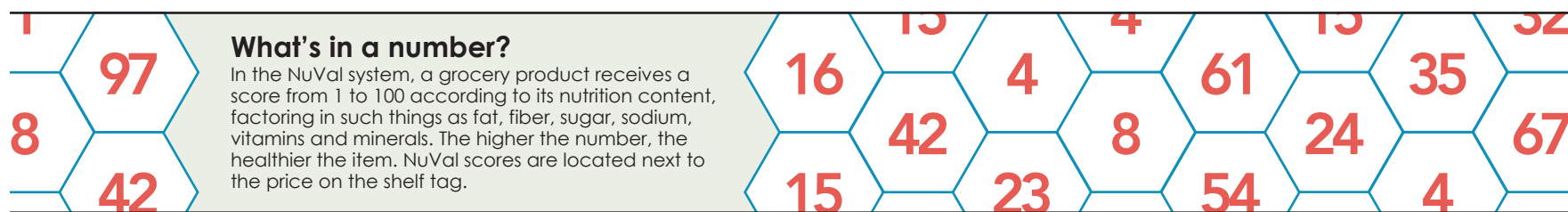
Chrissy Watters and Laura Anderson Shaw. (Photo by Todd Mizener / Radish)

Watters said. "You want that first word to say 'whole.'"

We then hit up seafood. Watters directed me to a freezer section I had never visited between the meat department and the bakery, and pointed out single-serving pieces of fish complete with cooking instructions on the back of the packages.

In the produce section, we discussed how to select fruits and vegetables. To my surprise, potatoes the size of an open hand actually contain two to three servings, not one, so it's better for portion control to look for potatoes the size of a closed fist. I also learned that selecting a cantaloupe is as easy as smelling it near the spot where the stem was. If it smells like a yummy cantaloupe, chances are it is a yummy cantaloupe! Now, that's what I'm talking about.

Laura Anderson Shaw is a frequent Radish contributor. For more information on Hy-Vee dietitians and services, visit hy-vee.com.





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environment

A living future

Our connection with nature is key, says educator

By Lindsay Hocker

Molly Steinwald knows a thing or two about sustainability. As the director of science education and research at Phipps Conservatory and Botanical Gardens in Pittsburgh, she has working firsthand knowledge of the Phipps' new Center for Sustainable Landscapes, a 24,350-square-foot "living building" with an extremely low ecological footprint.

"Living," in this case, isn't just a poetic description: The center was designed "to mimic nature and function as ultra-efficiently as a flower. It will generate all of its own energy using photovoltaic solar panels, a vertical axis wind turbine, and geothermal wells, and take advantage of passive cooling, heating and lighting methods," says Steinwald.

In addition to producing its own energy, the Center for Sustainable Landscapes will treat and reuse water on-site. The building has a green roof, lagoon, rain gardens, permeable paved surfaces, constructed wetlands, and a water distillation system. It also is surrounded by native plants that provide wildlife habitat.

Steinwald will visit the Quad-Cities this month as the keynote speaker at the winter symposium at Augustana College. The symposium is focused on sustainability, and Steinwald's keynote addresses are open to the public. She will speak at 10 a.m. and again at 12:30 p.m. on Jan. 23 in Augustana's Centennial Hall, 3703 7th Ave., Rock Island.

Kristin Douglas, associate dean of curriculum and student academic success at Augustana, who also is symposium coordinator, says when the symposium committee members were searching for a keynote speaker, they wanted to find someone to speak about sustainability issues without getting too technical or mired in detail. Douglas says after learning Steinwald could talk about the new living building at Phipps, is an educator

by trade, and also is a photographer who captures nature in urban settings, "we knew we had a speaker who could reach our symposium-day audience."

Douglas says she's excited to learn about the Center for Sustainable Landscapes, as well as the collaborative process that went into its design and building. She says the message she hopes to hear when Steinwald speaks is that there are many levels of action when it comes to sustainability — the corporate level, community level and individual level. "Action at each level is important, and there is something that each and every one of us can do differently that makes an important difference in our environment," Douglas says.

The overall theme of Steinwald's talk will be sustainability. "My primary message will be that no matter what talents and profession each of us has, no matter where we live or what background we are from, that we all are part of nature, that we all have a responsibility to care for the environment and humanity," she says.

Steinwald also will speak about green buildings, which she says "serve to inspire anyone who passes through their doors," but wants people to know that sustainability isn't just about constructing green buildings. "Sustainability is about working to change people's mindsets, values and behaviors," she says.

It's important, says Steinwald, not to lose sight of the fact that "society is made up of a wide variety of people with different backgrounds, stresses, motivations, needs; and that in order to create a truly sustainable society, environmentalists need to spend time understanding their audiences, appreciating them, and meeting them where they're at."

Lindsay Hocker is a Quad-Cities native who currently lives in Rock Island and regular contributor to Radish. For more information about Steinwald and the Phipps Conservatory and Botanical Gardens, visit phipps.conservatory.org.



Molly Steinwald. (Photo by Ben Filio)

health and fitness

To your health: Good goals to have in 2013

By Brandpoint

While losing weight, one of the most common New Year's resolutions, offers a host of benefits for many people, addressing other health issues can make equally compelling goals. If you are looking to shake up your resolutions and still do something to benefit your health in the year ahead, consider one of these ideas.

Resolve to take care of your hearing: About 10 percent of Americans report having hearing difficulties, and that includes about 1.4 million children, according to the Better Hearing Institute (BHI). In fact, the majority of people with hearing loss (65 percent) are younger than 65. Our increasingly noisy world exposes people of all ages to potentially damaging sounds, so it's more important than ever to pay attention to your hearing health.

Have your hearing professionally tested every year. If you're diagnosed with hearing loss, talk to your health care provider to determine if a hearing aid will help you. Hearing aids are now more discreet, versatile and effective than ever thanks to advances in technology.

Resolve to manage your stress: Stress seems like a natural part of our busy lives these days, but too much stress can be harmful to your overall well-being. Stress can negatively affect your mental health, your immune system, heart, digestive system, skin, lungs and reproductive organs.

Stress-busting can take on many forms for many people, whether it's spending time with a pet (interacting with animals can lower blood pressure and heart rate), listening to music, meditating or getting rigorous exercise.

Resolve to take care of your bones: Healthy bones are important for everyone, not just post-menopausal women and growing children. Most of your body's calcium is stored in the bones and teeth. When your body doesn't get enough calcium from outside sources, it starts drawing what it needs from storage and osteoporosis occurs.

To guard against it, ensure your diet includes the recommended amount of calcium per day and stay active by doing physical activities that help build bone strength, such as walking, running, dancing and weight lifting.

Resolve to take care of your feet: The condition of your feet can clue you in to your overall health, and signs of serious problems like arthritis, diabetes and circulatory issues can all be detected in the feet. More Americans have foot pain than in any other part of their bodies they consider vital to health, such as the skin, teeth or even the heart, according to a survey by the American Podiatric Medical Association (APMA).

To prevent foot problems, make sure you wear shoes that fit well and offer plenty of support, don't wear the same pair every day, and avoid walking around barefoot, the APMA advises. If you experience foot pain, don't ignore it; seek a doctor's help.



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Ancient wisdom and positive energy made accessible

Mini-review: “The Promise of Surfing Rainbows: Opening Your Energy Flow Attracts a Treasured Life” by P.D.M. Dolce (Balboa Press, 2010, 236 pages, \$23.95 paperback)

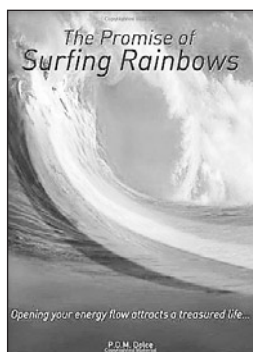


Reading “The Promise of Surfing Rainbows” came at a time when I was really struggling to balance the ever-increasing demands of work and home life. This book gave me details on the seven major chakras, something that I had looked into previously.

So often we blame our mood, behavior or feelings on external sources and happenings, and I know this should not be the case. Using the energy flow chart that Dolce presented gave me a clear way to work through my reactions to a given situation and make it more positive instead of focusing on the negative. The material in this book is clearly presented and easy to follow.

My only criticism is that sometimes things were presented almost too simplistically. For example, the energy flow chart is a great tool, but it is presented in a “just run through this flow and all will be better” kind of way that is often much more difficult in real life. Overall, though, this was a worthwhile read.

— Courtney Jones, Moline, Ill.



Submitted

A good book for cancer patients, even better for their support network

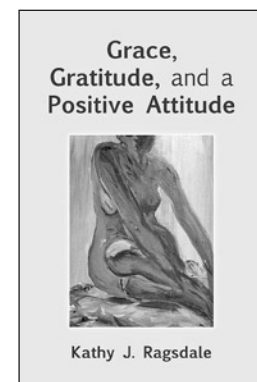
Mini-review: “Grace, Gratitude, and a Positive Attitude” by Kathy J. Ragsdale (Lulu.com, 2011, 96 pages, \$17.99 paperback)



This book is an autobiographical account of one woman’s battle with breast cancer as told primarily through e-mails she sent to a close group of friends and family. I love how this book really didn’t offer advice as to which treatment options were best or what a patient should do or should not do. Instead, it was told as a human interest story. I feel it would be a perfect book for someone who is newly diagnosed with breast cancer, or any other cancer, but even better for members of the patient’s support group.

The main thing I got from the book was that you need to rely on the knowledge and expertise of the doctors and other medical professionals, but just as important is that you have confidence in the course of treatment you decide on for yourself. The author really relied on herself to look at her options and determine what treatments were right for her and that matched her personality and lifestyle. She credits this mindset with really helping her physical self battle the cancer. There isn’t a lot of action, as such, but it is a raw account of a battle with cancer.

— Tova McNabb, Blue Grass, Iowa



Submitted

Puts bread perfection within reach

Mini-review: “Bread Making: Crafting the Perfect Loaf from Crust to Crumb” by Lauren Chattman (Storey Publishing, 2011, 296 pages, \$16.95 paperback)

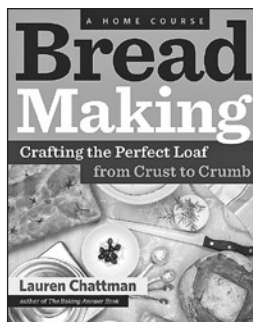


Rich in details, Lauren Chattman’s “Bread Making” has given me a proper lesson in bread making (and beyond!), and has reawakened my desire to try to become the accomplished baker that my mother was.

This cookbook explains the chemistry behind the recipe and the ingredients, and the reasoning for all the little seemingly-fussy “rules” that must be followed to bring the loaf to fruition. There are both recipes for the novice baker as well as some for the more adventurous. I would definitely go so far as to say that one would not need to look any further to learn to bake bread.

Chattman clearly knows of what she writes. She has an easy, friendly way of explaining the baking process, from ingredient purchase to removing the bread from the oven. She succeeds in giving the reader the inspiration to bake without fear or reservation!

— Peggy Douglas, Davenport, Iowa



Submitted

Vegetarian cookbook for not-so-busy moms

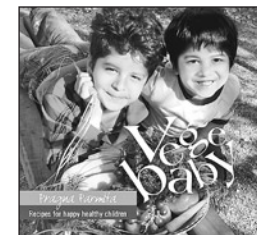
Mini-review: “Vegebaby” by Pragna Parmita (Self-published, 2011, 380 pages, \$19.99 hardback)



“Vegebaby” by Pragna Parmita is a cookbook and a nutrition book rolled into one. The first sections are on foods and the nutrients found in each of them, including a section on food allergies (which I had to deal with as a mom). The following sections are baby foods for infants and then children 1 to 2 years of age. This is helpful when transitioning young children to the next stage of eating. The last and largest section of the book contains recipes. Most of the dishes would best be eaten at home as they may not be easy to send to child care or school.

As a new, first-time grandma, I was interested in seeing how babies these days were being fed with home-cooking. I tried a yummy-sounding recipe for Beet, Carrot and Apple Soup. Other dishes, though, like Gherkins, Carrot and Potato Paratha, seemed to require too many ingredients to attempt this dish for a busy mom (or grandmother!). All in all, it was an interesting book for a vegetarian way of life and one that will challenge moms to keep their children healthy!

— Pat Stoltz, Andalusia, Ill.



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food for thought

My one resolution

Learning to love — and laugh at — life's little imperfections

By Julie Barton

I've never been a big fan of New Year's resolutions. While there is something to the feeling of a "fresh start" in the passing of one year into another, I'm usually busy giving myself a big pat on the back for surviving yet another holiday rush. Then I start operating under the misconception that I now have all kinds of free time — free time I can fill with more exercise targeted to specific muscle groups, or alphabetizing my spices for the amazing meals I'm going to cook, or creating a spreadsheet that outlines every family member's activities for the next 18 months. Ultimately, these activities end in disappointment — and occasionally cake.

Domestic doyennes on TV and in magazines constantly barrage me with how to achieve household perfection, or the illusion of it, but even something as benign as Pinterest can send me into spasms. I regularly bemoan my state as an adult. "How do other people keep their houses clean?" I gape. "How does one 'organize?' Our meals are not healthy enough! I need to do better!"

Every so often I try to reckon with my tendency to put undue pressure on myself to "get it right," as on a recent weekend when my family grappled with our holiday decorating. I ran out to get the tree with our daughters, while my husband put up the lights outside with our son. Upon my arrival at home, my husband was standing outside, glaring at the roof, clearly perplexed.

"You're going to hate these lights," he mumbled. "I need to run back to the store and get a different light strand."

"Why? They're up! Lights along the edge of the roof! I mean, they all work, right? Right?" I needed to sound positive and supportive, but hello, I also needed my lights up.

"No, it's not going to work," he fretted. "Some of the lights were burned out, so I had to buy new strands. I got 'cool' ones, and it turns out the old ones were 'warm.' They aren't going to match. I might as well just go back and get the other sets."

"Oh, I can't imagine they're that different," I nervously chirped. "Let's get the tree inside and we'll look at the outside lights when it's dark. I bet you can't even tell the difference."

At dusk, we all went outside and stood while our son plugged them in, and then everyone looked at me, waiting expectantly. It turns out there is as much difference between 'cool' and 'warm' lights on light strands as there is between a cold icicle and a hot flame. LOTS of difference!

For a few moments I thought, "We've once again embarrassed the neighborhood. They must be changed."

Then, I had what some would call an "aha moment." I said, "Who cares? They're not perfect, but they're fine." And just like that, it was really OK.

My family looked at me, mouths agape. Who WAS this accommodating person? These are not inside lights that only close friends and family will see. These are lights that our entire neighborhood, local drivers, and Pinterest users can see! We might as well hang our undies out to dry in the front yard!

Those mismatched lights became something we gazed upon fondly throughout December. We pulled up to the house and laughed about them, and invented drive-by dialogue, as in, "Looks like someone lost a bet there!" It was an imperfection that said, "This house is full of imperfections!" In many ways, it was freeing.

This year, instead of making New Year's resolutions about setting goals for myself that I may or may not reach, I'm making one resolution: To try to relax a bit and appreciate things the way they are. To embrace the imperfections.

Recently, I drove to Eldon, Iowa, to take a pie-baking lesson at the Grant Wood House from Beth Howard, author of "Making Piece," and one of her mantras is that homemade pie is supposed to have an imperfection; that's how you know it's made with love from someone's very own hands. Perhaps in 2013 my life can be lived with joy, imperfections and all. It'll still be delicious.

Julie is a regular contributor to Radish. She blogs at ADayInTheWife.com.



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