1st Annual Cartoon Issue! pg.24

A TIMES UNION PUBLICATION

518 Life

NOVEMBER 2014

special sections

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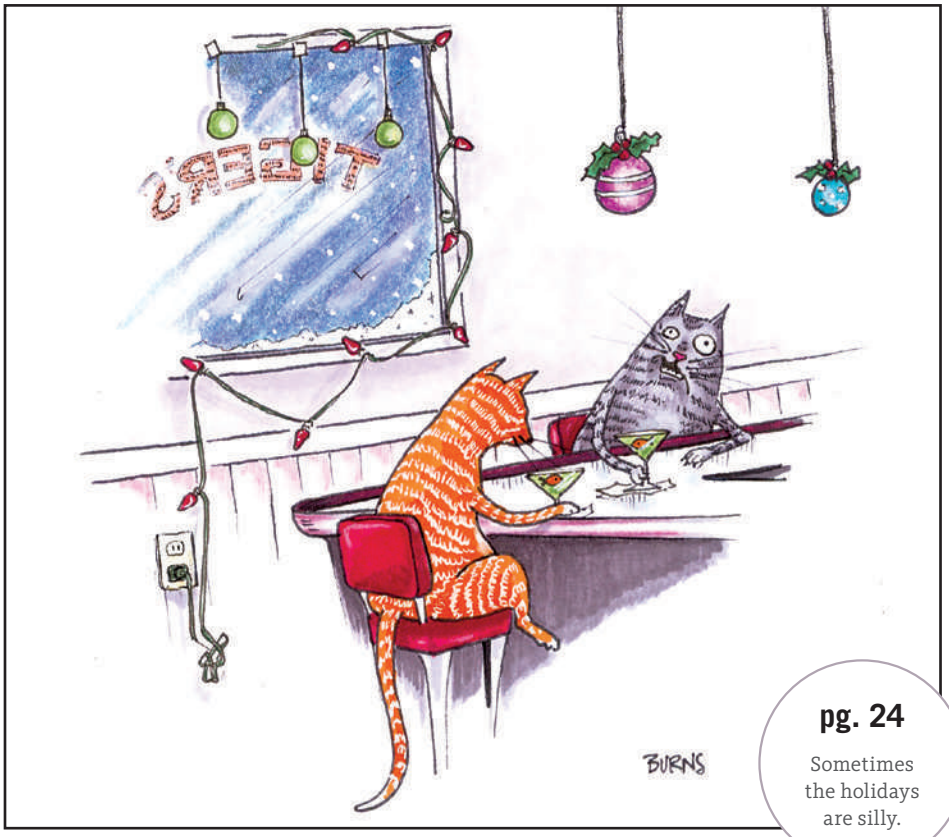
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Photo by Peter Bowden

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Illustration by Bill Abbott
Cover design by Emily Jahn

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GALLERIES



Home in Halfmoon (pg. 46)
See more photos from this DIY house.









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Cartoon Lives

I began my relationship with newspapers with the comic section. Every Sunday, I eagerly grabbed that section and read through just about every comic strip.

Charles Schultz's "Peanuts" led the pack above the fold, followed by "Family Circus" and "Blondie," among others. "Brenda Starr," a cartoon featuring a red-headed reporter, was my first glimpse — besides Lois Lane — at the journalism world. Clearly it made an impact. I even glanced enough at "Prince Arthur" to know the basic plot line.

My love of cartoons continued into full-blown comic books, which my uncle periodically provided for the whole neighborhood. It was never entirely clear to me how he got them at his job, but who cared when he was handing us "Casper the Ghost," "Wendy the Good Little Witch," and "Richie Rich"?

While some pooh-pooh cartoons and comics, I remain a fan. The best of them are snapshots into our lives, told one frame at a time.

We're so excited to highlight just a few of the many local cartoon artists toiling in the Capital Region in our first (hopefully annual) cartoon issue. We hope you like it as much as we enjoyed putting it together. ■



Illustration by Jeffrey Scherer.

JANET REYNOLDS
jreynolds@timesunion.com

Three things you'll learn in this issue:

1. What your teen is really saying when she calls something "janky." **pg. 86** **2.** A 3-minute breathing exercise you can do anywhere to help you instantly de-stress. **pg. 98** **3.** 10 tips to help you stick to your exercise routine in the holiday rush. **pg. 92**



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TRENDING #518

COMPILED BY BRIANNA SNYDER

Get Your Shots, People!

Yes, we're all plenty freaked out about Ebola. But it turns out there's something that's scarier than Ebola, and that's the plain old flu.

The flu is both deadly and an actual threat, while Ebola remains an obscure disease you're not likely to in contact with. Check out these stats, as reported by the *Times Union*, then go get a flu shot, pronto.



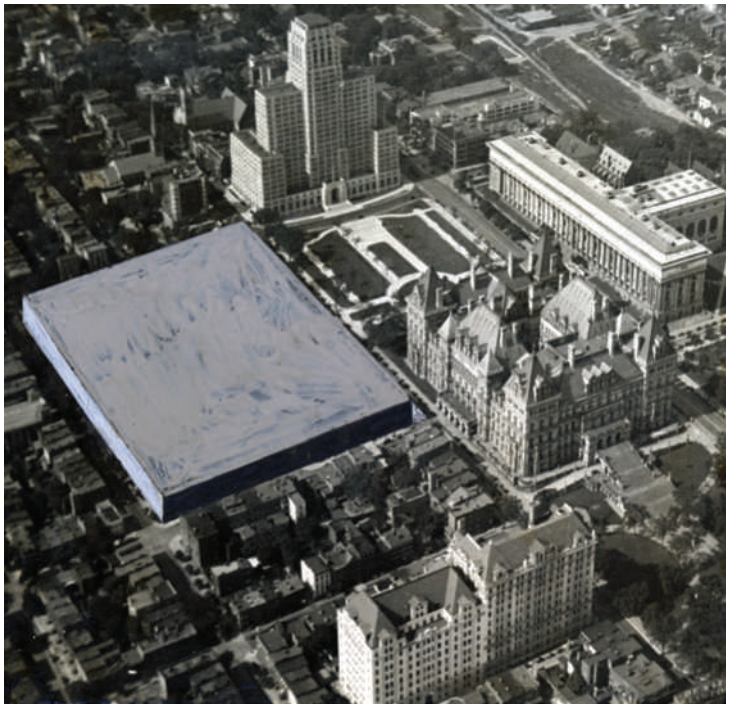
- A total of 108 children in the U.S. died due to flu-related complications in the 2013-14 season; 6 of the reported deaths were from New York.
- In the last five years, the Capital Region has had immunization rates higher than all of New York state, excluding New York City.

NUMBER OF PEDIATRIC DEATHS IN NEW YORK STATE RELATED TO THE FLU IN THE PAST FOUR FLU SEASONS:

- 2010-11: 7 deaths
- 2011-12: 1 death
- 2012-13: 14 deaths
- 2013-14: 6 deaths

(According to the state Department of Health prevention guidelines, the *TU* reports, the best way to protect a child less than 6 months of age is to make sure all members of a household and caretakers are vaccinated.)

It's holiday season, everyone! Yay, but also: stress. We made this perfectly tempered, rad, a-little-bit-indie, a-little-bit-new-wave, a-little-bit-rock-n-roll Spotify playlist for you. Check it out here: tinyurl.com/radthanksgiving



Empire State of How

Ever wondered how the Empire State Plaza came to be? Don't even bother with that paltry Wiki entry on it. Capital Lives Productions made a mini-documentary — viewable on YouTube — called *The Making of the Empire State Plaza*. It's got everything you need: Rockefellers, Mayor Erastus-Corning, Albany engineering drama. Really good stuff.

youtu.be/3rFDWFMGtZ4

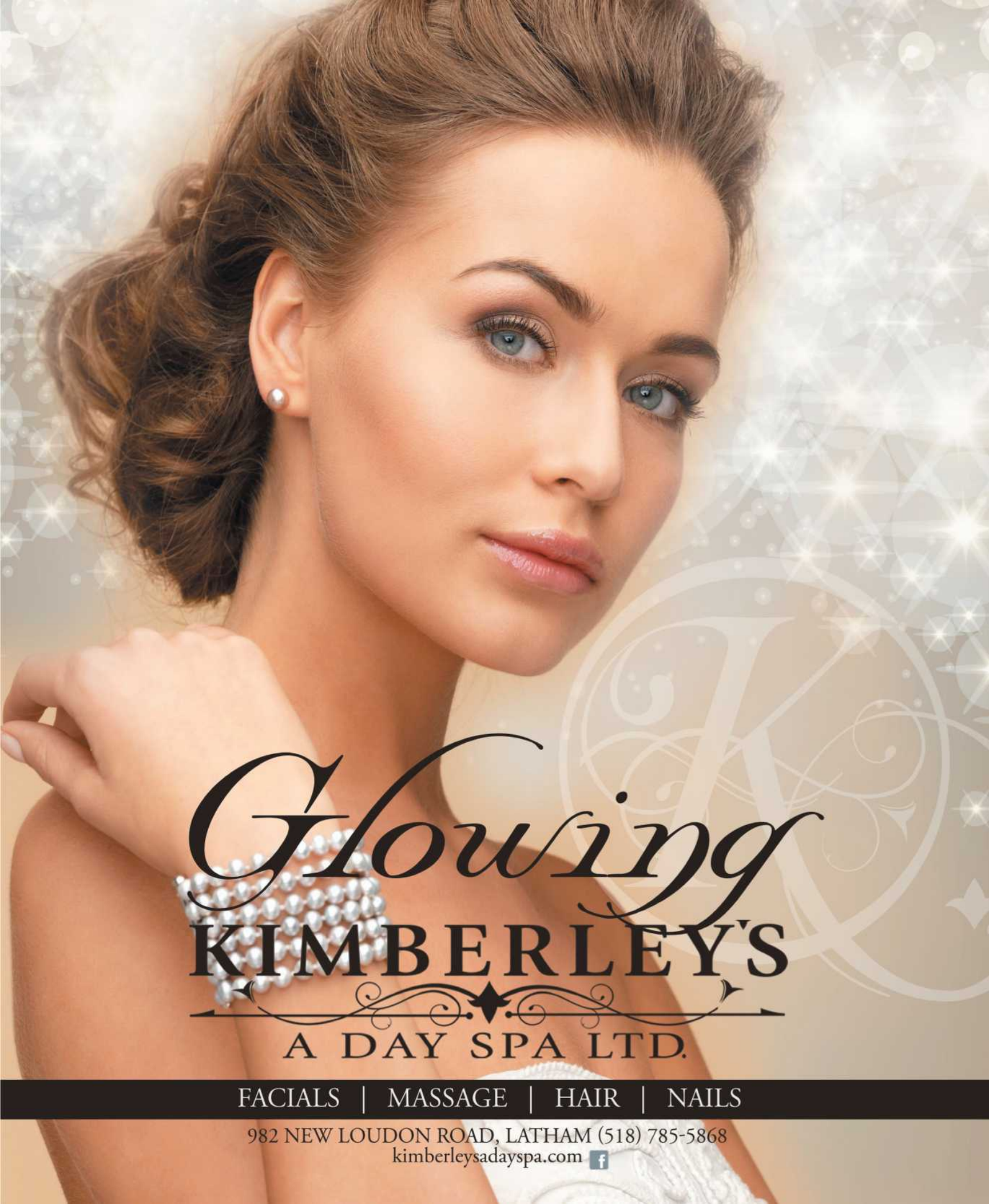
▲ Photo and graphic shows where a proposed World War Memorial building was to be built at the present site of the Empire State Plaza, April 23, 1934, in Albany, N.Y. Apparently the design was made to complement the classic lines of the education building. (*Times Union* Archives)

It's the Layers

Twitter user @mdamore4 tipped us off to this kind-of-ridiculous-but-also-kind-of-awesome Thanksgiving in a Bucket stunt-recipe. All the Thanksgiving dishes you love — sweet potatoes, Brussels sprouts, turkey, cranberry, mashed potatoes, all of it — layered in a bucket. Hey, anything that minimizes the dish-doing, we're for. Find the recipe here: tinyurl.com/TGbucket. And if you see something weird and cool, tweet it to us @518LifeMag. We love that stuff.



Photos: Syringe, TS Photography/gettyimages; Spotify Logo, courtesy Spotify, Thanksgiving in a bucket, Lauren Zaser for BuzzFeed.


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Feelin' All Right

The Organization for Economic Cooperation and Development has an easy-to-navigate website compilation of regional data. Look up New York (state), and you'll see based on various statistics that, hey, we're doing OK!

THE DATA SHOWS:

In **HEALTH, HOUSING and ACCESS TO SERVICES** New York ranks a little over 7 (out of 10), compared with the rest of the world.

1 2 3 4 5 6 7

And we got a whopping 8.7 out of 10 for **EDUCATION** ...

1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8

... and a full-on 10 for **INCOME**. (We're rich, yo.)

1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10

Where we did less great is in: **SAFETY** (4.3)

1 2 3 4

JOBS (6.3 — which is weird because aren't we rich?)

1 2 3 4 5 6

ENVIRONMENT (5.7)

1 2 3 4 5

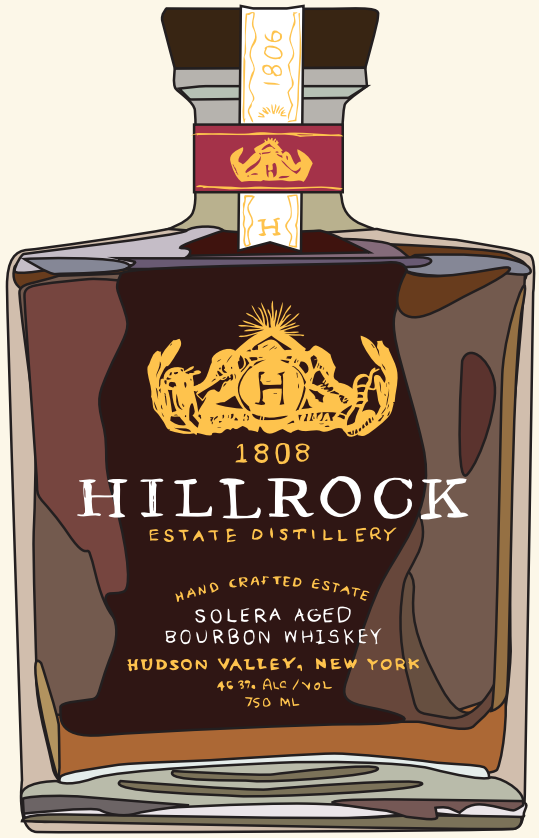
CIVIC ENGAGEMENT (3.6)

1 2 3

Still, though, not too shabby. We can work on these things!

source: oecdregionalwellbeing.org

Local Spirit



Hillrock Bourbon

MADE BY: Hillrock Estate Distillery, Ancram, Columbia County

WHAT IS IT: Founded in 2012, Hillrock makes what it says is the world's first solera-aged bourbon. The solera process, used by producers of some sherry, Madeira, port, rum, brandy and vinegar, uses barrels of different vintages that are progressively mixed over the years. Hillrock grows organic rye and barley on the surrounding estate (the corn is from local farmers), and it uses traditional floor-malting and smoking techniques. The whiskey itself is an exquisite sip, finishing with cinnamon and spicy fruit.

HOW TO USE IT: Given the price and the craft that goes into it, this is a sipping bourbon. Drink it neat or, better yet, with a little springwater to open up the vanilla and floral notes.

HOW MUCH: $75 to $80 for a 750ml bottle.

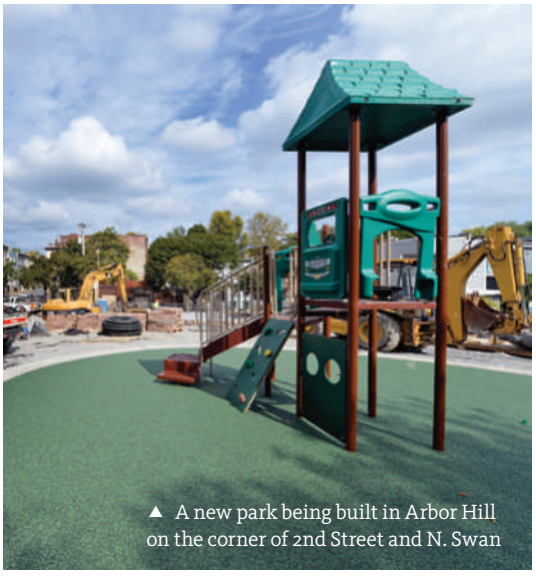
WHERE TO BUY: For a list of stores and online retailers, visit hillrockdistillery.com

We Did It!

In case you missed it, we thought we'd point it out or just remind you: Arbor Hill was named one of the top 10 greatest neighborhoods to live in by the American Planning Association.

"We're taking this neighborhood back one block at a time and there's a good spirit in the air here," Common Councilmember Mark Robinson told the *Times Union*. "There was nothing but blight, crime, shootings and murder along the Lexington Avenue corridor a few years ago and we've turned it around."

And you thought *Troy* was the new Brooklyn.



▲ A new park being built in Arbor Hill on the corner of 2nd Street and N. Swan

Illustrations: Emily Jahn: OECD chart, Local Spirit. Photo: Skip Dickstein/Times Union Archive.



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WHERE & WHEN #518

COMPILED BY JANET REYNOLDS



Plunge In Here ▲

Consider this a larger version of the ice bucket challenge. Instead of pouring a bucket over your head to raise awareness and donations for ALS, you can plunge your whole body in icy, freezing water to raise money for the Special Olympics. Last year, 600 hardy souls took the plunge. If you're wondering what to pack for an event like this, the organizers offer a few helpful tips:

- Pack a towel and water shoes
- Wear your swimsuit under your clothes
- Bring easy-to-get-into warm clothes (and shoes!) for after the plunge
- For your own safety, never dive into the water
- Bring a plastic bag for wet clothes, and somewhere to store your dry clothes
- Bring along a disposable, waterproof camera

SPECIAL OLYMPICS LAKE GEORGE POLAR PLUNGE, Saturday, Nov. 15, 9 a.m., Shepard Park Beach, Lake George, polarplungeny.org

Hear This ▼

If you're a fan of a cappella music, you won't want to miss the visit of Straight No Chaser, an all-men's group that began at Indiana University and now has a fanbase way past Bloomington, as well as numerous successful CDs and national TV appearances. The aptly named Happy Hour Tour comes on the heels of the release of *Under the Influence*, a CD that includes contributions from the likes of Jason Mraz, Phil Collins and Dolly Parton.

STRAIGHT NO CHASER, Sunday, Nov. 30, 7:30 p.m., Palace Theatre, Albany, palacealbany.com



Photos: Polar Plunge, Lori Van Buren/Times Union Archives; Straight No Chaser, Andrew Zaeh.

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WHERE & WHEN #518



Hear This ▸

Chris McKhool (violin) and Kevin Laliberté (guitar) are a duo but in actuality the sound they make is a much larger sum of those two actual parts. Although they hail from Canada, their music is a trip around the world, influenced by everything from whale calls to the gypsy jazz cafes found in Eastern Europe. If you want to expand your musical horizons, this is the concert to check out this month.

SULTANS OF STRING, Sunday, Nov. 23, 7:00 p.m., Caffe Lena Saratoga Springs, caffelena.org



Save This ▲

You may think you're good at couponing. But if you want to find out how the real pros do it, you'll want to come to the free — obviously — couponing workshop by Tiffany Ivanovsky, the woman who starred in the first episode of TLC's "Extreme Couponing." The couponing guru will share her tips and secrets. Also at the workshop will be master couponer Veronica Hall, who will show how she spends less than $250 a month to feed and purchase personal and household items for her family of four.

FREE EXTREME COUPONING WORKSHOP, Tuesday, Nov. 11, 4 p.m. & 7 p.m., Best Western Hotel, Albany, tinyurl.com/couponwkshop

Read This ▸

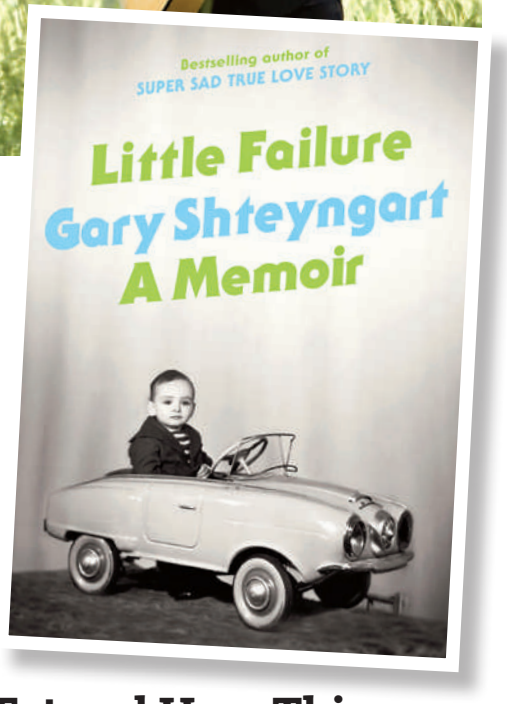
We loved Gary Shteyngart's *Super Sad True Love Story* as well as his newer book, *Little Failure: A Memoir*. We're also fans of Shteyngart's notorious blurbing, chronicled on Tumblr at shteyngartblurbs.tumblr.com. Some samples: On Walter Kirn, Shteyngart wrote, "There is no finer guide to the American berserk than Walter Kirn." On Patrick Wensink: "I like Patrick Wensink's work so much my heart had to issue its own cease-and-desist order." On Rachel Shukert: "If you read only one memoir by a disaffected, urban, 20-something Jewish girl this year, make it this one. Shukert rocks the lulav." So beloved are Shteyngart's concise praises that a 15-minute documentary about them was made last year, viewable on YouTube, and narrated by the hilarious/awesome Jonathan Ames (look for "Shteyngart Blurbs"). Shteyngart is reading from *Little Failure* and signing at the Northshire Bookstore in Saratoga. Don't miss it.

GARY SHTEYNGART, Nov. 6, 5:30 p.m., Northshire Bookstore, Saratoga Springs, northshire.com.

Laugh at This

Hey, if Lewis Black thinks she's funny, that's good enough for us. Black calls Kathleen Madigan, who comes to Troy Nov. 8, "the funniest comic in America, bar none." Winner of the American Comedy Award for Best Female Comedian, Madigan is the only comedian in the history of NBC's "Last Comic Standing" to go unchallenged.

KATHLEEN MADIGAN, Saturday, Nov. 8, 8 p.m., Troy Savings Bank Music Hall, troymusichall.org



Eat and Hear This

People have been sharing stories around the dinner table probably since the first cave man recounted — around the fire obviously rather than a table — his killing earlier that day of a sabertooth tiger. For the past 16 years Glen Sanders Mansion has been home to this storytelling tradition as the host site of Story Sunday, Stories to Nourish Your Soul. Since its inception, over 7,300 people have sat around the tables to eat and listen. On Nov. 2, adults — this is not a family event — can enjoy the storytelling of Eshu Bumpus and Motoko. Featured food will include Mediterranean Chicken; Garlic and Hot Pepper Steak; or Rigatoni, Butternut Squash, Soft Cinnamon Mascarpone, Sage-Butter Broth, Shaved Manchego.

STORY SUNDAY - STORIES TO NOURISH YOUR SOUL, Sunday, Nov. 2, 2:00 p.m., Glen Sanders Mansion Schenectady, storycircleatproctors.org

Photos: Coupon Illustration, GettyImages/Ivary; Sultans of String, courtesy of the artist; Gary Shteyngart, courtesy Amazon.com.



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AKUM NORDER
Akum Norder is an Albany writer.

I'm knitting a fence. Well, kind of.

There's a chain-link fence along one side of our back yard. On the other side of the fence is the unmowed back yard of a rental house. A pile of brush. An old rug mildewing in the rain. Every time I look that way I grind my teeth a little. Replace the fence, you say? Sure thing — as soon as we have a year without some other, more important, house expense.

I wanted something else to think about when I looked to that side of the yard. So lacking any skill with power tools, I'm knitting. And I'm weaving my knitting in spiral and zig-zag patterns through the links of the fence. Yarn-bombing, some people call it. Kind of like graffiti, but subversive in a cheeky, feminist way. Now when I look at that fence, I smile. Even though it probably looks ridiculous.

That's what my great-grandmother would say.

If Grandma were here, she'd plant herself in front of me, broad-hipped and formidable, and wag her finger in my face. Waste of yarn, she'd say. Make something useful out of that. And of course she's not wrong — but she's not completely right, either.

Grandma's the one who taught me to knit. I was five, I think. I don't remember asking her to teach me; she just thought it was a skill children should have. We butted heads more than once, over knitting and other things. She wasn't a patient teacher, and I wasn't a pliant pupil: "Keep your needles in your lap!" she scolded, slapping my hands down when I held my knitting too high. She was not tender or whimsical. She was strong and practical, because she had to be.

Grandma got married on the eve of the Depression, and it shaped her life: If she and my great-grandpa couldn't grow it or make it, they could live without it. Color didn't matter; style didn't matter. Having something when you needed it — that mattered. She never wasted anything. Everyone in the family had quilts made from bits of Great-grandpa's work shirts and old dish towels. Leftover half-skeins were knitted into squares; when she had enough squares she made an afghan. Little end-pieces were saved up, knotted together, and made into kerchiefs that tied under the chin. They looked like rag rugs for your head. Grandma didn't care.

> "I have Great-grandmother's genes to thank for the fact that I'm a maker."

I have Great-grandma's genes to thank for the fact that I'm a maker. I sew a little, I knit a little, I try my hand at canning every few years when the burns heal. If we need something, my first impulse is to see if I can make it myself. I sewed our curtains and knitted our Christmas stockings. When I needed art for the walls, I made some. I'm not very good at any of it, but it's not optional: If I go too long without creating something, I get twitchy.

Channeling Grandma, I try to be practical. I save my yarn end pieces, too, but I group them by color and when a ball is big enough I knit it into what I think is a really stylish bohemian scrap hat. But once everyone in your household has three knit hats, then what do you do? You give them to family and friends as gifts. You donate them to shelters. I've given away dozens — but the fact is, I've never seen anyone who doesn't live with me wear one, ever, even once. I don't think the world really *needs* my hats.

Unlike Grandma, I've never had to live on my skills. I'd like to think I could if I had to. Or at least I could barter with better-skilled neighbors. If nothing else, we'd be the best-hatted group of post-apocalyptic scavengers in the wasteland.

But being a maker gives me options. The old kitchen chairs I'm stuck with — I can't replace them just yet, but I can recover them and learn to love them again. My daughter who hates anything cute and flouncy but also doesn't want to dress like a boy — I can sew her a skirt out of superhero fabric. And make a cape and mask for when she really needs to fly.

The thing is, Grandma, I am doing just what you taught me. I am solving problems with my own hands. They're just not the problems you imagined, and I'm not solving them in the way you'd solve them. But thank you all the same, from the bottom of my heart. ■



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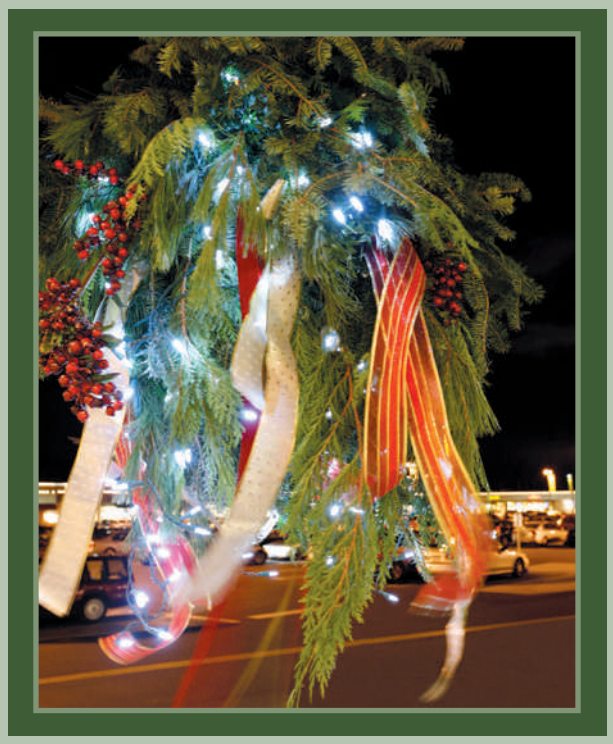
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Home for the Holidays

1st Annual Cartoon Issue

When I get my *New Yorker* each week, I do three things: I look at the table of contents to see what stories I'm going to make time to read; I flip to the back to look at the cartoon contest — readers submit caption suggestions each week for a particular cartoon and the winning caption is announced in the following weeks — and I then flip through the magazine and read all the cartoons.

I know I'm not alone in my love of *New Yorker* cartoons, nor in my quirky way of reading the magazine. Indeed, it's something the bean counters at the venerable magazine undoubtedly bank on, as they spin off merchandise from calendars to T-shirts and mugs, all covered with cartoons. I might even own a few.

It was while thumbing through the *New Yorker* that I had an editorial epiphany: If the *New Yorker* can do it, why can't we? How about doing a cartoon issue in *518Life*?

And so here we are. In August — yes, August — we put out the call for holiday-themed cartoons from local cartoon artists. About 30 people sent us rough sketches and we chose nine finalists. (As a comparison, *New Yorker* Cartoon Editor Bob Mankoff looks over about 1,000 cartoons a week before choosing the 16 or 17 that will be featured in a particular issue. He submitted 2,000 cartoons over three years himself before getting one published in the magazine. Things obviously worked out eventually.)

We each have our favorite. We hope you will as well. Next year, we'll hope for even more cartoonists to join the fold. Stay tuned.

— Janet Reynolds



"Great. This'll go straight to my hips."



BILL ABBOTT was born and raised in Wynantskill. After a brief career as a stockbroker, Bill served in a special forces unit in the military, putting in over 21 years in places like Iraq. Now, he has the good fortune to follow his passion – cartooning. His work has appeared in the *Wall Street Journal*, *Reader's Digest* and *Harvard Business Review,* as well as having been licensed with Hallmark UK and for calendars with Mead and American Greetings. His characters have even appeared as figurines with Westland Giftware. See more of Bill's work at billabbott.weebly.com.

CONTACT INFO

WEBSITE: billabbott.weebly.com

EMAIL: Bill@billtoonshere.com

FACEBOOK: facebook.com/billabbottcartoons





JEFF BOYER has been creating illustrations and cartoons for numerous publications and corporations for 34 years.

He has participated in many gallery showings, and has had his sports-theme illustrations shown in a solo exhibition.

He has also received awards for his work from various magazines and publications, including the Associated Press, Gannett News Service and Hearst publications.

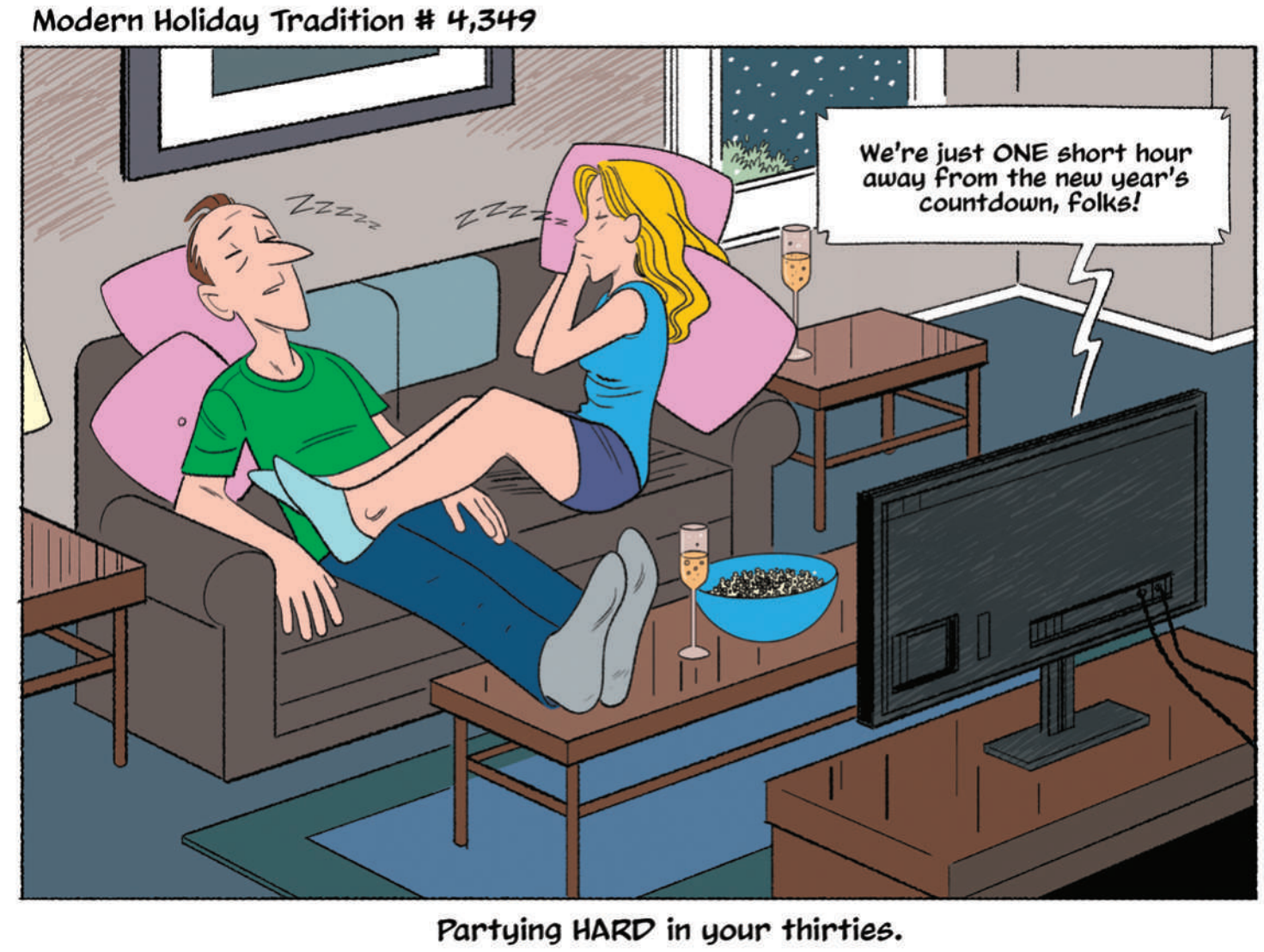
Working at the *Times Union* in Albany, he continues to design and illustrate for various sections of the paper, most notably the paper's daily opinion section where his cartoons appear on a regular basis.

He is a member of the American Association of Editorial Cartoonists.

CONTACT INFO

WEBSITE: editorialcartoonists.com/cartoonist/profile.cfm/BoyerJ

EMAIL: jboyerart@aol.com





T.J. KIRSCH is a cartoonist and illustrator living in East Greenbush. Since graduating from the Kubert School in 2005, he has had work published by Archie Comics, Oni Press, Image Comics and more. He is also co-creator of the critically acclaimed "She Died In Terrebonne" with writer Kevin Church. His most recent graphic novel, with writers Christina Weir and Nunzio Defilippis, was titled *Lost And Found: An Amy Devlin Mystery*, and was released in May 2014 from Oni Press. To see more of his work, visit tjkirsch.com.

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EMAIL: kirsch.comx@gmail.com



"You're right. At least this year, no dropped needles!"



JEANNE A. BENAS

Jeanne's professional art career began at age 3, when her mother Kay Kato, a well-known cartoonist for the *Saturday Evening Post*, *Herald Tribune* and *New York Times* magazine, among others, dragged her with her to draw on live TV in Boston in matching outfits. This continued for years.

After graduating from Syracuse University with an advertising degree and illustration minor, she worked as fashion illustrator, ad agency artist, art director and editorial and political cartoonist. Now, as head of Benas Art Studio, she does it all. Cartoons and illustrations for books, magazines, newspapers, advertising, courtroom art, greeting cards are some of her specialties, as well as caricatures from life and from photos.

Her motto? A picture is worth a thousand words, but a cartoon is worth a million laughs.

CONTACT INFO

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EMAIL: Jeanne@BenasArt.com



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RICH CONLEY

I've been drawing since I was 4. My tools have changed over the years, but not my desire to create. Since 1988 I've worked as a freelance illustrator and caricature artist. I have the great privilege of working with the Ronald McDonald House, the Starlight Foundation, and the Malaria No More project. My work has been used by numerous local and national companies. I've drawn caricatures at thousands of events, from the Times Union Center to the Saratoga Racetrack, area schools and colleges, and private and corporate events. I've drawn Oscar and Emmy winners, members of various halls of fame and various local celebrities including, most recently, Tom Durkin for the cover of the racing program for the final weekend at the Saratoga racetrack.

I've illustrated a children's cookbook, *Thumbs Up to Kids Cooking* and I've had my artwork featured in tribute books to James Bond and Robin Williams.

You can see examples of my work on my website, richconleyart.com.

CONTACT INFO

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EMAIL: richconleyart@yahoo.com

FACEBOOK: facebook.com/richconleyart



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"So, they bring a tree IN the house and put ALL these shiny, dangling things on it, then they freak out if I go near it... this is why I drink."



TERESA BURNS PARKHURST was raised in North Albany, where her very funny father taught her how to draw. Never having left the area, or actually grown up, she now gratefully designs for several major greeting card companies, regularly appears in *The Wall Street Journal*, *Barron's*, *The Harvard Business Review* and several other national publications, and is happy to be counted upon as one of The Usual Gang of Idiots for *Mad Magazine*. She lives with her husband, Ace, their canine son, Frankie and their pet pinworm, Munch.

CONTACT INFO

WEBSITE:
teresaburnsparkhurst.com



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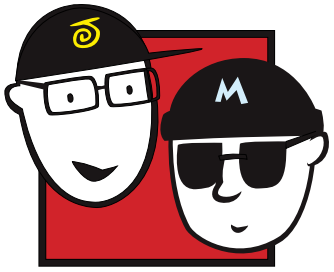
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JEFFREY SCHERER & MICHAEL VIRTANEN

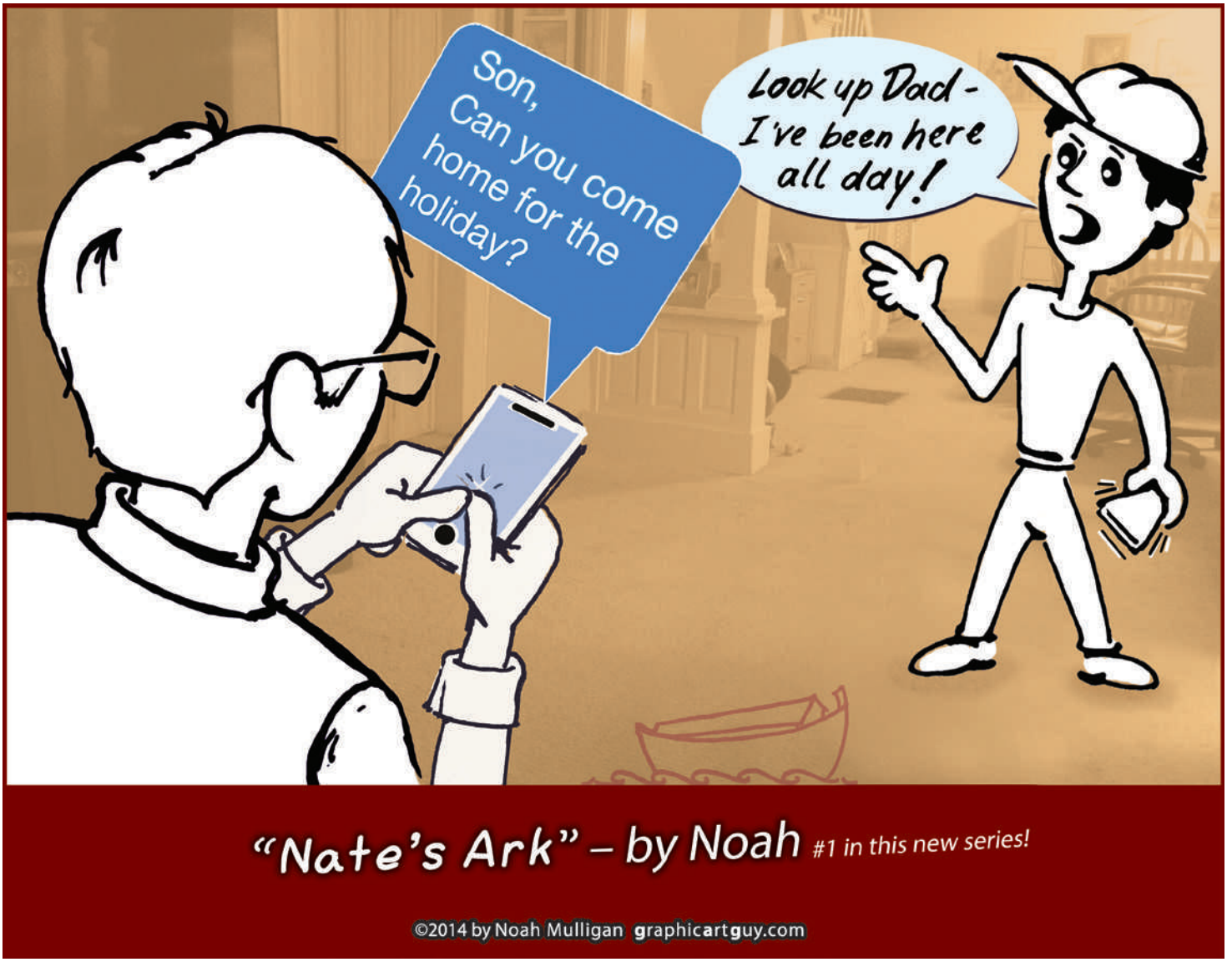
Jeffrey Scherer is an award-winning illustrator who has also drawn the million-selling *Wake Me in Spring*, published by Scholastic. Inc., and the wildly popular French children's book *Le Bonhomme de Neige* about a snowman.

He began collaborating in 1999 on what would become the comic "Finest Amphibians", with Michael Virtanen, a wire service reporter and writer of two thin Adirondack novels, *Within a Forest Dark* and *The River's Tale*, published by Lost Pond Press. His favorite movies are *300* and *Pulp Fiction*.

CONTACT INFO

WEBSITE: finestamphibians.com

FACEBOOK: facebook.com/finestamphibians







NOAH & NATE MULLIGAN

"Nate's Ark" is a new and original creation by Noah and Nate Mulligan, in collaboration with their grandpa, "Pa," **Bill Blais** (advertising graphic artist at the Albany *Times Union*).

Look for more — starting in 2015, published on GraphicArtGuy.com.

CONTACT INFO

WEBSITE: GraphicArtGuy.com

EMAIL: graphics@nycap.rr.com

FACEBOOK: facebook.com/GraphicArtGuy





DANA S. OWENS

My name is Dana S. Owens and I am a cartoonist/artist. I emphasize it in that order because everything I produce has a humorous undertone. I feel that laughter is the best medicine and also the best way to captivate an audience. I use humor in everything that I do because it allows the viewer to gain a sense of happiness, if anything, for that brief moment that they are viewing my work. I also like to have bold, "cartoonish" lines and whimsical characters scattered throughout the work. The end result is usually a colorful mix of graffiti-esque lines and, because of the glass, depth.

The cartoonist side of things is a bit more interesting. It allows me to really dive into my mind and reiterate life from my perspective. No matter how hard I try I cannot escape the fact that I love observing life and people and taking what they do and recreating it with my own twist. It's what I've always done. With that, fortunately, I've been able to really home in on the skill level and can produce work on demand.

CONTACT INFO

WEBSITE: DanaToonStudios.com

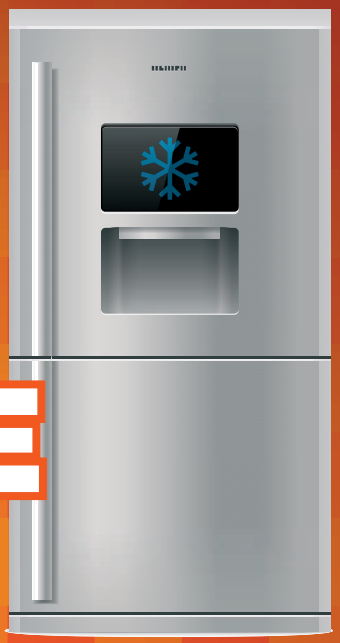
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I've studied this class of conditions, collectively known as neuropathy, for many years. In fact, helping people with these problems has become a primary focus of mine.

It's not unusual for me to hear stories from patients who've suffered for years with terrible symptoms. For many, they are missing out on the things they love to do. They aren't enjoying life as they once did.

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Shop Local — Etsy Edition

Local artisans get their wares seen worldwide

Photo: Sol de Zuasnabar Brebbia/GettyImages

BY KRISTI BARLETTE

Etsy. You've likely heard of the site that is, essentially, a worldwide craft fair. At etsy.com, you can purchase everything from a $3 hair bow to art that costs nearly $300,000. You can also purchase items from vendors who live in Taiwan — or maybe just a few towns away from you.

The site is a big deal. Sellers — and shoppers — have been flocking to the e-commerce hub that specializes in crafts and vintage items since 2005. Currently, more than 1 million shops are active on Etsy. The company doesn't release regional data, but customers can narrow their searches by city, town or state. Searching "Albany" on Etsy, for instance, yields more than 10,000 items for sale.

As with any store, you'll find goods and wares that make you say "what the …" (miniature pottery houses that look like poop huts are a good example), but there is an abundance of fantastic, desirable goods on the site. And plenty of those oh-so-talented crafters live right here in the Capital Region.

We take a look at a few of our favorites just in time for holiday shopping. ▶

Setting Up Shop

Are you crafty and looking for an additional place to sell your goodies? Opening an Etsy account costs nothing; nor is an application process required to start a shop on the site. As long as you're selling something Etsy accepts, you're welcome to set up shop.

It costs 20 cents to list an item for four months (or until it sells), and Etsy collects a 3.5 percent transaction fee after each sale.

If you aren't terribly tech-savvy, an Etsy support team will assist — online or over the phone.

For more information on getting started, or to see the company's selling guidelines, log on to etsy.com/sell.

Check out a few of our local favorites here

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Hunky Dori Boutique

Name: Dori Fitzpatrick
Shop name: Hunky Dori Boutique
Shop URL: etsy.com/shop/hunkydoriboutique
Selling since: July 2011

What she sells: Hand-crocheted hats and accessories with natural and synthetic fibers. Many pieces are adorned with a handmade felt appliqué.

When you can't find what you want, make it yourself. That was Fitzpatrick's motto after her second daughter was born.

She was having a hard time finding cool and hip hats for her little girl, so she started making them. "I received so many compliments and people kept saying I should sell them," Fitzpatrick says. "I was attracted to Etsy because it was all handmade or vintage items. No mass production."

Her friends who were dishing those compliments knew what they were talking about. Fitzpatrick's caps have caught the attention of Hollywood, with her hats appear on The Vampire Diaries and Parenthood.

She loves how her items — and the things she buys from other sellers — are "boutique-y," AKA things you don't typically find in stores.

"It's a great place to buy locally made items always knowing you are feeding our U.S.A. economy," Fitzpatrick says.



Custom Monogrammed Crocheted Twin Hat Set
$54





Literate Cat

Name: Kelly O'Connor-Salomon from Troy
Shop name: Literate Cat
Shop URL: etsy.com/shop/LiterateCat
Selling since: December 2012

What she sells: Mostly jewelry and hand-knit items like cup cozies.

Salomon had shopped on Etsy for years but didn't think about selling until she lost her fulltime job as the director of the writing studio at an area college and was looking for new income sources. She's crafted since she was a kid, making projects out of counted cross-stitch, latch hook and embroidery.

Selling is a family affair for Salomon whose store also features jewelry made by her mom and vinyl record bowls (and soon record clocks) made by her husband.

"My daughter is also hoping to join in, and I have been thinking of making her her own section of the store, called Literate Kitten," Salomon says.

Like other sellers, Salomon likes being able to reach customers here in her hometown, as well as across the world. The low cost to list items (20 cents) is also a draw.

"The main negative is getting your items to stand out from the thousands of other listings," she says. "For example, a search for 'knit hat' results in over 100,000 hits. You can buy better placement, but that is, of course, an added expense."



Glass Teardrop Earrings
$13





Li-La-Dots

Name: Jen Marshall from Clifton Park
Shop name: Li-La-Dots
Shop URL: etsy.com/shop/LiLaDotsAccessories
Selling since: March 2012

What she sells: Hair ties, headbands and other accessories.

Marshall started making hair ties and headbands for her 4-year-old daughter who loves accessories. She'd browsed Etsy for years and bought a few things here and there. When she started making things people seemed to like, she decided to set up her own shop.

These days, she mostly works with felt, fabric, rick rack and fold-over elastic with button, pearl and hand-painted wooden bead accents.

To her, Etsy has a bit of a Pinterest-esque appeal. Marshall will browse other stores for products to use in her crafting or for inspiration.

While some of her items can be found in consignment shops around the region, Etsy works well for her.

"Etsy makes the whole process quite easy for the buyers and the sellers and takes a very small percentage of the sale as compared the 40 percent that most consignment shops take," she says. "Which allows me to keep my prices affordable."



◀ **Fold over elastic hair ties**
$10





Marion's Mittens

Name: Laura MacGregor from Albany
Shop name: Marion's Mittens
Shop URL: etsy.com/shop/marionsmittens
Selling since: October 2012

What she sells: Mittens knitted from her grandmother's patterns, and a few socks, sweaters and scarves too. The mittens come in all sizes (even for babies) and colors. All the yarn is 100 percent acrylic.

MacGregor named her shop after her grandmother, a woman who has been knitting mittens for her grandchildren for decades. "Even though her grandchildren are now grown, she still loves to knit," MacGregor says. "One day she asked me to sell some mittens for her and I set up the Etsy shop that day."

MacGregor likes that Etsy connects her with buyers around the world. It's always interesting to see where things are headed, she says, adding that the mittens have gone all over the United States, Canada and to movie sets.

"Seeing an order come in is always exciting," says MacGregor. "I usually call my grandmother and let her know; she loves finding out where the mittens are going and which colors people like the best." ▶

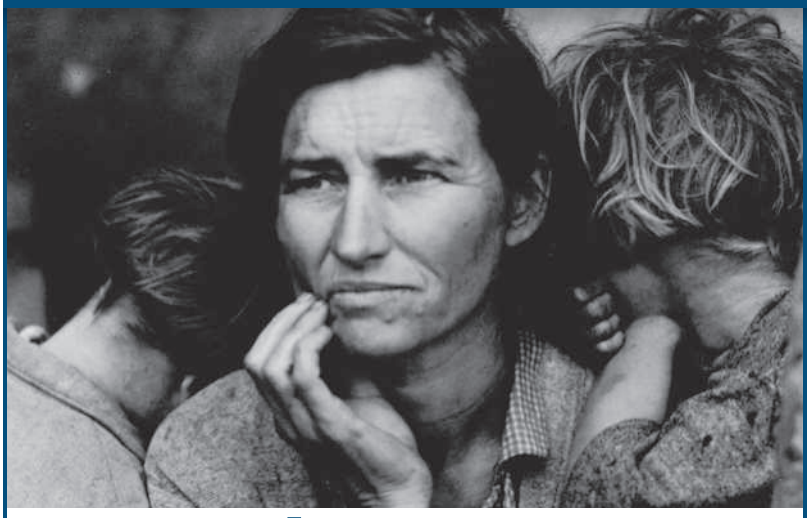


◀ **Orchid Child's Mittens**
$10





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E Razimus Jewelry

Name: Virginia Fretto from Saratoga Springs
Shop name: Razimus Jewelry
Shop URL: etsy.com/shop/RazimusJewelry
Selling since: February 2013

What she sells: Natural and hand-printed silk scarves as well as custom-made bracelets or neck-to-wristwear designs. The collection is billed as "Sustainable fashion, ethically sourced and handmade from two mom-owned brands."

Like other Etsy sellers, Fretto started as a shopper. "Etsy has been my go-to online shopping favorite for finding unique, handmade items for my home, gifts and just about everything," she says.

As a seller, all her designs are handmade using vintage, upcycled (deconstructed clothing), and organic fabrics creating lightweight and sustainably designed fashion statement pieces with locking magnetic clasps. Styles include single band bracelets, neck-to-wristwear (that can be worn as necklaces or three-wrap bracelets), double band statement necklaces and the Mama&Babe Collection that includes organic teething necklaces, organic cotton headbands and organic cotton coil clips.

Her items are available in boutiques all around the region, but she plans to continue selling on Etsy as well.

"I love the direct designer-to-customer interactions," she says. "I have found fellow Etsy shop owners to be some of the most accommodating and responsive vendors that I have worked with. It's a very supportive community of artisans." ■





◀ **Neck-to-Wristwear Necklace/ Bracelet**
$54









A Home of Their Own

The Christophers build their dream house

BY BRIANNA SNYDER | PHOTOS BY VINCENT GIORDANO

Hannah and Joe Christopher built their dreamhouse in Halfmoon four and a half years ago.

No, really, they actually built it.

"We went on the Internet and looked at 9 million home plans, like every single day," says Joe, an English teacher in Greenwich. Joe grew up here, and the land on which the Christophers built the house was inherited by Joe's uncle, who sold it to Joe. Joe has a handful of other family members living right nearby — the land was collectively owned by his grandparents, who split it up among their children. So it's all one big family plot.

Joe's father worked in construction, so with that expertise and background, Joe was able to act as a contractor throughout the building of his own home. He cleared the land himself, and gathered the materials for the wood, counters and floors. He and his father, when given a quote of $10,000 to build a staircase, did it themselves: altogether, it cost $1,200, for materials.

"We have student loans, huge student loans," says Hannah, who is also a teacher, in Troy. And the couple has three boys: Henry, 16; Jack, 10; and Leo, 6. "So we just can't [spend money]. There's no way. So things take longer."

It took 8 and a half months to build the house. And "life was pretty tough for a while" during construction, Hannah says. It was so exhausting that when they finally moved in, the Christophers took a year off from projects and construction to regroup. That's been the name of their game: slow, steady and thrifty. Joe builds nearly everything. The mantel on the fireplace





The house has 36 windows. Joe wanted "the biggest we could possibly get without having to put special glass in them." The result is tons and tons of gorgeous natural light.



The family goes to Cape Cod every year for vacation, and you can see that influence throughout the house. Joe and Hannah say they were inspired by the homes there, with the white trim and the cedar shakes.



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The Christophers on their porch, with their faithful dog and chicken.

For more photos of the Christophers' home, go to timesunion.com/518life.

— which was just finished this summer — was made from wood leftover from when he initially cleared the land. "When Henry was born, [Joe] was doing roofs as a job. He's a banker. He's a teacher," Hannah says. "He did the electric for the pool, the swingset for the kids. Everything."

When the Christophers were given a $7,000 quote to run a gas line from the street to the house, Joe looked into doing it himself. "You have to be certified," the



The family is incredibly environmentally conscious. They have 26 chickens and a garden that boasts 1,000 tomato plants, plus corn and gourds and pumpkins and zucchini — you name it. They even started tapping local maple trees to make syrup. "We make 100 jars of spaghetti sauce every year," Joe says. And they would compost, but the chickens eat all their scraps. They line up outside to get them. The family also runs a farmstand through the summer, where they sell veggies and Hannah's delicious baked goods.



electric company told him. "OK, how do I do that?" He asked. There turned out to be a class that Saturday. He went, got certified, installed his own gas line.

It's hard work, but the family saves a lot of money. "We still have a mortgage," Hannah says, "but when it's all said and done, we wouldn't have ever been able to afford a house around here without doing it this way." ■


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The Honeymooners

The wedding's over. Now for the fun part!



Illustration: Vlada Kramina/GettyImages.

BY KRISTI BARLETTE

The wedding is over. Now comes the de-stressing — the time when you can relax, talk about how your cousin's girlfriend would *not* stop texting during the ceremony or hitting on the groomsmen at the reception, and eat anything you want. After all, you won't be trying to squeeze into that wedding dress for many, many years — if ever again.

Ahh, the honeymoon. When we hear that word, we typically picture white sand beaches, water so blue it looks surreal and a team of resort staffers bringing drinks adorned with little umbrellas and spritzing you with aloe-infused water.

And that imagery makes sense. Tropical island honeymoons are the most popular, says Amy Gerling, a travel agent at East Greenbush Travel in East Greenbush. Gerling is referred to online as "The TravelGerl."

Amy Levin-Epstein, the travel editor with The Knot, agrees. "The things most couples look for is a beautiful beach and a romantic atmosphere," says Levin-Epstein. "While they're not for everyone, beach vacations are perennially popular because they're totally laid-back and relaxing — and that's what a lot of couples want after the hectic last few months of wedding planning."

But what if you're not a lounger? What if the idea of sitting on a beach makes you think "frying" — as in your brain and your skin? What if you need activity, and adventure, or something else? Or what if you want a little of both?

With the help of Gerling and Levin-Epstein, we take a look at the other popular honeymoons: ▶

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Weekend jaunts

These are typically within a three-to-five-hour drive away and could involve anything from a couple nights at a spa to a weekend skiing in Lake Placid.

GOOD FOR: Budget-conscious couples who want to get away but who don't want to burn all their vacation time — and cash — at once.

Cruises

You'll get to see several cities, have all your meals prepared for you and have no shortage of activities on the boat. Many ships now include rock climbing walls, golf and surfing (oh yes). Typically, you will dine with other cruisers and most of the activities are group-oriented. Cruise lines offer a plethora of shore excursions at each port that range from parasailing to shopping to gondola rides.

GOOD FOR: Couples looking to be catered to 24 hours a day, but who aren't looking for refuge from others. Unless you're in your cabin, you'll likely be surrounded by other travelers.

Hybrid trips

For instance, the first half of the trip is spent on the beach, while the second half might include sightseeing, an adventurous excursion such as swimming with sharks or even doing charity work in the local community.

GOOD FOR: Couples who want to relax, but who have a limit on just how long they can lounge in a cabana.

Before planning your honeymoon, you need to figure out your interests and budget. Are you sun and sand people? Adventurous? Formal or casual? High energy or laid back? Where have you traveled in the past? How long do you want to be away? Once you narrow this down, a honeymoon can be planned, says Gerling.

Adventure trips

These include anything from hiking the high peaks in the rainforest to standing at the mouth of an active volcano to hang gliding over the Grand Canon or swimming with sharks. If you want luxury by night (AKA: not sleeping out under the stars), but adventure by day, check out resorts such as Sandals or the Ritz Carlton properties. Many of these offer off-property excursions where they arrange the event (from a tour guide to transportation), and you pay for it.

GOOD FOR: Couples who have activities such as "ziplining 200 feet above the jungle" on their bucket list, or those who want a daring, new Facebook profile shot.

All-inclusive resorts

These provide the relaxation factor (and you can leave your wallet in your room at mealtime), but tend to offer other activities on-site such as horseback riding, snorkeling, boating, waterskiing and themed nights like a luau party or 1980s dance night. Unlike being on a multiple-country (or region) tour, you can pick and choose when you want to participate.

GOOD FOR: Couples who want to keep their minds and muscles active, but who don't want to need to see a massage therapist and a chiropractor when they get home. ■



Where, exactly, are the **most-popular places to celebrate post-nuptials**? Facebook took a look at the top 10 most popular honeymoons based on people "checking-in" 20 miles or more from their home within two weeks of their wedding (remember, people post all about their wedding day on social media, often even changing their relationship status before the cake cutting).

Here's a look at the list of the top 10 most popular:

10. Gramado, Brazil
9. Castries, St, Lucia
8. Antalya, Turkey
7. Montego Bay, Jamaica
6. Punta Cana, Dominican Republic
5. Cancún, Mexico
4. Playa del Carmen, Mexico
3. Honolulu
2. Lahaina
1. Las Vegas



Photos: GettyImages. Winter hands, Mustafa Arican; zipline, John Borthwick; resort, Larry Dale Gordon.



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Calling All Attendants

The ups and downs of being in the bridal party

BY KRISTI BARLETTE

You've been asked to be a bridesmaid or a groomsman. And, well, you haven't been *this* honored since your first grade teacher appointed you table captain at lunch.

But just as the puffed-chest novelty wore off right around the time Jimmy dumped his retainer in the garbage can along with his lunch tray, the glow that comes with being named wedding attendant can disappear as quickly as a photo on SnapChat.

Being a bridesmaid is so much more than a title. It means being a nurse and a therapist and a personal shopper and a parent and a teacher and sometimes even a mechanic when the limo starts smoking on your way to the reception.

The demands are as tough for a groomsman. He's got to be a coach, a tour guide, a guardian angel (everyone needs one of these at the bachelor party) and a seamstress when the groom's pants split as you arrive at the church. The groomsman, too, may have to be a personal shopper when the husband-in-waiting realizes at the rehearsal dinner he didn't get his bride a gift, and he overheard she's got something so spectacular that it was six months in the making.

No matter what's requested, both the men and the women will likely share these duties with three or four other attendants, since the average number of bridesmaids and groomsmen is four to five (on each side), according to the most-recent Real Weddings Study from The Knot.

Accepting the role of an attendant is kind of like signing out of your life and on to someone else's for a year. It could be a bit less or (a lot) more, but the majority of engagements last between 13 and 18 months, according to a survey from Wedding Paper Divas.

The role of a bridesmaid or maid of honor is typically more demanding than that of the groomsman. Because for women, this role is an investment more time consuming and physically demanding than preparing for a marathon. Plus, with a wedding, you've got cost. Oh, the cost.

It costs about $1,700 to be a bridesmaid, according to WeddingChannel.com. The estimate was based on a 2010 Real Weddings study that surveyed more than 20,000 brides nationwide. While groomsmen tend to spend more on their attire, according to several surveys, they spend less overall.

A bridesmaid will contribute to the shower — financially and with her soul. Oh, wait, did we say soul? We meant she'll put her heart and soul into planning a party that will have décor and a culinary spread that didn't come from Pinterest, but rather will "pinspire" others.

Oh, yes. And if you're the maid of honor you'll likely slack off at work because negotiating with the chef at the bride-to-be's favorite brunch spot takes precedence over that looming assignment.

"Aren't you afraid of upsetting your boss," asks your friend who will be attending the wedding, but who won't be standing up there like one of six Stepford Wives — all with

Photo: Yanis Ourabah/GettyImages.



The ultimate attendant is a best friend and confidant, one who understands weddings make lots of people — even those of sound mind and stable — a little wacky.

matching pedicures, despite the closed-toe shoes they're sporting.

"Yes," you tell your friend. You are worried what your boss may say/do/think, but her wrath is nothing compared to what your friend is capable of if the salmon croquettes look like salmon cakes or the lemonade is yellow instead of pink. Pink — more specifically, "lemonade pink" — is one of her wedding colors and, gosh darn it, there will be Lemonade Pink lemonade at this shower!

And, hey, if you get fired that means you won't have work "interfering" with your duties anymore.

The demands — er, requests -- don't dry up once the gifts from the shower are packed in the car. No, you may be asked (told) to wear yellow gold, despite your allergy to the metal or wear a strapless gown that just won't work thanks to your 42DD bra size.

Purchasing $70 Tory Burch flip flops and a customized lululemon hoodie so all the 'maids match for those "getting ready" photos is also part of being a supreme bridesmaid, as is getting hair extensions if your locks don't brush your shoulders. And don't go thinking you can DIY those babies. Nope. Prepare to park your butt — and your $500 — in a chair at a salon for a couple of hours while each extension is expertly attached.

Another thing not to consider? Pregnancy. A pregnant attendant will stick out in photos worse than short hair, so invest in enough prophylactics for a year, stat.

A prime groomsman also needs a certain makeup. The ultimate best man is willing to act as a stand-in for the groom's fiancée when a little extra first dance practice is needed. He will be swayed and dip and twirled — and will never speak of it again after you two break hold. ▶

The Perfect Wedding



PHOTO: MITCHWED.COM

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Bridal Party for Hire?

Anyone who's been married or who has been in a wedding knows being a bridesmaid can strain a friendship or family relationship. So why not outsource, as in hire some stand-ins? That's right. We said "hire."

Bridesmaid for Hire is a company based in New York City and run by Jen Glantz. Glantz, who has been in four weddings this year, calls herself an "experienced bridesmaid." She will do just about everything you ask — and even what you may not think to ask — for a fee (around $1,100 for the whole kit and kaboodle, which includes dressing up and standing with you on your wedding day).

We asked readers of the Times Union's On the Edge blog:

WOULD YOU HIRE A BRIDESMAID?

78% No way, weddings are about friends and family and that includes the wedding party.

12% I wouldn't, but I think it's a great idea.

5% Absolutely, we all know few people (even our best friends) really *want* to be a bridesmaid

5% Maybe, it would depend on the cost.

He will listen, for hours — maybe even days or weeks — when the groom-in-waiting wants to talk about his fears of leaving the single life behind. The ultimate groom will not gripe if this conversation occurs during the fourth quarter of the Super Bowl — when it's a tie game.

He will keep the groom from doing anything regrettable at his bachelor party. Or, if the betrothed does get a little shameful, the ideal groomsman or best man will not post evidence — verbal or visual — on social media. In fact, he will run interference if anyone tries to capture the event on their smartphone. He knows those Apple clouds can't be trusted.

Finally, on the day of, he will keep the groom's mother in check, making sure she doesn't go through with her threat to declare "I object" when the officiant asks "If anyone knows any reason why these two should not be wed, speak now or forever hold your peace."

Most importantly, though, the ultimate attendant is a best friend and confidant, one who understands weddings make lots of people — even those of sound mind and stable — a little wacky. And he or she knows you would do everything they did for you, for them — and more.

That little piece of knowledge is all you need to bring back the glow, and know it truly was an honor to be asked. ■

Photo: Dan Hallman/Gettylmages.





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Second Chances

… or, wedding tips for remarriages

BY KRISTI BARLETTE

She'd already worn the big, expensive dress and had her dad walk her down the aisle. The lavish reception and wedding party large enough to form a basketball team were also in the past.

This time, Carla Bavaro wanted to do things differently, starting with letting her future mother-in-law be heavily involved.

Bavaro, who lives in Rotterdam, was getting married for a second time. This wasn't a vow renewal, but rather a new relationship with a new man. Technically, she was getting remarried.

About 30 percent of married couples are characterized as "remarriages," according to the most-recent data available from the U.S. Census Bureau. That number includes duos where one, or both, people are on the second go-around due to the death of a spouse, or divorce.

Bavaro skipped the registry, as most second-time brides and grooms do, says Katie O'Malley Maloney, owner of Katie O' Weddings & Events in Troy.

"Most second weddings request no gifts," says O'Malley Maloney. "They're typically combining households and most have what they need to get started."

But no registry doesn't mean no gifts. Sometimes, the bride and groom will suggest a donation to a charity, or a contribution to their honeymoon. A household-type gift from several guests combined, such as a grill, is also common, says Jamie Miles, TheKnot.com editor.

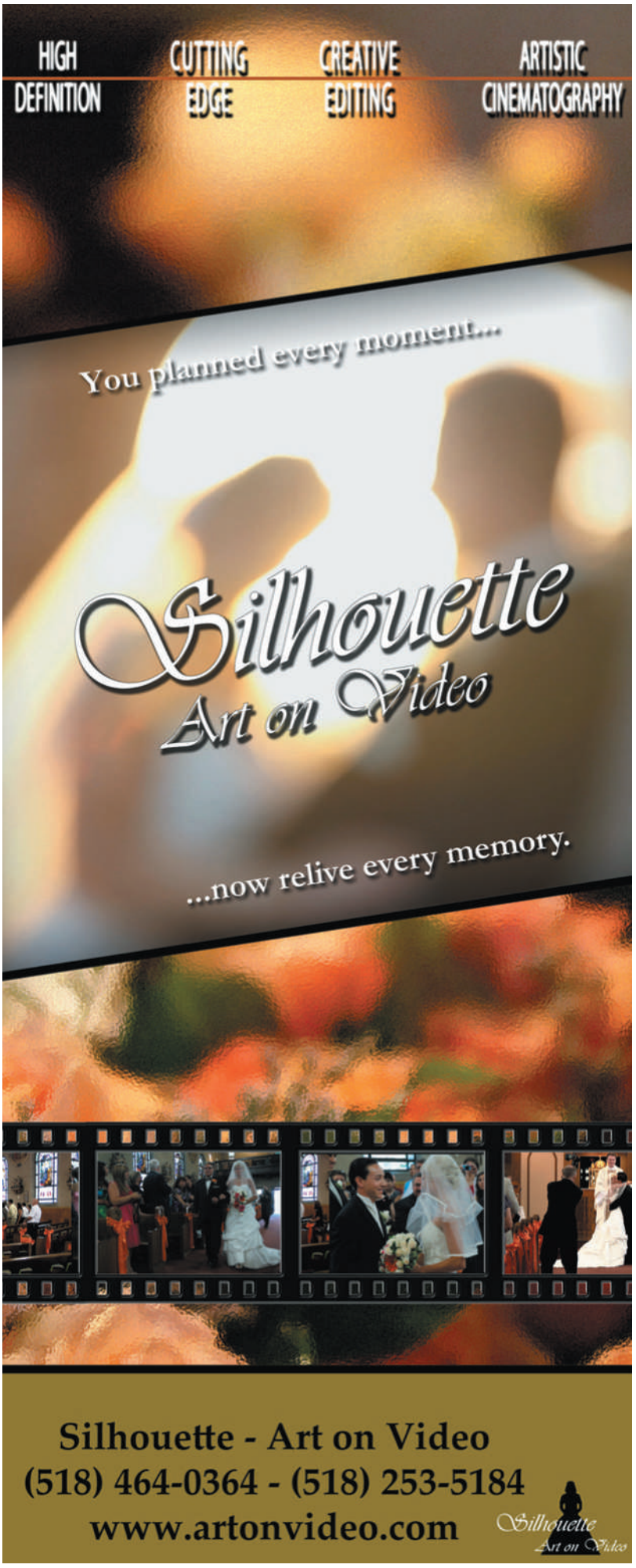
Trying to put a blanket rule like "no gifts, ever" for the second time around isn't fair, say experts. In part, because for one half of the couple this could be a first marriage and, even if both people have been married before, "you shouldn't slight them for the happiness they found the second time around," O'Malley Maloney says.

Bavaro's fiancé had not been married before, so they kept some of the tradition. The bride wore a white gown — with a train — that she found on clearance at David's Bridal ("I wanted to make it some kind of 'weddingish' for my hubby since it was his first," she says) and her friends threw her a small shower right before the wedding. Her fiancé had a bachelor party.

Some of the differences this go-around? Her 6-year-old daughter walked her down the aisle and her mother-in-law paid for, and planned, the wedding and the reception at one of the couple's favorite Italian restaurants in Schenectady (although Bavaro and her fiancé did choose the menu). They made their own invitations and carried a handful of her favorite flowers. The guest list was just 45 people — mostly family, a few friends.

A smaller guest list is fairly status quo when it comes to remarriages, say experts. Brides

◄ This Eat, Drink, and Remarry Cross Stitch can be found at etsy.com/shop/KMSORIGINAL. For more fun Etsy items from local shops, check out our story on page 40.
Photo by Kathleen Slupski.



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and grooms understand they've asked many of the same people to do this before — to possibly travel and incur the costs that come with attending a wedding — so they go easy, and they go small.

Another trend in second weddings? The affairs tend to be less about the show and more about the couple, says O'Malley Maloney.

That was the prime difference for Marna Meltzer McMorris and her husband Jim when they got married in May.

"This time, the wedding was for us and what we wanted and felt, instead of trying to satisfy the needs and wants of others," says McMorris.

The first time around, both she and Jim felt pressure from family-to-be. Also, because her previous wedding was an Orthodox Jewish ceremony, she couldn't wear the dress she wanted and there was no mixed dancing or modern music, she says.

For these "I dos," McMorris wore a dress she and her mother picked out and the festivities included music and dancing. McMorris's mom gifted her with her gown, but the couple otherwise paid for the wedding themselves.

This, too, is fairly common with second weddings, say Miles and O'Malley Maloney, in part because the parents may have already laid out the cash for the first wedding. Also, because couples are typically older and more established the second time around, they can more comfortably afford to pay.

> **"This time, the wedding was for us and what we wanted and felt, instead of trying to satisfy the needs and wants of others"**

Like many second marriages, the McMorrises did not exchange traditional vows. They had the ketubah, a marriage document, read aloud instead.

"In my first wedding, I did not speak at all, nor did I give my husband a ring at the ceremony," McMorris recalls. "This time, I made the same declaration my husband made to me and gave him a ring."

Like Bavaro (and many couples who are married for a second time), McMorris's children participated.

Because a second marriage is often a blending creating stepparents and step brothers and sisters, it's not only nice to have the children involved, but important, says O'Malley Maloney and Miles. Children will often walk a parent down the aisle, act as a flower girl, usher or ring bearer, offer a special reading or light the unity candle. Some newly married couples even bring the children along on the honeymoon, making it a family vacation.

"When it comes to second weddings, the rules kind of go out the window," says Miles. You feel as if you have to do things by the book or there are rules for a bride getting married the second time, she adds, but we say stop worrying about doing things the right way. "It's still your wedding. Just because it's a second wedding doesn't make it any less special." ■



Happy *Turkeyless* Thanksgiving (and not a tofurkey in sight)



See a recipe for Caesar Salad Soup, pictured above, on page 71

STORY AND PHOTOS BY STEVE BARNES

For a decade, friends and I staged turkeyless Thanksgiving dinners.

I'm not antiturkey — it's my sandwich and sub meat of choice at least 90 percent of the time — but a big hunk of protein in the middle of the table just isn't very interesting. My aversion to Giant Holiday Meat developed, paradoxically, from a family tradition that I loved while growing up. Because my father owned a restaurant for about a decade during my formative years, our extended family's tables and stomachs were strained on holidays by restaurant-quality, and restaurant-size, prime ribs and tenderloins. The turkeys were as big as beach balls. My father always took the bones and scraps of those big pieces of meat and made stock, a multiday affair that left the house smelling edible for a week and the freezer full of Cool Whip containers labeled with marker on masking tape.

I'm still in the practice of making stock at home whenever I have enough bones, but in my adult life I've never roasted a whole turkey or joint of beef in my home oven. I was content to go to my parents' place or another relative's home for Thanksgiving until 13 years ago, when I became close with a West Coast couple who had moved in across the hall from me in an old loft building in downtown Albany. My loft was one huge room with just a nook of a kitchen, yet, somehow, that's where I came into my own as a cook. Though I grew up in a restaurant and worked at age 20 as a chef for a swanky restaurant at the Sagamore resort on Lake George, my culinary aesthetic did not truly develop until I started hosting dinner parties in my downtown apartment. After several dinner parties with my new friends, we decided to cook together for their first Thanksgiving away from family.

For the three of us, the fundamental aspect of Thanksgiving is the coming together of people who care about each other for a special meal. If I and the people who wish to dine with me don't find anything "special" about a roasted turkey — or baked ham or standing

rib roast of beef — then we won't like them any better just because we're eating them on the fourth Thursday of November or the 25th of December or the Sunday after the first full moon after the vernal equinox or some random Tuesday, Wednesday or Thursday in February or August or October. I'd much rather spend a day preparing, and a few hours eating, six, eight or even 10 small courses of unusual, compelling food.

One year it was a blowout seafood menu, which had some conceptual courses — rice ice cream, salmon sashimi, soy gelée — and much of the presentation was meant to look contemporary and abstract. For another course, I served a shotglass of Caesar salad soup garnished with baby shrimp, a play on the shrimp Caesar lunch staple. We also had seared scallops with three cold sauces, including olive tapenade and jellied pea purée, and dessert was *granita*, a grown-up SnoCone, of zinfandel, pear, mint and black pepper. But at the center was blackened catfish with grits and collard greens: a dish as homey, comforting and iconic as the Thanksgiving bird.

Another year we made a spicy salad with jalapenos and stone fruit, seared tuna with an escabeche of tomatoes, prosciutto-wrapped shrimp with spicy creamed corn and bison loin with wine-braised red onions and potato "risotto."

For the first seven of those years my parents opted not to join us, still feeling tied to their turkey tradition. Then, in 2008, on what turned out to be my father's final Thanksgiving, they attended. They roasted a small turkey the weekend before and decided that would be their Thanksgiving bird, so they wouldn't miss it on the official day. The theme that year was updated versions of food remembered from childhood. Tuna-noodle casserole became Asian-spiced rice noodles with seared ahi and edamame. In a nod to family summer vacations in Maine, I made a dairyless New England clam chowder with a base of potato purée thinned with clam juice. Chicken-and-rice casserole turned into Moroccan chicken with olive, caper, preserved lemon and saffron risotto. Frito pie was virtually unrecognizable when dressed up as Southwestern shredded pork, red beans, crispy corn cake and cotija cheese. The main course, if it could be called such a thing, was a single lamb "lollipop" with, on each large white plate, a single baby zucchini, one fingerling potato and Bearnaise sauce. The spare plating was meant to be a goof on Thanksgiving's normally overloaded plates. The Bearnaise was in homage to one of my duties at my father's restaurant while I was in high school: On Saturday afternoons, as the dinner hour approached, I'd whisk endlessly to make a bucket of Bearnaise. This time I just put the egg yolks, vinegar-wine reduction and herbs into a blender, turned it on and slowly poured in melted butter. It was fantastically easy, and the sauce never came close to breaking.

My parents loved the meal. When my father died, a few weeks before the following Thanksgiving, my mom and I looked for a new tradition and started volunteering to cook at a homeless shelter on Thanksgiving morning. One year after volunteering we went to a friend's place for a large, loud, turkey-centric gathering. For the years since, my turkeyless-Thanksgiving neighbors having left the Capital Region, I have helped cook at my mother's home for a few relatives. There is always a turkey — I apparently am insufficiently evangelical about my quest — but I sneak in something quirky as a nod to those years when watermelon-feta salad might start a meal that ended with Gorgonzola soufflé, with cider-glazed squab breast and savory oatmeal in the middle.

In recent years I've often made French onion soup, following part of the recipe by celebrated chef Thomas Keller. He specifies that the onions be caramelized ultra-slowly over low heat, a process that takes five hours all by itself.

The first time one of my aunts tried it, she exclaimed in delight and said, "I never thought of French onion soup for Thanksgiving, but we should definitely do it again next year." That's how traditions start. ■



Pear-Zinfandel Granita

Makes 1 1/2 quarts | Recipe by Steve Barnes

Ingredients

- 2 cups red zinfandel
- 1 cup water
- ½ cup sugar
- 2 ripe pears
- 2 handfuls finely chopped fresh mint leaves
- 1 tablespoon freshly ground black pepper

Method

1. Put a metal baking pan (9-by-13-inches or larger) in the freezer for an hour before starting. Warm the water and sugar slightly in a saucepan and stir until sugar dissolves. Do not allow it to get too warm, which only lengthens the freezing time.

2. Peel, core and chop the pears. Put wine, sugar water and pears in blender. Puree until very fine, then pour into freezer pan, stirring in chopped mint and black pepper. Check back in an hour, and break up pieces and stir with a fork. Continue stirring every hour or so until completely frozen. You should have a fluffy texture. If the granita freezes too solid, simply let thaw and start again.

3. Fluff with fork before serving. Serve in bowls or small glass dishes, garnishing each with a mint leaf. ▶

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Crab Salad

Makes 4 servings | Recipe by Steve Barnes

Ingredients

8 ounces crab meat
2 medium red beets
2 ripe pears
2 heads endive
Crumbled goat cheese
1 tablespoon Dijon mustard
3 tablespoons balsamic vinegar
¼ to ½ cup olive oil
Salt and pepper

Method

1. Heat oven to 350 degrees. Wearing disposable gloves to prevent staining your hands, scrub beets well, trim off roots and cut stems to 1/2 inch above beet top. Sprinkle with olive oil, salt, pepper and, if desired, sherry vinegar. Wrap each in aluminum foil and roast until tender, 75 to 90 minutes. Allow to cool, remove skins and trim off top with stems. Cut into 1/4 -inch cubes.

2. Meanwhile, heat a grill or grill pan until very hot. Wash and dry endive, remove any brown outer leaves and cut heads in half (or quarters if large). Leave core intact for now to keep leaves together while grilling. Brush all sides with olive oil, sprinkle with salt and pepper, and grill a few minutes on each side until char lines appear and endive has softened. Trim off cores and fan out leaves before plating. Endive can be served hot or at room temperature, according to preference.

3. After grilling endive, peel, core and cut pears into 1/4-inch dice. Toss into nonstick saute pan over medium heat and warm through, but do not let get too soft.

4. This can be plated as a layered composed salad or, more simply, with the ingredients mixed. For the latter, stir beets, pears, crab and goat cheese in a bowl until evenly distributed, then pile on top of a fan of endive leaves. For the former, put a ring mold atop the root end of endive fan and layer in pear, then beet, then crab. Add lines of crumbled goat cheese at the sides.

5. Whisk together mustard, vinegar and olive oil. Season with salt and pepper. Dress lightly; you don't want to overwhelm the crab.



Caesar Salad Soup

Makes 4 servings | Adapted from *Artisanal Cooking* by Terrance Brennan and Andrew Friedman (John Wiley & Sons; $35)

Ingredients

½ cup plus 2 tablespoons olive oil, divided
⅔ cup Spanish onion, medium dice
5 cloves garlic, peeled and crushed
2 teaspoons plus 1 pinch kosher salt
3 cups chicken stock
1 pound romaine lettuce, cored, cleaned and coarsely chopped
¼ cup plus 2 tablespoons finely grated Parmesan cheese, divided
4 anchovy fillets
2 tablespoons lemon juice
24 precooked, frozen salad shrimp, thawed

Method

1. Pour 2 tablespoons olive oil into a 4-quart pot or saute pan set over medium heat. Add onion, garlic and a pinch of salt and cook until softened but not browned, 4 minutes. Pour in the chicken stock and bring to a boil. Simmer until the onions are tender, 15 minutes.

2. Meanwhile, fill a large bowl halfway with ice cubes and water.

3. Raise the heat to high and return the stock to a boil. Add the romaine to the pot and boil for 4 minutes. Remove the pot from the heat, add 1/4 cup cheese, 2 teaspoons salt and the anchovies. Puree the soup in a blender, in batches if necessary, slowly adding some of the extra-virgin olive oil in a thin stream to each batch. Transfer the soup to a stainless-steel mixing bowl, set the bottom of the bowl in the ice water and stir to cool the soup as quickly as possible.

4. The soup can be made up to this point and refrigerated up to 3 hours. Stir in the lemon juice just before serving.

5. Divide the soup among chilled bowls, glass or mugs. Hang shrimp on the rim, or float on top of the soup. Garnish with croutons if desired.



Stuffed Parmesan "Tulips"

Makes 4 servings | Recipe by Steve Barnes

Ingredients

8 ounces good quality Parmesan cheese, grated, see note
1 hard-cooked egg, minced or pushed through a fine-mesh sieve
2 tablespoons minced red onion
2 ripe plum tomatoes
4 sprigs fresh thyme
Olive oil
Salt and pepper
Creme fraiche, see note
Salmon roe, see note

Method

1. Heat broiler on high. Once hot, heat a broiler-safe nonstick fry pan or sheet pan under broiler for 2 minutes.

2. Spread circles of Parmesan cheese on the pan, using a little more than a tablespoon cheese for each circle. Put pan under broiler until cheese forms lacy discs, the edges start to brown and the middle is tan, a few minutes. (This will get faster with each batch as the oven and pan get hotter.) Do not let the whole circle brown or it will be too firm to mold.

3. Remove from pan immediately with spatula and place each cheese round into separate section of a cardboard egg carton, pushing down gently on the center to get a cup shape. After it has cooled a little, transfer to paper towel. Repeat until you have as many tulips as you need. Tulips can be stored overnight in 1 layer in an airtight container.

4. Heat oven to 250 degrees. Peel, quarter, core and seed tomatoes. Remove inner membranes, leaving flat petals of tomato flesh. Film a sheet pan with olive oil and put each petal on the pan with a bit of thyme underneath. Season with salt and pepper. Put in the oven for an hour or more until most of the moisture is gone but the tomatoes are still a little soft.

5. Put a petal (or two, if small) of oven-dried tomato into each tulip. Add sieved egg and red onion, top with creme fraiche and dot with a few eggs of salmon roe.

Notes: Do not use canned Parmesan. The Parmesan should be grated into small strips to create the lacy effect. Creme fraiche is a sour-cream-like product available at most larger grocery stores. Salmon roe (aka salmon caviar) is available at specialty stores such as Adventure in Food Trading in Menands. Other caviar or fish roe may be substituted.

The Big One

Wine in 1.5-liter bottles is slowly improving

The wine bottle is a very old piece of technology. Glass itself, in some form, goes back to about 3,000 B.C., and a thousand years later glass was used for lamps and fancy containers — though not, it must be said, for the transportation of wine. The glass of the ancient world was too fragile to travel, and so amphorae made of clay lugged wine about the Mediterranean, and then very gradually glass bottles protected with straw came into use. The classic Chianti fiasco, now sadly a thing of the past, with its round bottom — easier to blow glass in that shape — and straw basket bottom was still very much in use up until the middle of the last century, and we have references to this kind of bottle in the Decameron, around 1350 AD. The really big paradigm shift in wine bottling came in the 16th century, with the introduction of the coal-burning furnace. This allowed for thicker glass, and the corked wine bottle as we know it came into being. As storing wine and aging it became fashionable, the rounded bubble bottle was replaced by the cylinder we have today, and gradually the standardized 750-milliliter bottle came into general use.

But what a ridiculous way to store and sell wine! Row after row of these things. They are heavy. They are small. And we have box and bag technology that could easily replace the bottle. At this point, the 750ml bottle is simply a compromise. One day they will be gone and perhaps we will miss them, romanticize them.

One of the mysteries that continues to beguile me, however, is why the adoption of the 1.5-ml bottle is so slow. Oh sure, when you come in the door at your wine store, the big jugs will be on display, but the wine is often close to undrinkable. Wouldn't it be cheaper and more efficient to sell better wine in this size? Presumably, the marketing folks know what they are doing, and so we are stuck with what we get.

But particularly around holiday time with all the parties, I get interested again in what can be had in 1.5-ml bottles and try a few out. I am pleased to say that a few are quite good.

But let me put down some general observations. None of the domestic wine sold in this large bottle is worth buying. None of the Italian wine sold in this size is worth buying. The white wines of Chile in this size aren't bad. Beyond that, I would suggest you don't take any risks. There is some really awful stuff out there. Don't be a hero.

Having said that, imagine my delight at finding the 2010 Juan de Juanes Vendimia Plato Tempranillo ($14), from outside of Valencia on the Mediterranean in southern Spain. Tempranillo is the grape that is the backbone of Rioja and other wines of Spain. For a wine in this size bottle, the Juan de Juanes is generously complex, flavorful, subtle, with 6 months in new oak to add distinction to bright, generous fruit. "Cloves, cedar, cigar smoke, ripe cherry fruit, unoppresive, soft tannins, chewy: Those are my notes in order. It's a perfectly decent table wine and if you bought it in smaller bottles they would cost $7 a pop, so you can't beat that. ■



Alistair Highet is a former editor, restaurant manager, and vine dresser, and has written about wine for over 20 years.

Aveleda Vinho Verde, 2013 ($13)

This classic vinho verde is a terrific bargain and a lovely wine. This is a slightly fizzy dry white wine from Portugal, very low in alcohol at 10 percent. It accompanies food beautifully — seafood, a salad, a sandwich — with grapefruit, melon, and granite mineral water qualities. This is a good wine to have in your repertoire and a crowd pleaser.

Rosemount Diamond Series Shiraz, 2012, ($19)

I'm not that fond of Shiraz, finding it often too baked and candied when it is alone, but this Australian label is a reliable producer of drinkable if not outstanding wines. They deliver. Ripe fruit, notes of black coffee and dark chocolate and caramel, but with enough acidity and tannins to give it shape.

Baron Philippe de Rothschilde Mouton Cadet Bordeaux Rouge, ($19)

This is a classic Bordeaux blend of Cabernet and Merlot, and probably the most popular Bordeaux brand in the world. I find it very reliable. It has that autumnal, apple, muted fruit, assertive acidity, and the air of austerity that I like in Bordeaux, and is very good with food. Not to everyone's taste — too French for some — but reliable and grown up.



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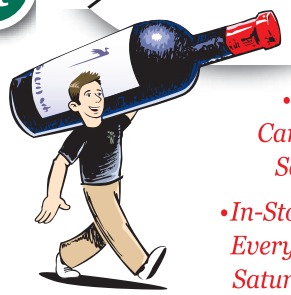
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Competing for Customers



Capital Region car dealerships invest in consumer satisfaction

BY LAURIE LYNN FISCHER | PHOTOS BY TONY PALLONE

All sugared up. That's how I usually leave Goldstein Subaru, thanks to the hot cocoa machine in the waiting area. This time, when I arrived, the cocoa machine was gone. The waiting area was gone. A golf cart whisked customers around the lot while the dealership underwent $5 million in renovations that include a drive-in express lube and showroom expansion.

"Everything's going to be state-of-the-art," says saleswoman Elizabeth Dimick. "We're going to have more TVs and touch technology. We have WiFi. We offer free coffee, hot dogs and popcorn. We have free lifetime car washes and a free lifetime limited powertrain warranty. No other dealership does that."

Curious to see what other automobile dealerships are doing to attract and maintain business in this age of Internet car purchases, I stopped at four more along Route 5. Renovations were also in progress at Metro Ford, where a giant, fan-inflated, pencil-shaped wind sock dude danced by the roadside.

"In the old system, customers would park outside and walk down to the service write-up area, get written up and be walked to the customer waiting area," explains Fixed Operations Manager Bill Thorpe. "Now, they'll drive up and overhead doors will automatically go up. There will be five service advisers waiting. The customer will never go outside. There will also be a 60-inch big-screen TV with a gas fireplace underneath. It's something that we felt we needed to do for the customers. Everybody's super busy, so if you have to spend a few hours, if it can be as convenient and as comfortable as possible, hopefully the experience will be a little bit better."

The automobile business is different than it used to be, says Thorpe, who has been in it for more than 30 years. "Today's vehicle goes much farther," he says. "There's a bigger percentage of customers with vehicles over 100,000 miles that they're servicing at a dealership. The amount of vehicles being sold is less. We sell tires at 10 percent over





A look inside Lia Toyota of Colonie.



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cost because we want to retain our customers."

For the past 10 years, Metro Ford has offered full-time shuttle service for customers whose vehicles are under repair. "From 8-5, Monday through Friday, it will drive you wherever you've got to go," says Thorpe. "We have some older clientele who would prefer to wait at home than wait here. We'll take you within a 45-minute radius and back."

In the customer Quiet Lounge, Kathy Simkins of Galway sits at a guest computer terminal. "The service personnel are really nice to work with," she says. "My car was dirty one day and they washed it for me. There's TV available. They've got the computers to use. There are toys for the kids to play with. Sometimes they have donuts and cookies. Also, they have this Advantage thing; you get a free oil change after 10 oil changes."

Next, I stopped at Lia of Colonie, whose interior looked like a cross between a living room, a lobby and an airport terminal, with a high ceiling, sofas, TVs, coffee tables, a gourmet coffee machine and vending machines. A huge window overlooked the drive-through Toyota Express Lube center. It was like an indoor road.

"We're in the customer service business; we just happen to be servicing automobiles," says Service Coordinator Fran Bain. "We offer a convenient drive-in service so you don't have to look for a parking spot. In inclement weather, you can get in your car in a nice comfortable environment. Between 250 and 300 new and used cars per month come through. Our service department is open 80 hours a week. Toyota maintenance care is included with the purchase of the vehicle for up to two years. The dealer-



The banquet-hall style customer meeting areas at Fuccillo Kia of Schenectady.

ship only makes 2 percent on new car sales."

The Internet has changed things, says Bain, who has been in the automobile business for four decades. "People are making appointments online," he says. "We're communicating with customers via text and email about their service. They can print out coupons from our website. We've cut down on mailings. It's more environmentally friendly. That's what our customers are telling us they want. People are also much more educated about the product and know what their options are."

At Fuccillo Kia, red and white flags punctuate the parking lot and tropical potted plants guard the entryway. Inside, large umbrellas wait by the door in case of rain. A Motown tune plays and a poster on the wall features costumed hamsters. Floral arrangements adorn a roomful of round tables draped with double cloths, just like at a banquet hall. It looks as if you could hold a wedding reception here.

The final stop on my car dealership crawl is Otto Cadillac. "Please help yourself" reads a sign on a mini-fridge. It is stocked with bottled water. The luxury car dealer also offers coffee, a big-screen television and — according to General Manager Chris Otto — complimentary oil changes, tire rotations and cabin filter changes for four years or 50,000 miles. "It's a great customer retention tool," he says, shaking my hand firmly — a skill that sales personnel practice during training at the Ritz Carlton Hotel.

"We are really driven by Cadillac to treat our customers as guests," says Otto. "We're scored by Cadillac on how we treat our customers. These are high-end customers. We don't have any inflatable gorillas on our roof. Our type of marketing is more subdued and subtle. We are considered a boutique store. Instead of going around the block with a salesperson breathing down your neck, we say, 'Go ahead and take our car and use it for the next three or four days.' We also have loaner vehicles for all of our customers. They're all new, current Cadillacs. We'll have a customer who's in a 2009 Cadillac. We'll put them in a 2014. They'll say, 'Wow! I want one!' It happens frequently." ■

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Certified Used Cars

What you need to know about that seal of approval

BY CARI SCRIBNER

You've been lusting after a vehicle for months, but the price tag is keeping you awake at night. You've visited dealerships and shopped around so much that the salespeople know you by name. But despite trying to stretch your budget, the cost of the new car is prohibitive.

There's another option: buying a pre-owned vehicle. Today's great deals come with an umbrella of protection when sold as a certified used car, backed by the original vehicle manufacturer.

Certified pre-owned programs vary significantly from one manufacturer to the next in the inspection standards, length of warranty and roadside assistance offered. Since there's no carved-in-stone legal definition of a "certified used car," you need to have a good understanding of what a dealer's certified program entails.

"There are so many variances; some manufacturers give nice, hefty coverage, while some give very little," says Val Ranguelov, owner of Bul Auto Sales in Albany. "Do your research. Talk to the dealer, and use the Internet. The more educated you are, the better."

During the certification process, the original manufacturer of the vehicle has the local dealer inspect the car, determine if it is worth certifying, and then offer repairs for the vehicle for a period of time beyond the original warranty. Not all used cars can

Photos: GettyImages. Car mechanic, Adam Gault; Lemon Car, ZargonDesign.



Lemon Law Details

The NYS Used Car Lemon Law provides a legal remedy for buyers or lessees of used cars that turn out to be problematic. The law requires dealers to give you a written warranty. Under this warranty, a dealer must repair, free of charge, any defects in covered parts or, at the dealer's option, reimburse you for the reasonable costs of such repairs. If the dealer is unable to repair the car after a reasonable number of attempts, you are entitled to a full refund of the purchase price. No used car covered by this law can be sold by a dealer "as is."

The Lemon Law defines used cars by the following five conditions:

1. It was purchased, leased or transferred after the earlier of (a) 18,000 miles of operation or (b) two years from the date of original delivery.
2. It was purchased or leased from a New York dealer.
3. It had a purchase price or lease value of at least $1,500.
4. It had been driven 100,000 miles or less at the time of lease.
5. It is primarily used for personal purposes.

NOTE: If you bought your car from a private individual (rather than from a dealer) you are not protected by the Used Car Lemon Law. You should consult a lawyer for advice as to other possible remedies. If the purchase price was $5,000 or less, you may wish to pursue your claim in Small Claims Courts.

Source: State of NY Office of the Attorney General

qualify for certified pre-owned programs, and terms vary from one brand to the next, but it will include at least a 100-point inspection of the car.

If problems are found, factory-trained technicians will fix it or disqualify the car from the program. The certified warranty protection typically takes effect when the original warranty expires and, like a new car warranty, offers coverage for a certain number of years or miles, whichever comes first.

The inspection and certification aren't free. Once a vehicle has passed the manufacturer's service inspections, the extended warranty will be rolled into the cost.

Ranguelov says many of his customers come in requesting certified used cars, but it's not the only option for protection against future problems. "It all comes down to what's covered, and in some cases, if you purchase your own extended warranty, it will be cheaper with much more coverage," Ranguelov says.

Craig Serafini, owner of Crown Motors in Schenectady, has another suggestion for people looking for assurance that the pre-owned vehicle is worth its sticker price. "My personal feeling is that a good mechanic should look at it," Serafini says. "Take it out for a drive and take it to your trusted mechanic. That's the best way to know what you're about to buy." ■

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Do you think urinary incontinence and pelvic floor disorders only affect women later in life? Think again. These conditions affect women of all ages, including those in their twenties and thirties, especially after childbirth. In fact, pelvic dysfunctions are the most common diseases in women after pregnancy. While many women are bothered by the symptoms associated with these conditions, they don't seek treatment because they aren't aware of their options, or they are simply too embarrassed. Join Albany Med's specialists as they provide information about the signs and symptoms of these common urogynecological conditions and the treatment options available.

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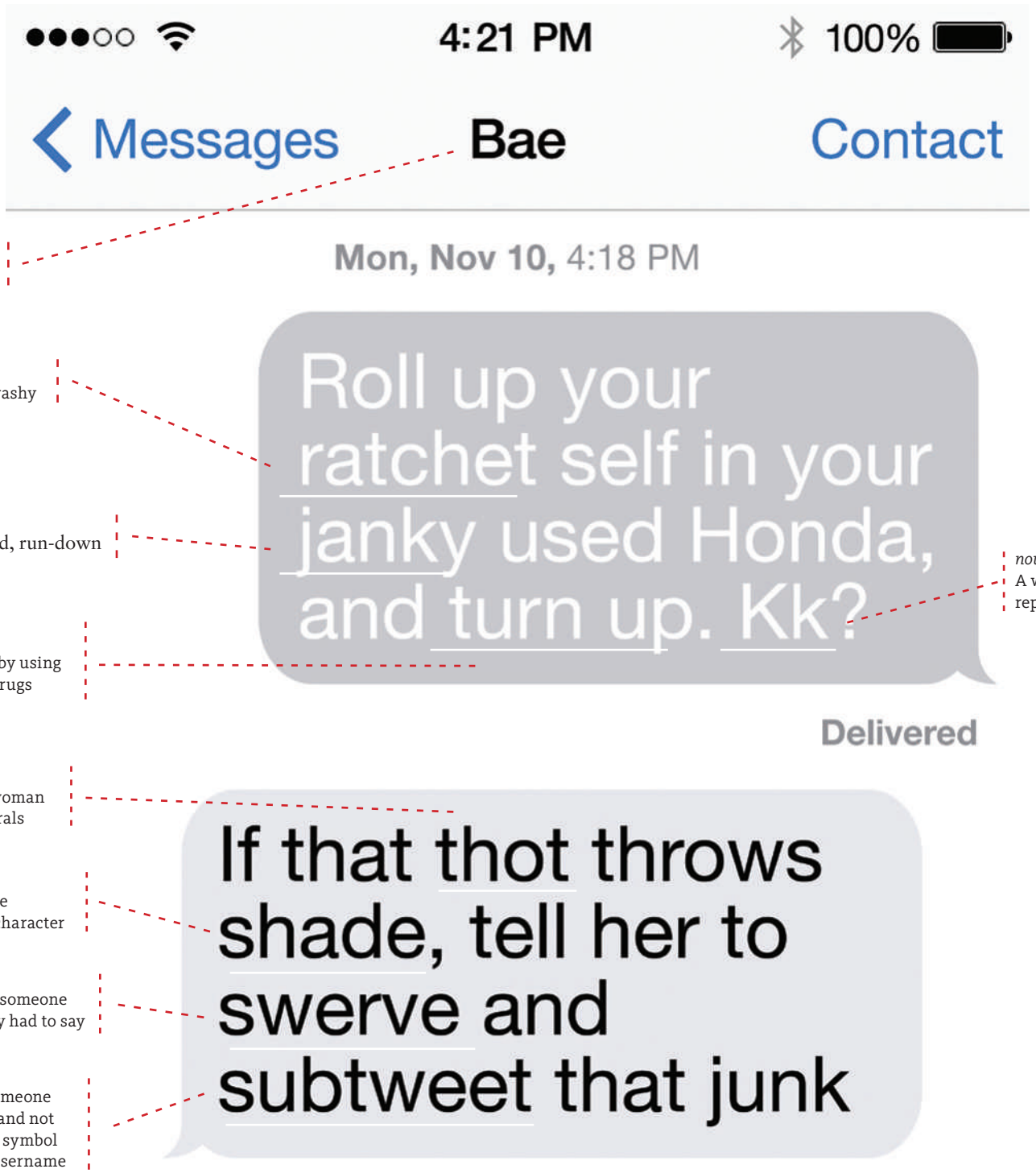
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What They Said

A brief primer on how to understand teen talk

BY JENNIFER GISH



noun
Baby, babe

adjective
Classless, trashy

adjective
Dilapidated, run-down

verb
To get wild, sometimes by using alcohol or drugs

noun
A way to reply "OK"

noun
A ho. Or a woman of loose morals

verb
to disparage someone's character

verb
Dismissing someone or what they had to say

noun
insulting someone via Twitter and not using the @ symbol with their username

Illustration by Emily Jahn.

Aw, kids say the darndest things. It's just too bad we look like dinosaurs when we have to go searching it all on Urban Dictionary (tip: urbandictionary.com) to find out what they mean.

Much of the language used by teens today (and for the last couple of decades) has urban roots, even if the vocabulary has become so popular through music and social media that suburban kids are incorporating it into lacrosse practice. Other terms — such as subtweet — are influenced by technology and explain a very specific piece of that world, says Robert Thompson, professor of popular culture at Syracuse University. Social media also allows new terms to spread more rapidly than before.

Some popular words and phrases — such as "groovy" and "not!" — can be distinctly pinned to certain decades. Others have a timeless quality, such as "cool," which has spanned generations in its popularity, Thompson says.

But none of this means that your mortgage-paying, carpool-organizing self should think using this teen-speak will bring your closer to your kid. Sure, you heard Jon Stewart use it on *The Daily Show*, but he was doing it to be ironic and funny.

"Depending on who you are is how well you can pull it off. My high school teacher once said, 'I really dig what you did on your homework.' We laughed hysterically," Thompson says. "Certain kinds of language are ways of showing you're a member of a certain cultural set. … At times, you just seem kind of pathetic." ■

Here are 10 popular words that you can use at your own risk. At the very least, you'll know what your kid is talking about without having to Google it first.

Janky

(adjective) Dilapidated, run-down.

We might call it: Busted up.

Theirs: "Mom, why do you have to drop me off in this janky 2001 Jeep Cherokee with duct tape holding up the bumper? It's so humiliating."

Make it yours: "The recession hit, and all I'm left with for retirement now is this janky 401(k)."

Ratchet

(adjective) Classless, trashy

We might call it: Anything you find on late-night reality TV.

Theirs: "Those kids outside of the high school yelling at middle-schoolers were so ratchet."

Make it yours: "Flip-flops at the office, eh? Didn't realize it was Ratchet Thursday, Monica."

Bae

(noun) Baby, babe, babester. You might know it from the Pharrell hit, "Come Get It, Bae."

We might call it: A typo.

Theirs: "Hey, bae, what are you doing tonight?"

Make it yours: "Hey, bae, how about you pack all the lunches tonight?"

Turn Up

(verb) To get wild, sometimes by using alcohol or drugs. It's "turnt up" if used as an adjective.

We might call it: Getting jiggy with it. No, even we know better than to say that anymore.

Theirs: "This football game is over. Time to turn up at Nick's place."

Make it yours: "This office potluck is a snooze. Time to have some Jameson in the supply closet and turn up."

Swerve

(verb) Dismissing someone or what they had to say. According to Urban Dictionary, it stems from the Kanye West song "Mercy," which manages to reference Sarah Palin, Duncan Hines and Salvador Dali in the same song. Not to be confused with "getting your swerve on" which means going out to have a good time and is just another phrase you shouldn't be using anymore. See also: Curve.

We might call it: Talk to the hand. Step off. Or any number of other things that date us as a couple years shy of Methuselah.

Theirs: "Hey, man. What you doing tonight?"

"Swerve, brah. I saw you after school with my girlfriend."

Make it yours: "Mommy, can I have a cookie?" "Swerve, junior. I'm not your damn Oreo dispenser."

Kk

(noun) A way to reply "OK" to a text or message and not make it sound as if you're passive-aggressively agreeing to something. Say your husband texts to say he's working late with Little Miss Hotty Pants at the office. Wait, that's an "OK" situation.

We might call it: OK or yes.

Theirs: "Olivia, make sure you're home by 11, all right?" "Kk."

Make it yours: Oh forget it. You know you're passive-aggressive, Kk? Learn to confront.

Throwing shade

(verb) to disparage someone's character.

We might call it: Dissin'

Theirs: "Chloe was throwing shade all over Facebook after Jacob dumped her."

Make it yours: "Susan was totally throwing shade about the snacks I brought to soccer practice. As if she's never made brownies from a box before."

Same

(adjective) A term of agreement. See also: Preach. Because words are precious, why waste syllables (or characters)?

What we might call it: Me, too.

Theirs: "I'm so tired." "Same."

Make it yours: During your teenager's tantrum in which they say they hate you and can't wait to get out of the house. "Same."

Thot

(noun) A ho. Or a woman of loose morals, and most likely, drawers.

We might call it: Slut, or when we're feeling retro: hussy.

Theirs: "Did you see her skirt? It was so short she looked like such a thot. Nicki Minaj is going to call her up to be a background dancer in her next video."

Make it yours: "Nothing to say about my new haircut, Bill? I know what that means. Well, I'm your wife, not your thot. Deal."

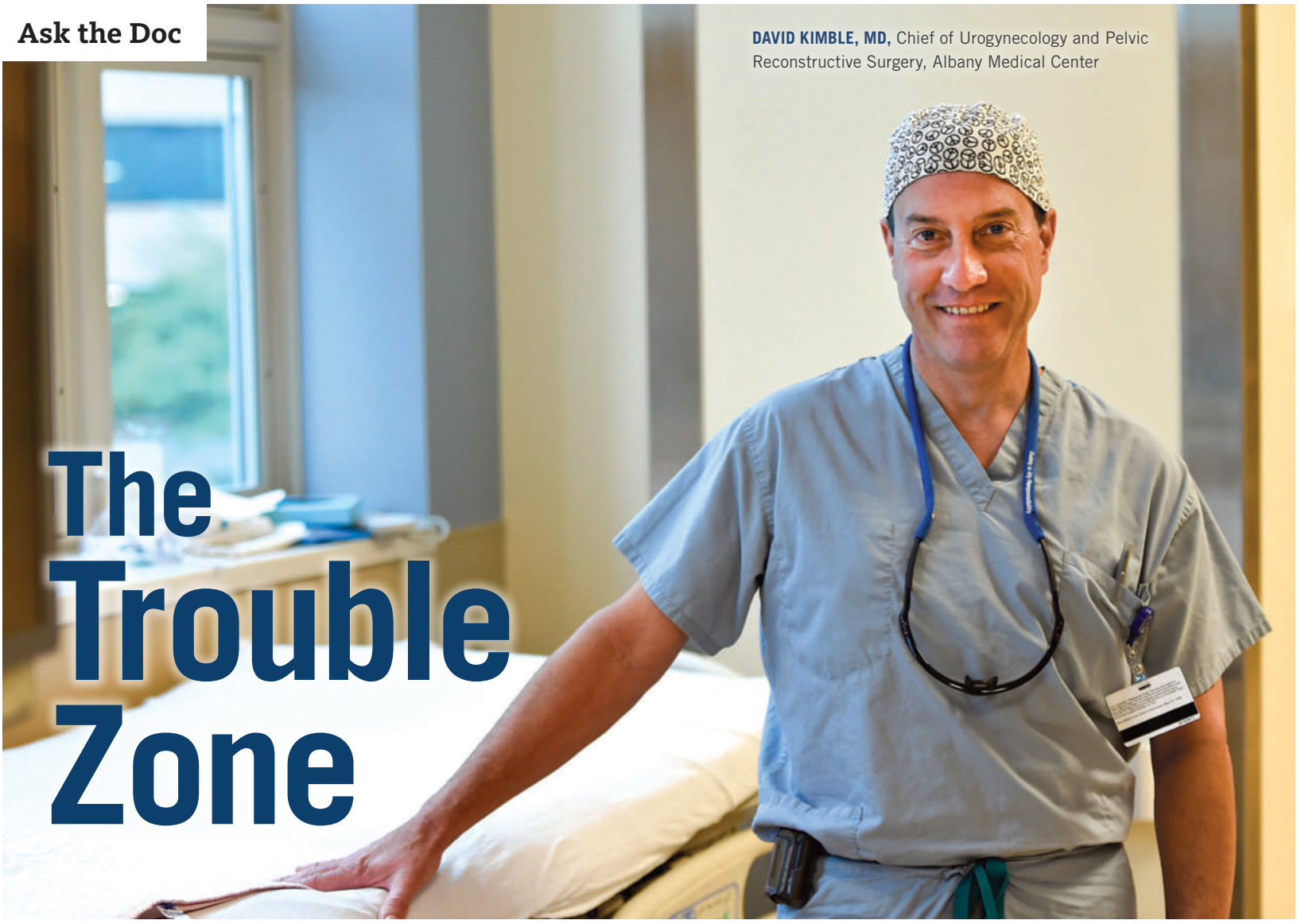
Subtweet

(noun) insulting someone via Twitter and not using the @ symbol with their username, so it doesn't show up in their feed.

We might call it: Throwing shade. (Because we're learning!)

Theirs: "Did you see what Joey said about Taylor Swift on Twitter? He totally subtweeted, so she'll never know he thinks 'Shake It Off' is lame."

Make it yours: You'd actually need to be using Twitter first. So ask your kids to show you. Then subtweet about how they treated you like a stupid old person while they were helping.



DAVID KIMBLE, MD, Chief of Urogynecology and Pelvic Reconstructive Surgery, Albany Medical Center

The Trouble Zone

Yes, there is hope for incontinence and other pelvic discomfort

BY BRIANNA SNYDER | PHOTO BY SKIP DICKSTEIN

Just chalk it up to another sacrifice you've made for your children: pelvic floor dysfunction, or PFD, a problem faced by most women at some time in their lives, particularly if they've given birth.

The pelvic floor is a group of muscles that attach to the front, back, and sides of the pelvic bone. They're what's failing you when you experience incontinence, constipation, lower-back or pelvic pain, pain during intercourse and spasms, among other uncomfortable symptoms in that zone. Many women are embarrassed by PFD and assume there's no treatment for their discomfort, so they suffer silently (other than the occasional sneezing joke among female friends).

Our upcoming seminar on urogynecological conditions Nov.5 is designed to change that. The experts at Albany Medical Center will discuss common PFD issues and provide answers. (See box for details.) We interviewed Dr. David M Kimble, chief of urogynecology and pelvic reconstructive surgery at Albany Medical College, who's speaking at our seminar. Here are his answers provided by email.

What are some urogynecological conditions women struggle with but maybe don't know how to talk about?

Stress incontinence, overactive bladder, pelvic organ prolapse, and fecal incontinence are some of the most common issues that plague women from a urogynecological perspective. I have been in practice for over 18 years and the vast majority of women I have cared for voice a common message that very little is publicly available regarding this aspect of women's healthcare. Women are highly private and most are not willing to discuss these issues. It is embarrassing for most. However, new treatment modalities are available that can effectively resolve these issues. This is the message I wish to impart to the women of the Capital District.

What are three things you recommend for optimum urogynecological health?

Optimal urogyn health would include maintaining a healthy lifestyle first and foremost. Obesity, smoking, poor exercise have dramatic negative impact on pelvic floor support and bladder function.

Second would be exercises for pelvic floor strength such as Kegel exercises. These will effectively maintain the proper physical strength of the pelvic muscles.

Third, I always recommend a healthy diet which avoids bladder irritants and drinking plenty of water. These are the most important preventive measures.

Pelvic organ prolapse and incontinence is derived from multiple factors such as genetics, childbearing, gravity, co-morbid health issues, etc.

What are the most common treatments available for women who might struggle with urinary incontinence or other pelvic-floor disorders?

The most common treatment for stress incontinence is a surgery called a sling procedure. This is an outpatient procedure done at the hospital. The sling will support the urethra and highly effectively stops the incontinence. We now have 20-year-data on slings showing durable, long lasting efficacy.

The most common treatment for overactive bladder is biofeedback, followed by medication, followed by a spinal stimulator and Botox of the bladder. Newer types of medications are available with fewer potential side effects.

The most common treatment for prolapse is surgery, although pessaries can be used for those patients who are poor surgical candidates or for those who wish to avoid surgery. I perform hundreds of robotic, minimally invasive prolapse repairs every year. Even the FDA stated this approach to prolapse is the gold standard in repair. It requires just an overnight stay in the hospital with a quick recovery. Fifty-year data shows that the risk of recurrent prolapse is less than 5 percent. I have performed more of these procedures than most urogyn surgeons in the US.

What are some things you wish more women knew about, relating to UG health?

Honestly, I wish women knew that very safe and effective treatments, non-surgical therapies, and surgeries exist to treat these issues. The current concern over use of mesh to treat prolapse has created an environment of hesitancy in seeking treatment for these conditions. Prolapse can lead to kidney damage, permanent bladder dysfunction, among many other potential health issues. Not only is it most uncomfortable and lifestyle limiting to patients, [but] it can lead to significant damage to their health.

Is there a FAQ or two you get in your practice that you think might be helpful to readers?

Most frequently asked questions are:

- *Will this surgery last* … I refer to the strong literature showing it will
- *Will this affect my sex life* … the answer is that it will improve sex life;
- *Is mesh safe* … the answer is yes when used in the right way. ■

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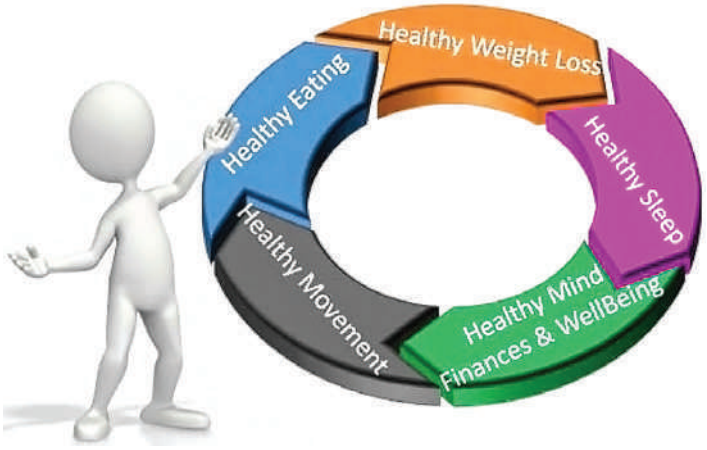
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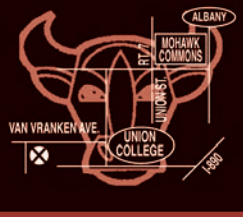
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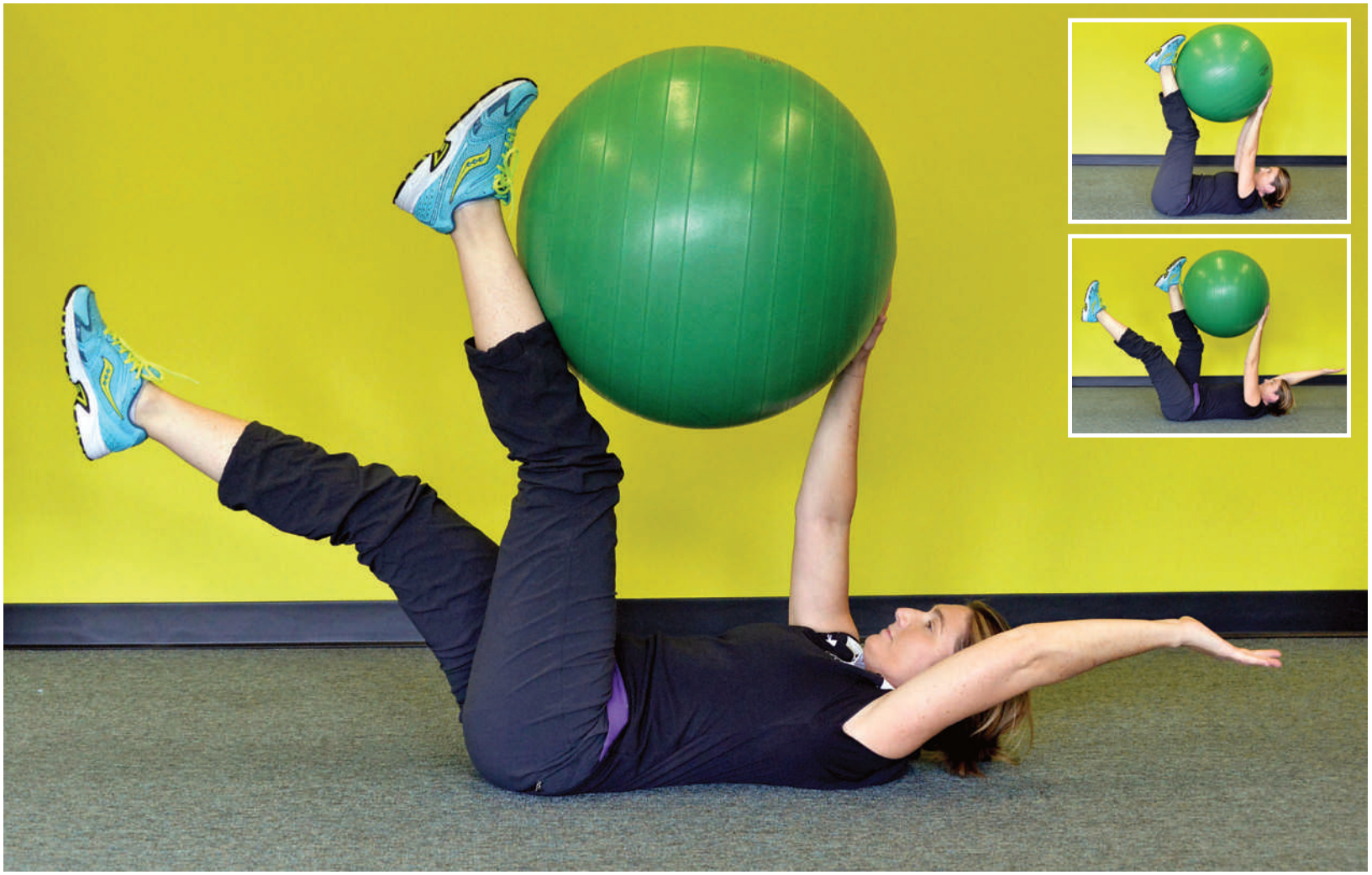
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The Dead Bug

with Jenny May Clermont



Jenny May Clermont is the owner of Fitness Together in Latham. She has researched diet and exercise for more than 25 years to understand better how a healthy lifestyle affects body physiology. Fitness Together specializes in personal training and coaching. Find more info or contact Jenny May at fitnesstogether.com.

1 **BEGIN LYING ON YOUR BACK** with your hands and feet elevated and a stability ball pressed between them.

2 **RELEASE AND LOWER** your right arm and left leg from the ball down toward the floor while holding the ball with your remaining limbs. Raise your arms and leg back to the ball and repeat on the other side.

3 **REPEAT 10 TO 15** times per side completing the exercise slowly. If your back begins to arc too much off the floor or you feel any pressure in your low back, reduce how far you lower your legs. ■

TOP TIPS:

- **DON'T** Never raise and lower arm and leg on the same side. Opposite arms and legs must be used.
- **DON'T** Make sure your knees aren't too bent.





The Gift of Health



10 tips to help you stick to your fitness routine during the holiday rush

BY LAURIE LYNN FISCHER

Jennifer Hobbs cherishes memories of her great grandmother and grandmother filling the kitchen — and her belly — with freshly baked holiday cookies. "I cannot pass a plate without having to have some," the Clifton Park personal trainer confesses, "but instead of eating a plate of cookies, I'll take one or two and walk away."

Usually, people have an all-or-nothing attitude, tossing diet and exercise out the window at holiday time with intentions of "getting back on the wagon" after the first of the year, she says.

Michael Kurkowski, training manager at HealthPlex Fitness in Clifton Park, says the average American gains 8 to 12 pounds between Thanksgiving and New Year's. Gym membership spikes nationally in January; however, newcomers' resolve tends to wane after four to six weeks, he says.

Want to stay true to your fitness regime during this hectic holiday season? Here are some pointers from these and other Capital Region trainers.

Photos: GettyImages. Santa Cookies, Tamelyn Feinstein; Cookies, YinYang. Illustrations by Emily Jahn.



1. Get moving

"When your body is under stress, the research shows that one of the best things you can do is exercise," Hobbs says. "It releases endorphins — all kinds of feel-good hormones — a lot of the same things that are released when we eat chocolate or comfort food. With seasonal affective disorder, exercise is one of the best things you can do to alleviate symptoms of depression and anxiety."

Find fun exercise opportunities with colleagues or relations, Hobbs suggests. "Try to get on the dance floor and dance at that office holiday party," she says. "Go skating, sledding or caroling with your children. It makes good memories of being active together as a family."

2. Get real

"Acknowledge that it is not going to be an easy time of year to remain consistent with your fitness goals," says Hobbs. "An hour a day at the gym, six days a week, because I want to burn off all those cookies I'm eating, is probably not realistic, but up and down the stairs in your office on lunch hour for 20 minutes per day or even five minutes is."

3. Strategize

"Schedule fitness, writing down the obstacles that you know might come into play over the next week; then fit fitness around the obstacles, says Kurkowski.

"If you know you are heading to a party or special event, work out extra hard prior to attending and have a good routine planned for the following day," says Seth Thomas, owner and director of Albany Movement & Fitness. "If you work hard, there is more room for you to play hard."

Measure workouts by time rather than occurrence, Thomas suggests. For instance, set a weekly goal to exercise for 7 hours, he says. If there's insufficient time for a 30-minute workout, schedule 10 minutes in the morning, 10 in the afternoon and 10 after dinner, he says.

4. Maximize

Short on time? Try mini-workouts, suggests Jeff Miller, an Albany-based personal trainer who makes house calls. "Push, pull, rotate, lunge and squat," he says. "You can use this with little to no equipment. I have one client who does it in the elevator going to his office. While you're in the store waiting on line to check out, you could be lifting one leg. When you're at home, you could do five squats before you sit down to dinner."

5. Hydrate

"Especially during the holidays, you need to focus on water," Miller says. "A lot of inflammation and pain can be eliminated just from drinking more water. If you drink more water, you'll have more energy and vitality."

6. Make wholesome choices

Get eight hours of sleep and eat quality food, Miller says. "When I eat, I don't watch TV or read the newspaper," he says. "If I'm sitting down at the holiday dinner with my family, I'm not going to eat the processed foods because I have high standards for myself. The same thing when I go out to eat or to the holiday party. At family functions, everybody talks about their diseases and aches and pains. What most people spend on prescription drugs per year is what I spend on organic food."

7. Shop smart

Heading to the mall? Park as far as possible from the building and bring something healthy from home to munch on. "Walk every day," says Miller. "If you're going shopping, take along portable raw fruit and vegetable snacks."

8. Eat mindfully

Gratitude isn't just for Thanksgiving. "I say a quick prayer before I eat, acknowledging the people that made my food and the animals that sacrificed their lives," Miller says. "When I eat, I don't watch TV or read the newspaper. When I was a fat slob, I would inhale my food. Now I chew it roughly 20 times for the most benefit.

9. Don't go it alone

Do you struggle with willpower, especially at this time of year? "The most important thing is having somebody else hold you accountable," says James "Coach" Rignet, owner of REZULTZ, a 24-hour Corporate Wellness gym based in Menands. "Get a workout buddy. Get a trainer. Join an exercise group. It's OK that you don't want to do it on your own. There's no failure in that."

"Make a recurring exercise date with a friend," suggests Thomas. "Hold yourself accountable by publicly setting a goal. If you know that you have a tendency to pack on the pounds during this time of year, set a personal goal to avoid adding the chub and make it public."

10. Be steadfast

"Get into a routine that you feel comfortable with and then stick to your goal," says Rignet. You cannot break it no matter what excuse you can generate. There are a thousand excuses in our heads every single day. The ultimate goal is to not let the excuses win." ■

Desert Island Moves

All you need is gravity and determination to stay in shape

BY LAURIE LYNN FISCHER
ILLUSTRATIONS BY COLLEEN INGERTO

Even on a deserted island, you could get a full body workout.

"The average person can get a great workout with no equipment whatsoever, just by using their own body weight," says Louann Kuntz, manager of Albany Med Fitness. "You can do it anywhere, anytime. You don't have to worry about the gym being open. If you want to get up at 3 o'clock in the morning and exercise, you can do it. It's convenient and doesn't cost you anything, except your time."

What are the best apparatus-free exercises? Here are eight suggested by Kuntz and other Capital Region fitness professionals.

Pilates is "based on using your own body resistance and your own body weight to get the same results or even better results than what weights or a gym machine would do," says Lisa Battuello-Yakel, owner of Core Pilates in Albany.

Single leg stretch

Lie on your back. Bend your knees into your chest. Curl up your head to the tips of your shoulder blades. They should still touch the ground. Focus on your navel. Hug your right knee into your chest. Extend your left leg to a 45 degree angle. Your left hand goes across your right knee. Your right hand reaches to the outside of your right ankle. Switch sides. Do eight to ten repetitions.

This exercise strengthens and stretches your back, leg, hip, thigh, abdominal and neck muscles," Battuello-Yakel says.



Focus on your navel. Hug your right knee into your chest. Extend your left leg to a 45 degree angle.

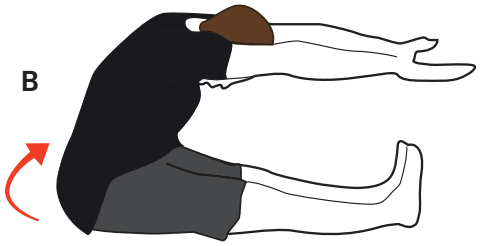
Roll up

Lie on your back, legs together and feet flexed. Reach your arms toward the ceiling. Lift your head and engage your abdominal muscles. Peel your spine off the mat, one vertebra at a time, like peeling a fruit roll off of wax paper. Round your torso forward in a C-curve, pull your abdominal muscles back and slowly roll your spine back down.

"This helps lower back pain," says Battuello-Yakel. "You're finding a stretch from the tailbone all the way to the neck."



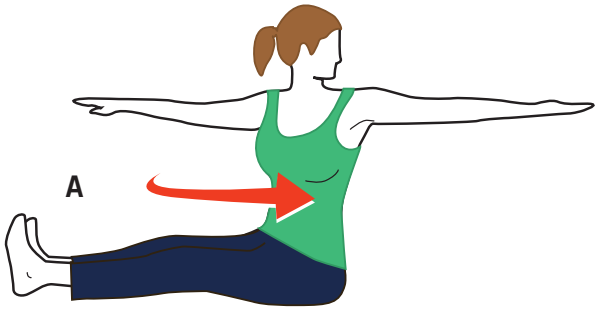
Peel your spine off the mat, one vertebra at a time, like peeling a fruit roll off of wax paper.



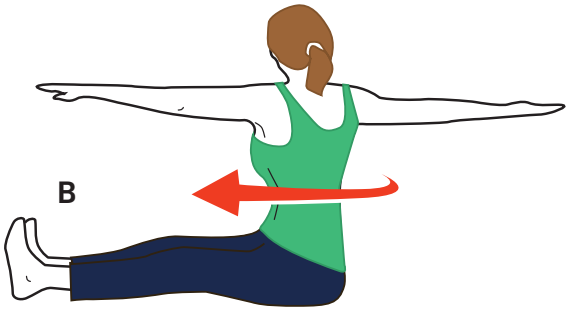
Spine twist

Pilates is a "foundation of movement" that translates to everyday activities, says Battuello-Yakel. This twist, which stretches the mid-spine, can increase your range of motion whenever you look over your shoulder while backing up an automobile.

Sit with your legs extended long in front of you and your feet flexed. Hold your arms out to the sides, as though you're an airplane. Visualize cementing the lower half of your body to the earth, from your navel down. Draw your abdominals in and twist from side to side from above the navel.



Draw your abdominals in and twist from side to side from above the navel.

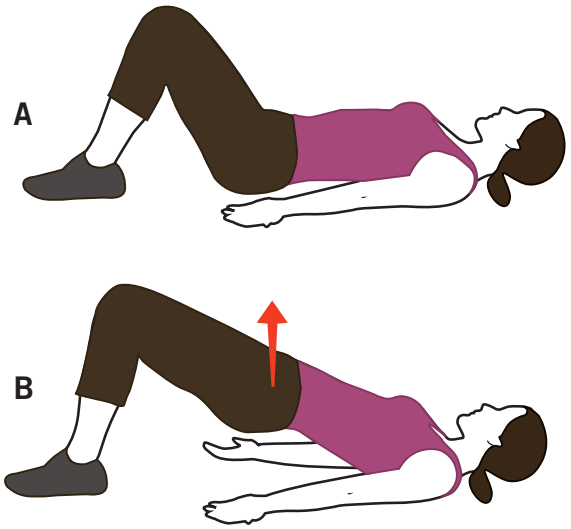


Glute Raise

A glute raise is "tremendous for anybody who has a job who sits down at a desk all day," says Adam Cernauskas, fitness manager at the Ciccotti Center in Albany.

Lie on your back. Elevate your butt. Tighten your butt muscles at the top of the movement. Your knee, hip and shoulder should be in one straight line, not parallel to the ground. The entire bottom of your foot should be in contact with the ground. Your knees should be bent. "This will activate your glutes and lengthen your hip flexors, which are chronically short for anybody who sits in a chair all day," Cernauskas says.

Lie on your back. Elevate your butt. Tighten your butt muscles at the top of the movement.



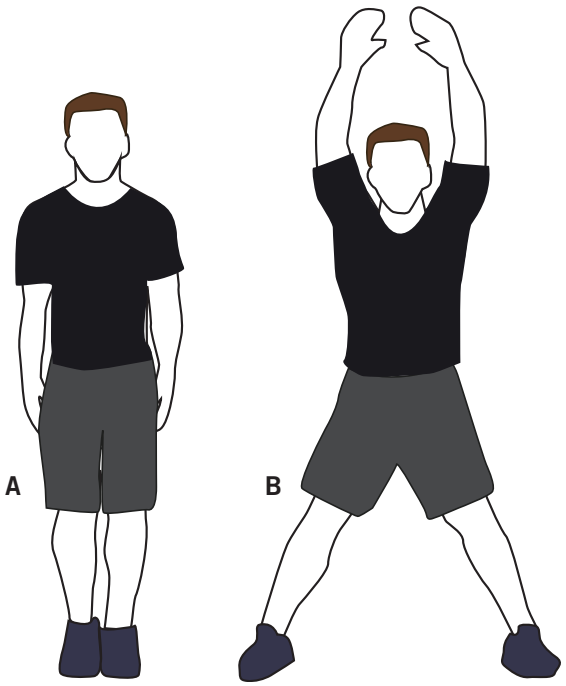
"The most important exercise for anyone, whether they're 18 or 88, involves compound movements," says Cernauskas.

Jumping Jacks

Plyometric exercise, which has to do with jumping, elevates the heart rate, says Cernauskas. "This is a good aerobic exercise," he says. "It can help mobility."

Stand straight in "military position" with your shoulders rounded back and your chest up. Bring your legs and arms away from the midline of the body so your legs form a triangle. Touch the arms directly overhead. Pretend there's a flashlight on your palms. Shine the beam straight ahead. Return to the beginning position. Be as smooth and consistent as possible. Begin doing these for 30 seconds and gradually increase the duration to 1 or 2 minutes.

Pretend there's a flashlight on your palms. Shine the beam straight ahead.



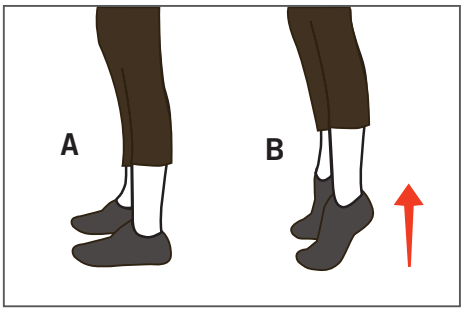
Heel Raises

"Some physicians recommend these for people who are sitting for a long time on airplanes," Kuntz says. "You need this for walking."

Lift your heel up 2 inches off the ground. Lower it. Repeat for 30 seconds.

"Fifty percent of your balance comes from your ankles," says Kuntz. "If this exercise can prevent one person from falling and breaking a hip, and save a life perhaps, I've done my job."

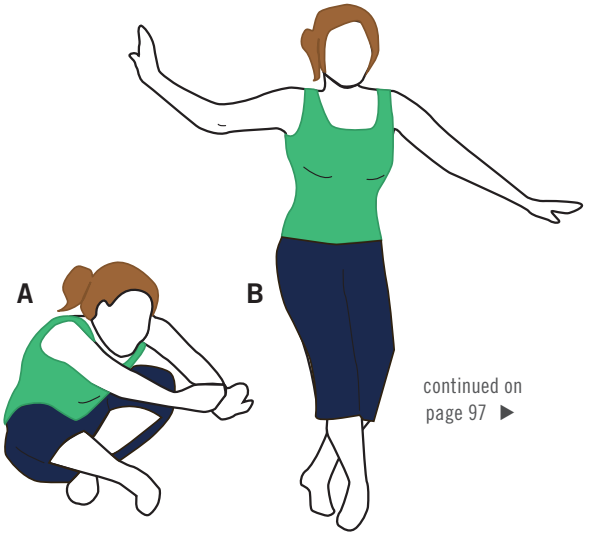
Lift your heel up 2 inches off the ground. Lower it. Repeat for 30 seconds.



Sit-stands

"One of the most basic things you can do" is sitting, standing, then sitting back down, says Kuntz. As you transition, try to keep your knees over your toes. Do as many as you can in 30 seconds. "By the end, your legs start to burn," says Kuntz.

Sit, stand, then sit back down. Do as many as you can in 30 seconds.



continued on page 97 ▶



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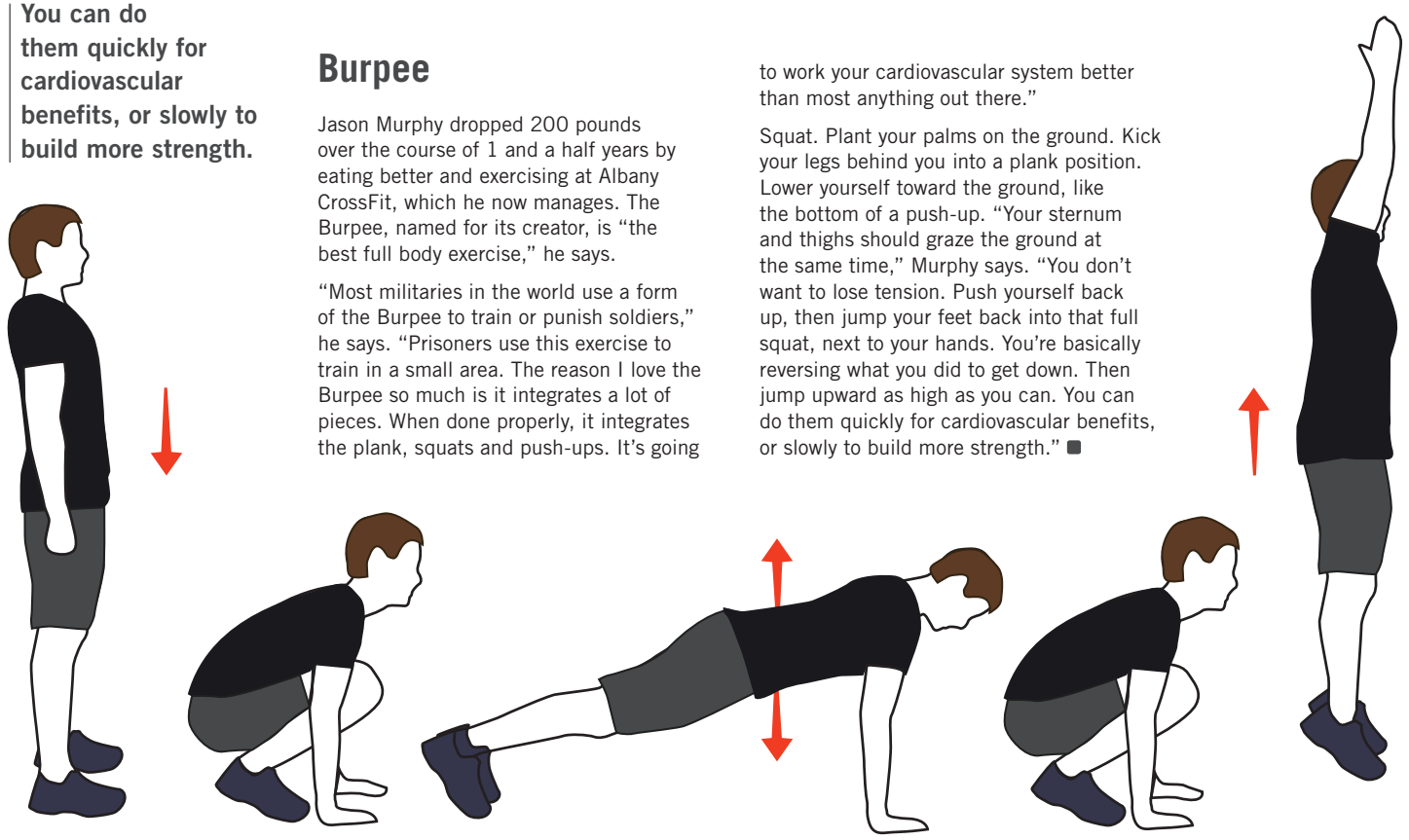
You can do them quickly for cardiovascular benefits, or slowly to build more strength.

Burpee

Jason Murphy dropped 200 pounds over the course of 1 and a half years by eating better and exercising at Albany CrossFit, which he now manages. The Burpee, named for its creator, is "the best full body exercise," he says.

"Most militaries in the world use a form of the Burpee to train or punish soldiers," he says. "Prisoners use this exercise to train in a small area. The reason I love the Burpee so much is it integrates a lot of pieces. When done properly, it integrates the plank, squats and push-ups. It's going to work your cardiovascular system better than most anything out there."

Squat. Plant your palms on the ground. Kick your legs behind you into a plank position. Lower yourself toward the ground, like the bottom of a push-up. "Your sternum and thighs should graze the ground at the same time," Murphy says. "You don't want to lose tension. Push yourself back up, then jump your feet back into that full squat, next to your hands. You're basically reversing what you did to get down. Then jump upward as high as you can. You can do them quickly for cardiovascular benefits, or slowly to build more strength." ■



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7 Simple, On-The-Spot Ways to Avoid Burnout



BY TRACI NEAL

Financial worries, job pressures, relationship issues, bills, family tension, time constraints, wars, Washington, illness, traffic, the nightly news all chip away at our health, and according to the latest figures on stress from the American Psychological Association, most of us are doing a pretty poor job of managing it (see sidebar).

"Stress is like acid on metal," says New York author and researcher Stephen G. Post. It erodes us, damaging our musculoskeletal, respiratory and cardiovascular systems and setting in motion a prolonged fight-or-flight response — an instinctive adrenaline rush hardwired into our brains that's meant to be an auto-reply to a pouncing tiger or a hot stove.

But for many of us with bills to pay, kids to raise, bosses to please, spouses to nurture, ageing parents to care for, and a to-do list that never seems to end, stress isn't just a reaction to an occasional threat or attack; it's a way of life. A pouncing tiger almost seems more manageable.

Here are some stress-busting tips from area experts who say that while stress is a part of life, we can beat it with a few simple strategies:

1. LAUGH IT OFF

Although you may not feel like laughing, forcing yourself to chuckle or smile can actually lighten your mood, says Arleen Stein (laughterfactor.com), a laughter leader from Menands who's certified by the World Laughter Tour, an international organization that promotes laughter as a source of good health and, well, happiness.

"When you start laughing, it's very physical and you find you forget what was wrong with you," says Stein, who works with businesses, hospitals, schools and nursing homes teaching the art — and benefits — of laughter.

Laughter may boost the immune system, reduce chronic pain, lower blood sugar levels in diabetes patients, improve lung function in COPD patients, and release chemicals in the brain that reduce stress hormones, leading to an overall feeling of relaxation, according to studies.

"Simulating laughter," she says, "stimulates laughter." In other words, even faking it can make you feel better, says Stein, who keeps her cool by "re-framing what's going on."

Try to look at things a little differently," she says. "Look at what you can control and how important it is in the scope of life."

When she's stuck in traffic and on the verge of losing it, Stein says she puts on a red rubber clown nose. "People see that and start smiling and then it calms me down," she says.

Photo: Design Pics/Chris Knorr/GettyImages.



2. TAKE A DEEP BREATH (OR TWO, OR THREE)

"We teach a technique known as the three-minute breathing space," says Lenore Flynn, owner of the Solid Ground Center for a Balanced Life in Albany (solidgroundny.com), of the mini-meditation designed to center and relax the mind and body. "I think that it's probably one of the most useful, quick, on-the-spot things we teach to people," says Flynn, whose students practice it a few times a day so they're ready to pull out the calming exercise when confronted with a frustrating or emotional event.

"What the breathing space does is it interrupts that reactivity," says Flynn. "As soon as you begin to notice you're getting agitated or reacting to something, you interrupt that with the three-minute exercise."

- Stop and become aware of your thoughts and how your body feels, even if it's negative
- Pay attention to the sensation of your breath, feeling yourself inhale and exhale while becoming more present in the moment
- Feel your body as a whole, redirecting your breath to parts of your body that are tense and allowing yourself to acknowledge how you feel

"That three-minute pause has really positive neurological and cognitive effects on your well-being so you're not going down the path of reactivity," she says. "Once the reactivity cycle goes into play, it often carries you along and has its own energy."

Mindfulness-based stress reduction has been shown, she says, to have the ability to change our brains.

"Let's say you go to see your mom and she's always commenting about your hair or your clothes or the car you drive or something else that's a sore spot for you, and immediately you begin to react," says Flynn. "Your brain has these automatic channels: Mom. Comment. Bingo! Off we go to the reactivity. Whereas the three-minute breathing space helps to alter that pattern, so if you practice it enough it often becomes your default reaction."

> "Look at what you can control and how important it is in the scope of life."

3. RELAX

"Those of us who sit at desks a lot often hold tension across our shoulders and in our necks," says Jan Hempstead, RN, a board certified health coach in Albany (inspiredhealthcoaching.com) who coaches clients in person and by phone. "Progressive muscle relaxation is something people can do right at their desks, or at home wherever they are sitting and involves a tightening and relaxing of muscle groups."

Hempstead starts at the top — tighten the muscles in your face and hold, then relax; scrunch up your shoulders and hold, then relax — and moves down the body.

"We are often very unaware of where in our bodies we hold tension," says Hempstead. "By tightening muscle groups then relaxing them, we first become aware of where we're holding tension and secondly give our body the opportunity to relax those muscles."

4. DO A GOOD DEED

In a 2010 study, 75 percent of Americans who volunteer said it lowered their stress levels and nearly 100 percent said helping others made them "feel happier," according to Post, founding director of the Center for Medical Humanities, Compassionate Care, and Bioethics at Stony Brook University and author of several books, including *The Hidden Gifts of Helping* (stephengpost.com).

"It turns out when people even *think* about helping others, a particular area of the brain gets activated — the part of the brain associated with feelings of joy," says Post, and "happiness chemicals" like dopamine and oxytocin are released.

"What's really interesting is that when these kinds of pathways are active, they close down the brain pathways that are associated with bitterness, hostility, rumination and so many of the destructive emotional states that create stress and protracted high levels of stress hormones," says Post.

Something as simple as putting a piece of candy on a coworker's desk or taking the trash out for an elderly neighbor can "light up" the happy chemicals in our brains and suppress the stress response.

"In terms of readily available activity for the everyday person, the best thing to do is make a point of doing something for somebody — a neighbor, a friend, someone who's needy — and even if it's just a half hour a week, the benefits are truly astonishing."

In the midst of a racing mind, Post says, "Breathe deep and ask yourself one very practical question: 'Right now, what can I do to contribute to the life of a single individual in my immediate vicinity?'

"If you want to feel relief from stress, get involved in the activity of helping somebody, somewhere, in some small way and that will help you make an emotional shift," he says.

5. GIVE YOURSELF A MASSAGE

"It's great to be able to go to a massage therapist but being able to do a self-massage right in the moment is helpful," says Hempstead, the Albany health coach, explaining a couple of simple stress-relieving self-massage techniques:

- Gently massage your earlobe with your thumb and forefinger for two or three minutes. "It's very stress relieving and very calming," she says. "I often have clients do this at night if they have trouble sleeping."
- Run the pads of all four fingers along the sides of your neck and out across your shoulders. "Do that four or five times with good, gentle pressure," Hempstead

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says. "It brings the blood flow through the neck and down to the trapezius muscles," at the base of the skull and across the shoulders, where stress often manifests as sore knots and painful trigger points.

6. HUG SOMETHING FURRY

Studies show that animal-assisted therapy (usually dogs trained to be calm and obedient) can significantly lower patients' blood pressure, reduce stress hormones and increase endorphin and oxytocin levels — "happiness" brain chemicals — resulting in a better mood and reduced pain.

Patty Reksc, an Amsterdam dog-owner and director of Therapy Dogs International Chapter 74 in the Capital Region, says she's not versed in the science behind her work — her therapy dogs visit with nursing home residents, hang with college students during exam week, help children learn to read, and even greet stressed-out travelers at Albany International Airport. She just knows it works.

"If definitely helps with stress relief," she says. "It helps them feel better and relax when the pet comes in and gives them unconditional love and acceptance."

As demand for therapy dogs grows, Reksc says her all-volunteer local chapter, which has more than 100 certified therapy dogs, is being invited to health fairs and local companies as well.

"There are so many different scenarios," she says. "Dogs are so giving and they don't judge."

7. GET IT IN WRITING

Journaling can be one of the most effective things you can do when you're stressed out, says Hempstead.

"You don't have to write your life story," she says. "Just write down your thoughts and feelings without editing as they come. It can be one word, a phrase, a sentence. Write it as it flows, keeping it private and releasing whatever needs to be let go."

People tend to dwell on things, she says, "thinking about it, ruminating over it. We spend too much time in our heads and eventually that starts to manifest itself in bodily symptoms" like aches and pains, irritability and trouble sleeping.

"The act of putting pen to paper helps us relieve that negativity," she says. "It can take two or three minutes but it's incredibly powerful to help relieve our stress."

For those worried someone mind find and read their innermost thoughts, Hempstead recommends using a basic student's composition notebook and writing your name and the words "TO-DO LIST" in big block letters on the front cover.

"Nobody would dream of opening it for fear of having to do something on your list," she laughs.

"Stress never ends," she adds. "We all have it, at different levels and at different times in our lives. It's how we respond to that stress that determines whether or not we do well or make ourselves sick." ■



Stress and Our Well-Being

The American Psychological Association's annual Stress in America survey examines how stress affects Americans' health and well-being. According to the 2013 study, the APA found that people continue to experience stress higher than what they believe to be healthy, struggle to achieve their health and lifestyle goals, and manage stress in ineffective ways. Here are some highlights of the report, available in full at apa.org.

Stress Over Time

42% of adults report that their stress level has increased

36% say their stress level has stayed the same over the past five years

Managing Stress

61% of adults say that managing stress is extremely or very important

… but only **35%** say they are doing an excellent or very good job at it

44% of adults say they are not doing enough or are not sure whether they are doing enough to manage their stress

… but **19%** say they never engage in stress management activities

The Major Stressors:

These three continue to be the most commonly reported sources of stress

Economy **59%**

Money **71%**

Work **69%**

Teen Stress

Teens report a **5.8** stress level (out of 10 points) during the school year.

They believe a **3.9** stress level is ideal.

Teens also top adults' average reported stress levels:

5.8 for teens

vs

5.1 for adults

31% of teens report feeling overwhelmed

36% of teens report fatigue or feeling tired

30% report feeling depressed or sad as a result of stress

23% report skipping a meal due to stress

Photo: Sophie Goldsworthy/GettyImages. Illustrations: iStock Vectors/GettyImages.

FYI | *with*

Annette Nanes

Annette Nanes isn't bug-phobic, but she really doesn't like snakes.

Owner of Spectrum 8 and New World Bistro

BY BRIANNA SNYDER | PHOTO BY COLLEEN INGERTO



Annette Nanes has been an owner of the Spectrum since 1983. She's also well known in the area for her widely acclaimed restaurant, New World Bistro, which she and her husband opened in 2009.

Before the Spectrum opened in 1983, Nanes, her husband and their two business partners opened a little theater in Rensselaer in 1980. But then they found the Spectrum location — which had been an old art deco theater in the 1940s — and purchased that, expanding it into the hip little strip it is in Delso today.

Since the New World's opening, chef Ric Orlando has been hailed as a hero of gustatory delight, and is set to begin a catering business this fall, so stay tuned.

In the meantime, we asked Nanes a few silly questions.

What's your current mood? I guess nervous. [Laughs.] But feeling more comfortable. **What's your Facebook pet peeve?** People who just give every little detail of their life. That is not really interesting. **Do you like Facebook?** I have a love-hate relationship with Facebook. I feel compelled to look at it. Sometimes I think it's a waste of my time. But I do often feel compelled to find out what's going on with other people. **Who was your last text from?** I don't remember exactly but I would probably guess my daughter. **How old is your daughter?** 35. **Does she live around here?** Yes, she lives in Albany. **If you could go back in time and change something, would you?** Something about my life? **Or something about anything.** I would change people taking to war to solve problems or using war as a means to solve problems. **It's pretty terrifying what's going on right now, isn't it?** Yes, it is. It's upsetting. **Have you ever had a near death experience?** No. **When was the last time you cried?** Hmm. Probably thinking about my mother, who passed away many years ago. **I'm sorry to hear that. Were you close?** Yes. But it's been actually 35 years. She died after my oldest daughter was born. **Who is your hero?** I would say Amelia Earhart. When I was a little girl, I read a biography about her and ever since then I think I've been fascinated by her and her sense of adventurousness, and also kind of interested in the mystique of her disappearance. **What was the last thing you ate or drank?** I just ate a homemade pretzel made by one of our cooks in the restaurant. With a honey-mustard sauce. **What makes you mad?** Certain people's sense of entitlement. **Do you think that's a generational problem?** No, I don't. **What have you been listening to lately?** Well, I don't have an iPod, so I listen to CDs. And I actually still have records. And I listen to the radio. But I listen to the WEXT radio station. I enjoy the local music. And I grew up in the '60s and '70s, so I love the Beatles and Neil Young and good old fashioned rock and roll. I also like, I would say, female singer-songwriters like Bonnie Raitt and Lucinda Williams and Norah Jones. **What's the last movie you saw in the theater?** Isn't that funny? Whenever someone asks me about movies in the theater my mind goes blank. [Laughs.] **Do you see every movie that comes to your theater?** I would say I see 90 percent. And sometimes I don't have time to see the movies, but then I'll try to catch them on Netflix, the evil N-word of the movie-theater business. **Do you have a favorite filmmaker?** Not really. I enjoy a lot of different genres of film, except I'm not a big fantasy or sci-fi movie fan. I like a good narrative story. I love a good story and I especially enjoy female-centric stories. **What are you reading right now?** I've just finished a book for book club called *The Language of Flowers*, by Vanessa Diffenbaug. **Is it good?** Yes. **Another female-centric?** Yes! It is. Another female-centric. **If you could choose how you'll die, what would you pick?** Definitely in my sleep. That's how my grandmother died, at 95. And I hope that's how I go. **If you could live anywhere, where would you live?** Well, I love living in the Northeast, because I do like the change of seasons. However, I am starting to grow tired of the long winters. So I would do three seasons in the Northeast and the winter in a more tropical country, possibly. Mexico. I've traveled a lot in Mexico. I love Mexico. **I want to go to Oaxaca!** You should. It's one of the most culturally rich cities I've ever been to. There's culture everywhere. In the streets, you go from square to square in the evening and there's folk dancing in one square and mariachi bands, and a lot of art and great food. **What's the first thing you notice in a person?** How genuine they are. ■

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