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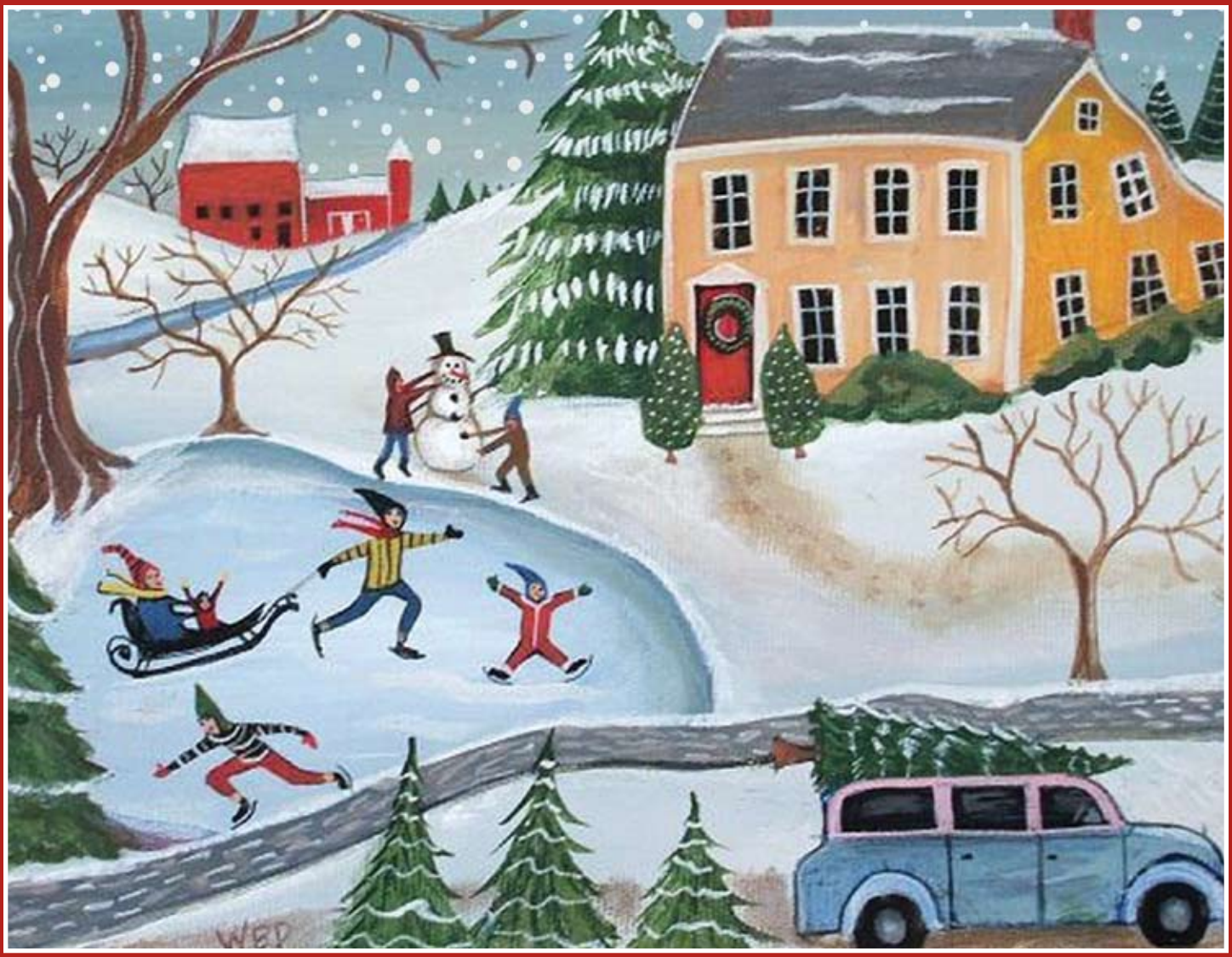
December 2008



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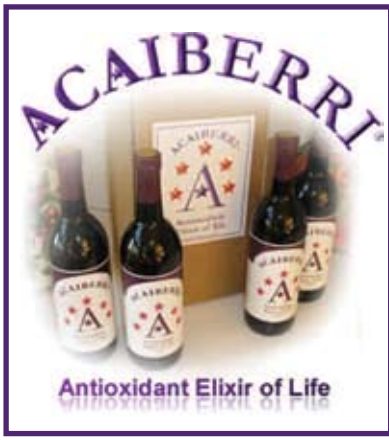

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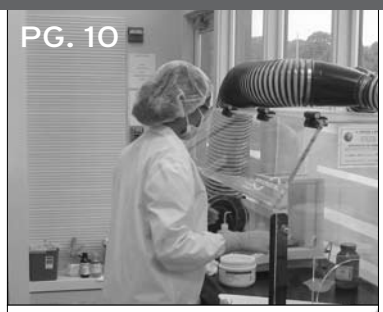
Natural Awakenings is your guide to a healthier, more balanced life. In each issue readers find cutting-edge information on natural health, nutrition, fitness, personal growth, green living, creative expression and the products and services that support a healthy lifestyle.

DEPARTMENTS

newsbriefs 5
healthbriefs 9
communityspotlight 10
inspiration 11
consciouseating 12
fitbody 14
globalbriefs 18
healthykids 19
healingways 20
naturalpet 21
greenliving 23



INSIDE THIS ISSUE

Compound Pharmaceuticals 10
Addresses Patient-Specific Needs

Better by the Dozen 12
With Decadent, Yet Healthy Cookies
by Melissa Williams

What Your Healthy Choices Really Mean 13

Gift From the Heart This Season 16
by Frances Lefkowitz

Gifts for God 19
Instilling Generosity and Joy in Children
by Elisa Bosley

Throw a Green Party 23
Eco-Entertaining Made Simple
by Corey Colwell-Lipson and Lynn Colwell

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letterfrompublisher

At my first real job after college, we practiced a familiar office tradition – the Secret Santa. We picked names from a hat. There were 80 or so of us, so the chances of getting the name of someone very familiar was slim; this, combined with a $10 spending cap, did not exactly lend itself to inspired gift giving. To me it seemed a crime that so much effort and money went into a program that was nearly guaranteed to end up in a landfill.

So I started a movement to abolish the Secret Santa. My idea was to have everyone donate their $10 to a local soup kitchen. I wanted my co-workers to realize that each year the $800 we spent could make a significant difference in people's lives. Fortunately, my idea caught on and we were able to raise several hundred dollars each year. We succeeded not only in diminishing the garbage that went into landfills, but also the stress and obligation that went with into purchasing a gift for someone we didn't know very well.

Some years later, I had a wonderful staff of my own and my own holiday tradition. I intended the tradition to be special, but as often happens, after a few years the tradition turned into something more obligatory than heartfelt. We had a department meeting and that same wonderful staff was excited with the idea that, in lieu of gifts, we would find a local charity and donate to them. By then there were a lot more local charities that had gotten the word out as to what their programs were looking for and it was easier to see how much was needed for the holidays. We chose Gateway Healthcare, which was looking for children's gifts. It was great fun to go to a toy store and freely buy presents for children. As Barbara Biziou reminds us *on page 16*, gift giving among adults is a modern tradition, as they were originally meant just for children.

In this month's feature article, "Give from the Heart" *on page 16*, Frances Lefkowitz encourages us to demonstrate our love for those around us by giving meaningful things rather than material ones. This is not easy when catalogs pour into our homes, tempting us into needless consumption and unwanted debt. Lefkowitz gently reminds us that there are inexpensive ways to communicate the joy of the season.

The greatest joys of the season, of course, are the many traditions we participate in each year. While most of us cannot remember the gifts we received the previous holiday, most can remember baking holiday cookies, hanging decorations, or singing carols with friends and family. Adding new traditions is always fun, too, and the healthy cookie recipes *on page 12* that families can enjoy making this year just might become part of next year's tradition. Like me, you may find that, after all the desserts are gone, what remains are the memories of time spent together -- and that is truly a priceless gift.

Peace on Earth

Maureen

Maureen Cary, Publisher

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newsbriefs

News and resources to inspire concerned citizens to work together in building a healthier, stronger society that works for all.

Not Your Everyday Holiday Gifts

The holiday season is fast approaching. Clements Market offers some off-beat gift ideas for those who want little something different. Food choices abound, including all natural fruit baskets made to order. Creekstone Farms premium quality meats are now available to order online and can be shipped anywhere in the country. Finally, Purple Pear of Providence Pecans, voted Best Snack by readers of Best of R.I., are available in two delicious flavors.

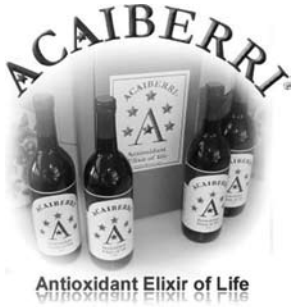
Clements also stocks Burt's Bees line of earth friendly natural personal care products, perfect as stocking stuffers. From their famous lip balms and hand and body lotions to shampoos and body scrubs, Burt's Bees will be found on many peoples' holiday gift lists.

Clements Market is located at 2575 East Main Rd, in Portsmouth. Call 401-683-0180 or visit ClementsMarket.com. See ad, page 9.

Enjoy the little things, for one day you may look back and realize they were the big things.

- Robert Brault

Benefit in more ways than one



According to recent research, nearly everyone over the age of 45 suffers more bodily aches and pains. Angelo Aiello, co-owner of the Rhode Island-based Acaiberri company claims that just one ounce a day of Acaiberri Antioxidant Elixir of Life health drinks can help to offset this. The drink, he says, boosts the immune system and even has shown improvements in some cases of arthritis. The product was named after the Acai Berry, discovered in the Amazon Rain Forest several years ago. "We believed so highly in the Acai Berry, that we named our product after it," says Angelo.

The best part for native Southern New Englanders is that the company, which distributes worldwide, is locally based. David, Angelo's brother, has a background in chemistry, and is the technical part of the team while Angelo, with his special interests in business and marketing, controls the marketing side. Because the product is manufactured locally, anyone in the area can easily purchase it at the following locations: Venda Ravioli in Providence, D'Palmeris Bakery in Johnston, the Village Wellness Center in Warwick, and It's My Health in Cumberland. Customers can also go to the home manufacturing location at 50 King St. in Johnston if they want to buy the drink by the case.

Visit the website at Acaiberri.com for more information or email Acaiberri@cox.net to learn more about distribution. See ad, page 2

Career Workshop Addresses Life Changes

Many workers today feel stuck in their careers, especially during these difficult economic times. Strategic life coach Jeff Doff will offer a workshop from 7 to 8 p.m. December 10 at The Spot on Thayer in Providence to discuss issues pertaining to job changes. Topics include: Grown Up and Still Not Sure What I Want to Do With My Life; Getting Un-Stuck: If You Can't Change Your Job, What Can You Change; Seven Secrets for Life-Work Balance; and Making the Most of a Lay Off: Finding What's Next After Losing a Job.

Doff, a strategic life coach, focuses on career transition and improvement. Drawing upon his own intensive career exploration, he helps clients to clarify intentions, shift limiting beliefs and move forward.

The Spot on Thayer is located at 286 Thayer Street, in Providence. Attendance is limited to 25. Pre-register at JeffDoff@yahoo.com. See ad, page 7.

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East Meets West in Church's Great Hall

Saint Martin's Episcopal Church on Orchard Street in Providence opens its doors each Thursday evening for Kundalini yoga. The 90-minute class is taught in the Great Hall by Sat Khartar K. Khalsa, who studied under India's Yogi Bhajan when he first introduced Kundalini to the United States in the 1970s.

Khalsa's warmth, strength and infectious laughter encourages students through a session of traditional Kundalini, sometimes call the yoga of awareness, by incorporating mantras, kriya, deep relaxation, meditation and song. Transformative exercises are accompanied by soothing music and chants; the collective energy in the room is palpable and empowering.

St. Martin's is located at 50 Orchard Ave., in Providence. Classes start at 7 p.m. each Thursday. Cost is $12 drop in or $100 for 10 classes. Call for more information: 508-376-6206..

Good Help in Tough Times

Marie Capobianco and Elisa Robley, co-owners of Wellness Within, provide mental health counseling including substance abuse, depression, anxiety/panic disorders, mood disorders and more. Recently, they have been working with people who have been approved through the Access to Recovery Grant (ATR), including those on probation and recently released from prison.

"We became providers for the ATR because it provides those clients who cannot afford healthcare the ability to seek treatment," says Robley. "It also ensures genuine, free and independent client choice for clinical treatment and recovery services."

Wellness Within Counseling Center

Wellness Within is sympathetic to those faced with the stresses of financial difficulties.

"More than ever people are experiencing stress related to problems in our economy such as loss of jobs, foreclosures and worries about their children's future," says Capobianco. "Many of our clients have informed us of how counseling has helped them cope more effectively with these problems and restore harmony in their lives."

Wellness Within is located at 900 Reservoir Ave., in Cranston. Call 401-632-4114. See ad, page 15.

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www.ProsperforPeace.com/Raffles4Rescues.html
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Workshop Addresses Back, Neck and Shoulder Pain

Andraly Horn of It's My Health offers workshops December 7 and 14 to therapists on the structure, function and pathologies related to neck, shoulder and back pain. Students will be using a variety of bodywork techniques to address these areas including: myfacial release, active assisted stretches, exploration of movement exercises and NMT release points. There will also be a comprehensive anatomical review of the thorax and back structures using a variety of teaching aides. The therapist will come away from these classes with a greater awareness of neck, shoulder and back pain and numerous ways to address them. Rather than providing a system or routine, these workshops offer the therapist a multidimensional approach to evaluate each client individually.

it's MY health
Wellcare Collaborative

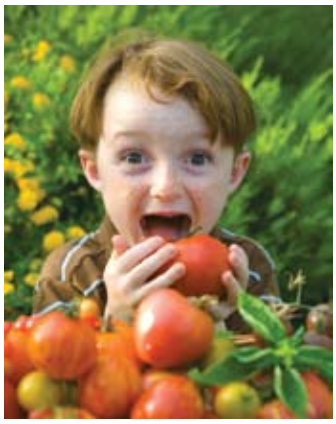
The basis of this work is to provide effective techniques in a supportive and non-invasive way and to teach clients self care strategies. Workshop participants should bring sheets, towels and oil. All students should be able to give and receive treatments. A workbook is included with the workshop and a certificate of completion will be awarded.

It's My Health is located at 2374 Mendon Road, in Cumberland. Cost is $85 for one class or $160 for both. 401-405-0819. See ad, page 28.

What can you do to promote world peace? Go home and love your family.

- Mother Teresa

Local Food, All Winter Long



No need to despair, you can still have fresh, local food all winter long and support our local growers and food producers too. This year, the Wintertime Farmers' Market has expanded to a new location at the Hope Artiste Village in Pawtucket. This new spot offers much more space and plenty of parking.

Some of the tasty items that will be offered are kale, collards, swiss chard, apples, salad greens, lettuce, potatoes, carrots, and radishes. Also available are locally raised eggs, meat and shellfish, RI made cheeses, jams and jellies, bread and locally produced, fair trade chocolate and locally roasted fair trade coffee.

Every Saturday from 11am-2pm at Hope Artiste Village at 1005 Main Street in Pawtucket. Visit FarmFreshRI.org for more information.

Bling Jazzes Up Traditional Acupuncture Practice

The sign in the window at Anania Chiropractic reads "Bling bling! Ask about 'Japanese-style' Tonification Acupuncture with 24-karat Gold Needles" So ask we did.

In an effort to appeal to the bling generation, Anania Chiropractic is touting its Japanese-style acupuncture that utilizes 24-karat gold needles. In truth, gold needles are fairly common in Japan and Tibet, says Dr. Jason Bergman.

"I want to reach out to the youth and present acupuncture as a cool, hip thing, which it is," he says, "but gold needles are not a gimmick. Gold is a trace element in our bodies, and is the best conductor of electricity. There is electricity in our bodies as well. Acupuncture works on this bio-electricity."

He says the gold needles have a slightly different, more warming quality than standard stainless steel needles, although he uses these, too. "Acupuncture has many styles. I practice mostly a pre-Qin dynasty Chinese style, but I also use a lot of Korean and Japanese techniques."

The 24-karat gold treatment also uses a high-grade tonic, which Bergman says is better used as a health boost when not acutely ill or in pain. "It is subtle," he says, "but can be a sublime, potentially life-changing experience."

Jason Bergman treats patients at the Traditional and Natural Medicine Clinic, 172 Broadway, in Providence (inside Anania Chiropractic). Call 401-523-3253 or email TNMClinic@gmail.com. See ad, page 2.

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Fall Honors Colloquium: People & Planet

Human activities are transforming the world at an extraordinary rate. The 2008 University of Rhode Island Honors Colloquium will explore human-caused global change, its consequences, and potential human responses through a series of lectures, films, and panel discussions. These events are free and open to the public.

Events are held Tuesday evenings at 7:30 p.m in Edwards Auditorium on URI's main campus in Kingston. Upcoming events include Solutions to the Global Carbon and Climate Problem December 2 with Robert Socolow co-director of the Carbon Mitigation Initiative at Princeton University. A "fresh, salty and musical look at global environmental change" takes place December 9 with It's a Shore Thing – A Coastal Cabaret.

Readings on climate change and discussions guided by experts in relevant disciplines are being held at various libraries throughout the area as well.

For more information, Visit URI.EDU/hc or call 401-874-2303.

Adults Let Loose, Get Creative

Creative play is essential for humanity to grow, stretch themselves and become more aware, says Creativity Coach JoAnne Bromley. "Imagination, role-playing and construction are the foundation of which all our critical and analytical skills are developed," she says.

That is why Bromley has formed Play, Laugh, Grow (PLG), an unpredictable, fun, non-threatening environment where being silly is totally acceptable. The group will meet on from 6:30 to 8:30 p.m. Tuesday evenings beginning December 2 at the Creative Cultural Center in Johnston. The meet-up will consist of games, challenges, discussion and creative prompts to help loosen participants from imposed thinking. "We are going to challenge ourselves," says Bromley, or at least try to explore and release parts of ourselves that have been left behind or undiscovered." She says all are invited to "meet new people, break old thinking habits, learn new skills or if nothing else, let loose and play."

The Creative Cultural Center is located at 228 Putnam Pike, in Johnston. Visit TheArtofPossiblitiy.net for more information.

Peace
is our gift
to each other.
- Elie Wiesel

Winter Wonderland

Wendy Presseisen

Whimsy and a love of animals are expressed in equal measure in much of Wendy Presseisen's work. *Winter Wonderland* is a soulful example of the artist's neo-naïve folk art style. Many of her charming folk art cats, animals and landscapes have graced the pages of Country Living and Country Folk Art, and her work hangs in private collections throughout the world.

Presseisen, who cheerfully admits to having no formal training, has been painting for more than 45 years. "My ideas come from out of the blue," she says, "the unplanned paintings paint themselves, literally taking form when brush meets canvas."

Lately, Presseisen has been exploring abstract expressionism. "I'm an artist whose style changes from day to day," she explains, then offers a favorite quote from Pablo Picasso: "Every child is an artist. The problem is how to remain an artist once he grows up."

View the artist's portfolio at ArtWendy.com.

Holiday Foods: Naughty or Nice?

A few cookies here, a couple of eggnogs there and a rich meal in-between can quickly pack on unhealthy extra pounds. But we can minimize the damage of holiday feasts by making wise food choices that total up fewer calories, less fat and more fiber. Here are some helpful tips:

- Pick whole wheat rolls, wild rice and quinoa to stay satisfied longer.
- Select steamed fish and seafood for a plate both elegant and light.
- Pass on the gravy, as it's usually high in fat.
- Eat regular meals and snack on fruits to avoid overindulging at festivities.
- Choose low fat yogurts and hard cheeses as both satisfying and rich in calcium
- Look to small amounts of dark chocolate and heart-healthy nuts to stave off a craving.
- Limit alcoholic drinks and cocktails because they are high in calories, with no nutritional value.

Depriving ourselves of a favorite holiday treat can backfire and lead to unsatisfied cravings and overeating. Making conscious decisions, however, on where to splurge will leave us jolly and feeling good.

Source: Adapted from WebMD.com

VITAMIN D

Researchers from the University of Rochester Medical Center now report that Vitamin D protects healthy prostate cells from damage and injuries that can lead to cancer.

GIFTS WITH A MESSAGE

A gift can bring lasting satisfaction and utility when it carries an inherent environmental message. A gardening book, stainless steel water bottle, or canvas tote for future trips to the supermarket happily raise the bearer's feel-good eco-quotient.

Source: Medical University of South Carolina

Compound Pharmaceuticals Addresses Patient-Specific Needs

A growing number of people have unique health needs that off-the-shelf prescription medicines cannot meet. For them, customized, compounded medications are an excellent alternative for achieving better health. Compounded prescriptions are ordered by licensed physicians or veterinarians and mixed safely by trained, licensed compounding pharmacists. Pharmacists are the only health care professionals that have studied chemical compatibilities and can prepare alternate dosage form.

Ryan Dyer, of Bayview Pharmacy has been practicing prescription compounding since 2006. The pharmacy is one of just a handful in Rhode Island that provides this service. Dyer explains one example in which compounding helped out a local girl and her mother.

"A 10-year-old girl was battling a moderate case of nausea due to an illness. Her mother had become concerned because she could not digest any liquids or solids, including medicine." When the mother contacted Bayview, Dyer called the girl's pediatrician to explain how a topical gel could help her. The pediatrician agreed to the prescription and, within hours, the girl's condition had taken a turn for the better.

"In her case," said Dyer, "we were able to take a medicine that was only available as a tablet, which she couldn't swallow, and turn it into a gel that her mother could rub onto her skin." As a result, he said, her condition improved within a short period of time.

Compounding pharmacists, Ryan and Christine Dyer, partner with the physician and patient to find the best way to "help the medicine go down."

The art and science of prescription compounding has been practiced for centuries throughout the world, said Dyer. "It allows pharmacists to work directly with medical providers to solve problems on an individual basis – based on a patient's needs and medical condition. The compounding pharmacist takes the time to learn more about the patients underlying symptoms, thus allowing for proper pharmaceutical treatment, delivered in a form that is the best way 'to help the medicine go down'."

Although this form of pharmacy was quite common in the United States 50 years ago, the number of pharmacists who practiced compounding diminished due to the growth of large pharmaceutical companies, as well as large chain pharmacies (most of which do very little compounding). Recently however, the number of independently owned pharmacies that specialize in compounding has grown. "Compounding pharmacies are licensed and regulated in the 50 states and the District of Columbia by their respective state boards of pharmacy," adds Dyer.

Compounding pharmacists can develop unique medications for animals as well as people. Not only is compounding good for those suffering arthritis, menopause or acne, but it is also good for a cat that will not swallow pills. "Compounding provides pharmacists the flexibility to offer solutions for these challenging situations," Dyer said. "It increases the treatment options for licensed medical prescribers, therefore improving outcomes and the overall quality of life of their patients."

Ryan Dyer is a co-owner of Bayview Pharmacy, a graduate of the University of Rhode Island College of Pharmacy, and has been a licensed pharmacist since 1996. Bayview Pharmacy is located in South Kingstown at 3045 Tower Hill Road at the corner of Routes 1 & 138. Call 401-284-4505 or visit Bayviewrx.com.

Having, Being and Stillness

by Father Paul Keenan

I have a friend whose spiritual practice relies heavily on affirmations. I ran into him the other day, and he was completely beside himself with joy. "I was waiting for the bus," he told me. "The sun was just coming up, a huge ball of light on a glorious morning. I stood there, basking in its warmth, when suddenly the thought crossed my mind, 'I feel like a million dollars.' Before I knew what hit me, another thought rolled in: 'I *am* a million dollars! I am a million dollars that God is sending into the universe today to make it a better place.'

"All my life, I have thought about wealth as something that I have, not as something that I am. Perhaps, if I thought of myself as wealth that God is sharing with the Universe, instead of thinking of my wealth as something outside of me, I would eliminate the awareness of separation between myself and my wealth."

I could only advise my friend not to adopt his new insight *for the sake of* getting more wealth, or he would create the separation once again. His excited musings started me on a train of thought about the difference between having and being. Can you have what you are not?

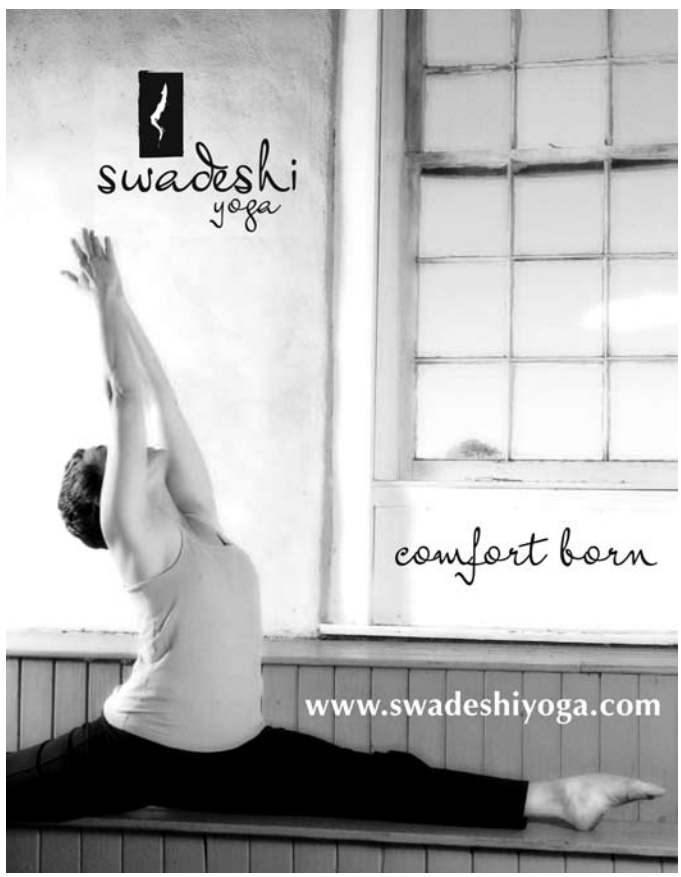
Most of us don't see any connection between being and having. It's living out of who we are, not out of what we have, that makes life worthwhile. And, unless we focus on being, we can never really have.

The way in to being is through stillness. "Be still, and know that I am God"—it is in meditation, in quiet walks in the park, when standing in awe before a sunrise or a sunset, and in the pause between two affirmations that there comes the stillness that is the very heart and soul of who we are and the place of encounter with God. It is the still point between the sobs of a grieving parent. It is in the space between the canvas and the artist's brush, in the space between two heartbeats. We hear it between two notes of music and between two clangs of a church bell.

In stillness, we join forces with the God of creation and declare that the world is good and very good. Like God, we are not daunted by the power of evil—we respect it, even as we go for its Achilles' heel, much as an electrical repairperson handles downed wires carefully, knowing full well how to get them up and running again.

Stillness bestows those powers upon us all. So, here's to my much-excited friend at his bus stop. His stillness in the sun led to insight and exuberance, which he shared with me and I have shared with you. Stillness is contagious like that. Having caught it, we must now let it catch us, so that we can, in turn, give it to the world.

Source: Excerpted from the late Father Paul Keenan's column for SoulfulLiving.com. *For information about his writings, including his new book,* If You Want to Change Your Mind, You Have to Open Your Heart*, visit* FatherPaul.com.



Better by the Dozen

Bake up Holiday Cheer with Decadent, yet Healthy Cookies

by Melissa Williams

Whether chewy or crunchy, eaten straight or dunked in milk, cookies are a perfect accompaniment to holiday parties and chilly nights gathered around the fireplace. This year, indulge family and friends with a batch of these tasty treats, updated by using unrefined flours, natural sugars, and nutrient-boosting ingredients, including dried fruit, heart-healthy nuts, vitamin-rich pumpkin, and antioxidant-laden organic dark chocolate. To cut unhealthy fats, these recipes also substitute unsweetened applesauce and egg whites for some of the butter. Such creative twists gladly transform cookies from a guilty indulgence to a healthier treat—true comfort food for a joyous season.

Gingerbread People

Makes 3 ½ dozen / Preparation tip: Currants make good eyes, noses and buttons; place on cookies before baking. Or, decorate with all-natural colored sprinkles before baking.

1 ¼ cups	unbleached all-purpose flour
1 cup	whole-wheat pastry flour
3 tsp	ground ginger
2 tsp	ground cinnamon
½ tsp	ground allspice
½ tsp	ground nutmeg
½ tsp	ground cloves
½ tsp	baking powder
¼ tsp	baking soda
¼ tsp	salt
½ cup	brown sugar
5 Tblsp	unsalted butter, softened
½ cup	molasses
1	egg

Icing (optional)

2 cups	powdered sugar, sifted
¼ tsp	lemon or vanilla extract
3-4 Tblsp	water

1. In a medium bowl, combine flours, spices, baking powder, baking soda and salt.
2. In a separate bowl, combine sugar and butter; beat on medium speed for 2-3 minutes until thoroughly combined and fluffy. Add molasses and egg and blend. Add flour mixture to molasses mixture; beat on low until blended. Divide dough in half and wrap each half in plastic. Chill for 1-2 hours.
3. Preheat oven to 350°. On a floured board, roll dough into a ¼-inch-thick circle. Cut out cookies with a cutter. Place one inch apart on a baking sheet coated with cooking spray. Decorate with candies and currants, if desired. Bake for 7-8 minutes until firm. Let cool on baking sheet for 2 minutes, then transfer to a wire rack to cool completely.
4. To make icing, combine powdered sugar and lemon or vanilla extract. Add 3 tablespoons water and stir. If necessary, add an additional tablespoon of water until a spreadable paste forms. Use a piping cloth (or zip-top plastic bag with one corner snipped) to decorate cooled cookies.

What Your Healthy Choices Really Mean

Walking into a health-food store can be overwhelming. Homeopathic, herbal, vegan, vegetarian, organic – there is a lot of confusion today about just what these terms mean, and how they differ from each other.

The word organic is used to describe crops grown without chemical pesticides and is often incorrectly assumed to mean healthy. While organic produce and meats are certainly healthier than those crops which are sprayed or injected with chemicals, organic gummy bears are still candy and organic lettuce still needs to be washed. The terms vegetarian and vegan often pose a problem for shoppers as well. A vegetarian is one who refrains from eating animals, such as fish and chicken. A vegan, however, does not eat any animal products at all including milk eggs, cheese or honey.

Similarly, the terms homeopathic and herbal each have their own definition and are not interchangeable. Shoppers may ask for a homeopathic remedy when what they are really looking for is tea, which is an herbal. While both products fall under the category of alternative remedies, the way they are prepared and their healing actions differ considerably.

Herbalism has been practiced for thousands of years worldwide and utilizes specifically chosen plants, either cultivated or wild-harvested, which are made into teas, tinctures or capsules. A camomile tea bag, for example, is filled with the tiny orange and white flowers of the camomile plant. Camomile in capsule form is simply ground up flowers poured into a capsule. A tincture of camomile is usually made with alcohol or glycerine; the flowers are packed into a jar, then covered with either liquid, capped and left to extract for a period of days or weeks, during which it is periodically shaken. Then the flowers are strained out and the remaining liquid is poured into an amber bottle with a dropper.

Homeopathy is a much more modern system of healing, devised in the late eighteenth century by the German physician Samuel Hannemann who believed that "like heals like". The actual remedy is either a small white pellet or a liquid, containing the vibrational signature of a specific plant, animal or mineral. Homeopathics are believed to be safe and non-interactive with pharmaceuticals because they are so diluted that there is little to no chemical composition left in the remedy—only the energetics remain.

Used in a homeopathic remedy, the camomile flower would be made into what is called the mother tincture, similar to the herbal tincture. From this mixture, one drop is taken and combined with 99 drops of alcohol/water. The resulting mixture is then shaken for a specific number of times. From that mixture, one drop is taken and combined with 99 drops of alcohol/water once more, and once more shaken. The first dilution is known as 1c potency, the next would be 2c, and so on, until reaching the potencies commonly sold in stores, usually 6c, 12c, or 30c.

The terms homeopathic and herbal each have their own definition and are not interchangeable. Shoppers may ask for a homeopathic remedy when what they are really looking for is tea, which is an herbal.

The theory behind homeopathy is that as the tincture becomes more diluted, its potency increases. The resulting liquid can be sold as is, poured over sugar pellets, which are then packaged and labeled, or combined with other liquids to form a combination remedy. Unlike herbals, which are plant-based, a homeopathic medicine can be made out of virtually anything—an insect, an animal, or a mineral such as potassium. While the dosing of herbs, like pharmaceuticals, is dependent upon weight and other considerations, it is entirely possible for a homeopathic 30c, for example, to be prescribed by a for a 250 lb man, a young child or a toy poodle. Because it is vibrational in nature, different rules apply to homeopathic remedies.

This is why it is best to avoid making assumptions and to ask questions.

While many forms of both herbal and homeopathic are considered gentle and safe to use with children, this is certainly not the case with all remedies, and it is always best to check with a health-care provider before making a choice.

Linda Rainshaw is a Supplement Buyer at Foodworks in Smithfield, 9 Cedar Swamp Rd. Smithfield 401-232-2410.

Winter Workouts

Indoor Options to Beat the Blahs

by Barb Amrhein

Plunging temperatures in cold weather climes can put a chill on the best-intentioned fitness routine. DVD programs and free weights are solid indoor choices, but we also can look forward to moving beyond those basics to more adventurous pursuits at local fitness clubs, health centers and YMCAs. This winter, try some of these activities to stay in shape while having fun.

Take a spin

The latest version of stationary bike riding, called spinning, continues to pick up in popularity, burning about 350 to 500 calories per 45-minute workout while toning the lower body. The trademarked indoor cycling equipment workout, created by endurance athlete Jonathan Goldberg in 1987, employs stationary bikes modified to feel like mountain bikes, allowing riders to change speed and resistance levels. In a class setting, instructors employ music and coaching to lead riders through routines designed to simulate outdoor terrain, with hill climbs, sprints and interval training. Spinning embraces a variety of intensity levels. "Beginners should not feel intimidated because the bike is controlled by the rider" explains Ellen Histen, a certified spin instructor and personal trainer. "Instructors ensure participants feel safe and confident enough to excel in a class environment."

Get some kicks

Kickboxing adeptly fuses elements of martial arts and boxing with aerobics to burn calories, build stamina and relieve stress. Set to beat-bound music, kickboxing movements vary from non-contact air kicks and punches or blows to actual punching bags. Kickboxing is strenuous, so start slowly with a qualified instructor and work up to more complicated contact moves.

Dive right in

Water workouts are easy on the joints, a plus for everyone. While lap swimming boosts cardiovascular fitness, water aerobics and other pool-based classes offer variety and camaraderie. Most are music-based—think splash dancing—with choreographed moves and exercises that may use water dumbbells and webbing props for full-body benefits. Pool noodles—inexpensive cylindrical foam flotation devices that resemble their name—are often used for balance, resistance and buoyancy. Students can bring their own or snag one provided by the facility. "There are water aerobics classes for arthritis to loosen and strengthen as well as hydro tone to firm and build," points out Christen Hodgkinson a certified Red Cross swim instructor and a certified personal trainer

Accomplishing something different – in a gym or pool, on a bike or up a wall – adds enjoyable new dimensions to winter fitness.

Dawn Brooks-Rapp,
AOS, BSN, DWH HOM

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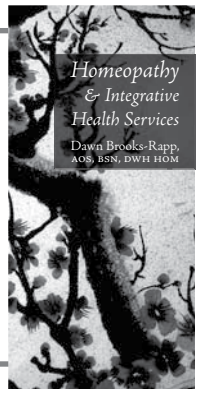


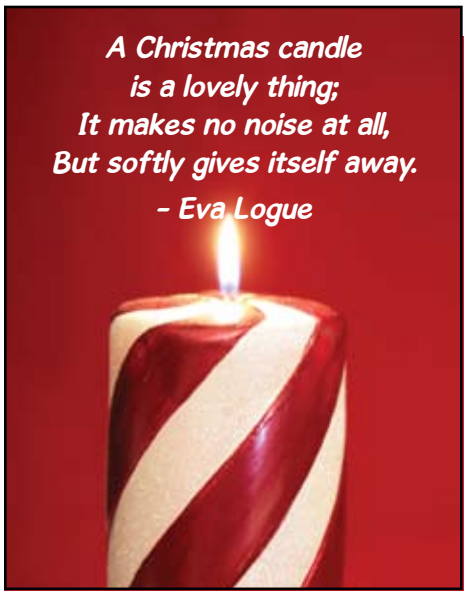
who teaches all levels of water aerobics and swim to both children and adults. "The cardio classes burn calories while building endurance and balance that challenge both women and men according to their ability".

Climb a wall

Pronounced upper body strength is not a prerequisite for tackling an indoor climbing wall. Experts note that scaling these manmade heights is entirely safe, because climbers wear a safety harness and climbing shoes provided by the facility. Finger and hand crevices, slabs and overhangs, as well as modular holds bolted onto the artificial rock wall, assist climbers as they move laterally or pursue the summit. Most children relish indoor climbing, so it's an ideal choice for family fitness adventures.

Accomplishing something different — in a gym or pool, on a bike or up a wall — adds enjoyable new dimensions to winter fitness. As always, remember to check with a healthcare practitioner before beginning unaccustomed activities.

Christen Hodgkinson is a certified Red Cross swim instructor. Ellen Histen is a certified Schwinn cycle instructor. Both women are ISSA certified personal trainers. Connect with them at Absolute Fitness, 2727 South County Trail in East Greenwich. 401-884-0330 or Absolutfit.com.



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be inspired...

Give from the Heart

this season

Presents allow us to express our love and gratitude. Why, then, do we get so stressed out over them, and how can we bring sense and significance back to the season?

by Frances Lefkowitz

Though many complain about the commercialism of the holiday season, no one—not even the two-sizes-too-small-hearted Grinch—would wish to get rid of presents.

At its core, the exchange of gifts is a joyous ritual. Those robes, orchids and batches of oatmeal cookies we bestow every year let us acknowledge important relationships and strengthen bonds with friends, family and our community. "To give a gift to someone is to say, 'I am connected to you, and I know you well enough to know what you like,'" advises M.J. Ryan, author of *Attitudes of Gratitude*.

Faced with a holiday season that's too often fraught with chaos, stress, waste and debt, it's easy to lose track of the pleasure and meaning of giving. But, by remembering what lies at the heart of this singular season and looking afresh at our impulses to give and receive, we can make these days feel more like the spiritual celebrations they were meant to be.

Look for the meaning

One way to bring meaning back to the holidays is to remember that they are holy days. "Welcome in the spirit of whatever you're celebrating, whether it be Christmas, Hanukkah or the solstice," says Barbara Biziou, author of *The Joys of Everyday Ritual* and *The Joy of Family Rituals*. Biziou advocates reviving the family's traditional ways of celebrating or creating new rituals, such as making ornaments together or cooking a meal for a neighbor or stranger, if the old ones no longer feel meaningful. Instead of obsessing about presents, we can spend this season

connecting with people through the sharing of food, warmth and hospitality.

Ryan has found a way to make sure that everyone around her table remembers the holiday's true meaning: At her dinner, each person takes a turn listening, as the others tell what they appreciate about her or him.

"When we feel gratitude for what we have received, we have an experience of fullness," comments Ryan. "From that fullness, you naturally want to give back. This is true generosity, not obligatory giving. It's the natural process of recognizing what we have, and then sharing it."

The good gift

Great pleasure is found in giving—or receiving—just the right gift. Last Christmas, for example, Ryan's husband gave her a box of 12 envelopes, one for each month; inside each envelope was a picture of one of her favorite flowers that she could then trade in for an actual bouquet. This was a successful present, she explains, because it demonstrated how well her husband knew her—plus, it lasted all year long.

One way to bring meaning back to the holidays is to remember that they are holy days.

Ultimately, the best gifts are the ones given from the heart, gifts that infuse these rituals with feelings and values. They're the ones that bring joy to the recipient and the giver—joy to the world. Even the Grinch realized this, right before his heart grew three sizes: "'Maybe Christmas,' he thought, 'doesn't come from a store. Maybe Christmas perhaps means a little bit more.'"

Who could argue with Dr. Seuss?

Frances Lefkowitz is an award-winning writer, editor and reviewer whose work is widely published via print and subscription radio.

5 great gifts

According to the Center for a New American Dream, 54 percent of 21st century Americans surveyed, "feel that spending less money on gifts will allow them to focus on the true meaning of the holidays." Here are some gift ideas that won't break the time or money bank.

Personalized cookbook. Give friends recipes for the kinds of food they enjoy. Throughout the year, clip items from magazines and newspapers, and then compile them into a store-bought journal.

Something of your own. Giving away things we love to people we love is always meaningful, whether it's a family heirloom, a piece of jewelry or a favorite book.

Photographs. Who doesn't adore a picture of the grandkids, a childhood snapshot of ourselves with our best friend, or a visual memento from last summer's camping trip? Frame a single photo, put a series in an album, or pick 12 and have them made into a calendar at the photo shop.

Gift of experience. Giving activities—a spa day for two, a wine tasting lesson or sports tickets—brings people together. Concert dates, brunch or a trip to a favorite hiking spot are other good options.

A donation. Send a check to someone's favorite charity in lieu of a gift (make sure it's their favorite cause, not ours). Or, ask friends if we can join them in their volunteer work.

globalbrief

News and resources to inspire concerned citizens to work together in building a healthier, stronger society that works for all.

Eco-Bag It

Wal-Mart Aims to Cut Plastic Bag Use by a Third

Wal-Mart is extending its waste-reducing initiative to cash registers, with a goal of eliminating one in three plastic bags in the next five years. That should cut 135 million pounds of plastic waste and associated petroleum use in their manufacture. The Environmental Defense Fund will consult with the retail giant to design the program and measure and assess its success.

The goal is to make reusable tote bags the norm. The trick is to carry a few in the car and remember to use them, rather than let unused totes pile up at home in the closet.

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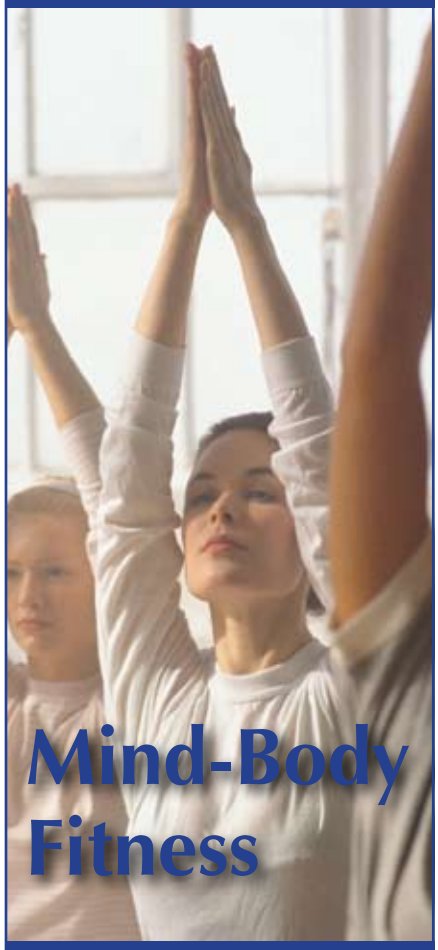

Get fit for the New Year

Find tips, resources and classes in the January issue of *Natural Awakenings*

For more information about advertising and how you can participate, call
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Gifts for Good

Instilling Generosity and Joy in Children

by Elisa Bosley

Every December, parents like me lament the "gimme" culture that so easily overtakes the holidays. But with environmental and social justice issues gaining ground and everyone rethinking economic priorities, introducing your child to opportunities for alternative giving can make a world of difference.

Even little changes—such as adding a charity to the family's giving tradition—can have a profound impact on how a child approaches the holidays. The idea is not to make a child feel bad about wanting stuff or be guilted into giving to others. Only cheerful giving makes a lasting difference. The following tips will help everyone tap into a deeper joy this holiday season by embracing altruistic and Earth-friendly gifts.

Reframe the List

Rather than instituting a blanket prohibition on traditional gifts, consider asking your child to name the two or three items he or she most wants to receive. Then, gently turn the focus outward by generating a new list, asking, "What do you love the most?"

Aside from the obvious ("Cookies!" "My iPod!"), try to capture your child's fondness for certain things: animals, people, places or hobbies. Then ask, "How can we give a gift to that?" For example, if your daughter says "Bears," ask if she'd like to give money to help protect panda or grizzly habitats. Play up your son's fondness for tree forts by donating to a tree-planting group. There are endless ways to creatively encourage giving to a cause that matters to a child.

Go Eco

When nothing but a tangible gift will do, scour natural shops, where you'll find high-quality items made with personal and planetary health in mind. Options abound: adorable, organic, stuffed animals and nontoxic wooden toys make babies and toddlers smile. Even picky teens might appreciate a sustainable-harvest bamboo skateboard (reportedly stronger than conventional decks), or trendy, organic-fiber apparel. Also consider scouting high-end consignment stores for barely used and cost-conscious clothes and toys. Then, encourage low-impact wrappings, such as cloth napkins, kitchen towels or an old standby, the Sunday comics.

Give and Do Good

When shopping, look for fair-trade items, which means that producers were paid honest wages for their wares. Jewelry, chocolates, toys and more can be sourced from such fair-trade companies as those found at *WorldofGood.org* and *BeadforLife.org*.

The nifty, solar-powered BOGO (Buy One/Give One) flashlight at *BogoLight.com* does more than illuminate your keyhole; for every light purchased, another is donated to a grateful community in the developing world. When you buy the UN World Food Programme's reversible burlap and muslin FEED bag, proceeds feed one impoverished child for one school year; it's available at *Amazon.com*.

Volunteer

Return to the list you generated with your child and pick something you can do together in your town as a gift to your family's place in the world. Do your kids love outings near the water? Spend an hour picking up trash along a local shoreline or creek. Do they enjoy the company of other kids? Have them box up gently used or new clothes, books and toys and deliver them to a family shelter housing homeless children. Whatever you do, make it your child's choice. You'll likely find that altruistic giving is a lot like cooking: Once kids get involved, they eat it up.

Sound Therapy Through the Ages

Ancient Instruments Still Soothe and Heal

by Jay Workman

Humanity's affinity for music can be traced to our most primitive origins. Tribal cultures around the world instinctively used sound for communication and as a healing tool. Today's technology explains why: Music bypasses learned behaviors to naturally regulate our pulse, blood pressure, breathing and hormone production; especially dopamine, which controls mood.

People throughout the ages have fashioned various instruments that manipulate these neural connections, clearing the mind of distracting thoughts or inducing states of well-being, satori and trance—even ecstasy.

Drums

Man's oldest instrument is found in endless variety everywhere. But, an empty bottle or wastebasket can evoke the same response as an African skin djembe, Persian metal tonbak or Polynesian slit log drum. The steady cadence of the beat naturally synchronizes with the body's life-giving rhythms of heart and lungs.

Universities like Harvard currently are conducting research into the positive effects of rhythm therapy as part of a new integrative medicine to reduce stress, strengthen the immune system and treat addictions. In Colorado, adolescent offenders participate in drum circles hosted by the Department of Youth Services to help them become more centered in times of crisis.

Bells, Gongs & Cymbals

Originating in Asia, metal gongs emit a range of pure, low-pitched tones that facilitate contemplative and meditative states. Bells and finger cymbals often signal a moment to enter or emerge from such states. With regular practice, these can become unconscious, reflexive triggers. Finger cymbals may serve as a "clearing" device, to dispel negative energy from a space.

Singing Bowls

Sometimes called standing bells, both traditional Tibetan metal and modern crystal singing bowls are used for meditation, relaxation, healthcare, personal well-being and religious practice. Many of us may have rubbed a wet finger around the edge of a crystal wine glass to produce a ringing whine. When playing a bowl, the musician applies a padded mallet to the rim, and also may tap it, producing a bell-like sound.

Older forms of singing bowls comprise five to seven different metals, including gold and silver, with size, thickness and composition determining pitch. One bowl or a whole array may be used, perhaps with tones of multiple bowls overlapping, to create deeply satisfying harmonics.

Robert Austin has traveled extensively for the past eight years, including in Fort Myers, giving singing bowl concerts, workshops and healing sessions. About the healing power of sound, he says, "Sound can penetrate the body to make it disturbed or happy." He notes how, "The bowls create harmony that can release blockages created by life's stresses," proving beneficial for relief of neuropathy, neuralgia, arthritis and circulatory ailments.

Rain Stick & Didgeridoo

A different approach to sound arose in places where metals were unavailable. Instead of a pure tone, these instruments chorus a cascade of frequencies to produce a constant drone.

Music bypasses learned behaviors to naturally regulate our pulse, blood pressure, breathing and hormone production; especially dopamine, which controls mood.

One indigenous people invented the rainstick, a long, hollow tube filled with beads or beans that has small pins arranged in a spiral pattern along the inside surface. When the stick is turned over, the beads fall to the other end of the tube, sounding like a rainstorm as they bounce off the pins. The rainstick is still played ritually in South American shamanic ceremonies for energy cleansing.

Australia's Aboriginal culture devised the didgeridoo, a long, flute-like instrument with sounds similar to the low moans of Tibetan throat singing. Archaeological studies suggest that the people of the Kakadu region of the Northern Territory have been using the didgeridoo for sacred rituals for about 1,500 years, based on cave wall paintings.

Today, use of all these ancient instruments joins newer ones, like the tuning fork and its electronic counterparts, in the quest to reach and influence the inner recesses of our mind. Scientists are learning why the cerebellum, or "reptilian brain," just 10 percent of the brain's mass, yet with 50 to 80 percent of its neurons, is important to musical perception.

As the West ventures forth in adapting the hallowed disciplines of meditation and healing of the East, such as yoga, T'ai chi, qigong and Tibetan Buddhism, these accompanying venerable tools provide a touchstone to ancestors of the past. They allow us to practice prescribed rituals and customs with an authenticity that continues to resonate, along with the sound, in our very souls.

Connect with Robert Austin at CrystalBowlSoundHealer.com.

Primary Sources: The Amazing Hypothesis, *by Sir Francis Crick;* This Is Your Brain on Music, *by Daniel J. Levitin*.

Herbs to *Go*

Keep Travel Companions Calm

Traveling can be hard on the family dog or cat. This holiday season, you can help ease your furry friend's distress with these natural herbal remedies from *The Encyclopedia of Natural Pet Care* and *Natural Remedies for Dogs and Cats*, both by C.J. Puotinen.

He cites chamomile, valerian and scullcap for relief of animal anxieties related to travel or new situations. Combining equal parts valerian, scullcap and chamomile tinctures. Use an eyedropper to place three drops of this blend per 10 pounds of body weight into each ear. Tilt the animal's head to the opposite side, hold the ear closed and gently massage the ear to distribute the tincture.

Ginger can be used to prevent nausea and motion sickness. Find a tincture especially formulated for pets, or make one by filling a pint jar with coarsely chopped fresh ginger root. Fill the jar to the top with vegetable glycerin, available in natural products stores, then let it sit in a warm room for six weeks or longer. Puotinen notes that glycerin has a sweet taste that is palatable to many dogs and cats. Administer orally.

Flower essences are soothing and take the edge off of travel jitters. Puotinen recommends dill for hypersensitivity to the environment; walnut to ease transitions; and Rescue Remedy (see *BachFlower.com/Pets.htm*) to alleviate fear. Administer them orally or massage into the animal's ear.

Traveling with a calm animal makes long-distance trips easier. Herbs offer a gentle, effective alternative to traditional drugs when traveling with our favorite four-footed friends. Then we will feel more relaxed, too.

One kind word can warm three winter months.

- Japanese Proverb quotes

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- Augusta, GA
- Lexington, KY
- Louisville, KY
- New Orleans, LA
- Ann Arbor, MI
- Grand Rapids, MI
- Greater Genesee, MI
- Greater Oakland/Macomb, MI
- Central Missouri
- Asheville, NC
- Charlotte, NC
- Raleigh/Durham/Chapel Hill, NC
- North Carolina Southern Coast, NC
- Somerset-Middlesex Counties, NJ
- Morris County, NJ
- Santa Fe/Albuquerque, NM
- Long Island, NY
- New York City, NY
- Rockland/Orange Counties, NY
- Westchester/Putnam Counties, NY
- Cincinnati, OH
- Portland, OR
- Lehigh Valley, PA
- Rhode Island
- Charleston, SC
- Columbia, SC
- Grand Strand, SC
- Chattanooga, TN
- Knoxville, TN
- Austin, TX
- East Texas
- Houston, TX
- Richmond, VA
- Southwestern, VA
- Madison, WI
- Puerto Rico

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Throw a Green Party

Eco-Entertaining Made Simple

by Corey Colwell-Lipson and Lynn Colwell

Whether you are still experimenting with ways to live green or are an experienced pro at an increasingly eco-friendly life, a party décor checklist is good to have on hand. The ultimate goal is hosting a zero-waste gathering, one that embraces only products and items that can be consumed, reused, recycled or composted.

It's easiest to start with just a few categories. Challenge the whole family to get on board and have some fun. For example: Reusing the same decorations, tableware and activities year after year creates treasured traditions among family and friends.

Remember to emphasize quality over quantity: buy 25 percent less than normal when shopping, for everything from trimmings to hors d'oeuvres. It's likely that no one will miss the excess, and every effort aids the planet.

Here are some ideas to kick-start the celebrations:

Trees – Invest in a live tree to plant in the yard after the holidays, and patronize a local, pesticide-free, sustainable farm or grower if possible. For a cut tree, chip and compost it later. (Many communities offer post-holiday curbside pickup, composting trees for mulch. Call your public works or waste management department for details.)

Lights – New light-emitting diode (LED), fluorescent or solar holiday lights are preferred replacements when old-style lights fail. Put them on a timer and use conservatively. With traditional lights, pick strings with smaller bulbs, which use less energy and emit less heat.

Creating zero-waste home decorations can become a cherished family tradition, eagerly anticipated each year and enjoyed by all ages.

Ornaments and décor – The best decorations are handcrafted, made from 100 percent natural materials, and created at home, locally or by artisans in other countries earning fair wages. Avoid products containing non-recyclable plastics, lead, phthalates or other toxins.

Creating zero-waste home decorations can become a cherished family tradition, eagerly anticipated each year and enjoyed by all ages. Consider designing recycled-paper snowflake cutouts; wreaths and centerpieces from collected tree trimmings; non-microwave popcorn and cranberry garlands; gingerbread houses; soy or beeswax candles; and stockings made from fabric scraps or knit natural fibers.

Tableware – Favor reusable plates, glasses, utensils, napkins and tablecloths. For larger gatherings, borrow extra place settings from friends or family, rent them, or stock up at a consignment or thrift store.

Cards – Send e-cards or email the family newsletter, or find snail-mail cards, invitations and thank-you notes made from recycled or tree-free materials and soy-based inks, via the Internet (search "eco-friendly cards" and "recycled holiday cards"). Find creative ways to parlay incoming cards by searching "reuse holiday cards."

Gifts – Ideal presents are handmade, activity-based, consumable or charitable. Look for a fair trade stamp of approval, as well as use of natural, sustainable, reused or recycled materials. Forego anything overpackaged, mass-produced, disposable, cheaply made, of unknown origin or requiring lots of additional components.

Wrapping – Creative giftwrap options include reusing decorative papers and traditional ribbons, raffia ribbons and repurposed fabrics.

Food and drink – Enjoy healthy holiday meals made from local and organic foods, to avoid genetically modified ingredients (see *Natural Awakenings* November 2008 issue). Cut down on meats, while upping the fruit and veggie quotient. Select organic drinks and liqueurs, and wine with real cork stoppers. Finally, compost table scraps.

Hosting a splashy party during the holidays, or anytime, can be as enjoyable as it is eco-friendly. The key to going green is to plan ahead, get everyone involved, and make it fun.

Corey Colwell-Lipson and Lynn Colwell are mother and daughter coauthors of Celebrate Green! – Creating Eco-Savvy Holidays, Celebrations & Traditions for the Whole Family, *from which this article was adapted. Find more ideas for enlivening occasions throughout the year at* CelebrateGreen.net.

Holiday Stress:

Finding Peace on Earth through Alternative Therapies

By Dr. Jon Hagenburg

As the holidays draw nearer, we are all faced with more stress than we normally have. No matter what stressors burden us during the rest of the year, there are always new ones such as financial constraints, family relationships and time crunches. Unfortunately, these stressors are not going to go away, but how we allow these burdens to affect us physically and mentally is something we absolutely do have control over.

From a physiological point of view, we can see that stress excites our sympathetic nervous system, what is commonly called the "fight or flight" response, when our heart rate and blood pressure increase. The reason for such an excited response to stress from our body is that it gears us to either face the conflict and fight or have the burst energy to run away. This is a normal physiological function of the body, but how easily this stimulus is triggered is where pathology can be seen.

For many, daily stressors occur and are easily dealt with, but for others, even the simplest of stressors creates havoc in the body and mind causing irritability, anger and chronic high blood pressure. Over time other symptoms/disorders can arise from an overtaxed sympathetic nervous system such as diabetes, depression and hyperthyroidism. During the holiday season, those who normally deal with stress efficiently may start to show symptoms of over taxation of the body and mind, and those that already have difficulty dealing with stress see that their disorders are worsened.

Rather than allowing the stress of daily life and the holiday season to hinder our enjoyment of life, we can use various means to allow our bodies to physiologically deal with the stress in a healthier manner.

The best way to decrease holiday stress is to be aware of it and not try to act as if it does not exist. Rather, sit down and face it. To hide stress or not face it with confidence causes the body to react physically and mentally whether through high blood pressure, insomnia, increased heart rate or anxiety. See what stressors are currently causing problems and which ones will be faced over the holiday. Create a game plan to work with them: For every situation of stress there must be a resolution. The resolution may not be easily accomplished, but once it is known so is the realization that it is within human power to correct it.

Sometimes complimentary medical care is helpful, such as acupuncture and natural medicinal supplements. Acupuncture, for example, can be used to help the body function more optimally so that the sympathetic nervous system is not so easily over stimulated. It can help the body react to stress in a healthier manner – without the increased heart rate, increased blood pressure, insomnia, anxiety and worry. For stress alleviation over the holiday season it is suggested that the patient receive approximately two treatments per week until the holiday season passes. For those that are looking for more long term results, for example those that have high stress throughout the year or those with another disorder

In addition to acupuncture treatments, natural supplements provide excellent results for treating high levels of stress.

During the holiday season, those who normally deal with stress efficiently may start to show symptoms of over taxation of the body and mind, and those that already have difficulty dealing with stress see that their disorders are worsened.

such as fibromyalgia, for example, a specific treatment plan will be provided and will tailored specifically for the individual patient.

In addition to acupuncture treatments, natural supplements provide excellent results for treating high levels of stress. There are a variety of natural supplements that can be used depending on the primary factors being treated along with the physiological cause of the problem. In those with chronic ailments the objective is to use the supplements to not only alleviate the symptoms but to work synergistically with the acupuncture treatments to strengthen the physiological functioning of the body. One specific formula often used, Calm, made by Evergreen, works to ease the mind and decrease stress. Its primary indications are poor appetite, headache, insomnia. In addition Calms relieves anxiety, nervousness and restlessness.

By combining conscious awareness, concrete resolutions and a complimentary form of healthcare such as acupuncture and supplements, we can withstand the extra stresses that holidays often bring. But more than that, we can begin to look on the season in a new way – no longer as a burden to be endured, but rather a season of wonder and good cheer.

Dr. Jon Hagenburg has opened a new acupuncture and natural medicine clinic at 1920 Mineral Spring Ave., in Providence, RI. This month he is offering a complimentary consultation for all Natural Awakenings readers. To make an appointment, call 401-865-6060. Visit DrHagenburg.com.

globalbriefs

E-Card Savvy

Good, Bad & Ugly Greeting Cards

Most of the 2 billion paper cards mailed between Thanksgiving and Christmas each year land in the garbage by January. According to Friends of the Earth, recycling those discarded greetings could save the equivalent of 666,600 trees. That's why legitimate online, paperless, greeting card companies have such an upside.

The downside is that, while desirable and cost-efficient e-cards readily spread cheer and cheesy humor, spammers and hackers spreading computer viruses often hide behind malicious season's greetings. Experts caution that we must ever be alert to delete the products of such malcontents, as they continually shift their strategies to match the calendar.

Here are three tips to sort the good from the bad: Only open cards that carry a familiar name; the generic "from a friend or family member," is a red light. Look for an individual verification code; instead of clicking on the email link provided, visit the company website to open the e-card using the code. Stay alert; both naughty and nice greetings can show up any time of the year.

Source: The Christian Science Monitor.

Green Holiday

Rapping on Wrapping

This year many green folk, recalling garbage bags from past Christmases stuffed with mounds of wrapping paper and ribbon, will opt for alternatives, such as reusable fabric covers, Sunday funnies and old road maps topped by natural accents like pine cones. But some, like Heather Lionette, of Boston, are taking this waste-reducing idea a step further: They're not wrapping gifts at all.

Lionette says she may just put some presents under the tree Christmas morning and heighten the surprise by creating a scavenger hunt for her young son. She muses that the experience may even contribute to his fledgling environmentalism. She also reports that she's received positive reactions to her *au naturel* presentation ideas from friends and family.

Children are used to hunting for things at Easter, and advocates suggest that when little ones grow up without the tradition of holiday wrapping paper, it will be the genesis of a new tradition.

"Wrapping paper for the typical child is just an impediment to getting what is underneath," advises Bob Lillenfeld, author of *Use Less Stuff*. "There's no need for fancy bows and expensive paper for kids."

Source: The Christian Science Monitor.

calendarofevents

NOTE: All Calendar events must be received by December 10th (for the January issue) and adhere to our guidelines. Email info@rinaturalawakenings.com for guidelines and to submit entries.

MONDAY, DECEMBER 1

Solar Power – 7-8pm. Sustainable Energy Group Monthly meeting. Share experiences with renewable energy and exchange ideas on topics including wind, solar, and hydropower. All levels of interest and experience are welcome. Free. Sustainable Energy Group, Cross' Mills Public Library, 4417 Old Post Road, Charlestown. 401-364-6211.

TUESDAY, DECEMBER 2

Meet the Members Expo – 6-9pm. Free mini treatments, demonstrations, readings and consultations and the opportunity to purchase products and gift certificates. Lots of raffles including a 50/50 door raffle and prizes. $5. New England Holistic Chamber of Commerce, Cape Codder Resort, 1225 Iyannough Road/Route 32 & Bearses W, Barnstable, MA. 508-364-0614. NEHolisticChamber.org.

Natural Solutions to Headache Pain – 6:30-7:30pm. Millions of Americans suffer from chronic headaches. This presentation was designed to educate the audience about the different types of headaches, what causes them, how to prevent them, and safe, natural and effective alternatives to treating them. Free. Lincoln Chiropractic, Creative Cultural Center, 228 Putnam Pike, Johnston. 401-233-7891.

WEDNESDAY, DECEMBER 3

Understanding Fibromyalgia: A Holistic Approach to Chronic Pain and Fatigue – 6:30-7:30pm. People who are suffering with fibromyalgia are desperate for relief from the constant nagging symptoms, pain and fatigue. Dr. Curtis will educate the audience about safe, effective and natural alternative methods for addressing Fibromyalgia and chronic pain symptoms. Free. Lincoln Chiropractic, Cumberland Library, 1464 Diamond Hill Rd, Cumberland. 401-333-2552.

THURSDAY, DECEMBER 4

Blood Pressure and Trigger Point Screenings – 12:30-3:30pm. Dr. Curtis of Lincoln Chiropractic is volunteering his time to do free blood pressure and stress screenings. Free. Stop & Shop, 622 George Washington Hwy, Lincoln Mall, Lincoln. 401-334-6006.

Green Drinks – 5:30-8pm. RI Environmental Networks monthly gatherings provide an opportunity to talk with people who are personally and/or professionally interested and involved in a variety of environmental, conservation and sustainability issues. Informal/fun time. Free. Farmaesthetics, 144 Bellevue Ave, Newport. Kara@6square.com.

Uncover and Develop Your Intuition – 6-9pm. Workshop will give you the keys to unlock your intuitive skills and identify your personal intuitive style. Walk away with simple, daily centering techniques to turn up your intuitive volume and visualization and energy exercises to direct your energy with intention. $55. All That Matters, 315 Main St, Wakefield. 401.782.2126. AllThatMatters.com.

Jazz at Rochambeau: The Mike Miller Swingtet – 7-8:30pm. Ease into the Holiday spirit with the Mike Miller Swingtet, a popular quartet of local jazz musicians led by Johannesburg native Michael Miller on piano. Free. Rochambeau Branch, Providence Public Library, 708 Hope Street, Providence. 401-455-8198. ProvLib.org.

FRIDAY, DECEMBER 5

Baptiste Yoga Weekend Bootcamp: Tools for Living – 4-9pm. Friday, Saturday, Sunday. Consisting predominately of hot vinyasa yoga and, fun, fast-moving discussion, Philip will ask you to consider some big questions. This is an opportunity to break through not only in your yoga practice, but also in your life, relationships, and work. $300. All That Matters, 315 Main St, Wakefield. 401-782-2126. AllThatMatters.com.

Craftland Opening Night Party – 5-9pm. A party celebrating the opening night of Craftland, a seasonal retail boutique with goods from more than 170 artists and crafters from Rhode Island and around the world. Free. Craftland, 235 Westminster Street, Providence. 401.743.8506. craftlandshow.com.

Critter Glitter Preview Party – 6-9pm. Exclusive sale of Sequin's Badgley Mischka line of jewelry. All proceeds from this sale to benefit the Potter League's capital campaign for the new building. RSVP to lauraG@PotterLeague.org or call 401-846-0592. $25. donation. Potter League, 87 Oliphant Ln, Middletown. 401-846-0592. PotterLeague.org.

Family Nature Night: Holiday Wreath and Candle Making – 7pm. Learn to create holiday decorations with a natural twist. Participants will leave with a seasonal candle and wreath of their own creation. $6/member adult 13+, $4/member child, $8/non member adult 13+, $6/non member child. One adult free per each paid child. Norman Bird Sanctuary, 583 Third Beach Rd, Middletown. 401-846-2577. NormanBirdSanctuary.org.

The Resonant Voices of the Spheres: A Gong Bath Healing Circle – 7:30-8:30pm. This four-person ensemble plays the gongs and the Tibetan singing bowls for the purpose of vibrational sound healing, relaxation, and stress release. Please bring whatever you need to lie comfortably on the floor. $15 donation suggested. Beneficent Congregational Church, 300 Weybosset Street, Providence. resonantvoices.blogspot.com.

SATURDAY, DECEMBER 6

Baptiste Yoga Weekend Bootcamp: Tools for Living – 7am-9:30pm. See December 5th for details. All That Matters, 315 Main St, Wakefield. 401-782-2126. AllThatMatters.com.

Fun and Healing with Crystals and Gemstones – 10:00am-12:00pm. In this workshop we will learn about some of the history and healing properties of these wondrous creations. Come and enjoy some delightful refreshments while we talk about and play with "rocks". $25. Adriene Smith, 917A Warwick Ave. Warwick. 401-741-2278. angelwhispersri.com.

Fourth Annual Gingerbread House Decorating Contest and Artisan Fair – 10am-3pm. Decorate a gingerbread house, and do some holiday shopping while supporting local artisans. All materials provided; call to reserve a house. $11 to decorate a house. The Artist's Exchange, 50 Rolfe Square, Cranston. 401-490-9475. artists-exchange.org/.

Rag & Bone Bindery Open Studio – 10am-4pm. Rag & Bone Bindery, makers of quality hand-crafted paper goods, are sharing the secrets behind the paper. This event will allow loyal customers, as well as first-timers, the opportunity to preview and purchase some of the most beautiful and whimsical hand-made holiday gifts on the market (and at 25% discount). Free. Rag & Bone Bindery, 1088 Main St., Pawtucket. 401-728-0762. ragandbonebindery.com.

Diesel Pollution Revolution ~ A Day of Action – 11am-2pm. Presented by Clean Water Action. Activities include pollution patrol, guest speakers, snacks, and giveaways. Free. Clean Water Action, Brown University Urban Environmental Lab, 135 Angell Street, Providence. 401-331-6972. cleanwateraction.org.

Nikkomo Celebration – 1-4pm. Enjoy storytelling, social dances, Native games, and the joy of giving. Participate in our Give-away ceremony by bringing a wrapped and labeled gift for someone in need. Donations are given to local agencies. Purchase unique holiday gifts, stocking stuffers, delicious foods, and decorations at our Holiday Market. Free. Tomaquag Indian Memorial Museum, 390 Summit Road, Exeter. 401-539-7213.

Broad Street Winter Festival – 1-8pm. Live Music, free movie making, international food court and open air market, heated walkway, ZERO WASTE and education, Santa, candle and lantern festival. Free. Blackstone Valley Tourism Council, Jenks Park, 586 Broad Street, Central Falls. 401-724-2200. keepblackstonevalleybeautiful.com.

A Happy Holidays Workshop – 2-4pm. An afternoon of peace and preparation. This workshop will concentrate on putting the joy back into your life during this time of year. Invite your friends for tea & goodies along with door prizes & raffles. $25. Adriene Smith, 917A Warwick Ave. Warwick. 401-741-2278. www.angelwhispersri.com.

Gluten-Free 'Seafood Night'. – 3-6pm. The Celiac Support Group of Southeast New England. Celiacs can enjoy fish & chips, fried clams, seafood platter, onion rings, etc. For more information, contact Kathi at 401-624-8888. Reservations are required for this event. Alice's Diner, 2663 South Main St, Fall River, MA.

The Spot Holiday Party: The Adventures of Filthy Fluno – 7-11pm. The Spot on Thayer presents "The Adventures of Filthy Fluno", a holiday party and mixed reality mashup of fine art, live music, and virtual culture. Abstract artist Jeffrey Lipski AKA Filthy Fluno presents, with music from Japanese boogie-woggie master Komuso Tokogawa and edgy folk singer Cylindrian Rutabaga. Free admission with canned goods. The Spot on Thayer, 286 Thayer St, Providence. 401-323-6891. enceethreeproductions.com.

SUNDAY, DECEMBER 7

Baptiste Yoga Weekend Bootcamp: Tools for Living – 7am-6pm. See December 5th for details. $300. All That Matters, 315 Main St, Wakefield. 401-782-2126. AllThatMatters.com.

Sunday Zen Meditation – 9:30-11am. This simple but powerful ancient practice of Zen meditation as taught in the Kwan Um School of Zen will begin with ten minutes of instruction, followed by sitting and walking meditation. Free. All That Matters, 315 Main St, Wakefield. 401-782-2126. AllThatMatters.com.

Kundalini & Ascension – 10am-12pm. What you need to know about the Ascension Process and how Kundalini plays a big part. In this introductory workshop you will learn Ascension & Kundalini Symptoms, information about our Aura & Chakras, Grounding Exercises & Visualizations, how to rejuvenate your Energy, and become more aware. $35. Spiritual Compass Connection, West Shore Wellness Center, 2077 West Shore Rd, Warwick. 508-369-9967. SpiritualCompassConnection.com.

MONDAY, DECEMBER 8

Understanding Fibromyalgia: A Holistic Approach to Chronic Pain and Fatigue – 6:30-7:30pm. See December 3rd for details. Free. Lincoln Chiropractic, Creative Cultural Center, 228 Putnam Pike, Johnston. 401-233-7891.

"It's a Shore Thing" - A Coastal Cabaret – 7:30-9pm. Part of the ongoing "People and the Planet Series" at URI. A fresh, salty and musical look at global environmental change in our coastal zones. Free. URI Honors Coloquium, Edwards Auditorium, 64 Upper College Road, Kingston. 401-874-2381. uri.edu.

Open House at the Traditional & Natural Medicine Clinic – 8-9:30pm. Learn about acupuncture, herbal medicine, yin/yang, and five element theory. Free samples of tonic herbs that improve health and taste delicious. See a demonstration of Japanese-style acupuncture with gold needles and moxabustion. Raffle for a free acupuncture session. Free. Dr. Jason Bergman, D.Ac., TNM Clinic, inside Anania Chiropractic, 172 Broadway, Providence. 401-523-3253. tnmclinic@gmail.com.

Benefit Fundraiser for The Tomorrow Fund at AS220 – 9pm. Benefit for The Tomorrow Fund, which is the only non-profit organization that provides daily financial and emotional support to children with cancer and their families who are treated at Hasbro. Featuring music from Fly Upright Kite, Tapestries, and Towers. $7. AS220, 115 Empire St, Providence. 401-831-9327. as220.org.

TUESDAY, DECEMBER 9

Steps to Starting a Businesss – 9-11am. Workshop discusses commitment, risks and rewards, advantages and disadvantages of entrepreneurship. Leave this session with tools, worksheets, and tips to get started. $35/partial scholarships available. Center for Women & Enterprise, 132 George Cohan Blvd, 2nd Fl, Providence. 401-277-0800. CWEOnline.org.

WEDNESDAY, DECEMBER 10

Potter League Candlelight Memorial Celebration – 6:30-7:30pm. Gather at the Potter League to celebrate all the animals that have touched our lives. Some are still with us but many more have passed and it is with both love and admiration of their spirit that we light a candle and honor them all. A $10 donation is appreciated at the door. Refreshments served following the celebration. RSVP to susanR@potterleague.org or call 401-846-0592 for more information. Potter League, 87 Oliphant Ln, Middletown. 401-846-0592. PotterLeague.org.

Making Your Job Work for You – 7-8pm. Career Workshop with Strategic Life Coach Jeff Doff. Preregister by email. Seating is limited to first 25. Free. Jeff Doff, Strategic Life Coach, The Spot on Thayer, 286 Thayer St, Providence. JeffDoff@yahoo.com

THURSDAY, DECEMBER 11

Blood Pressure and Trigger Point Screenings – 12:30-3:30pm. See December 4th for details. Free. Stop & Shop, 70 Mendon Rd, Cumberland. 401-722-3300.

Food Presentation at Craftland – 5-8pm. Artful food presentation and sampling by Whole Foods Market, held at Craftland- a seasonal retail boutique with goods from more than 170 artists and crafters from Rhode Island and around the world. Free. Craftland, 235 Westminster Street, Providence. 401.743.8506. craftlandshow.com.

Making the Internet Work for You – 6-8pm. How to get your website the traffic it deserves in ten easy steps. Getting your business easily noticed on the Web is essential – find out how. $10/prepaid members or $15/at the door. $25/non members, or $30/at the door. New England Holistic Chamber of Commerce, St Marks Church, 111 West Shore Drive, Warwick. 401-427-2233. NEHolisticChamber.org.

Toxins to Avoid that Affect your Health, Weight, and Children – 6:30-8:00pm.Workshop will share information on the toxins that are present in your food, house cleaning products, and beauty products. Will also show other sources of toxicity that are dramatically affecting your health, weight, and children's ability to learn. $15. Susan Lataille and Joy Poland, 917A Warwick Avenue, Warwick. 401-935-8451. Heavenly-Hugs.com.

If the roof collapses, your business shouldn't do the same.

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Christmas waves a magic wand over this world, and behold, everything is softer and more beautiful.

- Norman Vincent Peale

FRIDAY, DECEMBER 12

Toxins to Avoid that Affect your Health, Weight, and Children – 6:30pm-8:00pm.Workshop will share information on the toxins that are present in your food, house cleaning products, and beauty products. Will also show other sources of toxicity that are dramatically affecting your health, weight, and children's ability to learn. $15. Susan Lataille and Joy Poland, 917A Warwick Avenue, , Warwick, RI. 401-935-8451. heavenly-hugs.com.

Adult Full Moon Hike – 7-9pm. Center with the energy of the earth and the moon as we hike through the forest. May this quieting experience strengthen our spirits during this season. Bring your percussion instruments for a time of drumming after the walk. Donation $10. New Dawn Earth Center, 75 Wrentham Rd, Cumberland. 401-333-1341. NewDawnEarthCenter.org.

SATURDAY, DECEMBER 13

Family Winterfest – 10am-12pm. Experience the barn at Fisherville Brook Wildlife Refuge adorned with evergreens and festive natural decorations. Make seasonal ornaments and crafts inspired by the natural world, then head out onto the refuge for a short hike, returning to the barn for hot chocolate and a snack. $14/member child $19/non-member child. Audobon Society of RI, Fisherville Brook Wildlife Refuge, Pardon Joslin Rd, Exeter, RI. 401-949-5454. asri.org.

Space Clearing for a Peaceful Home – 10am-12pm. Space and Clutter Clearing is like modern day alchemy. Clearing clutter can have a powerful corresponding effect on the mental clutter inside you. $35. Spiritual Compass Connection, West Shore Wellness Center, 2077 West Shore Rd, Warwick. 508-369-9967. SpiritualCompassConnection.com.

Family Winterfest – 10am-12pm. Experience a winter celebration at the barn at Fisherville Brook Wildlife Refuge. Make seasonal ornaments and crafts inspired by the natural world, then head out onto the refuge for a short hike, returning to the barn for hot chocolate and a snack. $14/ member child, $19/ non-member child. Audubon Society of RI, Fisherville Brook Wildlife Refuge, Pardon Joslin Road, Exeter. 401-949-5454. www.asri.org.

Blood Pressure and Trigger Point Screenings – 12:30-3:30pm. See December 4th for details. Free. Stop & Shop, 446 Putnam Pike, Greenville. 401-949-4800.

Divine Embrace – 1-5pm. Sacred Activation Ceremony for awakening the Divine Within. We each have a Divine Spark within us. Embracing the divine within you causes transformations that change you forever. $111. Spiritual Compass Connection, West Shore Wellness Center, 2077 West Shore Rd, Warwick. 508-369-9967. SpiritualCompassConnection.com.

Bill Harley & Friends Benefit Concert – 2pm. Grammy winner Bill Harley and friends Len Cabral, Keith Munslow and Elizabeth Mitchell -- will be performing a benefit concert. All ticket sales, as well as the proceeds from the sales of books and recordings, will benefit the Food Bank. $10. Rhode Island Community Food Bank, Lincoln School Auditorium, 301 Butler Ave, Providence. 401-942-6325. RIFoodBank.org.

SUNDAY, DECEMBER 14

Kent County YMCA Holiday Bus Trip to NYC – 7am. Grab the family and head to the big apple for a day of shopping and sightseeing. Space is limited; please contact the Y for more information. $40/ members; $50/non-members. Kent County YMCA, 900 Centerville Road, Warwick. 401-828-0130. ymcagreaterprovidence.org/kentcounty.

Community Yoga – 10am-12:30pm. Join us for Community Yoga to support yourself and those in need. 2 yoga classes, Kundalini and Basic, for a donation of a non-perishable food item. All That Matters, 315 Main St, Wakefield. 401-782-2126. AllThatMatters.com.

Nature, Cookies and Holiday Fun – 1-4pm. Have your children enjoy three hours with us. We will go on a nature hike, decorate holiday cookies and enjoy hot chocolate. A fun, holiday craft will round out the afternoon. $15/per child. Pre-registration is required. New Dawn Earth Center, 75 Wrentham Rd, Cumberland. 401-333-1341. NewDawnEarthCenter.org.

EcoHome Series: Recycled Holiday Gifts and Cards – 4-5:30pm. Save yourself a trip to the overcrowded mall, and get creative with earth-friendly alternatives. Our eco-art expert Stephanie Zanati will teach us many fun and simple ideas for making your holiday a natural one. $6/member adult 13+, $4/member child, $8/non member adult 13+, $6/non member child. Norman Bird Sanctuary, 583 Third Beach Rd, Middletown, Middletown. 401-846-2577. NormanBirdSanctuary.org.

WEDNESDAY, DECEMBER 17

Wednesday Society Monthly Meeting – 7-8pm. Women networking with like minded women to support, inspire, motivate and propel one another to ultimate success. Round table forum with educational and motivational talk about living the life we love. Free. Wednesday Society, Creative Cultural Center, 228 Putnam Pike, Johnston. 401-787-7290. TheWednesdaySociety@live.com.

THURSDAY, DECEMBER 18

Green Drinks – 5-8pm. See December 4th for details. Free. RI Green Building Council, 28 Wolcott Street, Providence. BMott@TheOceanProject.org.

FRIDAY, DECEMBER 19

How to Start a Nonprofit – 10-12am. Part of the Building Your Business Workshop Series, these topic specific sessions are taught by experts with focus on areas essential for launching and running your business, with peer-to-peer feedback. Partial scholarships are available. $35/$30 with pre-registration. Center for Women & Enterprise, 132 George Cohan Blvd, 2nd Fl, Providence. 401-277-0800. CWEOnline.org.

2nd Annual Holiday Handbell Spectacular – 7pm. New England's premier high school handbell choir presents a program of holiday music to benefit the Rhode Island Community Food Bank. Works from the Nutcracker, Charlie Brown's Christmas and many other holiday favorites. Refreshments will be available before the concert and during intermission. $10. and/or non-perishable food items. Rhode Island Community Food Bank, Wheeler School Hall, 216 Hope St, Providence. 401-942-6325. RIFoodBank.org.

Gong Meditation and Sound Healing Circle – 7:30-8:45pm. A deep sound relaxation. Experience the vibrational healing of the bronze gong and Tibetan singing bowls. $20. All That Matters, 315 Main St, Wakefield. 401-782-2126. AllThatMatters.com.

SATURDAY, DECEMBER 20

Sunrise Hike – 7-8:30am. Anticipate the Winter Solstice with a Sunrise hike up to the field and through the woods. Warm up with coffee and muffins at the center. Donation $10. New Dawn Earth Center, 75 Wrentham Rd, Cumberland. 401-333-1341. NewDawnEarthCenter.org.

Reiki I Certification – 10am-5pm. Receive your Usui Reiki Level I attunement. Included in the class is your attunement to the Reiki I level, Reiki I manual, meditations, and instructions for hands on healing. After this class you will be able to heal yourself as well as others (friends, family & pets too). $25 off for every friend you bring. Call to register. $150. Spiritual Compass Connection, Cumberland. 508-369-9967. SpiritualCompassConnection.com.

Blood Pressure and Trigger Point Screenings – 12:30-3:30pm. See December 4th for details. Free. Stop & Shop, 1128 Mineral Spring Ave, North Providence. 401-727-3400.

SUNDAY, DECEMBER 21

Magnified Healing – 10am-5pm. You will receive a teaching Manual, Flower Essence for daily use, Guide CD & Certificate. Come enjoy and learn from Kwan Yin, an amazing Ascended Master, Goddess of Compassion, how to heal yourself and those you love from past traumas and energy blocks. $25 off for every friend you bring. $175. Spiritual Compass Connection, Cumberland. 508-369-9967. SpiritualCompassConnection.com.

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Family Yoga Class – 11:30am-12:30pm. In this child-oriented class, we'll practice partner and group poses designed to bring us closer as well as instill healthy habits and well being in our little ones early on. Breath awareness and meditation are introduced as well, in magical, meaningful and mindful ways. $25/first parent and child, $10/each additional family member. Darlene D'Arezzo, Breathing Time Yoga, 545 Pawtucket Ave, 2nd floor, Pawtucket. 310-428-9148. Darlene@KidsYogaCircle.com.

Providence String Quartet & Community Music Works Players With Alec K. Redfearn and The Eyesores – 3:15pm. Double billing featuring the Providence String Quartet and Community MusicWorks Players (the resident musicians of Community MusicWorks) paired with one of Providence's favorite original artists, Alec K. Redfearn. Music by Maurice Ravel, Zoltan Kodaly, and Alec K. Redfearn. Doors open at 2:45. $10; $5/students. AS220, 115 Empire St, Providence. 401-831-9327. as220.org.

MONDAY, DECEMBER 29

NBS Environmental Book Club – 6-7:30pm. Bring a potluck dish to share and join lively, thought-provoking conversation on a variety of environmental issues. This dynamic group is geared towards adults and older teens. Free. Norman Bird Sanctuary, 583 Third Beach Rd, Middletown, Middletown. 401-846-2577. NormanBirdSanctuary.org.

WEDNESDAY, DECEMBER 31

Bright Night Providence – 2pm-1am. Bright Night Providence is an artist-run, arts-oriented New Year's Eve Celebration that carries on in the tradition of First Night Providence. Some of RI's finest artist's including actors, jugglers, musicians, magicians, dancers, storytellers and clowns. The event showcases 150 performers at more than 22 venues throughout the city. $10/advance; $15/door; $50/family 4-pack. Bright Night Providence, Downtown Providence, Providence. 401-351-2596. brightnight.org.

sunday

Gaia's Hearth CUUPS Monthly Meeting – 12:15-2:00pm. 1st Sunday each month. We invite anyone who is interested in becoming part of Rhode Island's only CUUPS (Covenant of the Unitarian Universalist Pagans) to join us. Gaia's Hearth CUUPS is open to the public and welcomes members of the local RI, MA and CT community, no matter what your level, path or tradition is. Plans for open celebrations such as Yule / Solstice, Imbolc, Beltane, etc to be discussed. Free. First Unitarian Church of Providence, 1 Benevolent St, Providence. 401-533-7628. GaiasHearth.com.

Group Hand Drum Lessons – 2:30-4:30pm. Lessons, led by Alan Stone, cover drum circle etiquette, cultural rhythms and improvisation. Call for specific dates. Free. Spirit Sound Healing and Therapeutics, 420 Main St, Warren. 508-567-4498.

monday

In Nature's Hand: Nature Photography by Mike Tucker – 9am-5pm. Daily through December 28th. Exhibit of photographs from Mike Tucker. The pure beauty of birds, the mystical motions of streams, and the incredible shapes and colors of nature are well represented in this exhibit. Free with admission to the center. Audubon Society of RI, 1401 Hope Street, Bristol. 401-245-7500. asri.org.

Mixed Level Amrit Yoga – 6:30-7:30pm. Class designed for students of all levels of experience. Will be tailored to suit the students present. $60/Series of 6, $14/drop in. Sunsalutations Yoga Studio, 840 Smithfield Ave, Lincoln. 401-632-7254. Sunsalutations.org.

tuesday

Weekly Nia Classes – 11:30am-12:30pm. Nia (Neuromuscular Integrative Action) is a fusion fitness and lifestyle practice that blends rhythmic music with carefully choreographed hour-long routines. It is inspired by dance, the healing arts including yoga, and the martial arts. $14/one class, or $48/series of 4. All That Matters, 315 Main St, Wakefield. 4 01-782-2126. AllThatMatters.org.

Meditation Classes – 6-6:45pm. 1st and 3rd Tuesday each month. Utilizing sound to deepen inner body awareness. Release the stresses of the week and reconnect with the true self. Free Spirit Sound Healing and Therapeutics, 420 Main St, Warren. 401-245-7979.

Figure Drawing Class – 6pm-9pm. Every Tuesday bring your drawing utensils and paper to AS220 and sketch from a live model. $6. AS220, 115 Empire St, Providence. as220.org.

Play, Laugh, Grow Group – 6:30-8:30pm. Games, challenges, discussion and creative prompts to help loosen participants from imposed thinking. Free. Creative Cultural Center, 228 Putnam Pike, Johnston. TheArtofPossiblitiy.net.

Sierra Club Monthly Meetings – 7-8pm. 2nd Tuesday each month. Learn about how to get involved with the Sierra Club in Rhode Island. All are welcome. Free. Sierra Club, 17 Gordon Ave, Ste 208, Providence. 401-855-2103.

Introductory Amrit Yoga – 7-8pm. Developing confidence in yoga basics, postures, breathing, body science and meditation. Focus is on a developing a strong foundation on which to develop a regular practice. $60/Series of 6, $14/drop in. Sunsalutations Yoga Studio, 840 Smithfield Ave, Lincoln. 401-632-7254. Sunsalutations.org.

A Course in Miracles Study Group – 7-9pm. Learn how to bring miracles into one's life. Drop-in. $5 to cover costs. It's My Health, 2374 Mendon Rd, Cumberland. 401-405-0819. Its-My-Health.com.

Medieval Arts & Music Night – 7-10pm.Open workshop of The Society for Creative Anachronism. Anyone is welcome to bring a project, song or just a curiosity for the study of medieval arts and music. Free. The Artists Exchange, 50 Rolfe Sq, Cranston. 401-490-9475. artists-exchange.org.

wednesday

Westerly Arts Night – 5-8pm. 1st Wednesday each month. Downtown galleries and studios open in unison to exhibit new works. Artists Cooperative Gallery, 12 High St, Westerly. 401-596-2221. WesterlyArts.com.

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Free Beginner's Beginner Yoga Class – 7-8:15pm. Beginner's Beginner Yoga is a slow paced, tutorial based method of learning the foundation poses that make up any good yoga practice. This is a great opportunity for the new student, or for students who want to revisit the basics. Free. Sundance Therapies, 410 Main Street, East Greenwich. 401-398-0786. sundancetherapiesri.com.

thursday

Newport Gallery Night – 5-8pm. 2nd Through December. Various venues. Art exhibits at galleries include handblown glass, woodblock prints, award-winning photography, international handcrafts, and fine arts. Free parking at Newport Visitors Information Center, 23 America's Cup Avenue, or Newport Art Museum, 76 Bellevue Avenue. Free. Newport Art Galleries, 23 America's Cup Avenue, 76 Bellevue Avenue, Newport. 401-848-2000. NewportGalleries.org.

Maintain Your Weight Naturally – 6:30-8pm. 1st and 3rd Thursday of the month. Weight Management Group. So many are struggling with low self-esteem when it comes to body image. Gather with others who have decided to take back their power and rebuild their self-confidence. With Susan Lataille, N.D. $15. Heavenly Hugs, 917A Warwick Ave, Warwick. Heavenly-hugs.com.

Mixed Level Amrit Yoga – 7-8pm. Class designed for students of all levels of experience. Will be tailored to suit the students present. $60/Series of 6, $14/drop in. Sunsalutations Yoga Studio, 840 Smithfield Ave, Lincoln. 401-632-7254. Sunsalutations.org.

Blackstone River Theatre Drum and Dance Circle – 7-9pm. 3rd Thursday each month. Blackstone River Theatre's open drum circle focuses on tribal and multi-ethnic rhythms. Beginners and novices are always welcome. The emphasis is on fun, feeling the beat and playing together. Bring a hand drum, rhythm instrument or just dance. Some instruments will be provided. $5. Blackstone River Theatre, 549 Broad St, Cumberland. 401-725-9272. RiverFolk.Org.

friday

Guided Imagery Meditation – 7-8:30pm. 2nd Friday each month. The mind processes through images. Guided Imagery Meditation increases relaxation by creating joyful, positive images for the mind, leading to a more positive way of thinking and a better quality of life. $10. Heavenly Hugs, 917A Warwick Avenue, Warwick. 401-935-8451. Heavenly-Hugs.com.

saturday

Citizens Bank Free Family Fun Day – 9am-5pm. The Environmental Education Center is open free to the public the first Saturday of every month. Join us for crafts, nature stories, animal discoveries, hikes and more. Free. Audubon Environmental Education Center, 1401 Hope Street, Bristol. 401-949-5454. asri.org.

Beginners Yoga – 10-11am. Developing confidence in yoga basics, postures, breathing, body science and meditation. Focus is on developing a strong foundation on which to develop a regular practice. $60/Series of 6 $14/drop in. Sunsalutations Yoga Studio, 840 Smithfield Ave, Lincoln. 401-632-7254. Sunsalutations.org.

Behind the Scenes: Hands on Wildlife Biology – 10am. 4th Saturday each month. You and your family can participate in hands-on research projects. Along with the NBS team, you'll collect data, monitor local species, and help to determine ecosystem health. Each innovative and interactive workshop will spotlight a different local environmental issue. $6/member adult 13+, $4/member child, $8/non member adult 13+, $6/non member child. Norman Bird Sanctuary, 583 Third Beach Rd, Middletown, Middletown. 401-846-2577. NormanBirdSanctuary.org.

Critter Glitter Jewelry Sale – 10am-6pm. Daily December 6th through December 14th. Join us for a holiday sale of sample fashion jewelry from Sequin Fashion Jewelry at 50 to 80% off retail prices. We also have a selection of gifts from Berebi Home Accessories. All proceeds from this sale to benefit the Potter League's capital campaign for the new building. 401-846-0592. Free. Potter League, 87 Oliphant Ln, Middletown. 401-846-0592. PotterLeague.org.

Wintertime Farmers' Market – 11am-2pm. Open December 6 through April 25 Holiday wreaths and trees, winter produce, meat, oysters, fresh herbs, Narragansett Creamery cheese, honey, maple syrup, jams, jellies, artisan breads and pastries, gluten-free breads, tortillas, chocolates, fair-trade coffee hot or by the pound and gifts will be available from local producers. Free. Farm Fresh RI, Hope Artiste Village, 1005 Main St., Pawtucket, RI. farmfreshri.org.

gARTbage -- an Exhibit in Vermiculture – 12-4pm. Saturdays and Sundays through January 3rd. Part of a larger Ethical Eating exhibition, the piece explores the use of a special breed of worms, Red Wigglers, to create compost from ordinary household items. Information on composting and Vermiculture (worm farming) will be available. Free. Bell St Gallery, Bell St Church, 5 Bell St, Providence. 401-461-6903. BellStreetChapel.org.

Crafternoon at AS220 – 1-5pm. Last Saturday of each month. Local art wizards spinning magical crafts. Bring a project to work on with other crafty creatures. Free. AS220, 115 Empire St, Providence. 401-831-9327. as220.org.

classifieds

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