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DECEMBER 2023

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— Elton John



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The Royal Roots of Today's Christmas Traditions

Many Americans are not aware that some of the enduring Christmas traditions they enjoy every year are rooted in those started by the British Royal Family back in the 1840s. Here's a look at a few of the more colorful:

The Christmas Tree

It all started with Queen Victoria and her German-born husband Prince Albert, who were instrumental in bringing German Christmas traditions to Britain, such as the Christmas tree. Until then, most people in Britain thought the idea of having a tree inside the house was a little strange. A branch of a tree, or holly, or mistletoe was common, but the Christmas tree as decoration wasn't truly accepted until an engraving published in 1848 in the Illustrated London News depicting the Royal Family celebrating Christmas at Windsor that the tradition was adopted widely. Soon every home in Britain had a tree decorated with candles, sweets, fruit, homemade decorations and small gifts.

Christmas Cards

The notion of sending Christmas cards also originated during this period. Thanks to the industrialization happening at the time and the widespread use of the printing press, items such as cards and books became less expensive to make. When postage costs lowered in 1840, this led to the real boom



in buying and mailing Christmas cards.

Christmas Feast

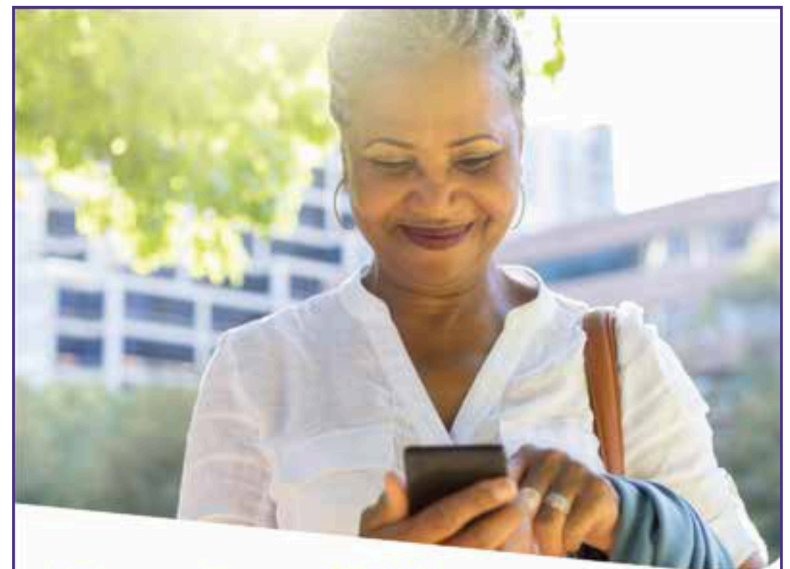
While the Victorian Royal Family may have been the impetus behind the public's adopting Christmas trees and cards, when it came to the Christmas feast, there was a lot

of variety on the Royal menu. Roast beef, turkey, mince pies, soups and plum pudding for dessert. But the majority of people in Victorian England weren't wealthy, so in order to have a festive bird on the family dinner table, some would join a goose club so they could pay in installments throughout the year.

Melding American and European Traditions

The idea of Father Christmas is one that predates the Victorian era and was part of English folklore; a figure of mer-

Continued on page 5



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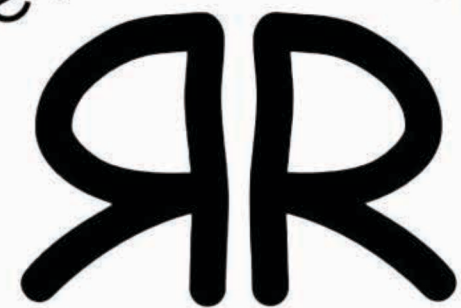
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‘Revenge of the Nerd’

By Randal C. Hill

Just weeks before her untimely death in 1970, singer Janis Joplin made one final journey back to her native Port Arthur, Texas, this time for her 10-year reunion at Jefferson Davis High School. The 27-year-old superstar had fled small-town life as a social outcast but was returning as a counterculture icon.

Weeks before the reunion, she had appeared on “*The Dick Cavett Show*,” where she claimed she had been “laughed out of class, out of town and out of the state.” Moving to San Francisco, her career skyrocketed after she began fronting the all-male band Big Brother and the Holding Company, her mezzo-soprano voice blasting out such blues-based classics as “*Ball and Chain*” and “*Piece of My Heart*.”

In high school, Janis had been a whip-smart student — she belonged to the Future Teachers Club and graduated from Jefferson David a year early — but was never accepted by her peers who had always called the social shots. Often seen as a reclusive eccentric on campus, she once said, “I was a misfit. I read. I painted. I thought.”

Joplin hung out with other teenagers on the school’s social periphery. One particular pal was a collector of record

albums by such Blues artists as Bessie Smith, Billie Holiday, and Big Mama Thornton. (In 1953, Thornton had cut the original “*Hound Dog*.”)

At 17, while showering at home one night, something happened that changed Janis’s life: “I discovered I had this incredibly loud voice!” Later, she said, “I started singing Blues because that was always what I liked.”

The head of the 1970 reunion committee who had mailed the get-together announcement had insisted to newspaper journalists, “This is NOT a reception for Janis Joplin.” Janis, though, made a regal entrance that night, surrounded by bodyguards, reporters, and paparazzi.

Many of her former classmates were no doubt shocked to see that the girl they had once teased mercilessly hadn’t just overcome their tormenting, she had become everything they would never be. (Joplin had admitted that she was attending to see “all those kids who are still working in gas stations and driving dry-cleaning trucks while I’m making \$50,000 a night.”)

Janis had arrived with purple and pink feathers crowning her head, oversized rose-tinted glasses framing her acne-scarred face, and bracelets jangling on both wrists. Some

welcomed her, but she also felt the chill of those who stood apart, much as they had before, and made comments about her. One of them asked her “what she had been up to” for the past decade.

At evening’s end, Joplin was given a car tire, a gag gift offered to the attendee who had traveled the furthest distance that day.

Two months later, Janis Joplin died from a heroin overdose, alone in a Los Angeles motel on a Saturday night. Four months later, she had the No. 1 single in America, the Kris Kristofferson-composed “*Me and Bobby McGee*.”

In Port Arthur, some felt proud to have known her. Others probably couldn’t have cared less.

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Health and Fitness

7 Reasons to Get Started with Your Fitness Program

Because physical activity and healthy aging go hand in hand, getting started with a fitness program included in your health plan can do more than help you maintain your health as you age.

“Movement truly is medicine,” says Dr. Jaynie Bjornaraa, physical therapist, fitness professional, adjunct professor, and senior vice president of rehabilitation services and digital fitness solutions at American Specialty Health (ASH).

Dr. Bjornaraa oversees the Silver&Fit® Healthy Aging and Exercise program for ASH, ensuring that its members get evidence-based recommendations when starting their fitness routines. She helped develop the program’s on-boarding feature, which sets members on individual fitness journeys based on their needs. Fitness levels, exercise goals, and personal preferences all factor into a tailored 14-day workout plan.

“Research has shown that active movement is the best way to prevent and improve chronic disease. And the great thing about exercise is that it benefits your cognitive health—memory and mood—as much as it affects your physical well-being,” according to Dr. Bjornaraa.

She offers this short list of other benefits a thoughtful fitness program can provide:



It’s not a stretch of the imagination: Regular exercise can help your mental as well as your physical health.

1. Improved Health Being physically active can reduce your risk of disease, strengthen your bones and muscles, help you manage weight, and boost your mental well-being.
2. Preventive Care Physical fitness can help prevent certain high-risk scenarios such as serious injury from falls, which is the leading cause of accidental death in older adults.
3. Social Interaction Some programs offer links to connect with clubs and free group fitness classes online for various types and levels of workouts.
4. Health Rewards Incentives for tracking your activity though a fitness program can earn various awards as well help you work with your medical provider to better manage any chronic disease.
5. Personal Coaching Connecting with a health coach during regularly scheduled sessions through a fitness-focused plan can help you achieve a variety of wellness goals.

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Christmas Traditions

Continued from page 3

ry-making just for adults. In the middle of Queen Victoria’s reign, however, American and European traditions came together to create the idea of Father Christmas or Santa Claus, as we now know him, as the bringer of gifts to children.

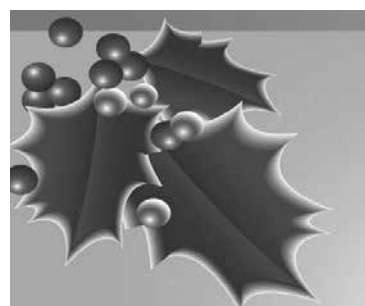
And all the other traditions of Christmas trees, Christmas cards, the Christmas feast and gift-giving were celebrated in England as well as across the pond in America.

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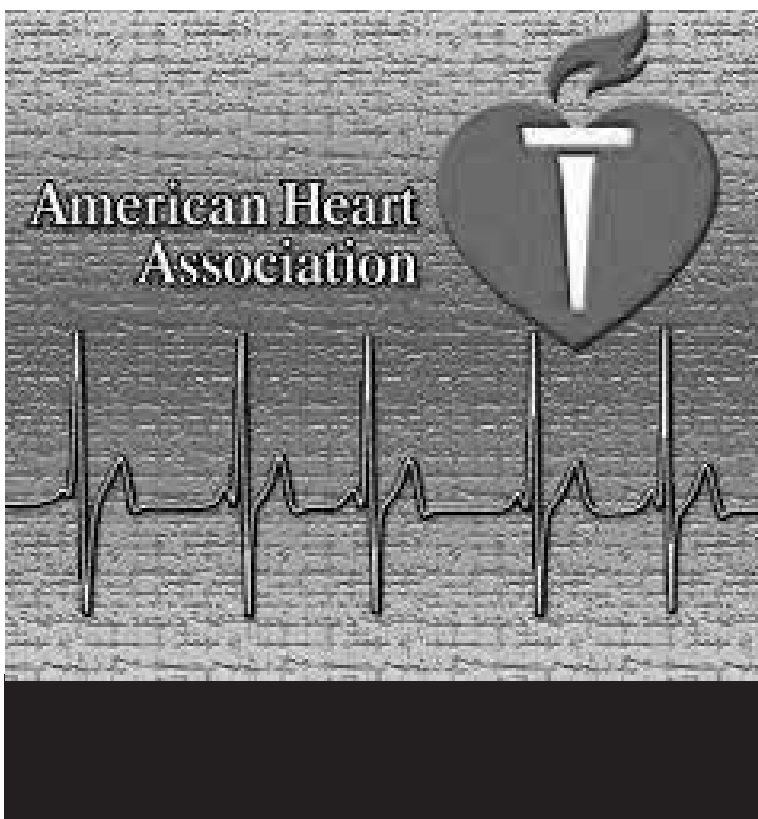
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Elton John – The Real ‘Rocketman’

By Les Goldberg

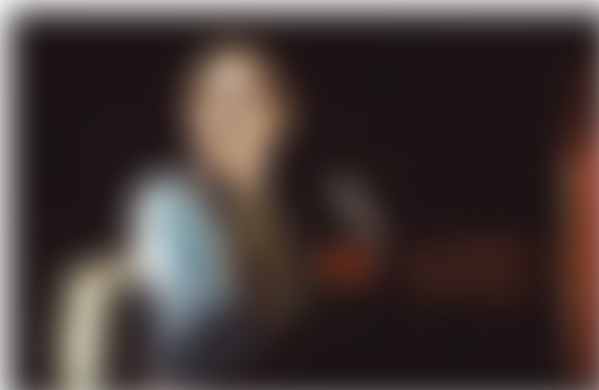
During our lifetime, the music we listen to and the musicians we admire have changed colors like the tropical chameleon. Sometimes it happens slowly over years and decades or, like in the case of Elton John, it rocks our world overnight.

I thought I had seen it all when, after listening to my parents’ favorite Big Band tunes, witnessing the startling rise of Elvis Presley, and experiencing the British Invasion led by The Beatles, we would see the rapidly rising star in the form of this flamboyant and uniquely talented English singer, pianist and composer.



Those of us born in the 1940s could easily relate to the new breed of Rock singers and the Rock ‘n Roll genre as it reflected the political, social, and drug-infested turmoil of the 1960s and the years beyond.

Elton John is the epitome of that era. Born in Middlesex, England in 1947, he began playing piano at an early age, and by 15, he dropped out of school and joined a Blues band. At 20 he met lyricist Bernie Taupin and for the next two years, they wrote songs for



other musicians, while Elton worked as a session musician for other artists.

At age 22, he released his first solo album, *“Empty Sky.”* A year later he created his band and released *“Your Song,”* his first hit record which reached the top 10 on the charts in the United States and United Kingdom.

Elton’s critical acclaim peaked in the 1970s, triggered by a series of hit albums, beginning with *“Honky Chateau”* in 1972 and ending with *“Rock of the Westies”* in 1975.



His fame continued to flourish throughout two more decades as song after song, and album after album became major chart-toppers, including *“Peachtree Road,”* *“Caribou,”* *“Goodbye Yellow Brick Road,”* *“Madman Across the Water”*

and, most notably, *“Candle in the Wind.”*

The reworked version of his 1974 single released in 1997 was

dedicated to Princess Diana and sold more than 33 million copies worldwide, becoming the best-selling chart single of all time.



John continued to record new music later in his extensive career. In 2006 he released *“The Captain & the Kid,”* a sequel to his earlier autobiographical effort *“Captain Fantastic”* and the *“Brown Dirt Cowboy”* (1975). He also teamed up with Leon Russell for 2010’s *“The Union,”* which led to a joint tour. John later released *“The Diving Board”* (2013), his 30th studio album, produced by T Bone Burnett.

In February 2016, John released his 33rd studio album, *“Wonderful Crazy Night,”* to positive reviews. The album featured the Elton John Band, with whom he last collaborated a decade prior.

‘Billy Elliott the Musical’ and ‘Rocketman’

Also, in demand as a songwriter, John was instrumental in bringing *“Billy Elliott the Musical”* to the stage. The show, adapted from the 2000 film, opened on Broadway in 2008, where it quickly became a critical and commercial success. John also worked on the 2011 animated film *“Gnomeo & Juliet,”* serving as a producer and a composer.

Even with a toned-down stage persona, John remained a popular live act. In 2012, he performed with Ozzy Osbourne, Eric Clapton, Stevie Wonder, and Paul McCartney, among others, in celebration of Queen Elizabeth’s 60 years on the throne.

Around this time, John and his husband were working on a biopic about the legendary musician *“Rocketman.”* Starring Taron Egerton, the film finally reached the finish line with its premiere at the May 2019 Cannes Film Festival, drawing attention for its whimsical musical scenes as well as its unflinching portrayal of John’s sexuality. The artist followed



with the publication of his autobiography, *“Me,”* later that year.

In January 2020, John and Taupin claimed the best original song Golden Globe for *“Rocketman’s”* *“I’m Gonna Love Me Again.”* Amazingly, it was their first shared award after more than a half-century of creating some of popular music’s biggest hits together. The duo then picked up their second joint honor, also for best original song, at the Academy Awards the following month.



Farewell Tour

On January 24, 2018, John announced that he would retire from the road after his planned Farewell Yellow Brick Road Tour, set to kick off that September. “My priorities have changed,” he said, citing his desire to spend more time with his husband, David, and their

Continued on page 24



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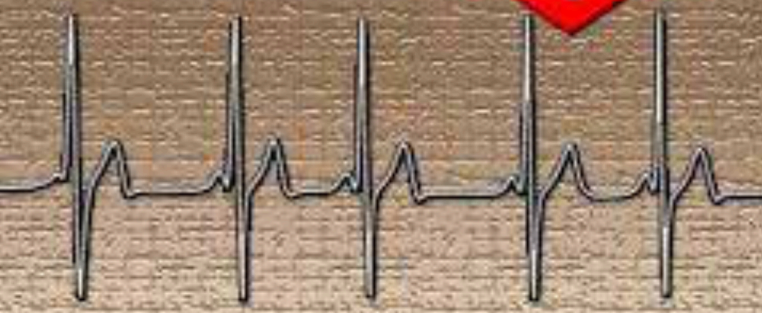
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On The Road Again ...

The Holidays in the Pines

By Shana McCann

When I was a kid, my parents treated my brother and me to a delightful road trip to Santa's Village in the not-so-far-away San Bernardino Mountains. In fact, from our home in West Los Angeles, it took us about two hours to drive up to one of the few holiday-themed parks in America.

Filled with excitement and after the usual questions of "Are we there yet?" and "How much longer 'till we get there?" We arrived in a real Christmas wonderland.



It did not matter to us that it was a December without snow. What mattered was the fact that we were together as a family in an enchanted place high above the traffic and noise of the city.

You can experience those same vibes today – with your grandkids, children, and anybody else you can fit into your vehicle.

Santa's Village is now known as SkyPark and is packed with adventure for every age group,



from a train ride to a zipline with plenty of dining and rest stops in between. Here is a sample of what you will find nestled in the pines:

- The Silver Balls Arena is for ice skating in the winter and roller skating in the spring and summer.
- The Adventure Zipline for soaring 600 feet through the dense Northwoods, high above the park.
- A Frozen Falls Climbing Tower for climbers of all levels.
- King Celwyn's Ax Challenge where you can try your hand at the ancient art of ax throwing.
- Princess Evergreen's Archery Range to learn the basics of the bow and arrow.



- Northwoods Sharpshooter Gallery is a whimsical BB gun gallery.

- Discovery Play-scape, designed as a playground for your grandkids.

SkyPark is also well-known for its excellent hiking trails and mountain biking on an

extensive set of professionally designed bike trails that wind through a dense Alpine Forest with natural jumps, wall rides, ladder bridges, and obstacles.



Just like its sea-level counterparts, this mountain theme park offers visitors a vast array of year-round entertainment in the form of live performances and costumed greeters who weave their magic and stories to create a fantasy world for all ages.

Included among the acts are puppet shows, live skits, magicians, singing, and dancing. To satisfy your hunger and thirst, the park features six on-site eating venues from richly decorated log cabin pubs and restaurants to a life-sized gingerbread bakery. My favorites

Continued on page 19

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Unearth the Uncommon: U.S. Holiday Traditions Unveiled

‘Tis the season for familial gatherings, the exchange of gifts, and feasts that satiate even the most voracious of appetites. As you revel in the festive spirit, consider these captivating nuggets of knowledge to regale your loved ones:

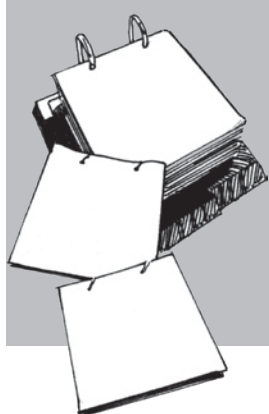


- Norwegian researchers posit that Rudolph’s crimson nose might be the outcome of a parasitic respiratory infection.
- The inaugural artificial Christmas trees, crafted from dyed goose feathers, hailed from Germany.
- More than 3 billion Christmas cards annually traverse the U.S., creating a paper trail of yuletide cheer.
- The gifts from the “*Twelve Days of Christmas*” tally up to a staggering 364.
- While Santa’s reindeer bear masculine names, the sleigh-pullers are likely female or castrated, as male reindeer shed their antlers around Christmas.
- The record for the tallest Christmas tree ever cut belongs to a 221-foot Douglas fir exhibited in Seattle, in 1950.
- The trinity of Christmas hues — green, red, and

gold — symbolizes life and rebirth, the blood of Christ, and light, wealth, and royalty, respectively.

- Hanukkah’s movable date stems from its alignment with the Hebrew calendar, adding a dynamic twist to its occurrence each year.
- The world’s grandest Christmas stocking measured a colossal 106 feet and 9 inches, holding the weight of five reindeer and nearly 1,000 presents.
- Christmas trees have been commercially available in the U.S. since the mid-19th century.
- Hanukkah celebrates its

Continued on page 24



DECEMBER

Calendar of Events



Winter holiday events in the area include many magical events with visits from Santa and lighting ceremonies.

There are also many regular annual events the community enjoys every year such as the Newport Beach Christmas Boat Parade and Huntington Beach Boat Parade.

So, enjoy the spirit of the season at one of these winter events or more.

Tree Lighting Ceremony ***Westminster***

Dec. 4

5 p.m. to 7:30 p.m.

Ring in the season with the annual tree lighting ceremony. Taking place at the Westminster Civic Center, this event will include activities for the whole family, live entertainment, food vendors, and a visit from Santa. At Westminster Civic Center, 8200 Westminster Blvd., Westminster. Call 714-895-2860.

Tamale Festival ***Placentia***

Dec. 7

4 p.m. to 10 p.m.

The Placentia Santa Fe Merchants Association and the city of Placentia are hosting the annual Tamale Festival to be

held in Old Town Placentia in the 100-200 blocks of Santa Fe Street.

The event will feature live entertainment, food and tamale vendors, non-profit booths, business booths, a beer garden, pictures with Santa Claus, holiday tree lighting, and a kid's games area. At Santa Fe Street, Placentia.

Santa on the Go ***Westminster***

Dec. 8, 9 & 16

Come join Santa for crafts, treats, activities, pictures with Santa, and more. Dec. 8 Sigler Park, 6 p.m. to 730 p.m. Saturday, Dec. 9, Westminster Village Park, 1:30 p.m. to 3 p.m.; Saturday, Dec. 16, Coronet Park, 10:30 a.m. to 12 p.m.; and Westminster Park, 1:30 p.m. to 3 p.m.

Breakfast With Santa ***Westminster***

Dec. 9

9 a.m. to 10:30 a.m.

Santa Claus will make a special trip to Westminster to have breakfast with children and their families. Bring your family to enjoy breakfast, activities, and crafts at the traditional event. The cost is \$15 per person and includes breakfast, crafts, and a small stocking for each child.

Children must be accompanied by an adult. All family members in attendance must be pre-registered. At Community Services Building, 8200 Westminster Blvd., Westminster.

Annual Newport Beach Christmas Boat Parade ***Newport Beach/Newport Bay***

Dec. 13-17

Free to the public, the boat parade will light up the harbor for five consecutive nights. The parade starts at Collins Island at 6:30 p.m. and will last approximately three and a half hours. Over 250 ships participate in the parade along with hundreds of waterfront estates. Providing the backdrop for the parade is the Ring of Lights waterfront home and business decorating competition. Free for spectators, entry fee for participating boats. Over a million and a half people view the parade each year.

For those of you who would like to be in the parade both Newport Landing and Davey's Locker will offer general admission cruises nightly every night of the parade that are a part of the actual parade. Viewing the parade from a ship means that you see all the parade and homes in full decor that line the waterfront. General admission tickets can be reserved over the phone.

Disney On Ice

Dec. 14-18

Disney on Ice is a family experience you must do at least once. Join Mickey and friends at the Honda Center to see this timeless show. Cannot make it to the Anaheim show? See it in L.A. Dec. 9-10 or in Long Beach Dec. 28-Jan. 1. At Honda Center, 2695 E. Katella Ave., Anaheim.

Christmas In Brea Downtown

Weekends in December
12 to 5 p.m.

Visit the Downtown Brea shopping center for photos with Santa, holiday performances and music, and more festive celebrations. At Brea Downtown, 330 W Birch St., Brea.

Dana Point Boat Parade of Lights

Dana Point Harbor

Dec. 8-10

Dana Point Harbor's annual boat parade takes place with a holiday theme. The festive, decorated boats cruise the harbor for onlookers to enjoy.

Laguna Niguel Holiday Parade

Laguna Niguel

Dec. 9

10 a.m. to 12 p.m.

The annual Laguna Niguel Holiday Parade features over

100 exciting entries including marching bands, floats, youth groups, equestrian units, exotic cars, military members, local heroes, fun attractions, and of course, Santa. There are more than 3,000 participants in the parade and more than 10,000 community members come out to watch. Bring your chair and scout out a spot to watch this fun annual parade. There is a free shuttle available from the Federal Building parking lot.

Huntington Harbour Boat Parade

Huntington Harbour

Dec. 9-10

5 p.m. to 8 p.m.

The parade begins at 5:15 p.m. Decorated boats will put on lights and holiday displays as they cruise through the waterways of Huntington Harbour.

Menorah Lighting ***Ladera Ranch***

Dec. 10

4 p.m. to 6 p.m.

Celebrate the Festival of Lights with the Menorah Lighting and enjoy music, dancing, dreidels, crafts, candle lighting, and Hanukkah snacks. At Town Green, 28801 Sienna Parkway, Ladera Ranch.



Continued on page 16

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by Robert Bruce Woodcox

Whether you want to capture your life as a memoir, autobiography, or legacy book (coffee table style), most people need some help. I am a **Best Selling local author and ghostwriter** and I can help you get started. (See adjacent ad on this page.) **I've ghostwritten 46 books,** was a **Pulitzer Prize nominee** (2012) and have helped more than 30 individuals and families tell their stories for children, grandchildren, friends, and for business books.

I come to you.

My process includes interviews, recording, organizing your materials, research, writing original content from your memories and editing. I am also a publisher for my clients and can design and print from one to 1,000 quality full color books for you at very reasonable rates. All of this work is done locally in Newport Beach.

This wonderful process is quite fun and is confidential. It begins by you calling me

(949-244-7880) or emailing (ghostwrite@icloud.com) to explore how we will work together, what it will cost, how long it will take and any other questions you have. Once you decide you are comfortable with me and the process, we will create an outline together to get started. From that point on, we will meet approximately twice a month to share the previous work I've completed, and to obtain new content from you. It's really that simple. We continue in that manner until the completion of the writing and editing. Generally, the process takes 4 to 6 months.

These books can be for your own family or for public sale, whichever you choose. I can also set up an Amazon account for you in some cases where you can sell your books.

Everyone who comes to me says the same things:

"I've been wanting to do this for a long time, but didn't know how to start. I'm not a writer and so time seems to just keep slipping away."

Continued on page 26



By Randal C. Hill

'Time in a Bottle'

Jim Croce

One night, Ingrid Croce sat her husband down at the kitchen table on their Pennsylvania farm. For five years, the two had tried in vain to have a child. That night, though, Ingrid had good news: They were about to become parents. Jim Croce was so overcome with emotion that he composed "*Time in a Bottle*" on the table that night, telling how he wished that that fleeting moment of euphoria could last forever:

"If I could save time in a bottle.

The first thing that I'd like to do.

Is to save every day till eternity passes away.

Just to spend them with you ..."

Of course, as we all know, life doesn't work that way, and that we are given only a certain number of days together:

"But there never seems to be enough time.

To do the things you want to do, once you find them

I've looked around enough to know.

That you're the one I want to go through time with ..."

Their blessed event was a boy. The happy couple named him Adrian.

Jim Croce was a struggling singer/songwriter who first per-

formed with his wife. In 1966, the two recorded an album — "*Facets*"—and released it on their own Croce Records label. The disc went nowhere. Three years later, they signed with Capitol Records, but their "Jim and Ingrid Croce" LP met the same fate, and Capitol dropped them.

Jim decided to try his luck as a solo artist, in the meantime driving trucks, working construction, and teaching middle school to make ends meet while waiting to make music his full-time occupation.

"*Time in a Bottle*" ended up on Croce's first successful album, "*You Don't Mess Around with Jim*." The title track on ABC Records had been a rollicking Top 10 novelty hit, but "*Time in a Bottle*" ended up being buried on the second side of the LP. Nobody at ABC Records ever thought of it becoming a 45 someday.

Fast forward a couple of years, and Jim Croce had become a musical superstar. In September 1973, he and his small backup band were headlining shows at various college campuses in the South. All were scheduled to fly from one venue in Louisiana to another in Texas, but their small, chartered plane struck a tree on takeoff from a regional airport, and everyone on board perished.

Adrian Croce had turned 2 years old just eight days earlier.

Coincidentally, one week before the crash, ABC-TV had aired a now-forgotten "*Movie of the Week*." It was called "*She Lives!*" and starred Desi Arnaz, Jr., in a story of a young woman stricken with cancer.

The film's producers had come across "*Time in a Bottle*" from Croce's first hit album and had secured permission to add it to the movie's soundtrack. The following day, radio stations were bombarded with callers asking to hear the heartbreaking tune again. ABC Records quickly issued "*Time in a Bottle*," which raced to the peak of the "*Billboard*" chart and became Jim's signature single.

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Jim Croce, "*Time in a Bottle*." en.wikipedia.org.

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Eskow, Gary. "*Classic Tracks: 'Time in a Bottle.'*" Nov. 1, 2009. www.mixonline.com.

December Crossword Puzzle

Across

1. ___ torch
5. Congeals
10. Deal (with)
14. Ripens, as cheese
15. Cowoys' jamboree
16. Brother of Cain
17. "___ problem!"
18. Shaq's surname
19. Baker's unit
20. Fading into the distance, paradoxically
23. Make an effort
24. Pacific ___
25. Wood-shaping tool
28. Test the water?
31. Partner to bounds
35. Length x width, for a rectangle
36. "Friends" friend
38. By way of
39. A busy workplace, paradoxically
42. Angsty music genre
43. Is like a helicopter parent
44. Burden
45. Donnie ___ (psychological thriller)
47. U.F.O. pilots
48. Full of grit
49. "Without further ___..."
51. Hosp. workers
52. "Let's not split hairs," paradoxically
60. Country singer McEntire

61. Lots and lots and lots of water
62. Fly high
63. End-of-class signal
64. Send, as payment
65. Deets
66. Seller of furniture and meatballs
67. Certain circus animals
68. "Little piggies"

Down

1. Orange-flavored powdered drink

2. Dr. Frankenstein's assistant
3. Trendy diet
4. "You're in trouble now!"
5. Corrupt companion
6. Like "War and Peace"
7. Poetic tributes
8. What there's no "I" in
9. Green sort of power
10. Flirtatious request
11. Slender woodwind
12. Prickly ___ cactus
13. Santa's little helper
21. Wrath
22. Light purple
25. Tied, as shoes
26. Enticing scent
27. Voice above a baritone
28. Complete, as a crossword
29. Cove
30. Journalist Morgan
32. ___-garde
33. Reverent
34. Irreverent
36. Oink : pig :: ___ : cow
37. Modern records: Abbr.
40. ___ Island Red (type of

- chicken)
57. Taboo
41. Do a favor for a vacationing friend, perhaps
58. Bistro
59. Greek god with a bow
60. Slugger's stat
46. Vice Presidential candidate Harris
48. Junkyard dog's warning
50. Landfill whiffs
51. Dings on a car
52. Hide-and-___
53. Up to the task
54. Drink similar to a Slurpee
55. Disaster preparedness org.
56. Not make the grade

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December Calendar

Continued from page 11

Laguna Niguel Chanukah Celebration & Menorah Lighting

Laguna Niguel

Dec. 10

4 p.m. to 6 p.m.

Holiday Lights at Heritage Hill

Lake Forest

Candlelight Walk: Dec. 8-10;

5 p.m. to 9 p.m.

Holiday Lights: Dec. 15-17; 5 p.m. to 9 p.m.

During the holiday season, Heritage Hill is adorned with lights. Come out and enjoy a stroll through the festive historic buildings including the Serrano Adobe dating back to 1863, St. George's Episcopal Mission circa 1890, the El Toro Grammar School, and the Harvey Bennett Ranch House. Plus, there will be kids' crafts, live entertainment, and the opportunity to visit with Santa. At Heritage Hill Historical Park, 25151 Serrano Road, Lake Forest.

Jane Austen Holiday Ball

Mission Viejo

Dec. 15

6:30 p.m. to 8:30 p.m.

Celebrate the holidays and Jane Austen's birthday at a special ball. Enjoy historical dancing, crafts, and refreshments in your regency finery or festive attire. At Norman P. Murray Center, 24932 Veterans Way, Mission Viejo.

Costa Mesa Holiday Snowland

Dec. 16

This local park will be covered in snow to become an exciting winter wonderland. The event runs from 9 a.m. to noon. At Balearic Park, 1975 Balearic Drive, Costa Mesa.

Laguna Hills Holiday Dance Extravaganza

Laguna Hills

Dec. 16

7 p.m. to 9 p.m.

Celebrate the holidays with an evening of dance performances from local dance studios. Light refreshments and dessert will be served. At Laguna Hills Community Center, 2555 Alicia Parkway, Laguna Hills.

Enjoy live entertainment, Chanukah treats, lighting the menorah, crafts, activities, and more.

Huntington Harbour Cruise of Lights

Huntington Harbour

Dec. 16-18 & 21-23

The annual Cruise of Lights, hosted by the Huntington Harbour Philharmonic Committee takes guests on a Harbour Cruise to view festive holiday lights and decorations. Participants will climb aboard a large, chartered boat and head out into Huntington Harbour for a 45-minute narrated tour. The Huntington Harbour homes, docks, and boats are always bright and cheery with everything from animations and music to giant Christmas trees on the docks. You will see some of the most extraordinary lighting displays here in Huntington Harbour. All proceeds

from the Cruise of Lights support music education programs for Orange County public and private schools by the Philharmonic Society of Orange County. At 16889 Algonquin St., Huntington Beach.

Holiday Festival at The Muck

Fullerton

Dec. 17

12 to 2 p.m.

Celebrate the holiday season at The Muck with family-friendly activities, live music, free art workshops for kids, and an arts and crafts sale. At, Muckenthaler Cultural Center, 1201 West Malvern Ave., Fullerton.

Winter Fantasy Sawdust Festival

Laguna Beach

Through Dec. 17, (each

weekend Friday through

Sunday) | 10 a.m. to 7 p.m.

Sawdust Art Festival, 935 Laguna Canyon Road, Laguna Beach.

The Sawdust Festival Winter Fantasy transforms the 3-acre art village into a magical winter wonderland during the holiday season, complete with lights and decorations, falling snow, Santa, art demos, live music, and entertainment, and 150 artists and craft makers.

Irvine Park Christmas Train & Wonderland

Orange

Through Dec. 23

Weekdays: 4 p.m. to 9 p.m.

Weekends: 10 a.m. to 9 p.m.

Every winter, the Irvine Park Railroad transforms into a winter wonderland complete with a train ride to the North Pole to meet Santa Claus.

Guests will also enjoy Santa's Village, a play area packed with fun holiday activities including the bounce house, cookie decorating, ice fishing, carnival games, blizzard ball, and Rudolph racers. All activities require a ticket. Free activities in Santa's Village include story time with Mrs. Claus, coloring corner, and photo stations. Tickets for the Christmas Train must be purchased online in advance. At Irvine Regional Park, 1 Irvine Park Road, Orange.

Capistrano Lights Nightly Program

San Juan Capistrano

Through Dec. 30

Joining in the nightly tree lighting in the Ruins of the Great Stone Church on select evenings. Enjoy the Mission in the lights and sing along with the holiday songs of the 30-foot Christmas tree. A 10-foot wreath in the front courtyard provides the perfect setting for a holiday photo op. Stroll the Mission grounds to see community Christmas trees, festively lit. At Mission San Juan Capistrano, 26801 Ortega Hwy., San Juan Capistrano.

Tanaka Farms Hikari – A Festival of Lights

Irvine

Through Dec. 30; 4:30 p.m.

to 10 p.m.

Open from Wednesday

through Sunday

Visit Tanaka Farms for a celebration filled with joy and light this holiday season. Tanaka Farms will shine with 30 acres full of farm-themed lighting. Choose from a wagon ride that takes you to the Land of a

Thousand Lanterns and a visit to the Gingerbread Forest, or general admission (without the wagon ride) to the Gingerbread Forest with crafts, photo ops, live music, and the chance to meet Santa. At Tanaka Farms, 5380 3/4 University Drive, Irvine.

Knott's Merry Farm

Now Through Jan. 7, 2024

Enjoy the festivities at Knott's Merry Farm with Charlie Brown, Snoopy, Linus, and the gang. For the holiday season, Knott's becomes a magical place to celebrate with a Christmas Crafters Village, holiday decorations, and all the excitement of the holiday season.

Winter Fest OC

Costa Mesa

Now Through Jan. 7, 2024

Winter Fest OC is a magical winter festival with Santa, snow, rides, games, and much more. Visitors can stroll through holiday-themed lands, and festive light displays, build a snowman in the snow play area, and enjoy a snow tubing slide, ice skating, and more. Every night guests will enjoy the tree lighting ceremony with fresh falling snow, a parade, and watch as fireworks light up the sky. Kids will enjoy all the magic that Winter Fest has to offer and the whole family will feel the spirit of the season as you wander through the winter wonderland. At OC Fair & Event Center, 88 Fair Drive, Costa Mesa.

Continued on page 24



December Book Club

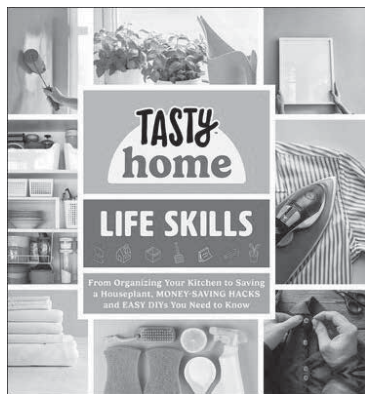
asked questions from BuzzFeed's popular lifestyle destination Tasty Home.

Before the Christmas parties and other holiday gatherings make sure to take time for yourself and pick up a good book.

There are plenty to choose from to keep you busy like tips on organizing your kitchen, and unclogging your drain, to interesting read about Charlie Chaplain, and reflections of famous author Ray Bradbury.

Check out these suggestions and enjoy!

Tasty Home: Life Skills From Organizing Your Kitchen to Saving a Houseplant, Money-Saving Hacks and Easy DIYs You Need to Know Part of Tasty Home By Tasty Home



"Discover all the life hacks you've been missing with this perfect compendium of skills to answer all of life's most

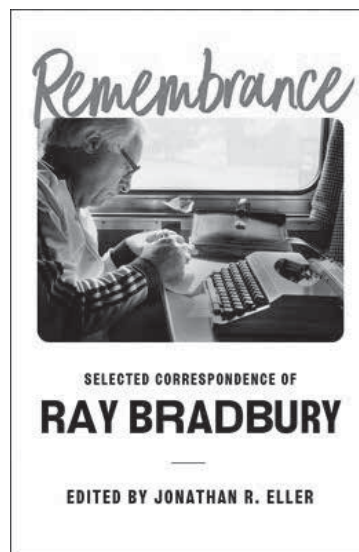
"Need help unclogging a drain? Can't seem to keep a plant alive? Just want to finally know how to fold a fitted sheet. Let BuzzFeed's Tasty Home make your life a whole lot easier. With *'Tasty Home: Life Skills,'* you'll learn simple tricks, helpful hacks, and super easy DIYs to increase your how-to knowledge. This book teaches you everything you need to know—even things you didn't know you needed to know!"

Based on the most searched topics on Tasty Home's site and social channels, this go-to guide covers the kind of questions that would have you calling mom. Now, you can secure your spot as a real-life adult whether you need to fix a kitchen fail or quickly sew on a button, this book has your back.

"*'Tasty Home: Life Skills'* packs all the fun and helpful info of BuzzFeed's how-to site into the perfect guide you'll find yourself going back to again and again," according to Publisher Adams Media.



Remembrance Selected Correspondence of Ray Bradbury By Ray Bradbury Edited by Jonathan R. Eller



"Iconic author of *'Fahrenheit 451,'* *'The Martian Chronicles,'* and *'Something Wicked This Way Comes,'* Ray Bradbury believed that, someday, a collection of his letters could illuminate the story of his life in new ways. That story emerges across time and memory from the pages of *'Remembrance.'*

"That story emerges across time and memory from the pages of *'Remembrance.'*

"Bradbury was one of the best-known writers and creative dreamers of our time. The many honors he received, which included an Emmy and an Academy Award nomination for adaptations of his work, culminated in the 2000 National Book Foundation's Medal for Distinguished Contribution to American Letters, a 2004 National Medal of Arts,

and a 2007 Pulitzer Prize Special Citation. For many years NASA and the Disney Studio felt the impact of Bradbury's creativity, and his fiction has found its way into hundreds of anthologies, textbooks, and the National Endowment for the Arts' Big Read program. His enduring legacy as a storyteller, novelist, and space-age visionary radiated out into popular adaptations for stage, film, and television, and now the fascinating narratives and insights of his personal and professional correspondence are revealed for the first time.

"*'Remembrance'* offers the first sustained look at his life in letters from his late teens to his ninth decade. Bradbury's correspondence was far-reaching—he interacted with a rich cross-section of 20th-century cultural figures, writers, film directors, editors, and others who simply wanted insights or encouragement from a writer who had enriched their lives through his stories and novels.

"Bradbury scholar and biographer, Jonathan R. Eller, organized this volume into categories of correspondents, showing Bradbury's progression through life as he knew it, and not necessarily as the public perceived him. Letters to and from mentors and other writers are followed by correspondence with such film directors as John Huston, François Truffaut, and Federi-

co Fellini. Letters with publishers and agents are followed by letters that capture moments of national and international recognition, the shadows of war and intolerance that motivated some of his best writing, and the friends and family members who shared the memories of his life. Among the writers whose letters illuminate *'Remembrance'* are Theodore Sturgeon, Sir Arthur C. Clarke, *'Twilight Zone'* writers Charles Beaumont and Richard Matheson, Dan Chaon, Bernard Berenson, Nobel Laureate Bertrand Russell, Graham Greene, Anaïs Nin, Gore Vidal, Carl Sandburg, and Jessamyn West.

"*'Remembrance'* illuminates the most elusive aspect of Bradbury's wide-ranging writing passions—the correspondence he sent and received throughout his long life, each letter originally intended for an audience of one," according to Publisher Simon and Schuster.

Charlie Chaplin vs. America When Art, Sex, and Politics Collided By Scott Eyman

"The remarkable, must-read story of Charlie Chaplin's years of exile from the United States during the postwar Red Scare, and how it ruined his film career, from bestselling biographer Scott Eyman.

Continued on page 26

In The Spotlight

Marygrace Carpenter Heads Up LWV's The Fit Brain Club

The Fit Brain Club of Laguna Woods Village is sponsored by Alzheimer's Orange County and provides speakers on all dementia and related topics.

These doctors and professionals from agencies such as The Council of Aging, Alzheimer's OC Educational Department, and lay people such as The Fit Brain Club's President Marygrace Carpenter (who goes by Grace) and Vice President, Stephanie Colantoni support and educate members who attend meetings seeking help from an illness which still incurable.

Carpenter, 81, resides in Laguna Woods Village and is the president of The Fit Club in LWV and said the Fit Brain Club and the Sunshine Performance Group were formed by Sunshine Lutey and her husband David. They raised thousands of dollars for Alzheimer's and the Village, Carpenter said.

As for living in the Village Carpenter said, "My husband and I bought a condominium in Laguna Woods because we needed to downsize from a large home in LA and was diagnosed with MCI (Mild Cognitive Impairment) and lost his driver's License. In 2016 he was diagnosed with Alz-

heimer's and passed away on Friday, Oct. 13, 2017."

Here is more about Carpenter who was born in Scranton, Penn., on Dec 11, 1941

SR: What is your education?

A: *in Scranton PA, from grades 1-12 at St. Mary's School, Mercedian School of Nursing, St. Mary's Hospital, Scranton, PA, Licensed Vocational Nurse, Pennsylvania 1960, and CA Nursing license, 1965 at Loyola Marymount University, BA in psychology and theater arts, 1975, LMU, an MA in educational psychology, and three Special Ed. Teaching Credentials, 1980.*

Q: Hobbies and spare time?

A: My hobby is singing with The Sunshine Performance Group. We sing for people with memory and behavioral challenges due to dementia. Studies and my experience show that there is a direct correlation between music and the brain. I have sung for people who have not spoken for years and yet are able to sing along or mouth the words to songs that are familiar to them.

Q: Professional experience?

A: Employed at Los Angeles School District as a specialist in Special Education Services

and simultaneously was an adjunct faculty member of Loyola Marymount University School of Education until my retirement at age 70.

Q: When does The Fit Brain Club meet?

A: The Fit Brain Club meets the second Monday of every month in Clubhouse 3, (Performing Arts Center, PAC), Dining Room 2 at 10 a.m. Mark Hochberg will play your requests if you sign in and arrive early!

Q: Any last words?

A: About 164,000 people have



been diagnosed with Alzheimer's (does not include all the other dementias and those undiagnosed) during 2023 in Orange County alone.

For more information about The Fit Brain Club contact Marygrace Carpenter at 310-780-0320 or via email at carpenter41mg@gmail.com



Fitness Program

Continued from page 5

6. Cost Savings Fitness-focused plans often include low-cost access to fitness centers and exercise videos for a wider variety of workout choices.

7. Quality of Life A thoughtfully designed program will help members develop a workout plan, which can help you stay mobile and maintain their independence.

Even for individuals who don't currently engage in fitness activities, Dr. Bjornaraa says it's never too late to start.

"You can be 80 years old," she said. "Whenever you decide to start an exercise routine, you'll notice the health improvements quickly add up. However, starting slow and staying consistent is the key to building fitness levels and a good program can help you steadily reach your goals."

It's important that your health plan supports your long-term health—and fitness. If you're considering adding fitness to your routine, be sure to work with doctors before starting any new exercise regimen.

Finally, once you've started a fitness plan, make the most of it. Stay committed to a lifestyle of fitness. Regular attendance in exercise classes and engaging in your wellness will go a long way to help you maintain and improve your health.

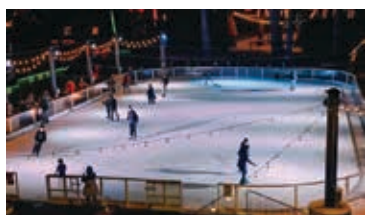
On The Road Again ...

Continued from page 8

were Billy's BBQ with its delectable pulled pork sandwiches, and The Pedal Pub where you can choose a wide variety of craft brews.

SkyPark is close enough to be a perfect dawn-to-dark day trip, but if you choose to extend your experience into a mini vacay, the facility is a Camp + RV Resort for full-service recreational camping.

All sizes of RVs are welcome, and every site has full hook-ups, power, water, and waste disposal. Campers can also access the bathhouse with seven changing rooms and hot-water showers.



As a Baby Boomer, I appreciate the trials, tribulations, and comeback that is the story of Santa's Village turned SkyPark.

From a dream by a Southern California land developer who read an article about a North Pole amusement park in New York, Santa's Village became a reality in 1955. By the 1970s, however, "Boomers" were growing up and the gas crisis hit American families hard. Road trips became fewer and far between. Parks like Santa's Village had a tough time turn-



ing a profit, forcing the facility to close in 1998.

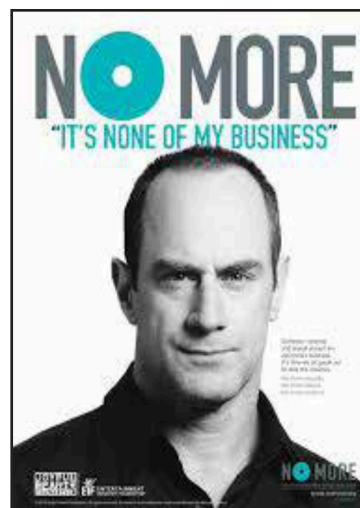
Sixteen years later and despite a raging forest fire in 2006, a Lake Arrowhead couple, Bill, and Melinda Johnson, decided to buy the place they loved in their youth.

"We loved that place so much," Bill, a real estate developer, said to his wife. "Wouldn't it be cool if we could share it with others? What do you think about buying Santa's Village? She agreed knowing it would be the most challenging project they had ever done.

But when the park reopened better than ever in 2016, she proclaimed:

"It's really a dream come true."

Take it from me, you will agree with her.



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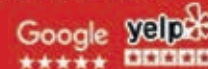


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Fabulous Finds

By Debbie L. Sklar

Cocktail parties, family get-togethers, and office parties ...

All these are events you might be attending and more this December so why not look your best with these wonderful **Fab Finds** from anti-aging products to a face wash, here's to looking great for any occasion.

Super Skin



The **CCULTURE** collection of premium multi-benefit skin and hair care products feature globally sourced botanical ingredients focused on anti-aging prevention, nourishment, and repair.

Rooted in a strong belief in the power of plant-based natural ingredients for skin nutrition, and wellness and coupled with the cultural discovery joys in travel.

At the heart of **CCULTURE**'s collection is a trio of 100% botanical face and hair oils featuring nutrient-rich cold-pressed botanicals that are fast absorbing and deeply nourishing to the skin. The clean oil blends feature familiar ingredients like plum, watermelon, rose hip, and cherry alongside internationally sourced xime-

nia, cape chestnut, arugula, broccoli, and Abyssinian oils.

The brand also offers serums and moisturizers that feature natural and gentle alternatives for popular laboratory-derived skincare ingredients like Hyaluronic Acid and Retinol in formulations further enhanced with potent complementing anti-aging natural ingredients like galactomyces ferment, ergothioneine, and Kakadu plum. Prices range from \$38 for a 0.5-ounce Bakuchiol Eye Cream up to \$62 for a 2.0-ounce Hyaluronic Acid Alternative Serum. The collection is available for purchase at cculturebeauty.com.

Clean Skin



COSRX, a **derm-favorite** skincare brand, now offers the 400ml (13.52 fl. oz) edition of the Low pH Good Morning Gel Cleanser. The XL size ver-

sion of the cult favorite cleanser offers greater bang for your buck.

The Low pH Good Morning Gel Cleanser is a daily companion, offering gentle and efficient cleansing for morning and night skincare routines. On application, the formula dispenses as a lightweight and

revitalizing gel. As soon as it meets water, it transforms into a soft foam that rinses easily, leaving no residue behind. It effectively removes dirt, oil, and other impurities, while also providing anti-aging and breakout-fighting benefits, while strengthening the skin barrier. In contrast to many gel-based cleansers that can leave the skin feeling tight and dry, this cleanser ensures a thorough cleanse without leaving the skin feeling stripped and tight. Low pH Good Morning Gel Cleanser in its new size, is available on Amazon.

Hair Loss Solutions



Rootique, leverages technology to optimize the performance of hair loss solutions and has launched Rootique DUO. It's designed to simplify the application of topical hair loss treatments to boost the chance of achieving successful hair growth.

Rootique is the first micro-misting hair loss treatment device. Its patent-design DuoTrace System and Intelli-Mist technology help to finely spread hair tonic over the scalp, encouraging absorption and reducing mess compared to the traditional application method of using bare hands

and a dropper, enabling users to apply minoxidil or any other hair tonic quickly and easily within just 15 seconds, and making it more likely for a user to stick to the treatment when hair growth results are seen.

Rootique DUO is available starting at \$89 (MSRP: \$149) through Indiegogo.com with delivery starting in January 2024.

Smelling Swell



Sharing and gifting the magic of fragrance has never been easier, thanks to **ScentAir's** products.

Available online and in time for the holiday season, these gift sets offer an array of quality products and price points. Try the ScentAir Whisper HOME diffuser, White Tea & Thyme fragrance cartridge, White Tea & Thyme room spray, Green Clover & Aloe auto fragrance, seasonal tin candle, and fragrance-infused reeds.

Perfect for stocking stuffers and hostess gifts, this bundle of three petite candle tins offers an ideal choice. These 3 oz., small-batch candles are crafted with soy-blend wax with cotton wicks in festive

gold tins. The fragrances are ideally suited to infuse homes with the scents of the season: Sage and Pomegranate, Apple and oak, and Cranberry Apple Marmalade. A \$42 value is \$30. To explore these fragrance bundles and more, visit ScentAir.com.

Styling Option



Cult Classic **Saints & Sinners Haircare** announces Velvet Divine Styling Potion was recently named "Best Thermal Protectant" in the category in Beauty Launchpad Magazine's Annual Readers' Choice Awards.

Saints & Sinners delivers luxurious, salon-quality results with the cleanest of formulations. A fan favorite, Saints & Sinners Velvet Divine Styling Potion is a multi-use styler for all hair types. Velvet Divine Styling Potion: Protects against the ravages of heat, can be used on wet or dry hair, adds tremendous shine, and smooths erratic flyaways, protects fragile hair color from

Continued on page 25

Celebrating a World of Music... 2024 Tournament of Roses Parade

“Best Seats in the House” Tickets Now on Sale

*Reserve Today to Ensure Prime Parade Viewing
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Tournament of Roses Parade fans can buy “the best seats in the house” without camping out for days on the streets of Pasadena, Calif. in hopes of nabbing a great parade-watching spot. That’s right. While tickets last, reserved grandstand seats for prime parade viewing are available through Sharp Seating, the ONLY Official Seating and Ticket Company of the Tournament of Roses Parade for more than 85 years.

The 135th Tournament of Roses Parade will roll through the streets of Pasadena on Monday, January 1, 2024. This immensely popular event that attracts 40+ million TV viewers and more than a million visitors from around the world to Pasadena annually will be here in no time.

Parade fans wishing to secure reserved grandstand seats are urged to place their ticket orders now for the best selections. Tickets are going fast for seating at what is historically known as “TV Corner,” which offers the same views seen on Rose Parade television broadcasts. Prices range from \$75-\$120 per seat, depending on location, plus \$50-\$60 for a parking permit.

“The Tournament of Roses is one of the greatest spectacles in the world,” said Sharp Seating President Sindee Riboli. “Nothing else compares with its more than 35 floats, 25 bands and 20 equestrian units. Musicians and equestrians from around the globe compete to be in the Rose Parade, so viewers really enjoy the best of the best. While the floats look beautiful on television, they are breathtaking to see live. It’s truly a not-to-be missed, experience of a lifetime.”

Sharp Seating also provides tickets for a variety of pre- and post-parade events. Fans can purchase tickets for close-up previews of the Rose Parade’s legendary floats while the finishing touches are being applied. Additionally, tickets are available to view the floats on display after the parade.

Another crowd-pleaser, Bandfest will feature bands from around the world showcasing their musical and marching talents with performances at Pasadena City College’s football stadium Friday, December 29, 2023, at 2:00 p.m.; and two shows Saturday, December 30, 2023 – 10:00 a.m. and 2:00 p.m.

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At EquestFest — happening Friday, December 29, 2023, 10:00 a.m. – 3:00 p.m., at the Los Angeles Equestrian center — horse-lovers can stroll through the Rose Parade stable area, meet many of the equestrians they will see on the parade route January 1st, and take photos with their beautiful horses. Visitors will also enjoy riding demonstrations and equestrian drills, as well as ongoing exhibits, musical performances and great food. For more information or to purchase tickets to the Tournament of Roses Parade and other events, visit www.sharpseating.com or call (626) 795-4171. Sharp Seating recommends advance ticket pur-

chases for all events as they often sell out quickly.



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Tinseltown Talks

By Nick Thomas

Eddie Muller's Case of the 'Missing Marshmallow Monkey'

If reading bedtime stories to the grandkids is a cherished family tradition, Eddie Muller has an unusual tale to share this holiday season: a gritty feline sleuth searches for a stolen artifact while encountering a host of seedy underground characters prowling through a shadowy urban setting.

If that sounds like the plot from 1940s film noir cinema, you're no dope. In his first published children's book, *"Kitty Feral and the Case of the Marshmallow Monkey,"* the Turner Classic Movies host has channeled his film noir expertise onto the pages of a new book for kids aged four and up.



Eddie Muller. Photo courtesy David M. Allen.

Toning down the traditionally dark stylized themes from early crime fiction thrillers was a no-brainer for Muller (www.eddiemuller.com) and Running Press Kids publishers (www.runningpress.com). The result is a cute mystery tale with animal characters that cleverly reference popular classic noir films, including one of the best from 1941.



Eddie Muller. Photo courtesy David M. Allen.

"*'The Maltese Falcon'* seemed a perfect template," said Muller from his home in the San Francisco Bay Area.

"Film noir themes revolve around the most diabolical and dastardly motivations that are not suitable for a children's book. But many are detective stories, so the idea of a simple quest, like a treasure hunt, seemed adaptable for kids."

Just like private detective Sam Spade's search for the precious *'Falcon'* statuette, Kitty Feral pursues a stolen artifact (a Marshmallow Monkey) and along the way, interacts with some interesting characters, driving the plot. (Kitty is also on a mission to locate kidnapped crime-fighting partner Mitch the Mutt).

When originally approached

by (co-author) Jessica Schmidt with the idea, Muller says he jumped at the opportunity provided the artwork would emulate the style of a classic noir film. Drawn by Forrest Burdett in glorious noir-ish black-and-white and distinctively skewed viewer angles, the Oregon-based artist added a splash of vivid blue highlights to Kitty who roams the dark alleys, deserted city rooftops, and eerie waterfront in search of a missing Marshmallow Monkey – a stolen sweet treat.

While aimed at children, adults familiar with classic movies will enjoy the subtle references to noir films. For instance, Kitty begins the search at the Acme Book Shop – similar (but naturally less risqué) to a Humphrey Bogart scene right out of 1946's *"The Big Sleep."*



A dockside warehouse image captures a scene from *"99 River Street,"* a theater marquee acknowledges producer Val Lewton's *"Leopard Man,"* and there are plenty of obvi-

ous references to *"On the Waterfront,"* *"Casablanca,"* *"Shakedown,"* and *"The Postman Always Rings Twice."*

As for the book's cast of supporting characters, rotund owl boss Casper Nighthawk and sleazy Wilmer the Weasel represent villainous Kasper Gutman (Sydney Greenstreet) and Wilmer Cook (Elisha Cook Jr.) from *"The Maltese Falcon."* Sinister leather-clad Johnny Gila is distinctly reptilian, a nod to William Talman's title role in 1953's *"The Hitch-hiker."* "People have said he looked like a Gila monster," notes Muller. And speaking of *"Perry Mason"* actors, there's even a character representing Raymond Burr's villainous roles (but we'll leave that one for readers to uncover!).

As for Kitty, the character is modeled after actress Ella Raines, especially her sultry role in 1944's *"The Phantom Lady,"* even though Muller doesn't formally acknowledge Kitty's gender in the pages. "Kitty was clearly inspired by Raines – a smart, independent woman intent on solving a



'Case of the Missing Marshmallow Monkey'.

crime herself in the film, not the typical femme fatale character," Muller said.

As a bonus, if reading the story to kids, grandparents can test the youngsters' powers of observation by asking if they can spot something intentionally omitted from the artist's images of Kitty!

Of course, most of the book's film references will be beyond young readers, but Muller thinks adults reading the story to their little ones will enjoy opening up a monochromatic world not usually seen on cellphones, laptops, or while gaming. And, perhaps, some may even come to appreciate the screen imagery in classic films enjoyed by their parents and grandparents.

"Since the book came out, I've attended film festivals that lasted several days and people told

Continued on page 25



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Elton John

Continued from page 6

kids. “In 2015, David and I sat down with a school schedule ... I don’t want to miss too much of this.”



That year also brought an end to his Las Vegas residency, “*The Million Dollar Piano*,” which wrapped with a performance at Caesar’s Palace.



In total, John has won five Grammy Awards, five Brit Awards, two Academy Awards, and a Kennedy Center Honor. His honors include knighthood by the late Queen Elizabeth and the Legion d’honneur award from French President Emmanuel Macron.



Continued from page 10

miracles with donuts, recalling the holiday’s origins.

- Christmas trees typically mature for about 15 years before finding their way to festive homes.
- The concept of Santa’s elves traces its roots to European beliefs in spirits during the “*Twelve Days of Christmas*.”
- Around 20,000 “rent-a-

December Calendar

Continued from page 16

Dana Point Holidays at The Harbor

Dana Point Harbor

Now Through Early January

Enjoy a stroll through holiday lights, boat rides, and pictures with Santa, Menorah lighting, live music, and much more as Dana Point Harbor transforms into a Southern California holiday setting.

Disney Merriest Nites Anaheim

Through Jan. 7, 2024

In addition to holiday décor throughout Disneyland Park, Mickey and friends will host six holiday parties on select nights in December. Find full event details on the Disneyland website. At Disneyland Park, 1313 Disneyland Drive, Anaheim.

Santas” don the red suit across the United States, undergoing training to exude festive cheer, even under the pressure of public scrutiny.

- New York City hosted the world’s largest menorah in 2017, standing at 36 feet and weighing a hefty 4,000 pounds.
- The dreidel’s Hebrew letters spell out “*nes gadol hayah sham*,” signifying “a great miracle happened there.”
- “*Hanukkah*” translates to “*inauguration*,” a term echoed in the “*Book of Numbers*” during Moses’ dedication of the Tabernacle.

Sources: FactRetriever, BestLifeOnline



ADMIT
ONE

By Randal C. Hill

Movie Preview

'Candy Cane Lane'

Brian Grazer is, along with Ron Howard and Eddie Murphy, one of five producers of the forthcoming "Candy Cane Lane." Grazer can hardly contain his enthusiasm when he gushes, "I can't wait for the world to see 'Candy Cane Lane'! I've wanted to make a Christmas movie my whole life, but I wanted to do something fresh and surprising. Eddie Murphy in this hilarious cast really brings the 'funny.'"

"Candy Cane Lane" centers on Chris (portrayed by Eddie Murphy in his first-ever Christmas release) as a man on a mission to win his neighborhood's annual Christmas home-decoration contest. After he makes a deal with a rascal elf named Pepper to improve his chances of winning, Pepper casts a spell that brings the 12 days of Christmas to life but, in the process, wreaks havoc on the town. At the risk of ruining the holidays, Chris, Carol, and their three children race against the clock to break Pepper's spell, battle devious characters, try to control the mayhem, and, finally, salvage Christmas for everyone.

In addition to featuring Murphy in his latest star turn, the film also features Tracee Ellis Ross (Diana Ross's daughter) as Eddie's wife Carol, and Jilian Bell as Pepper.

The screenplay was written by Californian Kelly Younger ("Frozen II," the "Muppets" movies), an English professor who moonlights in the world of celluloid magic and was inspired by his childhood experiences in El Segundo, a working-class beach suburb just below the Los Angeles airport.

According to Younger, for three weeks each December, Acacia Street, a cul-de-sac of traditional tract houses, magically morphs into "Candy Cane Lane" when residents there put out lights and decorations for strolling spectators to enjoy. The always-anticipated tradition among those 26 households along the street has been played out there since 1949.

Murphy grew up enamored of the edgy humor of Richard Pryor. After becoming a local celebrity as a spot-on impersonator of numerous iconic celebrities, Murphy found success overnight when he began making appearances on "Saturday Night Live." There he revitalized the show's flagging ratings with his rollicking sendups of Gumby, the Little Rascals' Buckwheat, and Mr. Rogers.

Murphy's film works have included numerous box-office winners, including the four beloved "Shrek" releases, where he voiced the character of Donkey.

Jennifer Salke, the head of Amazon Studios, says, "Eddie is someone who brings global audiences together, and we can't wait to make that happen again."

The holiday funfest will be released on Dec. 1 and available on Prime Video in more than 240 countries and territories around the globe.

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Tinseltown Talks

Continued from page 23

me they were buying the book for their grandkids," Muller said. "They've returned a second day, reporting they read it to them and that the kids loved it. So that's gratifying."

Nick Thomas teaches at Auburn University in Montgomery, Alabama, and has written features, columns, and interviews for numerous magazines and newspapers. See www.getnickt.org.

Fabulous Finds

Continued from page 20

fading with UV light absorbers and antistatic and humidity-resistant ingredients that keep frizz at bay.

Saints & Sinners is available at realsaintsandsinners.com, Amazon and select luxury salons and spas throughout Canada and the United States.

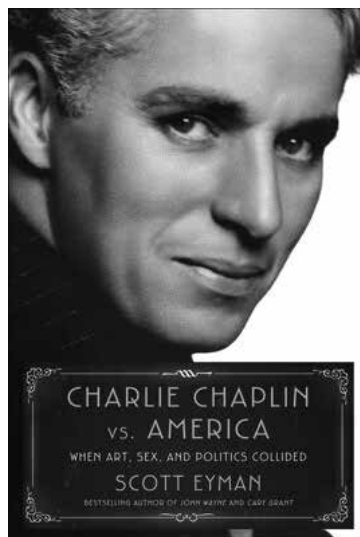


Christmas will always
be as long as we
stand heart to heart
and hand in hand.

Dr. Seuss

December Book Club

Continued from page 17



return to the US from a trip abroad, he settled in Switzerland and made his last two films in London.

“In ‘*Charlie Chaplin vs. America*,’ bestselling author Eyman explores the life and times of the movie genius who brought us such masterpieces as *City Lights* and *Modern Times*. This is a perceptive, insightful portrait of Chaplin and an America consumed by political turmoil,” according to Publisher Simon and Schuster.

The Future
By Naomi Alderman



“The bestselling, award-win-

ning author of ‘*The Power*’ delivers a dazzling tour de force where a handful of friends plot a daring heist to save the world from the tech giants whose greed threatens life as we know it.

“When Martha Einkorn fled her father’s isolated compound in Oregon, she never expected to find herself working for a powerful social media mogul hell-bent on controlling everything. Now, she’s surrounded by mega-rich companies designing private weather, predictive analytics, and covert weaponry, while spouting technological prophecy. Martha may have left the cult, but if the apocalyptic warnings in her father’s fox and rabbit sermon — once a parable to her — are starting to come true, how much future is left?

“Across the world, in a mall in Singapore, Lai Zhen, an internet-famous survivalist, flees from an assassin. She’s cornered, desperate, and — worst of all — might die without ever knowing what’s going on. Suddenly, a remarkable piece of software appears on her phone telling her exactly how to escape. Who made it? What is it really for? And if those behind it can save her from danger, what do they want from her, and what else do they know about the future?

“Martha and Zhen’s worlds are about to collide. An explosive chain of events is set in motion. While a few billionaires assured of their safety lead the world to destruction, Martha’s relentless drive and Zhen’s in-

satiable curiosity could lead to something beautiful or the cataclysmic end of civilization.

“By turns thrilling, hilarious, tender, and always piercingly brilliant, ‘*The Future*’ unfolds at a breakneck speed, highlighting how power corrupts the few who have it and what it means to stand up to them. The future is coming. ‘*The Future*’ is here,” according to Publisher Simon and Schuster.

Tell Your Life Story...

Continued from page 14

Or...

“I’ve wanted my husband to tell his story for years. Our family and friends have also been after him, to no avail. You came along at just the right time to kick start this important project for us.”

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Holiday Happenings

The U.S. Postal Service is Ready to Deliver

The United States Postal Service (USPS) is ready to deliver another successful holiday season.

“Our 2022 peak season was a tremendous success,” said Postmaster General Louis DeJoy. “We are ready to deliver for the holidays in a superior and routine manner. We have been planning early and leveraging investments in our people, infrastructure, transportation and technology—made possible by the Delivering for America plan. And with no holiday surcharges, we are strongly positioned to be America’s most affordable delivery provider this holiday season.”

In 2022, USPS processed more than 11.7 billion mailpieces and packages during the holiday season. On average, it took just 2.5 days to deliver a mailpiece or package.

Throughout 2023, the organization has built upon its successes and maintained even stronger service performance.

Thanks to the ongoing implementation of the Delivering for America plan, 98 percent of the nation’s population currently receives their mail and packages in fewer than three days, and 40 percent of First-Class Mail and packages are being delivered a day in advance of that.

The Postal Service is also working to resolve service-related issues in limited areas across the nation through hiring



With no holiday surcharges and key investments to their processing and delivery networks, USPS is positioned for success.

initiatives and improving operational efficiency.

During a media webinar on Sept. 19, the organization also announced it will not levy additional surcharges for customers this holiday season, offering increased predictability in pricing. There will be no additional fees for residential area delivery, for Saturday delivery or for minimum volumes.

USPS has also made key investments ahead of the holiday season, including:

- Hiring 10,000 seasonal employees. The organization has converted more than 150,000 pre-career workers into career positions since October 2020. Because of this success, USPS anticipates the need to hire only an additional 10,000 seasonal employees.
- Using 348 new package sorting machines. These units let employees sort and process packages of all sizes more quickly and reliably.

The Postal Service has installed 348 new package processing machines across the nation since the beginning of 2021, including 100 sorting machines since last year’s holiday season. An additional 47 machines will be installed ahead of this year’s holidays.

The equipment is part of the organization’s \$40 billion investment in new technology and facilities under the Delivering for America plan.

- Increasing daily processing capacity to more than 70 million. USPS has expanded its daily package processing capacity to 70 million—an increase of approximately 10 million over last year’s capacity.

Since 2020, the Postal Service has nearly tripled its daily package processing capacity. This lets packages move through the postal network more quickly and eliminates the need for the leasing of temporary annexes.

- Moving 95 percent of volume via more reliable ground trans-

portation. USPS has adapted its transportation and logistics processes to handle the high mail and package volumes expected during peak season.

The Postal Service continues to move mail and package volume from expensive air transportation to its redesigned ground transportation network.

Currently, 95 percent of First-Class Mail and more than 95 percent of packages are moved through the improved, more reliable ground transportation system.

- Offering USPS Ground Advantage™. This new shipping offering—which provides a simple, reliable and more affordable way to ship packages with an expected delivery time of just 2-5 business days across the contiguous United States—is an excellent choice for customers looking to ship holiday gifts.

“We understand the importance of every single package and letter that is sent during the holidays,” said DeJoy. “That is why we continue to adapt and execute on strategies to modernize and transform the Postal Service into the high-performing organization the nation expects and deserves. I am confident in our ability to handle the peak season surge and deliver exceptional service to the American people during the holidays and beyond.”

Whether it’s finding the best rates, tracking packages in real-time, connecting to convenient tools like Click-N-Ship or exploring expert tips to make sure packages arrive safely and on-time, the reimaged USPS Holiday Newsroom provides a one-stop solution for customers’ holiday shipping and mailing needs.



How to Avoid Medicare Penalties

Sign up for your Medicare benefit on time.

Medicare gives you a 7 month window in which you need to sign up. It starts 3 months before your 65th birthday and ends 3 months after your 65 birthday month. This is called your Initial Enrollment Period. What happens if you miss that window? Your monthly premium may go up 10% for each 12-month period you could have had Part B, but didn't sign up. In most cases, you would have to pay this penalty each time you pay your premiums, for as long as you have Part B. And, the penalty increases the longer you go without Part B coverage.

I'm not ready to retire

So what happens if you're not ready to retire and your employer offers insurance? If you choose to work past age 65, your employer must have more than 20 employees and offer an IRS approved group insurance. If you participate in that group coverage, then you do not need to sign up for Medicare at this time. However, keep in mind that after you leave that plan, you will have 63 days in which to enroll in another IRS approved group plan or in Medicare, otherwise you will receive the same penalty as listed above.

Prescription drug coverage

If you go for 63 days or longer without prescription drug coverage that is considered "credible coverage" by Medi-



care, you will have to pay a penalty for as long as you have Medicare drug coverage. Sometimes this happens when a beneficiary signs up for a Medicare Supplemental plan, but not a drug plan at the same time. The cost of the late enrollment penalty depends on how long you went without the coverage. Medicare calculates the penalty by multiplying 1% of the "national base beneficiary premium" (\$32.74 in 2023) times the number of full, uncovered months you didn't have Part D or creditable coverage. For example: if you go nineteen months without credible coverage, your premium may consistently be at least 19% higher than it would have been. In addition, you may have to wait until the following October to join a plan so those months count as well. Don't let this happen to you. Make sure to sign up for a Medicare drug plan with your Medicare coverage.

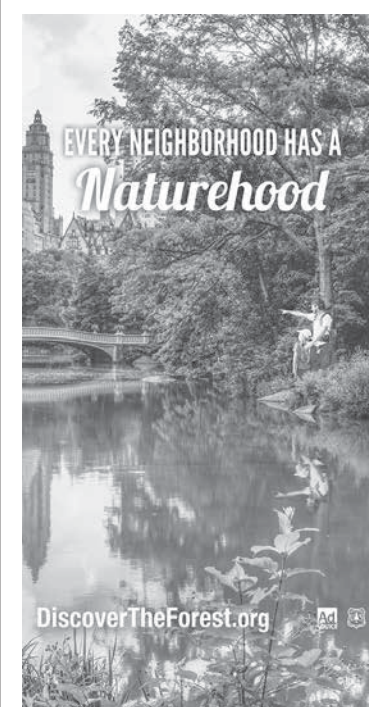
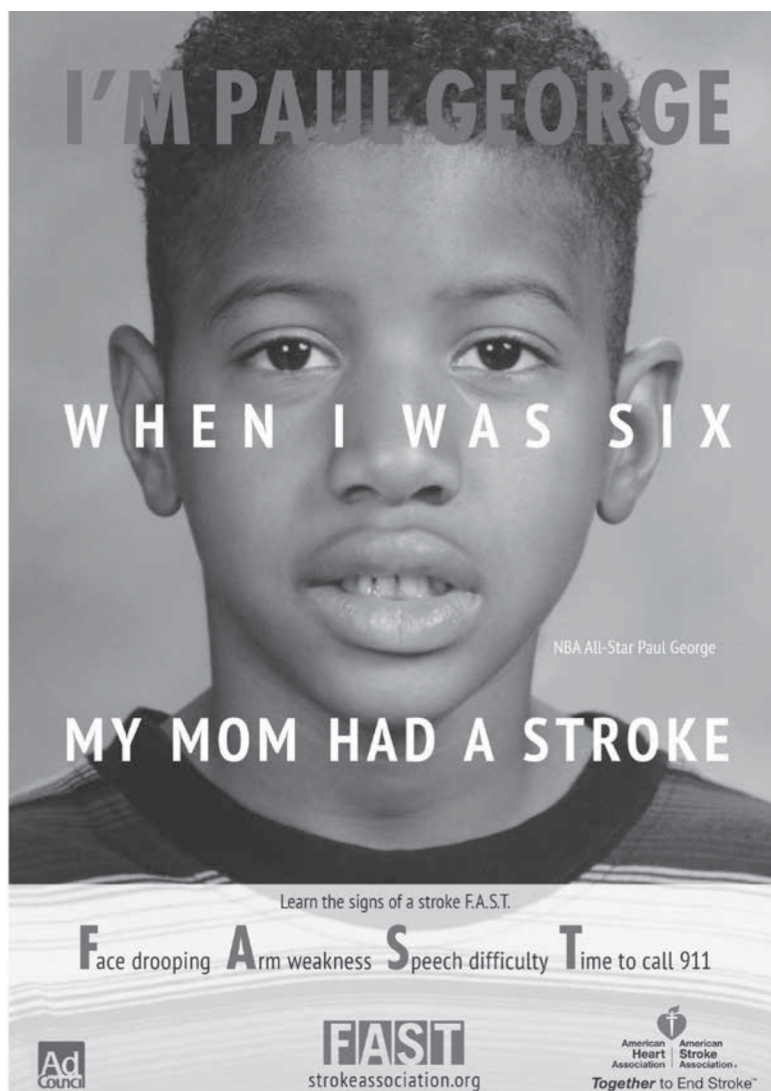
Cobra coverage

If you're eligible for Medicare, you don't qualify for COBRA coverage without having to pay a premium. You have 8 months to sign up for Part B without a penalty, whether or not you choose COBRA. If

you miss this period, you'll have to wait until January 1 - March 31 to sign up, and your coverage will start July 1. This may cause a gap in your coverage, and you may have to pay a lifetime Part B late enrollment period.

I know this can all be very confusing. If you have questions please feel free to call me.

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Insurance Broker
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Ingenios Ideas

Out-of-this-World Inventions Close at Hand

Chances are, you're not among the roughly 600 people who've been into outer space—but you can still learn about some of the products and discoveries of those who have.



A Japanese Space Agency astronaut holds a product used to keep things from floating around on the Space Station, one of many things created for space but with a down-to-earth use.

For example, according to NASA, many products firms made for space travel have their earthly uses today. These include:

- **Memory foam:** It was originally designed by NASA-funded researchers to keep test pilots cushioned during flights. Now, it's used in beds, couches, shoes, and many other everyday items.

- **CMOS image sensor:** When NASA needed miniature cameras for interplanetary missions, it created the CMOS active pixel sensor. Today, it can be found inside your DSLR camera, cell phone cameras, and in medical imaging and dental x-ray devices.

- **Scratch-resistant glass:** Created to protect astronaut helmet visors and increase their ability to filter out UV rays and enhance colors, it's now found on sunglasses, ski goggles and welder masks.

- **GPS:** No one wants to be lost in space, or anywhere else, so NASA created the satellite navigation system called GPS with an accuracy of up to five centimeters.

- **Cold weather wear:** NASA

found a way to make light warm clothing, often used by hikers.

How To Get Into A Sticky Situation

Hisamitsu Pharmaceutical Co., Inc., the makers of the world's best-selling OTC Salonpas pain relieving patches, applied their patented patch technology to help astronauts keep objects from floating around in zero-gravity conditions. They proposed a product called Fixspace® to the Japan Aerospace Exploration Agency's (JAXA) application for ideas for daily necessities, and it was adopted. It was recently installed on the International Space Station where it keeps knives, forks, pens, scissors and similar stuff from floating around in outer space, because their adhesive properties enable items to stick to the patches on the wall or other surfaces.

What's Next

As for the future, the comforts of space that you can have

Continued on page 32

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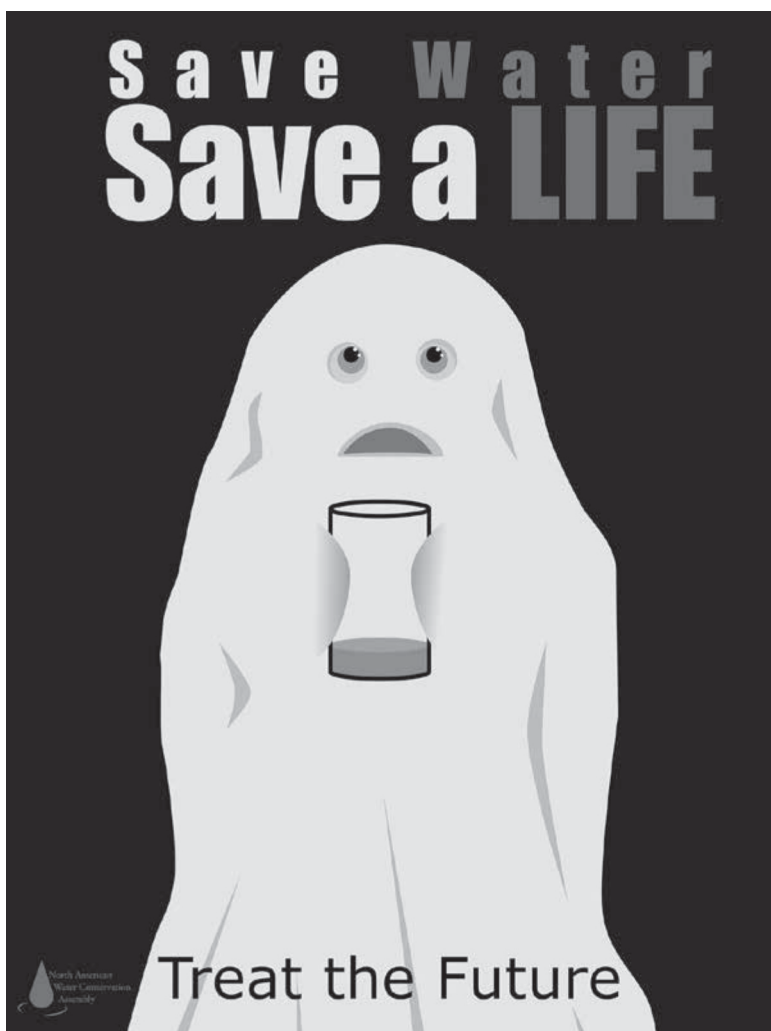
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‘Beware the 19th of January!’

By Randal C. Hill

Do you make New Year’s resolutions? About half the folks in America do. But how many of us see our goals to completion? The answer is a surprising 8 percent, but today we’ll offer some commitment guidelines that may help raise that lowly single digit.

First, though, let’s look at the history of formal intentions, which goes back 4,000 years to the Babylonians, who celebrated a 12-day, mid-March crop-planting ritual called Akitu. Citizens back then reaffirmed pledges to their god, crowned a new king (or renewed their loyalty to the reigning one), paid off debts and promised to return borrowed farm equipment – always a good idea in a primarily agrarian society.

Things changed a couple of millennia later when reform-minded Roman Julius Caesar created the Julian calendar in 46 BC. When doing so, he declared that January 1 would now officially introduce the new year and thus Caesar reset the long-established parameters. (January was named for the two-faced Roman god Janus, who looks backwards into the previous year and ahead into the one about to unfold.)

Here in America, early Christians saw the start of the new year as a time to reflect about past mistakes and vow to eliminate them in the future. Today, the nature of those aspirations

has changed, and promises made now mainly concern self-improvement (which could be why they are so hard to keep!).

Currently, the five most common resolutions include (1) diet, weight loss and exercise, (2) reading more books, (3) learning something new (a foreign language, for example), (4) saving money, and (5) being a kinder, more patient person.

One additional popular January resolve is to drink less alcohol, pledges undoubtedly often made following a bit too much imbibing in celebration of the holiday season just passed.

What exactly is a resolution? It’s a firm decision to do or not do something, and it’s often about finding a solution to a problem. It’s not about making majestic, wide-ranging changes; it’s a time to correct one’s behavior.

Do you want to make a personal list for 2024? If so, here are some hints for making realistic commitments—with an emphasis on realistic.

1. Avoid using such negative terms as “quitting” or “stopping.”
2. Set aside adequate time to pause and reflect before creating pledges.
3. Keep everything simple by choosing only one or two goals.

4. Pick a goal or goals that you truly think will make you feel better.

5. Make choices that are specific and measurable.

6. Plan for a month at a time, not a lifetime.

7. Confide in someone about your goal; it may help you keep your intentions.

8. If you slip up occasionally, don’t worry about it; however, if you err repeatedly, consider a less ambitious plan.

Over 90 percent of resolution participants don’t make it to their finish line. The most common day for people to throw in their metaphorical towels is January 19, which some cynics have labeled Quitter’s Day.

Take note. You have been warned!

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The Gadget Geezer

By Les Goldberg

Under \$50 Holiday Gift Guide

With the holidays here, the one big challenge is to try to fulfill the gift of giving without depleting your bank account. For that reason, I have found some cool gadgets that are under \$50 and are sure to put smiles on the folks who receive them.

And to save you the time and energy of finding these electronic gems, they all are available at Amazon.

Wyze Security Camera

Outdoor security cameras can run several hundred dollars, but the **Wyze Cam V3 Pro** is affordable and effective in detecting porch pirates and monitoring your property. It features 2K video resolution, Smart Focus, a built-in spotlight, and other capabilities usually found only in the more expensive models.

Key features also include color night vision, 2-way audio, and compatibility with Alexa and Google Assistant. A Wyze Cam Plus A.I. three-month detection service is available.

TP-Link Wi-Fi Plug



This device monitors the power usage of any appliance you plug in. At \$34.99, it works with voice commands and supports the tone of third-party platforms.

It is only available in a pack of four, which is reasonable considering all the features it contains.

The Smart Plug works with a secured 2.4 Gigahertz wireless network without the need for a separate hub. Since it is smaller than other smart plugs, they can be stacked in the same outlet. In addition to being able to switch on or off if you are home or away, you can set schedules or scenes from anywhere with your smartphone using the Kasa Smart app.

With simple voice commands you can turn on your living room lamps, schedule activation of your coffee maker, or control your room fans' power.

Chromecast



Chromecast with Google TV (HD) is the newest way for you to view video-streaming services, photos, and more without a smart TV. At \$29.99, it combines the remote function

and on-screen interface with a new and simple menu system that brings your current TV up to the 4K high-definition version.

Google Nest Mini



If Alexa's not your jam, the **Google Nest Mini** is the most affordable Google Assistant smart speaker you can buy. Among its features are an intercom and the ability to pair with more powerful Bluetooth speakers. Cost: \$36.95.

myQ Garage Controller

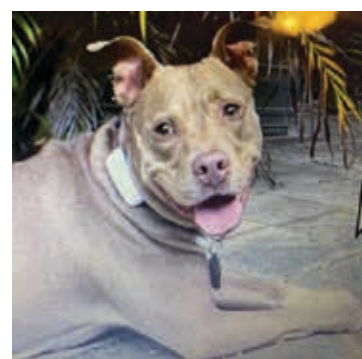


Have you ever rushed out of your home to go to work and forgot to shut the garage door?

If so, you will welcome the **Chamberlain myQ Smart Garage Controller**.

Priced around \$30, this device is a must-have on your smartphone. It collaborates with Amazon Key and Walmart's InHome delivery service which means your packages will be dropped off inside your garage, safe and secure.

GPS Dog Tracker



If your pet is an outdoor enthusiast or escape artist, the **Tractive GPS Dog LTE Tracker** is the ideal solution to a nagging problem.

For \$49, the tracker accurately monitors your dog's location and offers faster alerts than its competitors, according to a company spokesperson.

It is waterproof and works with any collar. It also lets you view your pet's location on your phone—anywhere, anytime, and without a distance limit. Plus, you can access his location history on your smartphone and track how active he has been and how many calories he has burned.

After you choose a subscription plan, this lightweight tracker will be able to find your pet anywhere in the world using a mobile network. Simply attach it to your dog's collar and start tracking with the free Tractive GPS app—available on both iOS and Android—or on any browser.

Happy Holidays!

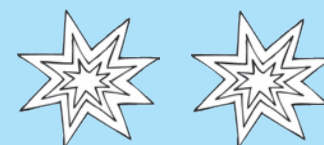
Inventions

Continued from page 29

around the house may just be getting started. NASA expects its engineers will develop new technologies to meet the challenges of advanced space exploration and that will improve air transport and much else here on Earth.

Learn More

Hisamitsu Pharmaceutical Co., Inc will work towards developing products to solve issues for living in Space and living on Earth via the company's 176 years of experience and expertise in developing patches whether for adhesion purposes in outer space or effective OTC pain relief around the world here on planet earth. For a deeper look into the patches used for space and here on planet earth, go to us.hisamitsu.com.



Holiday Health Hints

Happy(er) Holidays: How to Keep Your Mental Health in Check

While the joy and busyness of the holiday season can take a toll on some people's mental health, that doesn't have to be. There are ways to avoid holiday-related challenges.



For many people, the gifts, gatherings, eating and drinking at this time of year take a toll on their mental health. Mental health experts share some things you can do to help avoid holiday-related challenges.

People may feel stressed, sad or anxious during the holiday season for a variety of reasons. According to the National Alliance on Mental Illness, extra stress, unrealistic expectations, sentimental memories and other factors during the season may set some people up for temporary bouts of depression or anxiety.

Help Yourself to a More Jolly Season

However, mental health experts say there are things you can do to help avoid holiday-related challenges.

"Please remember, this is your holiday!" says Dr. Benjamin Yu, a psychiatrist in Roseville, California. "While there are many expectations and obligations from multiple sources (such as family, occupational, religious, social), this is still your time and you have the right to say yes or no. Chances are, what you would like to do is likely what others really want to do, and most of the time when you relay your desires and dislikes, this will lead to a more cohesive celebration."

Many experts advise, among the holiday events and mer-

ry making, to try to keep up your normal daily routines as much as possible. That includes eating and drinking in moderation, avoiding alcohol if you're feeling down and getting enough sleep. If you find yourself in a stressful situation at a family gathering, they say it's OK to take a break.

"I often tell [patients] that when I used paper prescriptions, I would write a prescription to 'have a migraine' so they could say 'my head hurts...I have to leave.' It allows the person to exit without having their self-image damaged or their PTSD triggered," says Dr. Nan Nelson, a psychiatrist in Beachwood, Ohio.

Taking part in other activities, such as breathing exercises, meditation and moving your body physically—even if it's just off the couch—can also be helpful, according to the experts. Planning ahead may also be worthwhile.

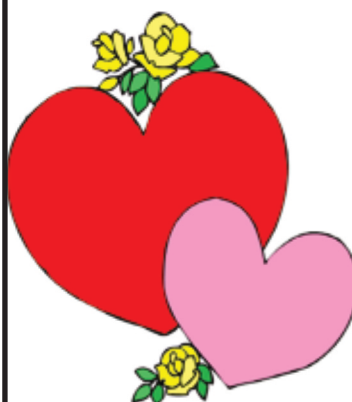
"The winter holidays can bring on positive and negative emotions and memories. Keeping your emotional equilibrium during this time requires a delicate balance between body, mind and spirit. Before the holidays move into high gear, take a look at how you are feeling and make a plan that will keep you on an even keel this season," says Dr. Paul B. Hill, a psychiatrist in Memphis, Tennessee.

Dr. Hill says it's important to continue your current mental health therapies throughout the season.

Learn More

For further information on how to improve your mental health this year, ask your clinician or visit GeneSight.com/holidaymentalhealth.

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The individuals pictured above are models and are not actual therapist and patient.



'A Doctor's Advice to Keep You Out of His Office'

By Ruth Reid-Thornton MD, founder of Chronic Pain Rescue, d.b.a. www.chronicpainrescue.com

Anti-aging is a misnomer at best. It seems to be associated with topical items which mask or cover but have little relevance in terms of transformational change. The opposite of aging is to die young, which is not generally what anyone wants. And I don't know what it means to "grow old gracefully". If that means, to accept without contradiction, the inactivity, inability and slow decay until death which people often associate with growing old, then I take issue with that as well. What makes much more sense and what I believe most people desire is healthy aging. To remain active, strong and live life to the full for as long and as well as one can.

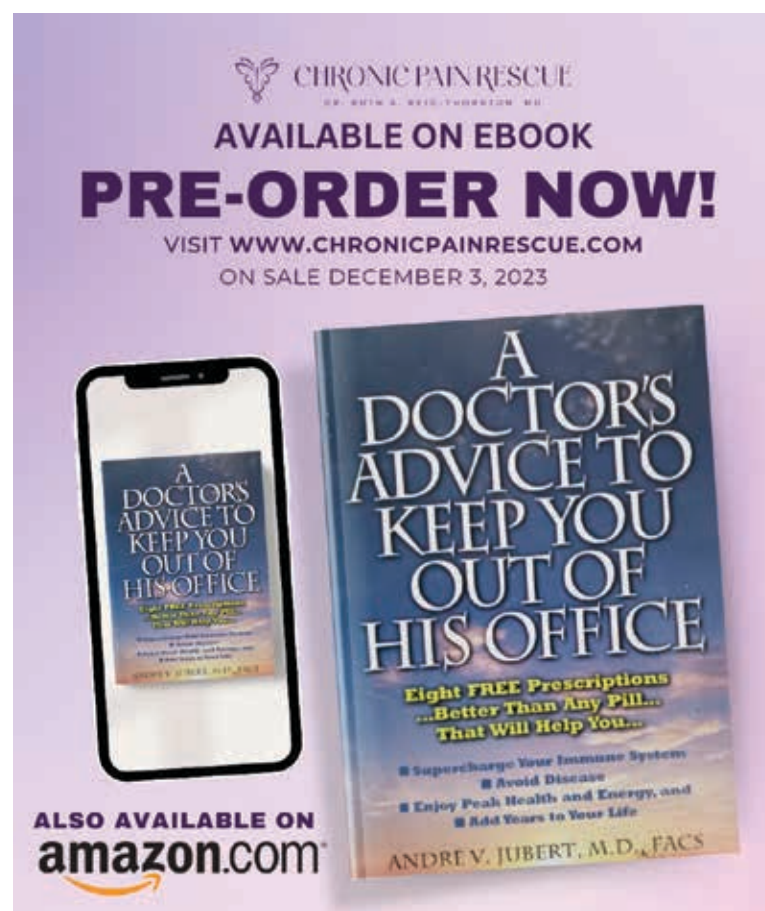
The United States' yearly gross domestic product on health-care in 2021 was 17.8%. Only Switzerland spent more. Australia, New Zealand and most nations of the OECD (Organization for Economic Co-operation and Development) spend half as much as we do. And yet, the United States is last among developed nations in terms of life expectancy. Since 1980 the life expectancy in the US compared to other developed nations has been steadily declining. And the COVID-19 pandemic only accelerated the rate of mortality and premature deaths in the US.

In contrast to this, there are areas of the world known as

blue zones. These areas have been singled out because many of their citizens live to be 100 years old. Most live until their 90s with less illness and a higher quality of life. Many die after a brief illness or during their sleep. These zones have been studied to see their commonalities and what the rest of us can learn and apply to increase our lifespans and to do so with greater strength and vitality.

The only blue zone denoted in the United States is Loma Linda, CA which is an enclave of the Seventh Day Adventist Church. My biologic father, Andre Jubert, MD, was an oncology surgeon in Michigan. He was known as "the praying doctor" and often offered prayer with his patients prior to surgery. Most people welcomed the invitation. He was very much loved in his community. He was also a leading member of the SDA church and the book he wrote, "A Doctor's Advice to keep you out of his office", is based on the health practices advocated by Ellen G. White, one of its founders.

The book is filled with biblical references. This may be delightful to some while others may be repelled by it. As a physician and a practicing Christian (I'm not Adventist myself), I am very sensitive to not alienating patients by my



or their beliefs. So, maybe I will need to write a book myself in time. In the meantime, however, I have no problem promoting his book because I agree with so much of what he teaches. You need not be Christian or Adventist to have transformative changes in your health by applying the practices advocated in this book.

He details 8 free prescriptions that will "boost your immune system, prevent disease, boost your energy and add years to your life". When I attended his memorial service there were some who shared how reading this book helped them. From people who reported weight loss, others who reported disappearance of their joint pain, to others who are no longer diabetic or have high

blood pressure. . .let me know these practices are life changing and should be shared. The little church was packed with people who had been touched by his life, for he was a caring man who gave much to his community.

I will share some of these prescriptions here. Some of them, if you are a student of health trends, you will be familiar with. For instance, we know we should exercise. In blue zones and what he advocates in this book, exercise is not going to work out in the gym, but to do movement which you enjoy, and which goes along with your lifestyle. One should do things like gardening, which gets you out in nature, stimulating your natural (or happy) endorphins. He notes that the

negative effects we attribute to aging are the negative effects of immobility or lack of exercise. So that, these are not actually related to aging but to inactivity.

Another prescription he promotes is a plant-based diet. But in his book, he goes further than what you may find elsewhere. I 'googled' how many eggs should you eat?. I found that you can have eggs 7 days a week. In contrast, he notes studies and advocates you cut eggs from your diet altogether. Given that there are forces in our nation due to capitalism that may counter the promotion of what is actually healthy for us, we should consider all reasonable yet contrasting thoughts on the matter of what's healthy to eat.

So, if you have read this far, I recommend you get a copy of the book. Transformational change to better health and longer life is possible!





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Crossword Puzzle Answers from page 15

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Life After Mother

By Lyn Jensen

'Exploring probate and estate issues from personal experience.'

Home for Christmas

My family's first Christmas in the home that's now mine--the first Christmas ever in this particular suburban home, when it was newly built--is preserved in photos taken for my father's company newsletter. My parents and I sit in our living room while my father shows off his master's degree in aeronautical engineering from the University of Southern California, obtained through a work-study program arranged by his employer North American Aviation (which, through a series of sales and mergers, eventually morphed into Rockwell International, and then became Boeing).



When I look at these photos now, I see time-capsule documentation of beginnings — the beginning of a family, a home, a career or two or three, and that first Christmas in our new home.

I can tell when the photos were taken because my father's degree is dated 1959, the year we moved in when I was a preschooler. I can tell it

was Christmas because of the Christmas decorations.

I can see how the house has changed, and how it has not. The hardwood floor, wood-paneled wall, the brick hearth, all look the same. The windows look the same, although shutters have replaced the window shades. Long gone are the black-and-white TV we watched well into the 1970s, the chair my mother's sitting on, and the card table my father took with him in the divorce. The bamboo lamps, though, that my father so proudly hand-crafted and so much later took with him in the divorce--I inherited them, and they're now back in the living room.

As with so many photos that show families that,

from all outward appearances, are happy, there's no evidence of the dysfunction that lurked beneath the surface and eventually caused my family to disintegrate. As the years passed, we couldn't be that family that welcomed our relatives and friends to share our holiday traditions every year. In our later years, we hardly even sent cards and gifts to each other. Even holiday dinners with my mother



became more of a chore than joy as her health, and mine, worsened.

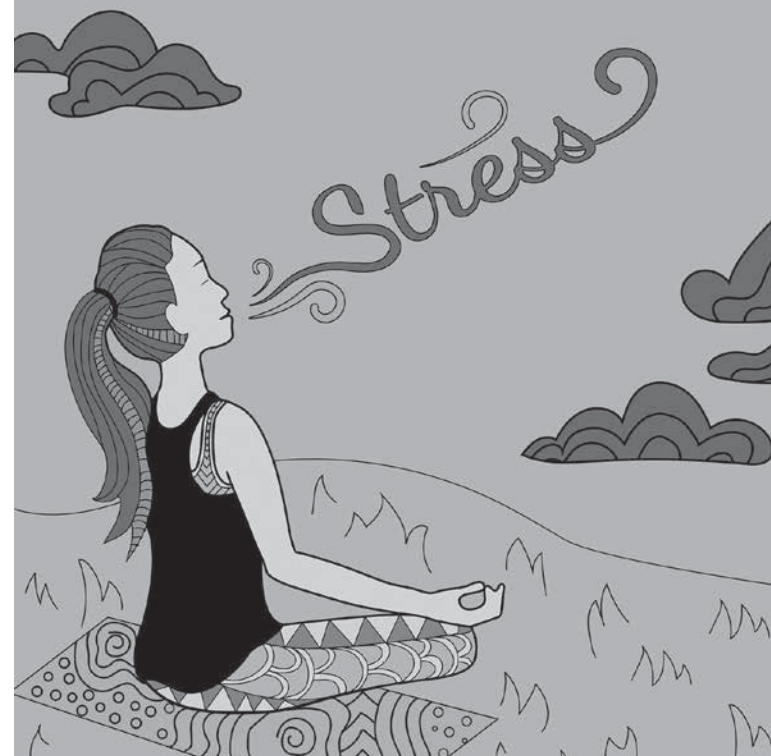
Of the three people in those photos, I'm the only one left. Every year the holiday season represents a new beginning for me, and I remind myself how all those Christmases past are past.

Look at the pictures again, look closely, and behind my father's head, you'll see evidence of a little artificial tree. My mother had that tree in her Seattle apartment, so she'd have a tree at Christmas, back before she married my father. It's still packed away in what's become my garage. When Christmas comes around, I put it in the living room.



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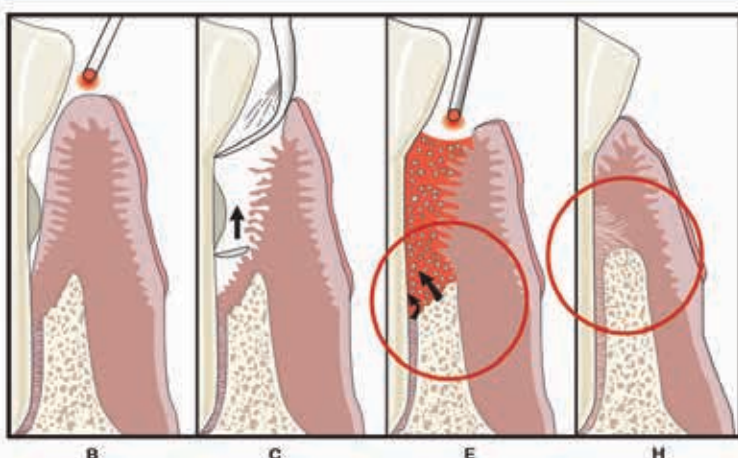
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1. Gregg RH II, Gregg DM. Laser-assisted periodontal regeneration with the LANAP protocol. *Dent Today* 2019 May;38(5):78, 80-83
2. FDA Clearance K151763



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Busy Boomers

By Les Goldberg

It Takes a Santa's 'Village'

When you were just a toddler, did you ever wonder how Santa Claus seemed to show up everywhere – at the mall, at your Christmas parties, and even on the street corners?

That wonderment disappeared quickly in our later years as we discovered the reality of the Christmas season and its commercial bonanza. Now, as adults, we know that all those Santas we see throughout the community are part of a very exclusive seasonal business.

Take Santa Phil Dunn of Irvine, for instance. For \$200 per hour, he will bring the spirit of Christmas to any holiday gathering by showing up in full Santa gear, complete with a real fluffy white beard and more than seven years of experience. He also sings with groups, reads stories, passes out gifts, and poses for pictures.

Or there is Santa Cliff of Anaheim who charges \$75 an hour to greet children with his festive Ho, Ho, Ho and listen to each child's Christmas wish.

And so many more, mostly individual entrepreneurs who want or need a "side hustle," or who want to fulfill a lifetime fantasy of making people happy during the holidays. Like Santa Don of Mission Viejo, or Santa Geoff of Huntington Beach, an award-winning entertainer.



How do you find and book a Santa for your party or corporate gathering?

People like Santa Phil Dunn and Santas Cliff, Don, and Geoff can be found through specialized booking agents serving customers in all parts of Orange and Los Angeles counties, including the House of Kringle.

"We believe in the magic of Christmas," says a House of Kringle spokesperson, "we are here to bring magic into your holiday event and help you create memories for years."

The business was established in 2016, beginning as a kids' party and planning service ... and evolving into an entertainment agency that now brings upscale Santa Claus and holiday characters to children during the festive season.

Previous customers of the House of Kringle and the San-

ta Clauses companies are more than satisfied with the services they provide.

"This was the best Santa I have interacted with!" said Katy Witherspoon of Fullerton in praise of the House of Kringle. "He sang, told stories, and interacted with all our residents. He had a wonderful stage presence, and they all loved him." After hiring Santa Don through Santa Clauses, Sheila Michaelson of Long Beach said "he was all Santa. The voice, the look, and the behavior were all so convincing. The kids and adults equally enjoyed him."

Says Santa Don, "There are a few things I have going for me that come naturally. I have been blessed with a laugh that is quite jolly and a voice that is deep and easy on the ears, my beard is naturally white, and my belly is large.

"I love to laugh, sing, tell stories, hand out gifts, and join in

all of the fun and activities that the Christmas season naturally brings."

Most of the Santas are experienced and some even are accompanied by Mrs. Claus, like Santa Joe from Los Angeles.

"I have been doing Santa for over 30 years, mostly private parties and corporate engagements from coast to coast, after starting as a Macy's Santa in New York City."

Specializing in capturing the essence of a classic, old-world Santa is Santa John and his Mrs. Claus from Riverside, who offer songs, games, stories, conversation, and lots of photos for everyone attending. According to the House of Kringle spokesperson, "Our Santas all undergo complete background checks and carry entertainer's liability insurance."

Since booking a Santa for a holiday event is a for-profit business, there are certain considerations to think about when working with individuals or agencies.

1. What is their experience? Who have they worked with? What companies have they worked with? How many events do they manage a year? Do they have reviews on Google?
2. How does the agency screen its Santa candidates? In addition to backgrounds, how do they look? How is their beard?

What is their personality like? How long have they been with the agency? How long have they been a professional Santa?

3. What support and training does the agency provide for its talent? You need to trust that their Santa Claus entertainers are knowledgeable, and can entertain, perform, and interact with the guests at your event.

I don't know about you, but I still enjoy the magical, whimsical element of Santa, and try to forget that it is a business.

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