



Our Wonderful World

November, 2012
Volume 3 :: Number 11

The Art of Living Green



Vizcaya
An American Masterpiece

Boost
Your Metabolism
Growing
Your Own Coffee Beans

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Our Wonderful World
Volume 3 Number 11



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Welcome to the November, 2012 issue of **Our Wonderful World**, Florida's leading green digital magazine. Our cover story, "Vizcaya — An American Masterpiece," features one of South Florida's most magnificent architectural wonders. A relic of the Gilded Age, Vizcaya is the former villa and estate of businessman James Deering of the Deering McCormick-International Harvester fortune. The majestic early twentieth-century estate includes extensive Italian Renaissance gardens, a native woodland landscape and a historic village outbuildings compound. The photography is stunning.

Teresa VanDyk Marshall tells you how to spice up your garden—and your dinner—at the same time improving your health in "All About Red Hot Chili Peppers," while the Green Goddess enlightens us to the many benefits of the "Precious Pumpkin." Speaking of the Goddess, be sure to learn how to "Boost Your Metabolism" in her Pearls of Wisdom column.

Now if you want to meet your local farmer, Richard Hawkins of Localecopia will tell you how to do just that. And if you're wondering about growing your own coffee, our very own Teresa gives you some helpful information in "Can I Grow My Own Backyard Coffee Beans?"

We want to welcome nationally renowned Lucas Miller, the "singing zoologist," as a new columnist

for **Our Wonderful World**. Lucas has written an interesting piece about the Return of the Wolves to Yellowstone." Be sure to check out this one-of-a-kind musician at www.lucasmiller.net.

Now if high utility bills with sky-high energy prices are wreaking havoc on your budget, check out Scott Ranck's "Ask the Energy Expert" for some top-shelf advice.

On the business side, a big thank you to John Carr for telling us the right way to network at all these holiday parties that we find ourselves scrambling to attend.

Last, but not least, kudos to Sandra Frens for showing us how to "green up" our holiday season in "I'm Dreaming of a Green Christmas."

Of course, we've got a whole lot more for you. So, enjoy this upcoming Thanksgiving, but in the meantime—get clickin'!

Sincerely,



Sharon

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FROM THE PUBLISHERS



Vizcaya

An American Masterpiece

by Glenn R. Swift

Standing majestically, nestled among the palm trees and facing the crystal clear waters of Miami's Biscayne Bay, is the magnificent Vizcaya Museum & Gardens.

Located in the posh neighborhood of Coconut Grove, Vizcaya is the former villa and estate of businessman James Deering of the Deering McCormick-International Harvester fortune. The magnificent early twentieth-century estate also includes: extensive Italian Renaissance gardens; native woodland landscape; and a historic village outbuildings compound. The landscape and architecture were influenced by Veneto and Tuscan Italian Renaissance models and designed in the Mediterranean Revival architecture style with Baroque elements. Paul Chalfin was the design director.

Miami-Dade County now owns the Vizcaya property, as the Vizcaya Museum and Gardens, which is open to the public. "Villa Vizcaya" is conveniently served by the Vizcaya Station of the Miami Metrorail.

The estate property originally consisted of 180 acres of shoreline



Photo by Bill Sumner

Mangrove swamps and dense inland native tropical forests. Being a conservationist, Deering sited the development of the estate portion along the shore to conserve the forests. This portion was to include the villa, formal gardens, recreational amenities, expansive lagoon gardens with new islets, potager and grazing fields, and a village services compound. The villa was built primarily between 1914 and 1916, while the construction of the extensive elaborate Italian Renaissance gardens and the village continued into 1923.

During the World War I years, building trades and supplies were difficult to acquire in Florida, making the estate an even greater tribute to its builders and designers. Vizcaya is noteworthy for adapting historical European aesthetic traditions to South Florida's subtropical ecoregion. For example, it combined imported French and Italian garden layouts and elements implemented in Cuban limestone stonework with Floridian coral architectural trim and planted with subtropic compatible and native plants that thrived in the habitat and climate. Palms and Philodendrons had not been represented in the emulated gardens of Tuscany or Île-de-France.

Deering used Vizcaya as his winter residence from 1916 until his death in 1925. Paul Chalfin, a former art curator, painter and interior designer, was the project's director. He assisted and encouraged



Photo by Bill Sumner

Deering to collect art items, antiquities and architectural elements for the project. Chalfin recommended the architect F. Burrall Hoffman to design the structural and envelope of the villa, garden pavilions and estate out-buildings. The landscape master plan and individual gardens were designed with the Colombian landscape designer Diego Suarez, who had trained with Sir Harold Acton at the gardens of Villa La Pietra outside Florence, Italy. The estate's name refers to the northern Spanish province Vizcaya, in the Basque region along the east Atlantic's Bay of Biscay, as Vizcaya is on the west Atlantic's Biscayne Bay.

Records indicate Deering wished the name also to commemorate an early Spaniard named Vizcaya who he thought explored the area, although later he was corrected that the explorer's name was Sebastián Vizcaíno. Deering used the Caravel, a type of ship style used during the "Age of Exploration" as the symbol and emblem of Vizcaya. A representation of



Photo by Bill Sumner



Portrait of Vizcaya's owner, James Deering by John Singer Sargent who was one of many artists who were Mr. Deering's extended house guests.

the mythical explorer, "Bel Vizcaya" welcomes visitors at the entrance to the property.

Vizcaya's villa exterior and garden architecture is a composite of different Italian Renaissance villas and gardens, with French Renaissance parterre features, based on visits and research by Chalfin, Deering and Hoffman. The villa facade's primary influence is the Villa Rezzonico designed by Baldassarre Longhena at Bassano del Grappa in the Veneto region of northern Italy. It is referred to sometimes as the "Hearst Castle of the East."



James Deering died in September, 1925, on board the steamship SS City of Paris en route back to the United States. After his death, Vizcaya was inherited by his two nieces, Marion Chauncey Deering McCormick and Ely Deering McCormick Danielson. Over the decades, after hurricanes and increasing maintenance costs, they began selling the estate's surrounding land parcels and outer gardens. In 1945, they gave significant portions of the Vizcaya property to the Catholic Archdiocese of St. Augustine, Florida, and to Miami's Mercy Hospital. Fifty acres comprising the main house, the formal gardens and the village were retained. In 1952, Miami-Dade County acquired the villa and formal Italian gardens, needing significant restoration, for \$1 million.

Deering's heirs donated the villa's furnishings and antiquities to the County-Museum. Vizcaya began operation in 1953 as the Dade County Art Museum. The village and remaining property were acquired by Miami-Dade County during the mid-1950s. In 1994, the Vizcaya estate was designated as a National Historic Landmark. In 1998, in conjunction with Vizcaya's reaccredita-

tion process by the American Association of Museums, the Vizcaya Museum and Gardens Trust was formed to be the museum's governing body.

The Estate is now known officially as the Vizcaya Museum and Gardens, which consists of 50 acres with the villa and the gardens, and the remaining native forest. Ten acres contain the Italian Renaissance formal gardens, and 40 acres are comprised of the native "hammock" (jungle forest). The villa's museum contains more than seventy rooms of distinctive architectural interiors decorated with numerous antiques, with an emphasis on 15th through early 19th century European decorative art and furnishings.

Currently owned by Miami-Dade County and governed by the Vizcaya Museum and Gardens Trust (formed in 1998), Vizcaya is located at 3251 South Miami Avenue in Coconut Grove neighborhood of Miami, and is open to the public daily except Tuesdays, Thanksgiving and Christmas Day. It has accreditation by the American Association of Museums.

Vizcaya was built with an open-air courtyard and extensive gardens on Biscayne Bay. As such,



the estate has been subject to environmental and hurricane damage, the latter notably in 1926, 1992 and 2005. Miami-Dade County has granted money (\$50 million) for the restoration and preservation of Vizcaya. These funds have been matched by grants from FEMA, Save America's Treasures and numerous other funders. Plans include restoration of the villa and gardens, and adaptation of the historic village compound for exhibition and educational facilities; however, additional funds are required for this. The completed first phase of this project has included rebuilding of the museum's Cafe and Shop (in historic recreation areas of the building adjacent to the pool), renovation of the East and West Gate Lodges that flank South Miami Avenue and rebuilding of the David A. Klein Orchidarium in a plan that generally uses historic precedent. At the same time, Vizcaya has completed the first half of a major conservation program of its outdoor sculpture collections. With a consulting landscape architect, Vizcaya has also finished a comprehensive cultural landscape report, which will be a vital tool in the the ongoing restoration of the formal gardens.

In 2008 the National Trust for Historic Preservation listed Vizcaya as one of America's Eleven Most Endangered Historic Places. As noted by the National Trust's website, Vizcaya's inclusion on this list was based on the threat of proposed



high-rise development on neighboring property. Specifically, the National Trust stated: "Unless development is blocked or an intervention occurs, this cultural landscape will be permanently damaged by the construction of three high-rise condominium towers within Vizcaya's historic viewshed." The proposed highrises were blocked by two court rulings, and, in 2010, the City of Miami included viewshed protection for historic properties like Vizcaya in its new zoning code, "Miami 21."

Vizcaya was the 1987 venue where President Ronald Reagan received Pope John Paul II on his first visit to Miami. Vizcaya was also the 1994 location of the important "First Summit of the Americas" convened by President Bill Clinton. This began a series of summits of the countries in the Americas. The thirty-four nations' leaders that met at Vizcaya created the "Free Trade Area of the Americas (FTAA)," which all the hemisphere's countries, except Cuba, could join for national and corporate trade benefits.

Vizcaya has provided the setting for many films, both credited and uncredited. Deering himself enjoyed watching silent films in Vizcaya's

courtyard, and he had a particular interest in the works of Charlie Chaplin. External pictures of Villa Vizcaya, for example, can be seen in the films Tony Rome, Ace Ventura: Pet Detective, Any Given Sunday, Bad Boys II, Airport '77, Haunts of the Very Rich and The Money Pit. The music video for The Cover Girls song Promise Me from 1988 was filmed at Vizcaya. The music video for New Edition's song "I'm Still In Love With You" from 1996 was also filmed at Vizcaya.

Vizcaya is also an extremely popular location for weddings and other special events, given the site's architectural and natural beauty. For decades, the estate has been a target of photography and is a favored site for photographs of women celebrating their quinceañera (15th birthday).

On April 18, 2012, the AIA's Florida Chapter placed Vizcaya on its list of Florida Architecture: 100 Years. 100 Places.

For a 60-minute stunning historical documentary film that tells the story of this grand estate, click here:

<http://www.wpbt2.org/vizcaya>. 



Hours and Visitor Information

Vizcaya is open daily except Tuesdays, Thanksgiving, and Christmas Day 9:30am-4:30pm
The Discover Vizcaya Audio Tour is available for purchase at the ticket booth for \$5.

Guide books are available for purchase at the ticket booth for \$3 (English and Spanish).

- Adult \$15**
- Child 6-12 \$6**
- Children 5 and under Free**
- Seniors 62 and older with ID \$10**
- Students with ID \$10**

Admission to Vizcaya Museum and Gardens must be purchased to enter the Vizcaya Café. General visitors and adults on group tours may not bring food to eat at Vizcaya. All food must be purchased at the Vizcaya Café with the exception of K-12 and college groups.

Please note that only service dogs are allowed at Vizcaya.

Location

Vizcaya is located at 3251 South Miami Avenue in the north Coconut Grove area of the City of Miami, overlooking a wide expanse of Biscayne Bay. Vizcaya is conveniently located just ¼ mile off of I-95, one mile from downtown Miami and 10 miles from south Miami Beach.



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Can I Grow My Own Backyard Coffee Beans?

by Teresa VanDyk Marshall

My husband and I live in the tropics. We love coffee, and coffee trees love growing in the tropics. Doesn't that sound like a great garden idea brewing?

Well, we decided to do a little research into what makes a healthy coffee plant grow right here in our backyard as well as what we can do to make our coffee flavorful. We were surprised at what we found and decided to share our new insight with our readers.

The Beautiful Coffee Tree

When we visited the McKee Botanical Garden in Vero Beach, we found the Coffee Arabica tree thriving in vibrant health. This lush tree is covered with dark-green, waxy leaves and adorned in "coffee cherries." It is not unusual to see fragrant white blossoms, green fruit and ripe fruit simultaneously on a single tree because they bloom continuously. According to the National Coffee Association USA (NCA), coffee trees are able to thrive in a wide range of climates, and they do best with rich soil and mild temperatures, with frequent rain and shaded sun.

So, the coffee tree grows well here. What's the problem?

We were hoping to cultivate our own beans and use them occasionally to brew a cup of delicious coffee. Unfortunately, we found out that to get to a height where we can raise delicious coffee here in South Florida, we'll need a whole lot of landfill.

As it turns out, coffee growers have found that the

higher the altitude where the coffee is grown, the better the flavor of the coffee. The NCA reports that the better Arabica coffees are grown between 2,000 and 6,000 feet above sea level and that "optimal altitude varies with proximity to the equator."

Coffee beans that are grown at altitudes over 4,000 square feet are graded with special designations including "Hard Bean," "Strictly Hard Bean," "Altura," or "Mile High." These "special" beans are generally more desirable (and unfortunately more expensive) because these beans take longer to mature but yield more consistent, richly flavored results than their counterparts grown at lower altitudes.

An article published by Scribbler's Coffee puts it this way: "As growing elevation increases, a coffee's flavor profile becomes more pronounced and distinctive... From the mild and sweet taste qualities of a low-grown Brazilian bean at 3,500 feet to the soaring floral notes of an Ethiopian grown above 6,000 feet, altitude heightens a coffee's ability to deliver bigger varietal nuance and complexity." The same coffee connoisseurs added, "Very low-elevation coffee regions impose harsher growing conditions on the coffee tree. Higher temperatures and less rainfall cause coffee to ripen more quickly resulting in beans with taste qualities that range from simple and bland to earthy or murky."

The Bottom Line

The coffee tree may add a beautiful lush ornamental accessory to our garden. However, unless we plan on moving to the Andes Mountains, we'll still need to continue getting our fine gourmet coffees from places outside of our backyard. 🌍



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Palm Beach State Eissey Campus Opens Cutting-Edge Ophthalmic Facility



On September 19, the Eissey Campus of Palm Beach State College held the Grand Opening of its new Ophthalmology Center. Featuring the very latest in state-of-the-art equipment, the new facility will permit the college to offer an Associates of Science degree in Ophthalmic Medical Technology, a rapidly growing field. At the ceremony, department chair, Dr. Robert Kershner, M.D., M.S., F.A.C.S., provided an overview of the new program and a tour of the classroom. Dr. Jean Wihbey, Provost of the Eissey Campus, also shared her vision for the new program. 🌍

*For more information
about Palm Beach State,
please visit
www.palmbeachstate.edu.*



*Photography courtesy of
Michael Bailey*

GREEN GOINGS



GREEN GOINGS



Top left: Dr. Robert Van Der Velde, Associate Dean, Dr. Robert Kershner, Dept. Chair, Ophthalmic Medical Technology program, Dr. Dennis Gallon, PBSC President, Dr. Jean A. Wihbey, Provost, Palm Beach Gardens Campus, Edward Willey, Dean of Academic Affairs, David Talley, PBSC District Board of Trustee.

Top middle: Scott MacLachlan, Dean of Student Services, Mayor David Levy, City of Palm Beach Gardens,

Top right: Dr. Robert Kershner, Dept. Chair, Ophthalmic Medical Technology

Bottom left: Dr. Dennis Gallon, PBSC President and OMT students

Bottom right: Dr. Edward M. Eissey, Past President, PBSC, Dr. Jean A. Wihbey, Provost



Artist: Sue Appleton

Northern Palm Beach County Chamber of Commerce Hosts Down Town in Bloom

by Glenn R. Swift

This past October 13 and 14, the Northern Palm Beach County Chamber of Commerce hosted its annual Down-town in Bloom at the fashionable Downtown at the Gardens retail center. The event featured an array of amazing artwork from many of the talented artists in South Florida.

Some of the leading artists who exhibited at the event were:

Sue Appleton (www.sueappleton.com);

April Davis (www.aprilwdavis.com);

Rick Lewis (www.ricklewisartist.com); and

Mike Williams (www.blueislandgraphics.com).

For more information about the Northern Palm Beach County Chamber of Commerce, please visit www.npbchamber.com.



GREEN GOINGS



GREEN GOINGS

Artist: Mike Williams

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Big Dog Ranch Rescue's “Paws in the Sand” Raises \$10,000

by Glenn R. Swift

The beautiful Palm Beach Marriott Singer Island Beach Resort & Spa was the setting for the inaugural “Paws in the Sand” charity fashion event benefiting the Big (and Little) Dog Ranch Rescue, Sept. 8 on Singer Island in Riviera Beach.

More than \$10,000 was raised by the first annual event that drew a crowd of about 240 supporters to enjoy the cocktails, food, fashion show, vendors and music, while looking for a loveable pet to adopt and take home.

“Paws in the Sand” was hosted by the Marriott, Singer Island, Si Spa located at the Marriott, BINKA boutique, also of the Marriott, Leblon Cocktails, Edmund James Salon and La Costa Organic Jewelry. Entertainment was provided by Will Webb and Paul Ardaji.

During the fashion show, emceed by Emily Pantelides of WPEC-TV CBS12 News, Big Dog volunteers modeled the newest fashions from BINKA and paraded down the catwalk with wonderful adoptable dogs from the Big Dog Ranch Rescue.

Susan Speaks McGirt © 2012

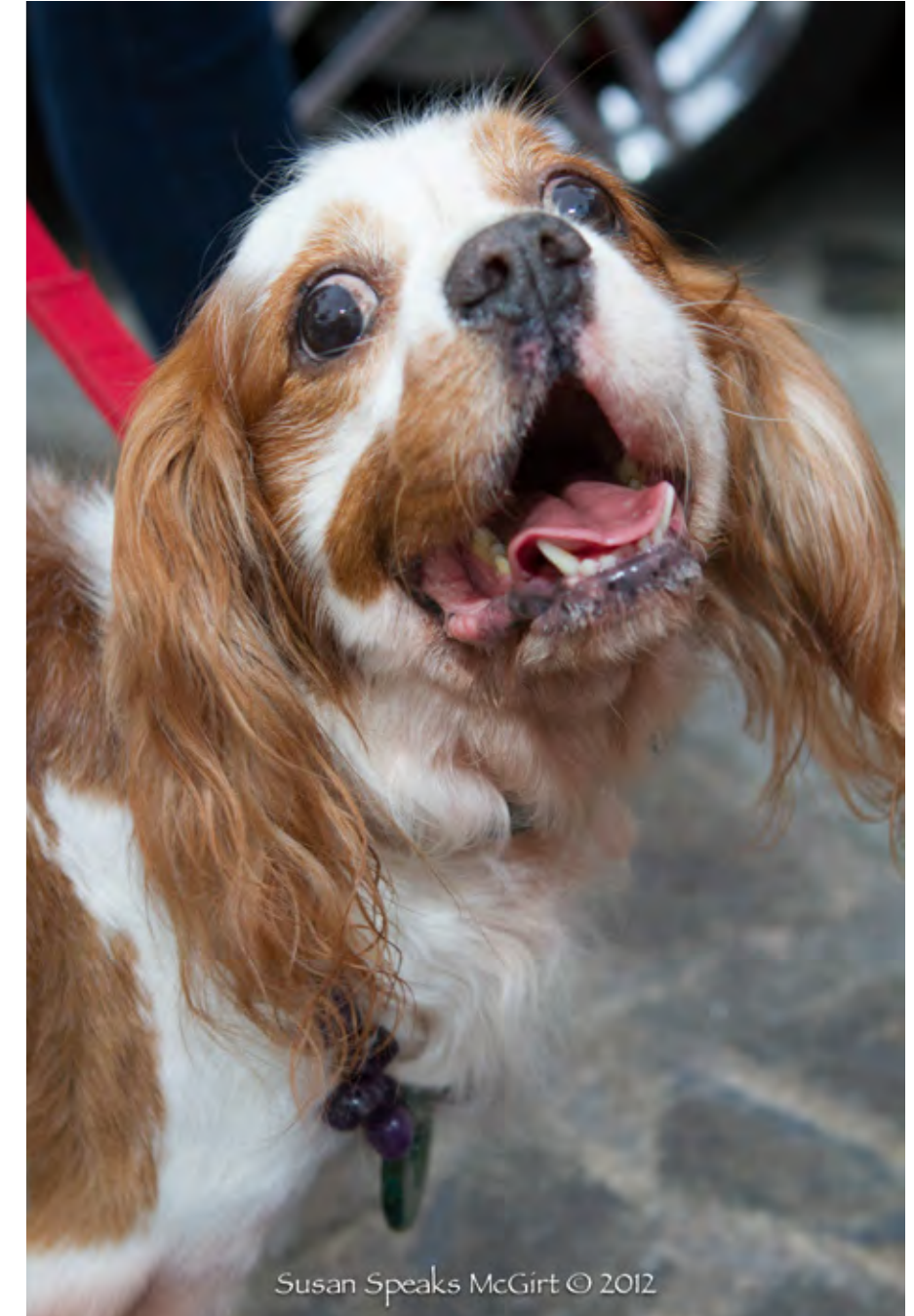
GREEN GOINGS



Christley E. McGirt © 2012



Christley E. McGirt © 2012



Susan Speaks McGirt © 2012

GREEN GOINGS

The Marriott provided an array of heavy hors d'oeuvres, some served in big silver dog bowls, like shrimp spread dip, lobster claws and other delicacies. There was also a special pineapple-flavored martini designed for the occasion.

A separate room of vendors was set up, which included beautiful La Costa Organic Jewelry and stella & dot jewelry, among others, for guests to bid on and purchase. Vendors donated \$200 to participate with their booths.

Organizing the event were Natalee Lynch, Spa Director of Si Spa, Jessica O'Doski, of BINKA and Meg Weinberger, of Big Dog Ranch Rescue. 🌍

For information about Big Dog Ranch Rescue, call (561) 791-6465 or visit www.bdrr.com.



Sharon Quercioli, Sprouts! and Dr. Brian Clement, Hippocrates Health Institute

Hippocrates Health Institute Hosts Mardi Raw

by Glenn R. Swift

GREEN GOINGS

The Hippocrates Health Institute of West Palm Beach has been the preeminent leader in the field of natural and complementary health care and health education since 1956. On Saturday, October 6, the institute hosted “Mardi Raw,” which drew hundreds of health-seeking supporters, many of whom were clad in Mardi Gras “French Quarter”-style attire. The event included live entertainment, wellness lectures, raw food cuisine sampling, door prizes, a parade and much more. 🌍

For more information about the world-renowned Hippocrates Health Institute, please visit www.hippocratesinst.org.

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Dr. Michael Haley and Amanda Haley, Stockton Aloe 1

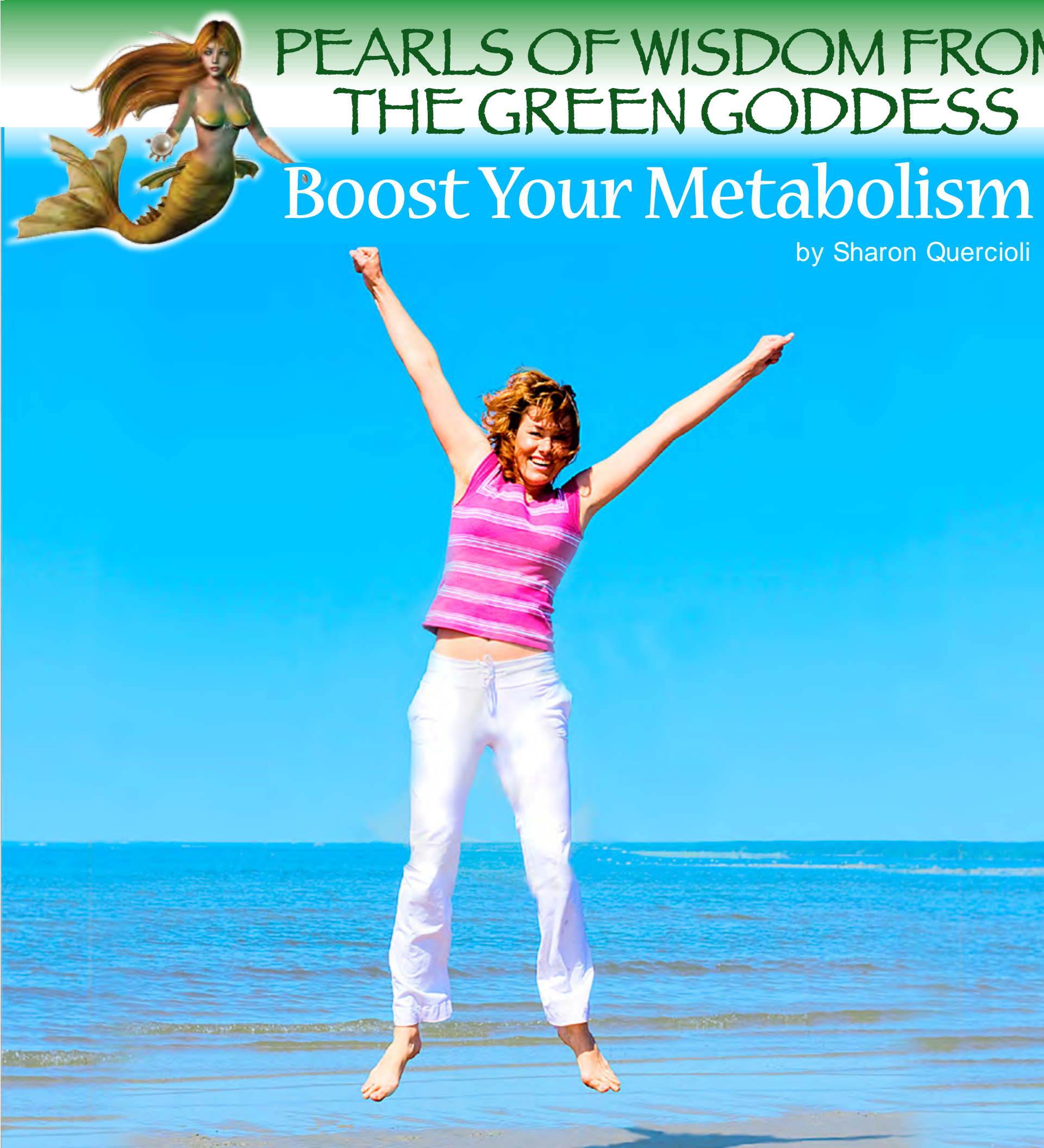


Sean Herbert and Jody Herbert, Got Sprouts?



Sharon Quercioli, Sprouts!

GREEN GOINGS



PEARLS OF WISDOM FROM THE GREEN GODDESS

Boost Your Metabolism

by Sharon Quercioli

Quote of the Month:

“Wish not for things, but for wisdom and courage!” (Anonymous)

Everywhere you look people are writing articles claiming to have discovered the latest “miracle food” that will burn off the pounds while you sit on your butt and eat. Well, sadly, we all know that is not true. Without regular exercise, a decent night’s sleep and a thought-out meal plan, your metabolic rate is going to be dragging. However, there are some things you can eat that’ll move the needle into the fat-burning zone. And all of these foods are delicious, nutritious, or both!

So why not? Here are some of the best ones:

Fish: Most of us have read about the benefits of fish oil, which is full of heart-healthy omega-3 fatty acids. Found in many common oily fish, like mackerel, trout, sardines, herring, tuna and salmon, it can also be taken in capsules (at least 300 mg/day) by those who are averse to seafood. Fish consumption has been found to boost your calorie burn by as much as 400 calories a day. Fish is also full of great, low-fat, muscle-building protein, which requires your body to burn more calories to digest it.

Dark Green Leafy Vegetables: These include arugula, chard, chicory, collard greens, dandelion greens, kale, mustard greens and spinach. They are full of vitamin A, vitamin C, calcium and lots of fiber. While the vita-

mins are great antioxidants and very healthy for you, the fiber is where the rubber really meets the road as far as your metabolism goes. Your body expends a lot more calories digesting fiber and protein than it does simply digesting carbohydrates. This is called the *thermic effect* — the amount of calories required to digest food can sometimes be almost as much as the number of calories in the food itself. Dark leafies also contain many B vitamins, which are necessary to produce the enzymes for metabolism. Most other vegetables are high in fiber and low in calories and can boost your burn, but the cream of the crop, nutritionally speaking, are the dark green leafy vegetables. So listen to Popeye and eat your spinach!

Tomatoes: Tomatoes contain high levels of the antioxidant *lycopene*, which has been proven to have several anticarcinogenic properties. And like the dark green leafy vegetables, tomatoes are a good source of fiber. But tomatoes can also work overtime to flusj fat, as they contain citric, malic and oxalic acids, which support your body’s kidney functions, helping your body eliminate more waste and fat.

Blueberries: (Check out my previous story on “The Power of Blue”!) Blueberries contain lots of fiber, and many contain so much,

A consistent exercise regimen is at the heart of boosting one's metabolism.



they can be said to have “negative calories,” meaning your body burns more calories digesting them than it stores. One cup of blueberries only has about 80 calories, but it has 4 whole grams of fiber. Your body will expend much of those 80 calories digesting those 4

grams of fiber. Blueberries also contain lots of antioxidants and are believed to lower cholesterol and regulate blood pressure. Plus they taste great! Try adding them to a high-fiber unsweetened cereal or oatmeal in the morning to get your metabolism up and running at the

start of your day.

Whole Grains: Well, if you’ve read this far, you’ve probably gotten that fiber is key to keeping the metabolic fires burning. Whole grains are one of the best sources of dietary fiber. This is where careful label reading comes in. Lots of items that are purported to contain whole grains only have just enough to make the claim truthful, and may be full of insulin-spiking carbohydrates or sugars, which will take your metabolism in the wrong direction. Check the ingredient list of your breads and cereals carefully and make sure the lion’s share of the ingredients is whole grains.

Chilies, Curries and Other Spices: Ever eaten a particularly spicy meal and felt your heart race a bit faster and your forehead start to perspire? The *capsaicin* found in many hot peppers and other spices can fire up your metabolism while it fires up your mouth. In fact, some studies have shown a 50% increase in metabolism for 3 hours after eating capsaicin. So, it helps to keep a bottle of hot sauce on hand at mealtimes. You can also use spices to add flavor to recipes instead of salty or fatty ingredients to help kick your metabolism into a higher gear.

Green Tea: Researchers have found that green tea consumption can increase calorie-burning by up to 4%. It’s believed that green tea accomplishes this by helping to

increase metabolic rates, as well as fat oxidation. Studies have also shown that green tea can reduce sugar cravings and help inhibit enzymes that slow digestion, thus raising metabolic rates. In addition to its metabolic properties, green tea is loaded with antioxidants and polyphenols, making it one of the most healthful beverage choices around.

Ice Water: Almost every nutritionist will recommend drinking 8 eight-ounce glasses of water every day, but did you know that if you drink ice water (instead of room-temperature water) your body will burn an extra nine calories per glass? Drinking room-temperature water can burn about 16 calories per glass — that’s 25 calories per glass for ice water. So eight glasses of cold water a day can be responsible for burning 200 calories! Besides, water is necessary for all your bodily processes, including the ones that control your metabolism. If you’re underhydrated, your body will underperform. Water also flushes out fat deposits and toxins, which can hamper your energy.

Remember, a good night’s sleep and smaller, more evenly spaced meals can be your best metabolic friends. And the best thing to really get your metabolism going is exercise. Stress has been found to produce *cortisol*, a steroid that inhibits the metabolism. I recommend that you try to relax...and have a blueberry or a piece of fish! 🌍

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THE PRECIOUS PUMPKIN

by Sharon Quercioli

The wonderful days of autumn are upon us. Having grown up in Ohio, this special time of year brings back many rich and wonderful memories...leaves changing, hot apple cider...and Halloween. Thanks to my dad and brother Ron, our house was always the most decorated in the neighborhood with all kinds of spooky looking stuff: skeletons, monsters, cob webs and of course scary music. Dad and Ron were always dressed in the scariest looking costumes you've ever seen. They were so scary looking that some of the younger kids in the neighborhood were too frightened to visit our house! Then there was Louie, my adorable Shih-Tzu, who would run to the door with a plastic pumpkin full of candy every time the door bell rang. These precious memories come alive every Halloween.

And while this season of goodies and goblins is sure to include a pumpkin or jack-o-lantern or two, before you trash that carved pumpkin on your porch, think again. The pumpkin has much more to offer than crooked smiles and a menial filing for holiday pies. Pumpkin is one of the most nutritional foods available year round. Rich in antioxidants, vitamins and minerals, both flesh and seeds of the pumpkin provide many health-boosting nutrients.

Health Benefits of Pumpkin

Alpha-carotene and beta-carotene are potent antioxidants found in pumpkin, as are pro-vitamin A carotenoids. Vitamin A promotes healthy vision and ensures proper immune function. The beta-carotene in pumpkin may also reverse skin damage caused by the sun and act as an anti-inflammatory. Alpha-carotene is thought to slow the aging process, reduce the risk of developing cataracts and prevent tumor growth. Carotenoids also boost immunity and lessen the risk of heart disease.

Pumpkin is an excellent source of fiber; one-half cup serving contains 5 grams. Fiber helps reduce high blood pressure and lower bad cholesterol levels, protect the body against heart disease, control blood sugar levels, promote healthy digestion and assist in weight loss. The vitamin C in pumpkin boosts immunity and also aids in reducing the risk of heart disease and in lowering high blood pressure and cholesterol levels. Pumpkin is also a good source of vitamin E, which promotes healthy skin by protecting the body from sun damage and may reduce the risk of Alzheimer's disease and certain cancers.



The potassium found in pumpkin is necessary for energy production and aids in balancing fluid levels in the body, as well as promoting strong bones. Pumpkin is also rich in magnesium, which aids the body in hundreds of functions, including promoting a healthy immune system, contributing to bone strength and normalizing heart function. Pantothenic acid, or vitamin B5, is also found in pumpkin. Vitamin B5 helps balance hormone levels and manage stress. Then again, the vegetable has a laxative action, being useful in cases of dyspepsia and constipa-

tion. Pumpkin juice is also useful in cases of insomnia, having a number of sedative properties.

Pumpkin Seeds

While pumpkin flesh is nutrient-rich, pumpkin seeds also contain essential vitamins and minerals for the strongest therapeutic effects. Pumpkin seeds are a good source of vitamin E, iron, magnesium, potassium, zinc, and an excellent plant-based source of omega-6 and omega-3 fatty acids. These help in eliminating intestinal parasites, cleaning blood vessels, adjusting cho-

lesterol levels and stimulating kidney activity. In treating cancer, leukemia, sclerosis, or various diseases hard to cure, pumpkin seeds have an energizing role.

How to Use Pumpkin

Fresh pumpkins are typically only available during fall and early winter; however, canned pumpkin is just as nutritious as fresh. Fresh pumpkin or canned pumpkin puree can be used to make soups, muffins, breads, puddings and smoothies. Pumpkin seeds can be eaten as a snack, used to top salads or added to sautéed vegetables.

Spicy Roasted Pumpkin Seed Recipe

- 3 cups pumpkin seeds
- 1 tsp. ground cinnamon
- 1/2 tsp. ground cloves
- 1/2 tsp. nutmeg
- Salt to taste

Clean pumpkin seed and allow to dry for at least three hours. Spray a flat non-stick cookie sheet with Pam. Spread pumpkin evenly on pan and sprinkle with seasonings. Bake at 375 degrees for 15 to 20 minutes, stirring several so seeds do not stick or burn. Watch carefully. Test with fork to see if done; when crunchy remove from oven.

Black Bean and Roasted Pumpkin Salad Recipe

Pumpkin doesn't always have to be a desert food. Enjoy it in a fresh salad with black beans, lots of crisp veggies, and a zesty lime dressing. This recipe makes for a hearty lunch or a light dinner.

- 2 cups cubed pumpkin
- ¼ cup olive oil, divided
- 1 clove garlic, sliced
- 1 (15 ounce) can black beans, drained rinsed, drained
- ½ cup cherry tomatoes, halved
- ½ cup sliced red onion
- ¼ cup sliced cucumber
- ¼ cup sliced celery
- 2 tablespoons chopped parsley
- 2 tablespoons fresh lime juice
- ½ teaspoon salt
- ½ teaspoon black pepper

Roast the pumpkin: preheat oven to 400 degrees. Toss pumpkin in 2 tablespoons olive oil with garlic and place in a glass baking dish. Drizzle 3 tablespoons water in dish and bake until softened for 20 minutes. Remove and cool.

Prepare the salad: combine black beans, tomatoes, onion, cucumber, celery and parsley in a large bowl. Add remaining 2 tablespoons oil, lime juice, salt and pepper; toss to coat. Add cooled pumpkin, toss gently and serve.



All About Red Hot Chili Peppers

Specifically, the Garden Variety

by Teresa VanDyk Marshall



Beautiful in a garden, pepper plants add bright colors and rich colored leaves, as well as access to decadent flavors for our favorite spicy dishes. With the exception of bell peppers, most peppers also have a secret ingredient that does more than meets the...tongue—or in the case of pepper spray—the eye.

That secret ingredient is capsaicin.

Typically, we enjoy (or respectfully retreat from) the spicy heat that the capsaicin in peppers brings to our dishes. That “heat” feeling, while it can be very dangerous if misused, happens to be useful to modern medicine. Doctors have been able to harness the powers of capsaicin in patches and injections used to treat chronic pain suffered by arthritic patients. Ironical that an “irritant” has practical use in such a way!

Evidence taken from the British Journal of Nutrition shows cayenne pepper could be helpful in breaking down carbohydrates after a meal, thus helping to regulate blood sugar levels.

In fact, some studies say that capsaicin may improve digestion due to its antibacterial properties. It has been shown to prevent clotting and hardening of the arteries.

Use These Peppers in Your Garden Bird Feeder

Here’s an odd fact about the use of capsaicin in various peppers: use ground chili peppers or crushed dried chilies with birdseed to deter squirrels but keep the birds coming. It turns out that while squirrels and other mammal animals shy away from the peppers, the birds are unaffected by capsaicin and will keep coming back for more!

Pick a Pepper

Peppers come in so many varieties, and they can add such a beautiful, let alone practical, presence to a garden. Some peppers are not grown to be eaten (they are just too hot) but are nonetheless strikingly showy in our garden.

For example, the dark, rich colors of the “Black Pearl” ornamental variety come covered in dark, almost purplish, green leaves. The bush explodes with red, pearl-shaped peppers that turn a shiny black color as they ripen. The “Christmas” pepper plant comes with dark green, waxy leaves and grows little peppers that look just like “Christmas Lights,” often showing off red, yellow, purple and orange peppers all at the same time! (Our only caution when growing these is to keep an eye out for the Whiteflies.) They seem to love these gorgeous plants as much as we do—except they love them to death. (Regularly spraying with Safer Soap or other organic pest control is highly recommended.)

So, spice up your garden—and your dinner—thus enjoying vibrant flavors accompanied by improved health. All the while, indulge in the eye candy that these lovely plants will become in your garden.



EATING WELL

I'm Dreaming of a Green Christmas

by Sandra Frens

As a child, Christmas was my most treasured holiday. I knew if I was good all year Santa would come down the chimney and reward me with a mountain of presents on Christmas morning. Each gift would be wrapped meticulously in the most exquisite of papers with the most beautiful bows—and in a flash those papers and bows would be nothing more than shreds waiting to be tossed out with the rest of the trash. Sadly, back then “Santa” and “Mrs. Claus” (my dad and mom) did not consider the waste they were creating with their thoughtful and beautifully wrapped gifts.

All the winter holidays involve some sort of traditional gift giving, and that usually means there will be gift wrapping. But do we have to give-up the trappings of a holiday with beautifully wrapped packages to live a more sustainable lifestyle? NO! There are many ways to wrap a gift and still live and breathe sustainability this holiday season or during any gift giving occasion!



[Click here to see Sprouts! Season's Greetings Cards and gift tags!](#)

First, let's go over some major don'ts when it comes to choosing how to wrap your presents. Never use a foil gift wrap or put glitter on your presents! Foil gift wraps (not to be confused with kitchen aluminum foil), although beautiful in appearance, are the hardest on our environment with no ability to bio-degrade. Glitter is another one of those materials that is not recyclable. Even if used on eco-friendly paper, glitter will render it no longer recyclable. Just being aware of the materials you're using can make a big difference in staying eco-friendly.

Now let's talk about the many ways to wrap a gift and still be environmentally conscious.

- Holiday bags and boxes are two of the simplest ways to go green this holiday season; the trick is keeping them to use the next year, the year after and so-on! Just make sure they are made of eco-friendly materials because eventually they will wear out and need to be recycled.
- Use holiday fabric to wrap gifts. You will only need about a yard or two from the fabric store and use cloth ribbon to keep it all closed up. This will last for many years, and you will spend less than buying a new roll of gift wrap every year.
- Another cloth option is using a pillow-case and tying it up with a big beautiful

cloth bow. Or, if you are giving clothes and other presents, wrap the other presents in the clothes and tie with ribbon.

- A classic gift wrap alternative is using old newspaper or kitchen aluminum foil. These two are easiest to obtain and can be made up fancier with a decorative cloth ribbon and bow.
- Using wrapping paper isn't totally out of the question either. Just be sure the paper you are purchasing is recyclable and comes from other recycled paper. This is easy to find by searching the Internet for “recyclable gift wrap.”
- In addition to using sustainable gift wrap, make sure your gift tags and cards are also eco-friendly. Buy tags and cards that are made from 100% recycled paper, like Sprouts! plantable seed paper cards (www.sproutem.com). If you're using seeded tags or cards in your gift giving, you're also sending an extra gift of flowers, too!

The holidays can still hold the beauty of established traditions and maintain a sustainable atmosphere. By just changing a few little things, we can have a huge impact upon the world we all share. Let's keep our various holiday traditions alive, only this year I'm dreaming of a GREEN Christmas. 🌍

Ask The Energy Expert

Unusually High Utility Bills?

by Scott Ranck



Do your utilities bills make you feel like you are flushing your money down the toilet?


I have the privilege of being an energy detective! In the rare case one of our customers has a high bill and there seems to be no easy answer to the dilemma, I get to go investigate and try to figure out what has happened to spike the bill. There are several things I have found to cause the utility bill to raise.

Recently, my own water bill spiked. I examined the last several water bills to see how much more water I used. I took the bill outside and read my own water meter and discovered the last meter read was incorrect. No matter which utility bill spikes, start by calling your utility and verifying the meter was read properly.

The second cause, whether it be for water, gas or propane, could be a leak. If there is a leak, they generally get worse over time. Two months of an extremely high bill could be an indication of a leak. Call your utility and they will check your system. Recently, a customer called about a high natural gas bill. Upon investigation, the customer had missed the fact their water usage had more than doubled. The combination of a high gas bill and a high water bill indicates a water leak in the hot water line.

The most common cause of high bills I have found is that the customer's use

changed. Heating a pool just a couple degrees warmer, bumping that air conditioner just a couple degrees cooler or having family come and visit for a week, make a significant difference in utility costs.

The final cause is faulty equipment. Occasionally, I have discovered a switch in the heat pump has failed, and the system is both heating and cooling at the same time! A professional HVAC contractor will be needed to correct this issue. With age and Florida water, water heaters and pool heaters scale up and become less efficient over time. Proper maintenance can help with this issue. See the manufacturer's recommendations. 

Scott Ranck is the Conservation Program Coordinator & Energy Specialist for Florida Public Utilities. Feel free to e-mail any energy-related questions or comments to Scott at sranck@fpuc.com.



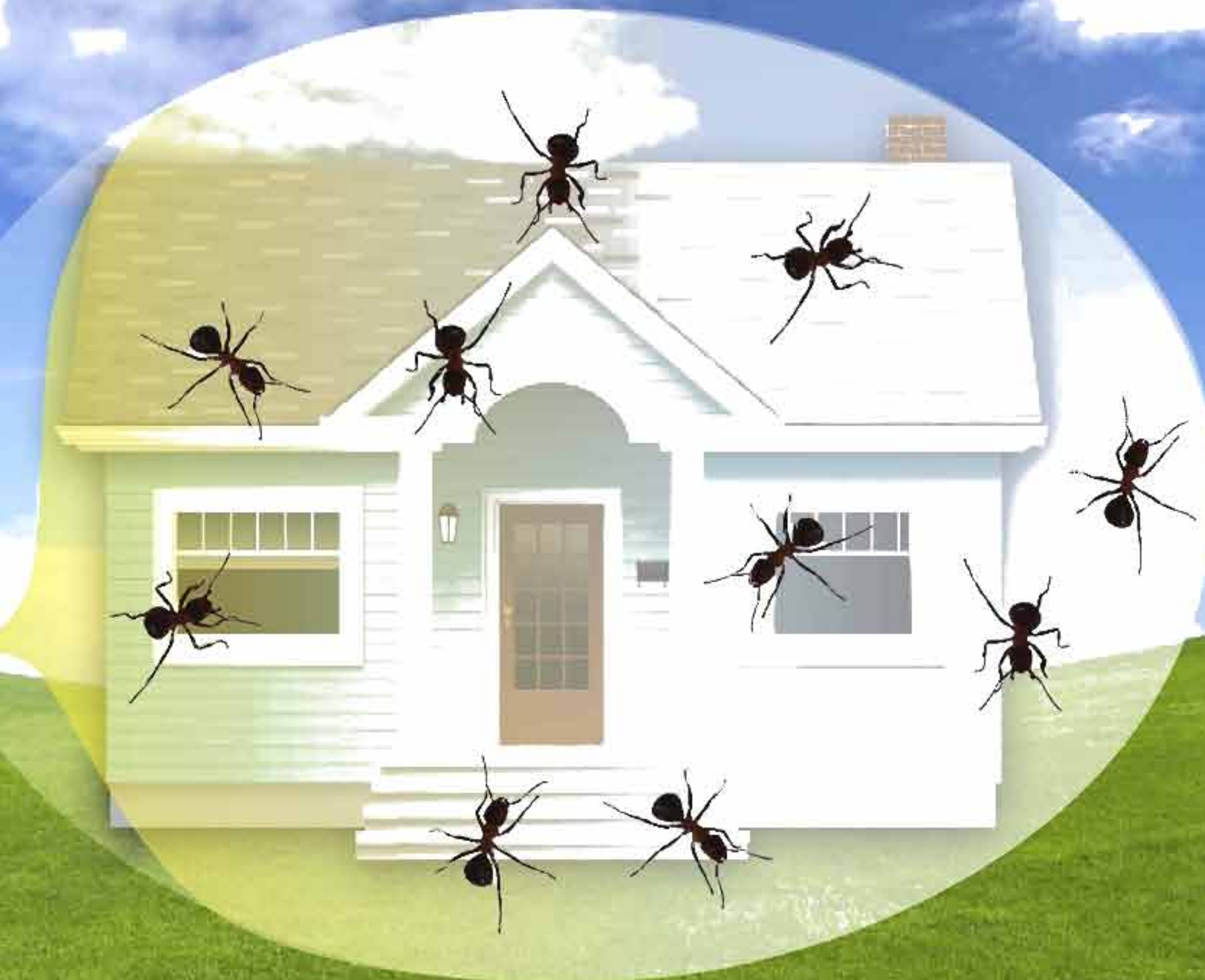
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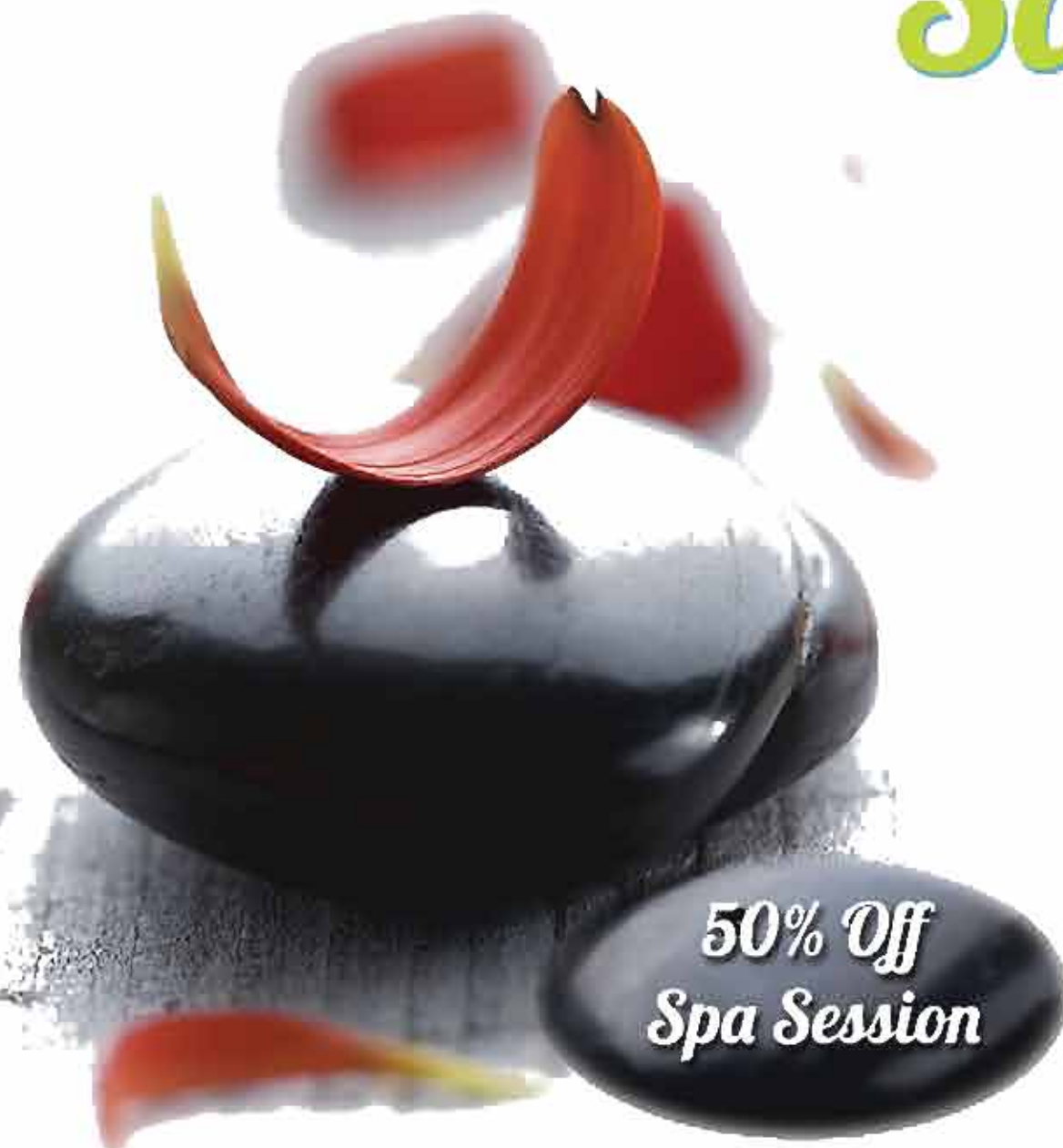
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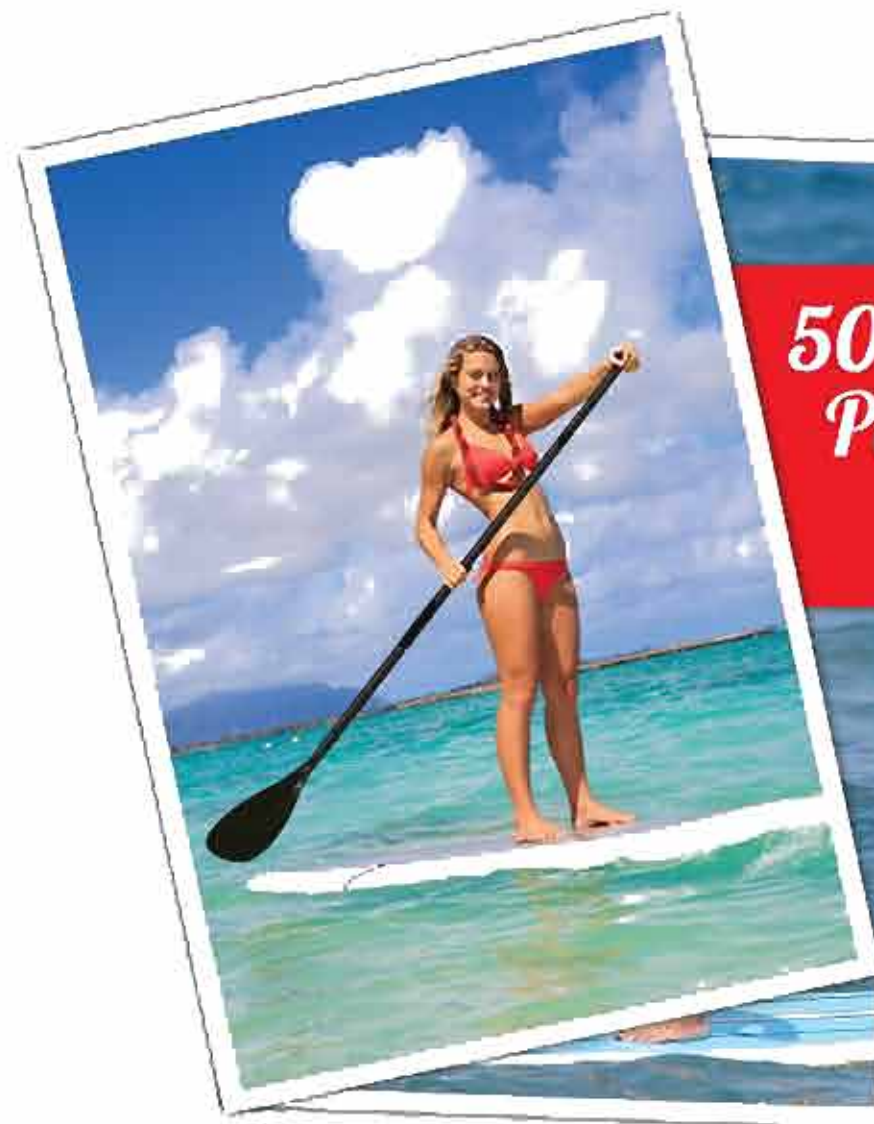


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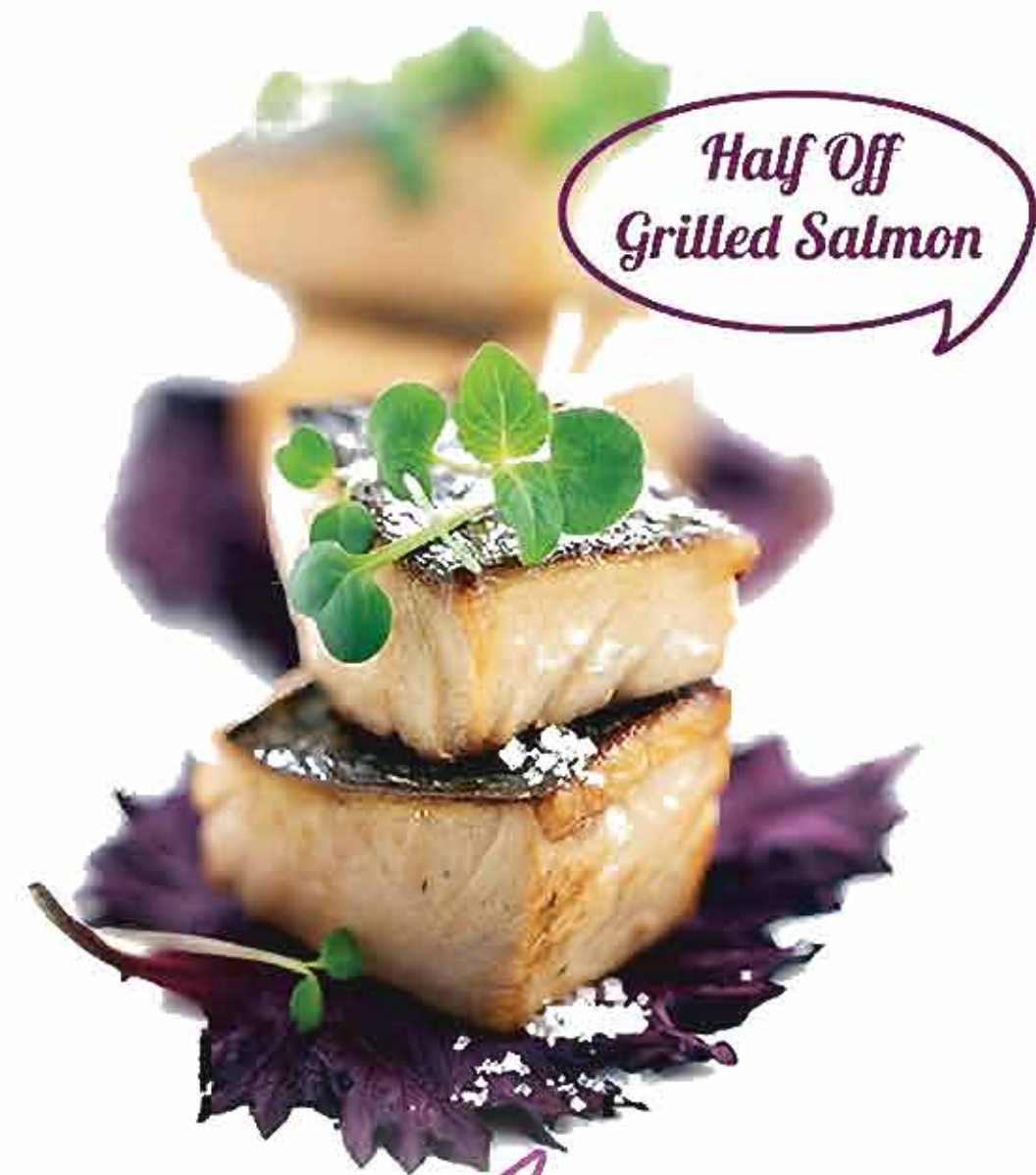
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**Great Deals
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Return of the Wolves of Yellowstone

by Lucas Miller



Back in 2005, I wrote a tune called “A Deer In My Cadillac” about the reintroduction of wolves into Yellowstone Park. You can download it free this month at www.lucasmiller.net/Deer.zip.

Bringing back wolves was, to say the least, controversial. How would you feel if someone released a couple packs of large predators into a park near you? On the other side of the issue, if wolves can’t live in Yellowstone—where can they live? In the end, pro-wolf forces prevailed, and, in the winters of 1995 and 1996, a total of 66 wolves left tracks in the Yellowstone snows that hadn’t been seen in decades.

Why did they disappear in the first place? The early 1900s saw deer and many other “game” animals in steep declines due to unregulated hunting. Wildlife officials decided that controlling predators was part of the solution and promoted indiscriminant hunting of wolves until 1926. Some unknown time thereafter, the last Yellowstone wolf disappeared.

In the wolves’ absence, elk populations exploded, and, being especially fond of the tender shoots of aspen (willow and cottonwood trees) the elk grazed upon them to the point that these forests were failing to regenerate.

For scientists, reintroducing wolves was about much more than the thrill of seeing a dominant predator surveying its kingdom again. They hoped the predators would restore balance to the Yellowstone ecosystem and foster the return of other species that had declined or disappeared in the wake of the ravenous elk.

Within ten years, scientists were noting signs of recovery in aspen forests and the wildlife they support. With the return of cottonwoods and

willows, the slap of a beaver’s tail, once nearly unheard in the park’s 3742 square miles, echoes again with renewed vigor and frequency.

In a 2010 study, however, scientists found that, even though wolves had reduced elk populations dramatically, elk were still gobbling up aspen shoots and preventing forest regeneration. A greater population of wolves would be required, they felt, to bring the restoration for which so many had hoped.

Unfortunately, wolves are now battling microscopic nemeses in addition to local ranchers: parvovirus, canine distemper, mange and more. Their population, once up to 170, has dropped to about 100.

The story of Yellowstone continues to unfold and wildlife managers are now working tirelessly to make sure that wolves are a part of it. Scientists, for their part, are documenting the cascade of effects that ripple through the Yellowstone ecosystems that will inform other efforts to reintroduce top predators. With continued time and support, I hope that Yellowstone can support wolves, aspen, beavers, eagles, foxes and all the other species that have called it home for countless years. 🌍

Known as the “singing zoologist,” author and songwriter Lucas Miller has been educating children about environmental awareness through the gift of music.

For more information and examples of his work, please visit www.lucasmiller.net.



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How to Meet Your Farmer

by Richard Hawkins

Our society has for the most part lost our connection with our sources of food. One would think that of all our daily priorities we would give some weight to the knowledge of what we are putting into our bodies and where these things came from. I mean really... We cannot live without the stuff; so, should we not know more about it?

Once upon a time, when the world was a little less complicated, it was pretty simple to find the source of what was on our dinner plates. We would not have to travel too far to find a farm raising cattle, hogs and chickens. Dairy and egg production could be found on a small scale in pleasant settings where the animals had a pleasant existence. Meat animals also had the chance for a nice life with just the "one bad day." Vegetable and grains were grown simply and naturally—they did not need to travel far.

Most of food today has a much more complicated story. Trust me when I say you would not want (even if you were allowed) to visit the source of industrial meat and egg production. Much of the food that sprouts from the earth has been altered in ways and is grown in ways that just are not sustainable. The methods used are

ways that will be hard to reverse. But there is good news. There are still alternatives and hints that needed changes in our food system are gaining support.


In 2009, our current administration began taking steps to improve access to local foods. In September of 2009, the Department of Agriculture launched the "Know Your Farmer, Know Your Food" initiative. The initiative has been very well received by farmers and ranchers across the country as a key resource in helping to break down barriers to agriculture and economic development.

Florida is very much an agricultural state and the source of small, medium and large-scale agricultural operations. We do have the opportunity to meet our farmers and learn more about the food we eat. We also have opportunities to know exactly where our food is coming from and how it was grown.

There are numerous farmers markets where local growers can sell their products directly to you. We have CSA's (community supported agriculture) where farmers will arrange weekly pickups of their freshly harvested crops or even drop them at

your doorstep! You can visit sites like www.eatwild.com and contact farmers directly. More urban agriculture is being created and soon you will find food growing right in the city! soon you will find food growing right in the city!

One of the easiest methods to know your farmer is to join Localecopia at our semiannual Meet & Greet. Our next event will be held at the fabulous Breakers Hotel in Palm Beach on Tuesday, December 18th. The event is free and will be held from 1 – 3 PM. Please mark your calendars and be sure to RSVP at info@locecopia.org.

See you then! 

Localecopia is a nonprofit organization based in Palm Beach, Florida focused upon bringing businesses, producers, educators and government organizations together for the purpose of lessening our carbon footprint by supporting local product consumption, helping operations



better utilize waste and bringing together individuals to help achieve sustainable business practices. For information about Localecopia, please visit www.localecopia.org.

NONPROFIT / CHARITY



Holiday Parties and Business Networking

by John Carr

BUSINESS

It is that time of year again! The holiday parties are going to be all over the place, and you may be invited to many of them. This is a great way to build your credibility or totally destroy your reputation.

When attending the holiday parties this year, you need to have a plan just like any other networking event. Here are a few reminders for this season's party:

1. Make sure you do not drink too much.

I would suggest limiting your alcohol consumption to 0-2 drinks max. I have personally seen several people over the years embarrass themselves by drinking too much, and their credibility, which they worked on to build for years, was destroyed in minutes.

2. Remember to dress appropriately for the party.

Find out what the host is suggesting. Will it be casual, business casual or event black tie? You don't want to wear shorts and flip flops to an evening event, but you also don't want to wear slacks and a long sleeve shirt to a BBQ.

3. Remember this is a great opportunity to get to know people.

Try to connect with ones you already know better and meet some new people, but this is not the place to work it like a regular networking event. Do not monopolize the host/hostess time. They have a job to make sure "everyone" is happy and having a good time.

4. Remember that this is not a place to close business or in reality even look for business.

This is a great opportunity for you to build relationships with prospects, clients or referral partners. If someone says they need your products or services, then get their information and let them know you call them the next business day to schedule an appointment. Do not pass out your cards and unless someone asks for one. Ask the other person for their contact information if you want to get to know them better. NO SELLING!

5. Don't arrive or leave late.

Don't aim to be the last person at the party. Show up on time. Depending upon how formal party is you should show up within 30 minutes or less of start time. If you are going to be late, notify the party host/hostess well in advance.

6. Talk as little as possible about work.

Focus mostly on them. If they talk about work, ask them about what type of sports they watch or what is their favorite TV show. If you know that they love golf or shopping, talk about those things—not work.

7. HAVE FUN!

Be yourself and have a good time. This is an opportunity for others to see you in a different atmosphere and get to know you a little better. Show everyone your lighter side!

Follow these few simple guidelines, and you will still have a great reputation and a wonderful time 🌐

For more information, please contact John Carr via email at john@jrcconsultinggroup.com.



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JRC Consulting Group was founded by John Carr in April of 2008. During the past 20 years, John has developed sales and business networking systems from his many successful endeavors in the networking and sales world. JRC's programs have a proven track record and can be tailored to work effectively for your business.



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GREEN GOODIES

Meet the Team...



SHARON QUERCIOLI

Co-Founder & President

Named 2011 Woman of the Year by the Northern Palm Beach County Chamber of Commerce, Sharon Quercioli is a highly successful entrepreneur with over 20 years in the recycle industry. The former Vice President of Static Control components, Inc. and four-time president of her own companies, Quercioli is widely recognized as a marketing guru and has consulted numerous companies across the United States. In 2004, Quercioli founded Sprouts, Inc., an innovative company that uses 100% recycled paper embedded with flower seeds to create a diverse array of eco-friendly products including greeting cards, bookmarks and unique marketing pieces that grow flowers when planted. In 2009, Sprouts was named Small Business of the Year by the Northern Palm Beach County Chamber of Commerce, and in 2010 the company received recognition by the U. S. Chamber of Commerce for being one of the leading small businesses in the country.



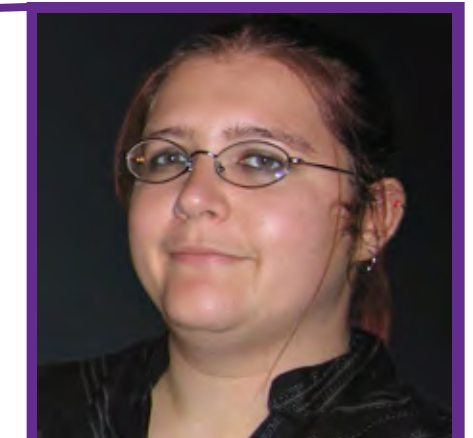
GLENN SWIFT

Co-Founder & Editor-in-Chief

Glenn Swift has been a feature story writer and editor for a number of high-end publications across the United States, and over the past decade has established himself as one of South Florida's leading journalists. Holder of a B.B.A. in Finance from Stetson University and a Master's Degree in European History from the University of Central Florida, Swift was the Winner of the Florida Magazine Association's Bronze Award for Excellence in Writing and is a member of Phi Alpha Theta, the International History Fraternity. Swift has interviewed many of the biggest celebrities in the Arts & Entertainment world and is renowned for his in-depth knowledge in that field. He has also hosted several radio shows, all of which focused on his passion for entertainment. From 2005-2007, Swift served as Managing Editor of Newport Beach, California-based Advisys, Inc., one of the nation's most highly respected e-publishers for the financial services industry.

SANDRA FRENS

Art Director



Sandra is a talented graphic designer who earned her Bachelors of Fine Arts from Florida Atlantic University. For more than a decade, she has worked as an independent designer and freelance artist specializing in painting, drawing, digital design, and photography before settling into Sprouts!, Inc. as the Creative Director. Now she is applying her vast artistic knowledge and creativity as the Art Director for Our Wonderful World.

"A good graphic artist understands the elements and principles of design, but an exceptional artist (of any kind) has to be able see how they come together in all the objects that compose the world around us. Remember: everything in our world (even the natural world) has been made by an artist."

Meet the Team...



SEAN REED

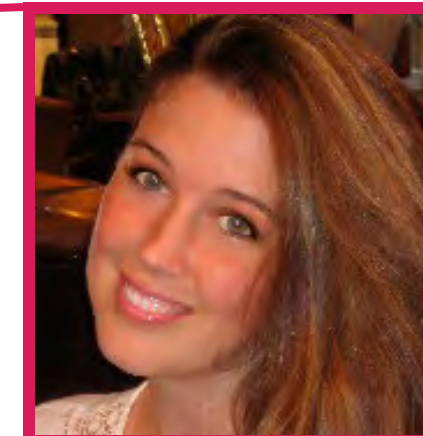
Webmaster / IT Coordinator

Sean is an information technology expert and photographer based in Palm Beach, FL. He is a graduate of the University of South Florida with a degree in Management Information Systems. Prior to graduating, he held positions as Senior Photographer and Online Editor for the University's campus newspaper, The Oracle.

With over a decade of experience in the information technology field, Sean has a long list of clientele for his IT consulting agency and holds a position of prominence in numerous organizations, including ArtiGras, the Northern Palm Beach County Chamber of Commerce, Sprouts! and Our Wonderful World.

TERESA VANDYK-MARSHALL

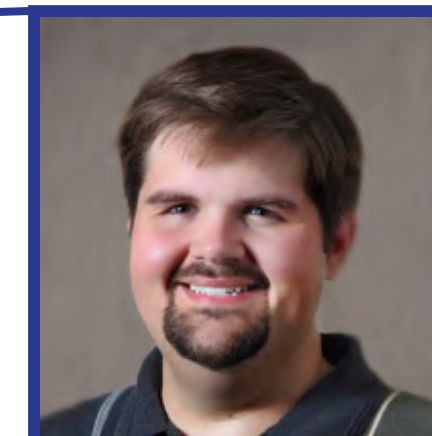
Contributing Columnist



Teresa Vandyk-Marshall is a columnist for Our Wonderful World Media as well as a Senior Quality Consultant with Florida Power & Light (a leading clean energy provider). Having spent over nine years writing for the company, this Palm Beach Gardens resident currently specializes in communications within Quality Management and has written a multitude of educational references for the company. Representing FPL, she provided helpful tips on energy conservation that all energy users can view at www.FPLConnect.com. In her private time, she and her husband, James, are passionate organic gardening enthusiasts, nature lovers and Sustaining Members of Bok Tower Sanctuary and Gardens in Lake Wales. "It is very important to me to actively support a team bringing a healthier, more sustainable and more beautiful tomorrow to our Earth and to our children."

ROBBY ANTONIO

Photographer



Robby is a native South Floridian who holds two bachelor degrees in Management Information Systems and Marketing. His background in photography started at an early age shooting with the inspiration from his family and friends. Under the tutelage of a great teacher in high school and some extremely talented friends, he has honed his craft to capture life through a viewfinder. Robby continues to pursue his passion as a freelance photographer shooting with friends, travelling, and as an active member of the Freelance Photography Studio in West Palm Beach. He views each shoot as a new challenge, never knowing what he can expect when he gets there. So far with Our Wonderful World he's shot in 9° temperatures for ICE! at the Gaylord Palms Hotel in Orlando and in the rain at the Worth Avenue Christmas Tree Lighting Ceremony.

"Photography is an adventure, and you can never be afraid to do what it takes to get the shot."

KRISTIN PURCELL

Operations Manager



Kristin is a native Northern Ohioan with over 15 years in operations as a Client Services Manager. The majority of her managerial experience has been with the insurance industry where today she is still a licensed insurance agent in Ohio. "I am thrilled to have the opportunity to work with a state-of-the-art digital magazine focusing upon the Art of Living Green!"

Kristin is no stranger to green initiatives as she worked vigorously with two insurance agencies helping them transition to a paperless environment. "It is really important to me to recycle and do as much as possible to save our precious planet. I have two young children and teach them every day the importance of living green for their future and the future of their children."



The Archive





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