



Our Wonderful World

December, 2012
Volume 3 :: Number 12

The Art of Living Green



Make it a
Green Holiday

Santa Claus
Through History & Time

Hanukkah
The Festival of Lights

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Our Wonderful World
Volume 3 Number 12



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The Art of Living Green 



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Volume 3, Number 12. Our Wonderful World is published monthly by Our Wonderful World Media & Entertainment, Inc. 7713 Sandhill Ct. West Palm Beach, FL 33412. Register for complimentary subscription at www.owwmedia.com. For general and advertising inquiries, contact Glenn R. Swift at (772) 323-6925 or glenn@owwmedia.com.

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Merry Christmas and welcome to the December, 2012 issue of **Our Wonderful World**, Florida's leading green digital magazine. Our cover story, "St. Nicholas to Santa Claus," explores the history of this immortal and beloved figure. Be sure to check out "Hanukkah: The Festival of Light" for an insightful glimpse into a spiritual tradition that has lasted for over two millennia.

Teresa VanDyk Marshall gives us some great tips as to how to keep our bodies hydrated inside and out in "Beat Winter Dryness," while the Green Goddess enlightens us to the many benefits of the "Classic Cranberry." Speaking of the Goddess, be sure to learn how to give the "Holiday Gifts That Keep on Giving" in Pearls of Wisdom.

Kudos to Sandra Frens for giving us "A Classic Holiday Treat" (with a healthy twist, of course), and a round of applause to Sandra Bogan for some great ideas on how to "Make It a Green Holiday."

Our energy expert, Scott Ranck, of Florida Public Utilities, offers some excellent advice on "Christmas Safety," while Mandy Nolen in "Christmas Pests" gives us fair warning as to what little critters might be lurking in our holiday decorations.

Thanks again to Teresa for "Our Winter Forecast" and an "atta boy" to Richard Hawkins for "Will Somebody Tell Me What Is in My Food?"

For a change of pace like only the "singing zoologist" (Lucas Miller) can do, be sure to check out "Time for the Christmas Bird Count." Last, but certainly not least, our business guru, John Carr, reveals his sales expertise once more in "End of the Year Review."

Well...That's enough from us. Now don't worry! There's a whole lot more. So, get clickin', but most of all — **enjoy the Holidays!**

Sincerely,



Sharon

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FROM THE PUBLISHERS

St Nicholas to Santa Claus Through History and Time

by Samantha Gold



One of children's fondest thoughts about Christmas is about a jolly old man with a white beard and red suit, gliding in the Christmas air with his magical reindeer, bringing gifts to children who have been nice the whole year. Children would be filled with excitement about what Santa Claus will bring for them and even adults are secretly reminded of their own childhood wishes.

Yet, how much of Santa Claus or St. Nicholas is true? Did the man that inspired the legend really exist? How has he become so popular, transcending different cultures and generations? How did various aspects of his personality evolve to what we know today? Will the legend and the story last for a long time to come?

The modern day St. Nicholas that we see today is already the result of historical, mythical and folk stories combined. However, historical studies trace the main inspiration of St. Nicholas back to the fourth century of the Common Era, and a place near Myra in modern-day Turkey.

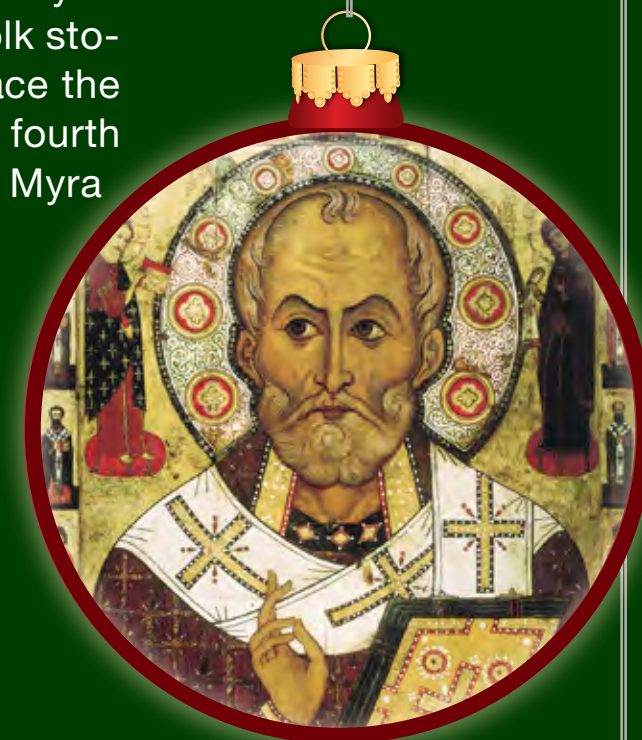
During the time, stories about the kindness of a man named Nicholas have spread in the countryside. He was generally known as a very rich man who is very kind to children, often throwing toys and candies in their windows. He was also said to have given away all his inheritance to the poor and the sick. Perhaps, one of the most famous stories about him was his kindness in paying for the dowry of three little girls, so they can be saved from prostitution.

St. Nicholas lived a life devoted to Christianity. As stories of his deeds spread throughout Europe, some elements of European folklore merged with earlier accounts about the saint.

In fact, there are a number of parallelisms between St. Nicholas and Odin, a deity for Germanic people prior to their Christianization. Odin was depicted in thirteenth-century literature as riding an eight-legged horse that could leap through huge distances. This is pretty similar to the idea of Santa Claus gliding in the air with his flying reindeer.

The hanging of stockings in chimneys or Christmas trees may also be traced to the legend of Odin. According to tradition, children would fill their boots with food for Odin's flying horse. In return, Odin would give the children candies and other gifts.

Dutch folklore may have also contributed to the overall picture of present-day Santa and gift giving. In the Netherlands before the sixteenth century, he was portrayed as having aides that would carry the list of children, categorizing them as naughty and nice. His aides were known as "Black Peter" and would ride with Santa in Christmas Eve, dropping Christ-



*St. Nicholas Lipensky
by Aleksa Petrov*



*Odin der Göttervater
by Carl Emil Doepler*

COVER STORY

Christmas gifts and candies through the chimneys of good children while carrying bags and willow canes for catching the naughty ones.

Britain's Father Christmas, a jolly, bearded man portrayed in the seventeenth century as magically spreading the merry spirit of Christmas, completes the picture of Santa Claus. Here, St. Nicholas is not just a gift giver with a magical ride; his magic extends into changing the mood of the people, making them happy just in time for Christmas.

The American version of Santa Claus is a combination of the elements mentioned, gradually formed when settlers arrived in New York back in the 17th century.

Popular author Washington Irving was credited for giving the first detailed description of the European version of Santa Claus. Irving described Santa as simply arriving in a horseback, without his magical reindeer and other elements.

In 1823, a poet named Clark Clement Moore provided more details of what soon became the Americanized version of Santa Claus. In his poem, *The Night Before Christmas*, Moore named Santa's reindeer and described his laughs and winks.

The story that Santa comes from the North Pole, where Christmas gifts are made, is attributed to a man named Thomas Nast. Nast was an illustrator for Harper's magazine who drew images of the jolly old saint in the magazine's Christmas issues back in the 1860s.

Interestingly, even a cola company contributed to our image of Santa Claus today. The company released human-sized Santas, instead of an elf in

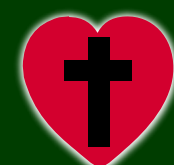
Moore's poem, and popularized his famous red suit.

As we look back and dig deep to the evolution of the images and stories of Saint Nicholas, it is amazing how various elements of society and history come together to keep the legend alive. In years to come, certain aspects of the legend may disappear to suit with the changing times.

One thing seemed timeless, though: that of a man who devotes his life in helping others, in sharing his God-given gifts for the good and happiness of mankind. That is a beauty that we should all be reminded about, especially during Christmas time. 🌍

The Coca-Cola Santa (pictured above), designed by artist Haddon Sundblom, made its debut in 1931 in The Saturday Evening Post; this depiction appeared regularly in that magazine, as well as Ladies Home Journal, National Geographic, The New Yorker and others.

Samantha Gold is a writer with [Gifts of Love and Devotion](#) - Unique Christian Gifts, which features a large selection of Personalized Christian Gifts for every occasion including baptism, first communion, confirmation, weddings and anniversary. In addition, they offer Personalized Christmas Gifts for the Christian gift giver!



Gifts of Love & Devotion



Illustration by John Leech made for the Charles Dickens's classic "A Christmas Carol"



One of the first depictions of Santa Claus from the cover of "Harper's Weekly" Jan. 3 1863.





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Hanukkah

The Festival of Lights

by Glenn R. Swift



Hanukkah comes from the Hebrew word meaning dedication. The history of Hanukkah begins with Alexander the Great who, after conquering Syria, Egypt and Judea, allowed all people to continue to observe their chosen religions. It wasn't until later that the successor of Alexander the Great, Antiochus IV, caused a great upheaval among the Jewish population.

Under the reign of Antiochus, the Jewish people were required to worship Greek gods. In 165 BCE, Judah's son Maccabee decided to rebel against this law and formed a crusade against Antiochus. Having defeated the Greek army, Maccabee and his allies found a sacred temple that had been left in ruins as a result of Antiochus' army, and they restored the temple to its former glory.

Thus, on the 25th day of Kislev, they dedicated the temple by lighting a restored Menorah. Although they were only able to find enough oil to keep the Menorah lit for one day, a miracle occurred in which the Menorah stayed lit for eight days.

Thus, the Festival of Lights was born to commemorate that day in the temple when

the miracle of the Menorah first occurred. All Jews celebrate the miracle of the oil by placing eight candles in the Menorah and lighting one candle on each of the eight days of Hanukkah.

Although not considered a holy day, Hanukkah is nevertheless celebrated by Jews around the world in observance of the miracle of the oil that occurred in the temple. Hanukkah traditionally begins on the 22nd of December and ends on the 31st of December.

Research also reveals that there are two types of Menorahs: one is 7-branched and one is 8-branched. There was a prohibition against the use of a 7-branched Menorah similar to the one used in the original temple.

The Chanukah (another way of spelling Hanukkah) Menorah has a place for eight candles as well as a ninth candle set apart from the rest. It is said that the eight candles commemorate the miracle of the oil while the ninth candle, the Shamash, symbolizes light.

The Hanukkah tradition serves to remind all of us that God makes miracles for those who stand up for truth and justice.



First Annual Jazz at the Zoo Honors Wheels For Kids

On Saturday, November 3, the first annual Jazz at the Zoo entertained an excited and appreciative audience to an evening of live jazz, a fine spread of assorted hors d'oeuvres, desserts, cocktails, silent auction and gift bag in the wondrous environs of the Palm Beach Zoo in West Palm Beach. Proceeds from the one-of-a-kind event benefited Wheels For Kids, Inc., a 501(c)(3) nonprofit that funds customized wheelchairs for disabled children and young adults in Palm Beach County. The highlight of the evening came when Denise Jungbert, President and Founder of Wheels For Kids, presented customized wheelchairs to two disabled children.

To learn more about
Wheels For Kids, Inc., please visit
www.wheelsforkids.org.



Photography courtesy of Alicia Donelan

GREEN GOINGS



The Bobby Lee Trio



Palm Beach Zoo Owl



Nancy Tart, Sharon Quercioli, Zoo Volunteer, Glenn Swift and Chet Tart



Ashlee Jungbert and Denise Roeser Jungbert



Wheels for Kids Volunteers



Chef Tim Raymond

GREEN GOINGS

Northern Palm Beach County Announces 2012 Woman of the Year—Karen Marcus

by Glenn R. Swift



At its annual luncheon at the Doubletree Palm Beach Gardens on Tuesday, October 23, the Women In Business Council of the Northern Palm Beach County Chamber of Commerce proudly announced the 2012 Woman of the Year—Palm Beach County Commissioner, Karen Marcus.

Created to honor an Outstanding Leader, the award is given annually by the Council to a woman who has attained and personified the highest level of professional excellence in business and the community. Marcus was chosen from among some of the most high profile professional women in Northern Palm Beach County.

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



Members of the Northern Palm Beach County Chamber of Commerce

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GREEN GOINGS



2012
Woman of the Year
Palm Beach County
Commissioner
Karen Marcus

Here is a list of this year's nominees:

Sarah Alsofrom

Chief Development and Community Relations Officer
Hanley Center Foundation

Patricia Faulkner

Director of Tennis
BallenIsles Country Club

Yvette Flores

Enrollment and Match Specialist
Big Brothers Big Sisters of Palm Beach and Martin Counties

Barbara Ross Kozlow

Regional Sales Manager
Keyes Company Realtors

Dana Middleton

President and CEO
Intelligent Office

Dawn Pardo

Councilwoman
City of Riviera Beach Council

Kay-Lynette Roca

Executive Director
Safe Harbor Animal Sanctuary

Sherra Sewell

Advertising and Marketing Consultant

Julie Swindler

CEO
Families First of Palm Beach County

Brittany Tallon

Regional Sales Coordinator
AFLAC

Jean Wihbey

Provost and Campus President
Palm Beach State College



Dr. Jean Wihbey and Scott MacLachlan



Sharon Quercioli, Greg Leach and Dr. Jean Wihbey



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Change the World with a Giving Heart Association of Fundraising Professionals Palm Beach Chapter Hosts National Philanthropy Day Luncheon

by Glenn R. Swift



Brian Edwards, Iva Grady and Jay Cashmere - Photography courtesy of LILA Photo

On Thursday, November 15, the Palm Beach County Chapter of the Association of Fundraising Professionals hosted the 2012 National Philanthropy Day "Change the World with a Giving Heart" Luncheon at the Kravis Center in downtown West Palm Beach. Sponsored by The Law Firm of Akerman Senterfitt, LLP, the event recognized the powerful results of philanthropy being generated by the caring hearts of philanthropy in Palm Beach County. Honorees were showcased to reveal the enormous impact they have made on the lives of many in the local community.

For more information about the Association of Fundraising Professionals Palm Beach Chapter, please visit www.afppbc.org.



GREEN GOINGS



Graham Anderson & Maura Koons



Norman Gitzen & Countess Henrietta de Hoernle



Buzz & Patty Myura



1st Row: Pepa & Hannah Sosa, Stewart Auville, 2nd Row: Sharon Quercioli, Denise Jungbert, Katie Gamble



Jim Sergeant, Harry & Morgan Sergeant, Lauren & Jonathan Postma

Northern Palm Beach County Chamber Hosts CEO Connection Luncheon Features Town of Jupiter Manager, Andy Lukasik

by Glenn R. Swift



Andy Lukasik, Sharon Quercioli, Russ Ruskay and David Middleton - Photography courtesy of Jane Pike

The Northern Palm Beach County Chamber of Commerce presented its bi-monthly CEO Connection on Tuesday, November 13 at the Jupiter Medical Center's Raso Education Center. The guest speaker was the Town of Jupiter Manager, Andy Lukasik.

As Town Manager, Lukasik is responsible for the administrative management and delivery of the Town's services, programs and special projects. The Town Manager acts as the primary executive—or CEO—and is responsible for the town's municipal government organization and the various town departments. The Assistant Town Manager acts in the capacity of Chief Operating Officer, helping to manage many of the Town's departments and day-to-day operations.

Lukasik became the Assistant Town Manager of Jupiter on April 29, 2002 and was promoted to Town Manager on April 20, 2004. Prior to Jupiter, Lukasik was the Village Manager of Spring Lake, Michigan for approximately six years.

Lukasik holds a Bachelor's Degree from the University of Michigan and a Masters in Public Administration from Grand Valley State University in Allendale, Michigan.

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

GREEN GOINGS



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PEARLS OF WISDOM FROM THE GREEN GODDESS

Holiday Gifts That Keep on Giving by Sharon Quercioli

Now, it is that time of year again, and we are all wondering what we can give to the person who has everything! I am diffusing Christmas Spirit and Idaho Balsam Fir to get in the spirit and connect to all that I am thankful and grateful for in my life. Check out some of the ideas that will make wonderful holiday gifts for the people you love.

Share the Power of Essential Oils with Holiday Mini Kits

Healthy Home Mini Kit (Item #4780)

Transform your home into a healthy haven with this mini kit that contains three powerful oils to promote a healthy immune system. The kit includes 5-ml bottles of Thieves, Purification and R.C.

Relaxation Mini Kit (Item #4871)

The Relaxation Mini Kit is an ideal way to help you relax and get grounded during the busy holiday season. This kit includes 5-ml bottles of Idaho Blue Spruce, Peace & Calming and Sacred Mountain.

The Spirit of the Season Mini Kit (Item #4872)

Embrace the spirit of holidays past and present with this especially selected trio of balancing oils. This kit includes 5-ml bottles of The Gift, Balsam Fir and Orange.

Essence of the Season (Item #3118)

Catch the true spirit of the season with this best-selling holiday collection. Essence of the Season features powerful oils and resins that are spiritually uplifting. The kit contains 5-ml. bottles of Frankincense, Myrrh and Christmas Spirit essential oils, plus Frankincense and Myrrh resin.



Quote of the Month:

“Blessed is the season which engages the whole world in a conspiracy of love.”
-Hamilton Wright Mabie

I have all of these kits and suggest them all depending upon the individual. Give the gift that keeps on giving! I wish you all a HEALTHY, HAPPY, ABUNDANT and JOYOUS Holiday Season!

Young Living – Florida

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E-mail: sharon@owwmedia.com



HEALTH & WELLNESS

BEAT WINTER DRYNESS

KEEPING OUR BODIES HYDRATED: INSIDE AND OUT

by Teresa VanDyk Marshall

On the Inside

It is true that what we take into our insides has a lot to do with how hydrated we appear on the outside. So, we decided to start by ways to keep hydrated inside. According to Dr. Leonard Smith, a well known gastrointestinal, vascular and general surgeon, here are some guidelines to keeping our bodies hydrated on the inside:

1. Drink half of our body weight in ounces of water daily. That's right, 8 glasses of water a day may not cut it. If you weigh 200 lbs., then drink 100 ounces of water every day. One hundred ounces of water equates to about 3 quarts to 1 gallon of water.

2. Don't drink it all at once! Sip slowly 2-3 ounces at a time, throughout the day. Drinking a little more than this won't necessarily hurt us, but we could dilute our blood and cause our bodies to just excrete our excess water faster. Therefore, we'd rob our bodies of the hydration we're trying to add in the first place! An exception could be if we are sweating or exerting ourselves, thus expending more fluids, in which case restoring the lost fluids by drinking more would be appropriate.

3. Don't drink a lot at the dinner table. Drink only 2-4 ounces of water with meals. It turns out that drinking more than this could interfere with our digestion. It should be added that a small amount of warm soup can actually aid digestion.

4. Especially during the dry winter days ahead, be sure we drink before we get thirsty. Ironically, signs of dehydration show up slower in drier climates.

5. Be conscious of our blood sugar levels. When our bodies excrete the higher sugar levels, out goes our water with it! This is especially something to keep in mind throughout the upcoming months as we attend upcoming festive dinners and family gatherings!

6. Strive to keep our blood alkaline. It's all about balance. Many of the foods, drinks and medicines we consume may contribute to our body being in an acidic state.

Additional tips from the Cleveland Clinic include staying on top of our hydration levels simply by checking the color of our urine: if it's darker than a pale "straw," we need to drink more hydrating fluids. They added that alcohol, some teas and coffee are more dehydrating than hydrating and should be avoided when trying to hydrate ourselves.

When exercising, they add that fruit juices should be avoided due to their high carbohydrate level, coupled with low sodium. The clinic recommends substituting the fruit juice with an alternative sports drink that replaces fluids and lost sodium and potassium.



On the Outside

Here are some tips to stay healthy and hydrated on the outside all winter long:

1. Caroline Goddard, an expert with Beauty & Style, shared this favorite spa-inspired recipe for a homemade moisturizing facial: Combine a cup of prepared instant oatmeal, a cup of whole milk, three tablespoons of honey and a few drops of essential oil in a blender. Process until smooth, and then transfer to a bowl. Microwave the blend for about 30 seconds, until it is comfortably warm—but not hot. Massage this natural mask into the skin after a cleansing shower and leave it for five minutes. Rinse thoroughly and then moisturize.

2. Coconut Oil is not just for in the kitchen. Massage it on right after a shower and enjoy its tropical scent and all natural, toxin-free, moisturizing properties.

3. Just before bedtime, massage hands and feet with petrolatum-based moisture creams. Follow by putting on light soft gloves and cozy socks. Not only does this make it easier to keep the

central heat in the house off (which helps prevent dryness in and of itself), but it makes hands and feet super soft the morning after!

4. If the home is dry or a heater is used to warm a chilly space, consider running a humidifier at home on especially dry days. One alternative to a humidifier is to simmer cinnamon spice (or another aromatic spices we enjoy) in a pot of water on our stovetop. This adds a subtle, festive fragrance while adding some much needed humidity.

5. Remember to routinely apply a moisturizing lip balm. Chapped lips are common at this time of year, and, when there's no lick balm handy, what do we do? We lick our lips, which actually dries them out more!

Those of us at Our Wonderful World will surely be using these tips for the next few months to come. Inside and Out—we wish ourselves and all of our readers a healthy and beautiful winter season!



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Classic Cranberry

by Sharon Quercioli

It is my favorite time of year. We all have so much to be thankful for – our family and friends, leaves changing colors, cooler weather, children all dreaming of Santa's visit and so many other things. Let me share with you one of my favorite berries that every Christmas table should include — the classic cranberry!

A cousin of the blueberry, this very tart, bright red berry can still be found growing wild as a shrub, but when cultivated is grown on low trailing vines in great sandy bogs. The American cranberry, the variety most cultivated in the northern United States and southern Canada, produces a larger berry than the wild cranberry or the European variety.

Cranberries are festive and terrific for the body and mind. Don't wait for the holidays, grab some today! As the holiday season approaches (it's not that far away, you know), thoughts often wander to many of the holiday treats and delights that contribute to the season. Pumpkin pie, sweet potatoes and stuffing are just a few of the highlights, but don't forget about the cranberries. They have been used for centuries by Native Americans in this country for medicinal purposes. They were first commercially planted in Massachusetts in 1816 and are a member of the same family as the blueberry. 🌍



TUMMY FRIENDLY

These red nutrition all-stars also possess the ability to fight the bacteria which cause stomach ulcers. They inhibit the H pylori bacteria’s ability to adhere to the mucous lining of the stomach.

A phytonutrient in cranberries appears to be effective against the herpes simplex virus which causes genital herpes. The cranberries show an ability to inhibit the attachment of the herpes virus. More research in human subjects is needed, but the findings so far are positive.

HERPES BE GONE

CANCER FIGHTERS

Due to their high antioxidant and anti-inflammatory ability, cranberries are proving to be potent cancer fighters. Specifically, some studies have shown cranberry supplements to reduce the incidence of breast tumors.

The quinic acid in cranberries has shown some ability to prevent kidney stones and appears to possess general anti-inflammatory and infection-fighting properties.

INFECTION FIGHTING

HEART FRIENDLY

Cranberries are high in antioxidants and flavonoids, both of which help protect against heart disease. The flavonoids have antioxidant powers that reduce the risk of arthrosclerosis by inhibiting LDL (bad cholesterol) oxidation. They also raise HDL (good cholesterol) levels, improve circulation and aid in stroke recovery.

GOOD FOR THE MOUTH

Cranberries have the power to inhibit some oral bacteria from their capability to form dental plaque and cavities. The berries reduce the amount of streptococcus mutans colony forming units, which are a known cause of cavities. Their anti-bacterial and anti-inflammatory properties also help to prevent gum disease.

VITAMINS & MINERALS

Cranberries are rich sources of vitamin C, manganese, fiber and potassium, all of which are great for a healthy mind and body.

FIGHT FATHER TIME

Cranberries and other foods high in ORAC values (antioxidants) may protect against age-related problems such as loss of coordination and memory.

INFECTION FIGHTING

Cranberries contain proanthocyanidins (PACs), which have been shown to prevent bacteria (including E coli) from adhering to the walls of the bladder and urinary tract, thus helping to prevent infection. Indigenous peoples have used cranberry preparations for years to treat urinary tract infections.

CRANBERRY/BANANA B READ

This is one of my favorite recipes that I make when I can get fresh cranberries. When I have bananas that are getting to ripe, I make several loaves and give them to my family and friends. I love this recipe and so do the people I give them, too.

Bake at 350F for 60 to 70 minutes

- ½ cup shortening
- 1 cup sugar
- 3 eggs
- 1 1/3 cups mashed banana (3 large bananas)
- 1 bag of fresh cranberries
- 2 1/3 cups all-purpose flour
- 3 teaspoons baking powder
- ½ teaspoon baking soda
- ½ teaspoon salt
- ½ cups chopped walnuts

Cream shortening and sugar until light and fluffy. Add eggs and bananas and beat for 2 minutes or until blended. Mix flour with baking powder, soda, salt and nuts. Stir into banana mixture just to blend. Add cranberries and mix. Spoon into greased 9” x 5” x 3” loaf pan. Cool bread in pan for 10 to 15 minutes.

CRANBERRY SAUCE EXTRAORDINAIRE

Prep time:10 Minutes | Cook time:35 Minutes

Original Recipe Yield 12 servings

- | | | |
|--------------------------------------|-----------------------------------|------------------------------|
| • 1 cup water | • 1 orange, peeled and pureed | • 1 cup chopped pecans |
| • 1 cup white sugar | • 1 apple - peeled, cored & diced | • ½ teaspoon salt |
| • 1 (12 oz)package fresh cranberries | • 1 pear - peeled, cored & diced | • 1 teaspoon ground cinnamon |
| | • 1 cup chopped dried mixed fruit | • ½ teaspoon ground nutmeg |

In a medium saucepan, boil water and sugar until the sugar dissolves. Reduce the heat to simmer and stir in cranberries, pureed orange, apple, pear, dried fruit, pecans, salt, cinnamon and nutmeg. Cover and simmer for 30 minutes, stirring occasionally until the cranberries burst. Remove from heat and let cool to room temperature.

A Classic Holiday Treat

With a Healthy Twist! by Sandra Frens

Ahh winter! The time of year when Mother Nature waves her wand and covers the North in a blanket of beautiful shimmering snow. Or for those of us in South Florida, she delivers a few days of brisk beach weather. Regardless of where you live, you feel the change in the air, and it brings a smile to your heart. Winter is the time for merriment, celebration, appreciation and love.

Along with all the winter festivities come the decadent meals and desserts to tempt our taste buds. These indulgences are not always the most healthy food choices, but fear not! There are ways to make even the most classic sweets with a healthier and more delicious twist.



A classic Christmas tradition is to leave out the milk and cookies for Santa to nibble on as a thank you for his yearly delivery of toys and gifts. This is far from the most energizing snack food we could leave for old St. Nick, but there is a more health conscious alternative! This year show the Jolly Old Elf some love by leaving him Vanilla Silk (soy milk) and some vegan, no-bake, chocolate chip cookie balls! These cookies are completely vegan, gluten-free and need no refrigeration!

One of the main ingredients of these delicious cookies is finely ground nuts, which have some wonderful health benefits. In addition to being packed full of protein, nuts are phytochemical powerhouses and low in saturated fats. They contain many other protective nutrients—calcium, magnesium, potassium and vitamin E. Nuts also contain an abundance of flavonoids and isoflavones, compounds thought to help ward off cancer and cardiovascular disease. (We have to make sure we take care of Santa's health after all!)

Vegan, no-bake chocolate chip cookie balls also make a great gift instead of the usual cookies and cakes. If you really want to make these into a healthy and eco-friendly treat to give away to family, friends and co-workers, box up a few of the cookie balls in a small plantable seed paper box (you can find some at www.sproutem.com), and tie cloth holiday bow around it. Use the bow to attach a small recipe card sharing how to make these outrageous cookie balls! This is a great way to give someone an inexpensive holiday gift that's not only from the heart, but heart healthy! 🌍

Ingredients

- 3/4 cup Raw Agave Nectar (start with 1/2 cup and add more if needed, depending upon how dry your "flour" is)
- 1 Tbsp Vanilla Extract
- 1 cup Rolled Oats or Oat Flour
- 2 cups Raw Almonds (or Cashews or Pre-Made Almond Meal)
- 3/4 cup Vegan Chocolate Chips – or to preserve true raw status, take 2 Tbsp Raw Cocoa Powder and add 1 Tbsp Agave, optional dash of vanilla extract, whisk and blend. Spread into a thin layer on wax or parchment paper, freeze. Take frozen chocolate off parchment and crumble the shreds into the mixture as your raw "chips."

Directions

Measure out all of your wet ingredients and dump them into a large bowl.

Measure out all of your dry ingredients. Blend the oats in your food processor into oat flour. Dump them in the bowl with the agave and vanilla.

Blend the almonds into almond flour.

CAUTION: Blend in batches of no more than a cup at a time or you will end up making almond butter. Then place it in the bowl with everything else.

Mix all the ingredients together and add chocolate chips, and mix it up some more. Use a cookie scoop or your hands to form into balls.

MAKE IT A GREEN HOLIDAY!

by Sandra Bogan



Americans throw away about 25% more trash between Thanksgiving and New Year's Eve. That's an additional 5 million tons of garbage!

From Thanksgiving to New Year's Day household waste increases more than 25% according to the Environmental Protection Agency (EPA). Make it a green holiday season, and think before you shop, wrap, decorate and throw parties!

That's a Wrap

Gift wrapping comprises much of the increased waste during the holiday season. Get creative and use newspaper, maps, posters, coloring book pages or fabric remnants you may have lying around the house. If purchasing wrapping paper, buy recycled paper and avoid the foil or metallic kind because it is not recyclable.

Instead of purchasing boxes and gift bags that are used once, try using things like baskets, old tins, hat boxes, cloth bags or even brown paper bags that you decorate.

You can use scarves or bandanas as tissue paper or buy some beautiful wash clothes or towels and make them part of the gift.

For ribbon, use yarn or twine, or make your own with dried vines or slivers of a palm frond.

Decorate your package with leaves or flowers that you find in your garden.

Save the front of all your holiday cards each year, and use them as your gift tags.

Gifts for a Good Earth

Consider useful gifts that will not end up in the attic or in the back closet. The best way to accomplish this is by asking family and friends to make a wish list of things they need or would enjoy having.

Give gifts that benefit the environment, like fair trade goods, compost bin, bird feeder, membership to an environmental organization or items made from recycled or organic materials. Include a card that highlights what is special about your gift, so you pass on the knowledge as well.

Consider gifts without packaging such as certificates for massages, a day of sailing or fly fishing lessons. You can make your own gift certificate for a special dinner, pet sitting, house cleaning, gardening or any other gift of time or talent that you have to offer.

If giving electronics, consider buying rechargeable batteries and a charger to add to the gift. Rechargeable batteries can last hundreds of hours longer than single use batteries.

Trimming the Tree

Choose LED lights for the tree and keep the lights on only when you're there to enjoy them. Trees can be recycled to create mulch by placing them roadside. Just be sure to remove all the tinsel, garland and any other foreign objects (consider using less tinsel or an alternative to save yourself time later).



Thoughtful Feasting

Don't throw that food away, instead have some extra plastic containers and send leftovers home with guests or donate to a local food bank.

Avoid paper plates, plastic cups and especially Styrofoam disposables by using washable plates and linens for your holiday parties and meals.

Recycle extra aluminum foil and cans that come with holiday feasts.

The Party's Over

After all the presents are opened, consider passing on your old toys, electronics, clothes and other items to nonprofit retail stores, or use eBay Freecycle or www.craigslist.com to find them a new home.

If you're unable to pass on your cell phones or other electronics, make sure to bring them to St. Lucie County's Recycling Facility (www.stlucieco.gov/solid_waste/index.htm) or to another facility in your area. DO NOT throw them in your regular trash as they contain hazardous materials that need to be handled separately to avoid air, soil or ground water contamination.

Save your boxes, bows and cards for next year, and do your part to extend the life of our natural resources.

Be sure to collect and recycle your cardboard and wrapping paper (only the non-metallic kind). Send any packing nuts.

Be sure to have a great holiday celebration while caring for the planet and setting a great example for generations to come.

Sandra Bogan is Environmental Education and Outreach Coordinator for the Oxbow Eco-Center, St. Lucie County's premiere environmental learning center. Visit the Oxbow's website at www.oxboweco.com for more green tips and information on their educational programming.


Sprouts! Cards

This Christmas don't just send a card, send flowers!

Sprouts unique Christmas Cards and gift tags are printed on eco-friendly, plantable seed paper. Handmade from 100% recycled paper and embedded with flower seeds, when Sprouts cards and gift tags are planted they grow beautiful wildflowers! Planting instructions are printed on each 5.25" x 4" card, gift tags and custom designs/inside printing are available. Please call (561) 840-8089 or e-mail info@sproutem.com for a custom or large quantity price quote.

Shipping Service

All orders placed over the Internet are shipped UPS Ground. If you need rush delivery or your order needs to be shipped outside of the

U.S., please call a Sprouts representative at (561) 840-8089. 

Founded six years ago by Sharon Quercioli, a lifelong entrepreneur with over twenty years in the recycle industry, Sprouts products include greeting cards, bookmarks, Blooming Boxes™ and a host of custom marketing pieces – all of which grow beautiful flowers when planted. Sprouts products can be purchased directly from the company's website (www.sproutem.com) or custom printed to accommodate various volumes, sizes and print specifications.



CLICK HERE for a short video about Sprouts plantable Christmas cards!

Thanks to Treasure Coast Parenting (www.tcparenting.com) for their assistance in the publication of this article.

A special thanks to the team
at Our Wonderful World.

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Ask the Energy Expert

“Christmas Safety” by Scott Ranck

It is reported that there are nearly 19 million Christmas tree fires annually, some 9 million of them started by faulty Christmas Lights. A slightly frayed electrical wire from those Christmas Lights that have been stored in the attic for the last ten years is all that it takes to start a fire.

In this piece, I want to introduce you to an organization, Electrical Safety Foundation International (ESFI) (www.esfi.org). ESFI is dedicated to educating the public concerning safe practices associated with the use of electricity. I encourage you to go to their site and read some of the excellent material there. They have put together “ESFI’s Twelve Days of Holiday Safety” as a fun way to educate the public concerning the dangers inherent in the holiday season. In the meantime, here are a few of their twelve items to help you have an enjoyable and safe holiday season.

After a week with two small grandchildren in my home, I’m aware of keeping lights, metal hooks, breakable ornaments, candles and other such items out of the reach of children. Also, make sure your extra plug in strips have child safety plugs. That leads to another consideration: be careful of plug count. Just because a power strip has five or six plugs in locations doesn’t mean that your circuit has the capacity to handle the load. While we are discussing all the extra things we plug in during the holiday season, remember to turn off the decorative lights and blow out the candles when going away or to bed.

Before decorating this year, carefully examine your lights and cords, looking for any fraying, burnt spots, missing or broken bulbs. When buying lights and extension cords, make sure to buy quality and tested products. Watch out for the thin, inexpensive extension cords. They may overheat and cause a fire because they are not designed to carry the electric load that you have put on them.

Finally, if you bring a real tree into your home, make certain it is fresh, green and has flexible rather than brittle needles. Then, keep the tree watered and remove sooner rather than later. Just a little precaution up front may save a ruined holiday later. Have a safe and blessed Holiday. 🌍

For all energy related questions or comments, e-mail Scott Ranck at sranck@fpuc.com.



Christmas Pests

Are They Hiding In Your Holiday Decorations? by Mandy Nolen

The ritual of bringing down boxes from the attic to decorate for the holiday season is all too familiar. It can sometimes be a tedious task, but the end result and holiday cheer is always worthwhile. Then again, there's something else you need to think about.

Is there something lurking in those boxes full of sparkly holiday joy?

Pests in Florida love attics. They especially love chewing on cardboard, glue, tape and bindings, which can be found in the boxes used to store your holiday decorations as well the decorations themselves. The most common pests found in attics in Florida are silverfish, roaches, spiders and rodents.

Silverfish are an extremely common attic pest in Florida. Silverfish are typically 1/2" in length, silver to gray in color and wingless. They eat starch, glue, sugar, photographs and synthetic or starched fabrics. Silverfish prefer damp places and paper storage areas. This combination of preferences makes decorations stored in your attic the perfect blend for a destructive feast!

The American Cockroach (also known as a Palmetto bug) is another common attic pest. These large roaches love dark, damp and warm places. Aside from the emotional damage that these roaches can have when they fly out of a box at you, they also tend to leave behind stains from their fecal matter on stored

items. Have you ever pulled something out of the attic and found some mysterious little brown spots all over it? Well, you may have been a victim of the American Cockroach.

Spiders love attics too! While all spiders can bite if provoked, they typically avoid human contact and are quite content to discretely share space with us. Spiders are certainly creepy, but aside from simply being a nuisance, they can also indicate the presence of other pests that they feed on.

When Clement Clarke Moore wrote the line "not a creature was stirring, not even a mouse," he obviously had never met one of Florida's roof rats. The roof rat is the most common rodent in Florida. Inside the home, roof rats can be heard scratching or running in the walls or ceilings. They chew through wires (potentially starting fires), gnaw through plastic and lead water pipes, make holes in walls and cause other structural damage. And your precious holiday decorations are not off limits! In addition to damaging your attic and its contents, rats are also filthy creatures. This rat is the same species that carried Bubonic Plague around the world. They carry and transmit a host of bacteria and infectious diseases that they spread through bites, contamination contact, feeding, urine and feces. If you find evidence of rodent droppings in your attic, be very cautious!

While you're in the attic, this is also a great opportunity to check your insulation as well as look for water stains and other leak evidence.

If you have evidence of any of these pests in your attic or if you're too afraid to look yourself, call Nozzle Nolen for a free inspection. Nozzle Nolen can eliminate all of these pests and can also sanitize a rodent infestation. 🌍

For more information about Nozzle Nolen, please visit www.nozzlenolen.com.



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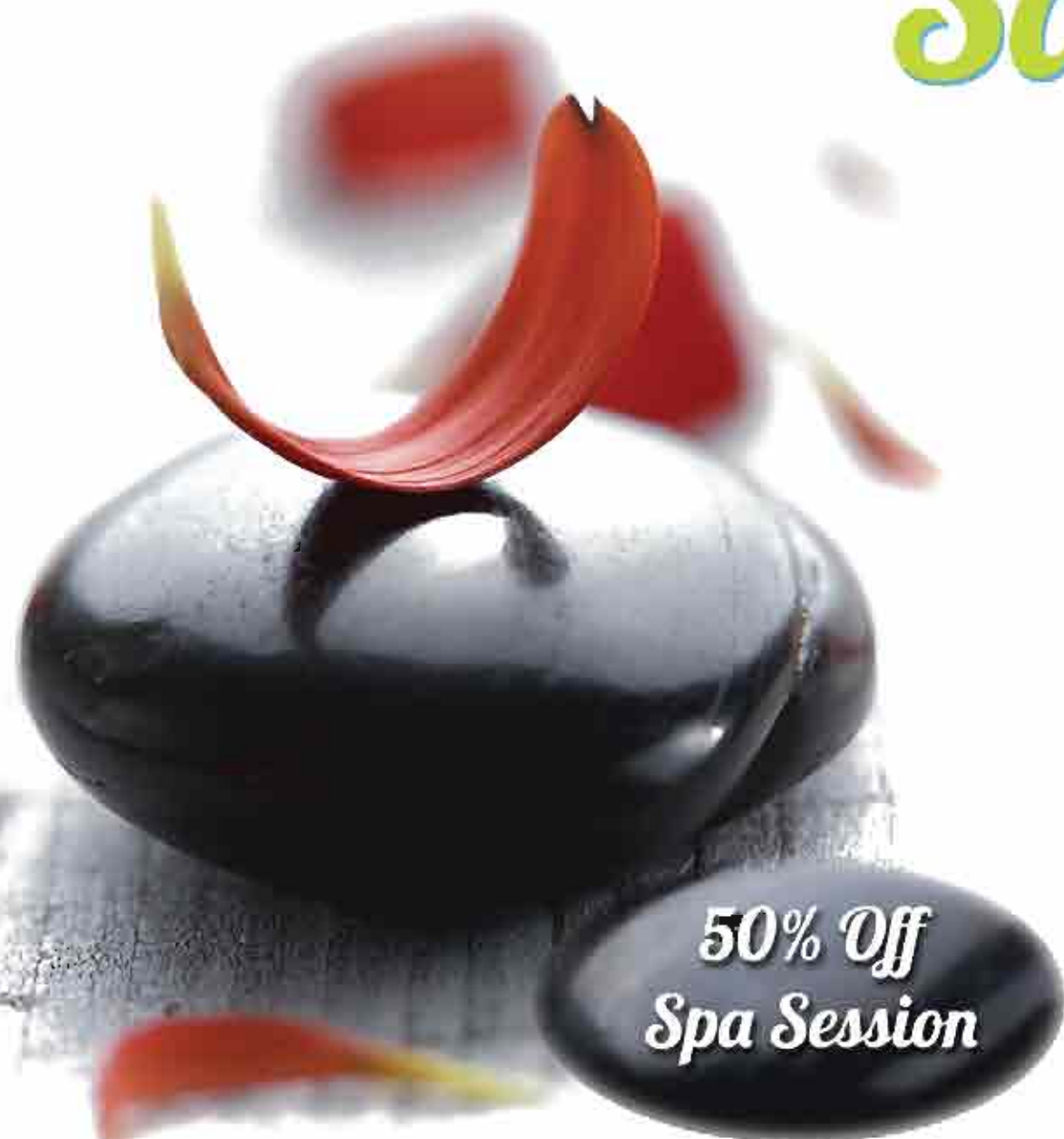
Nozzle Nolen Pest Solutions was green back when it was just a color. Nozzle Nolen serves the Palm Beaches and Treasure Coast. It is the only company in South Florida to offer Green Shield services approved by the IPM Institute of North America. Nozzle Nolen also has Green Pro certification from the National Pest Management Association.



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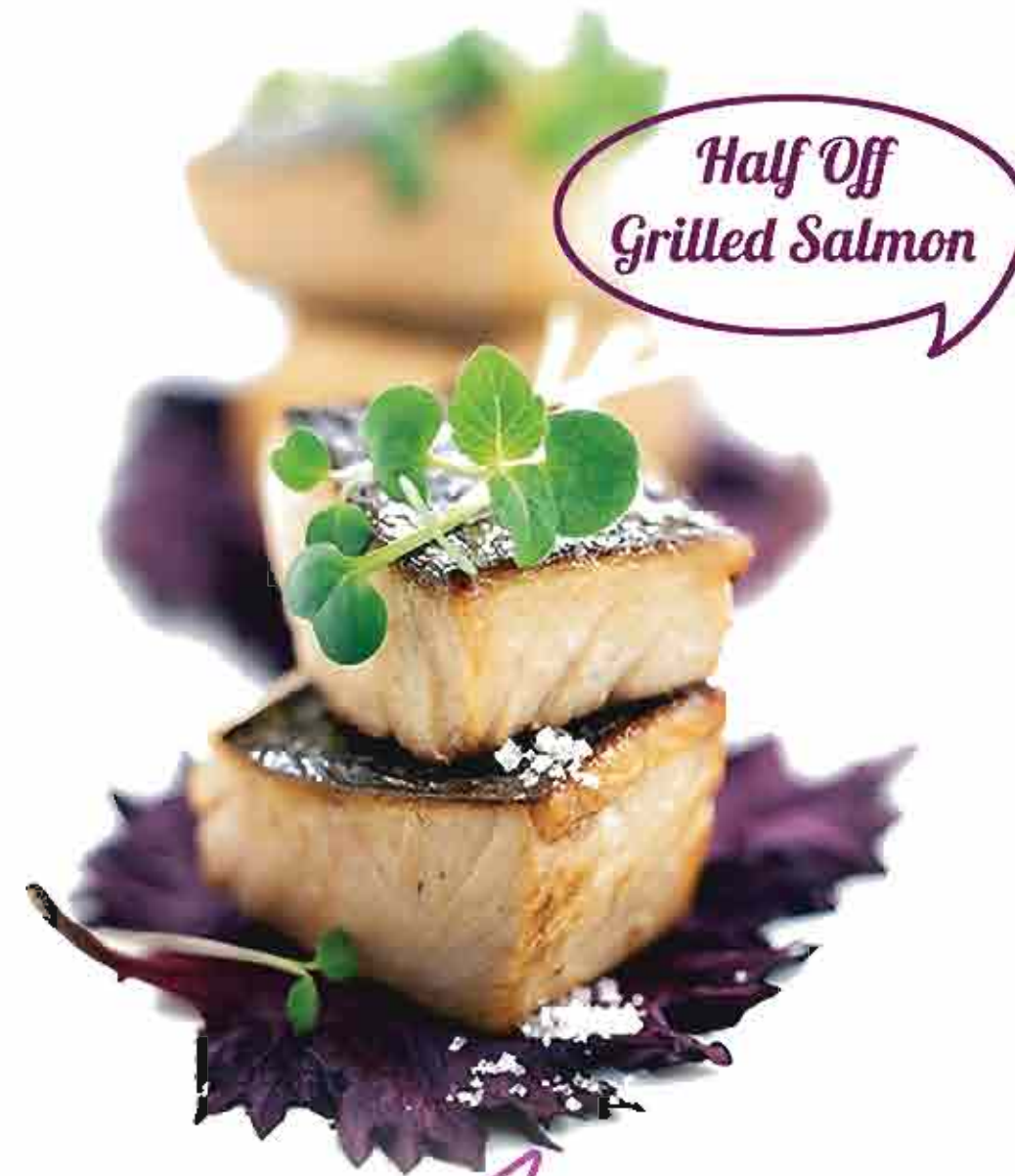
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**Great Deals
Greater Causes**

Our Winter's Forecast: Lower Electric Bills! by Teresa VanDyk Marshall



Sounds great to us anyway! We love hearing a forecast of lower electric bills on the way. But despite our expectations, there are still a few factors that can still cause a bit of “sticker shock” when we get our electric bill, such as central heat strips or festive holiday lighting. Nevertheless, there are steps we can take that should help to make this article’s opening forecast come true!

To guide our efforts in managing our electric bills this winter, we turned to two of Florida’s largest electric utilities for their valuable insights: Florida Power & Light Company and Progress Energy of Florida, and we are glad to share with you their hints for success:

As it turns out, one of the largest culprits behind a shockingly high bill during a chilly winter month is our heating system. For this reason, as counterintuitive as it may be, one full week of running central heat can equate to just about what we would pay for four weeks of central cooling costs! When winter temperatures start falling and heating systems run for longer periods of time, follow these energy-efficiency tips to save money on heating:

- Lower your thermostat to the lowest comfortable setting. If you have a heat pump, adjust your thermostat in small increments to keep the heat strip from turning on. This will keep your house comfortable while minimizing the use of the less energy-efficient resistance heat strip. According to Florida Power & Light Company’s website, “For every two degrees you lower the thermostat; say from 68 to 66 degrees, you’ll save about 9% on heating costs.”
- Reduce air leaks. Seal doors and windows with weatherstripping or caulk.



- Switch your central heating unit to “auto.” Leaving the fan on “on” can add to your monthly heating costs.
- Install the thermostat on an inside wall, away from windows and doors.
- Clean or replace filters every month. Dirty filters can increase operating costs by 20%.
- Set your thermostat back 10 degrees at night to save on heating costs. The lowered setting reduces the length of time the heating system operates throughout the night.
- Use ceiling fans in winter to distribute heat around a room.
- If you have a fireplace, close your fireplace damper when it’s not in use. Consider glass doors to help prevent heat loss when your heating system is on.
- Keep registers unblocked by furniture or draperies.
- Use insulated or heavy curtains on windows facing the north side of the house. Keep curtains and shades closed at night or on cloudy days.
- When entertaining, lower the thermostat a degree or two before the guests arrive. That way, you won’t overheat.
- Here’s an additional thought for those of us with swimming pools: Reduce the time you run your pool pump by two hours a day, and you could save approximately \$8-9 a month.
- To help customers figure out how adjusting their appliance use can maximize seasonal savings, both companies have online tools on their websites to educate consumers. For example, Florida Power & Light has an appliance calculator at www.FPL.com/Appliances on the right-hand side of the page. We can enter an appliance there, such as Heat s trips, and then enter the amount of time we think we might use the appliance and get an estimated monthly cost—right there on the spot. Play with the fields entered, such as changing the hours, and see how the changes affect actual savings—or costs.

What about Holiday Lighting?

To further reduce energy costs during the holiday season, Florida Power & Light recommends using timers on holiday lights to automatically turn them off during daylight hours and other times. Use light-emitting diode (LED) lighting on your trees, menorahs or any lighted holiday displays to save up to 90% in energy consumption compared to traditional incandescent lights. LED holiday lights usually cost more to purchase than traditional lighting, but they can pay for themselves in savings on your electric bill.

LED holiday lighting strands last 10 times longer than incandescent bulbs, and they don’t heat up like traditional bulbs. So, they reduce the risk of fire and injury.

Hopefully, these tips might save us all some money and smooth out our winter bills so our forecast comes true—lower electric bills all season long! 🌍

Time for the Christmas Bird Count

by Lucas Miller



There was a time when Americans celebrated Christmas with what was called a “side hunt.” Groups of men (I hate to stereotype but I have a hard time picturing women doing this in any time, but especially the 1800s) got together, chose sides and then marched into the woods to take aim at absolutely any animal that moved. Whichever team returned with the greatest number of pelts and feathers earned bragging rights.

It’s not hard to imagine the results of such attitudes and endeavors. At the turn of the 20th century, American wildlife was in a wide scale decline. Even whitetail deer, so numerous today, were down to an estimated 300,000, a sliver of their former numbers.

Conservationists and, yes, hunters decried the loss of wildlife, and a number of regulations, fees and laws were put into effect that have had profound benefits for wildlife, ecosystems and Americans.

In 1900, Frank Chapman, an officer of the then-new Audubon Society, turned the Christmas tradition on its ear and proposed that outdoorsmen gather to count, rather than shoot, birds on Christmas Day. It must have been mocked by many at the time, but his idea took hold and has grown into the world’s largest “citizen science” survey. Well over 60,000 people are expected to participate in the Audubon Society’s 2012-2013 Christmas Bird Count, or “CBC” as it’s known to insiders.

Novices and experts alike will gather at chosen locations and dates (any time from December 14 to January 5 in case you want to spend Christmas Day indoors) and count every bird they see and hear for a 24-hour period. If you live within one of the designated survey areas, you can just tally the birds that visit your feeder from the warmth of your home but, really, getting outside with your friends and family is part of the experience.

Don’t underestimate its importance either; the project is of immeasurable value as a scientific study. The data collected over the past 111 years is “at the heart of

hundreds peer-reviewed scientific studies,” according to Audubon’s chief scientist Gary Langham. “Because birds are early indicators of environmental threats to habitats we share, this is a vital survey of North America and, increasingly, the Western Hemisphere.”

The information has, among other things, documented northward range expansion of 177 bird species in response to climate change and has helped identify changes in species’ populations, such as the bobwhite quail’s recent decline as well as the recovery of bald eagles and peregrine falcons from the brink of extinction.

So this holiday season, why not give a little gift to the earth and spend a day counting our feathered friends? Novices are most welcome and will benefit from working with the experienced birders that will lead each census. Visit www.Audubon.org to find a chapter near you and see when and where the nearest count is.

Here’s to the foresight and audacity of Frank Chapman! Because of him, thousands head into the woods with binoculars instead of firearms in their Christmas “hunt” for birds.

My gift to you this holiday season is a song about owls called “Midnight in the Forest.” Download it for free at www.lucasmiller.net. However you spend your holidays, I wish you peace, cheer and happiness! 🌍

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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Have you listened lately?



Will Somebody Tell Me What Is in My Food?

by Richard Hawkins

Halloween has come and gone, but there is still “Frankenfood” on my plate. Once upon a time (prior to 1996), we could be certain that a strawberry was a strawberry. But now the lush juicy red fruit might have a gene from an Arctic fish to make it frost resistant! If you look at the label on the package, it is guaranteed that you will not see a disclosure about this.

Most processed foods contain some form of corn, soy, canola or sugar. Nearly all of these grown in the United States are now genetically modified (not cane sugar, only beet sugar—thank you South Florida!). Biotechnology has now been expanded into food animals. What is it that moved food design from nature to the laboratory? The best bet is corporate profits.


Bioengineering is the process of transferring the genetic material from one organism into another to create a specific trait. Some of the most common gene implants are the introduction of bacterium genes to plants that create an insect repellent within the plant. Sounds like a good idea doesn't it? We are just not sure what this does to those of us who end up eating the plant!

Another widely used gene implant makes the plant impervious to a very common herbicide, glyphosate (better known as “Roundup”). This makes it possible for large planted areas to be sprayed with this agent to kill every plant—except the bio-engineered ones. These engineered plants are owned by the company that developed them, and they have patented the seed stock. Maybe it is just a coincidence that these giant corporations also own the herbicide that is used with them!

History has taught us that you cannot fool Mother Nature forever, and, in just a few short years, the weeds that were meant to be killed by the herbicide will be tolerating it, and turning into superweeds. Of course, in the few years since genetically modified seeds were introduced, they have

taken over most of the market, leaving traditional seeds to be phased out and in short supply.

Most of the promised benefits used for the introduction and widespread distribution of GE plants have not been realized. They were designed to reduce the use of agrochemicals, but the use has actually increased. The promised yield advantage has not materialized over non GE crops. Farmers were supposed to benefit from these crops, but the real benefit is only realized by the few giant corporations that own these products. These companies have a lot of political clout, which is why the U.S. is one of the few countries not required to disclose the presence of GE ingredients on food labels. Some countries ban these ingredients altogether.

Very little is known about the long-term effects of consuming GE foods. Wouldn't you like to know what is really in your food? You can help insure truth in food labeling. Go to www.foodandwaterwatch.org to see how. 

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

Business Profile Richard Talabac, Jr.

by Glenn R. Swift



Twenty years ago, Richard Talabac, Jr. suffered an injury while working with the Connecticut Department of Corrections, maximum security. No longer able to continue with the CDOC, Talabac began weighing a number of career options.

"I tested to see what field I would be most likely to do well in. The accounting/finance profession is what I chose based upon those tests. And since graduating from Florida State University in 1992 with a degree in accounting and finance, I've been working in the accounting field ever since."

Four years after earning his degree, Talabac returned to Palm Beach County, where he would establish himself professionally, get married and help raise three children.

Before venturing out on his own, Talabac worked for a number of high-profile CPA firms in the Palm Beach area assisting with audits and tax preparation.

The experience would prove to be invaluable.

"I learned how to consult and research a wide range of difficult tax issues. Just as importantly, I learned how to forge the kind of one-on-one relationship that a tax professional must have to best serve a client."

Over the years, Talabac has built a solid clientele of business and personal accounts from large to small.

"At RT Taxes, we prepare tax returns for all types of accounts, but our niche is providing bookkeeping consulting and preparation services

via QuickBooks for businesses."

To continue to deliver the kind of top-level service that Talabac's clients have grown accustomed to requires staying on top of always changing tax laws and tax-related computer software.

"The profession has become much more encompassing, especially with regard to tax planning and in corresponding with the IRS. Recently, the IRS has reworked their tax preparer qualification requirements and is far more diligent in terms of reviewing tax preparers. They're weeding out those preparers who are not qualified."

That's not all.

"To do this job correctly, you need to be proactive. A big part of being able to do that is dependent upon having the top of the line in terms of technology. Of course, keeping up with all the changes requires a substantial investment. In the past year, I've invested more than \$10,000 in computer software so that we have the very latest that Quick Books has to offer."

Technology aside, RT Taxes still does a lot of things the old fashioned way.

"We are a hands-on, client-focused business. We always try to return a phone call as promptly as possible and to go the extra mile to treat our clients like we would want to be treated."

Talabac even goes a step further.

"We treat all our clients like our friends."



For more information about RT Taxes, please call (561) 746-3446.

BUSINESS

End of the Year Review

by John Carr



Here we are again, another year coming to an end. Whether you had a great year (I sure hope you did!) or a year that you would like to forget, the most important thing is what did you learn this year?

Each year I have my clients go through a review of the past year. Were our goals met for the year? Did our sales spike high and drop low? If they did, what caused that and how can we avoid that next year? We take each month and analyze it. We look at the financial statements and pay particular attention to sales revenue and profit. Then we break it down to a simple formula: what was it that we did right that month, what was it that we did horrible that month, what could have we done better that month, and what was the best part of the month? The best part of the month may not be a sale, but an acquisition, new hire or termination of an employee. (Yes, at times terminating an employee can be a good thing.)

We take each month and write it on a dry erase board or flip chart with sticky sheets. Once each month is completed, we sit back, relax, grab lunch, and, as we eat, we start reading each month and brainstorm on how to improve the next year. This process will really give you a great look at the past year and help you plan for the next year. I encourage you to take pictures of everything that has been written on the chart or boards. These can be a great resource for the next year.

The next part of the end-of-the-year process is to clean up your office space and/or desk. Get ready for a new year. I truly believe in cleaning out the clutter. Make sure you file all your paper work correctly and get yourself ready for the new year by making sure your call lists are ready and your follow-up calls are set to go. If you can change your office around a little, even just moving your phone or computer, this always seems to help with a fresh start. Hang some new pictures, take home the dusty knick knack you have on your desk, and bring something new in.

Remember, whether it was a great year or a year you wish never happened, you can always learn and improve from it.

These are a few tips to help you start your new year off with a fresh start!

Happy Holidays to everyone and see you next year! 🌍

For more information, please contact John Carr via email at john@jrconsultinggroup.com or visit www.jrconsultinggroup.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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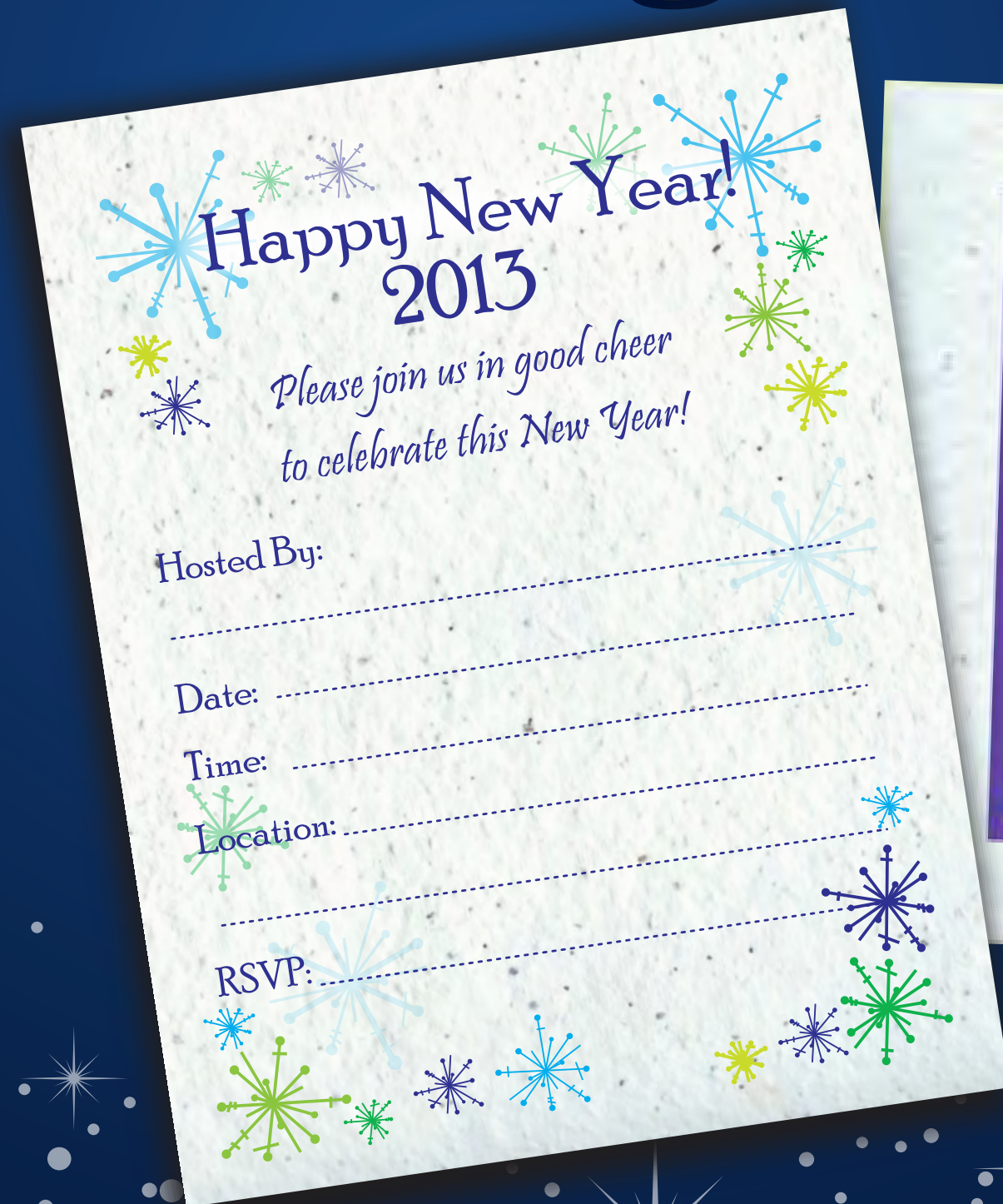
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GREEN GOODIES



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

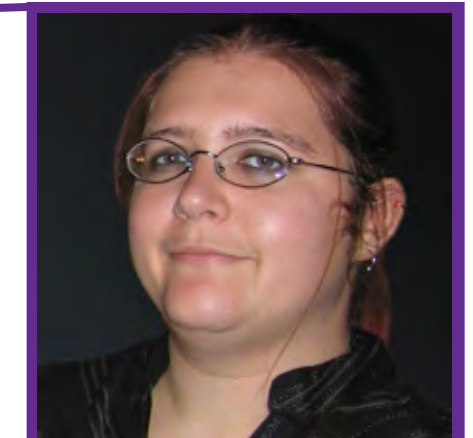
Co-Founder & Editor-in-Chief

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

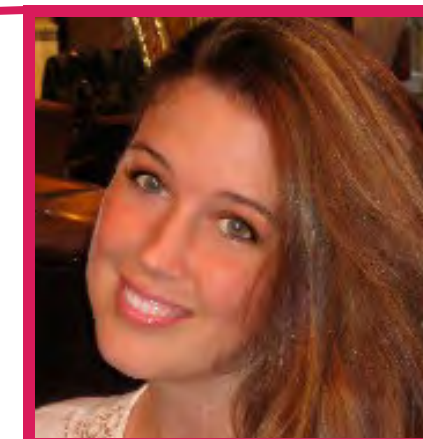
Webmaster / IT Coordinator

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

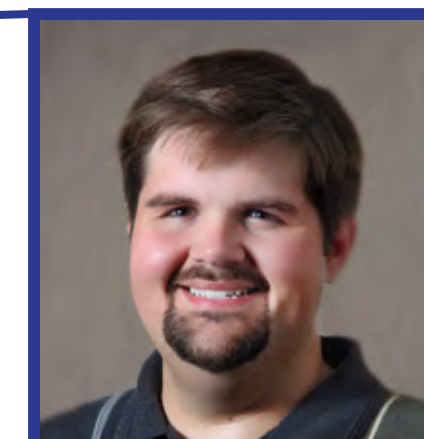
Contributing Columnist



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





The Archive



