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INSIDE THIS ISSUE

Pet Me Please!..... 6
 Weekend Project..... 8
 Here's A Tip 12
 Book Love..... 14
 Strange But True 18
 Bites..... 19
 History of
 Our Hamlets 22
 Green Living..... 23

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Gretchen Balcom
 PUBLISHER



How to change your **ROUTINE** for a more fulfilling life

DO

Do you feel exhausted or depressed by your routine? Good news! Spring is just around the corner, the perfect time to reassess your lifestyle. Try these tips to help you start feeling better.

- **Strengthen your relationships.** Spend time with people who make you feel good. Engaging with supportive friends and family can help reduce stress and boost your morale... and that could be your motivation to change your old habits. Join a group activity, check in with your loved ones, and make new friends.
- **Reduce your screen time.** Social media, video games, too much TV time, and other screen-based activities can eat up your precious time. Be mindful of this and set specific time limits, including a clear start and end time.
- **Move more.** Even 15 minutes of physical activity a day, such as walking or dancing, can significantly improve your mood and energy levels.
- **Get better sleep.** Create a soothing nighttime ritual. Shut down your screen devices at least an hour before bed. Instead, read a book, do some knitting or take a bath to promote restful sleep.
- **Get plenty of fresh air.** Rejuvenate your body and mind by reconnecting with nature. Try going for a walk or bike ride in the woods or a nearby park a few times a week.



Changing your routine doesn't happen overnight. Adopt new healthy habits gradually and celebrate each small victory along the way.

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CATSKILL NEIGHBORS

Neighbors Helping Neighbors

by Iris Mead



PHOTO COURTESY OF CATSKILL NEIGHBORS

Hey Neighbor! Volunteers with Catskill Neighbors got together at Goatie White's this past summer.

Catskill Neighbors is an all-volunteer organization conceived by Rev. Ralph Darmstadt in 2011 after the devastation of Hurricane Irene hit the Catskills. He and a small group of local residents from the greater Fleischmanns community banded together to provide help where needed to the many stranded and some homeless residents of this mountain community.

In 2015, this group created their Mission Statement: The Mission of Catskill Neighbors shall be to bring together volunteer neighbors to provide ordinary assistance for residents to remain safe and comfortable in their own homes. They accomplished this by providing rides to purchase groceries, for

doctors' visits, help with paperwork, and non-emergency transportation.

These services are still provided today, although the focus of the organization shifted in 2016 to helping seniors, many of whom live alone in parts of Delaware, Greene, and Ulster counties, mainly along the Route 28 corridor.

In 2016, a website was launched (www.CatskillNeighbors.org) to highlight the organization, provide information on what they do, and serve as a place to share news and stories about their events.

Before the pandemic, Catskill Neighbors hosted luncheons for seniors at different locales. During

the pandemic, volunteers continued to deliver food and helped with trips to doctors, although social interaction was paused. During this time, Catskill Neighbors was incorporated and received its 501(c) (3) designation, and in 2022, it was registered with the NYS Charities Bureau. Donations are tax-deductible. The organization also partners with Jewish Family Services based in Kingston.

Presently, there are around two dozen volunteers working with several dozen seniors, and more volunteers would be welcomed to help cover the need. Once a volunteer is vetted, they are assigned to a senior and visit the home with a volunteer nurse for an intake evaluation of the senior's needs. Each recipient receives a Vial of Life Emergency Medical Information packet that can be filled out by the senior, or, if help is needed, by the volunteer. It includes a red sticker and an envelope to be placed on their refrigerator in case of emergency. Should an emergency arise, emergency responders will have quick access to necessary information about that senior.

Some volunteers prefer to be drivers. There are many ways to provide comfort—spending time with the seniors, playing a game, making a telephone call for them, or simply having a conversation. Sometimes, taking them a warm meal that you can share over lunch helps ease the loneliness that is a major factor in many of the seniors' lives. All volunteers are covered through CIMA insurance while providing services.

Catskill Neighbors is led by a four-member Board of Directors and an eight-member Steering Committee that meets every month via Zoom. The Board members include Patricia Ruane (President), Gary Kusen (VP), Joyce Greenberg (Secretary), and Ruth Wickline (Treasurer). They are actively working with the Town of Middletown, the Town of Shandaken, and the WMC Health Network Margaretville Hospital to extend the UCAT bus service into the Town of Middletown. Currently, the free bus service ends in Pine Hill.

If this tugs at your heartstrings and you feel able to help in any way, please contact Gary Kusen at info@CatskillNeighbors.org or 845-280-0459 and leave your name, where you reside, and your contact information. You will be contacted shortly after that. To make a tax-deductible donation to help with costs, mail your check to: Catskill Neighbors, Box 353, Fleischmanns, NY 12430.



PHOTO COURTESY OF CATSKILL NEIGHBORS

The Catskills Neighbors board of Directors: Seated – Joyce Greenberg, Secretary; Rev. Ralph Darmstadt – President Emeritus (1930 – 2024). Standing L to R – Ruth Wickline, Treasurer; Gary Kusen, Vice President and Patricia Ruane, President.

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PRESENTS

Handcrafted Broom with Poliana Danila

Saturday, April 5, 2025 11am–3pm

Headwaters Arts Center
66 Main Street., Stamford



Learn to make a handcrafted broom, a traditional symbol of good luck. It is said that brooms can sweep away bad fortune. Whether used in a sacred space, as art, or as a sweeper, a broom crafted by hand is a functional, one-of-a-kind object.

In this workshop participants will make a 16-inch broom using an ancient technique and traditional materials. All materials and tools will be provided, and at the end of the class participants will leave with a beautiful, handcrafted broom. Space is limited, so early registration is encouraged.

Poliana Danila is an educator, fiber artist, and broom maker who loves working with plants. Originally from Romania, Poliana watched her

parents and grandparents working in gardens, teaching, and spinning and weaving with the wool from their sheep. She holds bachelor’s and master’s degrees in landscape design and horticulture and has expanded her knowledge of weaving, knotting, plant dyeing, and broom making with well-known artists and makers.

Registration is now open for the Handcrafted Broom workshop and the pricing options, \$30/\$60/\$80, reflect the Roxbury Arts Group commitment to tiered equity pricing. To learn more about tiered equity pricing and how to select the pricing tier that reflects your financial reality, please visit our website www.roxburyartsgroup.org, or call 607-214-6040.



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Pet Me Please!

Heart of the Catskills
Humane Society

by Laura Wright



Give a Shy Kitty a Shot at Love Foster a Furry Friend and Help Out Heart of the Catskills!

Spring is approaching, and your local shelters will need a variety of foster home options for pets, especially cats!

Here at Heart of the Catskills Humane Society, we are specifically sending out a plea for foster homes for shy cats in need of socialization to help make them more comfortable and adoptable. If you live within an hour of the shelter, are allowed to have pets in your home, and you would like to help, please reach out about being a foster home for a shy kitty or two. We can email you the foster care paperwork that needs to be completed and checked over so you can become a foster parent! Or feel free to stop in during our open hours — Tuesday through Saturday between noon and 4pm.

You will need to provide a safe, quiet space (perhaps an extra bedroom or office space), love, and attention. We will provide food, supplies, and any medical care needed while cats are in foster care. Shelter staff will help choose the cats you will foster, depending on your needs and the cats we have available. We do currently have specific cats we are looking to send into foster care, so foster families that are willing and open to working with shy cats for a few weeks, a month, or more, will be much appreciated.

If shy cats are not an option for you, you are welcome to put in paperwork to be a foster home for mama cats and kittens, orphaned kittens, or bottle babies. Spring is coming, and we will be taking in pregnant moms and little kittens that need foster homes. We prefer to foster out these young ones that are fragile and vulnerable until they are old

enough to have some vaccine protection. Once they have some protection, they can come back to the shelter for adoption. If you can commit to several weeks of fostering in the spring or summer and have transportation to get to and from the shelter, we will put you on our foster call list for when we get in baby kittens!

And it's completely okay if you fail as a foster parent... and fall in love with your foster friend and decide to keep them! Fostering is about providing a safe and loving environment, and sometimes that bond forms so strongly that you just can't imagine letting them go.

If you have any questions regarding our foster program, please email info@heartofthecatskills.org. We look forward to working with you!

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TREE JUICE

ARKVILLE — It's late winter. A time when many Catskill Mountain residents are optimistically looking forward to warmer days on the horizon.

The outlook for the crew at Tree Juice Maple Syrup in Arkville is a bit different. Like most folks, they appreciate the warming temperatures that usually edge up in February and March. But cold nights are part of the package as those conditions are ideal for getting maple sap flowing for one of the region's largest syrup producers.

This year, they started tapping about January 21, which is slightly later than last year when the first taps went in during mid-January, according to Tree Juice partner Jake Fairbairn.

"Earlier tapping is definitely the trend for commercial operations, as we need to capture every bit of sap we can. Some operations are even tapping in early December. The earliest sap has a lower sugar content, but it comes up to the normal range of 1.5-2 percent quickly," he explained.

As of early March, the Tree Juice crew was still putting in some taps, and they anticipate having around 7,500 taps this season.

Jake noted, "We'll go till the sap turns 'buddy,' then we'll see if we want to keep going or call it a season. The goal is to hit 2,500 gallons. Last year was 2,600 and our record season was 2020 when we made 2,700 gallons. Every year is different, and this season is getting a pretty late start. Mother Nature calls the shots — we can only take what she gives us."

In recent years, there's a growing trend among



some producers canning and selling maple sap. Jake said they have played around with bottling sap, but it's a very different product and he said they are not currently setup to handle that type of operation.

"Sap has a short shelf life, has to stay refrigerated, and the issue is that we already can't make enough syrup!" Jake pointed out.

When it comes to their primary goal of making maple syrup, the Tree Juice operation traces its roots back nearly 100 years when the Jake's family started a farming operation high up in the Dry Brook Valley, about 10 miles outside Arkville.

For decades, late winter signaled the arrival of maple syrup season as members of the Fairbairn family turned their labor towards tapping maples and boiling the sap down to make one of nature's sweetest offerings. It was demanding work. Over the years, other aspects of the farming operation began to take priority, and the maple operation

was largely abandoned at the start of this century.

Things changed in 2012. That's when Jake and longtime friend Ryan Annetts, along with Rae Brundage, restarted maple production on the Fairbairn farm on Rider Hollow property. As part of the reboot, the property was dubbed Lazy Crazy Acres Farm, with the primary product cleverly named Tree Juice Maple Syrup™.

They found a "sweet spot" with the public and the all-natural syrup was an immediate hit. Production grew at a quick pace. Today, they tap thousands of maple trees throughout the farm's rolling hills. Because sap flow is weather dependent production varies, but they have averaged about 2,500 gallons of syrup in recent years.

To help boost production, the crew utilizes an extensive network of tubing with a gravity feed to efficiently transport sap to the sugar house. Once the sap reaches its destination, a wood-fired evaporator efficiently boils the sap down to the perfect temperature to yield the prized Tree Juice Maple Syrup.

The farm's signature product is maple syrup in its purest form. However, the team is always dabbling in creating innovative flavors to enhance the primary maple ingredients. That work has resulted in interesting flavor options such as Bourbon Barrel Aged, Vanilla Infused, Rye Whiskey Barrel Aged, and Zesty Lemon.

Tree Juice offers a series of Variety Packs, from 2-10 bottles. There's also Maple Pancake Mix and Maple Sugar. There are also special seasonal varieties such as Strawberry Maple Syrup in early summer. Banana Maple Syrup is another option!

If you are looking for special Catskill Mountain taste treat as a present, let your favorite folks select for themselves with a Tree Juice Gift Card. Branded Tree Juice Maple Syrup™ merchandise, includes hats and shirts that proudly announce your good taste! All these items may be purchased online at www.treejuicemaplesyrup.com. Syrup varieties are available throughout the region, including at The Kitchen Cheetah in Margaretville.

The Tree Juice Maple Syrup™ crew has also formed the first Maple Syrup CSA (Community Supported Agriculture). An established practice with

many vegetable farmers, this type of arrangement was not common in among syrup producers. Customers pre-pay for a small or large share. At season's end, they receive either a half- or full-gallon of freshly made maple syrup. Jake pointed out that this program helps provide maple farmers with the capital to purchase much-needed supplies for the start of the season.

The company website proudly declares, "Tree Juice Maple Syrup™ CSA members are loyal fans and true syrupaholics! Tree Juice could not have started without their support. Each year, we open up shares for new and returning members."

For information on becoming a part of the Tree Juice Maple Syrup™ CSA, please visit www.treejuicemaplesyrup.com/collections/csa

Follow Tree Juice Maple Syrup™ on Facebook or Instagram to be the first to find out when new products arrive.

If you'd like to experience the Tree Juice Maple Syrup™ operation firsthand, the public is invited to the Lazy Crazy Acres Farm's saphouse at 251 Rider Hollow Road in Arkville as part of the annual New York State Maple Weekend celebration on March 22 & 23 and March 29 & 30 from 10 a.m. to 4 p.m. each day. Products will be offered for sale in barn at 59 Rider Hollow Road, Arkville. Visit www.treejuicemaplesyrup.com for additional information.

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Two Maple-icious Weekends



Maple Weekend, one of the most popular annual traditions in New York State, returns to the Great Western Catskills on March 22 & 23 and March 29 & 30. Learn about New York's maple sugar-making processes and perhaps get a chance to taste pure maple syrup in its many forms — right from the source!

Many farmers carry on family traditions, honoring age-old recipes and practices. During Maple weekend, you can meet the producers who annually make New York the second largest maple producing state in the U.S. Experience the many ways to cook and bake with maple syrup, maple sap and other maple drinks and products.

Below is a list of just some of the farms in our area. We have provided phone numbers so that you can reach out to them for their location and any special events they are having.

Brookside Maple

Delancey
(607) 746-6618

Buck Hill Farms

Jefferson
(607) 652-7980

Cody's Sugar Shack & Farming

Fleischmanns
(845) 254-4131

Hubbell's Family Farms

Margaretville
(845) 586-2500

Kenneth Burger Farms

Margaretville
(845) 586-4784

Lazy Crazy Acres Farm

Arkville
(845) 204-8870

Maplewood Farms

Meredith
(607) 746-6339

Reed's Maple Products

Hamden
(607) 538-1500

Roxbury Mountain Maple

Roxbury
(607) 538-1500

Shaver Hill Maple Farms

Harpersfield
(607) 652-6792

Thompson Sugar Shack

Jefferson
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The Sweet History of Maple Syrup

Maple syrup is one of North America's oldest and most cherished natural foods, with its origins rooted in Native American traditions. They were the first to discover this sweet treat, and it remains a staple in kitchens across the continent today.

To harvest sap from a maple tree, the tree needs to be around 40 years old and at least 10-12 inches in diameter. Some of the largest maple trees can even be more than 200 years old!

Maple sap is primarily clear water, with only about 2% sugar content. It takes roughly 40 gallons of sap to produce a single gallon of syrup. The maple season, also known as sugaring, spans approximately four to six weeks. During this time, the sap is collected and then boiled down to concentrate the sugar, turning it into the syrup we all know and love.

Freezing temperatures at night and warmer daytime temperatures (around 40-45°F) create pressure within the trees, causing the sap to flow out through the taps. Once the warmer days of late



spring cause the maple tree buds to appear, the sugaring season comes to an end.

While modern technology has changed the way sap is collected—moving from traditional metal buckets to vinyl tubing—the fundamental process remains the same: boiling the sap to remove the water and concentrate the sweetness into syrup. Today, maple producers also offering a variety of innovative maple products.

Maple Weekend is the perfect opportunity to visit a farm, discover New York's maple sugaring traditions, and enjoy fresh maple syrup in its many delicious forms, straight from the source.

FAIRVIEW PUBLIC LIBRARY MONTHLY NEWS & UPDATES



MARCH Events

JOIN IN OUR IRISH PROVERBS CHALLENGE

to celebrate the month of Saint Patrick's Day. Pick up a sheet at the circulation desk. Return it completed and you will be entered into the drawing for an amazing 'green' prize.

CONTAINER AND VERTICAL GARDENING WORKSHOP

FRIDAY, March 28 at 3:30 pm

Start planning for spring planting. Please bring a small container. Sign up is required. Please call the library for more information: 845-586-3791.

FPL BOOK CLUB Next meeting

March 20 at 2 pm via Zoom

The book for March is *Travels with My Aunt* by Graham Greene. Contact the library director at 845-586-3791 or director@fairviewlibrary.org for a Zoom link or more information.

FIBER ARTS CLUB Continues

Saturday, March 22 from 12 to 2 pm

Work on your own fiber arts (knit, crochet, embroider, sew, etc) and meet other makers. All are welcome - beginner to expert. No formal instruction but we will help if we can.

MAH JONGG

every Friday

12:30 to 3:30 pm



New in MARCH

Beach Vibes by Susan Mallery

Blood Moon by Sandra Brown

Bringing Them Home by Barbara Hinske

Far From Home by Danielle Steel

Fight or Flight by Fern Michaels

If I Go Missing by Leslie Wolfe

The Jackal's Missing by Christopher Bohjalian

Kills well with others by Deanna Raybourn

Lethal Prey by John Sanford

Nobody's Fool by Harlan Coban

The Paris Express by Emma Donoughe

Silent as the Grave by Rhys Bowen

The Summer Guests by Tess Gerritsen

This Book will Bury Me by Ashley Winstead

Under the Same Stars by Libba Bray

Ward D by Frieda McFadden

Sunrise on the Reaping by Suzanne Collins

PAPERBACK

Cat Got Your Killer by Sofie Ryan

Killing Me Souffle by Ellie Alexander

Patchwork Quilt Murder by Leslie Meier

AUDIOBOOK

Don't Tell Me How to Die by Marshall Karp

The Paris Express by Emma Donoughe

NON-FICTION

The Container Victory Garden by Maggie Stuckey

My Tiny Kitchen Garden by Felicity Hart

CLICK to search the
catalog for all your favorites!





Book

Reviews by
Jessica Reed

Glinda's Ruby Slippers

I don't know a single person who hasn't seen *The Wizard of Oz* multiple times. Released In 1939, it has withstood the test of time. It was groundbreaking then, delighting audiences for its use of technicolor, thrilling and frightening me as a child (darn those flying monkeys), sentimental to watch with my own kids (again, darn those flying monkeys), and now come full circle, relevant to today's generation with the *Wicked* version released this year.

When I think of *The Wizard of Oz*, the mental picture I conjure up first is that of Glinda the Good Witch, played by Billie Burke. I am still transfixed to the screen when the pink bubble carrying the equally pink Glinda floats in. She is pure confection in her bouffant dress, skyhigh crown, sparkling wand, and impossibly high cheekbones. She soothes the inner child in us all with her lilting childlike voice and doe eyes.

In *Glinda's Ruby Slippers*, author Mike Radice floats the reader in a pink bubble, right into the action, on set of the filming in 1938. Radice allows the reader to slip past security into the backdoor of the studio, letting us witness the Golden Age of Hollywood, but also the tarnished fools gold side as experienced by Burke in the forms of agism, sexism and actors beholden to their studios with oppressive contracts. Radice brings Burke to life from shadowy black and white to technicolor, revealing a surprisingly relatable person, as she navigates widowhood and motherhood while simultaneously reinventing her career. Glinda may have been her most famous role, but Billie had a long and full career, including an Academy Award nomination.

Written as historical fiction, the book has a nonfictional feel, the facts validated with the Google



Author: Mike Radice
Publisher: Blydyn
Square Books

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inquiries I embarked upon afterwards. The research for this book feels like it must have taken years, a true labor of love. I was struck while reading to compare Radice's writing to Italian sculptor, Michelangelo who when asked about his artistic process, replied, "I saw the angel in the marble and carved until I set him free."

Radice is also a marble shaper, starting with voluminous facts, cutting away the superfluous material, providing cohesion and clarity by molding intuitively imagined scenes and carving until he freed our Good Witch.

"Come out, come out wherever you are," and read *Glinda's Ruby Slippers*. Available for preorder for release April 25 on Amazon and wherever books are sold.



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Stay in shape by gardening

DO



If winter causes you to shift into a sedentary lifestyle, the arrival of spring is the perfect time to embrace a more active way of living. Are you looking for an activity that offers physical and mental benefits during the warmer months? It's an excellent time to give gardening a try.

START SLOW

Gardening involves various movements like walking, bending and stooping. If you want to enjoy this hobby pain-free, try a little pre-gardening warm-up. Before putting on your gardening gloves, take a few minutes to stretch and rotate your wrists, ankles and shoulders.

As you slowly familiarize yourself with the different movements involved in gardening, you'll engage all your muscles and joints more effectively. Don't forget to take breaks.

BETTER PHYSICAL CONDITION

Gardening helps improve and maintain your physical fitness. Activities like lifting and digging strengthen your thigh and arm muscles and increase bone density. Weeding also enhances flexibility and supports good posture. All these activities contribute to improving your overall stamina.

BOOST YOUR MOOD

Working with plants is an effective way to distract yourself from your daily worries. Focusing on the present moment and the small tasks at hand can help lower your stress levels. Gardening will certainly make you feel calmer, which is excellent for preventing anxiety and depression.

Feel like getting your hands dirty? Find everything you need at Stamford Farmers Co-Op or your nearest garden supply store.

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SPRING CLEANING Goal:

Clean Windows — No Streaks



We're all glad to see the end of winter. But, if you can't see the beauty of springtime through your murky, dirty windows it's time to get busy. Washing your windows is the ultimate way to brighten up your home. However, cleaning glass without leaving streaks can be tricky. Follow these tips to make your windows shine.

You'll need the following supplies:

- White vinegar
- Warm water
- Spray bottle
- Lint-free or microfibre cloths
- Rubber squeegee
- Newspaper

Prepare your windows

Start by dusting the window frames and removing any dirt, such as insect debris and spider webs. To lift off stickers or adhesive residue, wet the area and scrape it off gently with a plastic scraper.

Ideally, you should wash your windows on a cloudy day to prevent the cleaning solution from drying too quickly and creating unsightly streaks.

Wash the glass

Make a homemade cleaning liquid by mixing a three-to-one solution of water and white vinegar in a spray bottle. Generously spray this solution onto the glass. Use a cloth or squeegee to wipe it clean. Then, remove any liquid residue with a dry cloth. If you still notice streaks, dampen a piece of crumpled newspaper and rub it on the glass to achieve a streak-free finish.

If you don't have the time or prefer not to wash your windows yourself, get an impeccable clean by hiring one of the professional window cleaning companies in our area, and quickly check this task off your spring to-do list.



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SPRING CLEANING 101: Don't forget these 7 tasks

Spring cleaning, that yearly tradition that breathes fresh air into your home. But certain areas are easy to overlook—or ignore. For a thorough spring cleaning, don't neglect these seven essential tasks.

- Garbage cans:** Even if you empty them regularly, garbage cans can quickly accumulate bacteria and unpleasant odors. Be sure to wash them out with vinegar and hot water.
- Light switches:** These high-touch surfaces are breeding grounds for germs. Wiping them down with a clean cloth and all-purpose cleaner can make a big difference.
- Cushions:** Soft, decorative accessories need attention too. If possible, machine wash or vacuum them thoroughly to remove dust and allergens.
- Coffee maker:** This often-used appliance can develop limescale and grime buildup. Use a mixture of vinegar and water to sanitize the inside. Rinse it thoroughly afterward.



- Fans:** The blades and grilles on both ceiling and standing floor fans quickly collect dust. Use a damp cloth to keep them clean.
- Blinds and curtains:** Machine wash your curtains and dust your blinds with a dry cloth to keep them looking fresh.
- Vents:** Although easy to miss, air vents trap dust and allergens. Use a vacuum cleaner or a damp cloth to keep them clean.

Cleaning these often-overlooked areas will help you create a healthier living space. Gather your supplies and take your spring cleaning to the next level.

CLEANING MAJOR APPLIANCES: Don't neglect these workhorses

Spring cleaning is a great opportunity to make your appliances sparkle and shine. Try these simple tips to keep your four most important appliances looking their best.

- Stove:** Use soapy water or an all-purpose cleaner to wipe the cooking surface and exterior. A spray of white vinegar loosens grease and grime. For the interior, use your oven's self-cleaning function or clean it by hand using a paste made of water and baking soda.
- Refrigerator:** Clean the interior with a mixture of white vinegar and lukewarm water. Don't forget to clean accumulated dirt and crumbs from the door seals. For the exterior, an all-purpose cleaner is all you need. For

stainless steel, always wipe in the direction of the grain to avoid streaks

- Washing machine:** Run an empty cycle using hot water with either vinegar or bleach. Don't forget to wipe down the rubber seals to prevent mildew. Finally, clean the exterior with a mild all-purpose cleaner. * Check your manufacturer's cleaning instructions first.
- Dryer:** Remove lint from the filter and vacuum up any remaining fluff. Also, prevent fires by ensuring the exhaust vent is unobstructed. To finish off, clean the exterior the same way you did your washing machine.

HAPPY CLEANING!



Antivirus *Friend or Foe?*

by CJ Karcher

Owner & Systems Administrator

Level Up Tech Support

Norton, McAfee, Avast, AVG, SOPHOS, this list goes on for miles. How do you choose? What if I told you, the average user doesn't have to.

Microsoft introduced Windows Defender in 2006. Although it started out basic and maybe more annoying than useful, over the years it has proved to be a capable software and continues to improve. The best part is you don't need to install it or do anything special. It's built into the Windows 10 or Windows 11 operating system. It activates itself and downloads updates from windows update service. You can run custom scans, check status and other tasks by clicking this icon on your start bar.



Apple computers also have their own antivirus as well, called XProtect. However, only about 14% of consumers use apple products, so we will focus on Windows.

No antivirus is going to protect you 100%, it's just not possible. Antivirus software also doesn't protect you from internet scams. Antivirus programs in my personal and professional opinion are, for the most part, a money grab and a hindrance on your systems performance. When you buy a new computer, most of them come with a 30-60 day free trial of one antivirus or another. These software corporations pay the computer manufacturers to install their program as a trial in hopes you will be enticed to buy a full subscription that will auto renew each year. You may be reading this and think, but my antivirus includes so much more that they say I need. Again, this is just a money grab. Add-ons like driver

updaters, optimizers, and VPNs are things you just don't need. Windows regularly checks for updates, not only for itself, but for hardware drives as well. And most computer manufacturers have software built in that checks for hardware updates. Windows also has its own clean up and optimizing tools. You can find these by simply clicking Start and typing "storage". You'll see a list of options to clean up temp files and optimize performance. It's also a good idea to have your system professionally tuned up at least once a year, a service that Level Up Tech Support offers.

Virtual Private Networks, commonly known as VPNs, have been around since the mid 90's. Their original purpose was to allow users remote access to an internal network, and are still used for that today. As time progressed, access needed to become more secure making VPNs a good sell as security. If you travel a lot or frequent places that have public Wi-Fi, then a VPN may be a good idea. There are plenty of free options available online, such as Tunnlebear. If you are on a farm and trying to order parts for your tractor or sitting at home surfing Facebook, then a VPN isn't really something to concern yourself with.

There's really no right or wrong answer to the antivirus, friend or foe question. If you are a user who wants a big name antivirus or extra security from a VPN, by all means do it. Windows Defender turns itself off when installing a third-party application, so it won't create conflict. If you do choose to use a program like Norton, review what you are signing up for and install only what's needed. If you are still unsure Level Up Tech Support is here to help.

HERE'S A TIP by JoAnn Derson

Most grocery stores list unit prices on the shelf tag. You can use it to compare the cost of different sizes and brands of the same item. Just because a package is bigger doesn't necessarily mean it has the best price per unit.

"Cook once, eat twice — or three times, if you plan well! When you prepare favorite recipes that will freeze well, or even just elements of those recipes, make a double or triple batch so that a few nights of the month, you can just pop something in the oven easily. I cook taco meat once for the month, and we have tacos every week. I just freeze three portions of the meat, and the rest is easy to assemble." -- *K.S. in Florida*

When you finish a wood-working project, save your leftover bits of sandpaper and use them to sharpen your scissors. All you need is a piece long enough to make a few cuts through.

"Tired of squirrels on your bird feeders? String a line of 2-liter soda bottles (as many as you like) together, and hang them between two trees, with the feeder in the middle. Works like a charm." -- *C.V. in Maine*

If your water takes a minute to warm up, keep a pitcher by the sink. Let the water flow into the pitcher until it gets warm. Then, use that water (that otherwise would have been wasted) on your houseplants and in your garden.

Need a substitution for buttermilk? You can use an equal amount of plain, unflavored yogurt, or for each cup, add a teaspoon of vinegar or lemon juice to a cup of milk.

"On chore days, I write each chore or step of a chore on a sticky note and attach them to the kitchen counter. Then we all get together and decide who will do what. We end up with our stack of sticky notes and can complete the chores in an organized fashion." -- *R.E. in Alabama*

Keep a lint roller by the sewing machine to quickly swipe up those tiny bits of thread. It'll keep your sewing area from getting messy.



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VETERANS: *Create your own Legacy Memorial page*

The Department of Veterans Affairs has expanded the use of the Veterans Legacy Memorial (VLM) -- the digital platform dedicated to the memory of veterans who have passed. Until now, veteran pages were usually created by family after the veteran died. The new feature -- "Your Story, Your Legacy" -- means that living veterans can create their own page, to be activated after their death.



This is a great addition to the project, especially for veterans without family. The veteran can submit all their information in advance and have it just the way he or she wants. The VLM will hold the information until notified of the death and burial.

There is one caveat: The veteran needs to have advance approval for pre-need eligibility for burial in a VA national cemetery.

Have you seen the Memorial? There are 10 million Legacy pages. (The VLM automatically creates a generic page when there is a burial in a VA national cemetery.) Go online to www.vlm.cem.va.gov and explore the memorial pages. Standard information includes birth and death dates, rank, branch of service, decorations, plus the burial location and a photo of the marker.

You'll also find various ways that veterans have been memorialized by additions from friends and family, with photos, bios, historical documents, stories and more. You can create your page any way you'd like -- after being approved for burial in a national cemetery.

For pre-need approval for burial, you'll need several documents, including DD-214 and VA Form 40-10007. (Download the form at www.va.gov/find-forms/about-form-40-10007.) If you need help with the paperwork, call the National Cemetery Scheduling Office at 800-535-1117. For more information about creating your Legacy page, see www.vlm.cem.va.gov/livingveteranhome or call 866-245-1490.

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STRANGE BUT TRUE

by Lucie Winborne

St. Lucia is the only country in the world named after a woman. Originally called the Island of the Iguanas by early Carib settlers, the name was later changed after French seamen were shipwrecked there on Dec. 13, the feast day of St. Lucy.

Studies have shown that spending only a few minutes every day in the New York City subway system can ultimately result in hearing loss.

When you snap your finger, it moves at about 20 mph.

A bobsled is so named because early racers bobbed their heads back and forth in an attempt to gain speed. (It didn't work.)

The annual World's Biggest Liar competition in Cumbria, England invites entrants from around the world to tell the biggest and most convincing lie they can muster in five minutes. No props or scripts are allowed, nor are politicians or lawyers permitted to compete, as "they are judged to be too skilled at telling porkies."

More than four tons of old U.S. paper money is mulched into compost every day.

Cockroaches are so repulsed by humans that if they're touched by a human, not only do they run away, but they wash themselves. (To all cockroaches: The feeling is mutual!)

Bananas are curved because they grow towards the sun, in a process called "negative geotropism."

Read a week's worth of The New York Times and you'll have absorbed more information than the average 17th-century citizen would have encountered in their lifetime.

California was named for a fictional island in a 16th-century romance novel.

Researchers testing insect repellents used Victoria Secret's Bombshell perfume as a standard and accidentally discovered that it repels mosquitoes better than many repellents on the market.

People's body temperature drops when they watch videos of other folks putting their hands into cold water.

Onychophagia is the technical term for biting your nails. It takes somewhere between 144 and 411 licks to reach the center of a Tootsie Pop.

India has 454 living languages and 16 official ones.

During her 1982 restoration, the Statue of Liberty's head was accidentally installed 2 feet off-center.

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Maple-Candied Bacon

Preparation time : **Cooking time**
5 minutes : 30 minutes

INGREDIENTS

- 1 lb. good quality bacon, sliced
- 2 tbsp. pure NY maple syrup
- 1/4 c. brown sugar
- 2 tsp. Dijon mustard
- 1/2 tsp. Kosher salt
- 1/4 tsp cayenne pepper

DIRECTIONS

Preheat oven to 350° F.

Wrap a rimmed baking sheet with aluminum foil and top with a wire rack.

In a large bowl, add maple syrup, brown sugar, Dijon mustard, Kosher salt, and cayenne pepper. Mix well. Add bacon and toss gently with your hands. Make sure all of the slices are evenly coated. Bacon mixture may seem a bit dry when tossing with the glaze ingredients. No worries, this is how it's supposed to be.

Place the bacon in a single layer onto the wire rack. Bake in the center of the oven for about 20 minutes. The bacon will brown, but will most likely will need to bake for another 10-15 minutes. It should look slightly dark, but not burnt, and crispy. Removing from the oven too soon will result in chewy bacon.

Remove from the oven and cool for 5 minutes on the rack. Once cool enough to handle, leave whole or break into pieces. Serve at room temperature.



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CHECK IT OUT!

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Maple Jalapenos

INGREDIENTS

- 25 jalapeno peppers
- 1 package (8 ounces) cream cheese, softened
- 1 cup (4 ounces) crumbled feta cheese
- 1/2 cup maple syrup
- 1/2 pound bacon strips, cooked and crumbled
- 1/4 cup packed brown sugar



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DIRECTIONS

Cut jalapenos in half lengthwise and remove seeds. Set aside. In a small bowl, beat the cream cheese, feta cheese and syrup until smooth. Spoon into pepper halves.

Place in two greased 15x10x1-in. baking pans. Top with bacon and sprinkle with brown sugar. Bake at 350° for 20 minutes for spicy flavor, 30 minutes for medium and 40 minutes for mild.

Preparation time : **Cooking time** : **Servings**
5 minutes : 20 minutes : 50 Appetizers



DISASTER can strike at any time

EXTREME WEATHER CONDITIONS

These 5 preventive actions could change everything

Natural disasters are increasingly making headlines. The good news is that you can take steps to minimize property damage if an extreme weather event occurs. These five tips could help you improve your preparedness.

- 1. Cut back vegetation.** Regularly trim trees and shrubbery that are too close to your home. Overhanging branches can damage your roof or break windows in strong winds. If you see any branches that could fall on a power line, hire a professional to handle the trimming.
- 2. Secure loose objects.** Make sure that shelves, mirrors and picture frames, televisions and heavy bookcases and furniture are properly secured to prevent them from falling and breaking during an earthquake. (Yes, we do experience earthquakes.) If a tornado or high winds are in the forecast, secure outdoor items that can't be stowed away, such as garden furniture, patio umbrellas, barbecues and garbage cans.

- 3. Choose the right materials.** Forest fires are on the rise. Whenever possible when building or renovating your home, opt for fire-resistant materials like brick or aluminum. Use water-resistant materials in your basement to reduce potential flood damage.

- 4. Maintain your property.** Periodically clear debris from your gutters, ensure your sump pump is working and inspect your foundation for cracks. Promptly repair any issues to prevent water from getting inside during heavy rain. If needed, level your property to improve drainage.

- 5. Check your insurance.** Do you know what your home insurance covers? If not, review your policy. For example, earthquake damage is often not included in basic coverage. Don't hesitate to contact your insurer to explore your options.

Finally, prepare an emergency kit and plan various possible escape routes for different scenarios. Now, all you have to do is keep an eye out for weather warnings.

History of Our Hamlets

Photos and recollections courtesy of Diane Galusha,
Historical Society of the Town of Middletown

History of Our Hamlets is sponsored by



Sappin'

March and its fickle temperature swings signal the start of the time-honored craft of coaxing sap from the sugar maple and boiling it down into syrup, cream and sugar. Steam rising from the sugar shack means spring is on the doorstep.

That's Dick Sanford with Pete Haynes (top) in the doorway of the misty saphouse in the 1950s. Bob Hubbell holds a stack of pails (right) while he and his dad Ralph tap the trees opposite the Hubbell homestead in Kelly Corners, probably 1960s.

Once the maple leaves begin to bud, the season is over and the buckets need to be washed and stored until next year. Ella Robertson oversees the process in this undated photo (bottom).





MARCH 18, 2025

Together We Grow

Sustainability in US agriculture

National Ag Day is the perfect time to spotlight the farmers who work hard to feed America while protecting the planet. Sustainability is at the heart of modern agriculture, and our farmers are adopting innovative practices to minimize their environmental impact. Here are five methods they're using.

Crop rotation. Practiced since ancient times, alternating the types of crops grown in a specific field is known to boost yields and increase biodiversity. It also improves soil fertility while helping break the cycle of pests and diseases.

Cover cropping. Cover crops, which are sown during or after the growth of a primary crop, help protect and enrich the soil. They help minimize soil erosion, improve soil structure and increase organic matter.

No-till farming eliminates the need to disturb the soil through tilling and plowing. No-till farming

improves water retention, reduces erosion and promotes beneficial soil microorganisms.

Precision agriculture. Technologies such as GPS-guided equipment and data-driven irrigation systems help farmers apply water, fertilizers and pesticides more efficiently, significantly conserving resources and reducing waste.

Renewable energy sources. Innovations like solar panels, wind turbines and biogas systems are being used to power farming operations sustainably. Using this technology, farmers are lowering their operating costs, reducing carbon emissions and improving energy independence.

American farmers are proving that agriculture can thrive alongside environmental stewardship. This National Ag Day, take a moment to express your gratitude to our local farmers leading the way in sustainable practices for a healthier planet.

The logo for HomeFoam Insulation features a stylized tree with many branches and leaves, set against a circular background. The text "HOME FOAM INSULATION" is written in a semi-circle above the tree. Below the tree, it says "COMMERCIAL & RESIDENTIAL SPRAY FOAM" and "845-594-7413". At the bottom, it lists "Kane DiBenedetto", "HomeFoamInsulation.net", and "10+ YEARS EXPERIENCE | FULLY INSURED | FREE ESTIMATES".

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The advertisement for La Cabana restaurant features a sombrero icon and the text "Why Cook? Come and join us!". It promotes a "Combination Dinner Menu" with "Over 15 to Choose!" items, "Everything Made Fresh In-House". It is open Friday - Tuesday 4 to 9pm at 966 Main Street, Fleischmanns. Contact number is 845-254-4966. It also mentions "FULL BAR AVAILABLE", "DINE IN TAKE-OUT", and "Available For Private Parties, Large Groups & Families". A "CLICK" button is provided to see the menu or place an order.

Why Cook? Come and join us!
La Cabana
Combination Dinner Menu *Over 15 to Choose!*
Everything Made Fresh In-House
Open Friday - Tuesday 4 to 9pm
966 Main Street, Fleischmanns
FULL BAR AVAILABLE **845-254-4966** DINE IN TAKE-OUT
Available For Private Parties, Large Groups & Families
CLICK To See Our Menu or Place An Order



Living
green

World
Water Day

March 22, 2025

Good practices for preserving water



Take shorter showers Did you know that a five-minute shower can use up to 26 gallons of water? Taking shorter showers can save a lot of water.

Fix water leaks On top of being annoying, a faucet that drips just one drop per second can waste up to seven gallons of drinking water per day. Regularly inspect your taps and toilets and repair any leaks promptly.

Water your plants wisely If you love gardening, remember to water your outdoor plants either early in the morning or in the evening to minimize evaporation. Better yet, find ways to conserve water for your plants. You can use diluted greywater on hardy outdoor plants, and cooled cooking water is beneficial for watering plants and veggies.

Shop smart Consider investing in water-saving devices, such as faucet aerators and low-flow toilets. These can be found at your local retailers.

Get into better habits Take a moment to review your daily habits. Always make sure to fill your dishwasher or washing machine completely before running them. Avoid letting the water run unnecessarily while brushing your teeth or shaving.

Remember that every little bit helps protect this vital resource.

Do what you can!

"We do not inherit the Earth from our ancestors, we borrow it from our children."

- Native American proverb

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