

Wonders of Cattails

story and photos by Ting Qian, Contributor



“Conk-la-ree! Conk-la-ree!”

I looked to my left to see a red-winged blackbird happily singing for a mate from within the cattails at Highland Lake! From spring to summer in 2021, I observed the dominant population of red-winged blackbirds by the lake. They seemed to love the habitat here. Did they love the cattails as much as I do?

The scattered patches of cattail plants form a beautiful shoreline along Highland Lake. If you spend time admiring them, they are full of personality! I love these plants so much that I’ve taken many pictures of them — from group pictures to couples’ photos to individual portraits, these cattail families are so visually pleasing and vivid.

Their look changes as the seasons do. From green shoots to withered leaves and stalks, they sway their cat-tail-shaped heads in the wind, thriving through the rain, snow, and icy weather. They are always there, holding their heads up high and standing their ground, like soldiers of the lake to protect its community.

Cattails are environmentally friendly plants that provide an important habitat for wildlife. They are tall reedy perennial marsh plants that can grow to 10 feet tall. They have heavy sturdy rhizomatous roots, long and flat leaves, stalks and cylindrical brown flower spikes. When mature, their heads disintegrate into cottony fluffs which carry wind-dispersed seeds.

Their scientific genus name is *Typha*. There are 30 species worldwide, and three species in North America — broadleaf cattail (*T. latifolia*), narrowleaf cattail

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New Year’s Celebration: A Human Tradition

by Stephanie Joy Lewis, Contributor

Happy new year, Penn Estates neighbors! Ever wonder where this celebratory day came from? Our humanly celebrations of the new year have been had on earth, according to records, for at least four millennia (or 4000 years), with originating credit going to ancient Babylonians.[1] At that time and place, it was a day in late March when there was an equal amount of sunlight and darkness, thus representing the start of a new year.

Today, this equality of sunlight and darkness is known as the equinox and it occurs two times a year for all countries, and all people on earth, both late March and late September. “For a single moment twice a year, both poles are equidistant from the sun; day and night are roughly equal in both hemispheres on the dates when this equinox occurs. When measured in sidereal time -- time relative to the stars -- the equinox happens at the same moment for everyone, but people experience it at different local times.”[2]

However, the equinox is not when most of us celebrate our new year. Some credit the Romans for the move towards January. It is reported that when the early Roman calendar of 10 months fell out of sync with the sun, emperor Julius Caesar made some changes around 46 B.C., now known as the newer Julian calendar (which is closer to the Gregorian calendar used largely today).

To honor Janus, the Roman god of beginnings, Julius Caesar established January 1 as the first day of the year. In medieval times in Europe, some leaders moved the start of the year to a date of religious significance, December 25 being among them, but Pope Gregory XIII reinstated January 1 as New Year’s Day in 1582.

Being a broad celebratory tradition among humans, the details of the celebrations vary as much as we humans do. Here are some traditions for New Year’s from around our globe and within many of our homes here in Penn Estates:

Resolutions: Many of us cannot resist making a resolution or two. But we did not start this tradition. The ancient Babylonians are credited with the practice of new year’s resolutions. They reportedly made promises in order to earn the favor of the gods and start the year off on the right foot. Sound familiar? (Their resolutions apparently had less to do with losing weight or curbing vices, and more to do with vowing to pay off debts and return borrowed farm equipment.)

Dropping of big things, or other traditions: Crowds have been gathering in New York City’s Times Square to watch the big ball drop since 1907 and many of our fellow Penn Estaters have personally enjoyed that tradition over the years. The first new year ball was iron and wood. Today some of us watch a 12-foot, near six ton geodesic sphere, draped in over 2,600 Waterford Crystal triangles and 32,000 LEDs, partake in the famous drop.

Many towns and cities across America have developed their own version of the Times Square tradition, with public descents of items ranging from pickles in Dillsburg, Pennsylvania to Tallapoosa, Georgia’s possums. Plymouth, Wisconsin enjoys a big cheese drop while Kennett Square, Pennsylvania prefers a giant mushroom. New Orleans, Louisiana drops a *fleur de lis* (previously, a big gumbo pot).

It seems that the individualized nature of the choice of the drop is reflective of the individuality of the people specific, and their lives, in the town or region. Some places don’t engage in a big drop, but other notable activities. In Puerto Rico, they dump a bucket of water out the window to drive out evil spirits. They also sprinkle sugar outside of the home for good luck.

How about other countries? In Denmark, a tradition, rather than dropping something, is to stand on chairs at midnight and with their bodies, “leap into Jan-

(continued on page 4)

Jodi Reilly Remembered

by Sandy Bonet, Communications Committee Board Liaison

On December 1, 2021, Penn Estates lost a long time resident and active community volunteer when Joanne (Jodie) Reilly died peacefully in her sleep at home surrounded by her family.

In her 25 years as a Penn Estates resident, she always had a smile and warm way of making anyone she met feel welcome. When someone was ill, suffering a loss or in some kind of need, she would often be first in line with food and comfort.

Her long-time neighbor and friend, Dee Lowe was a single mom with two young children and no family nearby when she moved to Penn Estates. Jodie and her husband Sean reached out to her, became surrogate grandparents to the kids and remained an integral part of Dee's family throughout the years.

The children are long since grown, but Dee clearly remembers the day when she was in the back yard scolding her young son for some unacceptable behavior. Jodie's cheerful voice called from her deck next door: "You tell him, Dee. You kids listen to your mother, because she is right."

As a volunteer, Jodie served as chair of the Communications Committee and helped to develop and chaired the former Government Relations Committee that focused on getting out the vote in local and municipal elections.

Although two chronic illnesses progressively robbed her of mobility and left her with chronic pain, she remained positive and continued helping others to the extent she was able.

Jodie will be greatly missed.



President's Message

by Ken Nevil, PEPOA President

I would like to wish everyone a safe and prosperous new year!

Addressing an area of concern with the membership that I have been made aware of during the last nine months serving as president of your board of directors. The Covid-19 pandemic and its variants continue into 2022. We have already lost members due to Covid-19, and many other members have endured hardships by either contracting this horrible infection or losing income due to the pandemic.

Your board of directors takes the health and safety of our membership as their highest priority. The closing of certain amenities and the cancellation of gatherings are of two-fold concern. Health and safety are first to prevent the spread of illness to you.

As of January 2021, insurance companies dropped coverage to protect associations like ours against claims that something we did or sponsored caused a member to become ill with Covid-19. A potential lawsuit brought by a member would have to be defended by your HOA dues, with no insurance coverage to supplement that.

In 2020, only 14% of POAs opened their pools and amenities, with 58% in 2021. With careful planning and proper safety protocols set in place, our amenities were able to be open. We monitor the positivity rate in Monroe County and, at times, for the safety of our members, have paused the use of some facilities or events.

I have heard requests to refund a part of our assessments back to the members due to closed or suspended amenities. The assessments paid by our membership encompass the entire cost of running our association, including road upgrades, storm water drainage, health care rates for our employees, security, and insurance, to name a few. Due to several large storms in 2021, we endured almost 30% over budget costs in our maintenance department.

Please remember that your Board of Directors is comprised of homeowners like you. We are subject to the same HOA fees and feel the suspension of our amenity use. We want the same things you are requesting; however, we must protect the association's health, safety, and finances.



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Good News from the Community Associations Institute (CAI)

We are pleased to announce Phyllis Haase, Community Manager of Penn Estates Property Owners Association, has been appointed to the Community Associations Institute (CAI) Keystone Chapter Board of Directors.

Ms. Haase is an active member of CAI for the Keystone Chapter. She has served on various committees and presently serving on the Board Development Committee. She continues to focus on the education of community managers and board volunteers. Ms. Haase is the chair of the Pocono Council, representing those serving common interest communities.

CAI is a national membership organization dedicated to helping homeowner and condominium associations meet the expectations of their residents. This mission is accomplished by providing information, tools, and resources to homeowners and professionals who govern and manage common-interest communities. The 28,000-plus members include community managers, volunteer homeowner leaders, and businesses and professionals who support associations.



From Phyllis's Desk

by Phyllis Haase, Community Manager

Is a Board Seat for You?

It's already February. Before you know it, May will be here along with our annual Board of Directors election. We will have three (3) seats available. Each carries a three-year term.

Year after year the Association is faced with encouraging members to consider running for a position on the Board. Here we are once again looking for members to run.

Serving your community can be a rewarding experience. Being a Board Member, you are in a position of risk, power, responsibility, and visibility that singles you out as a player in this world. It says that you value your community and being a part of what's happening rather than being a bystander, a part of the silent majority.

Recognize that this temporary situation in which you find yourself is a unique opportunity to significantly impact your community's lifestyle, your neighbor's well-being and most importantly your own sense of self-esteem.

The Association's Bylaws is the document that is typically called the Board manual. It is a document that primarily outlines the roles and responsibilities of the Board.

The Board typically meets once a month to conduct the business of the Association. And special meetings are held from time to time. During the fall the budget meetings are held, and occasionally town hall meetings are held. So, one could expect a range of 20--30 meetings a year.

So, if you have great judgment, motivation, interest, and dedication, a Board seat may be for you.

Board Election Packets are available. The deadline for submitting the completed packet is February 1, 2022. Is a Board seat for you?

2022 Registration Forms

It's that time of year again!

By now you should have received an invoice for your 2022 Annual Dues and along with that, the 2022 Annual Owners Registration Form.

The Annual Owners Registration Form should be completed by all property owners and returned so that we can update your information and have the most current in our system. This includes all residents of the house, anyone allowed on property as a permanent guest that you want to have access to your home without you calling them in a pass.

Emergency contacts should be up to date as well as any personal contact information that has changed within the year. This includes, but not limited to, home phone numbers, mobile phone numbers, alternate mailing addresses, email addresses, vehicle registrations which include the adding and subtracting of new and old vehicles. And let's not forget your furry family members - your pets.

Please ensure when updating your form that you have selected a PIN number which is a required part of the calling-in-a-guest process.

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Poetry Corner

by James Ruffini, Communications Committee Member

Celebrating Black History Month Poems by Langston Hughes

Harlem Night Song

Come,
Let us roam the night together
Singing.
I love you.
Across
The Harlem roof-tops
Moon is shining.
Night sky is blue.
Stars are great drops
Of golden dew.
Down the street
A band is playing.
I love you.
Come,
Let us roam the night together
Singing.

Ardella

I would liken you
To a night without stars
Were it not for your eyes.
I would liken you
To a sleep without dreams
Were it not for your songs.

In the Mist of the Moon

In the mist of the moon I saw you,
O, Nanette,
And you were lovelier than the moon.
You were darkness,
And the body of darkness.
And light,
And the body of light.
In the mist of the moon I saw you,
Dark Nanette.

Editor's Note: Our committee member James Ruffini writes poetry in his spare time. We thought that a column showcasing poetry written by James as well as other poets in Penn Estates would be a good addition to Harmony. Please submit your poems to James at the Harmony email: pepoharmony@gmail.com



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New Year cont.

(continued from page 1)

uary” at midnight to bring good luck and cast out bad spirits. In Colombia, people grab an empty suitcase and spring around the block or down the road as fast as they can to encourage a year of travel.

Some regions side with the breaking of things rather than dropping them. In Denmark, people go around to friends’ and family’s homes, breaking dishware on their doorsteps, for good luck. In Ecuador, the bad parts of the old year — or *año viejo* — are manifested into fabricated effigies and then burned.

Other activities are less about breaking things, than making noise. The Irish bang on their homes’ walls with Christmas bread to start a clean slate for the year and drive out the bad spirits.

In Japan, for *ōmisoka*, buddhist temple bells ring 108 times, as the pre-introduction to the new year. Each chime is supposed to root out a worldly vice, such as anger, lust, suspicion etc.

In Belgium, Walloon and Flemish farmers share their celebration with their livestock, rising early on January 1 to wish a “happy new year” to the pigs, cows, horses and chickens to encourage a good farming year.

Symbols are also in favor. To Greeks, onions symbolize good luck and fertility, due to their capacity to sprout with little to no care. On New Year’s Eve, families in Greece, then, often hang onion bundles above their doors to welcome prosperity into the home. In Germany and Austria, there are lucky symbols to gift to loved ones, such as pigs, mushrooms, clovers and even chimney sweeps, of all things.

On a more genteel, note, Singapore decorates its river with the Wishing Spheres, each which holds the hopes and dreams of the new year revelers. They illuminate and in such vast groupings, they are quite an amazing sight.

Eating Traditions: Many cultures believe eating “round” foods on New Year’s Eve will lead to prosperity. In many, fish is considered another good new year’s entrée, since fish, like the movement of time, only swim in one direction — forward.

In Spain, they are known to pop a grape for every month of the new year. In Japan, they eat to represent longevity and resilience, in the form of *toshikoshi soba*,

which is a dish with long (longevity), buckwheat noodles (a resilient plant).

In Turkey, they relish pomegranates as symbols of abundance, eating them and smashing them on your doorstep for a smashingly great New Year. In Russia, a tradition with celebratory Champagne includes writing down your wish on a piece of paper, burning it, and adding the ashes to the beverage, then imbibing.

In Greece, new year’s dessert becomes a game of chance, serving *vasilopita*, cake or sweet bread with a coin baked into it. The finder of the coin wins good luck for the year. In Scandinavian countries, rice pudding is the dessert and a peeled almond within is the key to good luck in the new year.

In upstate New York, they sell special peppermint pigs during the holiday season, and people take a turn hitting it with a small hammer, then eating a piece for good luck in the new year.

Wearable Traditions: Like eating round things, sometimes traditions are worn and not eaten. In the Philippines, reveling partygoers wear polka dots, to increase chances for a fortunate new year. Brazil is uber easy – many wear white for peace and good luck in the new year.

On a more personal note, some countries, especially in Latin America, associate the color of your underwear with good things to come. Yellow is for luck, red is for love and white, of course, brings peace.

A Fundraising Tradition: Since the early 1900s, we have seen the Polar Bear Plunge to start off the new year. Cold-loving participants use the celebratory and hopeful day to raise money for local nonprofits, by willingly running and jumping into the freezing waters in return for donations.

If Penn Estaters continue to be what they are, we will see fundraising make up a significant part of their activities in 2022 – likely, however, in warmer weather!

So long as there are humans with their dreams, and regardless of the specifics of our own traditions and where they were born, how they have evolved, the annual day of hope and anticipation of each new year is not going away anytime soon.

Happy new year, fellow Penn Estaters!

[1] <https://www.history.com/topics/holidays/new-years>

[2] <https://sciencing.com/equinox-happen-over-earth-same-time-18514.html>

[3] <https://www.goodhousekeeping.com/life/parenting/g25360543/new-year-traditions/>

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Out & About

Things to Do and See in the Poconos

by Sharon Kennedy, Communications Committee Member

I don't know about you, but I have COVID fatigue. Who would have thought that we would be struggling with the highest yet numbers by 2022? (I hope that you and your family are well.) It seems like once again the local events are very limited in number. I am so glad that we had a bit of a respite last summer with the pool and lake and fitness center open.

It seems that most events are either outdoors or in restaurants. One event that is very low risk for COVID is the Snowmen of Stroudsburg. The snowmen will continue to inhabit Stroudsburg through February 26th. If you haven't yet toured the snowmen, please do so. There are 39 snowmen, 10 of which are new this year. Each one is a work of art by a local artist. This is the fourth year that the snowmen have been on display. For the first time, there will be an opportunity to own your own snowman, as they will be auctioned off sometime in May. I hope that doesn't mean that this is the last year of the snowmen. You can find a map on line, as well as upcoming information on the auction.

PEEC in Dingman's Ferry (as always) hosts many events. For example, they have introduction to cross country skiing, eagle watch, snowshoeing and more. One program that sounds like fun and is repeated throughout the year is their Wacky Science Adventures. It is \$5 per child. A program for the whole family is the Vegan Board Game Dinner on February 26th at 5pm. The cost is \$30 per person and \$15 for children under 10.

If you have small children ages 3 to 6, they might enjoy story time at Pocono Organics in Long Pond. They can listen to stories with farm related themes and participate in games and crafts. It takes place on Monday mornings. Two different times were listed so if you are interested, call 570-646-1100.

How about a snowshoe race? There is one at Shawnee Mountain Ski Area on March 6th.

Outdoor activities are the safest during the continued pandemic. The Monroe Winter Farmers Market continues at Courthouse Square in Stroudsburg on

Saturdays from 10am to noon. Jim Thorpe's Winter Fest occurs daily through February 20th. There are ice carvings, entertainment, horse drawn carriage rides, etc.

The Stroudsburg Winter Fest is on February 19th from 11 to 4 in downtown Stroudsburg. The St. Patrick's Day Parade is on March 20th starting at 1:30 in Stroudsburg. On 3/27/22 the Franklin Township Volunteer Fire Company in Lehighton will their "first ever" Outdoor Adventure Day. There will be food, games, contests and raffles, starting at noon.

It's time for Earth Day celebrations in April. Only two are listed so far but there are usually more in the area. Northampton Community College in Tannersville will host their Earth Day on 4/23 and PEEC will host their Earth Day on 4/30.

There are always numerous food related events in the Poconos. Stroudsmoor County Inn has Valentine's Day Celebration on February 12 through 14 (\$50) and a Valentine's Day Brunch on 2/14 (\$35). Keep an eye out for more special day celebrations especially around Valentine's Day and Mother's Day.

Have fun. Stay safe and healthy as much as possible!

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HEALTH & FITNESS

New Year Resolutions

by Yolanda Sarrabo, CPT, NASM

Happy New Year! Well where do we start? It's a new year and again we've written down resolutions days before the clock's turn of 2022. The plans for some may be bigger than others but it's the goal setting whether big or small for many that is a big deal.

Every year that big resolution of eating better and living better, stays on course up until 31 days later; you then realize it takes a lot of work to feel better, in actuality we put too much stress on the goal than needed.

The Science - Many people are tired of hearing about science this and science that, especially with this growing pandemic that keeps going and going, despite some of the recourse provided some still question. Well guess what? There's science behind why you can't lose those pounds too.

Shedding weight is a science, and it's actually not a one size fit all attitude. Many people may be in different phases of their journey, which leads to different course of options to take.

When constant weight gain is the talk of the table despite you making true active changes in your diet and physical activity, well it doesn't hurt to check

with your doctor to see if there are other health factors causing the hard shed. Once your doctor clears away those possibilities, then let's review the science of this, and how you can rethink this for 2022.



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Tracking - Simply tracking what you eat in a week, is an eye opener in what changes can be made. A lot of the time the problem is the truth which is a powerful realization that you messed up. However, there's no right or wrong, shedding weight is about relearning your relationship with food along with being physical.

Tip: Start a food journal for two weeks, write down everything from how much soda you drink in a day, to how much water your drink in a day, don't forget to add how much gum and candy you absorb too, believe it or not that adds to that weight gain too. Once you see a full diary of what you've been doing you can easily pick away in how to make the necessary changes moving forward.

Sugar - Part of this food journal will highlight the consumption in the amount of sugar you consume; you may find many foods have more sugar than you think.

Tip: List it and limit the amount of sugar in your diet, be cognizant and make adjustments as needed.

Gut Action - Though bacteria in the body are a good thing, filter in the good and bad of it, and reset if necessary. If you're feeling extra sluggish it may be because of what you have going on in the gut.

Tip: Try eating slow and mindfully chewing your food until its mush, this helps with digestion for a gut that may show signs of digestion issues, and always drink more water.

Rest - It's a given that when we don't get enough rest it disturbs this delicate engine called the body.

Tip: If your schedule doesn't allow for naps during the day, try taking 30 minute naps on weekends; though 30 minutes may not sound like a lot, it's about retraining your body in doing better in modules.

Yolanda Sarrabo is principal at Chronic Fitness Personal Training Boutique Service and a regular contributor. www.chronicfitnessinc.com

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Did you know:

- 11 homes are presently for sale in Penn Estates.
- 108 homes have been sold in the last 12 months.
- The highest sold price is \$576,000 in the last 12 months.
(Information provided through Pocono Mountain Assoc. of Realtors MLS Service)
- 95% of buyers start their search on the Internet.
- The average age of today's buyer is 33 years old.

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Wonders of Cattails

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(*T. angustifolia*), and southern cattail (*T. domingensis*). I have observed two at our lake— the skinny-leaved and tall narrowleaf plant, and the broad-leaved shorter broadleaf. They tend to grow in different clumps.

Cattails act like a buffer between the land and body of water, so that water doesn't get polluted directly from the land's nutrients. Instead, cattails can utilize these nutrients before they enter the water and promote unwanted algae.

They also provide a safe haven for small fish, turtles, and other aquatic creatures, as well as birds, creating a shelter for them from tough weather.

According to Wikipedia, many parts of the *Typha* plant are edible to humans. Before the plant flowers, the tender inside of the shoots can be squeezed out and eaten raw or cooked. Cattails are also a plant of a thousand uses. The whole plant is edible, and the stalks have been used to make baskets, mats, and ropes by indigenous communities.

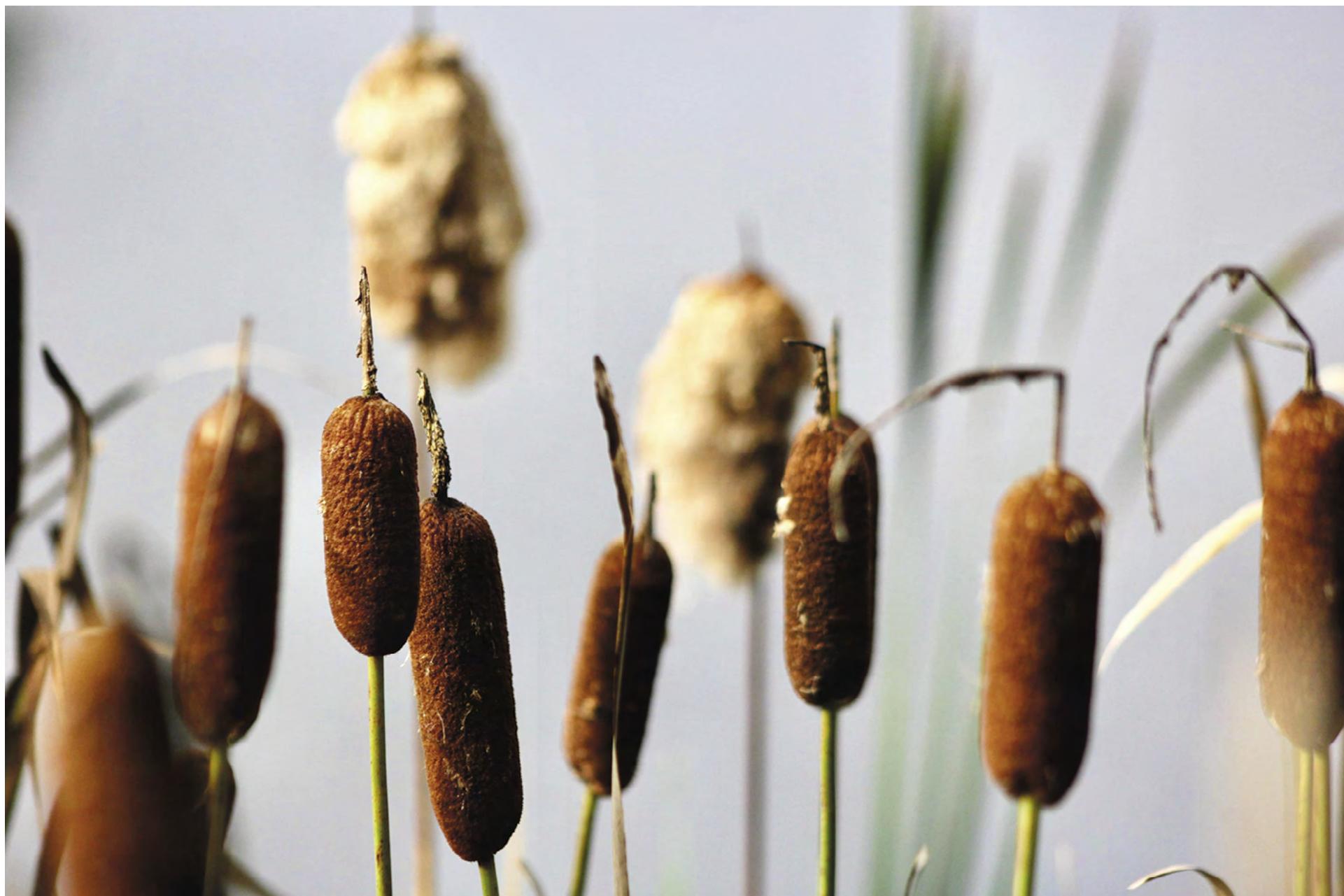
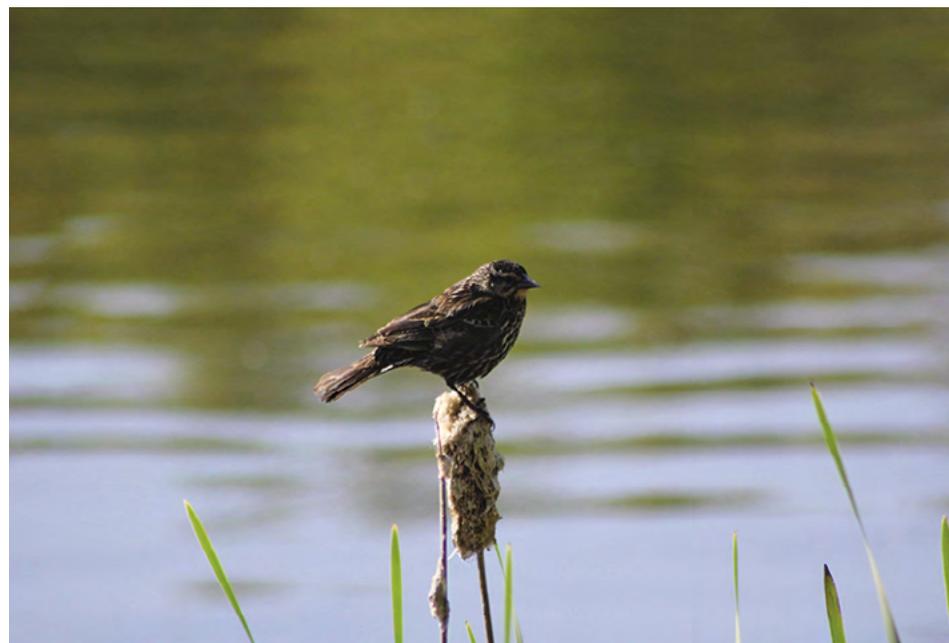
Here are some interesting facts:

- Cattail seeds have a high linoleic acid content and can be used to feed cattle and chickens.
- For local native tribes, cattails were among the most important plants and every part of the plant had multiple uses. For example, they were used to construct rafts and other boats.
- During World War II, the United States Navy used the down of cattails in life vests and aviation jackets.
- Cattails are used as thermal insulation in buildings as an organic alternative to conventional insulating materials such as glass wool or stone wool.
- Cattail stems and leaves can be used to make paper. Their leaf fibers can be used as an alternative to cotton and linen in clothing.

From their aesthetic beauty in the landscape, to their environmental benefits for wildlife habitats, and their unique characteristic as a plant of thousand uses, cattails are a wonder of nature!

"Did the cattails attract the red-winged blackbirds?" I wondered. I learned that cattails provide a source of nesting material for birds with their leaves and seeds. Female birds hide at the base of the cattails, nesting and raising their young.

No wonder there were so many red-winged blackbirds swooping between the treetops and the cattails! "Conk-la-ree! Conk-la-ree!" Will they return to the cattails by the lake this year, and be the first to tell us that spring is here? We'll soon find out!



The Origin of St. Patrick's Day

by **Sandy Black, Contributor**

As we prepare to celebrate Saint Patrick's Day on Thursday, March 17, 2022, the majority celebrating are not aware of the true origins of this holiday or even the true meaning of it. So, from celebrating the Irish, the color green, what is it really all about, how did it evolve into the holiday it is all these years.

First of all, Saint Patrick's Day is a religious holiday. Saint Patrick was a Christian but celebrants associate the holiday with celebrating Irish culture, rather than Catholicism.

Saint Patrick was a very prominent Bishop and missionary in Ireland near the end of the Roman empire in the middle to late 5th century, AD.

Saint Patrick is known as the Patron Saint and Apostle of Ireland and was instrumental in bringing Roman Catholic beliefs to Ireland. In subsequent years, Saint Patrick's Day became a day to commemorate Catholicism in Ireland - a day of feasting and celebration held every year on the day of St. Patrick's death.

One of the most popular myths about the holiday is that St. Patrick drove all snakes from Ireland after they had attacked him during a 40-day fast. Legend states that he drove all the snakes into the sea. While St. Patrick was not Irish by birth, he embodied the spirit of Ireland and loved the country.

Saint Patrick was taken from his home, either Britain, Wales or elsewhere, and became a slave to pirates for six years. When he was freed, he entered the clergy and then settled in Ireland as a missionary where he began his work. Even though he was not Irish by birth, he loved the people of Ireland and he loved the country.

St. Patrick never wore green but he did use the Irish Shamrock to explain Christian symbols and ideas such as the Holy Trinity to his followers. The significance of the three prongs as three is a number with significance in Pagan traditions. Green is the color associated with the Shamrock and certain groups in Ireland.



Editor's Note: This article from long-time resident and frequent Harmony writer, Sandy Black, illuminates Barack Obama's contribution to Black History.

Black History Month: The Rise of Barack Obama to the Presidency

by **Sandy Black, Contributor**

Barack Obama, the 44th President of the United States of America was born on August 4, 1961 in Honolulu, Hawaii to Barack Obama, Senior who was born in Kenya (1936-1982) and his mother, Stanley Ann Dunham born in Wichita, Kansas (1942-1995). President Obama spent most of his childhood years in Honolulu with his mother Ann who was studying at the University of Hawaii in Manoa. When his mother remarried and moved to Indonesia, Barack then resided with his grandparents in Hawaii. He spent a short period of time in Indonesia but returned to Hawaii in 1971 to attend the Punahou School graduating in 1979.

Barack Obama upon settling in Chicago married Michelle in 1992 and resided in Hyde Park. In 1996 he was elected to the Illinois Senate. He was instrumental in campaign finance regulations, expanded health care to poor families and reformed criminal justice and welfare laws. He was elected to the U. S. Senate defeating Alan Keyes. While campaigning for the Senate Obama gained national recognition by delivering the keynote address at the Democratic National Convention in July, 2004.

On August 27, Barack Obama became the first African American to be nominated for the presidency by a major party. He went on to challenge Republican Senator the late John McCain for the country's highest office. Even though Senator McCain stated that Obama as a first-term senator was inexperienced for the job of President, Barack Obama won the Presidency of the United States of America by receiving 53% of the popular vote and 365 electoral votes. As his running mate he selected Senator Joe Biden a veteran senator from Delaware.

In 2012, Barack Obama was re-elected defeating Massachusetts Governor Mitt Romney by 332 to 206 electoral votes. His biggest challenge during his presidency was the Middle East foreign policy challenge.

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Fostering to Adopt

by **Bettyanne Nevil, Communications Committee Member and Devoted Dog Mama**

We've always been a dog family; sometimes multiple dogs. This past February our beloved Wheaton Terrier, Bella passed away at the age of 15. We had her for a little over 10 years after rescuing her from an unhealthy situation. A few years earlier, our miniature poodle, Pearl, died at the age of 14. She was also a rescue.

Bella's previous human ran into some medical problems which left them unable to provide the care a dog needs. We weren't looking for a dog. We already had a miniature poodle. I believe timing is everything in situations like this. Our groomer had her in a crate trying to clear her up from an awful case of fleas and neglect. Her owner was hospitalized and thought she had her care covered. Our Pearl had an appointment and there was Bella.

I did what most nosy people would do and asked what was up with the dog in the crate? Then came the story of how she came to be where she was. I went home and told the family about Bella. She was a curly haired cream color just like our poodle. Within an hour she was ours.

I swore we would not get another dog. The heartbreak of losing them was just too much to repeat. Well, never say never.

My daughter and grandson were ready to take on the responsibility of adopting a dog. Since they live at home, that meant I needed to agree. Which of course I did.

We filled out applications at Awsom and Camp Papillion. I wanted a hypoallergenic dog. Non shedding, as both

Bella and Pearl were. We visited both animal rescues a few times but never found a dog that was meant to be ours. But boy did they have a lot of dogs.

What we didn't know was it's better to put in your application to adopt and get the approval before you find your dog. Lesson learned. Because, we did not get the dog whose picture, we saw online that fit my hypoallergenic request. So, we put in an application at both places.

We went to visit again when one of the volunteers mentioned he thought a fairly new to them dog might be a good fit. She is a Jack Russel mix. She weighed 10 lbs.

Most reputable shelters require that all of the animals they place get fixed before they go home with their human. Our choice KiKi was scheduled to be spayed before we would be able to bring her home.

Turns out, she was never vaccinated for parvo. A highly contagious viral disease that kills. Little 10 lb. KiKi almost died. Awsom did everything they could to save her. She was hospitalized and it did not look good.

She pulled through. But still wasn't able to get spayed. She had a history of being a runner. Was taken into Awsom three times in her 8-month life. We visited her a few more times.

With the help of Courtney Dinkle, a loving dog volunteer who helped us, we were able to be her foster to own family. She weighs over 12lbs. now and is fully recovered. KiKi is scheduled to be fixed in March. After which we will be able to complete her adoption and officially be her forever humans.



Navigating Your Finances

by **Bettyanne Nevil, Communications Committee**

Have you ever heard of having a no-spend month? It goes like this. You go through your freezer, fridge, and pantry to make a list of everything you have to create meals with. I also list condiments and spices so I know everything I have. You try not to do a regular grocery store trip for the entire month.

You will probably need milk, eggs, bread, and fresh fruit and vegetables. If you run out of coffee creamer or butter, go get just those items. Avoid buying anything you absolutely do not need to get by. You use what you have to create meals.

So why use up your stock when replacing it costs more than it did when you bought it? The reason is because my stock was built up slowly by shopping sales and buying extra when the items reach below my stock up buy price.

I do not need a month or more worth of food. But I do need room to buy and store when it is available at a special discount such as manager markdowns, coupons or coupon overage. Coupon overage is when you are stacking deals and may get more than the price of the item. Stores do not give you cash overage but may apply it to other items in your order.

After I know how much beef, pork, chicken and seafood and so on that I have, I make lists of all the cuts (steak, roast, boneless, filet, etc.). Then I inventory my complete pantry. Now I know what sides and canned food I have as well as sauces.

I keep a running list of my family's favorite recipes. I add different recipes into my normal rotation so we can try new things. For instance, we all know you can make meatballs, tacos, meatloaf, and hamburgers and more with ground beef.

To break up ground beef doldrum, I may throw in a stuffed pepper soup, or nachos. I may make spaghetti and meatballs one week and then meatball parmesan subs the next week. I might choose Fritos pie in place of the expected tacos.

Shepherd's pie with all the weeks left over veggies and mashed potatoes. Have you tried Mexican pizza or beef pot pie? How about sloppy joes, or beef dumplings?

I list dinner ideas using chicken, pork, seafood and anything else I have. We usually do not repeat anything and use leftovers for lunch or in a new dish such as a casserole or soup.

I make homemade rolls and bagels. I add plenty of salads and fresh veggies where needed. I have extensive lists with ideas so if my stock is heavy in boneless chicken breasts, we are not eating the same thing all the time. If someone in the family does not like the meal I am making, they can have a hot dog or breakfast for dinner.

I hope you enjoy doing this challenge. The money saved can set you up with a starter emergency cash fund or help pay off your holiday debt.



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Who doesn't like pasta? Show of hands please. I thought so. Its everyones favorite meal! Here are some tried and true pastas we make all the time. The Seven P's Penne and the Mini Rigatoni "Al Modo Mio" are great dishes to serve guests as well as your family on a busy weeknight. All heat up in the microwave just fine for leftover lunches. Give a few of these a try. Nothing more comforting than a big bowl of pasta on a cold winter night. Be well.

Seven P's Tuscan-Style Penne (Penne with Creamy Pancetta Sauce)

(serves 6)

- 1 medium leek
- 2 tbsp olive oil
- 4 ounces pancetta, chopped
- ½ tsp dried red pepper flakes
- 2 cups drained canned Italian plum tomatoes, chopped
- ¼ tsp salt
- 1 pound penne pasta
- ½ cup heavy cream
- ½ cup freshly grated Parmesan cheese

1. Trim leek, cut in half lengthwise and rinse thoroughly under running water. Slice thinly.
2. In a large skillet, heat oil over medium heat; add leek, pancetta and red pepper flakes. Cook, stirring occasionally, 10 minutes or until leek is tender. Stir in tomatoes and salt. Simmer 10 minutes.
3. Cook pasta following package directions and drain, reserving ½ cup pasta water. Add cream to sauce and bring to a simmer. Add pasta to skillet and toss to coat with sauce. Add pasta water as needed to loosen sauce.
4. Toss with cheese and serve immediately.

This recipe was originally published on my friend Michele Scicolone's blog. The seven P's stand for the ingredients: penne, pancetta, porri (leeks), pomodori (tomatoes), peperoncino (hot pepper), panna (cream) and Parmigiano.

Paccheri Carbonara

(serves 6)

- 4 egg yolks
 - 2 whole eggs
 - dash ground nutmeg
 - dash cayenne pepper
 - 1/8 tsp each salt and black pepper
 - 2 tbsp olive oil
 - 6 slices thick-cut bacon or 8 slices regular-cut bacon, cut into ½-inch strips
 - 1 lb paccheri cooked following package directions (regular rigatoni, spaghetti or fettuccine also work well)
 - ½ to 1 cup frozen peas, thawed
 - 2 tbsps unsalted butter
 - ½ cup grated Locatelli Romano cheese
 - additional salt, pepper, cheese, olive oil to taste
1. In a small bowl, whisk together egg yolks, whole eggs, nutmeg, cayenne,

Paccheri Carbonara cont.

2. salt and pepper. Set aside. Do this a little ahead of time so it's not cold.
2. Cook bacon strips in 2 tbsp of olive oil over medium heat. You want it somewhat crispy but not well done. Set aside and cool a little. If too hot it could scramble the eggs.
3. Cook pasta al dente; add peas last minute. Drain. Return pasta and peas to pot and stir in bacon and any drippings in skillet. Add butter in pieces and stir to melt. Stir in egg mixture and ¼ cup of cheese.
4. Spoon into large serving bowl and sprinkle with remaining ¼ cup cheese.
5. Add salt, pepper and a drizzle of olive oil to taste. Serve immediately.

Mini Rigatoni "Al Modo Mio"

(serves 6)

- ½ cup grated Locatelli Romano cheese
- ¼ cup grated Parmesan cheese
- ½ lb hot Italian sausage, casings removed and coarsely chopped
- 1 tbsp olive oil
- ½ cup brandy
- ½ cup dry white wine
- 2 cups heavy cream
- 1 lb mini rigatoni, cooked following package directions
- ¼ tsp salt
- ¼ tsp black pepper
- 2 tbsp chopped parsley

1. Combine the cheeses in a small bowl. Set aside.
2. In a large skillet, heat oil over medium heat; add sausage, cook 3 minutes, stirring occasionally. Remove sausage to a plate. Discard fat from skillet.
3. Hold skillet away from heat and carefully add brandy and wine. If brandy flares up, wait for it to burn away. Reduce over high heat by half, scraping up any browned bits from bottom of pan. Add cream, 1/3 of the cheese mixture, salt and pepper. Cook, stirring occasionally until it thickens and coats the back of a spoon, about 5 minutes.
4. Add sausage back into skillet and stir in the cooked pasta. Stir to coat pasta with sauce and cook for 1 to 2 minutes until heated through. Off heat, stir in remaining cheese and parsley.
5. Season with additional salt and pepper to taste and serve immediately.

Percatelli with Brussels Sprouts and Chili Oil

(serves 4)

- ½ lb thick spaghetti (Bucatini works well)
- 3 tbsp unsalted butter
- 2 tbsp olive oil
- ½ lb Brussels Sprouts, trimmed and quartered
- 4 garlic cloves, finely chopped
- 2 tbsp finely chopped onion
- ½ tsp red pepper flakes
- ½ tsp salt
- 1 cup grated Parmesan cheese
- 2 tbsp lemon juice
- 2 tbsp finely chopped parsley
- Asian chili oil, to taste

1. Cook pasta following package directions; drain; reserve 1 cup pasta water.
2. Meanwhile, melt the butter in a large skillet over medium-high heat. Add the oil and Brussels Sprouts; cook 5 minutes until tender, stirring occasionally. Add garlic, onion and red pepper flakes and cook 1 minute. Season with salt; stir in the reserved pasta water and bring to a simmer. Add pasta and toss to coat pasta with sauce.
3. Turn off heat and add cheese, lemon juice and parsley. Toss to combine all ingredients. Serve immediately. Drizzle each portion with chili oil to taste.

My Personal Covid Experience

by **Sandy Bonet, Communications Committee Liaison**

After almost two years of dodging Covid-19 and its prickly Delta variant cousin, I woke up one morning in late December 2021 with a sore throat. Even though I had a full night's sleep, I was so fatigued I just headed for the couch and crashed.

I had an elevated temp and a decreased level of oxygen in the blood. In the next 24 hours the fatigue increased, I developed a wicked cough, lost my voice, developed chills and muscle pain and experienced digestive system upset.

My doctor's office was overwhelmed and I could only communicate by leaving messages, which were never returned. Urgent care centers were not taking patients with Covid symptoms and tests were flatly unavailable.

I was fully vaccinated, including a booster shot, so I felt OK about managing my condition at home. I knew I would probably have a much milder case than the unvaccinated. But if I had not been vaccinated, I would have sought emergency medical care as soon as possible.

Due to my age, 78, I was a lot sicker than many vaccinated people who report they had no more than a mild cold. For me, it was like a bad case of the flu and it took a full week for the symptoms to clear.

During that time, I did not leave the house. I stayed glued to the couch moving only to get food or fluids, use the bathroom or go to bed. TV, audio books and phone chats with friends and family helped ward off the boredom and isolation.

After five days I felt better. After a week I was free of symptoms except for a mild cough. Since testing was not available when I was sick, I don't know which version of the virus I had, but I suspect it was Omicron.

Here's what I learned from the experience. I hope it helps you feel more empowered if you find yourself treating your Covid infection at home.

Things to do before you get sick

- Create a home treatment kit, not just for Covid also for other common illness that inevitably pop up at any time. It should include an accurate thermometer, blood pressure cuff, pulse oximeter and a stethoscope. All of these are available at any pharmacy, are easy to use and are not expensive. Also, keep a supply of acetaminophen (Tylenol) or aspirin and either ibuprofen (Advil) or naproxen sodium (Aleve).
- Once you have all these goodies, use them. When you are not sick, take your vital signs daily for a few days. Do it at different times of day with the goal of establishing your baseline. Everyone's body is different:
 - *Although 98.6F is the average body temp, some people have baseline temps that are a degree or so above or below that number. You can only accurately determine if you have a fever if you know your personal baseline temp.*
 - *The same is true for your oxygen level. Most healthy people under 65 run 98 to 100%. The elderly or people with respiratory diseases may run lower. If you think you have Covid and that number goes below 92%, it's time to call your doctor who may send you to the hospital because you are too low on oxygen*
 - *Do the same to establish your baseline blood pressure, heart rate and respiratory rate.*
 - *Keep a record of them in a safe place.*
- Keep Gatorade or Pedialyte on hand to help with hydration and electrolyte imbalance.
- Keep tissues and toilet paper in good supply.

Know the signs and symptoms

Although vaccinated people do get COVID, their rates of hospitalization and death are significantly lower than those who are not vaccinated. They can be positive without any symptoms, experience a slight cold or a light case of the flu.

However, the unvaccinated, older adults and people of any age with existing medical conditions are at risk of becoming much sicker. They should call their doctor as soon as symptoms start.

Signs and symptoms of coronavirus disease 2019 (COVID-19) may appear 2 to 14 days after you are exposed. The time after exposure and before having symptoms is called the incubation period, during which you can still spread COVID-19 before you have symptoms. Common signs and symptoms include fever, cough and tiredness.

Other symptoms can include:

- Loss of taste or smell
- Shortness of breath or difficulty breathing
- Muscle aches
- Chills
- Sore throat
- Runny nose
- Headache
- Chest pain
- Nausea
- Vomiting
- Diarrhea

What to do when you experience symptoms

The CDC website has a very helpful Coronavirus Self-Checker interactive tool that gives guidance on what to do if you develop symptoms. You can find it at [cdc.gov/coronavirus](https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus). Meanwhile, here are some tips from my own experience as well as the Mayo Clinic and Johns Hopkins Medicine:

- Take your vital signs twice a day, especially your temp and oxygen saturation. Get help right away if the oxygen level goes down or the temperature increases significantly.
- Drink fluids. (Coffee and alcohol don't count.) I found the easiest thing was to continually sip a cup of decaf tea, herbal tea or water flavored with lemon.
- Get a lot of rest and let your fatigue and muscle aches be your guide as to how much movement you can handle.
- Stay away from junk food.
- Isolate yourself from others in your house. Unless you live alone, this is maybe the hardest part of what you have to do.
- If you live alone, make sure your friends and neighbors and family know you are sick.
- If you absolutely have to be around others, wear a snug fitting mask with at least two layers. Or double mask with a disposable mask under a two layer cloth mask. And of course, keep your distance.

When to seek immediate help

If you have emergency COVID-19 signs and symptoms, seek care immediately.

Emergency signs and symptoms include:

- Trouble breathing
- Persistent chest pain or pressure
- Inability to stay awake
- Onset of confusion
- Pale, gray or blue-colored skin, lips or nail beds

There is a flood of Covid information on the internet. But not all of it is accurate and safe. If you are doing your own research, it's a good idea to stick to well-known and reputable sources. I depend on The Mayo Clinic, Johns Hopkins Medicine, the CDC and the New England Journal of Medicine.

Last thoughts

Keep yourself accurately informed. Be prepared in case you do get sick. If you are not vaccinated, please consider it. And stay safe as we learn to live with this virus and its current and future variants.

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Did You Know...?

by Phyllis Haase, Community Manager

Homeowners choose a community association based on appearance, lifestyle, amenities, and convenience. By the very nature of community association living, homeowners must abide by and rely upon the Association Rules and Regulations to ensure these benefits continue in their community.

The effective drafting and proactive enforcement of the Association's Rules and Regulations is necessary to preserve the Association for the benefit of all homeowners.

Rules & Regulations assist in protecting property values by enhancing and preserving property; they are set for the safety of the residents and to create and preserve neighbor harmony. Rules may often be modified or changed because an issue was identified and needs to be addressed.

A lot of thought goes into writing and modifying Rules & Regulations. The Association first identifies what is the problem or issue and then identifies how this will assist the residents as a whole. Residents ask us where do we come up with Rules and Regulations.

The Association follows the hierarchy of documents: Federal, State, and Local Laws including Act 180, Declaration (Master Deed), Bylaws, Articles of

Incorporation, Rules & Regulations, Building & Architectural Standards, and Case Law.

In the spirit of the Rules & Regulations, there are sometimes individuals who do not realize that they have behaviors or situations that may be a nuisance to their neighbor. Some nuisances can be as simple as overgrown grass, a car that you will repair one day, the garbage tote that was out too long, noise at night or day for the night workers, a dog that barks at every sound on the block.

Whatever is considered a "nuisance" in your eyes can be the aggravating factor or the wedge between you and your neighbor. Many residents turn to the Association to enforce the nuisances. If the issue is a common element or a violation of the governing documents, we can act to abate the situation.

However, the Association does not get involved in a "neighbor vs. neighbor" situation. Many believe that we can play mediator or step in and pick a side. This is beyond the scope and responsibility of the Association.

We communicate the Rules & Regulations and make them readily available to you. We post them to the website, in the Welcome Packet, in the Resale Packet, and available at the Administrative office. We feel that homeowners that are made aware of the Associations Rules and Regulations will be more apt to follow them. The community's aesthetics will be satisfactory, and harmony amongst neighbors will remain.

'Shooting for the Moon' for Valentine's Day Gift Giving

by James Ruffini, Communications Committee Member

Valentine's Day is right around the corner, and where can you find the gifts for your Valentine, or find the gifts to draw love into your life? A wonderful spiritual shop is not too far away from us, and they have the supplies and gifts you need for inspiring love and drawing love.

The store is Shooting for the Moon, and they are located in Snydersville (bordering Stroudsburg) on Main Street (Route 209).

The owner is truly wonderful; I've known her for a few years now. She is a Certified Universal Spiritual Advisor and High Priestess, and her name is Kathy Agate Brown. She is also a reverend and spiritual healer, and she specializes in spiritual gifts of all kinds and has plenty of items for romance and love.

If you need crystals for drawing and attracting love, she has a wonderful display of rose quartz crystals. She also has in stock Carnelian, Rubellite, and Agate gemstones, as well as heart shaped gemstones for attracting romance into your life.

Candles for love are always a go to for inspiring and lighting the flame or rekindling love, and she has a nice assortment of candles for everyone's personal needs.

Say you are looking for fragrances to wear as you are out and about, or need something for the bath like bath products to draw love into your life. Shooting for the Moon has you covered (no pun intended) with Essentials oils like Lavendar, Ponderosa, Geranium, and Cinnamon. They also carry magical oils like Irresistible, Patchouli and Road Opener -- not to mention a variety of oils with a light musk scent to attract the love of your life.

OK, you have ideas for the products, but what about your future? Is there love on the horizon, is romance close by? Kathy offers divination readings for you to see if there is love or romance in your near future, and she offers other one on one spiritual card readings for your romantic future.

Aside from finding romance or romantic gifts, Kathy provides Reiki healing sessions, spiritual cleansings for home and office, spiritual counseling, and other services to help you align yourself with a positive path in life.

Like a previously mentioned, I've been going to Shooting for the Moon for years now, and they always have the books and items I need. If they don't happen to have what you are looking for, they will be happy to place an order for you.

Shooting for the Moon is located at 6162 Route 209 (Main Street) in Snydersville (Stroudsburg), PA 18360. The phone number to the store is (570) 992-0943, or you can contact them via Facebook, or on their website www.Shootingforthemoon.com.

Happy romance shopping to all this February season of love.

The Feast of St. Valentine's Day

by Sandy Black, Contributor

The feast of Saint Valentine was established by Pope Gelasius I in AD 496 in honor of Saint Valentine of Rome who died on February 14 in AD 269. As early as the fourth century B.C., the Romans engaged in the annual rite of passage for young men to the God Lupercus.

The earliest origin of St. Valentine's day is the Roman festival Lupercalia which was observed on February 15. Lupercalia actually celebrated the coming of Spring on the Roman calendar. Lupercalia became the celebration to ensure the fertility of flocks, fields and people.

During the celebration the names of young women were placed in a box and drawn at random by young men and so they became a couple for the duration of the year after which another lottery was then repeated the following year.

The early church fathers decided to end this cruel practice after eight hundred years of doing it. Pope Gelasius changed the lottery that instead of mating young people, the box would now contain the names of saints. By doing this the young people would have to emulate the ways of the saint they had drawn from the box for the balance of the year.

Valentine became the Patron Saint and the overseer of the annual festival. The mid-February holiday commemorates St. Valentine where men offer women they admire and wish to court handwritten greetings for their affections. One of the earliest greeting cards ever sent was done in 1415 by Charles, Duke of Orleans to his wife. He was at that time imprisoned in the Tower of London. The actual card is now preserved in the British Museum.



Cupid, another symbol of Valentine's Day, became associated with the holiday because he was the son of Venus, the Roman god of love and beauty. Cupid often appears on Valentine's Day cards.



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