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DAY ISSUE**

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“

Thank you Dr. Young for truly being amazing and being there to share in my journey of rewarding myself for being a momma to 7 children and taking my sexy back.

- PATIENT TESTIMONIAL

“

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INSPIRATIONS

Elisemarie DiCarlo:

“There is always hope!”

“988 is the new emergency number for mental health crisis. Call if needed and continue to break the stigma.” That message is displayed prominently on the website of Talk 2 Me, founded by Elisemarie DiCarlo in 2019 after realizing that her son, Jacob, needed help. Their mission is to help people connect, heal and thrive in our schools and communities.



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MY OWNER'S MANUAL

Photography by Amber J Deery

Hearing “Mom” when we are at home is a bit-sweet sound. Sometimes it melts my heart and sometimes I want to scream, or cry, because I’ve heard it so many times. It never fails; the moment I sit down, one of my boys is hollering for me. Sometimes the words from when they were younger, “I don’t know who Mom is, but I believe her name is Excuse Me!” have stuck, but not as often as they used to.

It is a name that I am proud to be called. It is a title that I use with every breath and every ounce of my being to make me the best one that I can be. It is a responsibility that I am constantly trying to improve upon, always reading about and asking others for advice, to seek support, and for guidance when I need it.

No matter how hard I try, there are always the times when I feel like I have failed. Hearing “epic fail” giggling from one of my boys’ mouths doesn’t always help! Yes, they say it thinking it is all fun and games, and sometimes I can laugh with them, but occasionally it hits me deep.

I always talk about owner’s manuals, because parenting is one of the few things that doesn’t have one. There’s no contact number to call or manual to reference for step-by-step guidance or to fix the problem. There is not an owner’s manual for raising children or being a mom.

Each of us is writing our own owner’s manual that works for



us, tweaking it as we go. There are times when I feel like I am doing things right, but there are times when I am just doing the best that I can. I thought the toughest years were behind us. Just like the terrible twos and threes, kids go through phases, like we all do, and they are all hard and rewarding in different ways.

I feel like the mental well-being of our children is something that is more of a stress and worry on us than ever before. Part of it might be because we are more open and transparent about mental health and awareness than generations before. It is one of my biggest concerns for my boys. Kids don’t love to talk to their parents, especially not about emotions. I often wonder if I’m reading too much into something they said, if I missed something they were trying to talk about,

or if I’m prying too much.

All I can do is try my best and hope that one day my boys truly understand the love that I have and always will have for every part of who they are. Sometimes we fail, but we live and learn. At least I know that when “Mom” is being summoned, they still need me in some way.

Happy Mother’s Day from me, another mom learning as she goes, to you!

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395 Realty

A Pioneer in Landmark Changes Now Facing the Real Estate Industry

In 2023, a Missouri Court handed down a ground-shaking judgment of \$1.78 billion against the National Association of Realtors, or NAR, and some residential brokerage firms for conspiring to inflate commissions. NAR recently settled for \$418 million and two additional terms that could likely change the real estate industry forever. These changes are set to take effect in July or August 2024 and will have a profound effect on how real estate transactions and commissions are negotiated.

There are two changes agreed to by NAR that likely stem from a brief filed by the Department of Justice. First, it eliminates offering buyer broker commission compensation through Multiple Listing Service. Second, it will mandate that buyers and buyer agents must have a written agreement that clearly states the agent's compensation before the buyer views a property.

These two changes will likely impact both sellers and buyers in negotiating broker commissions, but buyers will most likely feel the impact due to the obligation for the buyer to pay a buyer broker's commission. The buyer needs to understand how to structure a real

estate transaction that best suits their needs in dealing with how the commission is paid.

"We predict a dramatic reduction in commissions across the board in the coming months for real estate transactions," said Kevin Hopkins, Owner/Broker, 395 Realty, Overland Park, Kansas, who has more than four decades of professional business experience and expertise. "At 395 Realty, we see the ability to negotiate these charges as solid wins for homeowners and buyers by enabling them to keep more money in their pockets. Our business model has always offered low flat-rate charges or adding our services a la carte, and we know the benefits that sellers and buyers can reap from having more choices.

"395 Realty has been offering negotiated commissions for years," he continued. Kevin and Greg Shahan, with decades of combined real estate experience, founded 395 Realty and were one of the first real estate firms to offer a full-service flat-fee model or negotiated commission, transforming the selling and buying process for their clients. Kevin was the first Realtor in Kansas City to be a buyer's agent in 1986 when it was introduced.

"This is truly a move to advocate for the consumer," he affirmed. "Now, on a national level, commissions are being restructured, as this settlement represents a significant shift in the real estate landscape and reshapes industry practices that both the buyers and sellers will need to adapt to."

395 Realty has offered a buyer program on a flat fee or a la carte basis since the company's inception. "Our buyer service starts at \$2,995; our Full-Service Listing is also \$2,995. The Basic Listing, only \$995, still provides a high level of service but does require the seller to assume some of the duties," Kevin stated. "The Flat-Fee service option does not mean any difference in the level of service; it's simply a different fee structure for the person looking to save money."

For those considering selling or buying a home, now is the time to learn how this change can save thousands of dollars in commissions. 395 Realty's knowledgeable and experienced staff is here to guide you through this critical, money-saving decision-making process. Let the agents at 395 Realty provide substantial services to help you keep your money in your pocket. ♦




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TAKE CONTROL OF YOUR COSMETICS DRAWER!

BY HANNAH FROST

My experience with helping people organize their cosmetics began at an early age and completely by accident. When I was in middle school, my cousins and I got bored while visiting our grandmother. All on our own, we went door to door in Grandma's neighborhood with a cardboard box, telling the neighbors we were doing a "makeup drive" and asking them to donate cosmetics they no longer wanted.



Then we sneaked back into Grandma's house and used what we had collected to paint each other's faces. Of course, when my parents found out what we had done, they were horrified. I'm not sure which was worse for them, their children's greasy clown faces or the humiliation of having to tell the neighbors about the phony

charity event.

Looking back, I realize we actually did those neighbors a favor. It can be hard to keep up with the clutter in your cosmetics drawer. Chances are good you won't have any middle school girls begging at your door for makeup (and if you do, please don't give them anything; expired products can cause irritation or infections)! But let's talk about a few

other ways to streamline your toiletries so you're not wasting time every morning rummaging around looking for one little item.

If your bathroom and bedroom drawers are a mess, you're not alone. And in fact, that may be a good sign. Research shows that people with more driven, Type A personalities are more likely to have an extremely messy sock drawer. Their hidden mess shows that they have their priorities straight; they choose to spend their precious time on more meaningful parts of life.

That said, you may be wasting time every morning if you have to dig through a heap of expired products to find that one eye pencil or mascara you need. Just think; 60 seconds of wasted time every day adds up to six hours in a year. It might be worth taking half an hour to get your toiletries in order today and save the extra five and a half hours for a good book!

If you have 30 minutes to organize your bathroom space, buy some clear containers and sort out what you use daily from what you only use on special occasions. While you are sorting, look for expiration dates on cosmetics and throw away anything that's past its prime. You can usually find a logo on each item that looks like an open lid with a number printed inside it. The number is how many months the product will last once you've opened it. When you buy new cosmetics, take a minute to think about your pace of using them, and buy an appropriate size based on how long it will take you to get through it. If you're regularly finding that your lotion goes dry and clumpy before you manage to use it up, you might need to buy smaller portions. Then store your daily use items at the front of drawers or in a glass jar on your countertop; tuck away the things you seldom need in the

backs of drawers and cabinets.

If you're a Type A, messy sock drawer woman who doesn't have any time to spare for a one-time cleanout, then try these tricks to organize your bathroom as you go. First, store a permanent marker and some masking tape in your cosmetics drawer. Each time you buy something new, mark the date you opened it and the date it will expire according to the package. That will save you the headache of squinting at the tiny logo and calculating the date repeatedly in the future, which may not even be possible if you've forgotten when you purchased an item, like I always do!

Another organizing trick that takes zero time investment is to empty your cosmetics drawer into a large paper grocery bag on the floor. Write a date six weeks into the future on the side of the bag. Each time you use an item from the bag, put it away in the drawer. When you've reached the date on the bag, throw it away along with anything left inside it. Be ruthless. If you haven't used those items by now, you probably won't use them within the next six weeks either, and you're certainly not going to use them up by the time they expire! Consider finding sample sizes for those once-a-year specialty items.

Don't be discouraged if your cosmetics drawer looks like a disaster right now. That's a good sign that you have your life priorities in order. But it also doesn't mean you have to let a mess permanently slow you down. Just try our paper bag strategy today and find yourself with a perfectly streamlined cosmetics drawer in no time. ♦

SOURCES: *lifehacker.com* and *rd.com*.



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JULES & ZOA STATEMENT SALON

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BY JULES MOORE

Q

What does a toner/gloss do and how often should I have it done?

A

Everyone is different, so we take certain factors into consideration. The frequency of toning/glossing your hair depends on factors including your hair's natural color, the desired shade, your home care products, and how much heat you use. We use these guidelines to determine how quickly your hair tends to fade or develop unwanted tones. At Jules & Zoa Statement Salon, we recommend every four to eight weeks based on some of those factors. Here are some general guidelines.

- **Blonde or lightened hair:** Blonde or lightened hair may need to tone/gloss every four to six weeks to neutralize brassiness and maintain your desired shade. However, this can vary based on factors such as your hair's porosity and the type of toner/gloss used.

- **Gray or silver hair:** Toning can help neutralize any yellow or brassy tones and keep your color looking vibrant. You may need to tone/gloss your hair every four to six weeks or as needed to combat any unwanted hues.

- **Lived-in Color:** It's meant to give longevity with fewer long appointments of highlights/balayage. But to keep the tone fresh and maintain hair health, we would recommend toning/gloss every eight weeks. It makes a big difference in bringing the color back to life.

- **Hair health:** It's important to consider the health of your hair when deciding how often to tone it. Over-toning or using toning shampoos with harsh chemicals too frequently can lead to dryness,

damage and breakage. Be mindful of your hair's condition and adjust your toning frequency accordingly.

Consult with your stylist and ask what's best for you based on these factors. At Jules & Zoa Statement Salon, we use the terminology Gloss. Our gloss is a gentle acid-balanced base buffered to an alkaline pH that works synergistically with acidic molecules, offering the best of both worlds. The result is unprecedented shine, conditioning and color longevity with zero lift, guaranteed!

Q

Should I wash my hair before I get it colored?

A

YES! In fact, at Jules & Zoa Statement Salon, we highly recommend clarifying your hair prior to your color appointment. Coming in with fresh hair has many benefits. When your hair is full of product and natural oils, the color cannot penetrate into the hair shaft as well, causing inconsistent results. Clean and clarified hair allows better lift for highlights/balayage and improved absorption for longer-lasting results, especially for gray coverage. Finally, clean hair and scalp will help with sensitivities for those prone to skin reactions and contribute to longer-lasting results. If you are looking for better color results ask your hair professional about clarifying treatments and home care. Our salon and client favorite is Purify from Surface Hair Health. ♦



Jules Moore, owner and stylist of Jules & Zoa Statement Style Salon, knows that the profession of a stylist can be very intimate. While getting up close and personal on a physical level, the stylists at Jules & Zoa make every client comfortable enough to share insecurities and work to help minimize their worries. Collectively as a team, we strive to bring out your best self. It is our goal to help you feel welcomed and loved so we can best help you feel confidently beautiful.

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A HEALTHY JOURNEY WITH HERLIFE MAGAZINE

BY CINDY MCDERMOTT

For over a decade, I have been a contributing writer for HERLIFE Magazine, most of the time composing cover stories recognizing the accomplishments of many women. Their stories are empowering, interesting and far-reaching. Their recipes for achievement are enlightening and I've chosen some concepts to enhance my own life.



These success tidbits were called into action in January 2019 when I decided to focus on living a healthier life. My overall wellness was fine for a 65-year-old female, but I needed something more on this journey, and that's when my *HERLIFE* connections paid dividends.

THE INITIAL STEPS

First, I hooked up with Lisa Butler from FitChixKC, a previous cover feature and our healthcare writer at the magazine. Together, we set realistic goals for me to lose weight and get in better shape with balance movements and lifting weights, many times combining the two in compound exercises. Ten pounds gone in three months would be a good start. Workouts of 45 minutes, twice a week fo-

cused on strength training to build muscle and good bones. Thirty minutes of cardio were scheduled on the other days on my elliptical or resistance cycle. I also downloaded a free app, MyFitnessPal, to plan and track my food. Success must include addressing diet and fitness at the same time.

In less than ten months, I had lowered my goal twice because 30 pounds had come off. I was nearly at my college weight, and I bought new

clothes because nothing fit. Then my wellness journey took another direction that I had never anticipated.

In 2020, I interviewed the owners of Angel Competition Bikinis. Two sisters, Karah and Lauren Beeves, had built a company with international sales to create and manufacture bikinis for con-

testants to wear during bodybuilding competitions. With about a quarter of a yard of material covering key areas of their bodies, the competitors' muscles were honed to perfection through vigorous, targeted training and diet management.

ADDING THE GAME CHANGER

I continued with my healthy journey at FitChixKC and even took up boxing as another healthy endeavor with a personal trainer. The cardio and flexibility this sport demands are mind-boggling, but I didn't have the goal of climbing into the ring with another person. It was a sport that had interested me.

Then COVID hit and my journey hit a speed bump. The gym closed due to the potential of exposure so boxing was out of the question while my fitness training went virtual. And I needed another challenge, another step in my wellness journey. The interview with Angel Competition Bikinis came to mind. Could a Medicare-aged woman be a contestant in a bikini competition? Networking paid off because I found my bodybuilding coach, Jill Buchert, who would take me on as a client.

The first training day started with measurements, weight and photos, which would be continuously tracked as I became trimmer and built muscle. I recorded everything I ate noting calories, carbs, net carbs and more. Consuming lean protein was the goal while many of my favorite veggies would be eliminated. Goodbye, potatoes and corn, hello to Brassica vegetables including broccoli and cauliflower.

I added supplements, which with my food ran about 130 to 140 protein grams a day. To build muscle, you need lean protein. Lifting weights makes tiny tears in your muscles and then you consume protein to build new layers. The work was paying off. My shoulders broadened, biceps grew, back strengthened and many more benefits were visible.

Now, I am in the final months to ready my body and mind for my first pageant. My mentality for this summer event reflects my outlook for this entire journey. I am not in competition against the other ladies on the stage but competing for myself. ♦

HEALTHY JOURNEY TAKEAWAYS

Here are my key learnings to share so far:

- Check with your primary care to ensure you're ready for an exercise program.
- Select a sport you'll enjoy.
- Find a good trainer. I consider this an investment; spending that money is a game-changer. You need an educated eye to ensure you're correctly completing your exercises and holding you accountable.
- Set goals with achievable measures. "I want to lose ten pounds by October with cardio and diet."
- Buy a set or two of good workout clothing designed for your sport. Then reward yourself with another set when you hit your goal.
- Make it a part of your daily routine. Not feeling it this morning? Take your walk or run for five minutes and then see if you really want to turn around.
- Keep track of your stats. I use MyFitnessPlan and the fitness tracker on my watch to hold myself accountable. They're invaluable.
- Be positive that you'll succeed. Negative Nellies are not a part of any successful plan.



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ELISEMARIE DICARLO

"THERE IS ALWAYS HOPE!"

BY CINDY MCDERMOTT | PHOTOGRAPHY BY AMBER DEERY

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- ONE IN FIVE HIGH SCHOOLERS HAS CONSIDERED SUICIDE.
- ONE IN FOUR COLLEGE STUDENTS HAS CONSIDERED SUICIDE.

These numbers have found a personal path to Elisemarie DiCarlo, M.D., MFA, who prefers to go by Marie. The Kansas City, Missouri, native is the founder and executive director of Talk 2 Me, A Program of Hope, that provides grants for counseling including but not limited to anyone suffering from anxiety, depression, trauma, addiction or grieving the tragic loss of a loved one. Since September 2019, this organization has focused on helping people connect, heal and thrive in our schools and communities by supporting mental and physical health and suicide prevention.

Marie has a personal connection to the impact of suicidal ideation on children. Her son, Jacob, had three schoolmates take their lives at different points during his high school years. Knowing how grave the situation was and her concerns for her child, she had repeatedly checked with him on how he was taking the news. He reassured her he was okay. But then one day his high school counselor called and said her son was having a hard time and she needed to come. Jacob was not okay. His high school counselor was his "safe person" to talk to about his feelings.

ALLEVIATING KIDS' SUFFERING

"I want to help other moms. Kids are so good at hiding their problems because they don't want us to be mad or disappointed or

sad. But they're suffering silently, right under our roofs. What we need to do is have conversations to give them space. And we should encourage moms to determine their child's safe person and discuss it with them," advised Marie. "Who would you talk to? Who's your safe person to talk to when you're feeling bad about something? Kids need to have that someone. But a safe person does not suggest alcohol and drugs or escape, but is someone who will direct you to actual help."

Talk 2 Me is based on the fact that talking to even one person can save your life. Marie and Jacob have been exceptionally transparent about their own struggles and continue to influence young people with their message of hope and healing. Talk 2 Me has reached thousands of young people and their families. Many times it's presentations to students or other times it's simply showing up at school or community events to let the kids know that help is available through Talk 2 Me or other counseling services. Businesses are also supported by this charity and each presentation is tailored to the audience receiving the message.

"We can give kids the skills, so they know there is a way through. There is always hope. There are always solutions. I say there are three solutions to every problem and that could be three people to help you or three ways to get there," she remarked. "Take the biggest problem you have and think of three ways to fix it. There is always hope. There



is nothing so dark and terrible that you can't find hope."

RESOURCES AND LIFELINES

Keeping those open lines of communication is critical for Marie and Talk 2 Me. She and her team have provided counseling resources to approximately 7,500 people through resource sharing, promotion of the 988 number and other lifesaving resources. She brings a wealth of personal experience and over 20 years of working with adolescents and adults with mental health issues. While Talk 2 Me is a lifeline for many children, it can be their parents that can be the stumbling block for mental wellness.

"We are letting this generation down if we do not help them with their mental health. We are failing them. I know so many parents who don't want their kids to get help. They tell them to suck it up and figure it out because 'we don't talk about this stuff.' But the kids want the help," she advised. "They want the resources and show up for them.

But many can't get there without their parents and that's part of the journey, too. We all want to say, 'No, not my kid.' I said, 'No, not my kid.' So I get that. It's awful for them, but it's the kids that are in pain and they want the pain to stop."

If your brain is giving you negative messages such as you're not good enough, no one likes you, or if it's telling you to hurt yourself or self-harming thoughts, Marie states that is likely mental illness. "But it's like a broken arm. We can fix your broken arm and we can fix broken brain messages," she said. "Would we shame a person for needing their diabetes medication? Of course not. You take it to make you better. It's not a moral judgment and neither is mental health."

THE KINGDOM ALWAYS RISES

In 2024, Talk 2 Me will focus on a book giveaway to help push its message of healing and hope for children and their parents. *The Kingdom Always Rises* will provide soothing faith for all those affected by the shootings at



RESOURCES AVAILABLE: MAKE THE CALL

- 988: New emergency number for mental health crisis
- Johnson County Mental Health Center 24/7 crisis line: (913) 268-0156
- National Suicide Prevention Lifeline: 1-800-273-8255 (TALK) or text: HOME to 74174
- Wyandotte County Behavioral Health Network General Questions: (913) 328-4600; 24/7 crisis line, (913) 788-4200
- Disaster Stress Hotline: 1-800-985-5990
- Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration National Helpline: 1-800-662-HELP; 1-800-662-4357
- National Domestic Violence Hotline: 1-800-799-7233

“Just be kind and give people a break. Give them grace. We know that people are suffering and that they are not happy. When someone does something that hurts your feelings, maybe you can give them grace. Maybe they’re having a hard time. Maybe they’re suffering. Many times, the person acting the worst needs the most love.”





the 2024 Chief Super Bowl parade. Marie states this manuscript will help kids and families know that they can “get through sad, scared and uneasy feelings together and that from this we will grow stronger.” Marie wrote the book after her own experience of attending the Chiefs rally with her children, but fortunately leaving before the violence began. Illustrators include her children, Madison, Nicholas and Will. Proceeds will go to assisting victims, their families, children, first responders, police officers, medical personnel and anyone in need of assistance with trauma, depression, anxiety, grief, chronic pain, medical conditions and mental health.

“The book is about coping with things by getting the help that you need. Getting through trauma is hard. It causes you to become very fearful and live a life from that place of fear. I want to live my life from a place of love. I want others to have that freedom,” she remarked. “Can we keep the world safe for everyone? No, but we can give them skills and things to do if they feel bad. If you’re intuitive, act on that. I had uneasy feelings at the parade so we left before the shootings. We can’t guarantee everything to our kids, but we can give them skills to thrive and overcome. Also, the book covers that you cannot worry about what other people think. That doesn’t serve us. No one has a life that’s completely portrayed on social media.”

MULTIPLE WELLNESS MODALITIES

Marie shares that a mental wellness strategy may include not only therapy but also exercise, medication and enjoying time with others. She notes that being in nature is extremely good for mental health. When they are employed together as part of an overall plan, impressive improvements can be achieved. The mind can heal from anxiety and depression but only through engaging in a solid plan composed of various coping skills. But not taking action means that the ability to achieve positive goals moves farther away.

“If you need help, get it now. My son wasted a whole year feeling bad. Don’t do that because it adds a layer that you don’t need. If you feel bad, get help. I fought for 30 years with a depressed mind. I don’t want anyone to go through that. I want people to get help the minute they need it. You don’t have to spiral to the bottom,” Marie



noted. “Mental health is health. You get a physical health exam each year and we start with newborns. We look for physical changes all the time. But for mental health, we’re supposed to wing it. But that’s not working because we have higher and higher rates of people taking their own lives.”

Marie states that many times our mental health can benefit by extending compassion to those around us. Research has found that care and consideration can reduce depression and anxiety for the one extending the kindness. These actions can reduce distress, improve life satisfaction and strengthen social connection.

“Just be kind and give people a break. Give them grace. We know that people are suffering and that they are not happy,” she commented. “When someone does something that hurts your feelings, maybe you can give them grace. Maybe they’re having a hard time. Maybe they’re suffering. Many times the person acting the worst needs the most love.” ♦



TALK 2 ME FORE THE KIDS

Talk 2 Me Fore the Kids golf tournament, an important fundraiser, is scheduled for 9:00 a.m., August 26, 2024, at beautiful Falcon Ridge Golf Course. Every participant receives greens fees, cart, new sleeve of balls, snacks, drink ticket, lunch and more.

Register at talk-2me.com and make possible the organization’s life-saving work to provide counseling, especially for anyone who has tragically lost someone they love.

PULLED PORK SLIDERS WITH BLUE CHEESE SLAW

RECIPE & PHOTOS BY LAUREN LANE | LAUREN-LANE.COM



INGREDIENTS

PORK

3 tablespoons packed brown sugar
3 tablespoons chili powder
2 teaspoons salt
1/2 teaspoon freshly ground pepper
3 1/2 lb. boneless pork shoulder,
trimmed of excess fat and cut into
2-inch pieces
3/4 cup chicken broth
1/2 cup apple cider vinegar
1/2 cup barbecue sauce
Slider Buns

SLAW

1/4 cup mayonnaise
3 tablespoons apple cider vinegar
2 tablespoons packed brown sugar
1/2 teaspoon celery salt
4 cups coleslaw mix
1/2 cup crumbled blue cheese
(optional)

DIRECTIONS

Pork: In a small bowl, mix brown sugar, chili powder, salt and pepper. Rub mixture all over pork. Place in 5-quart slow cooker. Pour broth and half of the vinegar over pork. Cover and cook on High heat setting 4 hours or low for 8 hours.

Slaw: In medium bowl, mix mayonnaise, vinegar, brown sugar, celery salt and blue cheese if using. Stir in coleslaw mix. Cover and refrigerate at least 30 minutes but no longer than 4 hours.

Remove pork to cutting board and shred using 2 forks. Reserve 1 cup of the cooking liquid. In medium bowl, mix reserved cooking liquid with barbecue sauce and remaining vinegar; return to slow cooker with shredded pork. Cover and cook on high heat setting about 20 minutes or until warmed. ♦

TIPS

1: The pulled pork can be made in the oven. Bake until pork is just beginning to turn tender, about 3 hours. Uncover and continue to bake until pork is very tender and easily pulls apart with a fork, 1 to 2 hours more.

2: For the slaw, you may use blue or Gorgonzola cheese, or omit the cheese altogether.



After 25 years in creative design and management with Hallmark Cards, Lauren Lane quit to pursue her lifelong passion for food and entertaining. Lauren has reinvented herself at 50 and now pursues her dream of teaching others how to cook easily and entertain effortlessly. Follow her on Instagram, Facebook and her blog so you don't miss any of her recipes and cooking tips and tricks.

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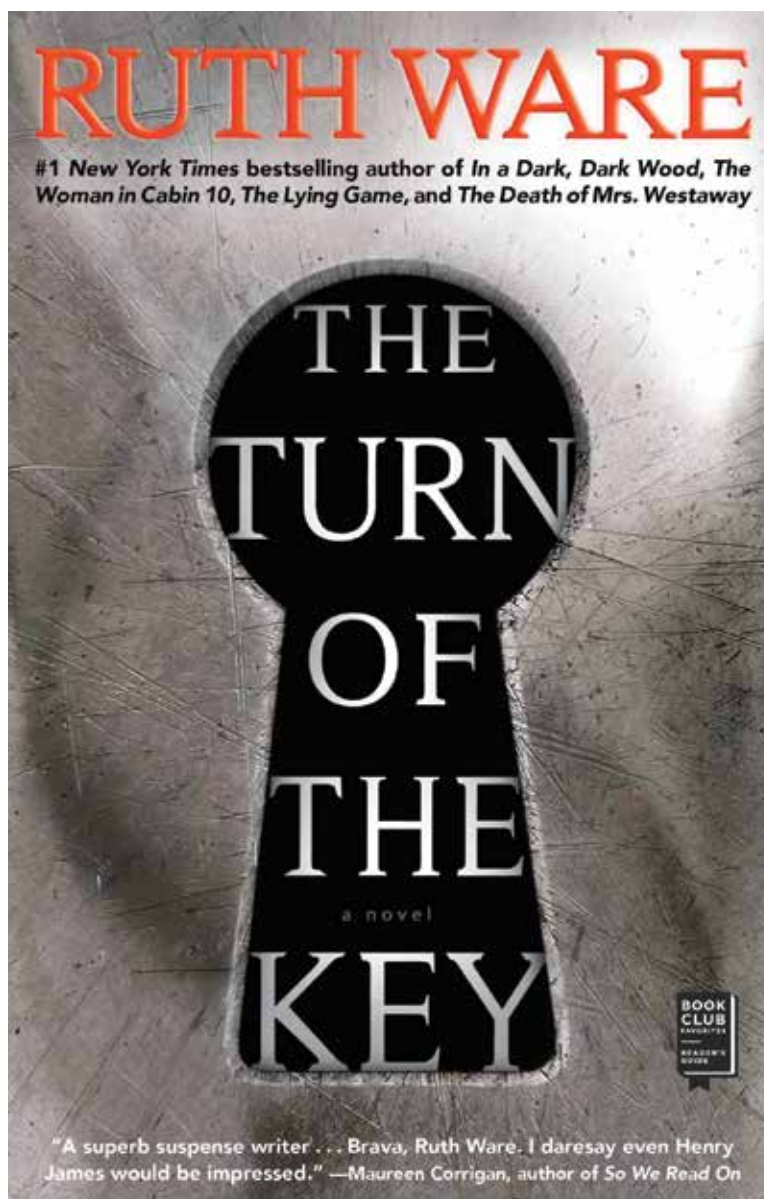
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THE TURN OF THE KEY

BY RUTH WARE

REVIEW BY GAIL SILVERSTEIN

*Pegged as the 21st-century Agatha Christie, British author Ruth Ware holds her own in the mystery genre. Her latest novel, *The Turn of the Key*, delivers with unstoppable, page-turning prose.*



Reminiscent of a gothic ghost story from a bygone era, Ware's newest protagonist, Rowan Caine, demands your attention from the opening with her letter to a lawyer she has never met, protesting her innocence. The crime is the death of a

child, but readers, take heart; you won't figure out which child until near the end of the story. Betrayal, lust, love and a gripping conclusion that keeps readers guessing—this novel encompasses it all.

An experienced nanny, Rowan answers an advertisement for a

live-in that is her dream job with a generous salary. Set in the beautiful Scottish Highlands, she secures the job for a well-to-do pair of architects, Sandra and Bill Elincourt. Rowan has her own reasons for wanting this position, despite that the last four nannies left in a hurry. Her charges range in age from teenaged rebel Rhiannon to moody Maddie, eight, shy, sweet five-year-old Ellie and toddler Petra. Each girl is woven into the story like an intricate silken thread of a spider web; three harbor their own secrets and one tot with the terrible twos behavior complicates matters. Enter Jack Grant, their handsome handyman and driver with a secret of his own. Brisk and unfriendly, part-time housekeeper Jean MacKenzie appears to dislike Rowan, and we are left to ponder what secrets she may be keeping. Finally, there are the Elincourts' two black Labrador retrievers, a pair of dogs that add just the right amount of believable chaos as events unfold.

When Rowan comes for the interview and meets the children, they appear well-behaved. Having traveled to Scotland from London, she spends the night at Heatherbrae House, the Elincourts' renovated Victorian lodge. Part traditional, part modern, the house is tasteful and located far from the hustle and bustle of city life. The writer describes Heatherbrae House in splendid detail so the reader can picture the setting precisely. Outfitted with all the modern conveniences of a smart home, the house takes on a life of its own as a creepy character. The Happy app, which controls everything from the lighting to the doors, adds substantial suspense. You'll feel your own frustration level rise with Rowan's at the numerous tech glitches that happen in the book.



Replete with action-packed events and spooky dialogue true to a gothic horror tale, there are creepy corners, scary discoveries, a poison garden and a haunting past; all this culminates in the death of one of the four girls. Told in first-person narrative style that Ware masters, the reader is privy to many of Rowan's feelings, thoughts and emotions. It is a whodunnit that will leave you shaking your head in disbelief.

When Bill's ribald advances do not prevent Rowan from accepting the job, Ware's dialogue between them leaves the reader wondering. "Bill was one of them. He was my employer. He was my boss's husband. And worst of all, he was...Jesus, I can't bring myself to say it. My hands had begun to shake, and I clenched my fingers more tightly around the stem of my wineglass to try to hide it."

Even Maddie's off-putting goodbye at the end of the interview does not deter the protagonist from taking the position.

"Don't come here," she whispered, still refusing to look at me. "It's not safe."

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"It's not safe?" I gave a little laugh. "Maddie, what do you mean?"
"It's not safe," she repeated, with a little angry sob, shaking her head harder so that her words were almost lost. "They wouldn't like it."

Despite this hint of ghosts, Rowan reminds the reader that she is not prone to superstition or the supernatural. After all, the spectacular salary and beautiful accommodations convince her that this is the perfect job. All too soon, Rowan is left to mind the children as Sandra and Bill go away on a business trip. Ghostlike noises and pacing sounds, china dolls' decapitated heads and a full-on malfunction of the smart home will leave you breathless as events transpire that lead to Rowan and Jack's discovery of a boarded-up space adjoining her bedroom. Just when it seems all can be explained away, the writer throws in a steamy, tension-filled interlude between the two.

Replete with action-packed events and spooky dialogue true to a gothic horror tale, there are creepy corners, scary discoveries, a poison garden and a haunting past; all this culminates in the death of one of the four girls. Told in first-person narrative style that Ware masters, the reader is privy to many of Rowan's feelings, thoughts and emotions. It is a whodunnit that will leave you shaking your head in disbelief. Ware, known for her mysteries that take place in a self-contained setting, has created an empathetic main character. Rowan is caught up in something larger than herself. A complicated damsel in distress, Rowan holds her own secrets. True to Ware's other novels, there is also more than one subplot. But that doesn't interfere with the main story line; instead, it leads to a robust conclusion that allows you, the reader, to decide the final outcome. ♦

HOW TO HANDLE LOUSY LEADERS

BY MARILYN ISAMINGER

What is effective leadership? Each of us instinctively has several responses to this question. An effective leader influences and enlists the help and support of others to accomplish a common goal; she motivates, inspires and encourages; she respects and listens to others; she is proactive in planning, setting goals and exploring new ways to do business.

But what occurs when these skills are lacking in a person with whom—or for whom—you work? According to Dr. Laurence J. Peter, author of *The Peter Principle*, “People tend to be promoted up to their level of incompetence...The cream rises until it sours.” During the path of promotion, the potential leader missed acquiring basic skills that promote teamwork and the achievement of the organization’s goals.

Nevertheless, when we face dealing with a lousy leader, we must develop strategies to keep our own work and behavior on track. Here are some of the most common ineffective styles and suggestions for turning them to your advantage.

BULLY

An executive needs to be assertive and occasionally just plain pushy, but the bully takes it to a toxic level, publicly or privately



threatening and humiliating coworkers. Your response? Take the high road; don’t bully back, become loud or angry. Take the emotion out of it. Calmly stand up for yourself and explain your position. Be the voice of reason, tactfully, firmly and repetitively if necessary. Stress that you are part of the team and will work to achieve the goals of the organization.

MICROMANAGER

Doing the job yourself ensures that it’s done correctly, but the micromanager can be a helicopter, keeping a tight leash and constantly looking over shoulders to manage every detail. This leader has a lack of trust in coworkers and their abilities. Create and build trust by doing your job more than well; achieve or exceed deadlines, pay attention to details, communicate, continue to act proactively.

POOR COMMUNICATOR

When tasks and responsibilities are assigned, it’s important for

the leader to provide enough direction to allow the coworker to get the job done. If he doesn't provide adequate information or direction, the task may need to be completed or redone at the last minute. Head off the poor communicator by gathering as much information as you can first. Ask specific questions in a neutral manner; be diplomatic, not aggressive. Remain flexible to the ideas or tasks you are asked to work on and continue to respectfully communicate your concerns or questions. If you stay focused on the quality of the tasks at hand, even a poor communicator will eventually divulge more information or rationale for the assigned responsibility.

SABOTEUR

This leadership style destroys organizations and businesses. He undermines the work and professionalism of others. He doesn't give credit when due, or may take credit himself for the ideas or work of another. To overcome the saboteur, make him look good; provide outstanding ideas and work product. Nevertheless, keep your own career advancement in mind. Document every idea you provide and its sources. Keep copies of reports; maintain a paper trail of memos and emails. If at some point your job is on the line, you will have evidence to demonstrate your performance and worth.

FICKLE BOSS

This leader may be pleasant but may lack clarity and decisiveness. His changeable directions and mood swings can create confusion within the organization. If you don't know who he will be on any

given day, productivity goes into the shredder. Don't take this behavior personally; there may be forces at work you know nothing about. Limit contact or communication to urgent matters; keep your nose in your own work, stay out of office politics and keep your comments and opinions about the behavior to yourself. This will encourage your coworkers to see you as a leader.

UNPREPARED PILOT

This executive flies by the seat of her pants. She makes decisions based on personal whim, not statistics or research. She often operates in crisis mode. Frequently you will see this leader when you have been with the organization for a short time, and it may have already reached the tipping point. Counter by doing your own research and, if possible, delve into company history and statistics to see trends so that you can assist her with developing plans for the company's future. Anticipate crises and have strategies in mind to overcome the worst outcomes. If your proactive nature can't turn the tide, the company itself may be history.

Practicing these responses to less-than-effective leadership will develop your own skills. In the end, you can't change or improve another person; you can only change yourself. It may be time to brush up on your other skills—networking, communication, technological, interpersonal—update that resume, and leave these lousy leaders behind.

SOURCES: conniepodesta.com, money.howstuffworks.com and theleadershiphub.com.

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A photograph of four children playing volleyball on a red court. One girl in a blue shirt is jumping high to hit the ball, while three other children (two girls and one boy) are also jumping or reaching up towards the net. The background shows green trees and a clear blue sky.

ULTIMATE GIFTS FOR MOM

BY LINDA R. PRICE

Most countries around the world celebrate Mother's Day on the second Sunday in May. Mothers are showered with gifts to honor her and all she means to her family. Flowers, clothing, gifts of jewelry and gourmet treats are a few of the ideas that pay tribute to Mom on her day. This year's list is full of ideas to make your shopping easier.



Flowers are the number one gift for mothers on Mother's Day. Besides the traditional floral bouquet from the florist, other floral gifts are easily obtainable. How about a Meyer lemon tree for the gardener? This is a special gift and the scent of lemons from the flowers as well as the fruit will be a constant reminder of the giver. The Jewel Garden from Lula's Garden is a small planter with three preplanted succulents for the woman with limited space who loves plants. The dedicated gardener might like the GardenHOME

apron tool kit from Amazon. And for the craftswoman, think LEGO. That's right! LEGO has an extraordinary array of pieces in their LEGO

Botanical Collection. These stunningly realistic flowers contain small pieces and require manual dexterity to assemble.

Clothing is another popular item. Sweaters are traditional, and this year is no exception. A bold black and white striped cardigan to go with slacks makes a dramatic statement piece for the fashionista. The Metallic Pearl Draped Collar sweater adds a polished feminine

touch to any outfit—pants or dress. It comes with faux pearls and crystal beading in three subdued colors. Leggings are the go-to pants for running errands and exercise class. Watch Me Melt High-rise Melt Fit leggings with four-way stretch come in extra-large sizes for the voluptuous mom. Comfy slippers go a long way towards making the long busy day right. Mom can relax after a hard day by slipping into a soft pair of felted wool slippers by Baabushka, handmade by the women of Nepal; these come in a slip-on and a boot style for toasty feet. To accompany her slippers, gift mom with washable silk tees and wide-legged pajamas from Lunya for the ultimate relaxing sleep wear. Various styles and colors make luxurious silk Mom's go-to fabric for relaxing at home while remaining stylish.

A Kindle Paperwhite is an excellent gift for the voracious reader. The light adjusts to different lighting conditions automatically. Another prized feature is the adjustable font size that makes the text easier to read for aging eyes. Maybe toss in a gift card to get her started on her e-library? A wonderful reference book to challenge any reader is 1,000 Books to Read before You Die by James Mustich (hardcover). This eclectic reference book is from several years ago but is still a valuable guide for the insatiable reader. For the nighttime reader, a neck reading lamp that hangs around the neck allowing the LED tips to be adjusted to the book page is a wonderful addition to the reader's tools. This device makes nighttime reading without disturbing your partner a thoughtful gift.

Gourmet foods are especially appreciated by a mom who loves something different that doesn't have to be cooked! Chocolate-covered strawberries from Godiva are a sweet treat that shows you care. Other delicious treats are cookies delivered by Levain Cookie Club. The monthly shipment of eight freshly baked cookies is a gift that will be anticipated by any mom. The cookies may be changed for different flavors if desired. Mom may especially like the southern spice jellies to accompany her charcuterie board or meats prepared for a meal. Jenkins Jellies delivers a wide array of spicy jellies to the mom who loves a little extra spice on the side. The seven pepper jellies are all-natural, vegan and gluten-free with pureed fruit. The Cheese of the Month Club sends cheese lovers three half-pound blocks of artisan cheeses from around the world. Cheese makes a hearty treat for late night snacks or a no-cook meal. Tea is a perennial favorite. Check out the Tea Drops Sampler kit. It contains nine tea drops in flavors such as Chocolate Earl Grey, Matcha and Citrus Ginger.

Candles come in all types, shapes and sizes. For a unique experience, investigate the candles at the Harlem Company. Harlem Candles are a collection of candles emphasizing Harlem, jazz and the rich scents evocative of the '30s and '40s, when jazz was king. Lady Day brings back memories of Billie Holiday and her gardenia while Ellington candles highlight earthy, woody fragrance notes. Canadian artist Zoe Tang hand makes soy candles infused with fragrance oils. The candles are "terrariums" containing wax succulents and poppies, among other designs.

However you celebrate Mother's Day with your mom, she deserves to be spoiled. Give the gift of love and joy, and maybe, just maybe, one of these items. ♦

SOURCES: amazon.com, uncommongoods.com, levenger.com, themagno-liacompany.com, loft.com, drapers.com, baabushka.com, levainbakery.com, amazingclubs.com, harlemcandlecompany.com and lunya.co.



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PURPLE MARTINS: NATURE'S INSECT CONTROL

BY CATIE WATSON

The purple martin is what you might call a people-loving kind of bird. For reasons that naturalists and scientists really can't explain, this species of bird not only tolerates people but has become dependent on human-created birdhouses for nesting.



The relationship is a long one, with records found of early colonists and Native Americans building martin houses in the 1700s. Humans are so interested and invested in helping purple martins thanks to the species' appetite for insect pests. They are also useful to farmers because they gang up on hawks, offering protection for barnyard birds.

The largest species in the swallow family, purple martins use existing holes for their nests. The species is found throughout the country, although in greatest numbers east of the Rocky Mountains. In

the West, they are more likely to use abandoned woodpecker nests and natural cavities in trees for nests. In the East, they seek open areas near places where people live and will gravitate to birdhouses. In urban areas, purple martins will roost under bridges, in powerlines and in other

human-made structures.

The diet of the purple martin consists of insects that they capture on the wing, including flies, beetles, wasps, bees, dragonflies and grasshoppers. Some folks may put up a birdhouse to harbor purple martins with the mistaken belief that they aid in mosquito control, a

myth that can be traced in large part to an Illinois entrepreneur, J.L. Wade, who falsely proclaimed in the mid-20th century that a single purple martin could consume more than 2,000 mosquitoes per day to help promote sales of his aluminum birdhouses. At the time of his death in 2007, thousands of ornate birdhouses lined the streets of his small hometown, Griggsville, including a 40-foot tower containing more than 600 bird-sized apartments. His daughter told the *Chicago Tribune* that he was known as the P.T. Barnum of the bird world.

As far back as the 1960s, scientists debunked Wade's claims about 2,000 mosquitoes per day by examining the stomach contents of purple martins. It was established then that these birds don't eat a measurable amount of mosquitoes, but they do help control populations of larger insect pests. More recent research has found that purple martins feast on fire ants that have been introduced to the U.S. from South America, eating as many flying fire ant queens as they can find. This is an extremely helpful form of pest control, since fire ants have painful stings and may attack in a swarm when their ant hill is disturbed.

Some people enjoy having purple martins around for their activity and song as much as their pest control function. Writing in *Heirloom Gardener*, author Cindy Barlowe says, "Social birds, purple martins often engage human workers with song. Swooping low over my head, they frequently lure me close to the tall poles that hold their gourds and serenade with a lilting voice as long as I linger."

Purple martins are so dependent on humans that many people feel protective toward them and there is a conservancy movement to attract them and provide homes. Besides aluminum, birdhouses can

be made from a wide variety of materials, from hollowed-out gourds to plastic or wooden structures. Birdhouses for purple martins are traditionally painted white or a light pastel color to reflect heat. Houses are typically raised 12 to 18 feet from the ground on a pole in groups of four or more since the birds nest in groups. There must be a way to lower the houses and check the nests. Purple martins have many natural predators, including hawks, owls, snakes and raccoons, so care must be taken to keep predators from attacking the birds in their nests. Locating birdhouse colonies in open areas away from trees can help prevent aerial attacks, and a protective guard at the bottom of each pole can guard against climbing predators.

North America is the nesting home of purple martins, but they migrate to South America in the winter. The majority of purple martins travel to the tropical rainforests of Brazil, but others find their way to Colombia, Venezuela and several other South American countries. Before they begin their migration, they leave their nests and gather in large groups to participate in migratory roosting, where thousands of purple martins will gather in a small area, often near a bridge or other human-made structure. After they rest up for their migration flight, they may cover as many as 5,000 miles over a six-week period. When they reach their destination, they roost in trees and around structures such as oil refineries.

You can find specifications for the size, shape and position of the birdhouse opening and other details on the website for the Purple Martin Conservancy. ♦

SOURCES: heirloomgardener.com, nature.org and purplemartin.org.

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LET'S HIKE ON NATIONAL TRAILS DAY®!

BY REBECCA FLANSBURG

On Saturday, June 1, 2024, the American Hiking Society invites everyone to join in on the fun and fitness of National Trails Day by planning some outside adventure. Founded in 1976, the organization and its mission of empowering everyone to enjoy, share and preserve the hiking experience have never wavered.



If you look up the word “hike,” its origin is a bit fuzzy, but all sources agree about the word’s meaning. To “hike” means to “walk vigorously;” some like to say “wander, saunter, meander or trek.” Of course, all of these forms of movement

are in direct correlation to getting out into the great outdoors. Wilderness is increasingly rare in the world and pathless places of raw wilderness are getting harder to find. But going for a walk on a trail doesn’t mean walkers need to train like Bear Grylls or pack enough provisions to last a month. There are thousands of paths most traveled that give hikers of all ages, sizes and expertise levels a reason to for a stroll go with only a little prep and planning.

Hiking is a powerful cardio workout that can lower the risk of heart disease while also working to improve blood pressure and blood sugar levels. Getting into the freshness and tranquility of nature also has mental health benefits. In a world that moves at a fren-

netic pace and is almost always noisy, the peace and calm of nature soothes even the most ragged nerves. Hiking trails can exist anywhere too. From the hard-packed desert earth to the lushness of woodland areas and parks, trail-walking doesn’t require a ton of fancy gear or a long commute. The main must-haves for a great way of trekking are a good pair of walking shoes, some water and treats, and the desire to discover new places.

Another health benefit to wandering the trails is that it can be a family affair and include people of any age or fitness level. To include all family members, arrange the walk or hike so that frequent stops are allowed for old and young, and make sure those stops include a place to snack, drink and play for ages in between.

Some would-be walkers need a little extra motivation to step away from their desk and putting down their devices to stroll the trails and appreciate nature. Luckily, every community, city or state has a plethora of beautiful places designed for those who wish to amble. Start by inquiring with the local park and recreation service about wildflower and wildlife identification walks and other informative hikes in the area. Check with your local historical society for tours and treks to explore historic places.

And don't forget, 108 years ago, August 25, 1916, the National Parks were created to preserve the unique and wild areas of this vast and beautiful country. The options for places to hike within these treasures are endless.

Saturday, June 1, 2024, is the perfect time to kick-start a new outdoor habit! It's an excellent excuse to lace up your hiking boots or trail runners and find new footpaths to explore. Whether you feel the urge to hike, saunter, meander or wander, the overarching focus is to get outside and walk the paths of the beautiful world we live in. ♦

SOURCES: americanhiking.org, awesomejelly.com, goodreads.com and travelandleisure.com.

RESOURCES AND APPS

Terry Tempest Williams, author of *The Hour of Land: A Personal Topography of America's National Parks*, says, "Our public lands, whether a national park or monument, wildlife refuge, forest or prairie, make each one of us land-rich. It is our inheritance as citizens of a country called America."

National Geographic's website, nationalgeographic.com/travel/national-parks, has information and gorgeous photos of some of the more famous National Parks.

National Parks Conservation Association's website, npca.org, shares all of the parks' resources including natural, cultural and historical. The National Parks were created to conserve our wild spaces and NPCA makes sure this continues to happen.

Junior Ranger programs are detailed at nps.gov/kids/jrRangers.htm, where you can see all of the programs and download info and activity books.

The National Park Trust, parktrust.org, is an abundant resource featuring hiking games, other activities one can do in any of our national parks, activity booklets and much more. Kids to Parks day is held on the third Saturday of May, so plan for an outing then.

For geocaching, Geosphere or Groundspeak, an iPhone and a sense of adventure will have your family locating caches in the parks.

For bird identification, Peterson Backyard Birds is a free app that quickly identifies birds with Roger Tory Peterson's innovative identification system.

For flower identification, The Flower Checker app for iOS and Android uses real botanists to identify unknown plants, moss, fungus and even lichen, perhaps therefore making it the most accurate of the apps.

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PET TIPS FOR HOT TEMPS

BY LISA BUTLER

Playing with puppy gets a whole new meaning when you are lucky enough to exercise outdoors. Warm weather offers plenty of opportunities for physical activity in the elements with our beloved fur babies, but the sun, warm temps and humidity can pose a pet problem if we don't take heed the heat. Here are some tips to taking our pets outdoors for superb summer fun.



First, pay attention to the weather. In the midst of summer, try to take pets outdoors in the early morning or evening. Most pups and princesses are meant for indoor love, but if you must leave your dog or cat outside for a brief period of time, ensure they are monitored and have access to shade, cold water and protection from the elements.

BAN THE BUGS

Beware of insect bites. If your dog or kitty is bitten or stung, remove the stinger and watch the site for an allergic reaction. If a reaction occurs or there have been multiple wasp, bee or mosquito bites, make a trip to the vet. Late spring is a good time to update

vaccinations, get flea and tick prevention meds and take a heartworm test.

KEEP 'EM CLEAN, JELLY BEAN!

The summer months expose our dogs and other pets to much sun, heat and dirt. Extra baths and brushing go a long way when keeping Rover clean and looking his summer beauty best!

PROTECT THE PAWS

Asphalt gets extremely hot and can burn our precious pet's feet, so try to walk dogs on the grass if possible. According to the American Kennel Club, if the temperature is 85 degrees or higher, the ground may be too hot for safely walking a dog. Experts recommend feeling

the pavement; if it is too hot for our hand, it is too hot for Daisy.

HYDRATE

Our pets always need access to fresh water, but the summer months call for about 10 percent more water per day when the temperature reaches 86 degrees. A must-have for any dog owner who likes to be on the go with their furry friend is a portable bowl. Collapsible, travel-friendly and even disposable versions are available for ease and safety. Having a portable dog bowl allows convenience; your pup stays hydrated and it keeps them safe in case of an unexpected delay getting back home.

DOG PARK DOO'S

Scoop your poop everywhere. No matter where you are with your animal family, make sure to get rid of waste. Feces can cause problems if left unattended and can cause disease and sickness for pets and humans alike.

CAR STOP!

Pets should not be left in cars, even with the car running and air conditioner on. On a warm day, temperatures inside a vehicle can rise rapidly to dangerous levels. On an 85-degree day, for example, the temperature inside a car with the windows slightly open can reach 102 degrees in ten minutes. Our pets may suffer irreversible organ damage or die.

GUARD THE POOL

Not all dogs are good swimmers and many pets do not tolerate water at all, so supervision around pools and water is a must. Introduce your pets to water gradually and make sure they wear flotation devices when on boats. Use water to rinse pets off after swimming to remove chlorine, chemicals and salt and hydrate our thirsty friends with tap water instead of swim water.

PESKY PESTICIDES

Lawn chemicals and insecticides can be harmful if directly ingested by a cat or dog, so keeping them out of Rover's reach is important. Call the vet or ASPCA animal poison control center at (888) 426-4435 if you suspect your animal has consumed anything poisonous.

BE VET READY

No matter how careful and responsible we may be with our pets, accidents can happen. Keeping the vet's phone number handy and available to all family members is valuable, especially in times of emergency. If you think that your pet is overheated, take it immediately to a cooler area or to the vet. Try pouring cool water over their head and body or place them safely in a tub of cool water.

We probably know our canine companions and feline friends more than anybody else, but when it comes to their health, the summertime months can add a few different challenges. Our furry friends often give us more love than we ever imagined. Summertime provides ample time and weather to make wonderful memories with them through many summers if we approach the hotter months with their safety in mind. ♦

SOURCES: akc.org, humanesociety.org and aspca.org.

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- February 24, 2024 -



Roses and Kevin Adams

WRITTEN BY MARILYN ISAMINGER

Roses Adams, 27, a Kansas City native, grew up in Lenexa, Kansas, and attended the University of Kansas, graduating with BS degrees in finance and marketing. She and Kevin live in Overland Park with two fur babies, a seven-year-old westie-poo named Beau Bear and a three-year-old black lab named Arnold Palmer.

Kevin Adams, 33, grew up in St. Louis, Missouri, and attended Marquette High School in Chesterfield. He played football at North Central College in Naperville, Illinois, where he received BA degrees in finance and business management. Presently, he is the executive vice president of the Kansas branch at Equitable Advisors.

"Kevin and I met when I worked at

Equitable Advisors as a financial advisor," Roses relates. "After I started, it took us a couple of months to be formally introduced and start working together. Once we did, we became fast friends. We spent a lot of the time in the car commuting to our appointments and were able to get to know each other well during those times, from work best friends to best friends, to more



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Amanda Gillian Photography

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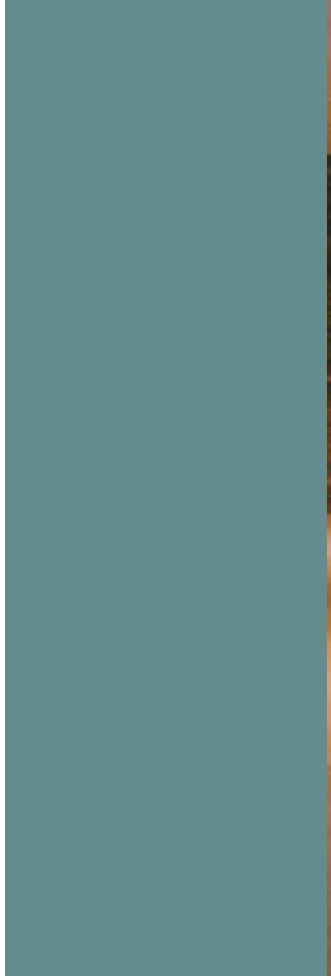
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than friends. It wasn't long after I left that job that we started dating. We are so grateful to Equitable for bringing us together."

When Kevin wanted to go pick out pumpkins in October 2021 at KC Wine Co., Roses couldn't say no. "He was very patient while I got ready for our pumpkin patch date, completely oblivious that I was taking too long and pushing back the timeline with the photographer that he planned to be there," she laughs. "Kevin, my mom, my aunt and my cousins scouted out the location ahead of time to find the carriage where he got down on a knee and asked me to marry him!"

The blissful couple tied the knot February 24th, 2024, in a destination wedding at Le Blanc Los Cabos. "The resort did such an amazing job at sourcing vendors and providing wedding planners so that my groom and I had no last-minute tasks or worries. We took a relaxing beach walk at sunrise, enjoyed some pool time, then had a little coffee date before going our separate ways to get ready," Roses smiles.

"We had our ceremony on a platform overlooking the Pacific Ocean," she continues. "It was whale season in Cabo at that time so we saw some whales spraying water and wishing us well. We then moved to another platform overlooking the ocean and danced the night away with our friends and family. It was absolutely magical!"

Roses and Kevin stayed at Le Blanc Los Cabos for a few days after their wedding, winding down and enjoying Cabo's beaches even more. ♦





MAY 2024

MAY 2-4

American Royal – Pro Rodeo

**HALE ARENA, KANSAS
CITY, MISSOURI**



The party starts early at 5:00 with music, food, drinks and games. Three rodeo performances start at 7:00 each night packed with fan favorites such as bull riding, barrel racing and mutton bustin'. Stay after the rodeo for live music and dancing in the Tailgate Beer Garden!

MAY 11

KC Summer Beer Fest

**GEHA FIELD AT
ARROWHEAD**



Enjoy over 60 breweries and 150 beers, food trucks and a rare opportunity to party on the playing field. Admission includes samplings from participating breweries, access to the field and food vendors.



MAY 26

Celebration at the Station

**UNION STATION AND NATIONAL WWI MUSEUM
AND MEMORIAL**

Music director Michael Stern leads the Kansas City Symphony performing iconic patriotic works by John Williams, Aaron Copland and John Philip Sousa, plus crowd favorites Armed Forces Salute and the 1812 Overture with live cannons. The grand finale features a stunning fireworks display accompanied by the Kansas City Symphony.

MAY 4

Horseshoes & Hats Derby Party

3:00PM, DOWNTOWN, POWER & LIGHT

Whether you're a seasoned Derby enthusiast or just looking for a good time, KC Live! is the place to be for an afternoon filled with exciting horse racing, fabulous fashion, Derby-themed cocktails, live entertainment and unforgettable fun. Place your (free) bets and enjoy the best Kentucky Derby watch party in KC! Prizes for best hat, best bowtie, overall best dressed and more!

MAY 18

Kansas City Folk Festival

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MISSOURI**



Enjoy a free all-day city festival that celebrates the music and arts of our neighborhoods, region and beyond. With song, poetry, dance, storytelling, local art, demos, workshops, food trucks, craft market and more, our folk fest has a little something for everyone.

MAY – SATURDAYS

Lenexa Farmers Market

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JUNE 7

Jazzoo

KANSAS CITY ZOO & AQUARIUM

Be a part of the wildest fundraiser of the year! Join us for a 21+ evening at the Zoo on Friday, June 7. Proceeds from Jazzoo feed the nearly 10,000 animals at the Zoo & Aquarium and provide educational opportunities for children in our community.

MAY 31 – JUNE 2

Prairie Village Art Show

It's a family fun affair! From browsing art, live music, to face painting and hands-on crafts, you will be entertained. Fantastic flavors, sips and snacks from your local Prairie Village restaurants are sure to keep your taste buds satisfied. Grab a beverage and a tasty treat and browse award-winning artists from all over the country. Listen to live tunes and groove the night away!



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CAPRICORN

(DEC. 22-JAN. 19)

You keep trying new ways of doing things; keep revising your approach. Eventually you may come to the realization that something just isn't working and needs to be released. There's no need for this to be frustrating; it can actually be very liberating and free you up for new experiences in the future. If you've lost the passion for something, recapture that passion somewhere else.



TAURUS

(APR. 20-MAY 20)

If you've been getting hung up in too many details, it's time to unhook from them and to focus more on what is most important to you. Frills and extras can cloud things and make them too complicated. Simplicity can be so refreshing at this point and can give you the peace and breathing room to function better than ever.



VIRGO

(AUG. 23-SEPT. 22)

If you're bored now it's because something in you is saying "no" to your experiences. The antidote is to stop doing anything that really isn't interesting to you, and then follow your inner impulses and desires to see where they lead. You've got a kind of X-ray vision that can see very deeply into what's really going on. Observe and act accordingly.



AQUARIUS

(JAN. 20-FEB. 18)

If there are things that have been irritating you, find a barrier that you can place between you and them. Take care of yourself in new ways now. Engage in something that's going to soothe you and make you feel good. If others aren't appreciating what you have to offer, don't feel bad about it. What you have to offer is great and soon someone is going to come along who will really appreciate what you have.



GEMINI

(MAY 21-JUN. 20)

If you find a new way to put your ideas across, you may be surprised at how much more people will listen to you. Also, actions speak louder than words, so if you feel you aren't being heard, DO something. If you have to do it on your own without the help or support of other people, go ahead. You're the only one who truly knows what you need, so go out and get it and don't wait for others to rise to the occasion.



LIBRA

(SEPT. 23-OCT. 22)

To be effective you have to create the right sort of atmosphere in which to live. If you don't like the atmosphere you're in, then it's time to clear the air and disperse any heaviness and stagnation you're feeling. Refreshment and airing out can alleviate so many problems. Allow yourself to relate to everything in a new and livelier way. It's probably best to stay away from anyone or anything that brings you down now.

STAR JOURNEYS

BY JOHN SANDBACH

We're all getting more perspective on our lives this month, and we're seeing how we've come to this present point where we find ourselves. This can help us to decide how we're going to move into the future, and can free us up to change direction and to make new decisions about what we're going to do. Friends are very important to all of us now and any effort you make toward working together with others on a more expanded and helpful basis will yield highly fruitful results.



PISCES

(FEB. 19-MAR. 20)

When things are unpleasant or difficult, or seem like they just aren't going anywhere, there's no reason you have to feel stuck in them. Rise up, be light, detach and let yourself float into freedom. Beware of taking problems too seriously. You can be okay all by yourself; your peace of mind ultimately depends on nothing outside yourself.



CANCER

(JUN. 21-JUL. 23)

Time alone can be very nice right now and can help you to recharge your energy. You're able to define more clearly what it is you want and are trying to do, and as this becomes clearer and clearer to you, your way forward becomes less and less cloudy. If you feel you're having a hard time keeping up with things, maybe it's time to give up trying and go at your own comfortable pace.



SCORPIO

(OCT. 23-NOV. 21)

If you have some alliances that feel limiting to you, it's time to quit them and be your own person rather than trying to please others. The fact is, you will please others more if you just be yourself and be more casual. Take a vacation now, or if you can't, at least take a vacation from worrying about things. Recreation can be a highly nutritious food for you at this time.



ARIES

(MAR. 21-APR. 19)

You're seeing things in a new way, and this can help you both to see what's wrong and to make it better. It's a great month for obtaining some important and key information that allows you to revise your life, possibly in big ways that will make everything easier and more rewarding in the future. Don't be at all afraid to make changes now—they're much needed.



LEO

(JUL. 24-AUG. 22)

Taking on a new role can be joyous and playful now. Your imagination is highly active and needs outlets. Don't worry so much about the reactions of others or whether or not they understand what you're doing. The worst thing you could do now is repress yourself, or worry about failure. Life is a game and whether you win or lose is not nearly as important as making sure you enjoy yourself.



SAGITTARIUS

(NOV. 22-DEC. 21)

There may be things that you need to let go of, but you may not be ready to do so. Don't push yourself; hold on to them as long as you need to. This is a positive time for thinking a lot about the past, and to understand more clearly why certain parts of it keep coming back to mind. There's something you need to learn from it, and as you do you will eventually be effortlessly released from it.



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