

FREE



A GOOD NEIGHBOR NEWS

"STRENGTHENING OUR LOCAL ECONOMY"

MAY 2012

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INSIDE THE TEA ROOM



by Brenda Dwyer ©

Some say it is easier to forgive than to ask for forgiveness and I would have to agree. Asking for forgiveness involves admitting wrong doing. It is humbling and it is necessary. I am one of those people that cannot go to bed at night with trouble on my mind; at least not more than two nights in a row. I almost always try to "right my wrongs" before sundown. Lately I have tried to be more considerate in my actions, more careful with my words, more sensitive and more compassionate. Sometimes it is so easy to be all of these things and there are other times that I may feel as though I am trying to swallow a hard pill. The other day Bob and I were hosting family night and as I was washing

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A GOOD NEIGHBOR NEWS

Owners:
BOB AND BRENDA DWYER



Senior Editor & Writer:
BRENDA DWYER

524 South Main Street
Middlebury, IN 46540

PH: 574-825-1677
FAX: 574-825-1368

Please email all inquiries to
brenda@agoodneighboronline.com

CURRENT READERSHIP:
36,000 AND GROWING!

THE BIG SURPRISE

by Brenda Dwyer ©

Looking back I'm not sure where I was or what we were doing when I heard him speak the words I would come to hear (sometimes several times a day) for the very first time, "I have a big surprise for you." "It's huge!" "You are going to fall down to the ground crying when you see it; you'll be so happy." Or he might say ... "You're going to feel really bad you said/did that when you see your big surprise." I had found three bronze life-size mustang (think horses) sculptures that were all separate but if placed just right would look as though they were running across our yard ... I had remarked more than once how much I wanted them ... but repeatedly he assured me that "No, it's not the three mustangs." It wasn't long before I didn't believe in the "big surprise" anymore. I started to hear it as code for "behave". I laugh as I think back on this and yet I would hear over and over (for what seemed like two months or more) about this "big surprise". Finally, immediately after entering the shop one morning, I was talking to Bob when his phone rang and he abruptly did a turn-a-bout and went right back outside. I heard him say, "Noah". It was all very puzzling to me but I didn't pursue it. Another few days went by bearing the usual exchanges about the "big surprise" and I realized I was becoming desensitized to the whole thing. Just to get back at him every time he would mention the big surprise I would tell him, "it better be my mustangs" or "I am so excited ... I just know you ordered my mustangs!" I didn't believe for a minute that there was a surprise waiting for me in the future - at least not the one Bob was referring to. After all, surprises are just that - unexpected and random so it was quite possible that a surprise would happen in my future. Maybe, just maybe,



publisher's clearinghouse would come to my house and tell me that although I never enter - I am the big winner of their drawing - now that would be a surprise. Well, as is usual with me and my run-away thoughts ... I was so wrong. There was a surprise and, looking back, I would have to say it was what I would describe as immeasurably big.

I walked into the office on April 16, 2012 ready to greet the week. I had "thrown" my lower back out over the weekend (again!) and was having a hard time getting up and down. My sciatic nerve was also acting up and the combination was downright painful. I was at the office for maybe a half hour before I told Bill, our Operations Manager, that I had to go back home to get a medicated heat patch for my back. The look that crossed his face for a split second put me on high alert. Something was going on. I retreated back to my office and thought of another way to ease my back pain when I remembered that I kept an electric heating pad tucked away in my closet that might help. After about an hour or so I realized that since I didn't have a pillow to prop the pad up it wasn't going to do much good. About that time Bob poked his head into the office and I told him I was going home to get a patch for my back. He looked me straight in the eye and said, "You cannot go home." I persisted. I had to go home because I couldn't take this pain another minute. He looked like he was about to tear up. He

knew I was in a great amount of pain but he also knew other things that I was completely clueless about. I could see the "wheels turning in his head" and so I asked if maybe we could go to the local drugstore and get more patches - I needed something to alleviate the pain. We agreed that we could do this over lunch. In no time at all we were off to have lunch. I don't quite recall our conversation over lunch at Hilltop or what led up to the decision but after lunch instead of heading to the drugstore we were headed to the house because he had just informed me that the day of the "big surprise" had finally arrived! Seriously? Was he joking?! I was so excited I forgot all about my pain (as long as I didn't move around too much). On the way home (as we were driving down the "S" curves) I remarked that it seemed like it was taking forever to get there ... I couldn't wait! In the flash of an eye I became a little 6 year old child; heavy with anticipation and without patience ... that is until we got a block away from our street and Bob made a sudden (!) turn to the right ... away from our house. He was having second thoughts. He thought that perhaps he had made a mistake, that I wouldn't be so excited ... that it wasn't as "big" as he originally thought. He knew from things the people that had helped him (with the big surprise) had said that no one else had done this before ... at least no one that any of them knew of. "Let's just go back to

the office and wait until the work day is over before we go home" he said. I had never seen him so nervous ... so unsure. I almost started to cry because he was so visibly upset. I wanted to comfort him and reassure him that whatever it was (THIS IS REALLY HAPPENING! THERE REALLY IS A BIG SURPRISE!) I was sure to love it because of the thought that had gone into it. I also told him that I had to go home because if my heart continued to swell at its current rate that I would surely expire before the end of the work day. I couldn't wait another minute! He then turned the car homeward once more and we were on our way. I couldn't imagine what he could have done at home. All sorts of things went thru my mind - but all of them would have taken more than a day to accomplish. I imagined that it had something to do with my garden - perhaps he had an entire crew of people come in to restore it. About a quarter of a mile away from the house or so he asked me to close my eyes and keep them closed until he instructed me to open them. He asked if I would promise to keep them shut. I did. He then told me to keep them closed because he was going to have to swerve around a branch that was in the street - I kept them closed. I could tell we were turning into our driveway - I could tell then that we were turning to the right towards my garden. I could hear his breathing, could tell he was anxious, nervous, almost petri-

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LOOK INSIDE

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SALISBURY'S STAKE

by Stephanie Salisbury
"For you created my inmost being - you knit me together in my mother's womb." -Psalm 139:13

Mother's day is this weekend. I continue to think of all the blessings I've been showered with by having a mother as wonderful as mine. I've never had to go through the trauma of physical or emotional abuse that so many have endured in their lifetime. I have never questioned her love or devotion. I have never doubted her gut response to anything resembling injustice toward her children. I have never pondered how she might have done something differently. She is, as all mothers should be, a role model to me in every way.

I have this incredible bond not only because we work so hard at maintaining a good relationship, but because it was innate. God saw my mother from the very beginning of time, just as He saw me. He 'knit me together in my mother's womb', a tapestry woven to be exactly who I am, gifted with talents and abilities that are unique to me. All of the doting a

good mother does on her child, that's what God does with us.

When we have questions, He has answers. When we have fears, He has peace. When we have doubts, He has evidence. When we have weakness, He has overwhelming strength. The traditional 'mold' of God the Father is what we've given Him. This old, bearded man wearing a white robe and shining with the intensity of a thousand suns. The truth is, God has no form. We are made in His image, all of us - not just the males, but the females as well. And if mothers are made in His image, what does that tell you about God? He is compassionate and kind, close enough to help but respectful enough to let us make our own choices. He gives us guidance and lets us find the path He's laid out for us, even if it requires us to stumble from time to time. When we stumble, he picks us up, dresses our wounds, and is our biggest cheerleader so we'll get back in the game.

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THE CORNER OFFICE

A word from Bob Dwyer, Jr.



It's more than just a class. On the 19th of May A Good Neighbor will host a Cooking BBQ/Grilling Class. We have arranged to bring Chris Marks the nine time world champion BBQ Master to Middlebury. If you ever thought of improving your

BBQ skills or just want to do something different this is your opportunity.

The class is about 4 to 5 hours long - Chris will teach you everything you need to know about smoking chicken and ribs; from how to pick your meat at the grocery store, prepping, cooking temperatures, seasoning, rubs, sauces and much more. If you've never barbequed before or you're thinking of cooking in the competitions this is a great opportunity - Chris covers it all. The class can make a great gift or just be something special and fun to do on a Saturday afternoon.

We limit the class to about 30 people so please call to hold your spot today. The

cost of the class is \$98.00 per person; this price includes all your supplies and you will be taking home a full slab of

ribs you prepared yourself at the class. We will have

free gifts and lots of fun throughout the afternoon. Brenda and I have attended these classes and have some wonderful memories of them - we want to pass that opportunity on to you - it's too good to miss! To encourage the art of BBQ we do not make a profit on these classes in fact we spend far more than we collect to bring the classes to our friends and neighbors. We would like to continue sponsoring events like this so please consider attending and having some fun. Call now to get that spot seating is limited and your community support is greatly appreciated.

THE CAT'S MEOW



by Brenda Dwyer ©

Taj is beautiful. She moves in such a graceful way. I am mesmerized by her. The other day Cleo, Brittle and I were lounging out by the barn when Stass whizzed around the corner - he was not much more than a blur yet he came to an abrupt stop right beside us and sat perfectly still. Brittle's fur rose on the top of her back and Cleo and I didn't know what to think until she walked past just seconds later. We had never seen her before. She took a few steps here and

there and every time she did it appeared as if she were walking on air; we were so awestruck by her that none of us dared to move. As old as I am I have never seen anything like her; she has huge orange eyes with green rims, her fur is long and luxurious, she has strong presence to be sure and as far as the rules of engagement go - she trumps us all. Taj is breathtaking and to say she is graceful is an gross understatement. After she had explored our yard - and I still don't know what came over us that we allowed her to do so uninterrupted - she walked directly towards us all the while scanning our little foursome to determine who was in charge. She stopped in front of me and sat softly upon the grass. We exchanged "knowing" looks and then she told us about her travels, her life and now her very personal trag-

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It's not often we have the opportunity to lean hands-on from someone like Chris Marks. If you want to step up your game and learn something special about BBQ this is an opportunity you should not pass up!

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- **PAINT SPATTERS**
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- **PAINTING DOORS**
Coat locks, hinges knob, etc with petroleum jelly to prevent scraping later.
- **ANTIQUING**
A small piece of carpet gives a lovely grained effect when antiquing furniture.
- **STORING PAINT**
Store paint containers upside down with lids tightly fitted to prevent skin from forming on the surface.
- **PAINTBRUSHES**
Sock brushes containing hardened paint in hot vinegar. Then wash in warm, sudsy water.
- **REMOVING VARNISH**
Old varnish can be removed by scrubbing with a stiff brush in a strong and hot solution of washing soda. Wipe off loose varnish with an old cloth.
- **POPSICLE STICKS**
When painting, dip a popsicle stick into the paint. Later it will make a handy color guide to match colors when you shop.
- **LOOSE BRUSHES**
Paintbrushes won't shed if you apply nail polish at the base of the brush.
- **PAINT REMOVER FOR SKIN**
Apply cooking oil to skin to remove paint.

CONTINUED TO 7

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Thursday, May 31: 8 - 5

Friday, June 1: 8 - 5

Saturday, June 2: 8 - 2

Garage Sale

CHILD'S PLAY



TALK ACROSS THE FENCE

by Brenda Dwyer ©

Dear Mom,

Although you may read this I know you probably won't remember it and that's ok. I just wanted to say one more time how much you inspire me. You have prevailed through some very dark times recently. When you were admitted to the hospital, my heart was wrenched and I had to go immediately to the Lord in prayer (you taught me to do that by your example). I was given peace which sustained me throughout the time you were being evaluated, tested, pried and poked. I was anxious for an answer but I wasn't panicked or unsettled. From the time I can remember you have had a faith that knows no bounds because your faith is child-like and pure - untarnished and not affected by the experiences in your life. When trouble appeared on your doorstep your faith would simply grow to accommodate it. You were and are an amazing example of God's grace at work in someone's life. I have seen time and time again the Lord come quickly to your aid - how could I have possibly thought it would be any different now? You stayed calm throughout the entire process - the desire of your heart was simply to "go home". You wanted to get back to the house to tend to your roses and your gardens. I wanted the same for you and yet I was so glad that God placed you in the hands of seasoned professionals and allowed a series of circumstances to merge together to ensure that you

ultimately got the best possible care available. Now you are back home and thriving and your smile lights up the skies again! Throughout our life together I have heard many people remark on your kindness, your gentleness, your helpfulness, your caring, your consideration, your loyalty, and your hugs. (You give the best hugs!) I have stood by countless times over the years and watched as you reached out to this person or that one to enrich their lives in some way. You have certainly enriched mine! You never were my "friend" growing up - you've always lovingly parented, instructed, directed, encouraged, disciplined and corrected me and yet when I reached the point of having children of my own, your expertise came in handy early on and we became fast friends as we achieved a common ground that would last us the rest of our lifetimes. I adored you when I was a little girl - I thought you were the prettiest mom in the world - outwardly and inwardly. I adore you still, your beauty (time has revealed) is ageless and is only more astonishing now than then. Even though you are afflicted with dementia (your recent definitive diagnosis) you still spend your days trying to be as helpful and as loving as you ever were. You still give sound, sage advice. You still smile and fill my world with happiness. I love you so and through God's amazing grace I pray this Mother's Day is your best one yet! I am more proud of you now than ever before!

FROM OUR KITCHEN

INGREDIENTS

- 12 slices day-old bread, cut into 1 inch cubes
- 2 (8 ounce) packages cream cheese, cut into 1 inch cubes
- 1 cup fresh blueberries
- 12 eggs, beaten
- 2 cups milk
- 1 teaspoon vanilla extract
- 1/3 cup maple syrup
- 1 cup white sugar
- 2 tablespoons cornstarch
- 1 cup water
- 1 cup fresh blueberries
- 1 tablespoon butter

DIRECTIONS

1. Lightly grease a 9x13 inch baking dish. Arrange half the bread cubes in the dish, and top with cream cheese cubes. Sprinkle 1 cup blueberries over the cream cheese, and top with remaining bread cubes.
2. In a large bowl, mix the eggs, milk, vanilla extract, and syrup. Pour over the bread cubes. Cover, and refrigerate overnight.
3. Remove the bread cube mixture from the refrigerator about 30 minutes before baking. Preheat the oven to 350 degrees F (175 degrees C).
4. Cover, and bake 30 minutes. Uncover, and continue baking 25 to 30 minutes, until center is firm and surface is lightly browned.
5. In a medium saucepan, mix the sugar, cornstarch, and water. Bring to a boil. Stirring constantly, cook 3 to 4 minutes. Mix in the remaining 1 cup blueberries. Reduce heat, and simmer 10 minutes, until the blueberries burst. Stir in the butter, and pour over the baked French toast

OVERNIGHT BLUEBERRY FRENCH TOAST



A WORLD OF WONDERS

KIDS

by Monica Clark

I miss kids! Especially my own kid, but I miss other people's kids, too. Sixteen years working for a school corporation will do that. Each year brought in a new crop of kids: shy kids, sulky kids, nervous kids, bossy kids, quiet kids, adventurous kids, happy kids, sad kids and any kind of kid you can imagine.

As a library aide, I enjoyed the challenges of working with high schoolers and junior high kids, assisting in their search for information, introducing them to the many resources of the library, or just helping them pick out that British novel for English class. "Don't you have something smaller?" (Sorry, all the short books are out right now.) "Help, I just got my paper done, it's due today, and the printer's jammed!" (Go on to class, I'll bring it to you.) "Don't you have any good books?" (Agghhhhh!)

I never thought I would have the patience to deal with "little kids", but then I ended up working with third graders and I found my people! Third grade is where it all comes together. Those fresh, young minds grow exponentially. The children begin to see the bigger world around them and start to realize they are part of it. For some kids and for whatever reason, third grade hits hard. Things take a little longer. These are especially my kids! If you catch them before they are turned off of school, it makes all the difference.

Since I only work with grownups nowadays, my time with kids is scant, but I recently had the opportunity to entertain delightful four-year-old twins. Or, I should say, they entertained me. "Susan" and "Katie" (not their real names) happily showed off their coloring books, their new sneakers—purple for Susan, pink for Katie—and their bright, spring jackets. They shared stories about their cat, their dog and their dead parrot. They sang, "Mary had a Little Lamb", "Twinkle, Twinkle, Little Star", and performed an amazing duet of "Itsy, Bitsy Spider". They had never heard, "I'm a Little Teapot". Well, someone had to show them...

Susan told me, "When I grow up, I'm going to be a nurse." Katie said, "I'm going to be an animal doctor." You know what? I believe them. They are so bright and so clever. They will be whatever they want to be.

That's what I love about kids. Kids are brimming with life's possibilities: "When I grow up, I'm going to be..." Kids just fill in the blank: a fireman, a policeman, an astronaut, a mother, a father, a farmer, a secretary, a teacher, an artist—to a child, the world is wide open.

A child's enthusiasm is boundless and everything is wonder! "I found a rock! I think it's a fossil!" (Wow, maybe.) "Hey, look at this ladybug!" (Awesome.) "Come see this toad-frog-snake I caught!" (Agghhhhh!)

Every year, third graders at Meadowview read, The Best Christmas Pageant Ever. In the story, when the pageant needs a baby to play the part of Baby Jesus, one of the main characters suggests stealing one at the local supermarket. It's an idea. I miss kids a lot, but I'm not quite ready to steal one from the supermarket. At least, not yet...

THE WAY I SEE IT

by Uncle Bill

In the grand scheme of life, we're really only here for a short time. If you spend time being miserable, or dreading the next event that affects your life, you'll waste a big portion of the time you're granted. Being angry and anxious affects your body, as well as your mind. Studies have shown that insomnia, high blood pressure, as well as many other various disorders can be pre-

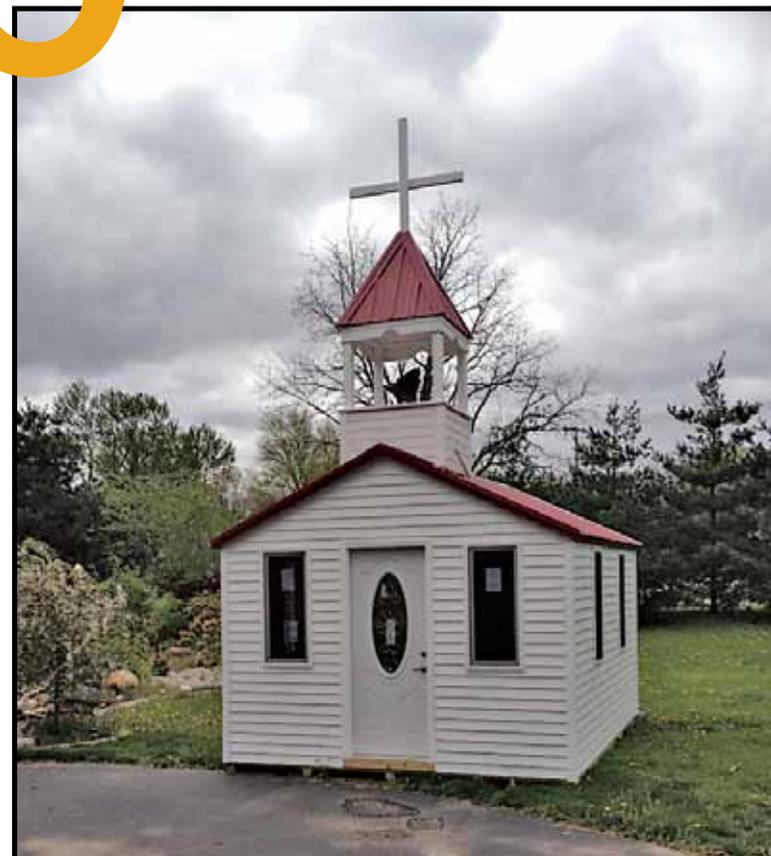
vented if you do nothing more than remain calm, and don't allow yourself to get "worked up". I read these things, and I'll admit, even I laughed at that. It's almost impossible not to get worked up from time to time, but the key is the release. Just like a pitcher and all of his fancy pitches, it's all in the release. Timing is everything... some events you can

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THE BIG SURPRISE

CONTINUED FROM PG 1

fied. I realized that my hands were shaking and I was almost too scared to even think about opening my eyes. Bob said, "Honey, I am going to get out of the car and come around to let you out – please leave your eyes closed – do you promise?" Once again, I promised and with (still) closed eyes and complete faith in my husband I listened as he got out of the car and walked to my side of the car, I heard my door open and he instructed me to step down from the car and then I could feel him leading me away from the car. My final thought before I opened my eyes is that I would see a huge bronze angel with wings unfurled before me – I love angels, it finally made sense and I couldn't wait to open my eyes! After we had taken a few steps he bent down (I could feel him close to my face) and with a choked up voice said, "Open your eyes". I opened my eyes (and almost did fall to the ground) ... I couldn't believe what I was seeing! There before me stood a beautiful little white chapel (I wish I could find a church of my own that fits ...) with a red tin roof ("I miss the sound of rain hitting a tin roof"), a beautiful leaded glass door ("oh, honey – look at the stained glass windows in that church – aren't they beautiful?" "I've never gone to a church that had stained glass windows ..."), a bell tower ("Wouldn't you just love to have a bell at home like that church bell over there?"), a cross at the tippy top ("... even though He's in heaven and not on a cross I love what the cross represents ...") and a little red scalloped edge (a very special touch – I call it Bob's way of putting his signature on my little church) hugging the entire perimeter. The detail that went into it was astounding to me! Tears (of absolute joy) coursed down my cheeks and I stayed pretty much in that same state of blissful shock and arrest with tears flowing for the remainder of the day. I would dry up for a couple of minutes and then think of the image of my little church which



would immediately overwhelm me with the extent of generosity, thoughtfulness and attentiveness my husband possesses and I'd start crying again. Then I'd think of how God answered a prayer of mine in a very abstract and unexpected way and that would set me into tears all over again. I marveled at how he used a husband who listened and who loves me beyond measure to bless me in such an unexpected way. I knew this for certain because earlier as I stepped up to get a closer look the skies that were absolutely full of dark storm clouds suddenly opened up as if someone were very briefly pulling curtains apart and the sun broke thru and blanketed myself and my little white church in a very bright and exacting ray of bright light for a few seconds and then closed back up to a very dark and stormy sky. The timing of that sun ray couldn't have been any more profound, nor was the exacting position of it. Once again, a little piece of heaven had been revealed to me and the feeling of glory that washed over me was as indescribable as its origin was unmistakable. Now, you may or may not believe in God ... there are a few of you who tell me how you trash my paper every month because that's what it is to you ... trash. Trust me, I understand. I

just hope that all of you, believers or not, can experience the overwhelming joy that I am blessed to experience in this life ... I can only imagine what comes next. I cannot end this story without a public Thank You to my wonderful husband ... Sweetheart, thank you for being so very perfect! I love you so! (I pray you never tire of hearing it from my lips.)

P.s. For everyone who had their hands in this project and helping my husband to protect and keep "the big surprise", I thank you. I am humbled by your craftsmanship, your attention to detail, your hard work. I am excited to spend the next couple of weeks working alongside my hubby to complete the interior. I am still in awe of the existence of this little chapel and all that it represents to me, to us; so, to Noah Byler and your crew ... my deepest, most heartfelt and soulful thanks ... may God continue to bless your hands as they master craft all of your future projects. And finally, my deepest gratitude also to Brian Steffan and Rebecca McPherson of Premier Signs for crowning my little chapel with the perfect sign that records my husband's sweet gift to me; I am amazed by your artistry, your thoughtfulness and your consideration. Again, thank you.

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Affairs to Remember Bridal Shop - 113 E. Warren Street
 Amis Chiropractic - 611 Wayne Street
 Awnings Unlimited 825-9768 "We've got you covered!"
 Backroad Crafts - 11262 CR 116
 Bill's Collision Service - 13024 US 20
 Cargo Plus Sales - 304 N. Main
 Cell Phones Plus / Verizon Wireless - 851 US 20 Suite 5
 Classee Vinyl Window LLC - 59323 CR 35
 Country Wood Creations - 11565 CR 116
 Crystal Valley Computers - 830 S. Main Street Suite A
 Crystal Valley Furniture & Floor Covering - 201 S. Main
 Crystal Valley Power Equipment - 11720W 250N
 Dairy Queen - 416 N. Main
 Dirk's Quality Automotive - 108 W. Wayne Street
 Fay Schwartz Attorney - 103 N Brown Street
 Fox RV, Inc. - 13431 CR 22
 Grand Rental Station - 131 Orpha Drive
 Healthy Pets - 851 US 20
 Hochstetler Roofing - 56781 CR 43
 Hoosier Tae Kwon Do, Inc. - 106 Wayne Street
 Indiana RV Connection - 503 N. Main
 Irontage Self Storage - 53070 SR 13
 Jenkins Automotive (NAPA Auto Parts) - 132 Orpha Drive
 Jerry's Standard Service - 101 N. Main Street
 Justrite Nails - 851 US 20
 Long's Convenience Marathon - 995 US 20
 Middlebury Hills Restaurant - 104 US 20 (Corner of SR13 &
 US20)
 Middlebury K.O.A. - 52867 SR 13
 Monteith Tire - 132 Orpha Drive Suite B
 Mr. Appliance of Elkhart County - 53855 SR 13
 Old Creamery Antiques - 333 N. Main
 Rullis Italian Restaurant - 851 US 20 Suite 2
 Shady Lane Welding - 56322 County Road 35
 The Cinnamon Stick - 102 S. Main Street
 The Getaway Tanning & Hair Salon - 426-1 N. Main Street
 The Market Place - 511 S. Main
 The Out Post RV - 57756 CR 37
 Unique Finds Resale Shop - 304 N. Main
 Varns & Hoover - 101 S. Main Street
 Village Inn Restaurant - 107 S. Main Street

GOSHEN:

7 Eleven - 1000 S. Main Street
 Balloon Express - 125 S. Main Street
 BetterWorld Books - 118 E. Washington Street
 DQ Grill & Chill - 723 W. Pike Street
 Ery's Vac Shop - 906 Linway Drive
 From Scratch Pet Bakery - 107 W. Washington Street
 Goshen Antique Mall - 107 S. Main Street
 Goshen Farm & Lawn Center, Inc. - 2413 Lincolnway East
 Hoogies Sports House - 119 E. Lincoln Ave.
 Jenkins Automotive (NAPA Auto Parts) - 1028 Lincolnway E.
 Joselena Fashions & Alterations - 125 East Lincoln Ave

Maple City Hobbies - 102 S. Main
 Merle Norman - 125 S. Main Street
 Monteith Tire - 1021 N. Greene Rd
 Monteith Tire & Auto Service Center - 2613 Caragana Ct.
 North Side Appliance Inc. - 1920 Elkhart Road
 Once Upon A Child - 4024 Elkhart Road
 Rain Drain Seamless Guttering, Inc. - 57273 SR 15
 Schrock Mobile Power Wash - 574-312-1113 (Business is mobile)
 Snider's Leading Jewelers - 128 S. Main Street
 SRP Custom Graphics - 119 E. Lincoln Ave.
 Terri's Flower Basket - 617 W. Pike Street
 Town & Country Appliance - 215 S. Main Street
 Video Visions - 508 W. Lincoln Ave.

SYRACUSE:

Dairy Queen - 700S. Huntington



THE FOLLOWING IS A LIST OF AREA MERCHANTS THAT ARE DEDICATED TO YOU, OUR LOCAL RESIDENTS. THESE MERCHANTS HAVE COME TOGETHER TO OFFER A GOOD NEIGHBOR CLUB MEMBERS SPECIAL PRICING, DISCOUNTS, OR SALES. LET'S ALL GET INVOLVED AND SUPPORT OUR LOCAL COMMUNITIES!



SHIPSHEWANA:

Along the Pumpkinvine - 145 Harrison Street
 Alpha Building Center - 0855 N. SR 5
 Bread Box Bakery & Café - 120 Morton St.
 Classic Auto Detailing - 7020W 200N
 Classic Jewelers - 350 S. Van Buren Suite G
 Country Yard Outlet - 400 N. Van Buren
 Daily Bread Café - 255 E. Main Street
 Dutchman Hunting Supplies - 8435 W. US 20
 Hostetler's Health & Wellness - 260 N. Morton Street
 Hostetler's Hudson Auto Museum - 760 S. VanBuren St
 Hostetler's Main Street Shoppe - 275 E. Main Street
 Indiana Auto Connection - 805 N. SR 5
 J. Farvers Book & Gift Shoppe - 455 S. VanBuren Street
 JoJo's Pretzels - 205 N. Harrison Street 1st Floor (Mercantile)
 L & R Marine - 8435 W. US 20
 L.A. Enterprises - 8275W 050N
 Lasting Impressions Gift Shoppe - 165 Harrison Street
 Lighthouse Christian Bookstore - 225 N. Harrison Street
 Morton Street Coffee - 260N. Morton Street
 Pampered Pet Boutique - 230 N. Morton Street
 R&S Floor to Wall - 9551W 750N
 Red Wagon Toys - 225 Harrison Street
 Shipshe General Store - 420 N. Van Buren Street
 Shishewana Harness & Supplies - 815 N. Van Buren Street
 Shipshe Pizza - 145 N. Village Drive
 Shipshe Rental Center - 0900 N. SR 5
 Shishewana Fitness Center, LLC - 505 E. North Village Drive
 Simple Sounds, Inc. - 225 N. Harrison Street
 Splash Waterpark Resort - 800 S. VanBuren
 Wellspring Components LLC - 1085N 850W

ELKHART:

Bueters Sewing Center - 205 S. Main Street
 CD's Pool & Scuba - 23672 Old US Suite P
 Dapper Dog & Fancy Feline - 54595 CR 17
 Dumor Water Specialists - 4405 Wyland Dr.
 Hickory Meats & More, Inc. - 54595 CR 17
 Ink Cartridge Solutions - 1808 E. Bristol Street Suite G
 Insignia Promotions - 135 Easy Shopping Place
 Jenkins Automotive (NAPA Auto Parts) - 59045 CR 13
 Joshica's Planet Canine - 4411 Wyland Drive
 Martin's Pet & Garden Center - 116 W. Jackson Blvd.
 Paradise Pools - 655 CR 17 (Next to Lucchese's)
 Sautter's Floral & Greenhouse, Inc. - 1725 Toledo Road
 Sassi Tan - 56199 Parkway Ave Suite 10
 S-N-J's Heavenly Hair Salon - 23737 US 33 Suite F
 Spectrum Eyewear Gallery - Dr. David Britzke, O.D. - 56028
 Parkway Ave., Suite E
 Tip-n-Toe Nail Spa Parkway - 17 Plaza
 56199 Parkway Ave. Suite 10
 Tru Colors Hair Salon - 54595 CR 17 Suite 5
 Video Visions - 655 CR 17

HOWE:

Laura's Bakery - 1255 W. SR 120
 Laura's Country Store - 1255 W. SR 120
 R & S Carpet Cleaning - 7030N 575E
 The Gathering Place Restaurant - 407 3rd Street
 Twin Mills Camping Resort - 1675 W. SR 120

LAGRANGE:

Dale's Dependable Handyman Service - 2420S 250W

LIGONIER:

Dairy Queen - 909 Lincolnway S.

MISHAWAKA:

Once Upon A Child - 5936 Grape Road

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SALISBURY'S STAKE

CONTINUED FROM PG 2

The wisdom about life that I've gained from my mother has helped to shape me into the person I am now. I firmly believe God gave me the mother He did so I would learn things about myself that I might never have learned otherwise. I was encouraged to read, to write, to dream, to imagine, to play, to laugh, to be compassionate, to be tender, to have fun, to help others, to pray, to love the arts, to hold on dearly to family because family are the only ones who will love you and be there for you no matter what.

In my mother's womb, God saw me being a writer. He saw me following in my mother's caretaker footsteps. He saw me

fail and He saw me succeed. He saw me taking the reins, and He saw me throwing them up in the air and begging Him to take over.

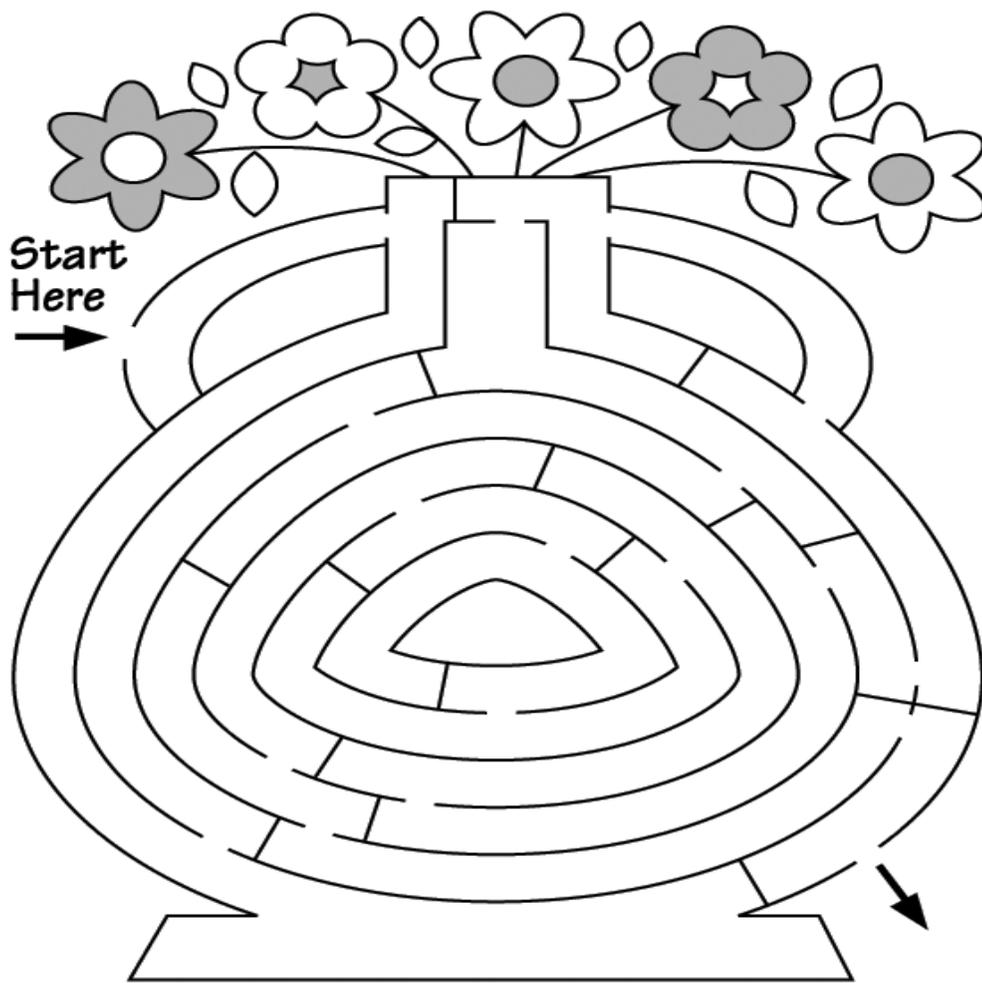
More than anything, He saw the need for me to have a strong, wise, loving woman to teach me His ways and grow along with me as I grew up.

Though it's never easy to decide which of God's blessings are the best, certainly being given the mother I have is one of the greatest He could have come up with, and I'm grateful and thankful for her every day of my life.

"Her children arise up and call her blessed; her husband also, and he praises her." - Proverbs 31:28

KIDz KORNER

MAZE



THIS 'N THAT

CONTINUED FROM PG 3

- RIDDING ROOM OF PAINT SMELL
A tablespoon of ammonia in pan of water banishes paint odor from a room.
- WASHING PAINTBRUSHES
Use fabric softener in the final rinse water when washing paintbrushes to keep them soft and pliable
- NON-YELLOWING WHITE PAINT
Add a drop of black paint to white to keep the white paint from yellowing.

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 3670 N. STATE ROAD 5 • SHIPSHEWANA, IN 46565
 (1 MILE NORTH OF SHIPSHEWANA ON SR 5)

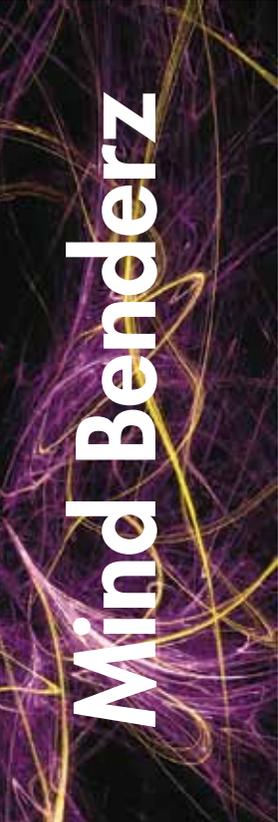
Inspire Your Kids

Take the time to check out A Good Neighbor News with your kids. Get them on the road to good communication and help them develop lifelong reading and writing skills.

SUDOKU OBJECTIVE

The objective of the game is to fill all the blank squares in a game with the correct numbers. There are three very simple constraints to follow. In a 9 by 9 square Sudoku game:

- Every row of 9 numbers must include all digits 1 through 9 in any order
- Every column of 9 numbers must include all digits 1 through 9 in any order
- Every 3 by 3 subsection of the 9 by 9 square must include all digits 1 through 9



					1		7	
		6			2	8	3	
	2	8			3	5		
5		1					4	3
7								8
9	6					2		5
		4	5			1	2	
	5	7	1			3		
	1		4					

WORD SCRAMBLE

Rearrange the letters in each word to spell something pertaining to Father's Day.

RNOOSA

--	--	--	--	--	--

DDDO

--	--	--	--

ANSWER: Sonora Dadd

3						2	9	
	8			7	9			
			1				7	8
		9	6				5	7
6		7				8		9
5	4					7	3	
7	1					4		
			7	1			8	
		4	5					1

WORD SEARCH

S	T	I	C	K	Q	U	I	T	E	T	B	T	S	E
T	O	M	A	T	O	F	X	I	D	E	A	S	T	X
J	P	S	U	P	P	R	E	S	S	E	A	S	S	I
T	E	P	U	R	P	O	S	E	P	L	A	R	K	T
E	R	S	I	A	R	G	U	E	G	T	G	G	L	S
M	C	A	U	R	V	S	R	N	N	I	O	U	L	Y
P	H	O	I	N	O	B	I	R	D	S	V	V	O	E
E	U	O	A	N	N	O	R	T	H	E	E	H	L	
R	A	F	T	S	I	Y	S	Q	U	I	R	T	S	I
V	E	T	F	A	T	N	P	O	C	P	N	R	S	V
M	E	E	T	S	R	A	G	L	O	O	M	Y	T	E
M	I	N	E	R	T	T	L	D	M	A	E	I	A	L
H	O	B	U	I	L	D	S	E	I	S	N	N	T	Y
C	O	V	I	S	I	T	O	R	C	I	T	G	E	V
R	E	R	E	S	I	G	N	S	I	S	S	U	E	D

- | | | |
|--|--|---|
| <p>ARGUE
BIRDS
BUILDS
COASTAL
COMIC
CONTAINING
EAGLE
EARLY
EXITS
FROGS
GIVES
GLASS
GLOOMY
GOVERNMENTS
IDEAS
IRONS
ISSUED</p> | <p>LIVELY
MEETS
MINER
MONTH
NORTH
OASIS
OFTEN
OLDER
PERCH
POUND
PUFFS
PURPOSE
QUITE
RAFTS
REPEAT
RESIGNS
ROBES</p> | <p>SENSE
SIRUP
SQUIRTS
STATE
STICK
SUNNY
SUPPRESS
TARTS
TASKS
TASTE
TEMPER
TOMATO
TRAINING
TRYING
VENUS
VISITOR</p> |
|--|--|---|

CROSSWORD PUZZLE

- ACROSS**
1. AGREEMENTS
 8. TURNED VIOLET-RED
 15. DELIBERATELY ARRANGED OCCASION FOR A CANDIDATE OR CELEBRITY (2 WDS)
 16. BY AND LARGE (3 WDS)
 17. COLORLESS, FLAMMABLE HYDROCARBON DERIVED FROM PETROLEUM
 18. SMALL ISLAND
 19. FAST FINISHER?
 20. ___ GROVE VILLAGE, ILL.
 22. O. HENRY'S "THE GIFT OF THE ___"
 23. LITTLE, E.G.
 24. ARCTIC ___
 26. ALONE
 27. BACKBOARD ATTACHMENT
 28. INABILITY TO SWALLOW
 30. SETTING FOR TV'S "NEWHART"
 31. PARODY
 33. REDUCES THE VALUE OF SOMETHING
 35. SHREK, E.G.
 37. SMALL AMOUNT
 38. BECOMES HARD
 42. GERMAN CATHEDRAL CITY
 46. BULL MARKETS
 47. VACATION SOUVENIRS
 49. "WALKING ON THIN ICE" SINGER
 50. "PLANET OF THE ___"
 52. EASTERN WRAP
 53. BRINGING UP THE REAR
 54. LACQUERED METALWARE
 55. "WHAT'S ___?"
 56. "REVEILLE" INSTRUMENT
 57. STERILE
 60. AVOIDING ASSOCIATION WITH OTHERS
 62. DO MUSEUM WORK
 63. TAKE OVER FOR
 64. EXAMINED BY EXPERIMENT
 65. FIXED (2 WDS)
- DOWN**
1. SHOWS UP
 2. VERY INEXPENSIVE ITEM
 3. DESPISE
 4. AQUATIC MAMMAL
 5. BIG LAUGH
 6. FAMILY HEAD
 7. ADDRESS
 8. ___ GOODS
 9. CABLE NETWORK (ACRONYM)
 10. AMSCRAYED
 11. PRIVETS
 12. NUT
 13. CHIC
 14. ORNAMENTAL PATTERNS
 21. DETECTIVE'S NEED
 24. CRUSH
 25. NO3
 28. CIPHER
 29. MET EXPECTATIONS?
 32. FOLLOW
 34. "20/20" NETWORK (ACRONYM)
 36. TOUCHED UP
 38. LARGE SPINY LIZARD-LIKE DIAPSID REPTILES
 39. FIGHTS AGAINST
 40. FUTILE
 41. "YOUR MAJESTY"
 43. SUB SANDWICHES
 44. SUBJUGATE
 45. FOLDED CARD FOR SHORT INFORMAL LETTER
 48. POSTER HEADING
 51. ANATOMICAL DIVIDERS
 53. CLEAR
 56. GAUCHO'S WEAPON
 58. CRACKER JACK BONUS
 59. ANGER
 61. "COMPRENDE?"

1	2	3	4	5	6	7		8	9	10	11	12	13	14
15									16					
17									18					
19						20	21				22			
23					24				25		26			
27				28						29		30		
31			32				33				34			
			35			36		37						
38	39	40					41		42			43	44	45
46				47				48				49		
50			51		52						53			
54						55				56				
57				58	59				60	61				
62									63					
64									65					

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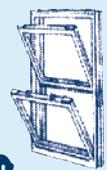
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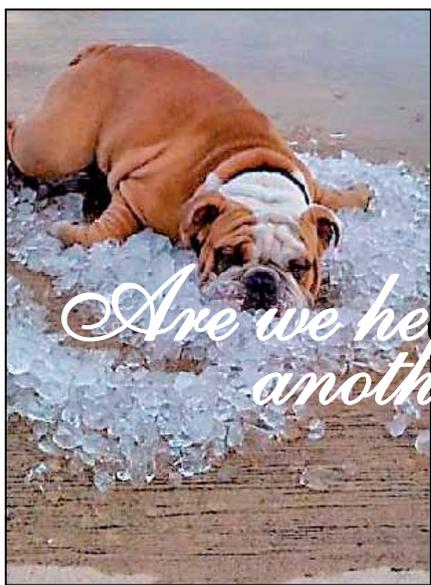


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Are we heading into another dog day summer?

It's just around the corner... the soft warm breezes whisper of a very hot summer ahead. Are you ready? The winter thaw has taken us to Spring's doorstep so don't delay in making sure your comfort isn't compromised.

We all want to feel cool and comfortable in the Summer months...

Let A Good Neighbor check/service your central air system this year! Your comfort is our top priority! Save your sweat for working out and when you're finished we can make sure that you cool down with a cool and responsive system! Let us keep you feeling dry and confident that your home will feel just the way you want it to - when you want it to.

No one wants to turn down the thermostat only to find that the A/C won't kick on. Having your A/C serviced on a regular basis is key... we can make it super easy for you with a annual service agreement! Why have one more thing on your plate to remember? We will make the maintenance of your A/C super simple for you. Give us a call!

It's much too important to take for granted. Do it for yourself - do it for your family!



We take pride in our work. We've been in the heating & cooling business all of our lives ... our company is the third generation to pick up the reins and go forward with what our father and our grandfather established. We love what we do, we are passionate about it and we hope it reflects in our work and how we communicate with our customers.

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Let us take the guesswork out of it for you. We offer free estimates on replacement equipment as well as on air duct cleanings.

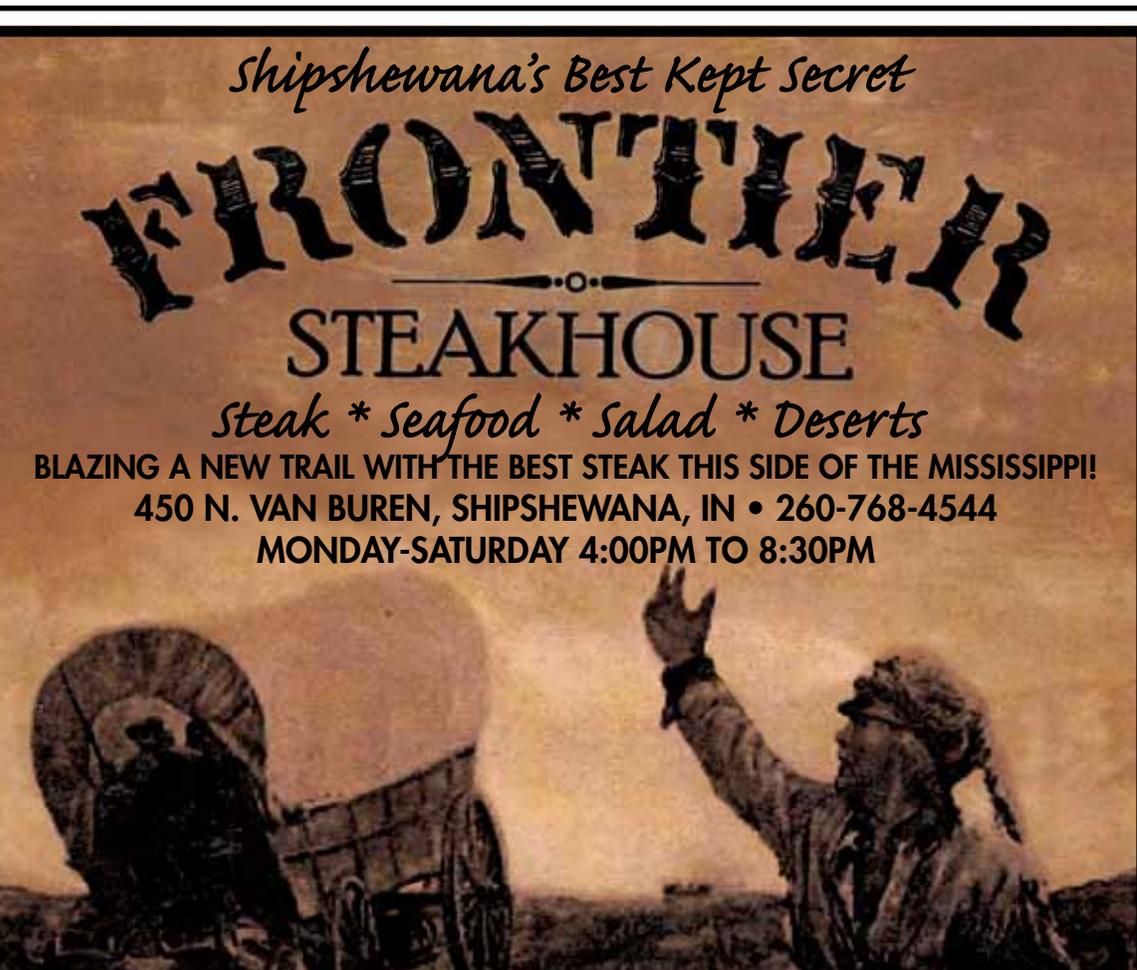
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TOWN OF MIDDLEBURY 2012 PARK AND RECREATION ACTIVITY GUIDE

Park Office 574-3283 • Town Hall 574-825-1499

Email: parks@middleburyin.com

Website: www.middleburyin.org • Check us out on Facebook

The Middlebury Park and Recreation Department, with assistance from the Park Board and the Friends of Middlebury Parks (FOMP), provides high quality parks, facilities, trails and programs for the Town of Middlebury. The Park Department is responsible for all of the maintenance and improvements in the parks and trails, plus maintain the street light flower pots throughout Town. Publica programming has been an increasing emphasis offered by the Park Department. The Town parks provide excellent venues for a variety of recreational, outdoor education and family fun activities. Please feel free to take advantage of the following programs and remember to get outdoors and enjoy your Middlebury Parks.

PROGRAMS AT A GLANCE

Detailed descriptions of the programs below

MAY

Friday, 18th

Fun Friday - Disc Golf

6-8pm at Memorial Park

JUNE

Saturday, 2nd

National Trails Day Bike Ride

9 am meet at Essenhaus

Thursday, 7th

Stewardship Day - Bird Garden

6:30-8:30pm at Krider Garden

Monday, 11th

Summer Fun Starts

Friday, 15th

Fun Friday - Basket Ball Contest

6-8pm at East Park

SPECIAL EVENTS

Saturday, August 18th

Middlebury Riverfest at Riverbend Park

MAY

Fun Day - Disc Golf in the Park on Friday, 18th from 6-8pm at Memorial Park. Come discover and try disc golf, a popular Frisbee oriented sport. Participate in a putting contest and win a prize.

JUNE

National Trails Day Bike Ride on Saturday, 2nd at 9 am meet at Essenhaus. Come ride with us to Shipshewana and back. Learn about the Trails of Middlebury vision, updates on phase 2 of the Pumpkinvine Nature Trail and a new bicycle friendly initiative.

Stewardship Day - Bird Garden on Thursday, 7th from 6:30-8:30pm at Krider Garden. Come out to learn about native flowers and shrubs that will attract birds, then help us spruce up our Bird Garden.

Middlebury Summer Fun Day Camp - June 11th-July 20th. Free day camp to children ages 5-12 that live in the Middlebury School District. Camp runs Monday-Friday 9am-3pm. Must pre-register. For more info contact the park office at 825-3283.

Fun Friday - Basket Ball Contest on Friday, 15th from 6-8pm at East Park. Come participate in a free throw and 3-point contest, prizes awarded.

1ST ANNUAL NORTHERN INDIANA WALK FOR EPILEPSY

On March 31st Roy Moon & Paul Smelser held the 1st Annual Northern Indiana Walk for Epilepsy in Middlebury, IN. on the Pumpkinvine Trail. The walk started from the old Syndicate sales parking lot & went to CR43 & back (about 3 1/2 miles) It was a cold morning but that did not stop people from coming out and supporting the walk & donating to both the National & Indiana Epilepsy Foundations. 48 adults and around 20 children participated on the walk & they raised \$2,200

I personally want to thank everyone who showed up for the walk, family & friends who helped organize the walk,

The Pumpkinvine trail, Syndicate Systems for letting us set up & park cars next to the trail, Harding's & Forks in Middlebury and Mor for Less & Pay'n Pakit in Bristol for donating water, The Bristol American Legion Post & Renee Moon and the ladies from the post who were our top raisers!!!! and Stephanie Williams from The Epilepsy Foundation of Indiana. by Paul Smelser



SHIPSHEWANA KICKS OFF VISITOR SEASON WITH UPCOMING EVENTS

Shipshewana, IN – LaGrange County Convention and Visitors Bureau and www.VisitShipshewana.org are pleased to announce these upcoming Entertainment, Family, Outdoor, and Cultural events in Shipshewana:

FAMILY RECREATION

- Annual Calf Day Celebrated at Cook's Bison Ranch June 16: Enjoy a day of family fun from 10 am to 3 pm. where the music is great, the food is delicious, and the buffalo still roam. Free wagon rides are offered to see bison, and other activities include buffalo hair weaving, bison jerky tasting, pony rides, and music. While the event is free, a minimal parking fee is charged, and donations are accepted for local charity.

OUTDOOR OPPORTUNITIES

- Flea Market Opens May 1: The Midwest's largest flea market is open every Tuesday and Wednesday from May 1 through the end of October, 8 am to 5 pm. Visitors will find 900 vendors everything from produce to pictures, clothes to cleaning supplies, antiques to arts and crafts, and much more. The flea market will operate on extended hours during the Memorial Day, Independence Day, and Labor Day holidays, open Monday through Wednesday, 8 am-5 pm.
- Antique Market Happens June 2: From 7 am-4 pm, over 100 vendors display their goods around the winding sidewalks of the Antique Gallery. An array of quality antiques is available for purchase, including primitives, refinished furniture, toys, pottery and glass, plus much more. Enjoy the outdoor shopping of the market as well as the indoor shopping of the gallery. No admission fee.

- 12th Annual Pumpkinvine Bike Ride Takes Place Saturday, June 16: Choose from a 10.4-mile family trail ride all the way up to a 100-mile ride. SAG stops are located throughout each ride, with pie and ice cream offered at Abshire Park and the Shipshewana Flea Market points. Registration is required with a downloadable form available at www.Pumpkinvine.org.

CULTURAL EVENTS

- Shipshewana Quilt Festival Offered June 20-23: Registration has already begun for this four-day occasion that welcomes over 2,500 guests annually. This festival has been voted as one of the top 100 events in North America, as voted by the American Bus Association. The quilt festival features workshops, displays, and keynote speaker Ricky Tims. Quilt Festival attendees can purchase shop hop passports: For only \$7, the passport will provide a tote for carrying goodies and entrance into eight local retailers. Purchase passports at any of the eight retailers. For a list of the retailers, visit www.ShipshewanaQuiltFest.com.

For more information: (800) 254-8090; www.visitshipshewana.org; Email: Beth@lagrangecountycvb.org. The LaGrange County Convention and Visitor's Bureau is the official agency for tourism marketing, planning and development in LaGrange County, Indiana. If you have any questions about LaGrange County or would like more information about Shipshewana and other LaGrange County attractions, please go online to www.VisitShipshewana.org or call (800) 254-8090.

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DESTRI OF NOCHAM[©]



A GLOSSARY FOR THE STORYLINE "DESTRI OF NOCHAM" CAN BE FOUND ONLINE @ www.agoodneighbornews.com

by Brenda Dwyer[©]
 Abaznar came alongside Musciaon to check on Destri and the Nochis. His concern was great as he had just held court with Mihai. Hangnar and his army were swiftly taking the hills and their arrival was imminent. Destri could hear the bending of limbs and the breaking of branches as Hangnar approached. These sounds of the forest that had been most delightful to her ears all of the days of her young life were now being ravaged and beaten under the ugly guise of one monster's revenge. Destri's heart broke but for a moment. She knew her every breath and her every strength, her knowledge of her people and her land would all need to be reserved for the next

moments that would determine her future. This would not be a war that would last listrays, or even veens. This detestable act would come to its end in dayz, if not hors. Terzin bent in low and emitted a beautiful yowl that brought the Glistners out so that they could send Destri into battle on a note of sweet promise. They all settled at Destri's feet and hummed the most mesmerizing song Destri had ever heard. Her heart swelled with the love of her land and all of its many inhabitants. Suddenly, the vistrillin sounded and Destri was off and running, spear upright and poised to strike out. As she ran through the forest she could hear the hard breathing of the Nutaln directly behind her and the hedging in of the Sem-

bits as they joined her on either side. This was it. This was the moment that she had been born for. As she looked out before her she could see the thousands of creatures that were the embodiment of Hangnar's army with Quirm the quirx leading the pack. Destri had never seen Quirm the quirx before but his reputation preceded him and she knew she would quicken his last breath. She had envisioned it just after waking. The visions were becoming her roadmap into the unknown and they gave her great comfort. The smell of the oncoming attack was offensive and penetrating, Destri spirits lifted with purpose. It was time to rid her beloved land of this vermin.
 To be continued ...

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THE WAY I SEE IT

CONTINUED FROM PG 5

see coming, and you have the opportunity to react. Other times, you're blindsided by things, and your initial reaction is defensive. You can let it affect you, or know that some things are out of your control, and not allow it to fester inside you and cause yourself undue strain. The way I see it, is that while we're here on this journey we call "life", we need to live as if every moment may be our last. Take chances, dance in the rain, do those things you've always wanted to do... and maybe, just maybe, you'll replace that frown or scowl with an infectious smile that everyone will notice.

THE MEMORY BANK

by Bill Raybuck

The trials of life are many, and often overwhelming. Faith is what keeps me putting one foot in front of the other these days. I watched my Mom and Dad go through a lot, and yet they remained steadfast in their belief that better days were coming. I learned a lot by watching them. They went to work, sick or not... they knew that they had responsibilities, and they did what they had to do. I'm no different than most people, I get sick and want to stay home, but yet I get up and go in. I've always believed that speaks volumes about a person. When my Dad had a mild heart attack on a Friday, he was back to work Monday. When my Mom retired and then went back to work for the same company, she went in with headaches and back aches so painful, she often would have tears in her eyes. She actually left work the day she found out she had stage 4 lung cancer that had spread to her spine and brain. She had been working through pain that most people wouldn't have been able to endure. My parents were, and always will be, my heroes. I know they watch over me, and I know that one sweet day, I will be with them again. What are some fond memories of your parents that you carry? What events stand out to you when you think back to your youth? If you're fortunate enough to still have your parents, honor them... love them... and above all else, treasure the time you have left with them. It's never too late to make a memory that you can place in your bank.

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THE CAT'S MEOW

CONTINUED FROM PG 3

edy. Her master had died suddenly. Taj was in the house for three days before anyone came to check on her. When someone did come it was to pick her up, load her into a truck and discard her on our road. She told us that she is 17 years old, has traveled the world and would never have thought in any of her darkest moments that something like this could ever happen to her. We were all devastated for her. I asked her to join our clan. What can I say; I am getting soft in my old age. She accepted and I caught a glimpse of something in her eyes that I hope never crosses the eyes of my children – a gratitude so deep that it can only be realized in the most difficult of times. We love watching her. Even though Brenda tried

to invite her in to be comfortable in the house – she has declined and has stayed loyal to us outside. She has no plumped up pillows to sleep upon – nor the bed of a master who loves her ... she has no toys or fancy dishes – but there have been moments that I have seen the pure joy of a child cross her face and I, too, am made young again. Taj and I "play" when no one is looking. We love to hide-out in the garden together and she has re-introduced the kind of happiness into my life that only comes from having someone your own age to share your days with. We just clicked from the beginning. Just as she never thought she would be abandoned in her life time – I never thought I'd meet the perfect friend at this time in mine. Life is such a sweet treat. Prrrrrrrrrr

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EVENTS

MIDDLEBURY MAGIC TRYOUTS!

Middlebury magic will be hosting tryouts for their boys and girls travel teams on the following days:

U9 - U14 BOYS

Wednesday, June 13

U9 - U14 GIRLS

Thursday, June 14th

Registration starts at 6:00pm and Tryouts will go from 6:30 - 7:30 each night. The Magic fields are located on CR 37 off of CR 20 in Middlebury. Feel free to contact us at middleburymagic@live.com or visit our facebook page <https://www.facebook.com/Middleburyclub> for more information.



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3	9	5	6	8	1	4	7	2
4	7	6	9	5	2	8	3	1
1	2	8	7	4	3	5	9	6
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62	R	E	S	T	O	R	E	63	64	R	E	L	I	E	V
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INSIDE THE TEA ROOM

CONTINUED FROM PG 1

dishes in the sink I could overhear conversation behind me – it seemed as though the little cousins were in the process of learning how to play with each other. Their interactions are sometimes comical and other times concerning. My contribution to the conversation was “leave them be ... they will work it out”. I started to think about how it is we learn to interact with others – it is by example. Having the little ones about is what prompted my “self-evaluation”. I want to be a better example; plain and simple. My heart fills with joy when one of our kids will use parenting skills that are to be commended. (Time and again I see couples with children who do not “parent” their children at all). I wonder if my mom and grandmother ever felt

this same way. Each day we are given is filled with gifts; some simple – others profound, and yet I marvel at just how many times I smile every day when there is so much unhappiness and discontent in the world around me. I will be 54 years old this year and I am still growing, still evolving, still learning ... every bit as much as the toddlers that I find hugging my knees every week on family night. This life is fascinating and I want to be the best me I can be as I continue toward the end of my journey here. Thank God I will be able to ask for forgiveness along the way because I have found that the path can be rather challenging at times and the lighter my load is the easier it will be to navigate.

by Bill Raybuck ©
I've put a lot of thought into this article, and I hope it reaches someone somewhere...

I've made decisions in my life that I regret, while other decisions have molded me into the person I am today. I had hopes and dreams when I was a child, I wanted to work for the FBI and go after the bad guys of the world. We all have this preconceived notion of “how our world should be”, but in reality it changes and evolves so rapidly, that any hope of a picture perfect existence is next to impossible. In place of that original dream, I've done a lot with my life. I've been in the Navy and traveled the world. I

THE VISION

was a licensed Funeral Director and Embalmer in California, a Firefighter and EMT for the city of Bristol, and I'm currently a Master Mason and a Marked Man For Christ. Looking back, I filled the void of never reaching that original goal by achieving all these other things. We've all had visions of what we expected out of our lives, but in the end, the fact that we were here is a testament within itself. Every word spoken to someone is a ripple across the water... every seed we plant; we hope it grows to fruition. Don't worry that you won't leave your mark, because somewhere along the way, you reached someone... someone

who needed to smile, someone who needed to be heard... someone who just needed to be acknowledged. Every day is a chance for all of us to make a difference. It may seem like the smallest thing to you, but to the person who “needs”, it may be the single greatest thing that they've ever known. I hope I can make a difference in someone's life like that. I hope if someone I know is reading this, that I've been the best friend I could be, and that when you needed me, I was there. I urge you, the reader to be the person you're capable of being... push yourself to attain your goals, and above all else, follow your heart.

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