Peace of mind and healthier habits go hand in hand with organization at home

By Sally Rummel
news@tctimes.com; 810-629-8282

We are surrounded by so much ‘stuff’ in our lives and that clutter may be standing in the way of goals we’ve set for ourselves this year.

If peace of mind and smaller-sized jeans are your hopes for the future, January is your month to begin not only a diet, but also a ‘purge’ of many of the unnecessary items that surround you.

“Losing weight and getting organized go hand in hand,” said Betty Huotari, a professional organizer and owner of Logical Placement, LLC in Fenton.

Whether you need to lose weight or not, both disciplines require many of the same skill sets: motivation, determination, will power and a willingness to make changes.

Tracy Boettcher of Tyrone Township didn’t wait until the new year to begin her plan to downsize. She took down holiday décor on Christmas Day and immediately began purging closets, pantries and drawers.

“I’m actually thinking of downsizing into a smaller home in downtown Fenton,” she said. “I won’t need half the stuff I have. I got rid of a lot of coats, shoes and clothes. Instead of keeping old cans of paint, I’m just keeping paint swatches.”

January is a fresh start for many people who want to get their homes and lives more organized.

SUMMARY

January is a fresh start for many people who want to get their homes and lives more organized.

I’ve had to decide what I actually use and why I have an attachment to this ‘stuff.’

Anna Handley
Fenton resident

Boettcher also has two organized upstairs closets — one is a walk-in pantry, the other is a hall closet for clothing.

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Was in and out in very little time.
appointment and was taken right in.
Arrived a little early for my appointment and was taken right in.
Was in and out in very little time. — Ernie M. of Linden

Would I remember?

By Vera Hogan
vhogan@tctimes.com; 810-433-6823

Alexandra “Ally” Brueger was shot and killed on July 30, 2016 while she was jogging along Fish Lake Road.
I have been wondering if, six months later, I could remember the details of my day that day — details that could help the police find a killer if it had taken place in my neighborhood.
Not off the top of my head, I’m afraid. I would have to do a little research to help me remember at least some of the day.
First, I do recall it was a Saturday. What was the weather like?
According to the National Weather Service (weather.gov), it rained that day and the high was 73 degrees.
I remember now, it was raining in the morning, but it cleared up in the early afternoon and the sun came out. Ally was running in the afternoon and was killed sometime between 2 and 3 p.m.
If it were raining in the morning, I probably spent that time cleaning up on laundry and cleaning. If there had been gunshots in my neighborhood, would I have heard them with the washer/dryer and dishwasher going, not to mention the TV?
I think I may have because when hunting season begins, I hear shots in the distance, but don’t really pay much attention.
Once the rain stopped, I would likely have gone out and done some shopping.
Would I remember who or what I saw on the road to the stores? I think I would if there was the slightest thing ‘off,’ like a vehicle speeding or weaving in front or around me, a strange ‘off,’ like a vehicle speeding or weaving in front or around me, a strange

Winter is here... is your car ready?

Arrived a little early for my appointment and was taken right in. Was in and out in very little time. — Ernie M. of Linden

Thanks for the timely service.” — Kenny R. of Fenton

Received a call for an appointment and was taken right in. Was in and out in very little time. — Kenny R. of Fenton

Thanks for the timely service.” — Kenny R. of Fenton

It is interesting to remember that just days prior to July 30, 2016 I learned that my younger sister had been diagnosed with throat cancer. She is cancer-free today, but this was on my mind at the time, I was pre-occupied.
In checking my emails, I was reminded of a few things going on in my life on and around July 30, 2016, details I had forgotten until I went back and checked.
It’s not easy to remember what you did, heard or saw on a Saturday six months ago, but I think it can be done. I remembered much more than I thought I would.
If you live in the area near where Ally was murdered, or knew her well enough to have knowledge of her movements in the days before her death, maybe you can challenge yourself, mentally take yourself back to that time and try remember something — anything.
The Michigan State Police say every little detail helps, even if it seems minor and insignificant to you.
With colder weather comes an increase in weather-related illness and health issues. From activity levels to mood, diet and more, seasonal weather affects all areas of your life. But, don’t let the winter blues get you down — follow these tips to help keep your family healthy and happy during the cold-weather months.

“Winterize” your diet
Some fresh fruits and veggies can be hard to find in winter. The Cleveland Clinic suggests turning to root vegetables like beets, carrots and turnips since they provide essential nutrients to support immunity and boost vitamin levels.

Also, be sure to work vitamin D into your system. It aids bone health and muscle strength, but during shorter, cloudy days of winter, you might not get the necessary amount you need. Experts recommend daily 15-minute walks outside to get some sun, and eating vitamin D-rich foods such as dairy products, breakfast cereals and fish like salmon and tuna. You may also consider a supplement.

Coping with Cold Sores

Mild affliction is very common
It’s winter, which means it’s also the season for colds, the flu and stress, all of which can trigger fever blister and cold sore outbreaks, which may make many people feel embarrassed.

The reality is that this mild affliction is very prevalent. Fifty percent of people will experience cold sores by the time they are 20 years old. Moreover, eight out of 10 people carry the (HSV-1) virus that causes the sores, so people that have fever blisters aren’t alone.

The Herpes Simplex Virus lives deep within nerve tissue. While “dormant,” the virus does not replicate, but when the virus becomes active it starts producing symptoms like a tingling or burning sensation around the affected area that lets one know a cold sore is on the way.

Unfortunately, fever blisters can be painful, itchy and unattractive. While there is no cure for them there are ways to manage symptoms.

• During the duration of a cold sore outbreak, avoid foods and beverages that contain acid, such as citrus fruits, red wine, coffee and tomatoes. The acid in these foods could irritate the skin, slowing the healing process and increasing pain.

• Keep the cold sore moist. Apply a cool, clean, wet towel directly to the cold sore for about five to 10 minutes a few times each day to help reduce redness and irritation.

Women also may want to apply a cold sore treatment under their lipstick or cheekbones like beets, carrots and turnips since all of which can trigger fever blister and cold sore outbreaks, which may make everyone moving. FitBit, Garmin and Jawbone all make trackers with corresponding mobile apps to help monitor goals.

... and, when cabin fever sets in, grab the kids and head outside. Cold weather activities nearby or on a trip away, such as sledding, skiing and snowboarding, can offer additional exercise outside the normal indoor routine.

Always be prepared
When the weather gets cold, the risk of certain illnesses like cold and flu rise. What’s in your feel-better-fast kit when your family gets sick? Items that doctors recommend to have when a cold or the flu hits include:

• Pain and fever relief (ibuprofen, acetaminophen)
• Tissues
• Fluids (especially cool water)
• Soup and tea
• Throat lozenges
• Digital temperature monitor

Instead of waking young children to get accurate temperature readings with a digital thermometer, consider picking up TempTrack the next time you’re at Target or your local pharmacy.

TempTrack is a wearable, Bluetooth monitor that safely and continuously senses, records and transmits body temperature for 24 hours through its free TempTrack app. You can even receive fever alerts so you can eliminate poking or prodding kids in the middle of the night, providing peace of mind for you and much needed rest for them during sick days.

For a happy and healthy winter, use these tips to inspire your family to eat right, get active and be prepared for colder weather.

Keep your family healthy and happy this winter

Source: StatePoint.net
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Mortgage rates inch up in 2017

To look for rates to be in the mid 4 percent range by the end of the year

By Sally Rummel
news@tcetimes.com; 810-629-8282

Mortgage rates may increase this year, but that shouldn’t stop prospective homebuyers in the tri-county area from making a move.

Rates have already pulled back after the first of the year, after nine consecutive weekly increases, following the Trump win of the presidential election.

"With Trump going in, the thought was that there’s going to be economic growth, followed by inflation," said John Ottney of Star Mortgage of America.

"Some inflation is good, wages go up. But it does put pressure on the upside of interest rates," Ottney adds that the increases have not been dramatic. "Rates have been ‘in the 3’s’ for so long, now we’re in the low 4’s. This past week, rates have stayed pretty steady after bigger increases a month ago."

Ottney noted that an average qualified homebuyer might pay 4.25 percent on a 30-year, fixed-rate mortgage, compared to an average of 3.65 percent in 2016.

Rates right now are at the highest level since April 2014, but well below the 6-7-8 percent rates back in the ’90s. "Rates have been historically low for a really long period of time," he said.

He said home purchases aren’t really driven by the mortgage rate as much as they are by a buyer’s need for a home. "It’s one of the factors in deciding how to finance the purchase, but it’s not going to keep someone from buying a home who needs to make a move."

This slight uptick in rates has also created a larger market for refinancing. "Some people are coming ‘off the fence’ to refinace," said Ottney. "People thought the rates were going to keep going down."

The Mortgage Bankers Association predicts that the 30-year fixed-rate mortgage will rise gradually over the year, averaging 4.7 percent in the fourth quarter of 2017. The National Association of Realtors expects the 30-year fixed mortgage to be about 4.6 percent by the end of the year.

Either way, one economist at bankrate.com put the increases in perspective by saying, "You don’t get married because there’s a sale at the bridal shop. You get married when you’re ready. It’s the same with buying a home."

School Board Recognition Month

January is School Board Recognition Month — a time to salute the work of our volunteer school board members and to celebrate public education.

School board members in Linden Community Schools develop policies and make tough decisions that help shape the future of our education system. They bear responsibility for the annual budget and school buildings. They are citizens whose decisions affect our children and build our communities.

Showing appreciation for the important work of school boards should be a year-round process, but too often we neglect to recognize the dedication and hard work of these men and women.

This January, the staff and students of our district are asking all members of the community to take a moment and thank a school board member. Each school will be presenting the board with tokens of appreciation during our scheduled board meetings to be held on January 18, 2017, at Linden High School starting at 7 p.m.

We salute the public servants of all districts whose dedication and civic responsibility make local control of public schools in our community possible.

The men and women serving Linden Community Schools are Scott Maker, Steve Murphy, Mike Murphy, Steve Losey, Peter Ponzetti, Jason Rowden, and Michelle Shyana.

School Board Recognition Month is celebrated by more than 540 school districts whose dedication and civic responsibility make local control of public schools in our community possible.

School Board Recognition Month is celebrated by more than 540 school districts in Michigan in January, honoring more than 4,000 elected school board members for untiring dedication to public school governance.
Meet
SHELLY
DAY

- Executive director of Fenton Regional Chamber of Commerce
- 10-mile Crim walker
- Traveler

By Sally Rummel
news@tctimes.com; 810-629-8282

Shelly Day, 52, has been working with the Fenton Regional Chamber of Commerce for 25 years in a variety of roles, from receptionist to event planner, finances, membership, etc., and the last 10 years as executive director. She grew up on Swanee Beach Road in Fenton, graduating from Lake Fenton High School in 1983 and Baker College in 1986.

You were recognized at the Chamber awards dinner in November for your 25 years with the chamber. Were you surprised?

I was very surprised until just before we began the program. I got suspicious when several people congratulated me on 25 years with the chamber. Dawn Placek, past board member and chairman of this annual event, did a great job planning it and keeping it a secret. I think another reason it stayed a secret is she didn’t tell my husband until the day before.

Speaking of your husband, how did you and Rod meet?

Rod and I met at The Light. People you grow up here in the ’80s will remember it. I was 18. He asked me to dance, and that’s all she wrote. We’ve been married 29 years. How have we kept going this long? I would have to say communication and respect, and remember to take time to have fun and enjoy each other’s company.

Our two kids are adults now. Matt is 26 and has a bachelor’s degree from Central Michigan University in Outdoor Recreation and Events. He’s the director of the before- and after-school programs for the YMCA in Owosso. Sara is 25 and is employed at Dr. Wax Orthodontics. She met Dr. Wax because she needed a dog walker and after a month, Dr. Wax brought her into to work at her office. Who would have thought a dog-walking job would turn into an opportunity like this.

What’s your best memory of your Lake Fenton High School days?

It would have to hanging out with my friends—we were like sisters. Lake Fenton is a smaller, close-knit school so everyone knew each other, even if they were a couple years younger or older. We will see each other weekly and I keep track of others on Facebook. My kids are good friends with my best friends’ kids. What are some of your hobbies?

Rod and I enjoy bowling on a league in the winter and golfing in the spring and summer. I like to walk for exercise and usually set a goal for the 10-mile Crim every year. We also like boating and traveling with family and friends. I have three very special girlfriends I have camped with everyone for the past 10 years. It’s just a long weekend and we don’t go far. Camp Dearborn in Milford. We don’t have any agenda, other than we’re each responsible for a meal. We read, ride bikes, go swimming and play cards in the evening by the campfire. There may or may not be some special beverage involved. We look forward to this weekend every year.

Where do you like to travel?

The farthest I’ve ever traveled is Spain and Italy, on chamber trips. I really liked Spain, but loved Italy. Rod and I said we will go back again. I enjoy cruises, too. We’re going to plan a family/friend trip possibly over New Year’s Eve next year. The place I haven’t been to and would really like to see is Hawaii.

If you could have one do-over in your life, what would it be?

I would probably used to finish my college education. Once I got my Associate’s Degree, I was so ready to be done with school. It’s hard to go back; I just wish I would’ve finished. I’m not sure it would’ve changed my career choice, but there definitely would have been other options to consider.

If you could be a business owner of any particular kind of business, what would it be?

For sure, clothing and or shoes. I am a shopping fool. My daughter, Sara, has a real eye for fashion so if it ever did happen, we would probably do it together.

What is something about Shelly Day that most people don’t know about you?

I am pretty much an open book. Most people don’t know my real name is Ann Michele, Shelly is my “nickname”.

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THE ITEMS SHE STRUGGLES WITH ARE COLLECTIBLES, LIKE AN OLD STAMP COLLECTION AND AN OLD SLIDE VIEWER. “WE THINK THEY HAVE SOME AWESOME VALUE, WHEN IT FACT, THEY AREN’T WORTH MUCH,” SAID HANDLEY. “SOMETHING IS ONLY WORTH WHAT SOMEONE WILL PAY, AND YOU HAVE TO FIND THE RIGHT SOMEONE,” SHE SAID.

HERMAN FERGUSON IS ALSO CLEARING CLUTTER FROM HIS TYRONE TOWNSHIP HOME, INCLUDING OLD PAPERWORK AND CLOSETS. “MY KIDS ARE WORRIED THAT I WOULD END UP LEAVING THE JOB TO THEM,” HE SAID.

HE’S LISTENING TO THIS ADVICE FROM HIS DAUGHTER, CRYSTAL HILER. “IF YOU HOLD SOMETHING FOR ONE MINUTE AND YOU DON’T GET ANY FEELING FROM IT, THEN GET RID OF IT.”

HUOTARI BELIEVES THAT MAKING A WHOLE HOUSEFUL OF DECISIONS AT ONCE CAN BE OVERWHELMING, SO SHE ADVISES PEOPLE TO BREAK ORGANIZATIONAL GOALS INTO MANAGEABLE STEPS.

“HAVE A PROJECT A MONTH,” SHE SAID. “SAY TO YOURSELF, ‘I’M GOING TO WORK ON THE GARAGE THE FIRST SATURDAY OF THE MONTH,’ THEN SCHEDULE IT ON YOUR CALENDAR AND KEEP IT LIKE YOU WOULD AN APPOINTMENT. HAVE WATER AND SNACKS ON HAND, AND SET A TIMER TO KEEP YOU ON TASK.”

HUOTARI WILL BE TEACHING HER ORGANIZATIONAL SKILLS AT A SPECIAL SEMINAR, “HOW TO ATTACK YOUR KITCHEN PANTRY AND CUPBOARDS” AT THE GRAND BLANC-MCFARLIN LIBRARY ON THURSDAY, JAN. 12 AT 6:30 P.M.

“WE’LL ALSO WORK ON JUNK DRAWERS AND ALL THAT TUPPERWARE,” SHE SAID.

The items she struggles with are collectibles, like an old stamp collection and an old slide viewer. “We think they have some awesome value, when it fact, they aren’t worth much,” said Handley. “Something is only worth what someone will pay, and you have to find the right someone. I’ve been dragging my stamp collection around since I was 11 years old.”

Herman Ferguson is also clearing clutter from his Tyrone Township home, including old paperwork and closets. “My kids are worried that I would end up leaving the job to them,” he said.

He’s listening to this advice from his daughter, Crystal Hiler. “If you hold something for one minute and you don’t get any feeling from it, then get rid of it.”

Huotari believes that making a whole houseful of decisions at once can be overwhelming, so she advises people to break organizational goals into manageable steps.

“Have a project a month,” she said. “Say to yourself, ‘I’m going to work on the garage the first Saturday of the month,’ then schedule it on your calendar and keep it like you would an appointment. Have water and snacks on hand, and set a timer to keep you on task.”

Huotari will be teaching her organizational skills at a special seminar, “How to attack your kitchen pantry and cupboards” at the Grand Blanc-McFarlin Library on Thursday, Jan. 12 at 6:30 p.m.

“We’ll also work on junk drawers and all that Tupperware,” she said.

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Marie Howe

Suzanne M. Gauthier
Suzanne M. Gauthier - age 64, of Plainwell, MI passed away Thursday, January 5, 2017. Suzanne was born December 10, 1952 in Flint, to Vincent and Loretta (Coswell) Gauthier. She was united in marriage to Wesley “Ves” VonSeggern on November 5, 1982. Suzanne is survived by her husband, Wes VonSeggern; son, Aaron VonSeggern; mother, Loretta Gauthier; siblings, John (Shelly) Gauthier and Ed (Kelly) Gauthier; and several nieces and nephews. Suzanne was preceded in death by her father, Vincent; and brother, James Gauthier. The family will greet friends on Sunday, January 8, 2017 from 2-5 PM at Langeland Family Funeral Homes, Westside Chapel, 3926 G. St. Funeral Mass will be held on Monday, January 9, 2017, 11 AM at St. Margaret Catholic Church, 766 Farmer St., Otsego, MI 49078. Fr. Benjamin Huynh officiating. A private burial will take place at a later date. Memorial in Suzanne’s name may be directed to Multiple System Atrophy Coalition, multiple-systematrophy.org or to Wings of Hope Hospice, Allegan. For obituary and condolences, please see Suzanne’s personalized page at www.langelands.com.

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Are your teeth like stars that come out at night?
Despite thoughtlessness kindness is the best way

DEAR AMY:
My husband and I have two adult children, and between them they have four young children. They live in other states and are happy and doing things rarely-wise. Sometimes when they are visiting us in our home state we host a large family gathering, but for everyone. My husband and I are hurt that no one from our families, our siblings or his parents, ever ask about them at other times of the year. We always care enough to ask them about their children and grandchildren: How are they doing? What’s new with them? We hear many stories about their grandchildren, the newest cute thing little Sally has said or done. When we do interject with news of our children or our grandchildren, there is total disinterest. I don’t feel like I am actually bringing. It seems that since they live far away from us that they simply don’t matter as much as those who live nearby. It just seems rude and thoughtless. Are they just poor conversationalists? Any suggestions on how we could handle this? — Loving Parents and Grandparents

DEAR LOVING:
Yes, this disinterest is rude and thoughtless. These family members are poor conversationalists. You could make this observation: “Do you realize that you never ask about our kids and grandchildren?” But don’t let this rudeness change you. Your kindness is the right way to behave.

Is medication risk worth the benefit?

DEAR DR. ROACH:
I am a 76-year-old woman with diabetes. My body, as I have been told, is bad with arthritis, for which I have been prescribed Celebrex. I have been taking it for a few months now, and am definitely moving around with a lot less pain. I recently watched a program on TV that the entire hour to Celebrex. It scared me out of my wits upon hearing the side effects. I am asking your advice on whether to stop taking the Celebrex. — S.A.

ANSWER: All medicines have risks, and in order to decide whether you should keep taking the medicine, you need to really understand what the risks are and balance them against the benefits you feel in your ability to move around more easily. In the case of Celebrex, we have a pretty good idea of what the risks are. Like all related drugs (including Vioxx and Bextra), celecoxib (Celebrex) can damage the kidneys, so it isn’t recommended for people with kidney disease. There also can be allergic reactions, which may be related to allergies to sulfa drugs. A few people have had vision changes. However, the most concerning risk is heart disease — both heart attacks and heart failure. These risks definitely are increased among users of Celebrex. However, the absolute risk is small. There were about two extra cases of all heart events, including heart failure, per thousand people taking 400 mg once daily, and six extra events in people taking 400 mg twice daily. Those risks probably are higher if you are at increased risk for heart disease (which you probably are, because of your diabetes), but it still means less than 1 percent of people per year. If the medicine isn’t helping, the risk certainly isn’t worth it. However, only you can decide if the risk is worth the benefit. Drug companies get into big trouble when they try to hide the risks of their medications, and honestly demands that we admit that all drugs and supplements have risks. Only you can make that decision, but I think it’s up to us as doctors to have a frank discussion, especially about medications intended to be taken long term.

Dr. Roach regrets that he is unable to answer individual letters, but will incorporate them in the column whenever possible. Readers may email questions to ToYourGoodHealth@med.cornell.edu. To view and order health pamphlets, visit www.rbmamall.com, or write to Good Health, Dr. Roach, P.O. Box 5364, Buffalo, NY 14226. ©2017 King Features Synd., Inc. All Rights Reserved.
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