

HEALTHY, WEALTHY, AND WISE

Practical Knowledge for Everyday Living



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Agent's Corner

Happy New Year!

The year 2006 is over. Let go of the disappointments of last year, but cherish the accomplishments. Tear down the rearview mirror of your life—never look back.

The upcoming year is going to be a great one—full of friends, family, and fun! Remember to smile and laugh as often as possible.

Make the most of your life. ☺

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DID YOU KNOW?

Iceland consumes more Coca Cola per capita than any other nation.



Tom Sawyer was the first novel ever written on a typewriter.



No NFL team that plays its home games in a domed stadium has ever won a Super Bowl.



Cat urine glows under a blacklight.

Consumer Alert: Energy Drinks

They come in small quantities that pack a big wallop. They're targeted towards teens and young adults and are advertised as cool and sexy.

What are they? Energy drinks.

Their popularity has increased exponentially in recent years, sparking controversy and concern.

Energy drinks such as Red Bull, Rockstar, Monster, and the new Cocaine promise to provide the consumer with instant energy to keep them going in a busy world.

Most of these drinks have exotic formula-

tions, with various herbal ingredients topping the list. However, what provides the energy jolt is a super-sized quantity of the common stimulant caffeine. Massive quantities of sugar are also added for good measure.

The final verdict has not been rendered regarding the nutritional hazards of energy drinks, if any. However, it is well documented that excess amounts of caffeine can cause dehydration, headache, and nausea. Too much sugar can lead to weight gain and cardiovascular problems.

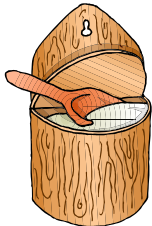
Drink at your own risk!



SECTION A: THE GOOD LIFE



The Bitter Side of Sweet?



Artificial sweeteners are 200 to 13,000 times sweeter than sugar.

Aspartame. Saccharin. Sucralose. Neotame. Acesulfame K. Polyols.

Huh?

These are the chemical names of many artificial sweeteners that you may know as NutraSweet, Sweet 'n Low, and Splenda.

These FDA approved substances are common ingre-

dients in many low-calorie foods and beverages that are popular in the United States such as diet drinks, candies, cookies, and other sweets.

Many of these sweeteners are derived from sugar and are 200 to 13,000 times sweeter.

These substances have been shown to be safe to humans, although many

are still undergoing further testing.

Some of the complaints about sweeteners are that they have a bitter aftertaste and a slimy “mouthfeel” — meaning that they leave a film inside the mouth.

If you’re craving sweet without the calories, sweeteners are for you. If you prefer natural sweetness, choose sugar.

The Price of Nostalgia

The days when gas was less than \$2.00 a gallon are but a distant memory. Fifty years ago, the cost of goods was a lot less. But were they really cheaper?

Here are a few prices then and now. Prices in parentheses reflect the adjusted price with current inflation.

Refrigerator

1947: \$200 (\$1810)

2007: \$1800 – \$3600

TV

1947: \$445 (\$4027);
12-in. black & white

2007: \$1500; 42-in.
plasma screen

Computer

1947: \$500,000
(\$4, 524,664)

2007: \$1099

Beer (12 oz. can)

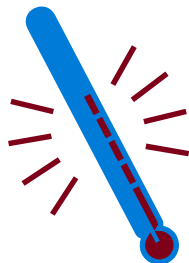
1947: 15¢ (\$1.36)

2007: 66¢

In the end, prices are all relative to the times.

“Only a fool tests the depth of the water with both feet.”

African Proverb



Even small amounts of mercury can be toxic. Handle spills with care.

Hidden Poison: Mercury

Mercury can be found in many common household items, including thermometers, thermostats, fluorescent lamps, and appliance switches. Mercury and its compounds are extremely toxic and most household items that contain it are safe unless

they are broken.

Always properly dispose of items that contain mercury. Never throw them away in the household trash. Call the local trash company to find out how to properly handle these items.

When replacing items that

contain mercury, look for mercury-free alternatives.

Following the proper procedure, you can clean a small mercury spill yourself. Vacuuming a mercury spill puts mercury into the air. Sweeping mercury breaks apart the beads and spreads them.

SECTION B: HOME ON THE RANGE



Shades of Chocolate

If only chocolate was a vegetable. Then we wouldn't have to feel so guilty about eating it.

But do we really need to feel guilty?

Chocolate has a lot of beneficial qualities. It's high in the minerals potassium and magnesium, both of which are essential for bone health and

heart function. It is also a good source of vitamin D, vitamin E (an antioxidant), and the B vitamins thiamin and riboflavin.

The darker the chocolate, the healthier it is for you. Dark chocolate—the kind with a higher cocoa content—contains more nutrients than milk chocolate.

Why? Because milk

chocolate contains more sugar than its darker counterpart. Also, studies have shown that milk may interfere with the absorption of antioxidants from chocolate.

As for white chocolate, it's not really chocolate. It contains no cocoa (that's why it's white) and therefore none of the nutrients cocoa has to offer.



Dark chocolate can provide you with essential vitamins and minerals.

E. coli: Tiny but Dangerous

E. coli is a very unassuming organism. It invades your body and takes up residence, causing you severe discomfort in the process.

E. coli is everywhere. Living mainly in the intestinal tracts of cattle and humans, it can make its way—via poor hygiene

practices—into fresh food sources, where it can spread like wildfire under the right conditions.

The recent outbreak involving ready-to-eat spinach is one such example of this tiny organism's ability to spread.

Following simple food

safety practices can help curb E. coli's spread. Always wash your fruits and veggies—even if the package says "prewashed." Always clean and sanitize cutting boards and utensils after each use. And always, always wash your hands thoroughly before preparing food.

"There is no mistaking a real book when one meets it. It is like falling in love."

Christopher Morley

Flavor of the Month: New Year's Black Eyed Peas

Eat your way to good luck in 2007 with this recipe!

Ingredients

2 lbs. black eyed peas
1 tsp. baking soda
1 lb. country ribs
1 tsp. salt
1 Tbsp. sugar
1/4 tsp. red pepper
1 large onion, chopped
2 cloves garlic

Directions

Soak black eyed peas overnight. Wash peas and cover with water and baking soda. Bring to a good boil. Drain.

In a heavy pot, brown country ribs, onion, and garlic. When the ribs are golden brown, add peas, salt, sugar, and red pepper. Cover with hot water and bring to a fast boil. Reduce heat and simmer on low for two hours.

Yum!

SECTION G: ODDS & ENDS

Volunteer News: HCE & The Guild

HCE News: The next meeting will be held, January 8, 2007 at 3:00 pm . We will discuss the schedule for the year and plan programming. Anyone planning to attend the District IV meeting January 24, 2007 in Riverview should contact the office as soon as possible. The deadline for registration is January 10, 2007. If you have any questions please contact Sharon at 722-4524 ext 232.

GUILD News: With the busy January schedule around the fairgrounds we will only meet on Monday the 8th this month. Although there are actually five Mondays –two are holidays with the office closed and the other two the fair will be using the buildings. We will have our Birthday lunch on the 8th so plan on coming out to share the fun. We will also have a sign up sheet to man the fair booth so don't forget your calendars.

January Birthdays

Carole Ransford	January 2
Brenda Rogers	January 3
Betty McLeod	January 9
Dee Anderson	January 16
Regena Byrn	January 17
Sue Wiedmeyer	January 18
Ilona Gans	January 26

**Happy New Year to everyone
and may all your wishes come
true in 2007!!!!**

Upcoming Events & Important Dates

January 1, 2007	Happy New Year CES Office Closed
January 8, 2007	Guild Birthday Lunch 1:00 – 3:00
January 8, 2007	HCE Meeting 3:00 – 4:00
January 15, 2007	Martin Luther King Day CES Office Closed
January 18, 2007 – January 28, 2007	Manatee County Fair “A Barn Raising Good Time”
January 24, 2007	HCE District IV meeting Riverview

Manatee County Extension Service

Solutions for your life.

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HAPPY NEW YEAR!

