



FREE

Advice for New Moms

Feedback for new moms who are the ultimate caregiver for their family

Safe Homes for Elderly

Explore accessibility tips to keep a safe living space for seniors

Heart and Soul, Part 2

Expand on our Editor-in-Chief's new series, First Things First

DIY Holiday Gift Ideas

Gain creative ideas for simply, yet effective holiday gifts for all



December 2024



Your allergies can now be taken care of, all in one convenient place.

Welcome to the team, Dr. Packianathan!

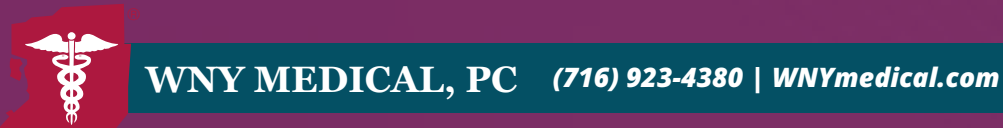
Specialist in Allergies & Immunology

- Seasonal & food allergies
• Respiratory problems (asthma)
• Anaphylaxis • Hives • and more

4979 Harlem Road, Amherst, NY 14226
Office Number: 716-923-4381

Our team of trained specialists are here to serve your needs.

Our team of competent providers now includes an allergist and immunologist. Additional services are available at other offices, seen on the right. We are here to serve you! Please call our office or visit our website to schedule your next appointment today.



- Amherst 4979 Harlem Road
Amherst 4985 Harlem Road
Buffalo 135 Grant Street
Cheektowaga 3884 Broadway Street
Depew 3218 Walden Avenue
Derby 6970 Erie Road
East Amherst *NEW* 8600 Transit Road, #102
Lackawanna 2600 South Park Avenue
Lockport *NEW* 15 Elizabeth Drive
Niagara Falls *NEW* 909 Pine Avenue
Orchard Park 3320 N. Benzing Road
Orchard Park 3595 Eggert Road



4011 Bailey Avenue (716) 362-7849
Amherst, NY 14226 YourBliss.us



@YourBlissWNY @YourBliss Magazine

Submit your article, recipe, or event!
Send to: submit@YourBliss.us

© 2024, SunSpin Media Productions. All rights reserved.
Reproduction in part or its whole without permission is prohibited.

Our Team

Staff Writers

Alex Tilton
Dr. Riffat Sadiq

Contributors

Rachael Bannen
Megan Plevniak
Bob Adner
Victoria Haq
Amna Sheikh
Muqadas Jabeen
Aadil Khan
Sam Defazio
Lisa McDonell
Colin Freedman

Editor-In-Chief
Managing Editor
Account Manager
Graphic Design
Print Publication
Copy Editors

Faizan Haq
Katy Defazio
Yahya Alaryani
SunSpin Media
SunSpin Media
Elizabeth Hatcher
Alex Tilton

Editorial Board

Riffat Sadiq, MD
CEO, WNY Medical, PC
Joe Serghany, MD
CEO, Western New York MRI
John M. Hatcher
CEO, JMH Advisement, LLC
Victoria Haq
Ralph Hernandez
Farina Mirza

Our Mission

Your Bliss Magazine explores the power of overall wellness. We look to push past the boundaries of physical health and explore aspects of mental, financial and spiritual health. Our goal is to bring you information that you can use to live a happy, healthy and spirited life. We find tips for the short term as well as more expansive information for the long term.

With the ever-expanding nature of technology, knowledge and evolution of the healthcare field, there is a growing supply of data to take from. With Your Bliss, we find the information for you and put it all in one place. Every month we bring you new articles on a wide range of topics so you can live a more fulfilled and whole life.

Table of Contents

4 Short-Term Goals vs. New Year's Resolutions
5 Giving Back During the Holidays
6 "Do It Yourself" Holiday Gift Ideas
7 Pearl Harbor Remembrance Day
8 Safe Homes for the Elderly
9 Gratitude Towards Moms and Caregivers
10 Heart and Soul: First Things First, Part 2
11 How Going for a Walk Changed my Life
12 Media Corner: What We Do in the Shadows
13 Book Review: The Eyes of the Dragon
14 Recipes of the Month: Holiday Side Dishes
15 Coloring & Activity Corner

Short-Term Goals vs. New Year's Resolutions

By: Megan Plevniak



Have you ever felt like your life is stuck in a never-ending cycle with nothing to look forward to? Are you rolling out of bed each morning just to jump into the same old grind of work, school, or boring chores, only to repeat it all the next day? Fitzhugh Dodson once said, "without goals, and plans to reach them, you are like a ship that has set sail with no destination." In this article, I would like to address the significance of setting plans, goals, and cultivating ambition.

What drives you to get out of bed each day? What motivates you to keep moving forward? Numerous people across the globe have dreams and aspirations. A few common goals people have include shedding some pounds, getting in shape, landing a job promotion, picking up a new skill, earning a degree in their area of expertise, launching a new career or hobby, getting married, starting a family, traveling, and a whole lot more. A vision or a goal starts with you. Ask yourself, what makes you happy? What are your dreams? You're the only person who can turn your dreams into reality and truly live your best life. Life is short, so make the most of it.

When the end of the year starts approaching, people begin to contemplate their New Year's resolutions. A recent survey found that around 40 percent of people set New Year's resolutions, but only 9 percent keep them, while a staggering 80 percent do not succeed. Although New Year's resolutions are important, establishing both short-term and long-term goals in your life are the most significant.

The key element in achieving your goals is finding motivation. What motivates you; what inspires you? It may refer to an individual of significance in your life, such as family members, friends, significant other, educators, motivational speakers, influencers, and others. Many individuals

struggle to find motivation in their lives, primarily because of mental barriers, anxiety, depression, and various other influences. This can be an easy fix. It starts with you! You have to be willing to make the necessary changes in your life and when you do; the opportunities are endless.

So, you possess goals or a concept, but you're uncertain where to begin. One way to get your ideas and goals to fruition is by creating a vision board. A vision board is a collage of images and words representing a person's wishes or goals, intended to serve as inspiration or motivation. Start by defining your vision—what you want to achieve. Next, select a theme and collect some images. Once you have your images and words, arrange them on your board, and then display it thoughtfully. Identify a location that captures your attention on a daily basis; that way, it will be hard to overlook it. The purpose of a vision board extends beyond mere inspiration; by viewing it daily, it fosters ongoing motivation.

Another profound way of enhancing motivation to achieve your goals is through journaling. Numerous individuals utilize journaling as a means of expressing their thoughts on paper which serves as a therapeutic outlet. This can also be beneficial for articulating both short-term and long-term goals. You can kick things off by putting your goals and ideas on paper. Create a timeline for when you want to achieve these goals, and to boost your motivation, consider noting down positive affirmations or rewards.

By adhering to these steps, you will be making significant progress toward achieving your goals before you know it. Why wait until New Year's to implement your goals? A year from now, you may wish you had started today.

“
**Life is short,
so make the
most of it.**
”

Giving Back During the Holidays

By: Amna Sheikh

The holidays are a season of happiness, festivity, and community. However, it's also a time of need and hardship for a lot of individuals. Giving back to the less fortunate is one of the most rewarding ways to enjoy the Christmas season. The holidays are a season of happiness, festivity, and community. However, it's also a time of need and hardship for a lot of individuals. Giving back to the less fortunate is one of the most rewarding ways to enjoy the Christmas season. One can contribute in a variety of ways, such as volunteering, giving money, or just lending a helpful hand.

Volunteering for local organizations

Volunteerism is vital to many local organizations, particularly during the holidays. Demand for food banks, shelters, and community centers frequently spikes at this time of year as people seek out additional assistance. You may directly help those in need by volunteering your time to these organizations. Even a few hours of volunteering can have a significant impact; it doesn't have to be a long-term commitment. Think of the food pantries in need of assistance at this time of year. The Family Help Center in Buffalo is part of a list on Volunteer WNY with a variety of volunteering options available this time of the year. Every deed of kindness has a positive knock-on effect that can improve entire communities.

Spreading kindness among those in need

Giving gifts is a major component of Christmas customs, but this may be a stressful time of year for families who are having financial difficulties. Numerous charitable organizations, like Toys for Tots and the Salvation Army's Angel Tree program, enable contributors to buy presents for kids who might not otherwise have them. Furthermore, a few nearby schools and places of worship run "adopt-a-family" initiatives in which people or organizations donate holiday presents to underprivileged families. When

“
**Even a few hours
of volunteering can
have a significant
impact...**
”

selecting presents, keep in mind that useful things like blankets, warm clothes, or personal hygiene supplies can have just as much significance as games and toys.

Offering a helping hand in simple ways

Large donations or organized volunteer programs aren't the only methods to give back. The tiniest deeds of compassion can occasionally have the greatest impact. One way to make someone's Christmas better is to shovel snow for an elderly neighbor, offer to watch a single parent, or bake cookies for a local family. Good deeds spread like wildfire and frequently encourage others to do the same. A kind card or a sympathetic ear can make someone feel better and foster a sense of community

The joy of giving

Giving back has a wonderful sense of fulfillment, particularly during a time when kindness and thankfulness are so prevalent. Acts of kindness can lower stress and improve pleasure for both the donor and the recipient, according to studies. Additionally, giving back serves as a reminder of the strength of community. We contribute to creating a world where people feel connected to each other by helping and taking care of each other. Think about the difference you can make this holiday season. Every effort matters, whether it is through gift-giving, volunteering, or performing small deeds of kindness. In addition to improving the lives of others, adopting the giving-back mindset helps us get closer to the genuine meaning of the holidays, which is compassion, giving, and joy shared by all.

You may scan the following QR code for a diverse list of volunteering options throughout Western New York. Do you want to help at a local food pantry or provide musical entertainment and companionship for seniors? There's something on the list for everyone! Give the best gift this holiday season, and give back to our community in any way, shape, or form.



“Do It Yourself” Holiday Gift Ideas

By: Muqadas Jabeen

Christmas is around the corner, and you must be worried about the gifts that you can give to your loved ones. These gifts would be a token of love and togetherness, and they will cherish them forever. Now is the time to plan gifts for your beloved ones. As you will have a long list of friends and family members, consider heading towards your DIY Christmas gift ideas.



person. Anytime he or she looks at it, it will remind him/her of you.

Fruit Stamped Tote Bags

Tote bags are the go-to for shopping. This stamped tote bag will become their favorite tote to go shopping in. Make your personalized fruit stamp with the help of cardboard and paint color. Cut the cardboard in the shape of your favorite fruit, dip it in the paint color, and put that on the bag. Your stamped tote bag is ready now.

DIY Baskets

Baskets are the things that everyone likes to have. In other words, it is one of the home essentials. People carry baskets whenever they go shopping. It keeps things organized. You can make baskets with the help of different things like straws or crotchets. You can reuse the old baskets and totes by decorating them according to taste.

Fancy Bookmarks

These are especially for book lovers. You can easily create customized bookmarks by cutting an 8- to 9-inch-long cardboard strip, wrapping it with a piece of velvet, and attaching a fancy broach or tassel at one tip of the bookmark. You can paste the printout of the name of the person you are giving gifts to. This bookmark will remind them of you whenever they read the book.

Christmas Cupcakes

Christmas night requires a lot of fun. And on that night, Christmas tree cupcakes will add a gesture of love for the sweet tooth. These cupcakes would be easy to make, and a perfect pick-me-up treat for Christmas Eve.

These were some of the easiest DIY Christmas gift ideas; you should give them a shot! DIY gifts always occupy a special value in hearts, as they would have taken a lot of effort and time in their creation.

Happy Holidays!

DIY gifts are not just gifts, as these are not something you would buy and take home. DIY gifts are always special and valuable because they require your time and energy to make them. This Christmas season, I have assembled the best gift ideas for you to make little presents for your friends and family. There are several DIY gifts you may not find at any store.

Beeswax Candles

Wintertime is approaching, and candles are the go-to thing in home decor. Whether it is your study table, coffee table, mantelpieces, or centerpieces, these would add a glamorous touch to your home. Sitting by the window on a couch with a mug of coffee in your hands and having blazing candles on your coffee table would add a cozy effect.

Wooden Polaroid Photo Gift Set

It is a unique way to preserve your adorable memories. These are simple, inexpensive, and easy to make. Adjust your Polaroid photos on the wooden frame. You can write anything on the bottom of that frame, such as date, occasion, or some love quotes. By sticking magnets in the frame, you can display them on the wall to give a sense of attachment and nostalgia.



Macramé Wall Hang

Wall hangings always catch attention and add beauty to the house. Macramé wall hangings are one of the sweetest DIY wall-hanging crafts. You can make it with a large single rope. Giving someone a handmade macramé wall hanging will show your affection for that

Pearl Harbor Remembrance Day

By: Bob Adner

“A day that will live in infamy” is the way President Roosevelt described the sneak attack on Pearl Harbor on December 7, 1941. According to PearlHarbor.org, the United States opted to remain isolated from the conflicts in Europe after Germany’s invasion of Poland in 1939. The United States lent support to the British and French, but did not send any more troops. This choice was rendered moot on this day in 1941, when Japan’s intelligence had determined that the bulk of the US navy’s battleships were tied up for repairs at a small bay off the island of Oahu. There was only one entrance or exit to the bay, if that. It was plugged into the entire group of battleships, blocking the move out to the sea to counter the attack. They were not successful in blocking it, but only one battleship, the USS California, was able to clear the channel. The other ships were damaged too badly to attempt moving them. There were only two ships that were permanently lost, the USS Arizona and the USS Oklahoma. All other ships were back in action within six months.



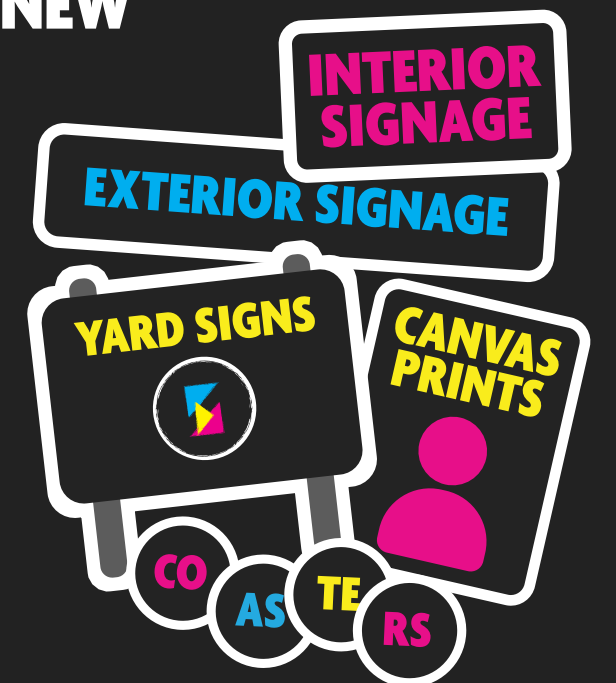
The USS Arizona was struck by a bomb that smashed through its deck and exploded where the gunpowder was stored. The ship exploded, killing over 1,100 men. The ship was never raised, and today, a monument is built over it. This commemorated the servicemen whose remains are still entombed there. Luckily, the three aircraft carriers were at sea and not targeted in the attack. They proved to be the backbone of the Pacific fleet until the other ships were repaired.

If Japan had targeted the fuel supplies for the Pacific Command, they would have crippled the war effort. All the fuel was in above-ground tanks and could have been easily destroyed. Many of the sailors who survived the sinking of the USS Arizona request that, upon their death, their ashes be interred in the remains of the ship with the buddies they served with. Let’s remember all the members of the armed forces who never got a chance to face the enemy, but who were still our first line of defense.

PROVIDING YOU A VARIETY OF NEW

PRINT SERVICES

CALL FOR A FREE CONSULTATION



SUN SPIN MEDIA

(716) 775-7776
ssm@sunspinmedia.com

4011 Bailey Avenue,
Amherst, NY 14226



Safe Homes for the Elderly

By: Dr. Riffat Sadiq, CEO of WNY Medical, PC, Channel Creator



In my YouTube series about elderly care, we discuss how we can make things easier for senior citizens. If we take care of simple matters, we can target major issues in the elderly effectively. 74% of the elderly population wants to stay at home in their safe space. Therefore, their home should always be safe for them, similarly to the way we plan our homes for when there is a baby on the way.

The number one tip for a safe space for the elderly is to avoid clutter. Our goal is to reduce the risk of falls. We tend to get a lot of material things in our home and overall surroundings to keep the space clear and concise. Give away some of the things that you are not using. Make your house clean and simple. Limit extensive amounts of furniture, or properly organize what you currently have.

Our pets are our loved ones, too, but they can take up space. Organize their furniture and food dishes in specific spaces to better avoid clutter and keep your space clear for walking. We also have a lot of cords and

appliances in our homes. Make sure these are properly tied up, out of the way of walking areas.

Keeping a well-lit home is crucial for maintaining a safe home for senior citizens. Lights near the bathroom, especially during the night, are crucial for good visibility. Some ways to make lighting easily accessible are simple automatic nightlights that plug into outlets. These will turn on when it is dark in the room, making it easy to navigate during the night to the bathroom. There are also motion and voice sensitive lights that can help with a more affordable electric bill.

In terms of your bathroom, it is important to have elevation and handles for seniors, to avoid hip and pelvic fractures. This makes the quality of life easier for elders because it is easier to stand up after using the bathroom. Be sure to keep your bathroom floor clean and dry, too. Proper floor finishes can help this, as well as traction rugs.

Overall, it is crucial to keep a safe living space for elders. There are several simple, yet effective techniques one can take each day to avoid accidents and falls in the home. Follow these tips and more to keep a happy, healthy home all year round.



Dr. Riffat Sadiq: Restoring Self

Want more tips on improving your wellness and restoring yourself? Watch videos on YouTube, DrRSMD.



Motherhood: The Gift of Gratitude

By: Victoria Haq

We have all been taught to respect your elders and your parents, but it was not until I became a mother this year that I fully understood how greatly that respect is earned. Having someone sacrifice to provide, nurture, and care for a child deserves gratitude. Parenting comes naturally to some, but others have to work very hard to become the person their family needs. This holiday season is a reminder to be grateful to those who helped shape us into who we are today.

All caregivers deserve praise, but those who have carried a child deserve extra appreciation. The vulnerability of having gone through the physical changes of child bearing is unlike anything else I have experienced. Pregnancy is such a beautiful and spiritual honor, but it also permanently changes your body, is very painful, and potentially fatal. After being humbled by pregnancy, I made sure to reach out to many of my family members, neighbors, and friends who have been pregnant to acknowledge the physical trauma and emotional strength required to endure.

After pregnancy, the priority shift that accompanies child rearing completely changes one's life. Becoming a provider, protector, nurturer, teacher, role model and much more requires major lifestyle adjustments. Personally, being a new parent has taught me the hard lesson of slowing down. I have always been a busy-body with a Type A personality who loves to stay organized and in control. Having a baby forced me to adapt my sleep schedule, outside excursions, working capabilities, relationships, and time management. Experiencing this for myself further highlighted how my husband and I, like everyone else, must rapidly evolve to provide for and nurture our baby.

Some parents had to manage alone while others were blessed with support. "It takes a village to raise a child" has never rang so true. Being a new mother, as a former babysitter and daycare worker, I now understand the importance of that role. Babysitters, nannies, extended family, and any caretakers who assist the primary caregiver are essential to the sanity and wellbeing of both the parents and the child. A relationship with a loving, trustworthy person who can care for a child like their own is indispensable.

There are many simple ways to show gratitude to those that you appreciate. If they are no longer with us, you can dedicate a donation in their honor, tell your favorite stories about them, or send up a thought or prayer of thanks. If they are physically present, you can write them a letter, make a heartfelt phone call, or send a text message to tell them how you feel. You can give a warm hug or simply spend quality time with them to express your gratitude. No matter how old we get, we are still learning and evolving, and those who assist us may appreciate the recognition.

It took so much effort and love to help mold us into the very unique and special people that we have become. Give the gift of gratitude toward those who did their best with one of the most difficult and, at times, thankless jobs. I am grateful that it took experiencing parenthood for myself to fully understand the beautiful burden of what our caretakers have experienced. If you have been involved in nurturing a child in any way, please know that you are appreciated and I am grateful for your efforts and sacrifice. You deserve praise and gratitude in doing one of the most rewarding jobs of parenting.

“
No matter how old we get, we are still learning and evolving...
”



Heart and Soul: First Things First, Part 2

By: Faizan Haq, Editor-in-Chief and Publisher, Your Bliss Magazine
President & CEO, Manage Your Business LLC



In last month's edition of *Your Bliss Magazine*, we promised to continue exploring the *First Things First* phenomenon in our lives. We established that life itself should always be the first. There are many things that contribute to our life. The most important among them is the soul. Without getting into any metaphysical explanation about the nature of the soul, let's define it as the energy that makes our heart beat. As long as the heart beats we stay alive. Even if a person is breathing on an artificial heart, it is still the heart that is carrying the burden of life.

The story of the mind always begins after the beat of the heart. In many traditions it is said that the heart is the seat of the soul. Today, we will only focus on making "heart" as the topic of the First Things First series. How does one take care of the heart? How one keeps a heart healthy and happy, so the soul that resides in there can continue to thrive and achieve its potential.

The physical aspect of a healthy heart will include having periodic medical check-ups, regularly exercising, eating low cholesterol and fiber-rich food, keeping oneself hydrated and taking prescribed medicine or supplements. All these actions require discipline and personal determination to accomplish. Before we tackle the physical health of the heart, we must explore the spiritual wellness of this vital organ. In other words, the capacity to be able to absorb, endure, and recover from disappointments, disagreements, disrespect, losses, anxieties, fears and resentments defines the wellness of the heart. No work environment in the world, whether it belongs to you or someone else, is immune to dealing with these feelings and emotions. There is no household in the world, even if you live alone, that is free of these challenges.

On the flipside, the abundance of opportunities, repeated successes, accumulation of wealth and fame can have a negative impact on the heart, if these feelings of achievements and accomplishments are not dealt with gratitude, humility and inclusivity. A sound heart is a prerequisite for a physically healthy heart. Many world religious theologies emphasize the soundness of the heart as it defines the quality of the soul that resides in it. In the business world, gratitude earns you loyalty and strong affiliation. Humility attracts deeper opportunities, and inclusivity is essential for expansion.

It may sound materialistic but, think about this, family, friends and loved ones all are part of the same business. A business where relationships are strengthened with the gains of happiness and sharing of losses. This business is the best business in the world. The holiday season is here, families will gather, friends will meet, and nostalgia will take over. This is the time to strengthen the heart and exchange greetings of happiness. The time for the good heart business has arrived. We shall continue to talk about *First Things First* in the next article. In the next conversation we will address the connection between the mind and the heart. Stay tuned until next time!



— **Grow with Your Bliss!** —

15% OFF AD SPACE BUNDLE



Secure at least 3 months of advertising with Your Bliss Magazine
and receive 15% off your commitment.



Read online at yourbliss.us

Submit to us at submit@yourbliss.us

How Going for a Walk Changed my Life

By: Aadil Khan

I used to stay indoors a lot. I would be what is called a "couch body," sitting or laying down most of the day, tired 24/7. Going to the gym seemed like such a daunting endeavor and when you think of exercise, going for a walk was the last option that would've popped in my mind. One day with a friend, I went for a walk along Buffalo's Canalside area. The fresh air, and background sounds of the water, birds chirping, people laughing, and wind blowing instantly made me feel more at peace.

I walked again the next day, and the day after that. Walking further and longer each day became a fun challenge for myself. Reaching a certain number of steps a day became a checkpoint and eventually, a habit for myself. I first walked for roughly 25 minutes, reaching the same area of a path before turning back around. As time went on those 25 minutes turned to 35, then 45, or even maybe a half a mile longer. I also discovered completely new areas that were previously unbeknownst to me. Walking on the Ellicott Creek Trail and turning the corner, seeing the Amherst Memorial Hill Grove was a surprise. It makes me wonder what else is nearby that I never ventured to visit before, and it pushes me to explore my own home city!



Of course, the days came when I was unsure if I wanted to walk due to the weather, or my own aversion to leaving the comfort of my house. However, building the habit of reaching a step goal, and combining it with previously built daily habits such as, listening to music or watching a show made those walks breeze by and I would forget even being hesitant about walking. Walking has become a meditative ritual for me now. I found my previous constant mental fog reduced to barely being there, and when I walk, it is completely gone. I feel more mobile, more energetic, and I constantly feel like I can walk further and further. This new habit has also paved the way to reconnecting to consistently going to the gym.

As you consistently walk further for longer, eventually you ask yourself, why not just go to the gym as well and keep pushing yourself further? What started as a simple "walk in the park," has led to a routine to follow, a refresh for myself mentally and physically, and a reminder that small choices can compound to bigger ones. Now every path, trail, or sidewalk I find myself on reinforces me to keep walking further, enjoy nature, and find what else is out there.

Review of What We Do in the Shadows (The Final Season)

By: Alex Tilton

Sticking the landing is hard. I remember at least as many botched series finales as good ones: *Roseanne*, *How I Met Your Mother*, *Game of Thrones*, and *Battlestar Galactica* are a few famous examples of bad finales. There was a general pattern to it: a decline in quality, a shift in the tone of the show, and an ending that made the audience feel like someone pulled the rug out from under them. *Roseanne*'s finale famously declared the entire 9th season to be someone's fantasy, and rewrote the show's entire canon in a voiceover. *Battlestar Galactica* made a bizarre tonal shift from space-opera to new-age spiritualism, left a lot of plot threads unresolved, and ended on a lame deus-ex-machina. *How I Met Your Mother* unceremoniously killed the title character (the Mother) off camera, and then flat out told the audience that the title of the show was misleading. *Game of Thrones*...ugh.

But What We Do in the Shadows will not have this problem.

The show is steaming happily along doing what it's always done. It knows exactly what it is, and what it wants to be: a pitch-black horror-comedy for grownups. There's still half a season left to go but none of the first six episodes give any indication of an unwanted change in tone. The quality is as good as ever. The vampires (and their human bodyguard Guillermo) have all had their personal arcs over the duration of the series, and they're comfortable with who they are. Nothing about this season suggests that the finale will be a bizarre attempt to rewrite the history of the show, or a sudden tonal shift that clashes with everything else we've seen. I don't know exactly what they'll do, but it'll be on brand. It'll be the *What We Do in the Shadows* that the audience has come to love.

As for specifics of this season (spoilers ahead) they do a good job setting up the ending. So far Lazlo has confronted the ghost of his father (literally), Guillermo moved out and got a real job (before moving back in), The Guide found a new master to serve that is more to her liking, and Nandor had a mental breakdown, went out and formed an army, then got over it and came home. Colin Robinson and Nadia still need a final episode about them, but we have five left and I have no worries on this account.

The cast and crew must've loved this show. They get to say and do pretty much whatever they please, and because they did a great job and people loved it, they got to do it for a long time. And most of all, they knew when to bow out. This show never threatened to overstay its welcome. There is a spinoff called 'Wellington Paranormal', but it doesn't feel like a soulless cash grab. It isn't great either, but at least they didn't give it a backdoor pilot. If you're unfamiliar with the term, that's when the pilot of a spinoff is technically an episode of the original show, but they just don't say so.

Anyway, that's about it for *What We Do in the Shadows*. I'm looking forward to a brief review of the second half of the final season, but mostly I just want to express my gratitude. The show was awesome, it remained awesome and (so far) it has finished its run equally awesome.

Image Sources: Yahoo.com & RottenTomatoes.com



Book Review of The Eyes of the Dragon

By: Sam Defazio

Happy Holidays everyone! Everyone has different thought processes on what defines this time of year. To me, there is only one common theme to the holidays, and that's being around friends or family. To some, this time of year represents a magical time of year. The snow falls, the wonderful lights placed outside most homes on your street, the feeling in the air that pleasant times are ahead. The book I have today only shares two common threads of the holiday season; family and hope for better days.

Eyes Of the Dragon is a fantasy-like tale about a kingdom in disarray. The kingdom is ran by King Rolland and his advisor, the main antagonist, Flag. The story centers around Flag murdering the King, blaming the perfect son Peter for the murder. Peter is locked up in the highest room in the tall tower called The Needle Point for a murder he did not commit. His brother Thomas, a brother of much jealousy and dim wit, becomes the King, who is controlled by Flag, to become his wrecking ball of havoc. Will Peter's name be cleared or will he be locked up for life watching his kingdom fall?

If anyone is expecting a complicated read from a fantasy novel written by Stephen King, you might be left a little puzzled. This book comes across as more for a young adult audience than his normal adult aim. The book takes almost 100 or more pages explaining



Peter's time in the Needle in detail, along with other things. With this being for a young adult audience, it makes more sense to explain everything the way he does. Stephen King takes more of a J.R.R. Tolkien approach in his 1987 novel by really diving into being the narrator of a timeless story to be told for centuries. I don't personally believe he succeeds completely, due to that style of writing feeling out of left field with how he decides to end each chapter. Readers will either be entangled into the story too much to care about or they will be thrown off by this type of storytelling.

I personally am on the half and half section here. I love the fact that Stephen can tell really any kind of story he wants to and still makes the reader care about what's going on. My biggest love in this story is Flag as our villain. Everything from his dungeon lab, to his quarters, to his overall vibe of character. He is bad to the bone. No way around that. He carries a lot of this story for me and I'm glad he does. Sometimes, a story's conflict is only as good as its villain. If you are looking to pick up a book for your young ones, don't be thrown off by Stephen King's name on it. It is very much for anyone to be able to enjoy. Any book that can make me leave reality even a little is worth it in my head. (3/5)

Image Sources: Amazon.com





FESTIVE *Rice*

Recipe Source
tasteofhome.com

DIRECTIONS

Step 1: Preheat oven to 325°. In a small saucepan, bring first 5 ingredients to a boil. Remove from heat. Pour over rice in a greased 8-in. square baking dish. Bake, covered, until all liquid is absorbed, (30-35 minutes).

Step 2: Meanwhile, in a small nonstick skillet over medium-high heat, cook pumpkin seeds, brown sugar and cayenne pepper, stirring constantly until sugar melts and cayenne coats pumpkin seeds, 4-5 minutes. Remove from heat; transfer to a plate, spreading out seeds to cool.

Step 3: Sprinkle cooked rice with feta, mint, cranberries and spiced pumpkin seeds.

INGREDIENTS

- | | |
|-----------------------------|------------------------------|
| 2 1/4 water | 1/4 salted pumpkin seeds |
| 1/4 butter cubed | 2 tsp brown sugar |
| 1 tsp salt | 1/4 teaspoon cayenne pepper |
| 1 tsp white vinegar | 1/4 cup crumbled feta cheese |
| 1/2 tsp garlic powder | 1/4 cup chopped fresh mint |
| 1 cup uncooked jasmine rice | 1/4 cup dried cranberries |

ROASTED ASPARAGUS *& Tomatoes*

DIRECTIONS

Step 1: Preheat the oven to 400°F. Place the asparagus, tomatoes and pine nuts on a foil-lined baking pan. Then mix 2 tablespoons of olive oil, garlic, salt and the pepper; add this sauce to the asparagus and toss to coat.

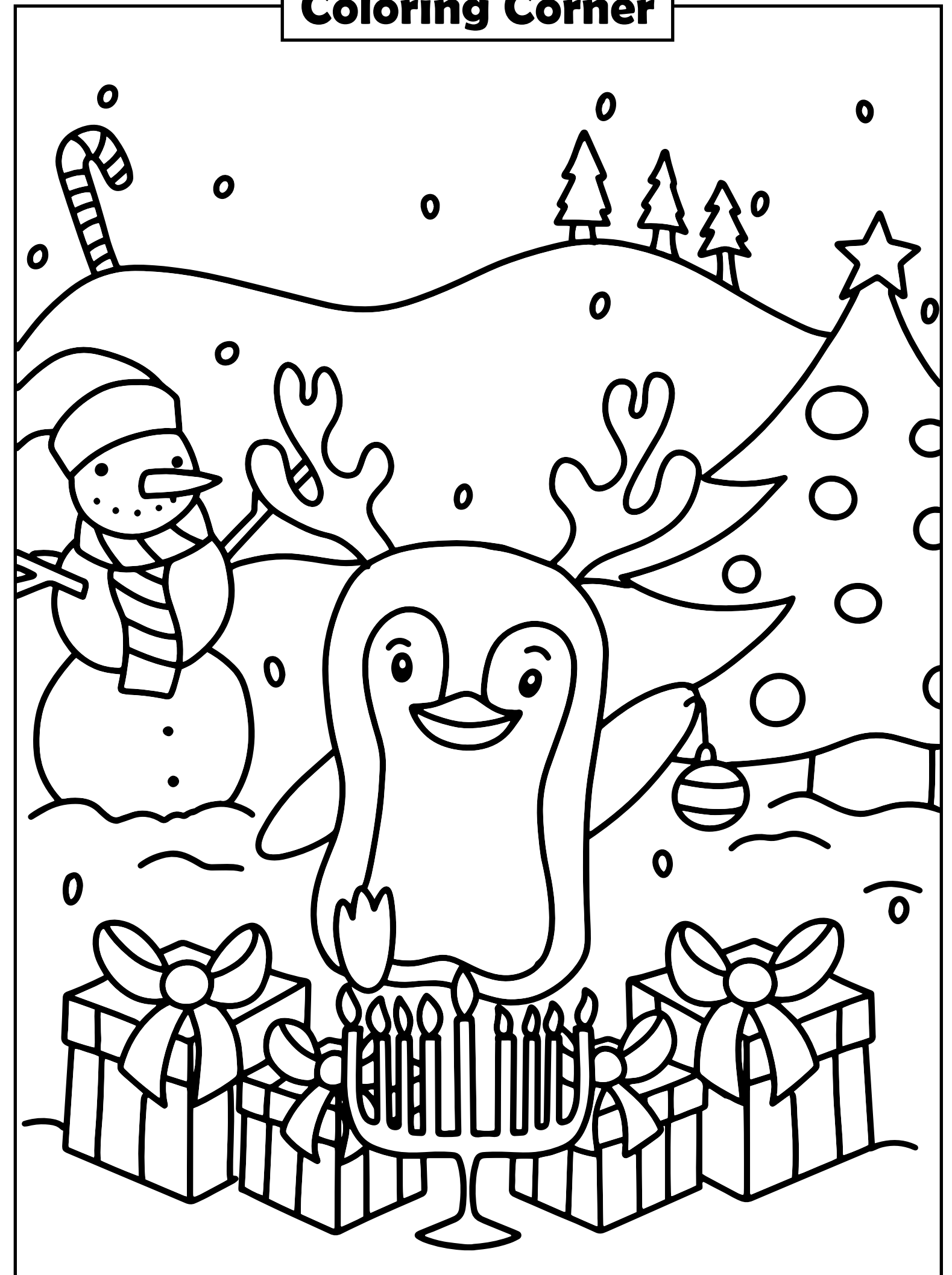
Step 2: Bake the asparagus for 15 to 20 minutes or just until the asparagus is tender. Remove it from the oven and drizzle it with the remaining one tablespoon of olive oil and lemon juice. Then, sprinkle it with cheese and lemon zest. Toss to combine.

INGREDIENTS

- | | |
|---------------------------|-----------------------------------|
| 1 tsp kosher salt | 1 1/2 cup grape tomatoes (halved) |
| 1/2 tsp pepper | 3 tbsp pine nuts |
| 1 tbsp lemon juice | 3 tbsp olive oil, divided |
| 1/3 cup parmesan cheese | 3 garlic cloves, minced |
| 1 tsp grated lemon zest | |
| 1 1/2 lbs fresh asparagus | |



Coloring Corner





Happy Holidays from Apna Dera!



**Receive \$20 off orders of
\$100 or more for the holidays.**

For dine-in & direct pick-up orders. Offer valid 12/24/24, 12/25/24, 12/31/24 and 1/1/25

 Apna Dera & Mister Dee's

(716) 839-9440

ApnaDera.net

 apnadera_misterdees

450 Beach Rd, Cheektowaga, NY 14225

