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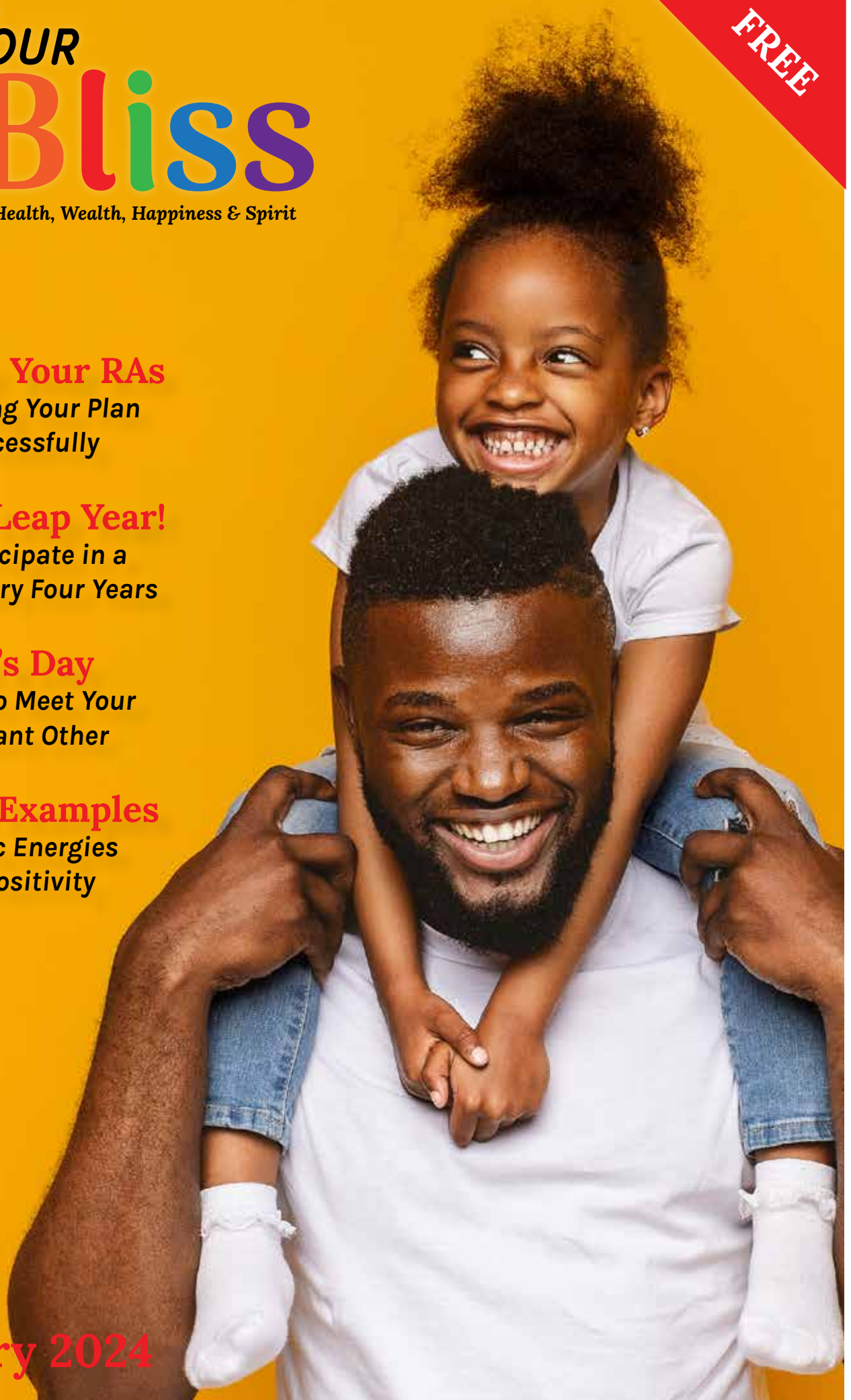
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February 2024





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Our Mission

Your Bliss Magazine explores the power of overall wellness. We look to push past the boundaries of physical health and explore the aspects of mental health, financial health, and health of the spirit. 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 technology, knowledge, and evolution of the health 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.

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Time's Extra Day: Navigating History of Leap Years

By: Gabrielle Guzinski

Scientists measure a day on how long it takes Earth to spin once on its axis, which is twenty-four hours. We measure a calendar year on how long it takes Earth to orbit the Sun, "365.2421 days to be precise", as outlined by biglanguage.com. Making it a quarter of a day longer, overtime which adds up to a full day every four years. To keep everything in sync this is added to the shortest month of the calendar, February. The 2024 leap year will fall on February 29, 2024.

Ever since the existence of humans, we have been fascinated by making a structure for our society to be supported on for daily life. The first known occurrence of creating a calendar, according to britannica.com was, "...the Egyptians invented a schematized civil year of 365 days divided into three seasons, each of which consisted of four months of 30 days each. To complete the year, five intercalary days were added at its end, so that the 12 months were equal to 360 days plus five extra days." This was to build a system centered around farming, cultural celebrations, lunar phases and much more. Documentation was very important to Egyptians to keep track of significant events, for example, to prepare for the harvests every year and it is known to the world as one of the most significant early human communities.

As civilization across the globe began to develop, they soon began to realize that typical periods were not lining up like they should be. Stated by kids.nationalgeographic.com, "In the 16th century, major dates and holidays had drifted by 10 days. In Rome, Pope Gregory XIII unveiled his own Gregorian calendar in 1582. That year, he dropped 10 days from the month of October to sync things back up. He also developed a new leap year system that used the solar year of 365.2422 days, added one leap day every four years, but dropped three leap days every 400 years to keep the calendars from drifting." Due to this beneficial change, this is what we use in today's modern world and time which is used across all digital and paper planners alike to help you, along with the rest of humanity, to stay on track.

From there, traditions seemed to arise from this rare event that fascinated many by curious nature. This is a global phenomenon that has been going on for centuries or even recently in the past fifty years, as declared by salon.com, "In February 1988, the town of Anthony, Texas, declared itself "leap year capital of the world" thanks to Mary Ann Brown and Birdie Lewis. Brown and Lewis, who were both born on leap day, proposed a festival to celebrate the unique day. The four-day-long shindig remains a popular attraction today, with folks from all over the world traveling to Texas to enjoy live music, good food and endless fun." While in Europe, specifically Ireland, according to civitatis.com, "Leap day was a day when women were allowed to propose to a man if he was taking too long to pop the question. According to legend, Saint Brigid struck a deal with Saint Patrick in the 5th century on behalf of all the women waiting for their partner to propose. Saint Patrick agreed that women would be allowed to propose once every four years, which still seems unfair! By the 1800s this tradition was well established, as were some requirements for what a man would need to do should he refuse. If your intended said no, he would be required to purchase gloves, a silk gown or a fur coat in the 20th century." Nowadays anyone can propose, but it is amazing to look back and see how far we have progressed with beating social norms.

With there being one extra day this year, that leads to the question of what you will be doing for that extra twenty-four hours that you only get once every four years? Here in hopes to seize the day and enjoy the moment because a day like this is special yet celebratory when it comes to the uniqueness of our planet, Earth. Not only do the seasons become aligned because of this occurrence, but as a society, we show that we are rotating properly on our axis as well and ready for the next leap year to commence.



Dr. RS: Sleep Solutions!

By: Dr. Riffat Sadiq, CEO, WNY Medical PC

How can we improve our sleep naturally?

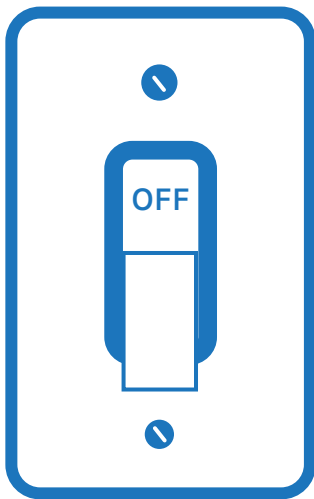
“There are so many natural ways to improve our sleep. If people are having sleep problems they cannot go to sleep on time and they are up all night. Sometimes it happens to me also, if a lot of things are on my mind I can not sleep, and I have to find a way. So, I am going to give a few tips which I honestly implement on myself.”

1. Regulate your sleep pattern:

Find a time your day should end at a certain time like 10:00 or 11:00. I would suggest, sooner like 10 is good. Between 10:00 PM to 12:00 AM your body produces dopamine which is really good for your memory and your sleep so you need that and also your body makes melatonin. Which is very well needed for your sleep. So, you need to regulate your sleep.



2. A dark room with no screens:



Having your room dark, with no screens on. Screens on and brightness are not a good way, because you will not produce the melatonin you want for your body. So the room has to be really dark.



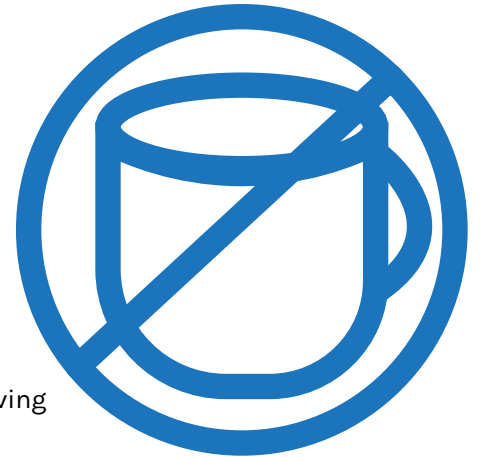
3. Relax and unload:

The next thing is you need to really relax. You need to meditate before you sleep. Meditation five to ten minutes relaxing letting go of all the luggage which you had for the whole day, the stress you have to put it on the side.

You can pray, or just do something that's going to relax you. Washing your face, hands and feet before you go to bed, that also can relax you and give you a very good sleep.

4. No Caffeine:

Also avoid certain things like coffee or tea, at least a couple of hours before the bed time. You should not be having coffee or tea.



Want more tips on getting better sleep? Watch the full video on our YouTube channel DrRSMD. We also post a variety of different health related topics videos, meant to help your health.



Exploring Health & Economic Benefits of Hemp

By: Gabrielle Guzinski

Holistic health has been a trending topic in the medical and nutrition field for multiple years. There has been one product that has seemed to peak pique interest these past couple of years more than anything else, that would be none other than hemp. According to, edis.ifas.ufl.edu, "Archaeologists and historians have confirmed the use of hemp for fiber and food by ancient civilizations: for example, seeds in Japan in 8000 BCE and pottery with hemp fiber in China in 4000 BCE." With the recent legalization of marijuana, (where hemp is found in the plant, *Cannabis sativa*, but does not contain THC properties of marijuana) it makes it more versatile in ways where it can be used and even consumed.

Hemp has been around longer than we realize, so with the ongoing popularity of this product, it gets its own national holiday which is February 4th. Its recognition is like no other with the positive impact across multiple industries, let alone the world with all its benefits. Healthwise, so far, as declared by draxe.com, "Hemp seeds are very high in manganese. When eaten or supplemented in combination with other minerals, including calcium, zinc and copper, manganese helps support bone health and reduces bone loss." Hemp aids people that have these issues, making it a nutritional powerhouse. It can be incorporated in any of your meals of the day, for instance putting it in smoothies or simply mixing it in yogurt; making anything you eat more healthy.

When it comes to improvements on your physical appearance, hemp can also assist anyone with that. Not to mention saving multiple trips (and tips) to a spa, a dermatologist, or even a barber. With that being said, as reported by draxe.com, "Hemp seed benefits for skin and hair go a long way in improving dry, red, flaking skin. Hemp oil is oftentimes included in lip balms, lotions and soaps. The oil in hemp seeds penetrates the inner layers of the skin and promotes healthy cell growth – the recipe for smooth, soft skin.



In fact, researchers studying the effects of oil extracted from hemp hearts on eczema, a skin condition that causes inflammation and dry skin, found that patients' symptoms improved with the use of the oil. Since the oil is also good for skin disorders, it's also a good idea to add the plant's seeds to your diet to maximize these benefits. You can also make a homemade skin cream combining hemp seed oil, shea butter and essential oils like lavender." Believe it or not, hemp is the secret to looking and feeling like a million bucks, not to mention your body being able to show improvements by taking it. "Look good and feel even better," is a motto you can start saying and it will all come down to taking hemp.

On the economic side, hemp seems to foster positive change on this as well. One of the (many) solution(s) is pursuant. According to shfinancial.org, "Farming hemp is a promising new opportunity for American farmers. The crop is relatively easy to grow and requires less water and pesticides than traditional crops such as cotton. In addition, it can grow in a wide range of climates, from hot and dry to cool and damp." This is leading to a new generation of both taking on an eco-friendly adaptation to what we previously knew and making improvements as we go along with this production. Hemp, "has deep roots, which help prevent soil erosion and retain moisture. It is particularly important in areas prone to drought or water scarcity. This means it requires less irrigation than other crops, which can help conserve water resources." The world has never seen such a multitude of reasons for something that can take on many different forms of benefits throughout society.

While this only scratches the surface of what hemp can do, it has already intertwined itself into the soils of our everyday life showing it is something some of us might be dependent on in the future, all for good reasons. This is just the beginning of something beyond incredible, and it is only up from here. There is one thing for certain, hemp is here to stay.

Holistic Ways to Set Good Examples for Others

By: Lana Shapiro

In a world that often seems fast-paced and chaotic, there is a day dedicated to slowing down, connecting with others, and making a positive impact – Random Acts of Kindness Day. This annual celebration encourages individuals to engage in acts of kindness, both big and small, to create a ripple effect of positivity. Let's explore the significance of Random Acts of Kindness Day and how embracing it can set a good example for a more compassionate and interconnected society.

Random Acts of Kindness Day, observed on February 17th, is a special occasion to intentionally spread kindness without any specific reason or expectation of reciprocity. It serves as a reminder that even the smallest gestures can make a significant difference in someone's day. From paying for a stranger's coffee to leaving an uplifting note, the possibilities are endless.



The Power of Small Gestures

Setting a good example starts with recognizing the power of small, everyday gestures. Acts of kindness don't always require grand gestures; sometimes, it's the simple actions that leave a lasting impact. Holding the door for someone, offering a genuine compliment, or helping a neighbor with groceries are all examples of how small gestures contribute to creating a positive environment.

Creating a Ripple Effect

One of the beautiful aspects of kindness is its ability to create a ripple effect. When individuals engage in acts of kindness, it inspires others to do the same. The positive energy generated by these acts can spread through communities, workplaces, and even across social media, fostering a culture of compassion and generosity.

As adults, parents, and educators, setting a good example for the younger generation is crucial. Random Acts of Kindness Day provides an excellent opportunity to teach children the value of empathy and kindness. By demonstrating compassion and selflessness, we contribute to shaping a future where kindness is ingrained in the fabric of society.

Incorporating Kindness into Daily Life

While Random Acts of Kindness Day is a designated occasion, the spirit of kindness can be incorporated into our daily lives. Whether it's expressing gratitude, actively listening to others, or volunteering in the community, there are numerous ways to continue spreading positivity beyond a specific date on the calendar.

Random Acts of Kindness Day serves as a gentle reminder that kindness is a universal language that transcends cultural boundaries. By embracing this day and incorporating kindness into our daily lives, we not only contribute to making the world a better place but also set a powerful example for others to follow. Let's celebrate the joy of kindness and inspire a chain reaction of positive actions that reverberates throughout our communities.

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Maximizing Contributions to Your RAs: A Strategic Move

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



Contributing to retirement accounts secures your financial future. It is a great tax saving strategy for the year 2023, and you still have time. The deadline to contribute to your retirement accounts is April 15th, 2024. If you haven't done that already, please consult with a professional to help you make it happen. Here is the summary of the benefits and strategies in regard to maximizing your contributions.

1. Reducing Taxable Income:

One of the basic advantages of contributing to a retirement account is that it lowers your taxable income for that year. Your contributing amount to a 401k or individual (IRA) is deducted from your taxable income, hence lowering your taxable income. Overtime, the reduction can result in substantial tax savings, particularly, if you are maximizing your allowable contributions to RAs.

2. Employer's Contributions:

Make your employer pay for retirement. Many employers have benefits that include matching contributions for their employees' retirement accounts. By not initiating your own retirement contribution, you're leaving your money with the employer. Over a period of time, it may add up to tens of thousands of dollars.

3. Catch-up Contributions:

If you are 50 or older, you can add an additional amount to your RAs. It is called catch-up contributions. These contributions have higher limits. They are specifically designed to help older individuals put away more savings for their retirement.

4. Growth without Taxes:

One of the greatest benefits of RAs is the tax deferred growth. All the earnings that accumulate in RA accounts are tax free until you make a withdrawal while in retirement. Consult with a seasoned investment consultant to strategically allocate your RA funds. Plan to enjoy your retirement in abundance.

5. Long-term and short-term financial security:

As you maximize your retirement contributions, you're certainly setting yourself up for long-term financial security. A short-term financial security benefit is that you can borrow from your own RAs. This way your RA becomes your bank and any interest you pay adds to your own retirement account. There are certain limits and rules that apply and you must consult with a professional to be able to take advantage of this benefit.

6. Financial Positioning:

RA accounts also make your net worth look good. When you are applying for home mortgages or business loans, your bottom line looks attractive to the banks. It also demonstrates that you are financially responsible and are planning for the long term.

It is important to take into consideration your own financial position, consult with a financial advisor, and your accountant to take full advantage of this benefit. It is clear that maximizing contributions to retirement accounts is a strategic move that provides long-term financial security, lowers your taxes, and financially positions you well.



Media Corner: A Review of Letterkenny, Season 12

By: Alex Tilton

After 81 episodes in 7 years (which is somehow 12 seasons) *Letterkenny* is over. In a recent interview series creator Jared Keso surprised me by saying more or less what I said in my review of season 11. They'd done everything there is to do with this idea and it's time to move on. So how did they handle it? Pretty well. It was very on brand and self-aware. It didn't suddenly try to be something different.

Every season of *Letterkenny* has one overarching plot supplemented by many, many unrelated tangents. This season had two plots. The first involves the character Daryl (Darry) becoming disaffected with the core characters and joining the 'degens', a group of unapologetically awful redneck types who live outside of town and enjoy ruining things for everyone else. The second plot, running parallel to the first, involves the rest of the four core characters feeling like they're stuck in a rut and considering moving on from *Letterkenny* to other places where life might be different.

Wayne, the main protagonist, is the 'toughest guy in *Letterkenny*' and really has no desire to move. But his long-term girlfriend is active in Pitbull rescue and wants to relocate, as she did once before, to pursue that calling. Squirrelly Dan feels drawn to the Mennonite way of life after becoming disgusted with how the internet brings out the worst in himself and many others. Katie (Wayne's sister) begins the season by returning from a trip to Mexico where the lifestyle and weather were more to her liking than rural Canada.

It's not a very subtle theme for the final season, but it was sincere and heartfelt. There is zero cynicism, and I loved that. Spoilers ahead.

This final character arc is set against the usual hijinks. The gang attends a night of standup comedy at the local watering hole, MoDean's, which sets Darry's arc into motion. They help the local auctioneer Jim Dickens pursue his dream of a country music career, and attend an after-hours club set up by the 'Skids' (social outcasts who sell drugs), all while confronting their feelings of stagnation and flirting with the idea of moving away. After tensions with the degens boil over resulting in Daryl's return to the fold, the series rounds itself out by giving the Skids a much-needed win, in the form of hosting a successful party at the local agricultural hall.



Letterkenny always had a large cast of characters and getting them all into the last six episodes was going to be a problem, but I thought we could have had more than we got. Conspicuous by their total absence were Shoresy, Joint Boy, Annik and Emma. Mrs. McMurray, Mary-Ann and Betty-Ann got only the briefest of cameos. It might have been necessary to tell a coherent story that did right by the main characters, or some of those actors may have been unavailable. Whatever the reason, as good as this season was, I missed them. Most seasons have a 'holiday special' of some kind that releases a few months after the season proper, but that feels unlikely here.

In any case, I give *Letterkenny* credit for knowing when to bow out, and doing a good job of it. Sticking the landing on a series finale is hard and I can think of more bad ones than good ones. So we bid a fond farewell to one of the few who did it right. Thanks for the laughs, *Letterkenny*.

Image Sources: scpsassam.org & variety.com



Local Spots to Meet a New Significant Other

By: Katy Defazio

Growing up as a teenager and a young adult, dating was never my strong point. I always felt awkward and childish. On dates, I would speak too much or too little about myself. Never in my life did I think I would be in a six-year healthy relationship with my best friend. Never in my life did I think I would be married to my best friend. I can thank some classic Buffalo favorites for that one!

Are you fresh out of a relationship and ready to put yourself back on the dating market? Have you been single for what feels like forever and not sure where to look for your next significant other? There are thousands of businesses and venues in Buffalo to enjoy for a public outing, hot date, or even casual conversation. Where are some of your favorite spots for date nights and meeting new people? Check out some of our hand-picked favorites below.

Stamps the Bar, Mohawk Place, Buffalo Iron Works, Rec Room Buffalo

Are you a deep admirer of music and local artists? Look no further than these music venues! My husband and I met at a friend's local show at Stamps the Bar due to our deep love for music and friendship. These are a few smaller venues in Buffalo, making it easier to mingle about and strike up conversation in between acts. Most of the time, you can find local music projects and artists at these venues. Thankfully, you can be lucky and catch some bigger names at these spots, too! Being that these venues include a bar, we do not recommend consuming too many alcoholic beverages before striking up a fresh conversation.

Tim Hortons, Dunkin, Spot Coffee, Starbucks

Now before you go ahead and assume we are coffee addicts; you can do more than drink caffeine at these places! Warm up with a cup of hot cocoa before giving your number to the cutie at the next table over.



My husband and I planned our first date at Tim Hortons the day after Valentine's Day, and it was a quiet spot for good conversations and subtle hints at a second date. The weather was nice enough to take a nice stroll outside afterward, too! My favorite part about meeting people at coffee shops is the artsy atmosphere mixed with toasty beverages and baked goods.

Church Groups, Book Clubs, Bowling Leagues, Painting Classes

It's good to get specific when it comes to meeting your next partner. Being passionate about a specific hobby or topic can heighten interests and brighten conversations. For example, having similar interest in religion and overall spirituality can heighten the possibility of marriage in the long run, making the process much easier once you reach that point. Being able to "nerd out" over your favorite book genre or author can dig deep into a variety of other interests. Bowling leagues are a simple hobby that shows dedication to the same thing every week, embracing that a set schedule is important for your significant other. Finally, painting classes are an easy way to dig into creativity on a simple, yet effective level, boosting conversations about some of your favorite artists or creators.

Overall, I feel like most of today's generation can find dating to be difficult. We live in a generation of technology and social media addiction. If you are single and ready to mingle, I highly recommend putting your phone away for a night to check some favorite spots in your neighborhood. We can discover relationships in the simplest of places without the influence of technology and social media. Be a human being, go out and show your voice beyond a screen. Scream what you are passionate about and find that person who can scream it right back at you. You never know who you may meet or discover, it could be someone that truly changes your life forever.

Dairy-Free Chicken Vegetable Soup

Ingredients

- ¾ cup raw cashews
- 1 ½ cups just boiled water + more to soak
- 3 tablespoons olive oil
- 1 medium yellow onion, diced
- 3 cloves garlic, chopped
- 2 stalks celery, thinly sliced
- 4 carrots, cut into rounds
- 1 teaspoon salt
- 1 teaspoon poultry seasoning
- 1 teaspoon dried oregano
- Pinch of chili flakes (optional)
- 3 tablespoons tomato paste
- 1 14.5 ounce can diced tomatoes, undrained
- 5 cups chicken broth
- 2 boneless skinless chicken breasts – about 1 – 1 ½ pounds, or about 3 cups worth of leftover cooked shredded chicken
- A few big handfuls of baby spinach
- ¼ cup parsley, chopped
- Salt and pepper to taste



Directions

- 1) Start by soaking the cashews for the cashew cream. In a small heat proof bowl cover raw cashews with just boiled water and set aside to soak.
- 2) In a large soup pot heat olive oil over medium heat and add onions, carrots, celery, garlic, and salt. Sauté veggies, stirring occasionally, for about 8-10 minutes – until soft and starting to caramelize.
- 3) Add tomato paste, poultry seasoning, oregano, salt, and chili flakes if using. Continue to cook until tomato paste has darkened slightly – another minute or two. This step deepens the flavor of the tomato paste and spices.
- 4) Add broth, diced tomatoes, and chicken breasts. Bring back up to a simmer. Simmer for about 20-25 minutes – until chicken is cooked through and veggies are tender. Reduce heat to low. If using already cooked leftover shredded chicken, just simmer the veggies and broth together and add the chicken in the next step.
- 5) When chicken is cooked, carefully remove from the soup to a cutting board. Shred using two forks or cut into bite sized pieces. Return the shredded chicken to the soup.
- 6) Prepare the cashew cream. Drain and rinse the soaked cashews and add to a high speed blender with 1 ½ cups just boiled water. Blend on high for a minute or two, until completely smooth and no pieces of cashew remain. Add cashew cream to the soup along with parsley and stir to combine. Bring back to a simmer and cook for about 5 minutes or so – to bring the flavors together and thicken slightly.
- 7) Turn off the heat. Add a few big handfuls of baby spinach and stir until wilted. Season to taste with salt and pepper.
- 8) Serve and enjoy!

Recipe presented by nyssaskitchen.com



Coloring Corner



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