

DEFRAYING THE COST OF HOBBIES



Written by Lisa Greer

Friday, 30 March 2007

Hobbies can be expensive by the time you purchase materials and instruction books, but how do you know which instruction books will provide you the most for your money? Read further to find out how our Editor, Lisa Greer, maximizes her arts and crafts budget without sacrificing quality or variety.

For years I did not have the time for arts and crafts that I once enjoyed. I was too busy being a wife, a mom, a step-mom, a volunteer, a litigation paralegal, and a writer –among other duties and chores. Over time, I blew the dust off of my books, paints, drawing pads and other materials I had collected for so long so that someone else could get good use out of them. Then came the day when we had an empty nest and I allowed my schedule to get even more full with writing assignments and there was no time for relaxation. At that point, I knew I needed a diversion to escape from constant work. I also knew I couldn't do something that required a lot of time in on sitting, so I chose one of the first crafts I had learned as a teen -crocheting. This is something that I could spend five minutes on, or half a day, if I wanted. I could also take this craft with me in the car to pass time on a long ride, or even when I'm driving and get stuck in standstill traffic. I had forgotten how neat it was to just sit and do something that didn't tax my brain, and create something beautiful, imaginative and useful.

The one thing disappointing about starting this craft again was the fact that I no longer had my books with instructions. There are so many out there to choose from now, and sometimes it's difficult to tell which you will enjoy the most until you get into the patterns. To alleviate some of the guesswork, I began searching on the internet for free patterns and stitch instructions. Much to my delight, there are many, many resources –not just for crocheting, but also for knitting, needlework, sewing, painting, and even things like egg art.

One example I found for a free craft idea is in the link below. This provides suggestions for kids on what to do with colored Easter egg shells after they have cracked. This is pretty darned neat. I wouldn't have thought of it myself.

http://www.creativekidsathome.com/activities/activity_133.shtml#Art%20from%20Egg%20Shells

I also found these sites for crocheting that offer stitch instructions and some free patterns:

<http://www.crochetpatterncentral.com/directory/stitches.php>

<http://crochet.about.com/library/weekly/aa052398.htm>

<http://home.inreach.com/marthac/jewel.html>

I also found one for watercolor, oil and acrylic painting. This site contains a wealth of step-by-step instructions and concepts you can apply to other projects:

<http://www.creativespotlite.com/art-instruction.htm>

If you're into many different crafts, check out the sites below for free patterns and instructions on crafts from A-Z. These are great sites for finding new crafts as well.

<http://www.allcrafts.net/>

<http://www.craftsitedirectory.com/>

Even though I have a lot of free information available, the writer in me still enjoys having a book to fall back on. After all, if the electric goes out during a storm, you can always light a kerosene lantern or some candles and work on your craft to pass the time. But, while I'm re-building my library, these websites are an invaluable tool to me.

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SPRINGTIME FUN IN KENTUCKY



Written by Lisa Greer

Sunday, 18 March 2007

What's there to do outdoors in the springtime besides visiting the zoo? Consider spending the day at Kentucky's Newport Aquarium, just across from downtown Cincinnati, Ohio.

Newport Aquarium is a full day of fun and adventure, starting with the Touch Pool where you'll be able to see, handle and pet creatures such as star fish, whelk and horseshoe crabs.

With sea life exhibits ranging from the Atlantic and Pacific oceans, to Amazon rainforests, to river life in Australia, Thailand, and even Kentucky, you'll experience places all over the world and never leave the area. Adults will gaze in wide-eyed wonder right along with children as they view exotic exhibits of otters, penguins, sea turtles, jellyfish, eels, seahorses, unicorn fish, porcupine fish, many varieties of sharks, including the distinctive, but hardly dangerous, Shark Ray, and even a giant octopus.



If you've ever wondered what it would be like to walk around underwater, this is the place for you -no scuba gear or submarines necessary. You'll feel as if you're standing right on the ocean floor as you watch sharks, stingrays and other sea life swim overhead and all around through the walls of an acrylic tunnel.



To enhance your aquarium experience, be sure to check out the diving exhibits where one can actually communicate with divers through a special intercom system to find out more about the sharks and fish swimming around them. For a close up look at the care and feeding of these marine life, book a behind the scenes tour to learn more about what is required of Newport's staff to maintain the health and well being of these animals.

If you're looking for a great activity for a large group such as school field trip, or church and community youth programs, this facility would be ideal. Group packages are offered and include choices such as breakfast with the penguins with early admission prior to opening to the public, or perhaps your group is into camping. Instead of sleeping under a blanket of stars, how about a canopy of sharks with one of Newport's overnight programs. Choose from packages that include scavenger hunts, documentary movies, game



and crafts, as well as behind the scenes tours and more.

After hours package deals are also available for corporate events and teambuilding, fundraisers, birthday parties, holiday parties and even wedding rehearsal dinners and receptions, complete with personalized dive shows and tours.

Newport Aquarium is open 365 days a year from 10:00-6:00 daily with extended hours in the summer. General admission is \$17.95 for adults (with a \$2 discount for seniors) and \$10.95 for Children ages 3-12 (2 and under are free). Be sure to check family hours and prices during the winter as those may vary.

To get to there from Louisville, take I-64 East to I-71 North, which joins to I-75. Take this to I-275 East to I47 North, and take exit #5 (Newport/Route 8 exit) and follow the signs that will take you directly to the parking garage. For more information, or to learn about special deals and packages, call 859-261-7444 or visit www.newportaquarium.com.



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THE MUSIC OF LUDVIG GIRDLAND



Written by Staff reviews

Saturday, 31 March 2007

Sensible Life highlights two music CD's this issue. If you love jazz, these are a must for your collection.

Both CDs feature works by artist Ludvig Girdland, with music that effortlessly and memorably permeates the heart and soul of the listener. Dialogue and Friends...Forever will provide you with a most enjoyable and relaxing experience imaginable.

Before Ludvig was seriously injured in 2005, he wrote music for film and television, as well as for himself. His friends, family and fans are hoping and praying that he will once again compose and play his beautiful music. Until then, we have these.

To read the full story of Ludvig's accident, visit the Features section of this issue of Sensible Life.

Dialogue: Contains Will You Be My Valentine, specially composed by Ludvig for his wife, Tamara, when they were separated during Valentines Day.

Friends...Forever is a wonderful compilation and all proceeds from the sale of this CD will go into a medical fund for Ludvig to fund a very special and much needed treatment to aid his recovery.

To purchase, visit the links provided below. Please note these are popular CDs that may be out of stock at the time, but if you put your name on the list, it doesn't take long for them to become available again.



Dialogue: Contains Will You Be My Valentine, specially composed by Ludvig for his wife, Tamara, when they were separated during Valentines Day.

<http://www.cdbaby.com/cd/ludvig>



Friends...Forever is a wonderful compilation and all proceeds from the sale of this CD will go into a medical fund for Ludvig to fund a very special and much needed treatment to aid his recovery.

<http://cdbaby.com/cd/nelsongirdland>

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GARDENING AND RECYCLING GO HAND IN HAND



Written by Lisa Greer

Sunday, 18 March 2007

Spring is in the air in most of North America, and that means sprucing up your outdoors. Before you make that trip to your local hardware store, be sure to look around the house to see what you have readily available.

For example, some gardeners are not aware that Canola Oil can be used as an insecticide for many plants and trees. Whether spraying on straight, or mixing with water to dilute it, this can be a more natural and safe way to protect your fruits and vegetables.

For more information, visit:

http://www.epa.gov/pesticides/biopesticides/ingredients/factsheets/factsheet_011332.htm

<http://www.epa.gov/fedrgstr/EPA-PEST/1998/April/Day-15/p10013.htm>

Making a new flower bed? How about using wet newspapers, instead of plastic garden liner to cut down on weeds. Newspaper can be an effective form of mulch, and can be used as a base for cedar or rubber mulch for an extra layer of prevention.

Read more about using newspaper by clicking on the sites below:

<http://www.recyclenow.org/less-toxic/Weeds.PDF>

or http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Weed_control

Planting tomatoes? You'll need some stakes to tie up those vines as they grow. How about recycling those worn bamboo torches you were planning to throw away by using them as stakes for your tomato plants. Then, replace the worn with new ones to decorate your patio or pool area. And, if you really like bamboo torches, you can purchase a 24 pack of them at Ace Hardware for just under \$100.00, <http://www.acehardware.com/sm-bamboo-torch-24-pack-g-tc009pbb-24-pack--pi-1760586.html>

Throwing out that old wooden ladder? Why not set it upright in concrete and spraypaint it dark green, then set a climbing rose bush at the base. If you like that idea, but don't have an old ladder, no worries. You can purchase one at a reasonable price at <http://arusticgarden.com/oldruswoodla.html>

Remember to be creative. Look around before you throw something out and see if you can think of a way to recycle it to enhance your garden, or at least serve a purpose in helping it grow. Sometimes all it takes is a little soap and water, or a dab of paint to create a whole new look.

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SPRING GET-TOGETHERS



Written by Connie Hickey

Monday, 26 March 2007

Easter and springtime bring back very special memories for me. I have a very special aunt, uncle and cousins who live in Marietta, Georgia. At Easter they would come visit us in Louisville, Ky. It was probably spring break, but that part escapes my memory.

My mother would shop and buy all six of us a new outfit for Easter. Our shoes were all polished and lined up for Easter morning. The patent leathers were shined up with a little bacon grease. You had to be all decked out for Easter in the 50's.

After church, the grown-ups would hide the colored eggs from our Easter baskets in the park across the street. (It amazes me now that none of us died from salmonella poisoning after eating those eggs a week later).

While we were having so much fun with the eggs, my mother and my Aunt Alma were cooking a feast for us which was put out like a buffet on our big dining room table with two leaves added and pushed against the wall.

Both my mother and Alma were fantastic cooks. Their styles were a little different, but both so delicious. That table was loaded down with good food. It stayed there most of the day. Friends and family would stop in during the day and grab a plate.

I really miss those days and my mother who passed away in 2003. But, if anyone stops by to see Aunt Alma down in Georgia, she is still always ready to lay out a scrumptious meal for her guests.

I have for this issue some recipes that make me think of spring, including some interesting ways to dye eggs "au natural".

NATURAL EGG DYES

Red Cabbage---Turns eggs robin blue
Onion Skins---Turns eggs gold
Curry Powder---Turns eggs light yellow
Beet Juice--Turns eggs red

Pour boiling water over ingredients used for dyeing. Steep 30 minutes or let stand overnight. Strain and dip hard boiled eggs into dye until desired color.

FOR THE BUFFET

It seems like we always had ham and/or fried chicken, salads like macaroni and potato, with plenty of yummy desserts.

Baked Ham

1 ham (I assume this is a precooked ham)
3 cups water
1/2 to 1 cup peach juice

Put into a roaster with lid tight. Three cups water, 1/2 or 1 cup peach juice. Baste about every 30 minutes. Bake at 300 to 350 degrees F about 2 1/2 hours.

This is not the recipe they used, but it sure sounds good and easy. This recipe was submitted to "A Taste of the Past" cookbook by Delta Fulks and it was her mother's recipe. Delta is probably about 80 years old now.

Perfect Country Fried Chicken

Perfect fried chicken comes from heeding details. Here are steps country women, experts in this cooking, take to achieve success:

* After coating chicken with seasoned flour, spread pieces on a wire rack to dry for a few minutes.

* Heat from 1/4 to 1/2" salad oil or shortening in a heavy skillet until it sizzles when a drop of water is added.

For special occasions, cook only breasts, thighs and legs. Avoid crowding chicken. Use two skillets if necessary.

* Brown meaty pieces first (add liver the last 15 minutes of cooking.) Brown lightly on one side, turn with tongs and brown on other side.

It takes from 15 to 20 minutes to brown chicken. Reduce heat, cover skillet tightly and cook until chicken is tender, 30 to 40 minutes. (If skillet's lid does not fit snugly, add 1 to 2 tbsp. water just before covering skillet.) Remove cover the last 10 minutes of cooking to re-crisp chicken. My mother used only salt and pepper to season her flour.

I found this recipe in a 1959 Farm Journal cookbook. I was so surprised as this is the exact method my mother, Pee Wee Whitlock Baugh used to fry chicken for our family.

Submitted to "A Taste of the Past" cookbook by my sister, Barbara Shields Burkart.

Macaroni Salad

This recipe is one of those where there are really no exact amounts. I have taken my Aunt Alma's and my own recipe and combined them.

2 or 3 cups macaroni, uncooked
sweet salad cubes or relish
1/2 to 1 onion (depends on how you like onion)
salad dressing such as Miracle Whip, but I prefer Blue Plate or Hellmann's
2 or 3 boiled eggs, chopped
salt, to taste
pepper, to taste
2 or 3 stalks celery, chopped fine
1 Tbsp sugar or 3 packets artificial sweetener
1 large or 2 small cucumbers, seeded and cut into small cubes
1 or 2 tomatoes, diced

Cook macaroni in boiling water until just tender. Do not overcook or let noodles swell. Rinse with cold water. Drain well. Let cool. Add pickle relish, probably a cup and one-half or more, but just add until it looks good to you. I like a lot of pickles in my salad. Chop the celery in a food chopper and add to noodles. Add tomatoes, onions, and cucumbers. Always stir gently when adding ingredients so you don't chop up the noodles. Add salad dressing until noodles are just moistened. Add sugar or sweetener and salt and pepper, stir. Add chopped eggs. Stir gently. You may have to add more salad dressing at this point, because the noodles absorb it sometimes. Chill. Make sure it has not gotten dry when you are ready to serve the salad. If it is, add just a little more salad dressing.

Kentucky 7-Layer Salad

1 head lettuce, torn
4 ribs celery, chopped,
1 bunch, green onions, chopped
2 (10-oz.) boxes frozen peas, uncooked
8 slices bacon, fried crisp or Bac-O's
1 1/2 c. sour cream
1 1/2 c. mayonnaise
1/3 c. sugar
1/2 c. Parmesan cheese
optional: shredded cheddar cheese
optional: croutons

Place lettuce pieces in bottom of a clear salad bowl. Sprinkle celery over lettuce, then the green onions, then the peas. Make a dressing by combining the sour cream, mayonnaise and sugar. Pour over the peas. Sprinkle Parmesan cheese over dressing. Crumble bacon and sprinkle on top. Chill well before serving. Optional to then sprinkle with shredded cheddar cheese and croutons.

This recipe was given to me by a military friend who brought it to our get-togethers.

Buttermilk Salad

This recipe is one of my mother-in-law's. It's a quick, yummy, easy to make dessert salad. I can remember having it at Easter dinner at her house.

1 can (20 oz.) pineapple in it's own juice
1 box strawberry sugar free or regular jello (large) or any other flavor you like
2 c. buttermilk
16 oz. Cool Whip topping

Bring pineapple to boil in small saucepan. Add jello. Stir. Let cool. Add buttermilk. Stir. Stir in Cool Whip. Spread in pan or covered rectangular container. You can add pecans, if you want.

Alma's Chocolate Pound Cake

Almost everyone in my family loves this cake. There is a handful of coconut listed in the ingredients. Alma says no coconut goes in her Pound Cake. But, if you like coconut, you can add it to the cake batter before you pour it in the tube pan.

Cake

1/2 lb. butter (1 1/4 c. or 2 sticks)
1/2 c. vegetable shortening
3 c. sugar
5 eggs, beaten
3 c. plain or all purpose flour
1/2 tsp. baking powder
1/2 tsp. salt
4 heaping Tbsp. cocoa
1 c. milk
1 Tbsp. vanilla
handful of coconut

Cream butter, shortening and sugar. Add eggs. Sift dry ingredients together. Add alternately with milk to egg mixture. Add vanilla. Pour into tube pan. Bake at 325 degrees for 1 hour and 25 minutes. Grease pan with Crisco and flour. Cool cake 10 minutes before turning out.

Frosting

2/3 stick butter
2 Tbsp. (heaping) cocoa or 2 squares melted semisweet chocolate
2/3 box powdered sugar
3 Tbsp. coffee

Mix ingredients together. Frost cake.

Four Day Coconut Cake

This cake takes a few days, but it is absolutely worth it.

The Icing

12 oz. sour cream
2 c. sugar
4 (6 oz.) pkg. frozen coconut

Mix and store icing in refrigerator for 24 hours in airtight container. After 24 hours, make 1 yellow cake.

Assembling the cake

1 Duncan Hines Yellow cake mix

Prepare cake according to directions on package for round cake. Split layers when cool. (Use clean dental floss to split them. Hold it tight and run it through center of layer.) Making four layers. Put icing on cake and between all layers. Store in refrigerator in airtight container. Cake is ready to eat on second day.

DOLLAR STORE STYLE



Written by Marlene Alexander

Friday, 30 March 2007

www.dollarstorestyle.com

The Scarf As Inspiration

Lets try a little free association using the word "scarf". Pirates, gypsies and magicians spring to mind. Dollar stores, possibly. Using scarves to dress up your home instead of your head, maybe not so much. But, at a buck apiece, these colorful headgear are worth a second look as home decorating accents.



This 41" x 43" scarf makes a nice covering for the dining room table in between family gatherings. We've accented it with candles and books. The candles and matching candle sticks were \$1.00 each. Use hardcover books you have on hand, (preferably in your chosen color scheme), to stagger the height of one candle so that you have a visually appealing scene. We spent six dollars on this table topping.



Here, two scarves make a light and airy change for a winter-weary bedroom window. This window is about 39" wide. (Use three or four scarves for a fuller look.) Curtain rings with clips would be ideal for hanging these curtains but paying up to \$13 dollars for one package of 7 rings (how odd!) rather defeats the purpose of our budget-minded exercise. Instead, we hung our thrifty window dressings on a café rod by pinning medium-sized safety pins through the top of the scarf and doing them up around metal key rings. The key rings came in a package of 8 for a buck. We found these in the craft aisle at Buck or Two and used two packages spaced about 6" apart for our pair of makeshift curtains. If you don't already have a ton of safety pins lying around, dollar stores have them, too. The total cost of our scarf curtains was \$4.00.

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SPLIT SECOND DECISION



Written by Lisa Greer

Friday, 30 March 2007

Imagine a couple very much in love. She is an accomplished ice skater, formerly skating with Holiday On Ice and in the Olympics. Her career was on the rise as she trained, taught and coached aspiring skaters. He is a phenomenally talented musician and composer, with the violin as his instrument of choice, but his is no ordinary violin. It is one of only 3 of its kind in Los Angeles that plugs into an electrical outlet, making his violin special. The uniqueness of his violin is only surpassed by the uniqueness of his own mortal presence in this world as a musician, a composer, a husband, a brother, a friend, a son, and a businessman.

His name is Ludvig Girdland. Born in Sweden, he has played the violin since the age of 4, even playing with symphony orchestras before the age of 15. After completing his studies at Berklee College of Music in Boston, he moved to Los Angeles to further develop his musical profession. He has played with such artists as Diana Krall, Betty Buckley and Terry Gibbs. You've likely heard his music in television commercials by Ford, Toyota, and Coca Cola and in motion pictures such as K-19 and Something's Gotta Give.

Her name is Tamara Kuchiki, a Canadian born in Montreal to professional ice skating parents. Following in their footsteps, Tamara began developing her career at an early age. That same stamina, strength and determination that has served her well in achieving her skating goals is so evident in how she has handled the most unexpected tragedy of her life.

Imagine listening to the most beautiful violin music you've ever heard. (Ludvig's music can be heard at <http://www.cdbaby.com/cd/ludvig>, and <http://cdbaby.com/cd/nelsongirdland>) As you listen, think of your name, your zip code, or your profession. In the time it takes you to picture any one of those in your mind, that's the amount of time it took for one individual to make the decision to drive under the influence of alcohol, changing the course of many lives forever by running a red light and crashing into Ludvig and Tamara's car September 16th, 2005.

The driver's blood alcohol level was .07 even three hours later when the breathalyzer test was finally administered. His reason for drinking? He had been celebrating the birth of his child and also receiving a passing score on his police officer exam. His punishment for this accident? Six months in the county jail. Six months out of a possible maximum of six years, and the only words he has ever spoken to his victims were uttered on that fateful night, "Do you have insurance?"

As for Ludvig; he, too, is serving a sentence; possibly a life sentence as he remains imprisoned in a world of medical facilities, machines and treatment for his comatose condition. Tamara is serving this sentence with her beloved husband by his side daily, waiting, hoping and delighting in even the slightest sign of improvement in his condition. In an exclusive interview Tamara tells of their life together and the results of that single, selfish act of another that has changed the course of their future.

Tamara and Ludvig first met in the show, Holiday On Ice In Concert. "A live orchestra toured with us, and Ludvig played the violin.. We both lived in Boston at the time, but had never met; we both lived in Los Angeles at the same time and never met; we went all the way to Holland to do this show, and we met each other there, and it just felt right."

This couple, destined for success, could never have imagined the ill fate they were about to meet. "The accident was on a Friday night. We wanted to see the movie that Ludvig had played in. Strangely, the name of the movie was An Unfinished Life."

After the movie, they were heading home, had exited the freeway and were sitting at the light at the end of the ramp. With construction all around, visibility was obscured for traffic coming from the left or right. "We were the first at the light. It turned green, and it was like we were run over by a train or something. The force was incredible, and we passed out for about 10 minutes. Two friends from Sweden were with us, and I could see Ludvig and one friend sitting in the front seat still passed out. The two of us in the back woke up and were out of the car trying to get them to wake up. It was surreal."

Ludvig was taken immediately to UCLA Hospital, arriving 50 minutes later and undergoing 17 hours of surgery to remove part of his skull and subdural hematomas in his head, repair his rib cage, intestines and other injuries. The initial prognosis was grim with the doctors indicating he would never breathe on his own again and there was nothing more they could do. Two weeks passed, and he was breathing on his own again. Ludvig was then moved to a rehab facility, then later moved to Sweden where he could receive more intense treatment.

Medical providers said Ludvig wasn't reacting to stimulation, but that really wasn't so. "He reacts to pain, withdrawing from it. The reacting is different levels of coma. I don't know what stage he actually is now, but he's awake. He can follow you, and he has a regular sleeping pattern. He'll stay awake for most of the day, but if he gets left alone and nobody does anything with him, he gets a fidgety, or looks sleepy. The minute you start moving him, touching him, or encouraging him to try something different, he joins in. He's much more there than people think."

Fortunately, Ludvig has a doctor who is willing to try things. "He has ridden a horse and did great with that. They were originally just going to sit him on the horse, and he sat so well that they walked him for about a half mile, and he held on with his right arm. He sat on a regular saddle with a light support vest and no one on the horse with him. He overstretched twice, but his head stayed fine, and he had good support in his upper body in his torso."

Tamara has seen Ludvig make amazing progress over the past year, but it's still difficult to tell the full extent of his injury. "Because the injury is on the brain stem, they don't have it 100% tested to see what is actually damaged. You're in the dark on finding out if it's damaged for good, or if it's just swollen. It can be swollen for quite some time. We're just going along with what we can see is

functioning. If we see that's not working then we say okay well maybe that's injured. It's a little scary because you don't know if this is how it is, or if this is still a part that's coming along. So you have to be patient and just keep going at all these different therapies."

Tamara's days are full, beginning with an early morning visit to her husband before teaching skating in the early afternoon. "I was very lucky to actually get the opportunity to work with skaters in Sweden. It felt good to jump into it and do what I was actually doing in LA. That's helped a great deal. It's been therapeutic for me and has helped me be myself. It feels somewhat like it used to be—the normal—and I can bring a portion of what I used to do home and tell Ludvig. Before, he heard about skating all the time, and it was good to have that energy and excitement to bring to him. He needs to feel what's going on out in the world. Skating is my life, and Ludvig is my life, and it's even more special that I met, through my passion for skating, my husband, whom I love."

Before work, Tamara spends quiet time with Ludvig. "Every day I lay in bed with him. Sometimes we'll just lay there and watch some TV, or we'll just cuddle, or I'll work with the hands a little bit while we're laying there. We've always cuddled, and we always inspired each other's creativity. He inspired mine, and I saw how hard he strived for originality and how he worked at his craft and how he inspired me to challenge myself more. He is more than I ever expected, and I had always spent free time with him, though, I had never even considered anything like this in my life."

There are difficult times when Tamara must travel back to LA. "I'll call Ludvig twice a day, and I can hear the nurses in the background saying, 'Oh he's smiling'. He smiles and he does cry, so we're getting responses. We're still quite a ways away, but I'm happy that we can see differences. There's just not enough time in the day to do everything I want to do with him, and with the energy he has. I'm mixing it up, but not so much that he can't grasp something. If you change the pattern every day, it becomes a little too much for him to handle, so you have to try to remain consistent. It's difficult figuring out the right pattern."

Even if Ludvig completely recovers, he will still have a long road ahead rebuilding his career. "It's hard as a musician, but he was pretty successful in the studios just from scratch with no agent. When he first arrived in LA, he worked hard and got a lot of contacts. He has incredible talent. Ludvig's primary goal was playing music, but he also liked composing his own music. I was lucky to have one that he composed for me, Will You Be My Valentine. He wrote that for me when we were separated for the opening and closing of the Olympics. I was skating in it and was gone for 8 weeks to Salt Lake City. In that time, Ludvig came to visit me four times. We missed Valentine's Day together, but that's when he wrote it. I've never had anybody do such a thing for me."

That's how life was with Ludvig. "Every birthday I would get serenaded. He would open the door and he would have on the stand beside the bed these candles, and he would come in with the violin and I would get my own Happy Birthday. It was very special."

So many studios have suffered the loss of a wonderful person as well as the loss of his music and talent. "They would tell him, 'This is what we'd like and something with this kind of feel', and he'd go and lay down the tracks and he might be done in 15 minutes. He's just very talented. He was trying to get more of his own stuff and trying to figure out what his own stuff actually is."

"I'm lucky he's still here and that he wasn't completely taken. I'm thankful for the time I have with him; it could have been a lot worse. I have a lot of hope. One day I gave him a hug and helped his right arm move across my back. I could feel him feeling me and I closed my eyes. I actually felt like he was going to talk to me. He didn't, but I felt it and it was so wonderful to have that. If I could speak to the world, my message would be to appreciate what you have, think of others and don't be selfish. Live life to the fullest because you never know when it can be taken away. You have so much to be thankful for just to be able to breath, walk, talk, be with the one you love and just get that reciprocation, so don't take it for granted."

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WHERE'S THE ACCOUNTABILITY?



Written by Gracie Dane

Tuesday, 03 April 2007

I was watching one of those cop reality shows on television one evening, and lo and behold I was witnessing a high speed chase on film. Pretty common with those shows, but what made this one more shocking is the fact that they were chasing an inebriated driver who had 18 prior arrests for driving under the influence. Eighteen –not eight, but eight plus 10 more. At what point is a judge going to make this person accountable? This is clearly a person who doesn't learn from her mistakes, and now she's putting officers lives at risk as they chaser her, dangerously speeding down the highway in an attempt to elude yet another arrest.

I have to ask why –why would she speed away to avoid arrest? Apparently it's notgoing to matter. She just gets another tic mark on the tally chart of her criminal file. Apparently, in this state, it's 100 strikes and your out, or something. Maybe I'm too hard on the lawmakers. Maybe there's a stipulation for situations where the persistent offender seriously injures or kills someone. For those, it's a slap on the wrist and 6 months in the county jail. If you don't believe that happens, please be sure to visit the Features section of Sensible Life to see what can happen as a result of that selfish act of the drinker who refuses to admit he needs someone to drive him home. Ludvig Girdland remains in a coma today at that hands of a police officer who chose to drive drunk that fateful evening.

With me living just about an hours drive from the site of the 1988 Carrollton bus crash that killed 24 children when a persistent drunk driver crossed the center line and hit the bus head-on, these incidences hit home. Many of us mourned as we watched that investigation unfold, learning that those children who could not escape, burned to death. In this instance, a judge decided to make an example out of this offender. His sentence was life without parole. The offender, Larry Mahoney, has been up for parole and each time it is denied.

If all judges took this stringent of a stance on driving under the influence, imagine the lives that could potentially be saved. But, then, to invoke stiffer penalties might leave lawmakers, attorneys and judges in an awkward position as many of them leave bars, parties, or maybe the golf course, driving away in their vehicles with a few drinks under their belt.

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Wii REVOLUTIONIZES THE VIDEO GAME INDUSTRY



Written by Sandy Greer

Friday, 30 March 2007

With childhood diabetes on the rise, and obesity becoming one of our nation's biggest health risks, many restaurants are trying to provide healthier menu options for families. McDonalds is now advertising more heart healthy foods, and other fast food chains are quickly following. But that's not all kids need to stay healthy. What about exercise? Most kids spend a large amount of time in front of the TV, the computer, or playing video games, and not much time playing and moving around. So what can parents do to help persuade their kids to get up off the couch, short of turning off the electronics and forcing them into the playground? One video game company has come up with a way to help players get up and move around, while still keeping them visually entertained. The Nintendo Wii, one of the hottest toys this past Christmas, features interactive games that require some sort of movement. The console comes with it's own packages of Wii Sports games, such as golf, baseball, tennis, bowling, and boxing. Each game requires the player to mimic the motions that you would do if actually playing the sport outside. It even comes with it's own workout program, that will literally make you sweat!

Other games for the Wii, such as Rayman and Tiger Woods Golf, also require movement in order to win the game. In Tiger Woods Golf, the player uses the controller like a golf club to swing, and make the shot. Rayman's theme is about a duck who is captured by raving rabbits, and must complete several tasks to escape from his prison. These tasks include running by moving your arms in a running motion, throwing a cow a long distance by making a roping motion, or filling up the rabbit's goggles with carrot juice by making a pumping motion. It also features a workout regime that if done right, will make you with sore muscles in the end.

Of course, like other consoles, there are games that you can play with a classic controller, such as the original Mario Brothers, but without the interaction, the game doesn't seem as fun as the ones where you have to get up and move around to complete your objective. Just like in the commercials show, you have to get up, flail your arms, jump around, and ultimately have fun playing the games. You can even have a family game night, where you and your kids can take turns bowling on your TV at home, without having to go to a smoky, loud bowling alley.

While the Wii shouldn't be a substitute for getting outside, running around the back yard, and breathing in some fresh air, it's a good start on the road to getting kids up off the couch, and showing them that exercise can be fun. Kudos to Nintendo for their innovative new family friendly console.

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SPRING



Written by Christy Fowler

Monday, 02 April 2007

Please enjoy a delightful poem by teen author and regular contributor, Christy Fowler, and the birdnest image by teen photographer, Kara Hancock, both from Kentucky.



Spring

By Christy Fowler

The flower joyously blooms
As the smoky clouds make way for the full moon
The grass transforms, revived, new
The sky is alive, brazen, blue
The trees reach to compete with the sky
The wind whips, flies
The birds chirp and sing
The frozen compact lakes no longer cling
The crisp, dark, ice, cold fades
As earth proclaims the new Spring days
~end~

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