

FREE

Temiskaming District Seasons

Spring 2024

Magazine



Wellness
on a plate

Catch
FISHING
fever

SPRING
CLEANING
Make your
home
SHINE!

SPEAKER
PRINTING, PUBLISHING
AND PROMOTIONS

A woman with blonde hair tied back, wearing a black jacket and a patterned backpack, is holding a young girl. The girl is wearing a colorful patterned jacket and leggings. They are standing in front of a waterfall. The background is slightly blurred, focusing on the woman and child.

Good things come to
those who wait.

Georgia-Pacific continues to make significant investments in our community, our workforce and the environment.

Sustainability and stewardship is everyone's responsibility. By following good manufacturing and distribution practices today, we help to ensure a healthier tomorrow

Help bring joy to others.

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SPRING

CLEANING

Make your home SHINE!

Decluttering isn't rocket science!

Is your home starting to look like a flea market or a second-hand store? Do you have too many of everything, including clothing, books, decorations, dishes, toys and tools? Have you accumulated things you haven't used in years? Do you have duplicates or even triplicates of some items? Follow this guide to sort through your possessions without losing steam.

SET REALISTIC GOALS

Having a home that's cluttered from the basement to the attic can feel overwhelming, and for good reason. To avoid getting discouraged and drained, organizational

experts recommend breaking the task into smaller, more manageable jobs. For example, focus on one room a week or one drawer a day.

You can check off completed tasks as you go, such as decluttering the game room. This approach is much more practical and motivating than aiming to declutter your entire home in one go and feeling like you're not making any progress.

MAKE PILES OF SIMILAR OBJECTS

If you want to declutter like a pro, use the tried-and-true pile technique. This method involves grouping similar items on a large surface, such as a big table or the floor.

For instance, when you tackle the kitchen, put all the cups on the table. Similarly, throw all your clothes on the bed when you're decluttering the closet. You'll probably discover that many of your possessions have hardly been used. So, why hold on to them? Simply asking yourself this question is a sign that you don't need them anymore.

SORT EVERYTHING INTO GIVEAWAY, SELL OR THROW-AWAY PILES

Don't let unused items collect dust in your

home. Instead of holding on to extra dishes or small appliances, like hair dryers, consider giving them to young people moving into a new place or donating them to a local thrift shop.

Do you have some valuable items? Sell them to make some extra cash. If you have expired or broken items, dispose of them responsibly by checking your local waste collection and disposal guidelines. To make the sorting process easier, prepare three boxes or bags marked "Give away," "Sell" and "Throw away."

HAVE A "GET RID OF BY" CONTAINER READY

When you're trying to declutter your space, it can be challenging to let go of certain items. If you find yourself contemplating whether to keep or throw away some things, try this: gather all the items you're unsure about and put them in a box marked "Items to be get rid of if unused by [insert date]." Don't forget to mark this deadline on your calendar.

What are you waiting for? Get started now!



Spring cleaning Tips for sparkling clean walls and floors

Over a year, your walls and floors can accumulate a lot of dirt. When it's time for a good spring cleaning, use these tips to make them sparkle.

PAINTED WALLS

Start by removing dust and cobwebs from your walls using your vacuum's brush attachment or a telescopic mop with a duster. Then, dampen a cloth with a mixture of warm water and mild soap and wipe down the walls, working from top to bottom. Rinse with clean water and allow to dry.

For stubborn dirt, use a stain remover specifically designed for painted walls. Be careful not to use the wrong product, as it could do more harm than good.

FLOORS

Start by removing dust, crumbs and other debris from your floor. While a traditional broom works, vacuuming is a



better choice. Next, clean the floors with a mixture of water and a dash of mild detergent that won't leave streaks. Be careful not to let the floors get too wet.

For best results, purchase a product specifically designed to clean your specific flooring, whether you have hardwood, bamboo, vinyl or ceramic.

The satisfaction of stain removal

Certain substances easily stain fabrics and other materials. However, there are several tried and tested home remedies that can be used to remove stubborn stains. Here are a handful:

•**Red wine.** Cover the affected area with a mixture of baking soda and lemon juice. Let it soak for about an hour. You can also use white vinegar to dab out the stain if it's already dry.



Finally, rinse with clean, cold water.

•**Pen ink.** Apply a bit of white toothpaste or rubbing alcohol to the affected area and rub vigorously. You can also try using a paste made from milk and cornstarch and brushing off the dried residue after a few hours.

•**Coffee.** Blot the affected area with a mixture of lukewarm water, dishwashing soap (or laundry detergent) and white vinegar. Let the mixture sit for several minutes and then wash the item as usual. If the stain is still visible, gently dab it with rubbing alcohol.

•**Blood.** If you're dealing with dried blood, soak the affected area in cool water mixed with white vinegar. Let it sit for about 15 minutes. Blot the mixture and rinse the garment with clean water. Avoid using hot water as this can set the stain.

Removing stains always gives you a feeling of relief and satisfaction. Give it a try!



Bye-bye, clutter!

Simple, effective storage solutions

Are you tired of having to tiptoe around piles of stuff in your home? Here are a few tips to help you organize and find a place for all your belongings so you can enjoy a clutter-free home:

•**Wardrobe organization systems.** You can find various practical and affordable solutions for intelligently storing your clothing and accessories at local hardware and big-box stores, including hooks, shelves, shoe racks, bins and more. The possibilities are endless!

•**Multifunctional furniture for the living room.** If you're in the market for a new coffee table, look for one with drawers and compartments that can be used to store items like the TV remote or video game controllers. Additionally, some ottomans double as hidden storage for things like magazines and throw blankets. Lastly, keep an eye out for sofa beds that come with drawers for extra storage.

•**Bathroom accessories.** Store personal hygiene products, like toothbrushes, towels and washcloths in an organized and attractive way using trays with dividers, towel bars, shelves or shower caddies. If you're tight on space, don't hesitate to utilize the walls or even the top of the door to store items you use less frequently.

Visit your local shops for other clever storage solutions.



The Colours and sounds of spring

By Darlene Wroe

This year Easter fell at the end of March, which is recognized as an early time to celebrate Easter.

However, according to the given explanation, it could have fallen even a week earlier, had the moon been in a different phase.

Apparently, Easter falls on the Sunday after the first full moon following the Spring Equinox.

Given that, it seems that Easter could be as late as the third week in April.

Whatever the case, spring is always a time for celebrating new life, hope, and empowerment to go forward into a new season of great opportunities.

My childhood memories of spring always feature the iridescent colours of cellophane papers tied around big colourful baskets of sweet Easter eggs.

There were always tiny yellow chicks attached with bendable feet to the rim of the basket.

Upstairs, when I was very little, there was a section of the bedroom curtained off with a pale orange curtain. In this curtained area, piles of boxes full of various things awaited the day when they would be brought out for their allotted purposes. But only stacked part way up, they basically created shelving areas. With the full morning light streaming through the bedroom window, this little space was a golden retreat for my five-year-old self, and a perfect place for stashing my treasures, such as the beautifully coloured paper from my Easter basket.

I always loved colours. It's a strong family trait. My grandmother was a master of creativity and outside the little house where we all lived there were many little chimes hanging in the trees. Bits of glass retrieved from broken bottles were somehow pierced and integrated into lovely collections of clinking wind chimes.

The windows themselves were draped in lace curtains and the shelves were filled to the brim with red geraniums.

In one corner of the dining/living room where our seven fami-

ly members, two dogs and two cats mainly congregated, there was an old hutch. How many decades old it was at the time I can't tell you, but several decades later it still stands, now at my sister's place, as sturdy as ever. Above this old hutch was a square amber-coloured jar, and within the jar was a collection of tiny coloured glass plates, cups and other dishware, fit for a doll's tea party.

Today, the square glass jar sits in my home.

Easter usually came at the same time as the tiny flowers at the south edge of the house began to poke their heads above the ground.

Our huge gardens were alternating rows of rich, wet dirt and snow. In later years, when many of us were in or headed toward our double digits age-wise, we would often brave the muddy mess to search for wrapped Easter eggs, hidden in favourite spots across the property.

I would give anything to go back, to hear the crows, which I took for granted then and love now because I equate their raucous calls with new spring, or the constant nattering of the robins as they pick away at worms. I would also do anything to be able to go back and give each of my family members an extra hug.

As the spring advanced the birdsong did too, and my grandmother was adamant in ensuring that the feeders were always full. There were always birds clustered around the many feeders that stayed filled throughout the year. The birds for miles around knew our little home and knew it was always a refuge in a storm, as it was for anyone else.

Across the field, the rows of trees would be slowly but surely shifting from grey to green, and the small shrubs of moose maple would be a deep shade of brilliant purple.

It's no wonder that the children in the family loved to colour, surrounded by all this beauty.

The world opens in spring, and Easter heralds in the new season.





What to do if your dog keeps running away

Does your dog have a habit of running away from home? Here's what you should know about this behaviour and what you can do to stop it.

WHY DOGS RUN AWAY

Most dogs are naturally curious, and there are various reasons why one might wander. While dogs, especially males, are more likely to roam if they're looking for a mate, they might also take off if they're scared, bored or chasing potential prey.

HOW TO PREVENT IT

If your dog has a tendency to explore, it's best not to leave Fido unsupervised outdoors. Additionally, having your pet spayed or neutered will significantly reduce its temptation to run away. Other precautions you can take include:

- Fencing off the entire backyard
- Installing a gate that automatically locks
- Giving your dog toys to play with outside
- Getting a longer leash so your pet can wander around the yard

Following these tips can reduce the likelihood of losing your dog, but your pet should wear a collar and tag just in case. You should also consider microchipping your dog. Whereas a tag might break or fall off, a microchip is a more reliable way to ensure your pet can be identified and returned to you.

If you continue to have trouble with your dog's behaviour, consult a veterinarian or enrol your furry friend in an obedience training class.



Why cats love boxes

Does your cat enjoy cardboard boxes? Here's a look at why they make a great place for your feline friend to play.

- They make your pet feel safe. When given the choice, cats tend to prefer boxes that are a little snug. While research is needed, some specialists suspect this is because small spaces remind cats of being huddled together with their siblings as a kitten.
- They're an ideal place to hide. Cats have strong hunting instincts, and an empty box provides the perfect place to lie in wait and pounce on prey. Hiding in a box also makes it harder for predators to sneak up behind them.
- They provide a warm oasis. Cardboard retains heat, which makes boxes an ideal place for your cat to snuggle up and sleep. What's more, studies show that having a box to retreat to can reduce stress in cats and make them more social.
- They're great for scratching. Cats can sink their claws into cardboard, which shreds easily and makes a satisfying sound

when torn. Scratching allows felines of all kinds to stretch, keep their claws sharp and mark their territory.

Though cardboard boxes are a fun, safe toy for cats to play with, it's best to provide your furry friend with a variety of toys and hideaways. Your local pet stores have everything you need.



Catch FISHING fever



No boat? Try these 5 tips for successful shore fishing!

No boat? No problem! Shore fishing offers a rewarding alternative for anglers without access to a boat. Maximize your success with these five tips:



1. Pick the best spot. Research and choose fishing spots with accessible shorelines. Consider factors like water depth, structures and potential fish habitats. Parks, docks and riverbanks are promising locations.
2. Get the timing down. Fish are often more active during specific times of the day. Early mornings and late evenings tend to be the most promising times because fish are closer to the shore in search of food.
3. Use the right bait and lures. Tailor your bait and lures to the local fish species and their feeding habits. Experiment with a variety of options, including live bait, soft plastics and crankbaits.
4. Stay mobile. If the fish aren't biting in one spot, move along the shoreline to find more promising areas. Be observant of changes in water conditions and adapt your strategy accordingly.
5. Mind the weather. Fish tend to be more active before a front moves in. Overcast days can also be advantageous, as fish often venture closer to the shore in these conditions.

Additionally, fishing on the windward side of a body of water can increase your chances of finding active feeding areas and improve your overall success.

By implementing these tips, you can make the most of spring shore fishing and enjoy a successful and gratifying experience without needing a boat.

Fishing photography tips: documenting your best catches this season

Capturing the thrill of your fishing adventures through photography adds an extra layer of joy to your memorable catches. Follow these tips to take stunning and ethical fishing photos:

1. Handle the fish gently. Be gentle when holding the fish to minimize stress and potential harm. Wet your hands before touching the fish to protect its delicate slime layer. Avoid squeezing it tightly and support its weight evenly. Have your camera ready as you don't want to have the fish out of the water for more than three or four seconds at a time.
2. Use the proper holding technique. For smaller fish, use a one-handed grip, keeping your fingers away from the gills. Larger fish can be supported with two hands, one near the head and the other at the tail. This not only showcases the fish but also ensures its safety.
3. Make sure you're in focus. Focus your camera on the fish's eyes. The eyes are the focal point of any living subject. If the eyes aren't in focus, chances are the rest of the fish will be blurry as well.
4. Avoid selfies. Taking a selfie with your catch is difficult and can be stressful for the fish. Ask a friend to help you get the best shot.



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Mild & Wild

By Sue Nielsen

It is safe to say that in the Temiskaming region we had a relatively balmy winter.

We didn't receive any great amounts of snow until 2024, and then as soon as it came, it melted away with the warm winter temperatures.

I personally don't mind the fact that our winter has been mild with warmer than normal temperatures and less snow.

But people who love outdoor winter activities moaned and groaned about it.

And as we know about anything to do with weather in Northern Ontario: "This too shall pass."

I am a bit concerned about the wild life in the region, as the mild winter may have some negative effects for them.

There are the animals that hibernate and reptiles, toads and turtles who burrow beneath the soil during winter entering a period of inactivity known as brumation.

Brumation is defined as "a state or condition of sluggishness, inactivity or torpor exhibited by reptiles ... during extended periods of low temperatures."

I seem to also be in brumation mode during the winter months as I burrow beneath my blankets. Ha, ha.

Heaven forbid, but the warm weather may also be perfect for tick activity and we have seen moose and deer affected negatively by ticks.

Bumblebees can also mistakenly emerge from hiberna-

tion before the spring flowers have pushed up from the cold mud and bloomed.

Insects can also succumb to frost bite and hypothermia in cold temperatures.

We need all the pollinators we can get.

I know ruffed grouse go deep into the snow using it for protection against the cold winter weather. But if that snow isn't there they may be negatively impacted when temperatures drop to -20 C or so.

Another factor with a mild winter is a lack of birds at backyard feeders. We've seen that so far this winter in our region as birds have been slow to come to the feeders.

They have stayed in the forest finding enough food to survive.

However, the colder it gets the more food they need for energy output.

That is when bird lovers make sure to keep their feeders filled for when it gets cold.

And they also put out suet, which is an important fat source for birds.

It's hard to look out the window and not feel for squirrels when the winter winds whip through their fur.

We do not know if animals dread the winter, but I can say wholeheartedly, this animal sure does.

Welcome spring whenever you decide to fully show up.



Wellness on a plate



Are you changing your diet without supervision?
A terrible decision!



Changing your diet isn't a decision that should be taken lightly. Whether starting a weight-loss program, cutting sugar, going vegan or trying intermittent fasting, you must be aware of the potential health risks. With March being Nutrition Month, it's an excellent time to educate yourself about the dangers of changing your diet without the guidance of a dietitian-nutritionist.

VARIOUS HEALTH RISKS

If you have a specific goal in mind, such as losing weight, resolving digestive issues or reducing your environmental impact, making informed decisions about changing your diet is crucial. Avoid making sudden changes based on random advice from unverified sources. Altering your eating habits can have harmful consequences for your health. For example:

- Completely depriving yourself of particular foods, such as fatty or sugary ones, can lead to compulsive eating
- Adopting a diet that's low in fluids or fibre can cause severe dehydration and constipation
- Consuming an unbalanced diet, such as one that's low in vegetables and high in fat, can lower your energy levels and affect your ability to concentrate

These are just a few examples. However, dietary changes can cause nutritional deficiencies and unpleasant side effects, such as headaches, dizziness, nausea and heart palpitations.

PROVEN BENEFITS OF PROFESSIONAL ADVICE

Regardless of your age or current health status, it's vital to undergo a nutritional assessment and follow-up with a dietitian-nutritionist before making any changes to your diet. Whether you want to lose weight or better manage your diabetes, seeking the guidance of a dietitian is crucial to achieving your health goals safely.

Visit dietitians.ca and click "Find a dietitian" to connect with a dietitian-nutritionist in your area.



What are the 2024 food trends? Get inspired before going grocery shopping

New food trends emerge every year, like the recent popularity of gluten-free diets and superfoods. Here are some food trends to keep an eye out for in 2024.

- **Brain-boosting foods.** The desire to maintain cognitive function and feel good has become increasingly important to all age groups. Both young and old alike are looking for foods that boost brain health, such as berries, nuts, seeds, green tea and dark chocolate.
- **Plant proteins.** Many meat substitutes, such as legume hamburger patties, are ultra-processed. This year, however, informed consumers are opting for plant-based proteins that are as natural as possible to reduce their meat consumption and decrease their carbon footprint.
- **Organic products.** Organic foods are far from going out of style! A growing number of agri-food companies and producers are adapting their methods to meet the demands of environmentally conscious consumers.

Finally, fresh and locally sourced food continues to be a popular trend that's not going away anytime soon.



Fresh ingredients for your active life.



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You can access a wealth of advice on eating well on the Discover Food website (www.unlockfood.ca) by Dietitians of Canada.



FIRE PREVENTION

4 smart ways to avoid fires

Did you know that almost half of all residential fires are caused by human negligence or distraction? Adopt these four life-saving habits to prevent a fire from starting in your kitchen or another room in your home.

1. Never leave heating appliances unattended. Are you ironing or cooking food on the stovetop? A fire can break out even if you leave the room for only a few seconds. Avoid the worst by never

leaving these types of appliances unattended.

2. Don't store combustible objects or materials in or on your range. Keep flammable items like paper, plastic utensils, dishcloths and cereal boxes away from your stove's heating elements. Remember that you could accidentally light the wrong ring or preheat your oven when there are flammable materials inside.

3. Be mindful of electrical cords. Whenever possible, avoid using extension cords for auxiliary heating appliances. Look for appliances with CSA or ULC approval and don't use them if they're damaged.

4. Have your chimney or flue professionally serviced. If you use a traditional wood-burning stove or pellet-burning fireplace, leave the chimney sweeping or flue cleaning to the experts. Ideally, this should be done in the fall before the snow falls.

You can reduce the risk of fire significantly by remaining vigilant every day.



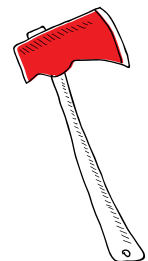
Is your evacuation plan up to date?

Creating an evacuation plan is essential for responding quickly and appropriately when a fire breaks out. Have you made one? If so, take a few moments to consult this checklist. If you haven't, it's high time you did!

- **Emergency exits.** Identifying all emergency exits — doors or windows that lead directly outside — is an essential part of every evacuation plan.
- **Fire extinguishers and alarms.** Ensure your plan includes the location of fire extinguishers, smoke alarms and carbon monoxide detectors.
- **Escape routes.** Establish two different escape routes for each room so you can reach an emergency exit as quickly as possible.
- **Muster point.** Determine a place where everyone should meet after leaving the building. Remember that it must be easily accessible in every season.

Once the plan has been finalized, make sure everyone in your household is familiar with it. Carry out at least two fire drills every year to ensure everyone knows what to do in the event of a fire.

Is your fire protection equipment, such as smoke detectors and extinguishers, up to date and in good condition? If in doubt, buy quality products from your local shops.



LANDSCAPING

Create your plant paradise



5 golden rules for a productive vegetable garden

Do you want to start your very first vegetable garden? Did your last attempt go differently than planned? Put on your gardening gloves and follow these five tried-and-tested tips.

1. CHOOSE THE RIGHT SPOT

A healthy garden needs at least six hours of sunshine a day. Choose a bright spot sheltered from the wind to minimize the risk of damaging your plants. Pro tip: don't plant anything within five metres of a tree to prevent the roots from interfering with the growth of your vegetables.

2. FERTILIZE THE SOIL

Give your garden soil a helping hand to yield a good harvest. Add compost to the soil when planting your seeds and seedlings, and use a natural, commercial fertilizer every three or four weeks.

3. SOW RELIABLE PLANTS

Before getting your hands in the soil, select plants that are easy to care for and produce a lot of veggies. Tomatoes, carrots, radishes, cucumbers and zucchini typically guarantee success.

4. WATER REGULARLY

This may seem obvious, but you must water your garden often. If you water in the morning, the foliage will have time to dry out during the day, reducing the risk of disease and fungus.

5. HARVEST WITH CARE

When harvesting vegetables, use garden shears or clippers to avoid breaking the plant. This allows the plant to continue producing.

Are you worried about making a mistake? Ask a gardening expert for advice or watch a few online tutorials. Finally, don't forget that patience is a virtue. Sooner or later, you'll master the art of gardening!



Rain gardens: stylish and ecological

A rain garden is a bed of stones and plants that captures rainwater, allowing it to slowly seep into the soil through infiltration. Here are some guidelines to follow when planning your own rain garden:

- **Location.** Your rain garden should be located at least three metres away from your home to prevent water from seeping into the foundation. It should also be in an area that receives full sun or part shade. Finally, avoid building your rain garden over any underground infrastructure.
- **Depth.** Your rain garden should be between 10 and 20 centimetres deep. You must take the slope of your land into account when digging. The steeper the slope, the greater the depth. Additionally, making any necessary adjustments to ensure the garden is level is essential.
- **Retention wall.** Made of excavated soil or fill, this barrier acts like a wall to retain water in the garden. Mulch is recommended to prevent erosion.
- **Plants and stones.** You can cover the bottom of the rain garden with plants and river stones or pebbles. For best results, select native plants with well-developed root systems. Ask a horticultural professional for advice on which species are best suited to rain gardens.

Find everything you need to make your rain garden a reality at your local building store.



A well-designed rain garden should only retain water for one or two days after rainfall. It should remain dry the rest of the time.



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Setting SMART goals for your golf game this season

Setting SMART goals for your golf game is a strategic approach to improvement that ensures clarity, focus and attainability. SMART is an acronym that stands for Specific, Measurable, Achievable, Relevant and Time-bound. Here's how to apply these criteria to your golf goals.

- **Specific.** Clearly define what you want to achieve. For instance, rather than a vague goal like "improve my swing," make it specific, such as "reduce my slice by refining my backswing."
- **Measurable.** Establish concrete criteria for tracking progress. Instead of a goal like "get better at putting," set a measurable goal like "reduce my three-putt instances by half."
- **Achievable.** Set goals that are challenging yet realistic. If you're currently shooting in the 100s, aiming to consistently break 80 might be too ambitious initially. Choose goals that push you but remain within reach.
- **Relevant.** Ensure your goals align with your overall golf aspirations. If improving your short game is crucial for your overall performance, set goals that prioritize this aspect.

- **Time-bound.** Set a deadline for achieving your goals. For instance, rather than saying "improve my handicap," specify "lower my handicap by three strokes within the next three months."

Other examples of SMART goals include, "decrease my average putts per round from 34 to 30 within the next two months," and "increase my average driving distance by 10 yards through a structured fitness and training program over the next six weeks." These types of goals will give you a clear plan of action and allow you to track your progress.

Get SMART before you hit the links this season to improve your game!



Pre-season fitness: a guide for golfers



Pre-season fitness is essential for improving your golf game, preventing injuries and enhancing performance. A comprehensive fitness routine can not only help improve strength but also address the specific demands of the sport. Here are some pre-season exercises to try:

- **Core strengthening.** A strong core is fundamental for a powerful and controlled golf swing. Incorporate exercises like planks, Russian twists and leg raises to fortify abdominal muscles.
- **Flexibility training.** Golf requires a wide range of motion. Engage in dynamic stretches and yoga poses that focus on hip flexibility, shoulder mobility and hamstring lengthening. Improved flexibility helps you achieve a more fluid and unrestricted swing.
- **Cardiovascular endurance.** Golf can be physically demanding, and maintaining energy throughout a round is crucial.

Incorporate cardiovascular exercises such as brisk walking, cycling or jogging to build endurance, ensuring you stay strong and focused from the first tee to the final hole.

- **Rotational exercises.** The golf swing involves a significant amount of rotation. Include exercises like medicine ball twists, cable woodchoppers or resistance band rotations to enhance the rotational power of your torso, translating to a more forceful and precise swing.

By integrating these exercises into your pre-season fitness routine, you can enhance your physical condition, reduce the risk of injuries and set the stage for a successful and enjoyable golf season. Visit your local gym or contact a personal trainer for help.



spring pulse poetry festival

WARMER WEATHER

Walking along the street with just a jacket or sweater
Speaks of the start of spring and the warmer weather,
Ice and snow disappearing before winter tired eyes,
Listen to all the birds and how the breeze gently sighs.
I can hear the children playing happily in the street,
Neighbours chat as working in the gardens where
they meet.

Bags of leaves and rubble pile as gardens come alive,
And it is good to know that so many creatures did
survive.

We saw a pair of chipmunks scurrying all over the
place,

And a pair of young otters playing together in furry
grace.

All the lakes are still frozen; I hear them weaken and
creak,

See, they are changing colour even as we speak.
I keep looking for the signs of flowers in the dead grass
I will even shout for joy if I see a dandelion grow as I
pass.

Now, the days are getting longer, and the warmer
weather is here

It fills your heart with comfort, longing and loving good
cheer...

Ann Margetson

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Green living

FIGHT FOOD WASTE

Smart food storage tips

Did you know that around one-third of all food produced worldwide is wasted? If you want to avoid becoming part of the problem and stop throwing away expired food, adopt these healthy habits.

- **Citrus fruits.** Keep them in the fridge to prolong their freshness. You can also place them in a bowl of water in the fridge to keep them delicious for a month or two.
- **Bananas.** Store them on the counter or in the pantry. Put them in the fridge as soon as they're ripe. Even if their skins turn brown from the cold, their flesh will be just right. Are your bananas overripe? Freeze them so you can add them to muffins, smoothies and more.
- **Lettuce.** Store it in the fridge in its original packaging or a non-airtight bag, wrapped in a damp cloth. Is it slightly wilted? Don't panic! Soak it in a container of cold water in the fridge to become crisp again.
- **Bread.** Store sliced bread in the pantry and eat it within two to five days for a softer texture and better taste. You can also freeze your bread and toast or defrost the slices you need as you go.

Finally, get creative when it comes to using your leftovers and extras. For example, you can make breadcrumbs from dry bread or prepare soup stock from vegetable peelings.



In 2024, spring chores go green

Do you associate the arrival of spring with cleaning? If you want sparkling clean results without harming the environment, adopt these eco-responsible practices.

- **Use cleaning products that are safe for the environment.** Look for biodegradable cleaners that are ECOLOGO®-certified and preferably locally made. Alternatively, you can make your own cleaning solutions using non-toxic, inexpensive ingredients like baking soda, essential oils, lemon juice, white vinegar and table salt.
- **Dispose of hazardous products properly.** Don't throw away items like light bulbs, batteries, leftover paint, medications and ink cartridges in your household garbage. Instead, sort them and take them to designated collection points. You can check your city or municipality's website for recycling instructions.
- **Say goodbye to single-use paper towels and wipes.** Use washable products to dust and clean all the surfaces in your home. You can easily transform stained t-shirts and used towels into rags with a pair of scissors.
- **Optimize how you wash and dry your textiles.** Machine wash curtains, carpets and other items in cold water using a biodegradable detergent and hang them on a clothesline to dry (if the weather permits). Alternatively, you can put them in the dryer with a few dryer balls to get rid of wrinkles and static electricity.

Visit your local stores to find products that will help make your spring cleaning as green as possible.



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Buy local in every industry

When you think about buying local, you probably conjure up images of a friendly farmer selling vegetables and jams on a country road or a quaint farmers' market with a friendly atmosphere. Although these examples illustrate one aspect of buying local, it goes much further.

HAVE YOU THOUGHT ABOUT THESE SECTORS? Buying local isn't limited to specific industries. When it comes to supporting your local economy, various companies would be happy to do business with you, including:

- Telecommunications providers
- Banks
- Insurance companies
- Supermarket chains
- Big box stores
- Hardware stores
- Video game developers
- Engineering firms
- Furniture retailers



WHY ARE THESE IMPORTANT? Even if you don't associate large companies with buying local, they play a significant role in the economic vitality of your region. That's why it's essential to be aware of where the products and services you use come from, whether you're buying fresh fruits and vegetables or doing business with an insurance company, internet provider or appliance store.



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3 types of buy-local enthusiasts: which one are you?

Every consumer has reasons for buying locally, depending on their values and priorities. Which of the following buy-local enthusiasts do you identify with most?

1. **The environmentalist** loves buying local products because they don't require large amounts of fossil fuels to get to their destination. They also know that transporting food over long distances often involves using chemical agents to preserve its integrity as it travels by road, sea or air.
2. **The humanist** is keenly aware that working conditions abroad don't always meet basic human rights standards. This advocate has the well-being of their fellow humans at heart. They believe that buying local ensures the products they buy have been produced in a country where legislation governs fair wages and humane working conditions.
3. **The patriot** constantly thinks about how their choices impact the local economy. They purchase local products to encourage entrepreneurship and help create and maintain jobs in their community. They also recognize that buying local increases their community's economic stability and resilience, especially in an era of global uncertainty and upheaval.

Do you recognize yourself in any of these profiles, or do they all describe you? Whatever your motivation for buying local, it's an intelligent choice.



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How to find the perfect campsite
READ ON FOR A SUCCESSFUL STAY!

Have you found the perfect campsite for your vacation? That's great! However, if you want your time off to meet your expectations, there's still one crucial step: choosing where to pitch your tent or park your RV. Generally, you can select the site you want when you make your reservation or when you arrive. Try booking ahead!

EQUIPMENT

Not all sites are designed for an eight-person tent or a large RV. So, ensure that your chosen site accommodates your equipment and has enough free space to set up your outdoor kitchen or children's play area.

Do you want to pitch two tents? Find out beforehand if it's allowed.

ACCESSIBILITY

Isolated campsites are great if you want peace and quiet. However, sometimes you must walk anywhere from a hundred metres to a few kilometres to reach them. Some establishments provide wagons to carry your equipment. Make sure you know what you're signing up for to avoid unpleasant surprises.

Are you meeting up with friends on-site to camp? Be careful — some sites only have space for one parked vehicle. Find out if there's visitor parking and where it's located.

TERRAIN

If you have a tent, a grassy campsite is best as it's less likely to damage the material and is more comfortable. Dirt campsites can quickly become muddy when it rains. Don't like dragging sand around everywhere? Don't camp on the beach, no matter how idyllic it may seem! Moreover, it's often humid near the water and filled with mosquitoes.

Open areas can be very windy, which can be good or bad depending on the temperature. Plus, some tents don't stand up well to high winds.

SERVICES

Make sure the site has the services you consider essential, such as water, electricity and internet. If you choose a site without services because it's cheaper, consider a waterfront view.

Want to take a shower? Find out if there

are modern toilets, as some semi-rustic campsites only have outhouses.

LOCATION

If you're looking for peace and quiet, avoid busy or noisy campsites, such as those near reception areas, toilets, swimming pools and community halls. Do you have young children? Being a short distance from the toilets or play area may come in handy.

Finally, many booking platforms have filters that allow you to refine your search. Don't hesitate to use them to find the ideal campsite. Happy camping!





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Is it time to replace your toilet?

Is your toilet showing its age? Are you thinking about investing in a new one? Are you renovating your bathroom and want to update this essential fixture? Beyond aesthetic considerations, here are some telltale signs it might be time for a new commode:

- The toilet leaks or is frequently clogged.
- The flush mechanism works erratically despite attempts at repairing it.
- There are cracks in the porcelain bowl or tank.
- The water tank runs continuously.
- The toilet is unstable and moves when you sit on it.
- The seat is uncomfortable. Modern models feature elongated bowls, which provide more support and comfort than round seats.

If your toilet is past its prime, you may want to consider swapping it for a low-flow model to reduce your water consumption. Has your water bill recently increased? A faulty toilet could be to blame. It may be wise and cost-effective to replace it.



Shut the door on pests this spring!

As the weather warms up, many insects and animals come out of hiding, looking for a place to live or raise their young.

SPECIES

Pests to look out for in spring include small mammals like skunks, groundhogs, raccoons, squirrels and mice. These small but mighty critters can cause damage to your home and yard.

Birds, such as swallows and sparrows, can also build nests in inconvenient places, such as your eavestroughs or attic. During the spring thaw, ants, wasps and other insects can also become an issue.

RISKS

Depending on the species involved, pest infestations can lead to various consequences. Some risks include:

- Structural damage
- Fires
- Contaminated food



SOLUTIONS

You can do several things to prevent a pest infestation, including keeping the inside of your home clean, regularly emptying the trash, storing food in airtight containers, repairing cracks, replacing damaged weatherstrip, placing screens over vents and trimming overhanging tree branches. Additionally, it's a good idea to trim overgrown bushes or hedges to eliminate nesting places for rodents.

If pests are still getting into your home despite your best efforts, call a local pest control expert to address the issue. Professionals can quickly and effectively relocate troublesome animals and exterminate unwanted insects.

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Don't play with your old toys anymore? Here's what you can do with them!

Do you have lots of stuffed toys, toy cars, animal figurines and dolls you don't play with anymore? Here are a few ways you can give them a second life.

- **Sell them.** Are your toys in great condition and look almost new? With your parent's permission, you can sell them online (on a classified ads site) or at a garage sale. You can keep the money to buy something else, like a skateboard or video game, or use it for something else, like travelling when you're older.
- **Donate them.** If your toys are clean and aren't broken, you can do a good deed by taking them to a local donation centre. They'll bring joy to the lives of children whose families don't have enough money to buy new toys.
- **Exchange them.** Organize a toy exchange with children of all ages, like your cousins. This way, everyone will be able to score some new toys and get rid of the ones they no longer use. Great, isn't it?
- **Transform them.** You can find lots of ideas for transforming your toys into works of art or practical objects online. For example, a dinosaur figurine can become a jewellery stand or a doll's head can be transformed into a planter. Use your imagination!

How will you keep your toys from ending up in the garbage?



The human body: 5 facts that will WOW you

If you go to school, you can probably name most of the parts of your body. However, it would be surprising if you knew the five following facts. You'll be amazed!

1. If you were to lay out all the blood vessels, the little "pipes" that allow blood to circulate, of an average-sized adult end-to-end, they would stretch to about 160,000 kilometres.
2. Human bones are very strong. In fact, experts say they're stronger than steel. Your femurs, the long bones at the top of your legs, can support 30 times the weight of the average person.
3. If you went into space, your body would grow by about four centimetres because there's no gravity. When you return to Earth, you'll shrink back to your regular size.
4. When you sneeze, the air coming out of your nose can

travel at speeds of 50 km/h or more. Additionally, it's very difficult to sneeze with your eyes open. Closing your eyelids is your body's protective reflex.

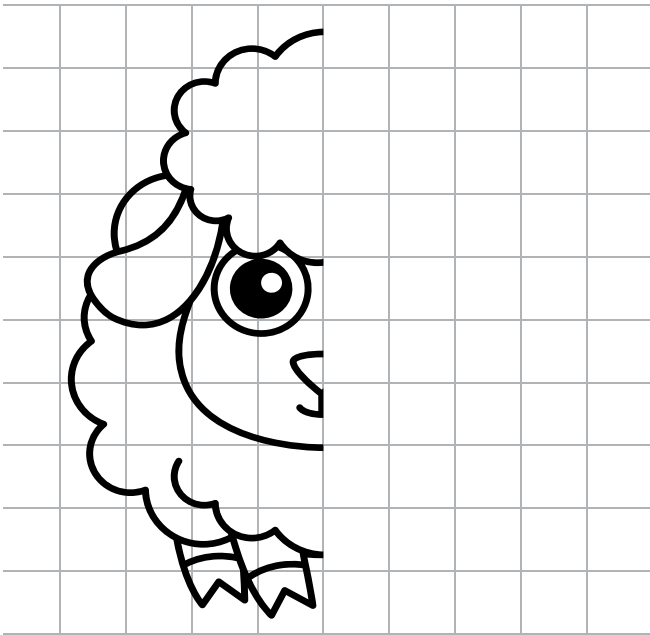
5. Small flakes of dead skin fall off your body every day. This is completely normal! By the end of your life, you'll have lost between 20 and 60 kilograms of it.

Read books, magazines or encyclopedias on anatomy or biology to discover more fascinating secrets about the human body.



MIRROR IMAGE

DRAW THE MIRROR IMAGE OF THE PICTURE YOU SEE



Sudoku 6 x 6

4		6			
			4	1	
				5	2
	2	3			1
				6	5
	5	2			

COMPLETE EACH GRID WITH NUMBERS FROM 1 TO 6, KEEPING IN MIND THAT:

- a number can only appear once per row
- a number can only appear once per column
- a number can only appear once in each box of 6 squares

6	5	2	1	3	4
3	4	1	2	6	5
5	2	3	6	4	1
1	6	4	3	5	2
2	3	5	4	1	6
4	1	6	5	2	3

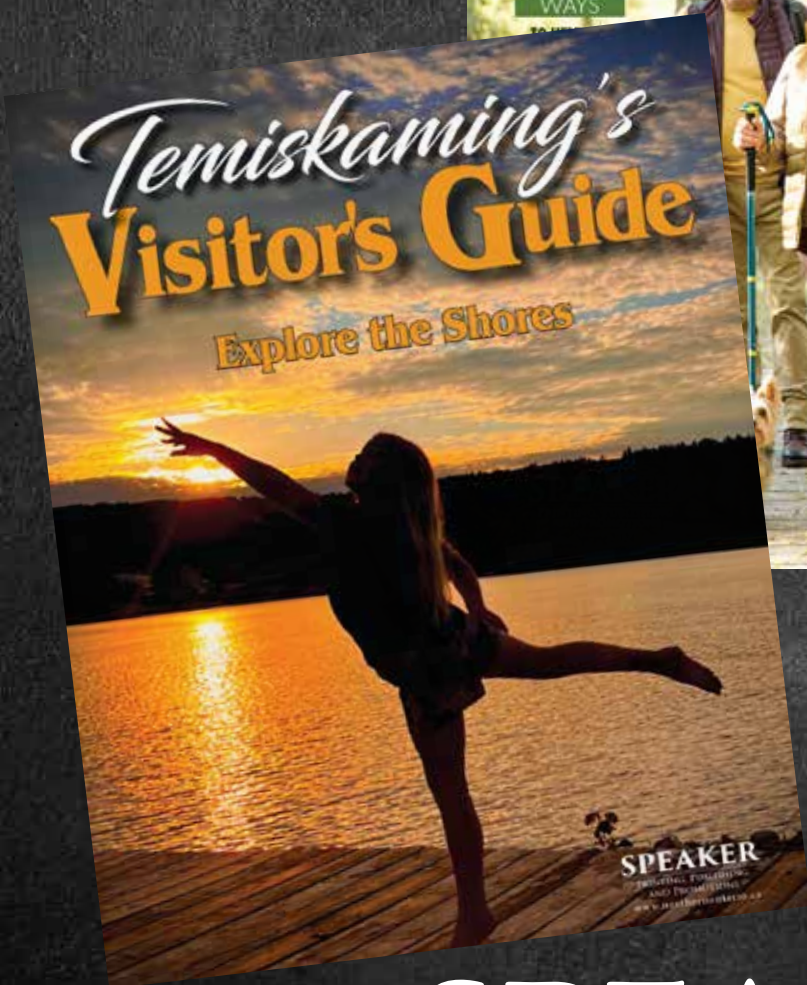
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Which two are exactly alike?



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