



American
MAN

Inside:

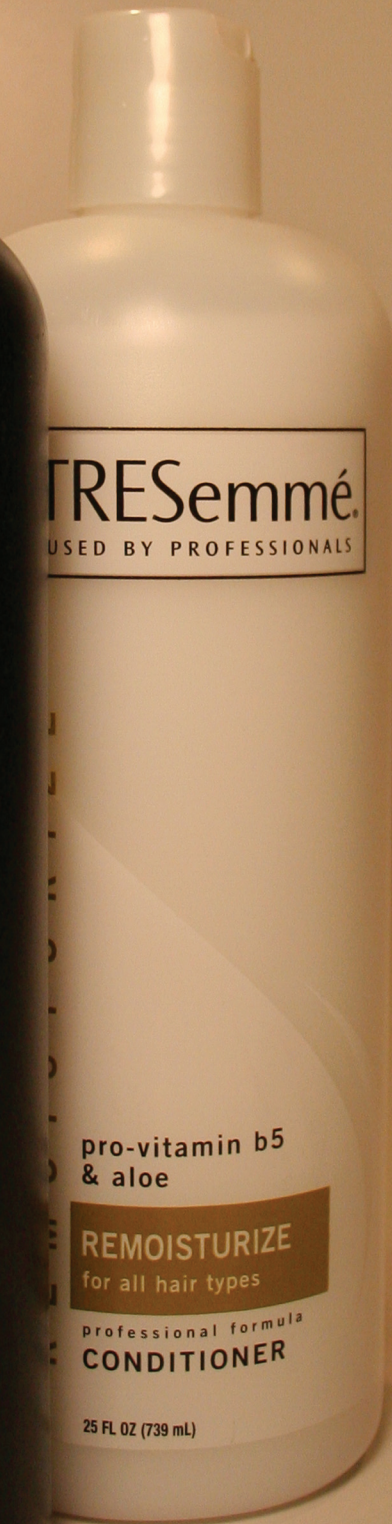
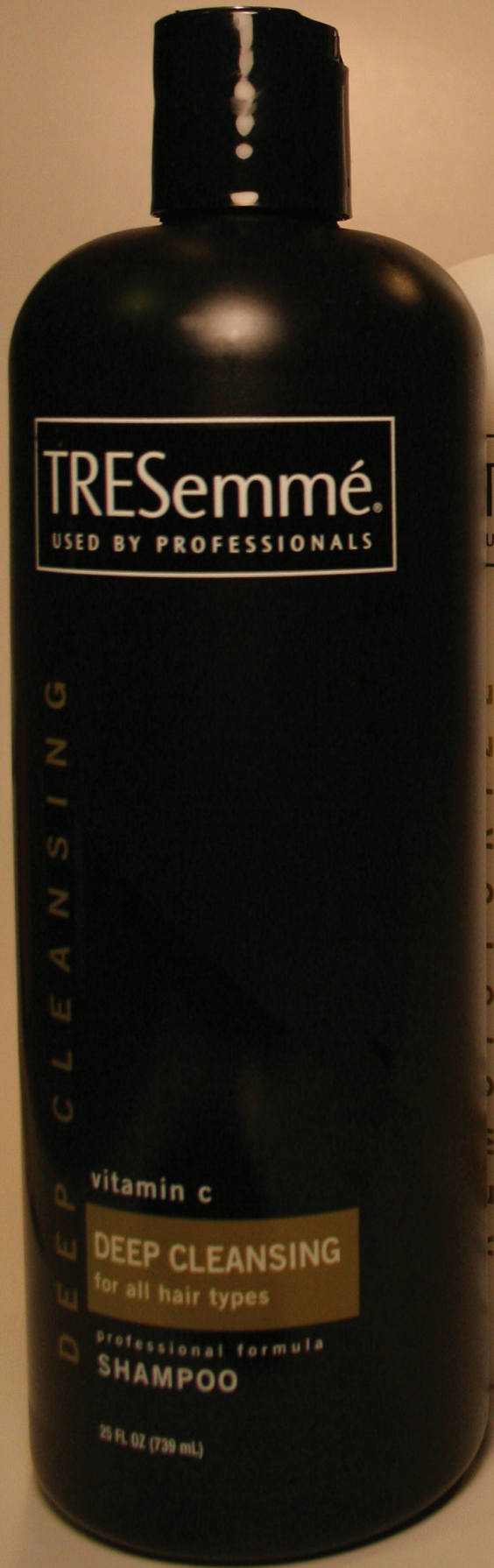
Fuel for the Mind,
Body, and Spirit

Health News

Outdoors

Men Need It Too!

Money Matters



Clean.

No froof.

Conversation Starters 5

Health 9

Latest health findings are our focus in this issue.

Fuel for the Body 13

It's all about food.

Fuel for the Mind 17

We give you some tidbits from our crazy and fascinating world.

Fuel for the Spirit 21

There are things to feel good about, no matter what the evening news says!

Outdoors 25

Our publisher takes you on a weekend quiet hiking getaway.

Men Need it Too! 29

Advertisers often forget us! We'll find things that we need, despite what they say or don't say.

Technology 35

We'll keep you on top of technology trends without bogging you down in a million details.

Money Matters 41

We'll help you save! And what happens when a family that lives far outside its means? We'll show you one.

Grooming 47

Yeah, we need that too! And we're here to help.

Fashion 51

In this issue, we give you a few starting points with fashion and business wear.

American Stories 55

We want to hear about your lives. We start off with a story from our publisher.

ON THE COVER:

For this, our first issue of **AmericanMAN**, it seemed fitting to honor a man who embodies the American dream. President Barack Obama is a man with ambition who never forgets the importance of family. He is a man who strives for greatness while always admitting his imperfections. He is a man of strong belief who never belittles the convictions of others. He enjoys life, but knows it takes a little hard work to make it better. Regardless of political leanings, there is no discounting President Obama's embodiment of what real American men should be: confident, respectful, and true to himself.



COVER: Barack Obama in Rollins Park, Concord, NH, 9/29/07 (Chude).
THIS PAGE: Barack and Sasha Obama at an Oregon diner in 2008 (Raquel Wilson); Obama during a basketball game in Chapel Hill, NC. (AP Photo/Jae C. Hong).

From the editor:

Welcome to **AmericanMAN**, the magazine that celebrates you.

While many men's publications in America tell you to have singular interests or that you are nothing more than your hobbies, careers, or clothes, we will have none of that here.

American men are complex and individual. Many things bind us, but so much makes each of us unique. We'd rather help you be unique than to tell you who to be.

We'll celebrate health and fitness but won't assume you're just a jock or health nut. We'll just give you ideas for a better life.

We'll celebrate fashion and grooming, but you're more than a mannequin draped in a nice suit. We'll just offer you tips to help you figure out how to be you.

We'll celebrate technology, but we're not all tech-heads. We'll tell you about some of the new stuff out there without telling you what to buy.

We'll celebrate American life, but won't tell you how to live yours.

In fact, we'll want to hear about you. We invite your stories as American men. Tell us who you are and how you got that way. Tell us your trials and triumphs. Show us what you had for breakfast.

We're pretty tired of reading about who we should be, rather than about who we are. And we're guessing that you are too.

So we proudly say, welcome to **AmericanMAN**. Welcome to you.

-The Editors

That tiny print stuff:

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Manuscripts, photos, or artwork are encouraged but cannot be returned unless a self-addressed envelope with adequate postage is provided. Please make sure to include current contact information.

Find much more at www.AmericanManMagazine.com.

Issue 1, May 2009



A healthy snack doesn't have to taste like the box it comes in!





CLARINS MEN

Long live men's skin.

A poll last year found that 62 percent of American men have valid library cards. In addition, of all library card holders (men and women), 77 percent say they have visited the library at least once in the last year.

Don't assume the non-library card holders to be illiterate, though. About 12% of those respondents say they buy books instead of borrowing. Only 3% of respondents say they don't read.

Another study found that 30 percent of Americans prefer to read during leisure time. Only 27 percent preferred watching TV.

[See <http://www.harrisinteractive.com/>]

FACE THE NATION

The January 2009 *Scientific American* reports on a study that suggests self-identified Republicans are more likely than self-identified Democrats to see anger or disgust in a fuzzy photo altered to obscure emotion.

Democrats were more likely to see surprise or fear in the same faces.

The researcher concludes that perhaps political ideology could be linked to the way we respond to ambiguous details.

[See <http://precedings.nature.com/documents/2414/version/1>]

A BEEF WITH BEEF?

Think you're doing your part just by getting that Prius, or walking to the corner store? What you eat can do more damage than driving.

Producing one pound of beef adds as much carbon dioxide to the atmosphere as driving over 19 miles. A pound of chicken only creates the equivalent of driving about a mile-and-a-half. The bigger picture: livestock production creates 18% of the world's greenhouse gasses, just below the 21% created by energy production.

Solution? Obviously eat less beef. Excessive beef consumption is already bad for your health. But we should also plant trees to make up for our other actions. One mature tree can remove up to 48 pounds of carbon dioxide every year.

[Sources: US EPA and Department of Energy, photo Michael C. Berch]



INKED AND SEXY?

While the trend among young adults seems to be waning, about 15 percent of American men have tattoos. The numbers cross the political spectrum, and is well distributed among Americans 25 to 50 years old.

More interesting is how having a tattoo seems to make people feel, with 31 percent saying they feel sexier with their tattoo. Also, 19 percent say they feel more attractive and stronger from being inked.

Hold the needles, though. Of those without tattoos, 39 percent say that people with tattoos are less sexy than those without any.

[See <http://www.harrisinteractive.com/>]

Contrary to the common misconception of the leisurely Americans, leisure time is at an all-time low for us.

In 2008, the median number of leisure hours available to Americans was 16. That's down from 20 hours in 2007.

What makes the findings more interesting is that median work hours are down as well—down to 46 from 51 hours in 1997.

Clearly Americans have increasing obligations outside of work. If we're calling family time an obligation, let's hope that's on the rise.

[See <http://www.harrisinteractive.com/>]

CONVERSATION STARTERS

Classy...

A man in Saudi Arabia informed his wife of their imminent divorce via a text message.

Judges upheld the notification and granted the divorce after verifying his intentions with some of his relatives.

Under Saudi's strict Islamic Sharia law, a man can divorce his wife simply by saying "I divorce you" three times.

This is not an isolated event, either. Legal tests of SMS divorce notifications are currently pending in Malaysia and Egypt.

[Yahoo! search: divorce + sms]

DO YOU BELIEVE IN MAGIC...

Sizable minorities in America believe in ghosts (44 percent), witches (36 percent), UFOs (31 percent), and astrology (31 percent).

And in case you think it's some "new age" stuff, people attending church at least once a week are more likely to believe in witches (34 percent) than those who never attend church (27 percent), and even astrology (28 percent versus 27 percent).

We're a nation of believers—in this and that.

[See <http://www.harrisinteractive.com/>]

GAG ORDER

A judge in Idaho ordered a defendant's mouth be taped shut with duct tape because of continued outbursts during the proceedings.

Niklas Frasure was in court for violating probation by not taking his prescription psychiatric drugs. Witnesses said he was uncontrollable, while his probation officer said he was a threat to himself and others.

After continued interruptions, Judge Peter D. McDermott ordered the duct tape remedy. Frasure's attorney told the judge that his client was obviously not competent.

At the end of the hearing, the judge ordered the tape removed, hoping to allow Frasure a chance for final comments. Frasure simply asked the courtroom if anyone wanted to arm wrestle.

[See Idaho State Journal, <http://www.journalnet.com>]



WINE ME, DINE ME...

Even while many municipalities in America still forbid its sale, a full 60 percent of Americans still buy wine.

And it's a very American industry, as 90 percent of wine drinkers buy at least some wine made right here in the US. We're still supporting wineries elsewhere, though, as 37 percent say they also buy wine from Italy and Australia, which is growing in popularity.

And now, we're not washing away our sorrows in the current economy: Only 20 percent of wine drinkers have wine more than twice a week.

[See <http://www.harrisinteractive.com/>]

A 12-year-old boy in Florida is working toward double majors in math and physics.

Sky Choi attends Florida International University, where he takes a full course load, and still finds time to play table tennis with other students.

Home schooled before college, Sky also holds a third-degree black belt in tae kwon do and speaks fluent Korean on top of his native English. He started taking college courses at 10.

Asked when she knew her son was gifted, his mother says it's when he asked to leave a party early, to finish a math workbook.

The tae kwon do may come in handy.

Boy Wonder



Clean.

Easy.

Is there more to say?

It's about time!



...for a healthy breakfast that will keep you full longer than it takes to prepare it.

Small doses

For thousands of years, people have used ginger for various ailments, often brushed aside by modern medicine as folk remedies at best. But now scientists are finally investigating its power.

One recent study found ginger to be effective in easing indigestion, nausea, and motion sickness. Researchers believe the key is an antioxidant, which may also ease inflammation caused by arthritis.

For therapeutic use, 2 to 4 grams of ginger are suggested. Supplements often contain 500mg per dose. For an easier way to get ginger, try Ginger Chews made by The Ginger People (www.gingerpeople.com).



Stuck with belly fat after exercise-based weight loss? According to a study published in the February 2009 issue of the *Journal of Nutrition*, green tea can help.

It seems the isoflavins found abundantly in teas, especially green tea, increase fat loss in the belly area during exercise-rich weight loss. Overall fat loss was not increased, however, so green tea is no “get skinny in a cup.”

Why not black tea? While black tea has the same compounds, they are greatly reduced in production (fermentation) that black tea goes through.

Time and time again, studies prove that exercise is key to good health. A recent study in *Lancet Neurology* shows that exercise may decrease risk of developing Alzheimer's later in life.

Participants who exercised at least twice a week were 60% less likely to develop the disease, even if family history and other risk factors were there.

Doctors believe exercise increases blood flow in the brain, improving brain signalling.

In October 2008, the US government released its first-ever "Physical Activity Guidelines for Americans," designed to complement the dietary guidelines that it updates every five years.

The new guidelines lay out the amount and type of physical activity needed to control weight and reduce risk of preventable diseases like heart disease, diabetes, and

some cancers.

The guidelines break up activity for three groups: children/adolescents, adults, and older adults, and suggest 150 minutes per week of moderate activity like walking and gardening, or 75 minutes per week of vigorous activity like aerobics, swimming, or cycling.

For more: <http://www.health.gov/paguidelines/>

Want to boost brain function? Here are some key ways:

Get antioxidants! They really are everywhere!

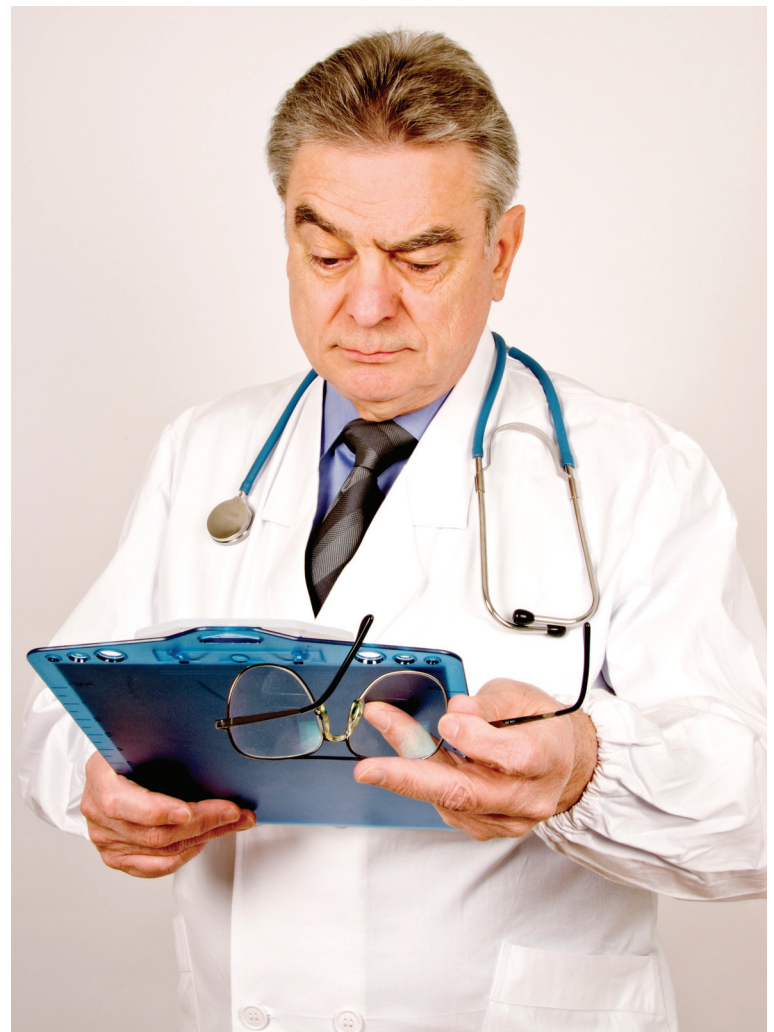
Eat breakfast. Your brain needs a regular boost of glucose, which it gets from carbohydrates and proteins alike.

Eat fat. But make them healthy fats with omega-3s and vitamin E.

Get your B vitamins, especially B-12.

Have your tea! It has an amino acid that increases focus and concentration.

Exercise, both your body and your mind with thinking games.





◀ CALCIUM, WORTHLESS?

Yes and no. Analysis of 12 research studies appeared recently in the American Journal of Clinical Nutrition suggests that calcium alone is worthless, even suggesting that supplements may *increase* hip fractures.

Researches say the key is to keep overall calcium at 1,000 to 1,000 mg per day, but primarily through calcium-rich foods. Vitamin D as well as minerals like phosphorus and magnesium are essential to absorption, which may explain why some supplements don't work.

Conclusion: Eat foods high in calcium, phosphorus, magnesium, and vitamin D (legumes, nuts, fish, lean meats, and eggs). If taking a supplement, make sure it contains vitamin D and phosphorous and magnesium.

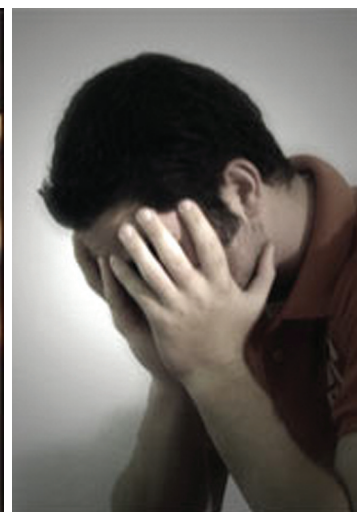
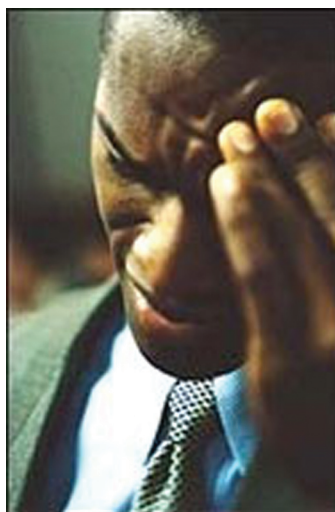
JOB PROMOTIONS MAY NOT PROMOTE GOOD HEALTH

While many are stressing over not having a job at all, those still working may have a new worry of their own. A study recently completed shows that job promotions sometimes promote bad health.

Research in Britain found that people getting promoted on the job often suffer 10 percent more mental strain than before, but, more importantly, are less likely to have time to visit a doctor regularly.

Other research has often shown that added stress increases everything from the common cold to increased cancer, and job stress in particular increases illness.

The job research comes from an annual study of British workers. No such public studies are done on Americans annually.



◀ THE MAN FRUIT

Not only are blueberries an antioxidant-rich healthfood for everyone, but numerous studies have shown that they slow the growth of prostate cancer.

A 2006 study published in National Biochemistry found that blueberries inhibit an enzyme that otherwise helps prostate tumors grow. Research published in Cancer Letters that same year, found a 57 percent reduction in cancer cell growth.

Wild blueberries seem to have more of the healthy compounds, but all blueberries have great health benefits.

[Web keyword: blueberries + prostate]

If she likes chocolate



make her LOVE you.

Focus: Diabetes

Diabetes affects 24 million Americans, so the rush is on for better treatments and better understanding of the disease. Some recent findings:

Simply avoiding starches is not a solution.

Diets high in fat and lower in carbohydrates have been linked to worse blood sugar control. [*American Journal of Clinical Nutrition*, Feb. 2008]

In fact, certain starches actually help manage blood sugar. High-fiber, slow-digesting starches like beans, green bananas, and cooled cooked pasta or potatoes (starches rearrange with cooling), must be digested by bacteria in the colon, in turn producing "short chain fatty acids." These SCFCs increase hormones that reduce appetite, slow digestion, and thus reduce glucose spikes.

The benefits don't just last for that meal either, with the hormones lasting for hours or even a few days after initial creation. It all sounds complicated, but it's simply nature looking for balance.

Healthcare costs for diabetics rises faster.

Surveys taken in 1992 and 2002 showed that per-capita spending on healthcare for diabetics grew from \$11,157 to \$13,243. The increase was actually slightly less than inflation. However, per-capita spending for non-diabetics actually dropped in the 10 year period, from \$2,604 to \$2,560.

The great irony is that foods like beans, potatoes, and fruit, which prevent or minimize the effects of type 2 diabetes, are actually less expensive than the fatty, rich foods that encourage it.

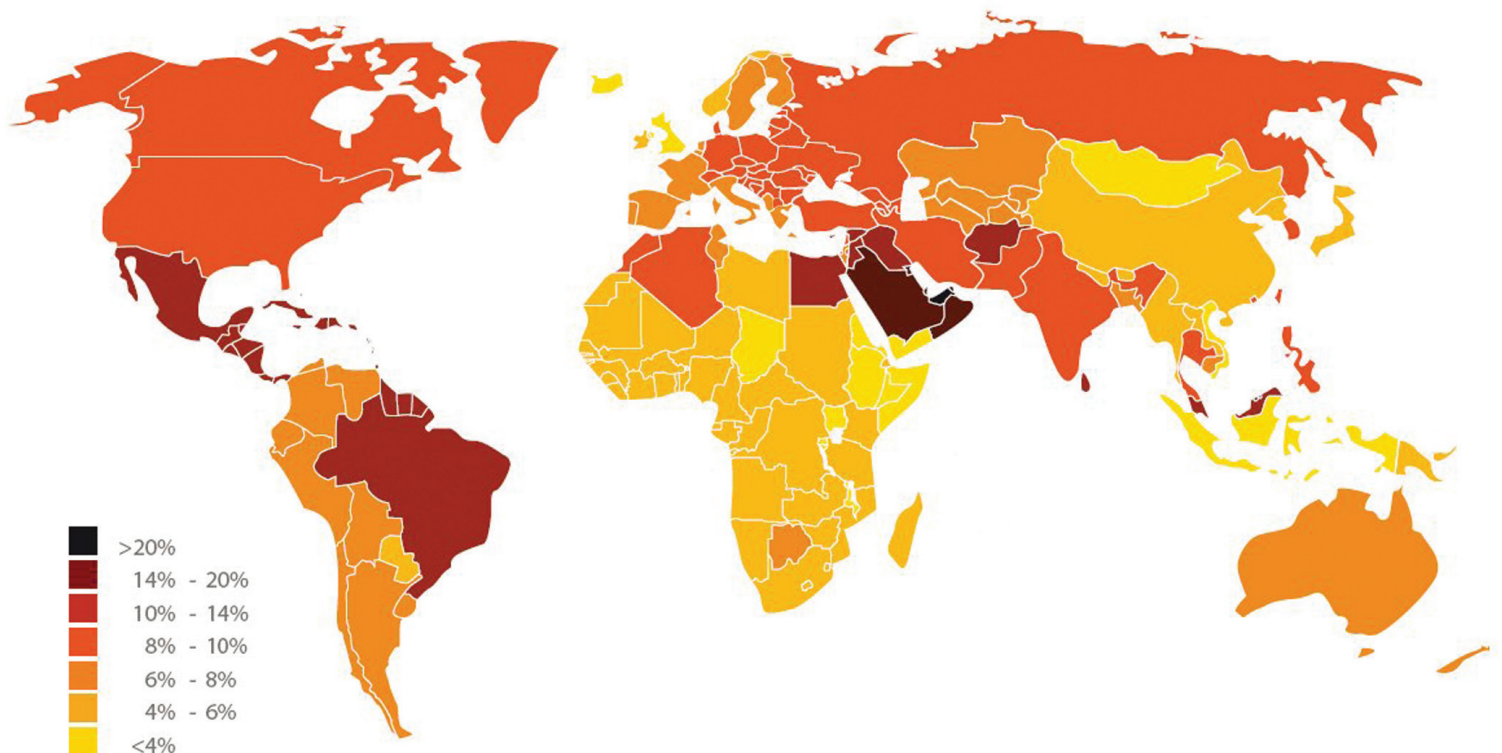
Vitamin K?

A new study published in *Diabetes Care* shows that vitamin K reduces insulin resistance in men.

In a study intended to research the vitamin on bone health, findings showed surprising results on insulin resistance. Participants were given supplements, but more interesting is that foods that typically contain vitamin K naturally, like broccoli, leafy greens, and some healthy oils, have long been associates with good health.

Reducing insulin resistance is the best way to prevent diabetes, making this finding really important.

Prevalence estimates of diabetes, 2025



SOURCE: DIABETES ATLAS THIRD EDITION, © INTERNATIONAL DIABETES FEDERATION, 2006

Small bites

Healthy bread that's tasty? Yep! **Arnold** has something new called **Select Sandwich Thins**. Round like hamburger buns, this thin rolls are great in the toaster or right from the pack. Use them for sandwiches or burgers!

The flavor is rich without any of the "grit" some people associate with wheat bread.

While many hamburger buns check in at 110 to 150 calories each. The Sandwich Thins are 100 calories, but with the added bonus of 4 grams of fiber each, and they are made with no high fructose corn syrup.

To see if Arnold products are available in your area, visit <http://arnold.gwbakeries.com>.

Like to eat out? Be careful, because many meals you may think are healthy can actually contain well over 1,000 calories per serving!

A seemingly light plate of Fettuccine Alfredo at **Olive Garden** has 1,220 calories, 75 grams of fat, 1,350 mg sodium. That's without chicken or shrimp that many people add to the dish! Instead choose their Linguine alla Marinara, which contains just over 400 calories per serving.

At **Macaroni Grill**, you may encounter Parmesan-Crusted Sole. That sounds light and healthy, doesn't it? Unfortunately, the dish comes in at over 2,000 calories, and more than a day's recommended intake of sodium! Your only bet for dinner is Chicken Cannelloni at 880 calories.

Red Lobster's Admiral's Feast. Sure it's called a feast, and you will know you're getting a lot of food. But at 1,500 calories, it also packs twice the suggested sodium for a day! Instead, pick something from the LightHouse or Wood-Fire Grill menu.

Sure, deep fried fish is unhealthy, but tuna is good, right? Not always. One of the most unhealthy selections at **Cosi** is the Tuna Melt. Already at 874 calories, once you add chips, your meal is well over 1,000 calories.

The simple fact is, men need no more than 3,000 calories a day. the easiest way to achieve this is to avoid any meals over 1,000 calories. A few bad choices a week, and you'll start packing on the pounds.

There is now an online option for finding healthy restaurant meals in your neighborhood. Partly funded by the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention and staffed by registered dieticians, **HealthyDiningFinder.com** lets you put in your ZIP code to find the healthiest dining options near you.

A whole slew of products recently hit the market with the natural sweetener stevia (from the *Stevia rebaudiana* plant). The FDA gave the go-ahead, rating the product as "generally regarded as safe." Under that rating, any natural ingredient with no reported adverse effects is allowed to be marketed, with no further studies required.

The extract has the illusion of sweetness, but with no calories. It also lacks the lingering sweetness of sugar, which means it makes sugarless foods and drinks more tolerable, but not exactly sweet.

The sweetener has been used for over 30 years in Japan, giving the product a fairly proven track-record of safety.

It has also long been used in South America, Australia, and New Zealand.

Already, Truvia has hit the market as another option among the pink, yellow, and blue packets found at your local cafe.

This is a natural substitute for sugar, but like all herbal supplements and additives, each individual should use it carefully before making a full switch.

Spinach was made popular to many by Popeye. Of course it won't pop your muscles out and let you take on bad guys, but there are so many benefits that a good love for the leafy green should be high on your list.

High in vitamins A and K, as well folate, the greens cook down so much while cooking that spinach packs a punch for so few calories. It's also rich in antioxidants that are shown to stave off some cancers.

Aside from all the numbers, eating spinach has been shown to fight off inflammation as well as promote heart and bone health. Lutein and zeaxanthin, also found in spinach, have been shown to minimize damage from ultraviolet light, on both the skin and eyes.

The added bonus is that it's so easy to cook. Simply wash the leaves well, and quickly saute in olive oil with some diced onion and fresh garlic (the wet garlic in a jar works fine!).



Tasty and healthy?



with **Whole Grain**
Guaranteed



Nutrition Highlights

Calories	Saturated Fat	Sodium	Sugars	Iron	Vit. D
100	0g	140mg	8g	9mg	40 IU
5%	0%	6%		50%	10%

Amount and % Daily Value per serving

Oat Cluster Cheerios[®] Crunch

May Reduce
the Risk of
Heart
Disease*



Enlarged
to Show Detail

*Diets low in saturated fat and cholesterol may reduce the risk of heart disease. Cheerios[®] Crunch cereal is low in fat (1g), saturated fat free, and naturally cholesterol free.

A Cereal with a Perfect Blend of Five Lightly
Sweetened Whole Grains & Crunchy Oat Clusters



NET WT 11.3 OZ (320g)

Yep.

Go with green

Study after study reveals benefits of leafy greens on men's health.

Cabbage has been shown to reduce free-radicals in the body, which may cut cancer risk. Swiss chard is high in vitamin K, which may reduce diabetes risk. All greens are high in the natural fibers we all need.

Some men think it's just too hard to get the greens we need. This may be true for some, but if you can boil water, you can make greens.

Most greens, including Swiss chard, collards, mustards, cabbage, and turnip greens need only to be washed, cut, and boiled. A little olive oil, salt and pepper is all you really need.

Cook until they reach desired tenderness, and keep water levels low to increase flavor. It's that easy.

It's even easier if you are near a store like Trader Joe's that sells bagged greens pre-cut and washed!

Stop for red

Tomatoes are good for everyone, but research continues to show that they are very important in men's diets.

First, tomatoes have lycopene, an antioxidant that is not broken down into vitamin A as others are. That means it reaches the cells as an antioxidant, preventing damage to cell tissue. This may reduce general inflammation.

As part of this general damage control, lycopene has also been shown to reduce the impact of UV rays on human skin.

More importantly, tomatoes may prevent some cancer. Researchers at Harvard found that men who ate tomato sauce at least twice a week were 20 percent less likely to develop prostate cancer, possibly since it reduces inflammation, thus reducing build up of toxins in the prostate. For added benefit, enjoy broccoli in the same meal.

Additional research has shown a reduction of pancreatic cancer in people whose diets are rich in tomatoes.

HEART-HEALTHY AND QUICK

Sure, we all need to eat healthier. It's hard to make time, sometimes. Each issue we'll give you at least one quick-and-easy meal.

Easy Spicy Beans and Rice

One package of frozen Latin blend vegetables (usually black beans, red kidney beans, corn, peppers, onions)

One can of diced tomatoes with garlic

A cup of instant brown rice

A few tablespoons of olive oil

1/4 teaspoon dried savory

1/4 teaspoon italian seasoning (or basil and oregano)

1/4 teaspoon dried red pepper flakes (or to taste)



Cook bean mixture as directed, usually in a low-water simmer. Add all spices and oil while this cooks.

About ten minutes before the beans are done, add about a cup of water and a cup of instant rice. Cover and simmer, stirring occasionally.

For added taste, you can add about a tablespoon of taco seasoning, one diced hot pepper of your choice, and melt Mexican blend cheese on top.



Food 911

Q. I'm dating a vegetarian who wants me to at least eat some meals without meat. I'm okay with that, but I'm worried about hating it. Any suggestions?

A. If you mean home-made dishes, many vegetarian dishes are pretty tasty. If they contain beans, corn, and rice, don't worry about being hungry, either!

If we're talking "meat substitutes" here, try refrigerated "baked tofu." Most health-food stores and some supermarkets should have it. It's simply pre-seasoned, pre-cooked tofu that can be heated and served. Some varieties are pretty tasty.

There are also a lot of "burger" choices that are easier on the carnivore palate. Try Boca Burger Flame Grilled or MorningStar Grillers Original. For best taste, microwave a little less than stated in the directions, then fry them up with fresh pepper.

If we're talking restaurants and dining out, try some Asian restaurants, and go for the spicier varieties of stir-fry vegetables. Many Italian restaurants also have meatless dishes that are just as tasty. Careful though! Many Italian dishes are pretty high in cholesterol, which sort of defeats the propose of eating vegetarian!

And if you have to do the cooking, consider picking up *How to Cook Everything Vegetarian* by Mark Bittman. It's a vegetarian cookbook by and for the non-vegetarian.

There are really endless possibilities, you'll just have to be willing to try a few new things. You won't like it all, but that goes with all types of food.

Q. I know I need to eat more green vegetables, but it's really hard, and most just don't taste good to me. The only way I can eat broccoli is covered in cheese. What can I do?

A. First, it's okay to add cheese to broccoli. If you don't go overboard, you are still getting the benefits of the green vegetable. Steam (or shallow bath boil) frozen broccoli on the stove just until it's tender. Add REAL cheese such as a Mexican blend or cheddar with Colby or Monterrey jack. Stay away from the jarred or boxed "cheese!"

You might also try cooked spinach. Sautéed with only onion, garlic, salt, and pepper, it can have a good rich taste. Just about any green can be cooked this way, but adjust the spices and cooking time to your liking.

If you are really rushed for time or you suck in the

kitchen, try Green Giant Health Blend frozen vegetables, or any of their seasoned boxed vegetables. They are super easy to cook, and while they are not fresh, you still get most of the health benefits.

Q. Why is olive oil so popular now? What about fried foods? Don't I need a lighter oil?

A. First, most sautéing can be done with lighter olive oils or equally healthy grapeseed oil, which is also heavily used in Mediterranean cooking. Extra virgin olive oils are best for sauces that call for oil while simmering, as well as for salad dressings and any uncooked recipes.

As to the oil's health benefits, researchers learn something new all the time. For years, they've known that olive oil contains monounsaturated fats and natural vitamin E. Both are known to fight off some cancers and possibly Alzheimer's disease, as well.

More recently, research has discovered that good quality extra virgin olive oil also contains anti-inflammatory compounds that work much the same way as aspirin or ibuprofen. Further, consuming just two ounces of high quality oil has the same heart-healthy benefits as taking two baby aspirin a day.

Another benefit is often overlooked. Good quality olive oils cost more than your standard vegetable oil, so you will, by nature, use less. That alone will mean less fat in your diet, and most American men can stand to do that.

Q. I've heard of products switching to sea salt. Is that really better for me?

A. For the most part, salt is salt, so if you are cutting salt, keep reading the sodium content. The reason for switching to sea salt, however, is that there is more flavor from other minerals so less sodium ends up in your food, while you should get the same taste as before.

Q. I have to start cooking more at home, to save money and to eat better. I'd also like to make things that my girlfriend will enjoy. Where do I start?

A. The best line of cookbooks on the market for the novice right now are by Mark Bittman. Aside from his vegetarian book mentioned earlier, he also wrote *How to Cook Everything, The Basics*, as well as a few others. They are your best bet.



A vegetarian option for the carnivore.

American men should know their world. The history of our country is rooted in Renaissance men who sought knowledge all around them, trying new things and never fearing of knowledge. We can't know everything—and shouldn't try! But it never hearts to learn something new.

This section will be tidbits of the world around us. Whether it's strange history or biology, you may find things here that you haven't heard before. More than just "stuff to know," we hope it'll be stuff to make you think.

WTF?

There are likely many places in this big world you've never heard of, but perhaps none stranger than Puma Punku.



Puma Punku is a temple complex that's been dated to at least 10,000 years ago. Buildings were made from pure granite, with lines cut smother than most construction crews could do even today. Faces are carved into the outer walls, perhaps to warn unwanted guests, much like the faces most of us know from Easter Island. Everything else about the center is really a mystery.

Most of us know about old settlements in the Middle East, Asia and Egypt, but how many have heard of a 10,000-year-old civilization in Bolivia?

Because of the huge stones used in construction, it is clear that a large population supported the temple complex. Some stones likely weigh as much as 130 tons, and most were moved uphill to the site of the temple.

So, right about the time that accepted archaeology says that Native Americans were moving into the America's from Asia, there was already a large urban center in Bolivia.

It's pretty clear that histories will always be rewritten, and we're at the cusp of a major shift in how we view early America.

YOUR CHANGING WORLD

In your lifetime, the North American and African Continents will move six feet further apart. You probably remember "Plate Techtonics" from school but learned it as some abstract theory. But it happens every day.

Even more interesting is that a tear in the earth's crust in Ethiopia will create a new sea that will eventually split the horn of Africa from the mainland. Scientists aren't sure how long this will take, since this is the first time modern man has witnessed such an event.

Much of the area is already below sea level, so a major earthquake could be enough to bring in the seawater from the Red See and Indian Ocean. And even that wouldn't be permanent. Volcanic activity could very well spring a new chain of mountains from the new sea.

For more on Africa's splitting land, see:

http://reporter.leeds.ac.uk/press_releases/current/continental_drift.htm



WELCOME TO THE JUNGLE

Common wisdom seems to be that the Amazon has been the Amazon for millions of years. To be sure, it is a natural treasure that is so vast, it helps reduce carbon dioxide in the Earth's atmosphere. But new evidence shows that some of the forest was cleared before.

Science magazine published a story in August 2008 showing that not only were parts of the Amazon previously cleared, but it was done by a complex culture—at a time and place where complex cultures just weren't supposed to be.

Giant shapes carved into the ground, ranging from 300 to 1000 feet in diameter and from 3 to 21 feet wide, show that culture was complex and dense enough to support some sort of public construction.

The research is pretty new still, so the purpose of the shapes are still a mystery. They may simply be interconnected building foundations, defense structures, or more likely irrigation.

Age is uncertain, and varied. Some have dated to 3000 to 500 years ago, and they are similar to irrigation structures found elsewhere in the Americas. As more of the forests are cleared for cattle, expect more surprises.

[See ScienceMag.org, or Yahoo! keyword Alceu Ranzi]

BEYOND COMPACT



With small cars suddenly popular again, did you ever stop to wonder about the smallest car ever produced? Think it's the Mini? The Smart car? Not even close.

The honor goes to the Peel P-50, a car produced from 1962 to 1965 on the Isle of Man in Great Britain. And being left or right-seater was not an issue—it only had one seat, and one headlight for that matter.

Weighing only 180 pounds, the car was marketed for town driving, with enough room for "one person and a shopping bag."

Sticker price? It cost about US \$700 in 1965, about \$4,000 in today's dollars.

DISCOVERIES

Scientists now think they know exactly where space begins and where Earth's atmosphere ends.

A mere 73 miles from where you sit is outer space, and the end of the only home humans know.

For many years, most astronauts have considered themselves space travelers once they passed the 50-mile mark. Most in the space industry have believed space to begin 62 miles above sea level, the point where the atmosphere is almost too thin to measure. NASA uses a 72-mile standard.

But the atmosphere threshold doesn't make everyone happy. Some scientists feel that space begins where Earth's gravity is no longer dominant—13 million miles from the surface!

We'll take the point where there's no air. Somehow the moon doesn't feel like home, and it's in the gravity field.

No matter how you measure it, the findings are important, because the boundary lies in an area that is difficult to study—it's too high for balloons, and too low for satellites. Using an instrument that measured air and particle flow, scientists now think they can understand what impact space particles have on our atmosphere.



What's up with that?

News in America is usually sound bites and tidbits. The stories usually create more questions than they answer. So each month, we'll take an issue or two from the news and go into a bit more detail. This month, we look at the political troubles in Thailand, and why the country is important to America.

Thailand became a unified nation in the mid-14th century and was known as Siam until 1939. It is the only Southeast Asian country to never have been a European territory or colony.

A monarchy for much of its history, the people gained constitutional power after a bloodless revolution in 1932. During World War II, the country aligned itself with Japan, and immediately following the war, signed a peace treaty with the United States.

Current troubles began in September 2006, when the military ousted the legally elected prime minister Thaksin. The interim government held open elections a year later, putting Thaksin's party back in power, after which he was reinstated as prime minister. Unhappy with the election, the largest anti-Thaksin party started street protests in May 2008.

Protests intensified until a court ruled that the pro-Thaksin party and two other coalition parties had violated elections rules. The three parties were legally dissolved, bringing some calm to Bangkok. However, when other pro-Thaksin parties were able to form a new ruling coalition, protests broke out again.

Elsewhere in Thailand, a muslim separatist movement in the southern Malay-Muslim region has led to thousands of deaths and continued unrest since 2004. Those troubles will likely continue for some time.

Thailand is largely modernized, but Thais continue to embrace its long held traditions as well. On the one hand, the country is 94% Buddhist and still celebrates the original king's birthday as a national holiday. On the other hand, as an indication of its flourishing consumer society, there is one cellphone for every 1.27 people—about the same as the United States.

Most educated Thai speak and read English. There are English-language newspapers, and many Thai magazines contain English as well as Thai. Additionally, many large businesses in Bangkok operate in English and Thai, making it an international center of commerce and communication.



Thailand has become crucial to international trade in the area, providing a stable and safe trade and commerce site, in an area that still suffers from the affects of the Vietnam war,

Thailand has been peaceful for most of its history, despite being neighbors with hotbeds like Cambodia, Laos, and Burma. Stability there is sometimes the only anchor of stability in the region.

An added bonus is that it has long been a welcoming tourist destination for Westerners.

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What is a Man?

It's the mystery of the ages, and many have tried to define men as if cataloging any other animal. Here's our take on what makes a man a man.

A man is complicated yet doesn't complicate his world. He has feelings and ideas he may never be able to explain, but he works to simplify the world around him whenever possible. That's why...

A man strives for peace and balance. He knows that chaos leads him nowhere. But...

A man knows that sometimes a fight is necessary. If it creates a larger peace or protects those he loves, he doesn't cower from a little adversity. After all...

A man is loyal and respectful. He does not abandon those he cares about. Of course...

A man knows he isn't perfect, but he does his best. He tries to be honest and loyal to the people in his life. He may not always be successful. Therefore...

A man admits his faults, mistakes, and quirks. No matter how large or small, he knows honesty is best. He never hesitates telling others of his screw-ups, because...

A man shares. Whether it's pitiful advice, silly jokes, or how to create nuclear fusion, he can't help but share with those around him. Likewise...

A man listens. Curious and compassionate by nature, he listens to those he cares about—and many he doesn't. He also doesn't ignore people in need, and enjoys helping. And...

A man is good at what he enjoys, and strives to do what he enjoys. A man doesn't stick with a job he hates, but if he did, he'd still perform his best. When he does his best...

A man is proud, but never boastful. A man may smile and point to the dishes he just washed, but he would never pretend that was beneath him, or that it obligates anyone to him. Naturally...

A man doesn't feel he is owed anything. If a friend gyps him on a promise, he simply doesn't get fooled again. He

knows not to lend more than he can afford to lose. But...

A man is forgiving. Life is too short to carry baggage, and he knows it. Even still...

A man welcomes age. Wrinkles and gray hair don't scare him, and while he may rather not be bald, he goes with it. Life is short, and...

A man enjoys having fun. Whether it's playing a video game, watching movies, or playing cricket, a man isn't afraid to waste away a whole day. And of course...

A man does what he enjoys, without apology. If he likes dancing ballet, he does it. If he likes boxing, he does it. If he likes planting petunias, he does it. If he likes shark-fishing, he does it. If he likes writing poetry, he does it. If he likes hunting and slaughtering wildlife he does it. And good for him, because...

A man stays busy. Even when he's doing nothing, he's doing something. He's thinking about what he wants for breakfast tomorrow. He's questioning the world, other men, his existence. But...

A man doesn't dwell on the unknown. He asks big questions and hopes for answers, but his life goes on in the meantime. And he never rests when the answers do come, because...

A man is never truly convinced of anything. He knows that doesn't make him wishy-washy, or a flip-flopper, it just means he can think. And...

A man knows every man has his own beliefs. He is not threatened by those beliefs or new ideas. It reminds him that he is

alive. And...

A man likes to feel alive. He gets it from mental or physical stimulation, but he gets it one way or another, even if he's alone. Even better if he is, because...

A man enjoys some solitude. He relishes in it. He does what he wants and is one with the world. He especially loves driving alone. And...

A man knows who he is when he's alone. He is not defined by others—not his friends or family. He is not defined by his interests or activities. He is not defined by his job or career. He is more than that. He defines himself—to himself, and to the world.



Alfred T. Palmer, Farm Security Administration, 1942. Library of Congress.

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ACTUAL SIZE



BLIND JUSTICE

A legally blind man is credited with saving his neighbor recently, after a man broke into her apartment.

After hearing noises in his neighbor's apartment, the man, who only gave his first name Jerry, broke the door down, surprising the burglar.

The burglar was a convicted rapist who apparently intended to stay in the apartment until the woman returned home from work. She returned home to find police and confirmed that she did not know the man who had broken in.

Jerry is fully blind in one eye, and has only 25 percent vision in the other.

The intruder has only been charged with burglary, though the investigation continues.

[See <http://www.cbsnews.com/>]

TRUE GRIT

Sophie Tucker was a pampered house pet until she was thrown into the wild, where she recalled her wild heritage to survive.

The unassuming Australian cattle dog was separated from her owners after falling from their sailboat during rough waters. They searched for over an hour, and concluded she was lost forever.

Unknown to the Griffith family, she had swam five miles to a small, uninhabited island, apparently surviving on a diet of wild goats for four months.

Park rangers who patrolled the island, within Australia's Great Barrier Reef, spotted the dog over a period of time. At first she was skinny and pitiful.

But after a while, they noticed she had picked up weight as they began noticing goat carcasses on the island. Sophie had "gone wild" in order to survive.

Rangers tried for some time to trap the dog they thought was wild. Finally, after four months, they succeeded.

The story travelled fast that a wild dog had been captured on the island, and the Griffiths went to meet the rangers as they came ashore.

The rangers realizing Sophie had to belong the Griffiths, released her, and she rushed the family in delight.

Pampered house dogs? We think not.

[See <http://www.msnbc.msn.com/id/30088069/>]

SUITABLE CHANGE

It's hard for men to ask for help. We're sometimes a proud bunch—overly proud, in fact. But luckily that doesn't stop people from offering help. One such helper can be found in Framingham, Massachusetts.

Linda Brooks knows that in the labor market, clothes can indeed make the man. That's why she started A Suitable Image to help people suit up for job interviews—of increasing importance lately. First she offered business wear only for women, but recently expanded to men's suits.

A man getting help through any one of 80 human service agencies can walk into A Suitable Image and walk out with a designer suit and nice dress shoes for free. The service thrives on donations of both professional clothing and money, so those in need can improve their lives without added hardship.

On why she expanded to menswear, Brooks said, "Beauty and appearance are traditionally the realm of women. There isn't an awareness that men need this as well. And there is no men's service that matches the scope of our program." Hers is the first organization in Massachusetts to assist men.

Clients not only get a suit for interviewing, but if hired, they get three additional outfits for the work place.

There has long been the idea that men will find a way, or make due. The simple fact is, most just won't go to job interviews where nicer dress is needed. Linda Brooks realizes this, and is working for positive change.

[See www.suitableimage.org/]

RETHINKING THE CABLE GUY

It's common in our culture to mock the cable guy as crooked, sneaky, or downright scary (Jim Carey!). But one cable guy worked against those ideas in December.

Jorge Rivera was on his way to a job as a Comcast repairman, when he noticed smoke coming from an apartment building. Without thinking, he pulled over, grabbed his ladder, and got to work.

Before firemen arrived, Jorge had already saved six people. Fire officials confirmed that by the time they arrived, there were few people to rescue, leaving them to focus on the fire.

After it was all over, Jorge spoke to reporters and officials, then continued on to his appointment.

[see <http://www.washingtonpost.com/>]



Fall Getaway

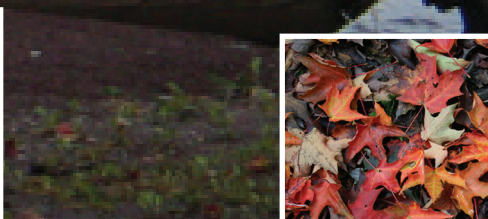
Summer is usually a lot of work! So now is the perfect time to plan a fall getaway.

Tucked away in the mountains of northern Pennsylvania is Ricketts Glen State Park. With over 13,000 acres, the park was set up to preserve an area that contains more than 20 named waterfalls, including Ganoga Falls, which cascades 94 feet down the mountain.

Obviously with all those waterfalls, Ricketts is a great place for mountain climbing and hiking. Don't worry, in the 26 miles of trails, there's plenty of light hiking too.

Furnished cabins (with electricity, full kitchens, and bathrooms) are available, but there are also sites for campers and tents.

Surely this is a great summer place, but unless you want to swim or sun on the beach—something you can really do anywhere—consider a fall visit to Ricketts. After Labor Day, the crowds are pretty much gone, and while the cabins are well-heated for cool fall mornings, they are not air-conditioned for hot summers.



Photos and story by
Glenn Ferrell

OUTDOORS

I set out to get away from civilization for a bit. I was working full-time and taking a full course load in graduate school, and I might have been a few breaths away from road rage.

Someone told me about Ricketts Glen years prior, so it was in the back of my head when I started looking for remote cabins to rent.

With the park only a three-hour drive from home, I knew I could get there quickly, and I wouldn't be too far from home if something came up .

The park is near the intersection of Pennsylvania highways 118 and 487, a short drive west of Wilkes-Barre and Scranton. On the way are small towns, some remembering their past, a few charging into the future via fast food and convenience stores.

Nearer the park is the small crossroads sort of place called Red Rock, complete with one corner store. If you visit in fall, grab a sub and some Martin's potato chips at the Red Rock Store! It's the last convenience food you'll find, since concessions in the park have very limited hours after summer.

The park is a few miles up PA 487 from Red Rock, so remember how to get back there for gas and food. It's also the last place you'll have cell-phone service!

Despite not being only 32 miles from the decently sized Wilkes-Barre, the park sits on top of a mountain. And while cell service is pretty good down at Red Rock, the park sits too high to receive the signals! This goes for most carriers. Luckily there are public phones in the park!

The first thing I noticed about the park was the beautiful sounds of quiet. Once you drive away from the highway, there are few noises of humanity. There were birds, the occasional plane overhead, and at some cabins, children playing. But for the most part there was a kind of quiet you don't hear to often.

The cabin was rustic, but adequate. I instantly knew what a peaceful time my stay would be—no TV, no phone, no internet! (That part took the most getting used to!)

But who needed internet when there were trails to explore!

My first hike was just to the lake, mostly via current and former roadways. Being a weekday in October, there were few people in the park, so the common beach was quiet. A cool wind blew from the lake, and the leaves rustled as they held onto the trees for their last few weeks of life.



Again, there were soft sounds of wind and water rippling onto the shore. But with no boats, everything was calm and natural.

The next day, I tackled one of the easier trails. Highland Trail crosses the flat part of the park cutting through a nice gap in the rock, created by receding glaciers. During summer and on weekends, this trail is probably the most traveled, but on this day, I encountered only two other hikers.

Highland was a nice way to see some nature and great bits of geologic history, but I wanted to see the pièces de résistance—the waterfalls! Those trails are quite difficult, so take my lead and work your way up to them! I didn't try reaching the falls until my third day.

The easiest way to reach the largest falls is to park in the "Lake Rose" parking area, and head out on Falls Trail. This will take you into Ganoga Glen, where the largest falls are.

Going directly down Falls Trail is very challenging and steep. There are a few other ways to get at the larger falls, so ask around, study the map left and



right, and watch signs closely. I took Beaver Dam trail to Ganoga View Trail, then cut through to Ganoga falls from above. Even then I was only looking down on it. Next trip I will hike up the mountain from below.

Be sure to save yourself a day or two to really relax after all the hiking. There are fire pits outside for cool evenings, and grills if you want to cook out. If you're feeling lazy, the microwave works well!

Even if you don't want to hike at all, Ricketts Glen is a good choice. It can be as relaxing or strenuous as you want, but either way, you leave the real world behind while you're there. I had to drive down the mountain just to check my email a few times. And I



liked it that way!

For more, see: <http://www.dcnr.state.pa.us/>



The waterfalls are what make Ricketts Glen a hidden treasure. The hikes to the larger falls are a bit hard-core, but plenty can be seen with a moderate heart-healthy hike.

After the hike, pick a cool spot and rest. There really isn't swimming in the streams, but plenty of opportunities to get wet and cool down. The falls are also the noisiest part of the park, but it's a relaxing roar.



Really, it's okay.



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MEN NEED IT TOO!

Why do advertisers and retailers of general merchandise tend to ignore men's needs? It's hard to tell. But if we listen to them, men don't need furniture, vitamins, grooming aids (other than razors), or foods that don't involve microwaving or cutting open a shiny package.

The simple fact is, there are many things men need and want. We just often don't know where to turn. That's where

we come in. In this section, we'll cover a few things each month that men are often afraid to ask about.

Yes, it *is* okay to go into Pottery Barn to buy a couch—even pillows if you like! Yes, you can eat yogurt! Yes, you may need to buy some air freshener or a candle before company comes!

We'll help ease your fears, and give you ideas!



◀When's the last time you heard about calcium without hearing about osteoporosis in older women?

The truth is, men need calcium as well, and if you don't get it in food, you'll need a supplement. Be sure to get one with magnesium, varied calcium sources, and vitamin D to aid in absorption.

▶ Men need moisture rich soap too? One of the better types is olive oil soap, but most are floral, pink, or just plain frilly.

While "Kiss My Face" may seem like a frilly name, the soap is old school. And olive oil soap has been around for years, making it classic and proven.



◀Men need hand moisturizer sometimes. But when's the last time a commercial tried to sell you one? The real irony is that the best hand moisturizer we've found is from a company that doesn't advertise at all. Good for them! They can focus on the products instead. A large tube sells for \$19, but it'll last you a year. Visit Aveda.com for more information.

P.S. If you wear flip-flops or sandals in summer, for the love of God, try their Foot Relief, too!

▶ Men need cookware too! Would you feel comfortable asking a friend for suggestions? We're trained to pretend we never cook.

We do. But men need easy! Calphalon Tri-Ply is your best bet. A little non-stick spray, and it's non stick. It's dishwasher safe. And it's durable. It'll last you 30 years. The set is \$299 at Bed, Bath & Beyond minus your 20% coupon!







It's a clean so big,
we had to use two pages to tell you!

MEN NEED IT TOO!

Furnish your life

Men need furniture and household products too, even if advertisers and stores don't realize it. Other than "Queer Eye for the Straight Guy," when is the last time you heard anyone pitch home style for men exclusively. Most HGTV shows simply portray men as the barrier to what a woman wants.

What if you're single? What if you get to be in charge of deciding on furniture? What about your "man cave" we hear so much about? There's more there than just a huge TV. So we'll try to have a forum of man-style here.

First, it's okay to go in Pottery Barn. No, they don't just sell clay pots. Instead they actually have some of the best masculine furniture designs on the market today. So for argument's sake, we'll furnish a living room and bedroom for you.

Even if you don't like what you see, check out the store. Most sales people there are very helpful. Like what you see, but think it's out of your price range? Take these pages to another store! It's almost certain they'll find something similar. They need the sales, after all!



The Rhys Media Suite (\$2599 as shown) is perfectly designed for flat screen TVs. The line has various sizes for the middle console to fit your needs. It's easy to accessorize such a setup, since it holds books nicely. And if you need baskets to keep DVDs, go for it. Try houseplants, or vases to add color.

Remember to get the dimensions of your TV, not just the screen size. Most need 4 inches free on all sides for ventilation. Be sure to anchor the tall shelves, as well as your TV if you have small children.



Addin Leather Sofa and Chair in "Bourbon" are about as masculine a set you can find. Straight lines and a gentle broken in look make this furniture fit for any man-friendly room. (chair \$1,099.00, sofa \$1,999.00)

Farmhouse queen size bed
\$1,199.00, bedside table \$399.00,
dresser \$1299, armoire \$1899.



What houseplant fits best with men's lives? Pothos, the vine you see in grocery store floral shops is your best bet. You almost can't kill it.

Make it YOU.

You may think the products here offer a whole lot of brown. But what's more masculine and natural than earth tones? The key is, treat this as a base coat on your canvas.

Picking traditional hues and styles allow you to then personalize the room with your own tastes. For instance, you get to

add pillows, which can be as 'pretty' or plain as you like. You get to pick colorful items to put on your bookshelves, like books and pottery. Coffee table books add your personality, as do rugs and window coverings.

In the bedroom, pick a wall color that says "I live here!" Then add bedding that is both comfortable and as colorful as you want it to be.

You live there, make it you!

Rhys tables offer an almost perfect match for leather sets. Coffee table \$699, side tables \$399. Watch for package deals!



The Ashland Tripod Table Lamp offers a nautical, man-friendly design for \$199.00

MEN NEED IT TOO!

Men have lips too. But we don't want flowers or cherry flavor all over our face. Try Burt's Bees. The flavor is a light mint.



THE MAN CANDLE



What man hasn't needed to freshen up his home? Say company's coming, and it's been a long stuffy winter. What can you do if the windows can't be open for a few days?

Sometimes candles will fit the bill, but how many are created for, much less marketed to men? Almost none. But we did find a candle that is fit for a man's abode.

WoodWick candles are just that—candles with wooden wicks. Wooden wicks burn cleaner and slower than the normal cotton wicks. They also produce a light crackling noise like a small fireplace.

"Fireside" is one scent in particular that's great for a man's tastes, especially in fall and winter. Other scents may also freshen without feeling too "pretty." Try "Frosted Cookie" or "Cinnamon Chai."

The candles can be found easily online, or at Bed, Bath, & Beyond, and retail from \$10 to \$24, depending on size.

MEN EAT YOGURT!

Perhaps no universally needed product on the market today is advertised to men less than yogurt!

The simple fact is, men need it, and many enjoy it. But when's the last time you saw that in a commercial? One yogurt company is trying to fix that.

Stonyfield, known for its organic line of products, has set up a page on its website explaining all the benefits of yogurt to men.

Men need calcium too. Just 1200 mg of calcium help improve weight loss and maintenance.

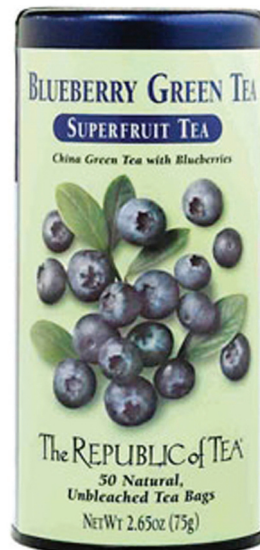
Men need the live cultures in yogurt, just as women do. They enhance digestion, and help maintain healthy immunity to food-borne bacteria.

Men need protein! Yogurt, both dairy and soy, provide healthy protein.

Men also need fruit, and most yogurt has that, too!

So, wake up advertisers! You're doing a disservice to men and your own bottom line by ignoring men. Bravo to Stonyfield for bucking the trend.

[See www.stonyfield.com]



With much talk about all the benefits of green tea, few companies market it to men. One that does is The Republic of Tea, even selling a blueberry green tea for prostate health.

Fresh Tech

Even in a bad economy, new technology comes out every day. There are smart choices even with the latest trends.

Olympus has a new point-and-shoot camera (SP-590UZ) that packs a 26x optical zoom. That's greater than any other point-and-shoot on the market. The lens uses a double reflection method that reduces the number of lenses needed for magnification. At \$450, it's more expensive than many point-and-shoots, but still a relative bargain compared to digital SLR cameras otherwise needed to get similar results. See <http://www.olympusamerica.com>.

Hi-def home movies at the beach? And it's waterproof? Yep. **Sanyo's** VPC-WH1 is the first hi-def waterproof video camera to hit the consumer market. And at \$400, it's inline with standard definition digital video cameras available today. For more, visit <http://us.sanyo.com>.

You finally don't have to choose between **XM and Sirius!** Now that both services are one company, you'd think the switch would be easy. Unfortunately, in order to not cut off existing customers, two players have been needed until now. Sirius is now offering the **MiRGE** that features two chipsets to play both services. At \$250, it's on the high end, but should please new customers more than existing ones. Visit www.siriusxm.com for more information.

For many people the iPhone or similar smart-phone is enough for on-the-go connectivity. But for those needing a bit more than games, email, and 15 pages of apps, there is a new solution at a mobile store near you.

Many already know about netbooks—small notebook PCs geared mostly for internet and business applications—but they are about to get a whole lot cheaper. AT&T is the first to offer rock-bottom prices just as they do with phones when customers sign on for new service.

Being tested in Atlanta and Philadelphia right now is the \$50 netbook offer, with non-contract prices of up to \$300. Just sign up for data service for the built-in 3G network adapter. For some, the downside is being limited to one device for mobile internet. You still have the option of getting a free aircard to use with any notebook computer if you want more flexibility.

If the marketing tests work, expect nationwide deals on these ultranortable computers.



Coming soon to a computer near you, Windows 7.

Even though most kinks were worked out of Windows Vista with the first service pack, and despite it running beautifully on new PCs, Microsoft seems ready to move on from the drama.

Microsoft made a huge blunder rushing Vista to the market, long before computer manufacturers could prepare for its intricacies.

Home buyers also had no idea what they were in for, and those who loaded Vista on older computers soon regretted the decision. It wasn't long before the product was considered a joke. Truth is, Vista was meant for powerful computers, just as many users were realizing they didn't need power-hogs for internet and word processing.

Enter Windows 7, a move away from the catchy names like ME, XP, and 2000. But is it that different?

By most accounts, 7 will be Vista without all the bells and whistles that most users don't want in an operating system. Developers promise that users won't have to customize a thousand settings before feeling at home on 7. (Vista often took hours to set up.)

Windows 7 will also work better with low-end PCs and smaller notebooks, so no one gets alienated. They

hope it will work better with existing software, or provide easier work-arounds.

Windows 7 will also be more like Office 2007, which by most measures was a huge hit, despite being vastly different than previous versions. The reason? Microsoft thought about how the user works and plays. That's something they forgot with Vista. We'll see.





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SONY

Like no other.

It's a crazy world

Philips, the same company that gave us cassette tapes and helped introduce laserdiscs, CDs, and DVDs, now plans to help fight cancer. Within the next few years, the company hopes to release an electronic pill that will be directed to tumors to release medicine locally. This will reduce reliance on chemotherapy, which damages healthy tissue along with cancer.

Known as the **iPill**, the device shows greatest promise in fighting gastrointestinal cancers, since the drugs typically used in treating those cancers are often digested by the stomach. The iPill would avoid digestion, with medicine reaching the cancer fully intact. The pill would be preprogrammed for location of the cancer and release the proper dosage where needed.

About 1.5 million Americans are treated for colitis, Crohn's disease, and colon cancer every year. These are the patients who would benefit the most from the iPill.

The device is currently being tested in animal trials with human testing beginning as soon as this year.

Flying cars are here—sort of. **Terrafugia** is releasing a car/plane hybrid that fits in a garage, is street legal, and gets 30 miles per gallon on land and in the air.

The Transition® can travel by air at 115 mph, and on the road it can reach and maintain highway speeds. It runs on standard unleaded gasoline.

Terrafugia, based in Woburn, Massachusetts, was founded by five pilots who are graduates of MIT. The project was begun in 2006, and the Transition had its first test flight on March 19.

For more, visit <http://www.terrafugia.com/>.

Philips Healthcare is now making it easy to save a life at home. The new HeartStart Defibrillator unit is available for consumer purchase.

The unit uses voice instructions to walk the user through saving a heart attack victim, even coaching you through CPR. To prepare family members, a training video is included.

And if you worry you may shock someone unnecessarily, the unit also reads heart activity to determine if a shock is actually needed.

The high cost (\$1200 to \$1700) will be an issue for some, but finance options are available. As always, talk to your doctor before buying such equipment for your home.

For more, see <http://www.heartstarthome.com/>.



The endless web

Chances are there are a lot of useful websites you've never used or perhaps never even heard of. Here are a few that you should bookmark now.

Informational sites

www.Weather.gov. This is the website for the National Weather Service, NOAA. Enter your ZIP code and get local weather and warnings direct from the source. You'll avoid all the bells and whistles (and advertisements) of other weather sites. Radar images tend to be much better than the competition as well.

earthquake.usgs.gov. If you like to keep up with what's going on in the world, then you may want to add this to your routine. The site includes up to the hour information on earthquakes around the world. There's also a lot of historical information on the site.

news.bbc.co.uk/1/hi/country_profiles/. Need to travel to another country for business? Just curious about other places? This site is for you. BBC keeps up with current politics, news, and media in countries around the world.

www.woot.com. This site only features one item for sale per day, so they can offer crazy blow out prices. Recent deals included an HP Pavilion laptop (4GB DDR2 500GB HD eSATA HDMI Blu-Ray) for \$699. Work fast! That deal was listed at midnight (as all are), and it sold out before 4pm central time.

www.happymedian.com. Have to meet someone quick and aren't sure where "half way" is? Try this site. Enter up to four addresses and it'll give you the best spot to meet. You can choose whether you want a restaurant, movie theater, or even hotels.

www.calorielab.com. This site has nutritional information for just about every restaurant chain and grocery store product imaginable. If that isn't enough, they also post articles and data about nutrition.

www.criminalsearches.com. You should know who your neighbors are. This site lets you know about reported crimes in your neighborhood. This is especially useful if you plan to move to a new area. You can also search by name!

www.repairpal.com. Getting your car repaired, and have no idea how much you should pay? RepairPal can help. Type in the make, model, repair, and ZIP code and you can get an idea of what to expect. You can even rate your mechanic afterwards!

www.viewzi.com. Hate shuffling between search engines to get the best results? This site searches all the big ones, and compiles them in one results page. Results are still ranked in the order they would be on the search sites, so you'll always get the best hits first.

Fun sites

www.oddee.com. Just plain fun. This site collects all the odd and interesting photos that make the rounds on the internet. Especially fun is the section on the worst Photoshop mistakes ever. There are categories for every taste, though!

www.damninteresting.com. Like the strange, bizarre, and obscure? This site is for you. It's simply a collection of articles posted blog style, but the topics are stuff you didn't hear in high school history, or the nightly news.

www.howcast.com. Okay, this one could be informational, but it's also just plain fun. Think of YouTube and ask.com having a love child. That's How Cast. Users post videos explaining how to do all kinds of things, and viewers get to rate and comment on them.

www.dailylit.com. This one is for the reader who never seems to have time. This site will email you a small portion of a public-domain book as often as you wish. And most are free.

www.songza.com and **www.favtape.com.** Both of these are great music sites. FavTape lets you search for and create music playlists to add to any website. Songza is a simple search and play service. Unlike services like Pandora, you listen to what you want, when you want.

www.earthalbum.com. If you're like many heavy web users, you know that Google makes the best map site, but Yahoo makes the best photo site (Flickr). How to mix the two? EarthAlbum takes Flickr photos and adds them to Google Maps allowing you to click on a place and get photos for the area. Other sites have tried this, but this one seems to be the best.

TECHNOLOGY

Signs of the times

The world changes so fast it's hard to keep up. We'll try to keep you on top of it all!

Many of us are old enough to remember *CHiPs* or maybe even *Adam-12*. Remember all those fun codes like 10-4? Maybe from your years of viewing you know a 187 is a homicide or that a 926 is a request for a tow.

Well, they'll soon be history. As technology has gotten better, the need for quick messages between officers is fading. Simply stating what you need is now easier and more reliable—confuse a 187 and a 487 and the difference is between murder or grand theft.

Just as sales of Blu-ray discs are picking up, the next move from the industry is the cheap player. Expected to hit the market by year's end is the **\$99 Blu-ray player**.

Why now? The Blu-ray Disc Association, set up to handle licensing and production standards, has begun licensing the technology in China, meaning cheap players will come very soon.

Some players are even expected by Black Friday, which would be a boon to the Blu-ray segment, which would mean more discs purchased, thus lower prices on the discs.

If you are thinking of purchasing a player, keep a few things in mind.

First, make sure the player upconverts standard DVDs to 1080p display. Most machines on the market now do, but future cheaper models may be iffy.

But if the player does upconvert, then standard DVDs will play almost as well as Blu-ray discs that aren't remastered for Blu-ray. You'll never really need to repurchase any discs that you have on DVD.

Second, if you don't have a 1080p HD TV, a Blu-ray player is pointless. The Blu-ray picture is unbelievable. But without a good display, it won't exist.

Finally, make sure you know what you're doing. You only need a \$30 HDMI cable to hook up a Blu-ray. Standard audio/video cables that come with the machine will work fine as well. Don't fall for any sales pitches.

With Apple computers now accounting for 14% of personal computer purchases, it was only a matter of time before serious security threats showed up. And one has.

While trojans aren't new for the Mac OS, a recent one embeds itself in iWork. It's likely downloaded with software from third party sites, just as Windows computers usually fall prey. Lesson: no computer is foolproof.

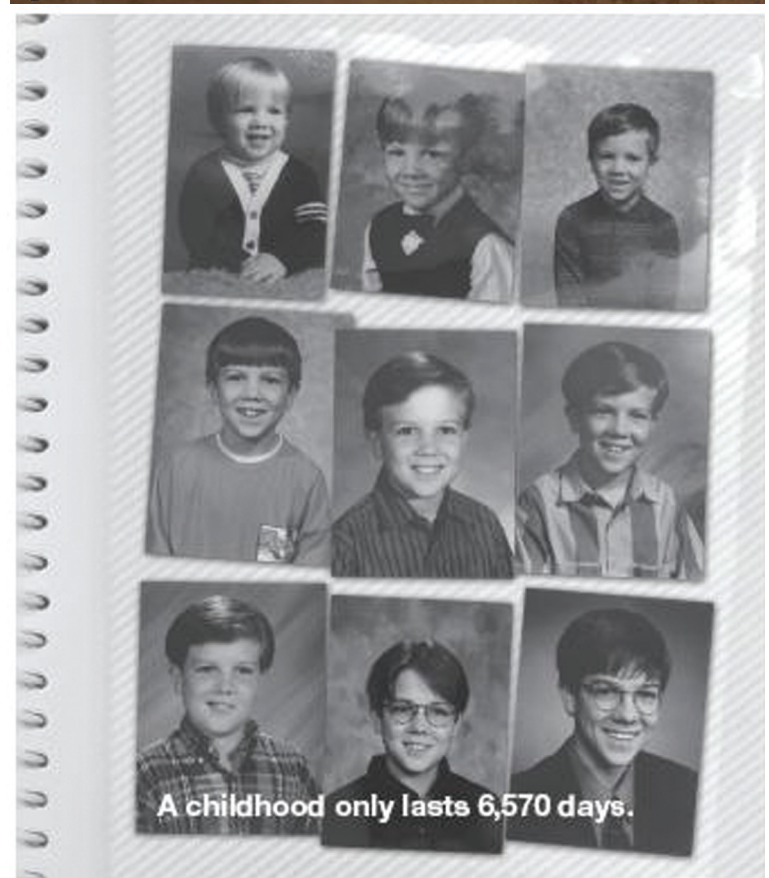


99% of Americans have seen combat on TV.
1% of Americans have seen combat in Iraq or Afghanistan.

We know where you're coming from.
If you're a veteran of Iraq or Afghanistan, you're not alone.
We've been there. Join us at CommunityofVeterans.org

IAVA IRAQ & AFGHANISTAN VETERANS AMERICA
Ad Council

Photo by Perry Drury 2nd Class/Staff Sgt. Paulinho, U.S. Army, Bataan, November 6, 2007



A childhood only lasts 6,570 days.

Take time to be a dad today.

Call 877-4DAD411 or visit www.fatherhood.gov

Ad Council



Making ¢ents

Even if we weren't in the middle of an historic recession, being frugal just makes sense. How can you maintain your lifestyle while still saving money? With a little thought. We've compiled a few ideas to get you started.

Start with one of the basics—water. Sure many of us hate the taste of tap, or we just need our water on the go. But drinking just three \$1 bottles of water a day can add up to \$15 per week, or almost \$800 a year—for about 73 gallons of water! You're paying well over \$10 for a gallon of water! So what's a guy to do?

First, get a stainless steel water bottle. Trust us. Hard plastics always leave a plastic taste as water approaches room temperature. Additionally, anti-bacterial and anti-odor properties of stainless steel make it easier to keep clean. Klean Kanteen (www.kleankanteen.com/) has a 27-ounce bottle for \$17.95 or 2-for \$33. Keep the bottle cool all day with a bottle wrap or wine bottle carrier!

Then, find acceptable water to carry with you:

If your municipal water isn't bad, but you just don't like the chlorine, get a filter. An 8-cup **Brita filter** at Bed, Bath & Beyond costs about \$31. A 4-pack of filters is around \$24. (Use the store's widely distributed coupons for additional savings!) Each filter lasts for about 40 gallons of water. This means, aside from the initial pitcher investment, you'll get 160 gallons for every \$24 four-pack of filters. That works out to 15 cents per gallon.

Many of us have lived in places where even filtering wouldn't help tap water. What then? Check to see if water delivery is available in your area. **Nestle's** family of water-delivery companies (<http://www.myspringwater.com/>) charge about \$8 for a 5-gallon bottle (\$1.60 per gallon). Dispenser rental is usually free, and the water is filtered and treated with reverse osmosis and packaged in reusable, low-leaching bottles. The water tastes like, well, water.

Because delivery bottles are reused, you're saving thousands of disposable bottles a year! And if you live on an existing route, you're not likely adding to fuel waste.

Either way, 15 cents or \$1.60 per gallon is far better than \$10 per gallon. It just makes sense!



Buy music online? It's usually cheaper than buying CDs, and it cuts plastic waste! But who has the best deal?

If you like oldies, indie, and obscure music, a membership with E-Music (www.emusic.com), the Internet's oldest MP3 retailer, might be up your alley. For about \$12 per month, you get 30 downloads per month. That's 40 cents per song. A sign-on bonus of 25 to 75 songs also makes this an appealing service.

If it's industry music you like, Amazon.com tends to be the best service. Many new releases are 79 cents or \$7.99 for full CD downloads. And Amazon has only ever sold MP3s free of "digital rights management." You can put the songs on as many MP3 compatible devices as you want.



Organic produce is a very good thing. If you can find it at a good price, choose it over conventional. But if you are in a pinch, some produce is typically grown with few or no pesticides anyway. The extra costs are only to make sure they can promise what may be true anyway.

According to the Environmental Working Group, best bets for non-organic food to be pesticide free are fresh corn, avocados, onions, pineapples, mango, asparagus, sweet peas, kiwi, cabbage, sweet potatoes, and broccoli. Some produce like tomatoes and eggplant are only sprayed young, so pesticides will be lower.

Some produce should be purchase organic whenever possible. Those include peaches, apples, pears, bell peppers, strawberries, cherries, imported grapes, carrots, kale, and lettuce. Buying locally helps. You may find farmers who use no pesticides but who can't afford certification.

Packing up the American Dream

Editor's note: While this is a wife's tale about the toll of the economy on family life, we believe it shows the effects of a husband's bloated dreams on his family. The husband in this true tale though he could do and own everything. We know this simply isn't true in life. This stands as a cautionary tale for all.

“As we rummage through the house to decide what to throw out and what to donate, I find myself living [my son's] childhood years all over again. We'll find a toy we had almost forgotten about, and all of a sudden the memories come flowing back in. It doesn't matter what it is—a Playskool garage or farm, his dinosaurs, little cars and trucks, Legos, even a silly McDonald's Happy Meal toy—it doesn't matter. All of them were once alive for us. They truly were. And as we go through all of them I still can hear the two of us giggling away, just as we did so many years ago... The worst part is having to give up our home—my son's childhood home.”

Across America, many families are going through a situation similar to that of Colleen Smith's family. Frantic attempts to rein in debt and prevent or survive foreclosure are growing more common as an increasing cost of living and variable rate loans confront people who, up to now, were more focused on their daily routine. For the first time since the federal government began keeping consumer debt statistics in 1950, Americans now have more debt than income. Compounding the problem is that job losses, more frequent layoffs, and falling value of pay and property continue to plague much of the country.

According to statistics compiled by the Federal Reserve Board, consumer debt grew by 6 to 7 percent each year from 1990 to 2000. After 2000, that rate increased sharply until it reached 12 percent by 2005, when Americans had \$1.2 trillion in debt. In 2001, Americans as a whole owed more than they made, and by 2006 collective debt equaled 131% of pay. Ironically, it was the Federal Reserve who made accumulating such debt easier during the period, by regularly reducing interest rates to stave off recession since the lesser market troubles of 2000 sparked fears of recession. Colleen and her husband Al have borrowed steadily since the late 1990s, supporting a lifestyle that was increasingly beyond their means.

The Dream.

In 1998 the Smiths bought a second, smaller home further down the New Jersey shore. It had been Al's dream

to have a coastal home, where he could keep a small boat for fishing and where the family could catch crabs and spend quiet time on the piers after all the tourists left the area. This “dream” home came at a high price—a \$2300 per month mortgage, which Colleen knew from the beginning that they could not afford on top of their current mortgage payment of \$1600. “He wanted a house by the lagoon. I told him we couldn't—we didn't have the money for it. So the realtor, supposedly a friend of Al's, puts all these numbers on paper and shows me how we can manage it quite well. I'm sitting there as Al and the realtor are trying to convince me that we can swing it. Actually, I was feeling quite pressured.”

The waterfront house had been his dream since early childhood, since his grandmother had lived on the shore. Even though common online mortgage calculators, like the one at CitiMortgage.com, show that the normal guideline for his income is a monthly mortgage payment between \$1000 and \$1400 per month, she thinks they might have actually managed the two mortgages alone. Research from the Center for Housing Policy found that 4.5 million families in the US are spending at least half of their income on housing. The Smiths were spending just over half their income on the combined mortgages. However, the spending did not stop with the vacation house. She thinks that achieving one long-held goal made Al feel that he could go after more, and at first, they managed the two mortgages and the first few large purchases after that. “We weren't struggling as much back then, so he felt we could manage it all. But throw in a bit of mid-life crisis, and you got a real case of the *gimmees* on your hands. He wanted all the toys.”

First, there was the older Chevy Corvette in need of some restoration work and mechanical tinkering, then a motorcycle he could work on in the driveway and ride on warm summer days, and finally, the boat to keep on the canal behind the “house on the lagoon” as they call the shore home. More than once, the houses were refinanced and equity was taken out for other expenses or purchases. When that was no longer an option, more items were charged on credit, including daily expenses and quite a few non-essential items. According to Delos, a public advocacy group, 7 out of 10 low and middle income households use credit cards for living expenses or for car and house repairs. After being overextended in so many other areas, the Smiths did the same.

Colleen says she always reluctantly agreed to unnecessary purchases—or caved in defeat and frustration. “Being a bit inept in the area of money and figures, I buckled in. I didn't totally understand, so I took a coward's path and just

said ‘ok.’” In retrospect, she also feels a bit taken advantage of, at least with the house. “I truly think that there is something to all the talk of people in business who try to take advantage of those who know less than them. They seem to prey on the unsuspecting, and in our ignorance we fell for it.” She remembers that her husband was in a state of euphoria at the thought of getting his waterfront house, and the realtor directed all the mortgage figures and reassurances toward her. Al had already been convinced to make the purchase. She doesn’t try to pass off the blame, however, and is fully aware that they share the guilt as a couple. “I’m just saying that I gave up. I shouldn’t have, but I did. He got swept away with all the things, and he wanted the house, the cars, the motorcycle, and boat as parts of his life. Was he right? Of course not! Was I right for not putting up a bigger stink about it? Of course not!”

In many ways, something inside kept telling Colleen that it was wrong to deny her husband’s whims. “After all, he was the one with a job, a job that pays actual real money... Sure, if I had worked all this time, we probably wouldn’t be in the mess we are now,” she says. That doesn’t mean she regrets being a stay-at-home since her son was born—a decision they made when they first got married and an arrangement that Al still prefers. “I don’t belittle myself at all for staying home. I never have and I never will. I know for a certainty that [my son] would not be the person he is today if I had worked while he grew up. If there is one thing that I’m totally sure of in my whole entire life, that would be it. And I have no regrets whatsoever. I know damn well that we wouldn’t have the kind of son that we do.” However, it does mean she always had some reluctance to argue against needless purchases that put both of them deeper in debt. “Al and I have never considered it ‘my’ money or ‘your’ money. It was always OUR money. He’s never once said, or even hinted, that it was ‘his’ money. That has never ever been an issue for us. But yes, I wanted Al to have the things that he desired, since he worked hard for our money.”

The Smiths are not alone in being overextended and near foreclosure. A study of New Jersey by RealtyTrac, a real estate industry research group, showed an 11.2 percent increase in July 2008 foreclosure notices over the same month in 2007. This was below the national increase of 55 percent, and New Jersey ranks 19th nationally, with one in 751 households currently in foreclosure. Additionally, a recent Federal Reserve report found that most foreclosures are likely due to property values falling below overall debt. As real estate values declined, homeowners no longer had the leverage of equity credit to buffer hard times. Others

simply decided it wasn’t worth paying more for a house than it was worth. Neither of the Smith’s homes is in foreclosure—they are rushing to sell their main home before it happens. But much of their accessible equity is long gone.

While buying the waterfront home has been a major source for their troubles, at least for the moment, it means they have some options in dealing with their current situation. They intend to sell their main house and move into the smaller one. Al will get to keep his dream home—though the boat is in question. But for Colleen, having this option hasn’t made their current situation much easier emotionally. She still has to lose the home and neighborhood where she feels most comfortable. “Out of all the things we’ve been dealing with, this is the hardest part for me. We’ve lived here for 17 years, and the thought of leaving here really breaks my heart,” she said.

“We’ve been in the process of getting rid of so many things,” Colleen said. “Things are funny. They are just things, and yet when I look at them, the memories they hold are so strong and vivid in my head...but mostly in my heart.” Most of the things she must get rid of belonged to her son as he grew up—clothes and blankets from his infancy, as well as countless toys and “little treasures” he accumulated over the years. “They represent so much of his life, as well as mine—hours and hours of playing...laughter, fun, and even joy, but mostly, the closeness that we’ve always shared when we played.” She adds that they could never fit all these things in one house, and is thinking of having a yard sale to raise a little cash and dispose of things other people might use. She says that this, of course, adds more stress to an already hectic time for her and Al.

The Unraveling.

Colleen’s emotional and physical exhaustion are the same as anyone else within sight of foreclosure, but she’s quick to point out that the cause is likely different than the majority of Americans approaching foreclosure. While her husband was recently terminated during a round of layoffs at Dow Jones, his pay has not decreased yet. He still draws on his severance package until January 2009, while working part-time in real estate and looking for a stable full-time position. Like most other American families, the Smiths are also dealing with higher fuel and food prices, but not substantially enough to fully cause their situation. The economic downturn has not put them in this position. When asked what went wrong, Colleen readily admits: “Yes, we have foolishly lived beyond our means, and it’s our own fault for being in this situation. We foolishly bought unneeded

MONEY MATTERS

cars, a boat, jacked our credit cards up to their limits and spent money that we basically didn't have.”

Her husband continues to draw severance pay based on his \$60,000 annual salary from Dow Jones in South Brunswick, New Jersey. His salary alone has simply not been enough to handle two mortgages that now total \$3900 per month. Factor in automotive payments and repairs, insurance, fuel, utilities, and expenses for their son's college education, and they've been on a fast track to ruin for some time. Aside from the mortgages and living expenses they have about \$85,000 in unsecured debt, including credit cards and lines of credit that grow increasingly hard to manage as interest rates and fees accompany late or missed payments.

Colleen believes they were simply living the American dream, and was reluctant to deny the hopes and dreams of her husband. “Yes, I wanted Al and our son to have all that they wanted, but I didn't feel the need for the same things for myself. Clothes, jewelry, cars, nice pots and pans, fancy furniture, going out to dinner, and on and on—none of that has ever meant anything to me. I don't know why, I've just never been like that.” The recent job loss and the approaching end of the severance package are simply the final events to prove that the dream was developing into a nightmare. In retrospect everything makes sense to her now, as she says, “\$60,000 is not going to cover all of it, and we were foolish to ever think that it could.” Even if her husband finds a job with the same pay, or if they both find work to total what he had made, changes in their lifestyle must be made.

As the job market turns sour in New Jersey, the Smiths are facing another common problem of the current economic downturn—a painful job hunt. According to the New Jersey Department of Labor and Workforce Development, the state has seen a net loss of 7,000 non-seasonal jobs so far in 2008. Making matters worse, Colleen fears her husband may be ill-equipped to even search for jobs, with the market and the methods of seeking employment so vastly different from when he first started at Dow Jones in 1986. She's not even sure if he knows what CareerBuilder is. And since she has not worked in 21 years, Colleen knows her search would be futile, as declining eyesight prevents her from doing most of the work she is qualified to do, and the pharmaceutical

industry she once worked in is both no longer prominent in the area, and vastly changed as well. She admits that retail work would likely be her only option once they settle in at the smaller house.

Colleen's husband left Dow Jones as a senior systems administrator. He had been laid off previously, and fought successfully to keep his job through union action. She says this time, they categorized it as a “termination” due to “poor performance,” which her husband says had never been mentioned or documented previously. She believes age may have played a role in the termination, and wonders if he'll be able to find similar employment at all, since 54 is considered “old” in his line of work. She asked him if he would seek union help to fight the termination, and he said he would not. She explains, “I think this time he was just spent and couldn't find the strength to fight again.”

The Toll.

On top of the sadness, fear, and frustration, Colleen feels much embarrassment. “One month we had to count out our stash of saved change just so we could make our mortgage payment. We've unintentionally bounced checks, and missed payments, all because our mindset has been one of sheer confusion.” These are things many might do when trying to make ends meet. But perhaps more embarrassing are trips to the grocery store, as increasing prices make it harder to get the things that her husband and son are not yet ready to sacrifice. “We would put all our items on the check-out counter, and if we had picked out two or more packages of soda, we'd only put one on the belt in the hopes that the clerk wouldn't notice the ones left in our cart. Obviously I'm not proud of this at all, and I'm also ashamed as well.”

The entire situation has been a physical drain as well. “The stress and worry has been quite overwhelming at times,” she said. “I fear for my husband's health everyday. The thought rarely leaves my head. I'm losing some of my hair,” she adds. And while her husband won't talk a lot about the situation, he no longer hides his emotions. “I've seen him cry more than ever in his life, and I have been there right along with him.” But in not talking about the root issues that caused economic disaster for the family, she worries he may not fully appreciate what went wrong. He is working to get them through this situa-



tion, but she's not sure if he's fully learned his lesson or not. "Keeping the house by the lagoon should help keep him from wanting too many things, though—at least for now."

Al has given up some luxuries, however, as his dream car, the Corvette, was sold earlier this year. He's currently selling a Chevy Camaro, which was never more than a collectible as well. Both he and Colleen drive cars that are about 10 years old. While Al's 'daily driver' needs some repair, it will be back in working order once the more expensive Camaro is sold. The son is sharing vehicles with them to get to class, and commutes to save money. He has been unable to find work that is flexible enough for his class schedule, and his small college does not have many campus positions for students.

The entire family has given up eating out or having food delivered, except the occasional breakfast at McDonald's. "But we no longer get our weekly pizza delivery, and I haven't had White Castle in months," she said. The grocery store is still a challenge, but Colleen says she's trying to change how and what the family eats. "ShopRite had Banquet meals 10-for-\$10. That's cheaper than cooking, although Al may eat three meals at once!" she joked. "I made only one 'treat' purchase—banana split flavored Oreos! I can't wait to try one!"

Somewhat expected is the toll that all of this stress and shame take on the couple's relationship. "My husband and I seem to pick on one another a bit more than we normally would," Colleen says. "But thankfully we both realize that we're only doing it because we're confused and scared." Even with that understanding between them, they are becoming more withdrawn from others. "We've also been shying away a little from visiting with our families, because we don't know what to say to them. We don't want them to know the full extent of what we're going through. Maybe it's pride, or possibly even shame, because we realize that so much of this is our own fault—Al for wanting so much and thinking we could afford it, and me for not being able to convince him otherwise."

The Curb.

More immediate things trouble Colleen, however—the sorting, packing, and placing so many personal things out

by the curb once a week. She says they can only put household rubbish out the afternoon before pickup day. But even in that short period, people have often pilfered through the piles at the curb before the trash collection arrives, meaning a lot of her son's childhood will end up in someone else's home.

The thought of having the yard sale gives her the same sadness. Though she finds some happiness in knowing that the things won't make it to the landfill, it still hurts to see her life in the house—indeed most of her son's childhood—reduced to a pilfered heap at the curb or to imagine boxes full of memories hectically torn through during a yard sale.

Making all of this even more difficult is that Colleen says she has never taken change very well, so even the smallest things tend to bother her.

"I think what I'll miss the most is my front yard garden. I have tenderly cared for it for all these years, and to think that someone else will be tending to it from now on is quite difficult to handle, especially when it comes to my roses. I have a number of rose bushes and each of them is so very special to me. I know each one individually. I know their wants and their needs...it will hurt to say goodbye to them."

For Colleen, it's like leaving friends behind. She is planning to take a few of her favorites with her to plant at the other house. Her husband will take a cutting from his favorite fig tree.

Colleen knows she is not a victim in her family's situation—she readily admits that her story is not one of pity or blame. It is a cautionary tale of being swept away in the American dream and failing to be aware of the consequences. And while she is fully aware that so many other families across the country are facing similar hardships, even if under different circumstances, she takes no comfort in being a statistic. "What

makes it even worse is that other families and individuals all over the country are going through the same thing. For me, misery does not love company. For me, it only makes it more tragic."



By Glenn Ferrell, Publisher



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Grooming Q & A

Q. I know it's crazy, but my wife tells me to get a manicure. I think that's overkill. Is there anything I can do to make them look better without going that far?

A. The main problem with nails is the cuticle and other dryness. Try applying a light hand lotion with a nail brush immediately after showering. That will push back the cuticle while moisturizing any dry skin.

If that's still not enough, try getting a nail buffer. Sure, it sounds a bit dainty, but it looks like a jumbo nail file. You just rub it over the nails for a natural, chemical-free shine.

Q. My face is sometimes dry, especially in winter and summer when the indoors is dry. I can't imagine using lotion on my face though. Won't that clog pores and leave me greasy?

B. Not if you get a lotion specifically meant for a man's face. We do get dry, but not so much that we need to oil up. A light moisturizer, whether lotion or gel, should be fine.

The good news is, there are many options for us now, in every price range. On the low end, try "Every Man Jack" from Target. The brand is just for men, and the lotion is light and won't clog your pores. They retail for \$5.

You might also try Aveda. Their products use natural plant extracts and moisturizers, and most are light, and only lightly scented. They have a men's line, but you may have better luck in the regular gender-neutral product lines. Expect to pay about \$15 to \$30 for a good sized container.

On the higher end are products from Clarins. You'll find that at stores like Macy's and higher end department stores. They have a men's line, and they also use plant extracts and oils to lightly moisturize. Their products run for about \$30.

Q. I have a pretty thick beard. Sometimes the skin underneath is dry and flaky. I tried shampoo and conditioner as well as 2-in-1 products, and still can't find a good balance. Any ideas?

A. Some people have success with a good, moisture-rich, old-fashioned soap.

Hit up a natural foods store for some olive oil soap or hemp oil soap. They usually don't dry skin, and leave a good bit of moisture.

The main thing is to make sure your beard dries. Yeah, sounds crazy, but if it's left wet for extended periods, the skin will dry out more quickly. Run a comb through it, even if the hairs aren't long. It'll help it dry as it moves air through.

Q. I'm not too worried about wrinkles, but I have always had dark circles under my eyes. I get plenty of sleep, exercise, and eat relatively well. What can I do to stop looking hung over at work?

A. Some people just naturally have thin skin around the eyes, and that's what the dark circles are. Thin skin means blood vessels are closer to the surface, thus the skin looks almost bruised. And it's not that uncommon.

A few companies make products that can help, but one of the better ones seems to be at Aveda. They have a "Tourmaline Charged Eye Creme" that has ingredients to encourage the skin to produce collagen, which thickens the skin. The added bonus is tourmaline which makes the skin seem brighter. It's not cheap though! But a \$32 tube should last you 6 months at least.

EMBRACING THE SHINE

The days of covering it up are just over. Most balding men today are embracing the shiny head earlier, and there's finally a line of products made especially for the clean shaven head.

Bald Guyz (www.baldguyz.com) makes a complete line of grooming essentials for those embracing their inner Mr. Clean.

The line includes sunscreen, pre-shave scrub, as well as shave gels and moisturizers. One interesting item is a portable head wipe to keep the head clean and dry. They think of everything!

Products are available online as well as in major drug-store chains like CVS and Walgreens. Larger grocery chains also carry some products.

More than just offering products, the website also includes a gallery for men to show off their clean "do," and a blog for news and updates in the world of bald men. Of course there are also "head stylin' tips."

It looks like hats won't be back in style for a while.





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acne scrub

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Almost.

Are you ready for...

The Mirdle?

Surely you've heard women rave about their Spanx, the spandex tights that firm up the body under clothing. Well, now men have the same option.

An Australian startup called Equmen (www.equmen.com) has launched a line of "Core Precision Undershirts" that tone and tighten the belly and those pesky love handles. It's the girdle for men.

Also intended to "improve posture," the shirts have interwoven bands of elastic that pull the body in certain places, and tucks in others. It even promises to straighten the spine.

Retailing for about \$100 each, yes each, the undershirts come in V-neck, tank top, and long sleeve tee. They are designed to wick moisture, making them good for athletes as well. It also gives men an excuse to need a man girdle.



The Man Purse?

Designers have tried for years to get men to buy purses or handbags with little success. A new push may be starting soon, as cash strapped designers try to catch any business they can.

During the Renaissance, it was indeed the men who carried purses. Women had to tuck items into their clothing. So the concept is not new.

But is it time to change back? Probably not, but that won't stop them from trying.

The latest push may come from Carlos Falchi, an upscale department store designer known for his ladies' handbags. He seems poised to take the plunge into men's bags, first starting with messenger and duffle bags. The designer typically offers exotic skins like python, ostrich and buffalo in neutral hues, as well as bright reds and greens.

Falchi says "American men are just starting" to love handbags. Really? I think most of us like our backpacks, duffle bags, and even messenger bags. So let's hope he sticks with that.



The Man Skirt?

Here we go again.

Sure, kilts are pretty cool when displaying your Celtic heritage. And some men can get away with wearing them any time they want.

But fashion designers are ready to go overboard—again.

On the runways of Paris back in January, almost every major designer show had skirted male models. We're not talking kilts, either. Imagine shimmery, crinkled and folded fabrics on lanky models with stern, mean looks on their faces.

This happens every few years, and the fashions never make it to the streets, but they seem more determined lately.

And honestly, many men wouldn't mind having a breeze available now and then, but the designers seem to have no clue what we'd even consider wearing.

The looks ranged from corpses wrapped in coffin fabric, to mountain guerilla rebels wearing any scrap they could find.

To see the photos, search "skirting the issue" at <http://themoment.blogs.nytimes.com/>.

Happy Socks?

Tired of the old drab black, gray, and brown socks? We knew you were! Well, the Swedes have come to cure you of you drabby feet.

Available in psychedelic colors and patterns, in just about every combination you can think of, Happy Socks (www.happysocks.com) are

showing up at high-end department stores in the US.

The website features men in pink and black checkerboard socks, as well as argyle in black, dark green, and lime green.

Retailing for \$10 per pair, it seems likely that the socks are more likely to show up as tongue-in-cheek gag gifts this holiday season or at office birthday parties.

You might want to prepare yourself now.

Q & A

Sometimes there's just too much to keep up with when it comes to fashion. What's acceptable? What's not? What looks good? What doesn't?

Send us your questions or quandaries. To protect your innocence, we won't use your name!

Q. I haven't bought a suit in years. Are double-breasted suits now a no-no?

A. They're not quite a "no-no," but they aren't the "in" thing currently even if they are again showing up on runways.

Just like certain colors and patterns, their popularity fluctuates. Back in the 1980s and early 1990s, they were certainly common. Think of David Letterman and game show hosts during the time. Even Dave has gone to single-breasted suits.

Since they aren't completely "out," they remain a matter of personal taste. They aren't yet a major faux pas, but by no means are they trendy.

Q. What's with the sizing of off-the-rack suits? Why is a 38R jacket always with a 32 pant?

A. Suits are sized with something called a "drop." It refers to the difference between the chest and waste measurements. American suits usually have a 6-inch drop, so a 38 jacket would, indeed, be paired with a 32 waist pant. (FYI: European suits usually have a 7-inch drop.)

Naturally this doesn't work for all men, thus suit separates are always popular. Of course, that means losing out on deals and convenience, but that's far better than matching your waste size and just "dealing" with an ill-fitted jacket!

A good suit should be an extension of you, not something thrown on.

Q. I see a lot of flip-flops on the street lately. Where is it appropriate and fashionable to wear them?

A. At the beach.

Q. I just accepted a job that is "business casual." Do I only need to buy khakis and dress shirts?

A. The term means different things to different people, so if you can look around the office before you start. Ask current employees as soon as you start what's expected.

Your best bet, though, is to get some khakis, some dressier pants, and both button down shirts, as well as a few nice polos for more casual days if they occur.

It's never a bad idea to have at least one nice suit, and a few ties that match your shirts and pants, in case the CEO shows up some day. Don't be unprepared for a last minute notice for nicer attire.

Q. Are skinny jeans out for guys?

A. Were they ever really in?

Seriously, if you're not under 16 or in the band Fall Out Boy, just don't do it.

Q. My last pair of dress shoes were from Aldo. They are a bit "young" and square toed. Are they out yet?

A. Excessively square shoes are pretty much out for dress wear. They do work with jeans, though.

Shoes from stores like Aldo tend to be pretty trendy, so don't expect more than a couple of years out of them—sometimes more, sometimes less.

If you're working with a tight budget, consider a store like Bostonian. They tend to stock more traditional or basic dress shoes, plus dressier casual shoes for casual Fridays.

You can usually get a good pair for under \$100 that would last you a couple of years.

Q. I'm invited to a wedding this summer that is being held outside. Supposedly it'll be somewhat casual, but I don't know what to wear.

A. Regardless of how casual it is, a nice simple suit won't look out of place. You can always take the jacket off if attendees are a bit more casual, and you'll fit right in.

But everyone has a different view of casual. If in doubt, call up the bride or group (or their immediate family). No one will think anything of your inquiry.

TIP: Like **Banana Republic**? Get on your local store's mailing list. You'll get fairly regular emails or postcards announcing "friends and family" discounts of 30% off regular prices.

We priced a work-friendly outfit of chinos and a casual button-up shirt for \$76, or a more casual look of a polo and chinos for \$62.30



If it suits you...

Men's Wearhouse intends to continue a "buy one get one free" promotion that customers seem to love—even if investors hate it. The campaign includes suits ranging from \$299 to \$599, with the second suit free.

Initially a test to boost slowing sales, CEO George Zimmer said, "We believe that this strategy is necessary in the current economic environment, and still allows us to offer our customers extraordinary value." To find a store, visit www.menswearhouse.com.

Get the executive look for less. **President Barack Obama** is fond of his single-breasted, 97% worsted wool Hart Schaffner Marx suits, in grey and navy. At department stores, the suits can sell for \$800 to \$1500 each. While not obscene for the US-made quality, there are less expensive options.

For instance, at Macy's you'll find a similar two-button navy suit from Lauren by Ralph Lauren for \$495.00.

Another option is JoS. A. Bank, where you can get a Signature 2-Button Wool suit (# 8174) in navy for \$399.99, or on the lower end, the Executive 2-Button Wool/Cashmere suit (#10720) in navy for \$199.

How far has the craze gone? One seller on Amazon is now selling a "Presidential Suit" for \$99 (ASIN: B001LD9TD4). The styling is surprisingly close to the original Hart Schaffner Marx and customer reviews seem positive. At the very least, you'll have a \$200 or \$300 suit for \$99.

Sears has partnered with its suppliers and a textiles manufacturer to bring a recycled suit to the market as early as May.

Available as suit separates under the store's Covington Line, the suits will be about 42 percent wool, 54 percent

polyester made from PET bottles, and 4 percent spandex. Jackets are expected to sell for \$175, while pants will retail for \$75, before any normal specials or markdowns.

How many bottles are saved from landfills? According to the textile firm, it takes about 25 2-liter bottles to make one suit.

Don't throw that suit away! In this economy, and with our minds on reducing waste in general, many men are turning to tailors to rejuvenate old suits. Let's face it, men have it easy, since a classic suit never goes out of style.

Tailors across the country have reported increase in business, with men holding on to old suits longer, and some customers even buying suits at second hand shops and bringing them in for repairs and fitting.

Some tailors have reported a 20 percent increase in business over last year.

Also seeing more business are cobblers, as people try to hold on to even shoes longer. And why not. With a good pair of shoes easily hitting \$200, why shouldn't they last at least five years.

JoS. A. Bank Clothiers, Inc. announced a new program in March that would refund the purchase price of any \$199 suit if the buyer loses his job between April 16 and July 1 of this year.

The real kicker is that the customer also gets to keep the suit! "At JoS. A. Bank, we understand the uncertainty everyone is facing. We want to help the customer look good at work."

While it covered other suits, a maximum of \$199 would be refunded.

The program only covered purchases made during a \$199 promotion from March 16 through April 9. While the current program is over, if it was successful (and if the economy doesn't improve) expect a repeat some time soon.

PRESIDENTIAL STYLE



Hart Schaffner Marx, \$800 to \$1500 versus Lauren, Ralph Lauren \$495.

How do you measure up?

Shopping for proper fit can be daunting, especially if you're buying something for the first time or if you are ordering online. We hope this handy guide will help.

Suit size: Jacket or suit sizes have a number with a letter or word, such as 40L or 40 Long. The number is your chest measurement or your overarm measurement minus 7 inches. Most of the time, the numbers are the same, and your chest size is assumed to be your size. If these two measurements differ, your overarm measurement as your size.

Overarm: This is the measurement around the broadest part of your shoulders when standing straight with arms at your sides. Be sure tape is completely parallel to the floor.

Chest: This is the measurement of the fullest part of your chest. Be sure to measure while the arms are down, or your chest muscles may add girth. FYI: Many men prefer to add one inch to give a bit of room.

Short, Regular, or Long?

* Short: refers to men of about 5'5" to 5'7"

* Regular: is a man of average height 5'8" to 5'10"

* Long: is a typical tall guy of 5'11" to 6'2"

Anything taller or shorter will require tailoring.

Pants: Suits have a "drop," which is the difference between the jacket size and pant size. American suits typically have a 6-inch drop, so a 38R suit will have a 32-inch waist in the pants. Most pants can be let out one inch and taken in up to two inches. Anything more, and you'll need to try separates.

Waist: This should be taken just below your natural crease. Bend over to one side to find your crease. Typically it's also right under your navel. The tape should be close to the skin, but don't pull tightly.

Length: Pants, especially suit pants, are usually sold in one length and must be hemmed to the right length. This may be included with price, or add \$10 to \$20. The seller may ask what kind of "break" you prefer. This refers to how the bottom edge of your pants hits the top of your shoes. For this reason, they won't usually just call it an "inseam."

* Full break: pants reach down to the top of the shoes' heels, with the front "breaking" naturally over the shoes. This is most common.

* Half break: pants reach about halfway down the back of the shoes. This is a more classic look.

* No break: hems end right before shoes with your socks showing slightly. This is a casual look that is best left to Hollywood types.

You can also decide if you want the pants cuffed or not. In general, pleated pants can be with or without cuffs, while flat-front pants should not be cuffed.

Dress shirts: Finer men's dress shirts will use neck and arm measurements as sizes while more casual shirts will have "US Standard" sizes (Small, Medium, Large, etc.). Those using US Standard sizes will often have a chart available with corresponding measurement ranges.

Neck: Measure around neck just below Adam's apple. Add a half-inch for comfort.

Arm: This is the measurement the center back of your neck, over the top of your shoulder and down to the wrist.

Chest size and the length of shirts vary by brand, but you can have each tailored to fit as long as the neck and arms fit well. Most makers also give estimates of both measurements on the back of the package.

Belts: Belt size should correspond to your true waist, so you can use the same waist measurement as your pants. Be sure any belt you buy has holes available for a smaller and larger fit, as pants (and your waist) may vary a bit.

Gloves: Measure around your larger hand at the knuckles. Then measure from the tip of your middle finger to the base of your hand. The larger measurement is your glove size. The size may use inches or US Standard sizes.

* Small: 7 inches

* Medium: 7 ½ inches to 8 inches

* Large: 8 ½ inches to 9 inches

* X-large: 9 ½ to 10 inches

* XX-Large: 10 ½ inches to 11 inches

Brushing Ants

I was proud of my new bike. Mama had just bought it from the neighbors whose kid had outgrown it, so I had walked it across the road to show them that it was a perfect fit for me. I was just over three years old, so of course it had training wheels attached to the bright, lime green frame. I could have never guessed then what a ride I was in for.

As I stood there showing the bike to the kid's grandparents and uncle, something suddenly didn't seem right. I felt the ticklings of what must have been a million tiny feet on my bare legs. Wearing shoes, I hadn't noticed anything unusual underfoot, but now that the fast-moving menace had reached my legs, a sense of urgency hit.

I looked down and there they were—thousands of fire ants attacking the foreigner who had invaded their territory with a bike's training wheel. In a panic, I moved away from the ant bed, still holding my new bike. But it was too late—the troops were in place and ready to battle. I looked up at the neighbors. They had been sitting on their porch most of the day to escape the heat of their small un-airconditioned house, which was surely turned into a sauna by the Mississippi summer.

They didn't budge. They sat there, slyly grinning with anticipation of what I'd do next. They had already noticed what was wrong, but they didn't offer any help or even kind words. Instead, they erupted into laughter, with the uncle saying "Git outta that ant bed, boy!"

But it all happened so fast—just as soon as I felt the tickling and saw the plague of ants, the ants began biting almost in unison. It wasn't the sweet little pinches that

the "sugar ants" would sometimes give. It wasn't even the harder pinch of the giant, solitary cow ants that lived under the shade trees. This was a gripping, fiery pain that felt like hundreds of hot needles dipped in alcohol were piercing my skin over and over.

I quickly looked up at the neighbors again. They still didn't move. They sat there, with their bare legs, fanning the heat and swatting at bugs, all the while laughing at my misery. The old lady was barefoot, since she usually just walked from inside to the porch. I had never seen her make it past the bottom step. The house next door, where the bike's previous owner and his parents lived, was quiet and still.

The laughter became louder and louder until it faded into the muffled dizziness of my panic and pain. By now I was crying, and I begged for help in what now felt like hours—but it all likely happened in less than a few minutes. They never stopped laughing at the scene that was turning out to be their entertainment for the day. There was no cable TV that far out in the country, and the nearest TV stations were 60 miles away. Besides, to them, this must have been better than any Andy Griffith rerun.

I turned to look across the road, toward home. The world appeared surreal as the sun grew brighter and the summer heat more intense. It was as if the sun was lowering onto the neighborhood. The cicadas sang their usual song that usually meant "it's hot

as hell out here." That day, I think they were joining the neighbors in laughter.

Before the world faded to white, I dropped the bike and darted home, where I hoped to find some help. Every few steps I would bend to brush off ants and then run some more. By the time I got home, I wasn't running, but staggering. I was exhausted from the pain and the rush of terror.



AMERICAN STORIES

I could also hear the laughter still, as it faded in and out, seeming to follow my heartbeats, which were going in slow motion.

I wondered if Mama would laugh too—adults were adults, and I was already sure that they were all against me. Or maybe she would just yell at me for coming into the house dropping ants everywhere. But she heard me coming and met me at the door. She had a sudden look of terror, but it quickly turned to a look of determination, as if she knew exactly what to do.

Unlike my “city-boy” father, Mama had spent her whole life in the country, so indeed she knew what to do. She pulled me toward the water hose, brushing my legs the whole way. She wiped and sprayed the ants away. She never laughed—she never even said a word. She just kept that serious look of diligence on her face.

Once the ants were gone, she took me inside and ran a cool bath for me to sit in. My older sister soon returned from school. My older brother returned from his adventure in the woods with the neighbor kid. Of course they thought the whole thing was hilarious and pointed at my “polka-dotted” legs—but they were never ones for sympathy either.

Since I was pretty young, that painful day in the Mississippi heat settled into the back of my mind, though my impression of adults remained. I never trusted or liked people very much, especially adults. I was usually a moody kid who wanted little to do with anyone—I stayed in my room, and rarely made friends at school. People who did try to be kind to me were often met with a scowl. Even at a young age, I was sure they would laugh and ridicule me as soon as the opportunity arose, so I wasn’t going to give them the satisfaction.

Even my favorite aunt liked to call me a “mean little shit,” half joking, but half serious. She was right, of course, but she never knew why. She never asked why. She only knew that I had thrown a piece of brick at her sweet little daughter Tosha in a fit of rage. Tosha only wanted to play with me, and I just wasn’t interested. It was as simple as that, and to me, it was enough. The brick grazed her head, barely avoiding serious injury to her face. Yes, I was a mean little shit.

In some ways, it would be easy to blame my father for a

lot of my trouble with people. At some point, he withdrew from the family and was drunk more weekends than he wasn’t. But that was not really a problem until I was about eight, and I felt I was grown by then. Back when we lived in the country, he was a pretty good father. We fished on Saturdays and often visited family on Sundays. We went shopping as a family, even if it was an hour’s drive to the malls in Jackson around Christmas. His behavior later on would certainly affect me and was one reason I withdrew from others as a teenager, but my distrust of others was born long before.

Daddy stopped fishing with us after we moved to town, many miles from that country road in the next county. Something about living back in Brookhaven turned him to drinking. Maybe it was the memory of his childhood there—both his parents were gone before he turned 35, and he was estranged from his siblings. We were all he had, and at some point we were no longer enough.

Since there were kids my age, I slowly made friends and stayed out of the house as much as possible. We explored the country to one side of the neighborhood, and the town on the other. These days were far less idealistic than our time in the country.

One summer day, a neighbor kid named Shane walked over so we could go watch the giant snapping turtles living in the pond across the road. He would sometimes cast a fishing rod, hoping to hit them with the lure—he had a few surprises that way, after mistaking a water moccasin snake for a turtle. They liked to snap at the lure, after which you either cut the line or dropped the rod. Animals, wild and domestic, were an important part of our childhood. I tended to see pets as friends if not family members. They were loyal, trusting, and always compassionate, all traits I had yet to discover in people.

We had a fenced-in yard at the time, but that didn’t stop our Chihuahua, Candy. She would climb it and roam the neighborhood as she pleased—she was just as surly as the kids who raised her. And we liked it that way. Duke, who we had rescued from a hole in the ground behind the house of some friends of my parents, would usually stay in the fence unless we let him out to tag along. He was huge for only a few months old, being the product of a pack of wild dogs that included Dobermans and



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AMERICAN STORIES

pit bulls. Despite the lineage, he was a big, clumsy lovable nut who ran around the yard knocking over anything in his path—think Marmaduke after a bottle of gin. That day, he was staying at home—or at least that was the plan.

Shane and I had just made it across the old, rusty barbed-wire fence and were headed up the trail to the pond when we heard a loud thud behind us. The next thing I knew, I was in the middle of the busy road cursing out a man I did not know. I was about 11, and used words that might make sailors blush. It all happened so fast, but in between my foul expletives and yells I saw flashes of Duke standing there with blood gushing from his mouth. The man's truck was a bit further down the road, and he had stopped to see what he hit. After months of observing the Chihuahua, Duke had finally learned to climb the fence and had run up the embankment so fast that the man had never seen a thing.

My yelling seemed to go on forever, and I know traffic on the busy road had been blocked. More than once, I had gotten in the man's face calling him names and cursing his mother. Mrs. Neal, who lived across the side road from our back yard, had seen everything. She ran over then dragged me away from the man and out of the street. Like Mama all those years earlier, she never really said a word to me. She also didn't seem horrified by my foul mouth. She just walked me into my house before going back to talk to the man. We weren't even very friendly with the Neals, but she still involved herself to rescue me or the man who had hit Duke—I was never sure.

Later that day, as Daddy buried Duke in the back yard, the man returned. I never left my room. Mama said he came to apologize for everything, and to see if I was okay. I didn't care. At the time, I hated him—and most everyone other adult.

It would be this memory, recollected years later in college, that led me to change. The man probably had no idea what he had hit, perhaps even thinking it was someone's child. Many terrible thoughts must have gone through his head before he got out of his truck. Afterwards he was likely stunned by the hatred spewing from my mouth. He still came to check on me. At the time, his compassion meant nothing. In the South, most preachers sang the praises of revenge and

an “eye for an eye,” and it was part of the culture. Back then, I knew my cousin Tosha owed me a brick, and I owed this guy a fast moving pick-up truck across his back. I also owed some old people back in the country a bucket full of fire ants. I was perfectly okay with such an arrangement.

When I came to college, 1200 miles from Mississippi, I had plenty of time to think about all the things I had lived and all the people I had known. I had friends at work, and a few in classes, but I never really let them into my life. And that part was easy—I rented a room in the home of an elderly lady who didn't allow guests in the house. I didn't live on campus so that I would not be forced to visit Mississippi unless I wanted to.

Before moving to Delaware, I had never had the luxury of real time to myself, much less quiet-time. My younger brother was born when I was 12, so activity in the house usually revolved around him or the conflicts of my older brother and father. The general chaos of the house with the added rambunctiousness of a 6-year-old made thinking impossible. Moving away for college was my mental salvation—not because of what I'd learn about the world, but because of what I'd learn about myself.

As I tried to move forward in life, my past kept creeping back—either to stake a claim on my emotions, or to beg for reconciliation. One by one, I worked through them. There was no epiphany and no startling revelation. I simply had enough time to poke at experiences in the absence of too many new ones. I finally realized that holding resentment or awaiting revenge was far more damaging to my own soul than to any of the people I felt had wronged me.

I had to remember the story of my first bike, and the neighbors' disinterest in my pain. I had to forgive them. I had to realize that resentment and bitterness were no different than the ants gnawing at my tender legs, infecting my skin with toxins that turned to painful puss-filled sores. It took nearly twenty years, but I had to let go of so many things. At 21, I returned to Mississippi filled with forgiveness—twenty years of brushing ants was more than enough.



by Glenn Ferrell, Publisher

Fame at last?

We want to know what's going on in your world. We're not talking about staged memories or posed vacation shots from a planned vacation. We're talking real life here.

Send us bits of your "everyday life" via pictures from your cellphone. We want to see what you see, to go where you go. Email to phonepics@americanmanmagazine.com

Be sure to add your name and location and add a few

The world can be psychedelic. Macy's has decided to poise hippy girls at the entrance. At a nearby University, bricks seem to reach for the sky.



I was lucky enough to see Joe Biden speak only days before the election (above), and then even luckier to go to the insane inauguration (left). The crowds were indescribable. Luckily pictures can describe the experience for me.

AMERICAN STORIES



Apparently the economy is so bad that not only are stores closing, but those that remain open can't afford to clothe their mannequins. I snapped that shot recently at a Banana Republic.



There's something about the Empire State Building that brings out the kid (or tourist) in all of us.



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