

# Lifestyle

## Pets and the holidays

We hope everyone had a wonderful Thanksgiving with family, friends and pets. We are thankful for all our supporters, staff and volunteers. We're sure that you were all careful that pets did not overindulge in turkey dinner. We all need to be sure our pets don't get too much of the holiday fixings.

Christmas is just around the corner. During this time of year, many people consider giving their family a puppy, kitten or other critter as a Christmas present. If you are the type to have a quiet Christmas and New Year, this could be a good idea. Children can spend their off days from school learning about their new animal friends and how to take care of them. Be sure to teach them not to squeeze the little ones too tightly.

However, if your family tends to be very active or have lots of visitors during the holidays, it might be a good idea to wait for that puppy, kitten or other critter. Remember that

these baby animals are moving away from their family into new surroundings. Too much noise and activities could upset them and deter their bonding with their new family. They need a few weeks to adapt to a new environment.

Consider getting a stuffed dog or cat that looks like the animal you want. Attach a photo of the critter you have made arrangements to obtain. Children will love the idea that in a few days they will have that longed for companion. In the meantime, they can help pick out food, treats, bedding, toys and make a warm space for the new family member before it arrives.

Please consider adopting from the Adams County SPCA. We have wonderful dogs and cats looking for the perfect new home. If you decide to buy from a breeder, please do your research.

Unfortunately, there are many puppy mill breeders in our area. If you

SPCA

Donna  
Quante



find a website that offers any kind of dog you want, it is probably a puppy mill and/or broker. If they offer to show you the mother and father of the puppies, look to see if it really is a momma dog. If they have a vet who assures you the dogs are well cared for, ask to see where they were born. What shots have they had? Will they spay and neuter when the pup is old enough? All of this applies to kittens as well.

How about those designer pup-

pies: the small dog mixes or the Labrador and poodle mixes? While they are cute, please understand they are not purebred dogs. Just because they have the word "poodle" in their name doesn't mean they are hypoallergenic. They may have purebred parents, but they are mixed breeds. Paying a couple thousand dollars for a mixed breed is totally up to you, but the shelter has some wonderful, loving mixed breeds available too. We even have purebred dogs and puppies at times, so be sure to check our website for our current residents looking for loving homes.

Winter is a great time to get outside with your dogs. You can walk any time of day, unlike in the summer. The roads and sidewalks won't be too hot. If you do walk along roads, be sure to watch out for salt or other ice removal substances. Wipe your dog's feet after a walk. You could consider purchasing booties for your dog too, even though it may take some time for your pooch

to agree to wear them.

Just in time for the holidays, Pennsylvania State Representative Torren Ecker will be hosting "Christmas for the Critters" on Dec. 8 from 3-5 p.m. He will be serving light refreshments and collecting donations for the animals. To see our list of needs, please visit <https://www.adamscountyspca.org/wish-list>.

Thank you to all who visited our Christmas store at the Outlet Shoppes of Gettysburg. This is one of our big fundraisers, and every one of you made it a success. Thank you to those who donated items to be sold and for everyone who bought some terrific Christmas gifts here.

We wish everyone a joyous holiday season and a happy, healthy new year.

Donna Quante is the current vice president of the Adams County SPCA's board of directors. She shares her home with her sled dog team of four Siberian huskies.

## Is it a hike, or a walk?

The Physical Fitness Task Force offers both free hikes and walks in our beautiful Adams County. Occasionally people will ask about the difference or tell us that they can't do hikes. The Outdoors at Weekends website reads: "Hiking is the activity to describe adventurous walking out on uneven trails in natural settings experiencing the delights of nature."

We try to follow this definition: walks – even surface; hikes – uneven, but, some of our walks can actually be a bit more hike-like than some of our hikes. An example is a walk on a farm or orchard path can be more uneven than a hike on a logging trail. So, in our descriptions of our hikes and walks we try to always describe the walking surface, so individuals can make their own

decisions. We also label our hikes as easy, moderate or difficult depending not only on the unevenness of the surface but also the steepness and duration of some inclines. If you ever have questions about the difficulty of a walk or hike, please ask us, often there is a bypass or a turnaround that would skip a more difficult section.

There are many great benefits to outdoor recreation, whether it be walking or hiking. Exercise in general offers great cardiovascular benefits as well as mental and emotional perks and even helps prevent diseases such as diabetes and cancer. Exercising outdoors has the added benefit of being a calming influence. Scientists have actually measured changes in brain waves during out-

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door exercise that cause relaxation. They say that any relief from stress (which negatively affects both memory and mood) also helps the brain. Interestingly, neuroscientists have found that hiking offers one additional benefit of improving memory tied directly to the uneven surface discussed above.

Dr. Sarah McEwen from the Pacific Neuroscience Institute explains that when you are hiking on natural terrain you have to use special navigational skills, your memory, and attention with every step. This is much more cognitively challenging than walking on a treadmill or most sidewalks. The extra focus required is especially good for your hippocampus which is a region of your brain essential for learning, memory and navigation.

Additionally, they explain that the thinking involved in hiking involves neuroplasticity which is the nervous system's ability to accommodate new information. She says this is the "vital superpower of our nervous system." Studies have shown that older adults who learn new complex skills like hiking show marked improvements in

memory.

Whether you want to see if this memory stuff is true for you, or just want to get out and enjoy nature, please consider joining the Physical Fitness Task Force Winter Hikes. Please join us on Wednesday, Dec. 7, at 9:30 a.m., or Saturday, Dec. 17, at 1:30 p.m., for group hiking. Or join the local state parks for their last day or first day hikes on Dec. 31 or Jan. 1. Please check [www.facebook.com/healthyadamscounty](http://www.facebook.com/healthyadamscounty) or call 717-337-4137 for more details.

Betsy Meyer is a member of the Physical Fitness Task Force of Healthy Adams County. The group meets by Zoom on the second Friday of each month. If you are interested in volunteering please call the above number.

## Housing boom, affordable housing bust

Some clippings from recent issues of the Times make you scratch your head. First, there's this: "The 2020 census showed a drop in Gettysburg's population, which borough officials said could cause a small revenue loss."

Despite an almost flat line for population growth, we are in the midst of an unprecedented housing construction boom. Take, for example, a supervisor's vote "which potentially adds 417 units to the Amblebrook development."

Or, "Cumberland Township is projected to gain more than 200 new residential units in 2023." Cumberland Crossing, 43 permits for single-family homes. Cambridge Crossing, Table Rock and Biglerville roads: 42 units

are complete in Phase I and "a land development plan has been submitted" that includes 79 townhome units for the second and third phases. Cannon Ridge Phase 2, all 47 single family homes for which permits were issued are complete, as are 34 of 39 permitted townhouse units. Cannon Ridge Phase 3, Battalion Lane: all 18 single family homes are complete.

Or this: "...a preliminary land development plan for a 112-apartment complex proposed on the former Gettysburg Country Club site." Or this: "a developer who plans to build approximately 100 homes adjoining the Links at Gettysburg golf community agreed to divide the project into two phases."

And what isn't mentioned in any of those development plans? Affordable

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housing, that's what. There isn't any, in any of those plans.

But then there's this: "...housing industry experts, community and municipal leaders, lenders, land conservancy experts and interested parties discussed the housing crisis in Adams County.... Affordable housing

is a crisis in Adams County," South Central Community Action Programs (SCCAP) Chief Executive Officer Megan Shreve said.... "We struggle to attract business and employees because of an inability to find housing, and it's even harder to find housing in line with incomes... Businesses lose employees because of housing instability. Our youth don't come back because wages in Adams County don't match the cost of living here."

This isn't just a housing issue, though the housing part of the problem is bad enough. It's a community issue, an economic issue, a brain drain issue. All those "young" seniors moving in to Amblebrook or the Links, in 10 years when they're not so young, who's going to take care of them?

Where are their healthcare workers going to live?

No jurisdiction in Adams County has a "moderate priced dwelling unit" (MPDU) ordinance. MPDU ordinances, which require developers of projects over a specified size to include a percentage of MPDUs in their development, have been tried in a number of places. These ordinances are far from perfect, but they do make sure that a certain percentage of affordable housing gets built. There is nothing complicated about such laws; they're not hard to write. People concerned about the availability of affordable housing should talk to their supervisors or borough councils.

Leon Reed is on the board of Adams County Habitat for Humanity.

## Taking the measure of your well-being

Each time we open the paper or engage with media these days, we find concern about the mental health of America's people. At every stage of life, we have been impacted by the intense years of the pandemic and the strains of returning to what feels like a different world. Across the country and the county, therapists are reporting increased demand for their services, to the extent that some people in need may feel they cannot find help.

This is not a dilemma that can be quickly fixed. It takes time to build new capacity into the healthcare system at a time when our national will and ability to fund services is quite strained. Speaking as a former emergency room nurse, I wonder if we can't help ourselves and each other by applying a bit of triage. There is no doubt that we all need help at times, and a lot of us need some now. But

let's pause for a moment and consider that mental/emotional well-being occurs along a scale from acutely threatening to very good. There are people with conditions or symptoms that threaten their lives or make life untenable. They clearly need the most professional level of care our system can offer: services from therapy modalities to hospitalization. For most people, the level of intervention needed might be much simpler to help them through a period of stress or struggle. The services of a support group, a particular training class, a spiritual community or a coach might be just the ticket. We often don't know exactly what we need to address the distress we feel, but there are resources to help us help ourselves.

Let's begin with the idea of self-screening for holistic well-being. Tools are available to guide us through

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an assessment of our own areas of need, especially if we suspect that we don't require the highest level of care. A "Well-being Assessment" was developed by the University of West Michigan that covers five dimensions of holistic health: physical, social, emotional, spiritual, and intellectual wellness. It asks 10 questions in each dimension and you can score yourself. This approach can help you distin-

guish which area of your life might be causing the biggest proportion of your distress. Similarly, the Human Flourishing Program at Harvard developed a well-being assessment that covers a range of life domains: life satisfaction, physical/mental health, purpose, character and caring, relationships, social support, financial stability and affect. The linking information for both these tools is listed at the end of this column.

But let's suppose you identify an area in which you want to address improvement. Where would you turn to find resources? If you feel that your problems are so severe that you might harm yourself or someone else, you should seek crisis intervention. Crisis services are available through TrueNorth Wellness Services or at any WellSpan emergency department. You can also call 9-1-1 or the new

9-8-8 number for suicide prevention services. For problems that are less severe but still important to you, check out the Adams County Mental and Behavioral Health Guides developed by Healthy Adams County. They are available at <http://www.healthyadamscounty.org> under the resources tab. An array of services that support mental well-being are listed in the guides. If you can't find your specific answer, there is probably someone in the guide who can lead you in the right direction.

Here are those references:

- <http://www.wmich.edu/eup-instructional/WellbeingAssessment/>
- [http://www.hfh.fas.harvard.edu/files/pik/files/100mlives\\_well-being\\_assessment.pdf](http://www.hfh.fas.harvard.edu/files/pik/files/100mlives_well-being_assessment.pdf)

Julie Falk, PhD, is a psychologist and mindfulness teacher who chairs the Behavioral Health Task Force.

## Readers weigh in on processing trauma from cheating

**Dear Readers: A number of you wrote to me in response to "Still Recovering," the woman who was not yet over her husband's affair for seven years earlier. You offered a range of different perspectives gained from personal experiences with infidelity. Below are two good examples that may be of use to "Still Recovering" and to any reader who is struggling with infidelity in a relationship. For a more in-depth dive into the subject, you can also order "How Can I Forgive My Cheating Partner?" — the book I released last year — on Amazon.**

Dear Annie: Our family went through some tough times a few years back, which ultimately led to my husband being unfaithful. When I found out, I packed his things and told him I never wanted to see him again. I even served him divorce papers in front of his new girlfriend. We were separated for six months before we realized that we were really good together, and we both were at fault for why we drifted apart in the first place. I was not loving and attentive due to issues involving the children, and I put my husband's needs last. I decided to forgive him only

after I saw him take responsibility for his infidelity, show true remorse for the actions that completely destroyed me, make an attempt to repair our relationship and make a continued effort to never repeat his mistake.

It is not always easy. I think about that part of our life from time to time. But the day I decided to continue working on our marriage was the day I was no longer allowed to hold that time against him. You accept your partner for all their faults and shouldn't hold their feet to the fire if they're making conscientious efforts to move past their

ugliest behaviors. Hold them accountable in the moment, but remember it's just a moment. — Happier With Him Around

Dear Annie: I would like to respond to "Still Recovering," whose husband had an affair that left her traumatized. Regular talk therapy can certainly be helpful, but I would suggest she look into a therapist trained in Eye Movement Desensitization and Reprocessing, or EMDR. This therapy is designed specifically for trauma and the tendency to ruminate over those traumatic events. I have two friends who have experienced EMDR, one for infidelity and

another for the loss of a spouse, and both experienced dramatic relief within six to eight sessions. While the memories are still present, they no longer hold the emotional pain they once did. There are many books from established scientists on the subject, and you can also learn more and find a therapist at the website [www.emdria.org](http://www.emdria.org).

"How Can I Forgive My Cheating Partner?" is out now! Annie Lane's second anthology — featuring favorite columns on marriage, infidelity, commu-

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nication and reconciliation — is available as a paperback and e-book. Visit <http://www.creatorspublishing.com> for more information. Send your questions for Annie Lane to [dearannie@creators.com](mailto:dearannie@creators.com).

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