

2000 Lifestyles

Merry
Christmas

FREE

Vol. 25 Issue 12

DECEMBER 2024



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25
1999-2024
YEARS

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Thank You for Making Let's Get Fired-Up Jambalaya a Sold-Out Success!

We are absolutely thrilled to share that our **Let's Get Fired-Up Jambalaya Fundraiser** event this past November 16th was a **complete sell-out!**

Seeing so many of you swing by to enjoy a warm, hearty meal while supporting a great cause means the world to us.

A huge shoutout to our amazing volunteers, staff, and board members who worked tirelessly to prepare the delicious, authentic jambalaya and ensured everything ran smoothly. This success truly reflects the incredible community we have.

From all of us at Camp Fire Sandusky County, thank you for making this event unforgettable. We couldn't have done it without you!

Get ready for an exciting night at the Tricky Tray Fundraiser!

Camp Fire Sandusky County is excited to partner with Relay for Life of Sandusky County to bring you an unforgettable evening of fun, games, raffles, and prizes! Mark your calendar for December 5, 2024, at 6:30, and join us at Misty Meadows for a night you won't want to miss!

With a \$5 cover, you'll enjoy a unique blend of silent auction and raffle excitement. Purchase your raffle tickets and browse through all the amazing prizes. We will then sit at our tables as the prizes pass by on trays and drop your tickets into a container of the items, you're most excited about for a chance to win big! Want to increase your odds? Add more tickets!

Ticket prices start at just \$5 for 25 tickets for regular-size prizes, with options for medium and large prizes as well. That's not all! We'll also have other games and raffles, plus concessions to keep you fueled for all the action. So, visit www.campfiresc.org/events for tickets and details. Don't miss this exciting opportunity to have fun, win big, and support an amazing cause!

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Lifestyles 2000

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Vol. 25 • Issue 12

www.lifestyles2000.net

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Life Scholars

By Kathleen Nalley

Terra State Community College's Life Scholar Program is close to submitting its Spring Course Catalog for print. Watch your mailboxes this month, call to get one sent to you (419-559-2255) or view it on the website: Learn.Terra.edu.

A fun alternative to selecting courses by reading the catalog is to attend the Sampler on Jan. 23 from 10-noon and listen to the instructors' explanation of classes while munching on a scone with a warm cup of tea or coffee. There are new class topics and new presenters, many from our own backyard. Register for the Sampler by calling or emailing (Learn@Terra.edu).

Included in the growing list of instructors for 2025 are Dan Henning (Did you know he coached debate in college?), Jon Detwiler (retired superintendent who loves all things Sandusky River), and local authors Heather Hines, Dr. Regina Vincent-Williams, and Mike Gilbert. Instructors choose topics aligned to their interests and expertise. The Curriculum Committee seeks out topics of interest participants express through surveys and word of mouth and then will search for community members who may be willing to teach the subject. Most classes are one to two sessions of 1 ½-2 hours in length. The committee welcomes new course ideas and new instructors. Drop by the office, call, or speak with members to share ideas and resources to explore.

Returning for spring will be Rob Swindell, executive director of the Black River Audubon Society. His topics include a requested repeat presentation about warblers and another concerning bird conservation. These will occur in March and May. Jamie Cunningham of the Black Swamp Bird Observatory will cover a birding/nature theme. The increasing interest in our local bird-watching resources here in Ottawa and Sandusky counties has prompted many requests for these topics.

Local history is explored by Kevin Moore who will talk about the Civil War Veterans Experience while Joshua Dubbert will share our own President Hayes' Western Trip during his tenure in office. Gene Smith, Curator of Clyde Museum will introduce topics of Escaped Slaves and Black Civil War Soldiers in Clyde. Ken Miller will give us the History of Cedar Point which will make the next visit there more of a history field trip!

Literature topics include authorship, developing a personal reading list, and reviews of two books: Life After Power and The History of the American Bookstore.

Come to the Life Scholars Spring Sampler and decide which classes are for you.

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Available locations: Fremont—Cookie Lady, Root's Poultry, Kroger's, Subway, Share and Care, Bark Creek Pantry, Dairy Queen; Gibsonburg—Kirwen's Grocery; Oak Harbor—IGA; Clyde—Subway, Drug Mart, Miller's Grocery, Bellevue Hospital, Bellevue Goodwill, and East of Chicago Pizza... and many more! Or go online to: Lifestyles2000.net.

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Lifestyles 2000

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For advertising and general information call 567-342-3117 or email lifestyles2000@sbcglobal.net

Camera ready ads can be taken up until the 20th monthly; if approval artwork is needed, please contact us no later than the 15th monthly. Press releases and events are to be emailed to lifestyles2000@sbcglobal.net by the 20th monthly. Sorry, we cannot return phone calls and we will do our best to print those received. Press releases must be submitted as Word documents only. No PDF files please. We cannot run fliers, please write up your event and we will include "In Your Own Backyard." Please make sure all info is correct before sending.

Lifestyles 2000 is a monthly publication available free of charge at over 100 retail locations in Sandusky and Ottawa counties.

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Mission Statement: Lifestyles 2000 is a monthly resource guide of northwest Ohio area events presented in an attractive format with entertaining and educational articles suited to fit your "lifestyle."

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Lifestyles 2000
30 Ponds Side Drive
Fremont, OH 43420

Publisher's Letter

Merry Christmas!

Starting Jan. or Feb. we will be transitioning to our issue being online only at our website: Lifestyles2000.net.

Everything will remain the same, same contest and an extra prize monthly to get you all to visit us online.

After over 25 years, this was not an easy decision to make, however with another increase in printing, it is just not possible to continue to print. We will do all we can to make the website easy to use with great graphics and a link to enter the contest from the website. We can also add more content as we won't be limited by space. Our advertising rate will also be reduced.

Thank you for being a reader, it has been a great 25 years, and I know we can continue to entertain you online with our great writers, contest and more.

God bless,
Joanne



Find Pete



Find Pete Winners:

There were over 100 entries, Bark Creek Pantry was the correct answer, it was a bit tricky to find! "Pete" is easier to find online as you can make the page larger.

Winners are: Diane Clinebell, James Smallets, Brett Wamsley, Kurt Henkel, Betty Sanchez, Dick Hoffman, Becky McElfresh, Fremont; Shirley Swaisgood, Helena; Donna Lloyd, Clyde; Diane Stelter, Green Springs; Duane Gerwin, Julie Picciuto, Gibsonburg; Liz Lieb, Oak Harbor; Sharon Miller, Bettsville.

Find Pete Prizes:

Sixteen entries are chosen monthly for the following prizes: \$5 gift certificates for Old Fort Market, Otto & Urban, The UPS Store, and A's Family Restaurant. You may specify a prize.

Find Pete Contest Rules:

To enter, send the name of the ad, your name and address on a 3x5 card or paper to: **Lifestyles Contest, 30 Ponds Side Drive, Fremont, OH 43420.** Or email your entry to lifestyles2000@sbcglobal.net. Sixteen prizes given monthly. One entry per household. **Deadline is the 20th monthly.** Please do not send the ad.

History Notebook

By Nan Card

The President Who Banned the Christmas Tree at the White House

The White House will soon undertake one of its annual Christmas traditions. The official White House tree will be installed in the Blue Room and formally welcomed by the First Lady, a tradition that began in 1912. Down through the years, First Ladies have developed their own

personal holiday themes. Some first families even decorated every room in the White House with a Christmas tree.

But in 1902, President Teddy Roosevelt announced, "There would be no tree in the White House." During the 19th century, many homes did not celebrate Christmas with a decorated evergreen.



Some believed it to be a pagan symbol, but eventually the German custom of having a live tree during the holidays grew in popularity. But President Roosevelt, a devoted conservationist, was opposed to it. He said his family of six children would celebrate Christmas as "simply as possible."

Deeply concerned about America's natural resources, Roosevelt created the Forestry Service and established 150 national forests, 51 bird reserves, five national parks, and four game preserves. The "Chicago Daily Tribune" agreed with the President. The paper dubbed it a "forestry fad." Environmentalists harped against the "Christmas tree habit" that caused "immense destruction of young firs and spruce."

But Archie and Quentin, Teddy Roosevelt's two youngest sons, were having none of it. They slipped outside and cut down a small evergreen right on the White House grounds. They sneaked it inside and hid it in a closet. With the help of one of the staff, they fitted it out with lights. They decorated the tree with small presents for every family member. Archie even included gifts for Jack the dog, Tom Quartz the kitten, and his pony Algonquin.

Early Christmas morning, even before they opened their own gifts, Archie escorted his parents to the big closet. He swung open the door, revealing with delight his White House Christmas tree, laden with presents and lights. It was his gift to his parents. The President wrote later that it was Archie's "surprise" and he was pleased with his son's ingenuity.

One source tells that Teddy took his young son to visit Gifford Pinchot, head of the Forestry Service, to explain to Archie the damage to America's forests that occurs when so many trees are chopped down for Christmas. But the President was taken aback when Pinchot explained that cutting down some of the larger trees was actually a good thing. The practice allowed sunlight to reach the smaller, young trees which could then flourish.

At Christmas in 2006, the President wrote that Archie was again at work. This time he was placing a tree in his bedroom. While Archie showed off his creation to his parents, the older children sneaked a fully-lit tree with two huge stockings into the bedroom of the President and First Lady. Eventually the controversy over using live trees to decorate for the holidays ended. It was just a few years later when President Calvin Coolidge hosted the first public Christmas tree lighting at the White House.





Out to Lunch

By Lynn Urban

Milan Ohio is probably one of my favorite little towns. Even the drive over there is a nice ride. It's so full of history, since it is the birth place of Thomas Edison, and home to his museum. The town square, in the center of town is surrounded by specialty gift shops, antique shops, a wine bar as well as other bars and restaurants.

Before you start your day of exploring, have a hot and hearty breakfast at the Invention Restaurant on the corner of the square. There is an inviting atmosphere from everyone who works there when you walk into this family friendly diner. The food comes to you quickly and is good and wholesome.



Choose from fluffy omelets, hash browns, sausage gravy, pancakes, and chicken fried steak with gravy, which, by the way was tender and flavorful. Or stop in for lunch, for a bowl of homemade soup and a 1/2 lb. burger made from local beef.

Our waitress suggested her favorite, a grilled chicken breast, cheese, tomato, and bbq sauce on sourdough, so that's what I had with crispy hand cut fries. It was a little messy, but good. And for dessert, they've got a large selection of homemade pies.

This restaurant is a sister restaurant to the Cold Creek Café in Castalia, and has a similar menu. They are open everyday 6am-2pm and 7am-2pm on Sunday. Check out the Invention and the town anytime of the year.

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Christmas
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An Unexpected McD Blessing!

By Denise Baldetti

As 2024 approaches its final days, this time of year is often a time of reflection and gratitude. I am grateful for a charity I knew very little about, yet have come to recently greatly appreciate . . . because . . . my niece had a baby!

Backstory – As a 35-week old preemie, little K.W. was facing a serious condition: supraventricular tachycardia (SVT) – a racing heartbeat that wouldn't go down! During SVT, the heart beats 150-220 times a minute, and may come and go suddenly. The new parents were fraught with worry about their little newborn baby and didn't want to leave his side. Would they be able to stay and sleep at the hospital to be there with their new little bundle? Not for too long. . . but a charity provided them with alternative lodging and an unexpected blessing!

The Ronald McDonald House Charities (RMHC), a worldwide nonprofit organization, suddenly came to the forefront for the new parents. The first Ronald McDonald House opened in Philadelphia in 1974. Today, over 380 Ronald McDonald Houses are located in 64 countries. These houses accommodate families with hospitalized children and are located just minutes away from nearby hospitals. Ronald McDonald Houses allow families to stay free of charge, and they offer a home away from home to families while their child is being treated. They provide lodging, home cooked meals, laundry amenities, 24-hour staff and transportation back and forth from the hospital. The Ronald McDonald House my niece and her husband stayed at is located in Toledo, Ohio.

The mission for Ronald McDonald House Charities is to create, find, and support programs that directly improve the health and well-being of children. For little K.W, this charity mission has provided his new parents with two weeks of wonderful accommodations. My niece said that "Ronald McDonald House was very nice!" She also said they did periodic room checks to ensure all rules were being followed and units were being respected. If parents have other family children (18 years and under), they are also permitted to stay. For younger siblings who stay with their parents, a very secure outdoor playground area is available.

K.W. was born on November 3, 2024. After two weeks of constant care and supervision, his special day arrived for a very welcomed trip home. K.W. had received an all clear status and passed all checkpoints. However, before going home, he was given a cute gift package. It included a children's book, scented teething toy, teddy bear and an adorable handmade quilt with construction vehicles made by kind hearted Ronald McDonald House volunteers!

The Ronald McDonald House Charities also include 260 RM Family Rooms (located in 28 different countries) and 40 RM mobiles (located in 10 different countries worldwide to provide people access to quality health care.) Ronald McDonald Charities depend on many wonderful volunteers and supportive donors. If you are looking to make a difference in the lives of others, you can explore opportunities at rmhctoledo.org. Whether by donating time or money, your efforts will help support even more families with ill and injured children around the world! Welcome home K.W.!



Sending K.W. home with his goodie gift package!



The Liberty Center of Sandusky County would like to say THANK YOU to everyone who has supported us in any way this past year.

Since opening, 3891 people found shelter at the Liberty Center. This past year 118 people lived at the shelter, 62 of them were single men or women, 56 were family members. Of the 56 family members 37 were children.

This year our Domestic Violence Victims' Advocate worked with 428 domestic violence victims helping them with crisis intervention, safety plans, education, legal process support, and for some, emergency shelter.

We could not do what we do without your support. Please consider making a donation to help change someone's life and bring hope to a hopeless situation.

Donations may be sent to:
Liberty Center,
1421 E State St., Fremont OH 43420
Call 419-332-8777 for more information.



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2000es Lifestyles is going Digital in 2025!

See the Publisher's Letter on page 4 for more details!

- Digital Flipbooks
- Downloadable PDFs
- Same Contest
- Extra Monthly Prize
- Updated Website
- Online Interaction
- And More!



Issue shown is from January 2024.

IN YOUR OWN BACKYARD

Fremont Tree and Beautification Commission is having a special sale on personally engraved pavers for the Walsh Park Memorial fountain. What a wonderful way to honor that special someone! Pavers are on sale through the end of December for \$55, regularly \$65. There are special sections around the fountain for veterans and even pets. Forms may be picked up at **Otto and Urban Florists** at 200 S. Front St. We are once again sponsoring our annual Christmas/Holiday Decorating Contest. Feel free to submit your nominations on our FB page or text 419-307-8924. Judging takes place Dec.15.

COOKIE SALE: Green Springs United Methodist Church 117 N. Broadway, Saturday Dec. 14, 9am till cookies are gone! Let our elves do your baking this Christmas season.

The North Coast Concert Band and North Coast Big Band will present a holiday concert Sunday, Dec. 8, 1 p.m. at Port Clinton High School, 821 South Jefferson Street. The Bands will present a variety of seasonal tunes arranged in both familiar and unusual formats. Free Admission.

Dec. 7th & 8th, 5:30-7:30 pm. **The Gibsonburg area churches will be hosting a Live Drive-Thru Nativity.** This outing is in the safety and comfort of your own vehicle. Come to this free presentation of the Biblical Christmas Story as it "comes to life" in 9 scenes portrayed by area community members of all ages. Live animals will also be present. You will drive slowly past each scene as you listen to the beautiful narration of Mary & Joseph's journey to Bethlehem, where Jesus was born to offer salvation to us all. (Narration is available in sanitized CD, cassette or flash drive formats to accommodate all vehicles.) The Nativity will be held at Zion Lutheran Church located at 500 S. Brentwood Avenue, Gibsonburg.

Continued on page 11

Happy Holidays!

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Nature's Light Show

At 8:30 pm on October 10, 2024, we stood in the dark with several others in front of the Port Clinton Lighthouse waiting to see the Northern Lights. It was 46 degrees, with a light breeze blowing off the lake, making it seem colder than it was. We had missed all the other light shows—including the one in May—which made us determined to see this one, since it was supposed to be SPECTACULAR! Our property is surrounded by trees, making it difficult to see much of the



sky except for what is directly overhead, so we decided to drive up to the lake for a better view. Robin packed two cameras and her tripod, hoping to get some great photos. We walked around checking various angles that included the lighthouse. Shortly after she

found a spot to set up, we saw faint trails of green in the dark sky behind the lighthouse, but not the dazzling display we had hoped to see. The pictures she got were nice, but not what she was hoping for, and we left, slightly disappointed, after about an hour. Later, we realized we should have stuck around a little longer. It wasn't until after we got home that the REAL light show began and we were able to see it in all its splendor right from our own back deck—even over the tops of the trees that surround our house! The sky overhead danced with vivid streaks of green, red, and purple...it was magnificent!! It brought back a memory from my childhood many years ago—the only other time I ever saw the Northern Lights. Viewing them this night brought back the magic of that night when I saw them for the first time. Before the show ended, Robin took several beautiful photos.

What causes such stunning light shows? It's not something new...paintings on cave walls from 30,000 years ago depicted this phenomenon. While there is still a lot that is not known, we dug around on the internet and this is what we found...in simplest terms. The source of auroras is the sun, as it emits a cloud of gas known as a "coronal mass ejection" or CME. If one of these CMEs reaches the earth, it collides with the Earth's magnetic field and causes charged particles to flow along a magnetic force into the polar regions—both the north and

south poles. Since they can occur in both the north and the south, they are also known as "Aurora Polaris" or "Polar Lights." In the northern hemisphere it is called the Aurora Borealis; in the southern hemisphere it is called the Aurora Australis. The different colors are caused by the charged particles from the sun reacting with oxygen and nitrogen gases in the Earth's atmosphere: the green color is the reaction with oxygen, while the blue, pink or purple is the reaction with nitrogen.

In 1619 Galileo saw the sky streaked with green and purple and called it the "Aurora Borealis" after "Aurora," the Roman goddess of dawn, and "Boreas," the Greek god of the north wind... we haven't discovered yet who named the "Aurora Australis." Although very beautiful, the solar storms causing Northern Lights can be disruptive at times, affecting power grids, radio communications, GPS, and satellites. Sunspot activity, which causes the solar storms—and sparks the Auroras—peaks every 11 years.

What a fantastic year this has been for viewing the wonders of nature...some of which we will never see again in our lifetime. We were treated to a total solar eclipse in April, the Northern Lights at various times this year, and an 80,000 year old comet that is still faintly visible in the evening sky. Makes you wonder what next year will bring...it would be pretty hard to top this one!

Wishing you all a safe and Happy Holiday Season

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Christmas Chaos: A Fremont Tradition

By Robert Morton

December turns the most sensible folks in Fremont into a unique brand of holiday-obsessed and mildly frazzled people. In the Kroger checkout line and in the aisles of local shops on Front Street, I see the dazed look of someone who's just realized they forgot Aunt Martha's gift or the wild determination of a parent searching for the "it" toy of the season.

Some people plan their shopping with military precision—lists, budgets, and coupons alphabetized by store. These folks intimidate me. Meanwhile, I'm the one frantically wandering the aisles on December 23rd, buying scented candles because, well, they're all that's left. Overthinking is not my style.

Sometimes, I even ask shopkeepers for advice. "What would be a good gift for my cousin who already owns every gardening tool known to man?" They usually offer great suggestions but seem quietly amused by my last-minute scramble. Once, I stood at the counter with a store owner, watching a customer agonize over whether a coffee mug that says "Best Dad Ever" was too cliché or if they should splurge on a \$50 artisan cheese board. It was exhausting to watch. The shopkeeper and I exchanged a knowing glance, silently screaming, "Just pick something already!"

Then, there are Christmas cards and the same old debate: Merry Christmas or Happy Holidays? By the time I get to writing mine, I'm just scrawling my name like I'm signing a receipt. Some people send heartfelt updates about every family member—including the dog, who apparently had a big year. Me? I slap a stamp on a generic card and call it a day.

And then there are the truly ambitious—the folks who send custom photo cards featuring the family in matching pajamas, complete with coordinated smiles. Last year, I decided to get a little ambitious myself and really put effort into my cards. Naturally, I messed it up spectacularly by accidentally sending the card meant for a fellow retired Bowling Green University professor to my cousin's house. As the owner of a food truck, she called me, genuinely baffled, and asked, "Why on earth would I care about 'Teacher Retention and Burnout in Elementary Schools'?"

Decorating for Christmas is another adventure. Fremont has its share of overachievers who transform their homes into something straight out of a Hallmark movie. One neighbor displays a reindeer inflatable while another ups the ante with a synchronized light show set to the Trans-Siberian Orchestra. Of course, the reality of decorating often involves untangling miles of lights, muttering words you hope Santa didn't hear,

and performing a precarious balancing act on a wobbly ladder. As for me, I hang a wreath on the door and maybe a strand of lights around the porch.

Despite the chaos—the tangled lights, the last-minute gift panic, and sending cards to the wrong people—I love Christmas. There's something magical about Fremont in December, even if it sometimes involves watching someone stuff an inflatable Santa into a hatchback. Christmas isn't about perfection; it's about laughing at the imperfections and sneaking another slice of pie. That's a tradition I can get behind.

Robert Morton has retired from his positions of school psychologist for Fremont City Schools and adjunct professor in the School of Leadership and Policy Studies at Bowling Green State University. He authors 3 spy thriller novels, available on Amazon.com books: Mission of Vengeance, The Shadow War, and Penumbra Database.

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Christmas Contradictions

By Pauline A. Darr

I see the simple beauty of the holy family but am dazed and dazzled by the retailers' visions, and am blinded by the lights which do not illumine.

I hear soft refrains of "Silent Night" and "O Holy Night" but am deafened by the discordant cries of the poor by day.

My heart is warmed by compassion and generosity of passers-by, but my heart is chilled by selfishness of too many.

I can understand why children believe in Santa, the gift giver, but I am dumfounded that adults don't believe in Him Who lavishes us with priceless gifts of love, mercy, forgiveness, and life eternal. Why can people name Santa's eight reindeer but cannot name the nine choirs of angels?

Why do people follow the inconstancy of neon lights and not the constancy of Him Who made the stars?

Why are people looking outward for answers—for which they have not turned inward to question?

Why are people frantically shopping for yearly presents while missing the greatest daily exchange of Presence?

Why do people celebrate birthdays but not the greatest Birthday in history?

Media and merchants lead people astray. Where are the shepherds of today?

False prophets and smooth-talking salespeople abound. Where are the wise men and sages of today?

Good tinged with evil, right wronged, devils in disguise—Where are the angels on this silent, holy night?

Pauline A. Darr



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Astrology FORECAST

By Magi Helena

ARIES (March 21-April 19): Being a people pleaser might sometimes feel like trying to walk through a social minefield. Express gratitude for everyone's efforts, even for routine tasks. Feeling appreciated could boost your morale and confidence.

TAURUS (April 20-May 20): You're not here to fit into anyone else's mold, so consider boldly showing off your intelligence. You're the artisanal meal of existence with unique, flavorful, and satisfying ideas that could make people feel more loved and at home.

GEMINI (May 21-June 20): Inspiration can strike at the most unexpected moments. Someone close might fuel your ambitions and even pick up the tab. Be careful not to get distracted by the social scene when crucial discussions are needed.

CANCER (June 21-July 22): Your choices might be fulfilling and bring great contentment. You may be inspired to showcase your thoughts about important subjects. Consider giving advice or new opportunities that come your way a fair chance.

LEO (July 23-Aug. 22): Take a moment to embrace a clear vision of a contented and fulfilling life. Bring up your goals and aspirations. Picture yourself lounging somewhere relaxing, sipping a refreshing beverage, and basking in the warm glow of life satisfaction.

VIRGO (Aug. 23-Sept. 22): Someone else might see the big picture and bring it to your attention. Giving in may bring acceptance and respect just as you are. Consider taking time to connect with your inner thoughts and drown out any outside distractions.

LIBRA (Sept. 23-Oct. 22): Inspiration is like finding a hidden treasure chest in the attic of your mind. The month ahead might bring lots of stimulation. Whether it's through reading, meditation, or rubbing shoulders with others, continue nurturing your curiosity.

SCORPIO (Oct. 23-Nov. 21): A brilliant idea might easily come your way. Picture it as a tiny seed of what could grow. Nurture it with love, water it with curiosity, and watch it thrive. Who knows? It could be the blueprint for your future empire.

SAGITTARIUS (Nov. 22-Dec. 21): Good communication may lead to contentment. The truth may be embellished or exaggerated but it could still be charming. Consider using more compassion if people decide to lean on you for advice or life guidance.

CAPRICORN (Dec. 22-Jan. 19): Encouragement and understanding could help you be a better person. While someone else may be busy keeping the fire alive, you might find yourself footing the bill. All your senses may feel improved except your business sense.

AQUARIUS (Jan. 20-Feb. 18): Indulging in a hobby or becoming consumed by a new study may be like a human espresso shot for your ambitions. Be mindful of spending money on things you don't need and consider focusing on investing for the long haul.

PISCES (Feb. 19-March 20): Take the time to truly listen. When someone shares their thoughts or concerns, show them genuine interest. Consider asking follow-up questions and acknowledge their feelings. Sometimes, people just need an empathetic ear.

Image of the Mind

By Alisa Florio

Define Your Win

We're back to Resource Allocation discovering this 1 word where Craig said, "This one word is very important in order for you as a leader in yourself, in your family, and in your organization? You have to change the word **spending** into **investment**."

As an Entrepreneur of 42 years while raising 6 kids I had to apply this strategy many times while climbing the ladder of life. I was very familiar with coming from a mindset that instead of spending my resources or spending my time, I had to look at it as investing my resources and investing my time.

Most leaders try to use people to get their desired results, but the best leaders intentionally invest their time to achieve their desired results. What's the difference? When we spend-it's an even trade. But, when you invest this means you're expecting a bigger return! Craig suggests, "Before you start allocating your resources you have to do 3 things."



1. Clearly define your win

What exactly are you trying to accomplish and why does this matter to you? Because you can't accomplish what you don't define. If you don't define your win clearly then you'll spend all your resources. If you define your win clearly then you'll invest in the right direction. Why does this matter? Defining your win directs what you do on a daily basis. When you know what your WIN is and what your priorities would be it moves your resources, time, and your energy into investing in the direction of that win. You can see this in both your home and your work life.

Your win must be very, very clear! Be very specific on the details. What is it that you want to accomplish and when do you want to accomplish it by. The win must be current. If you pick up a goal you had last year this may limit you because last years barriers could be stumbling blocks for you this year. Ask yourself, "Has my drive to meet this goal changed?"

2. Take inventory of your available resources

Don't tell yourself you can't do something for 2 reasons #1 your limiting God. Your Creator didn't create you to say, "Oh, that's too big a job for me." You were strategically designed with a purpose, and on purpose! # 2 Whatever you tell yourself you can't do; you won't.

If money is what's holding you back because you spend the majority of your money to meet your overhead demands this is where reallocating your money to get a better return can be an interesting concept to help you reach your goals.

Go to imageofthemind.com for more information. Wishing you an abundance of Peace & Joy filled with Hope & Love. Merry Christmas and a Wonderful New Year to you all!

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Merry Christmas & Happy New Year!



Dear Cathy,

My son has a Pomeranian who barks at people walking down the street. He barks if I bang into something in the house, even if I'm right next to him. He is a good watchdog because he knows when someone is outside, but it gets to be too much. The dog goes into a barking frenzy at times and doesn't stop. What's his problem?

— Stan, Huntington, New York.

Dear Stan,

Dogs bark – or alert us – when they hear noises. Excessive barking in small dogs, however, like Pomeranians can stem from several factors. It's possible that your son's dog is experiencing heightened anxiety or sensitivity to stimuli, which is common in smaller breeds. Pomeranians are naturally alert and protective, making them good watchdogs, but sometimes their instincts can go into overdrive. The barking at distant people or noises, even minor ones like banging sounds, could be a sign of nervousness or hyper-vigilance.

Additionally, it could be related to a hearing issue. When a dog experiences hearing loss or sensitivity, they may become more reactive to certain sounds because they either can't hear them clearly or the sounds seem startling or unfamiliar. Have a vet check the dog's hearing to rule out any underlying problems

If not hearing-related, try desensitizing him to the triggers that set off his barking by practicing calm responses to noises or people walking by, starting from a distance where he's less reactive and gradually bringing the trigger closer while rewarding quiet behavior.

Gradual exposure, combined with rewards for quiet behavior, can help train him to be less reactive. Additionally, providing more mental and physical stimulation, like puzzle toys, training sessions, and regular walks, can reduce his excess energy and help him stay calmer.

You might also want to create a quiet, safe space for him to retreat to when he becomes overstimulated. This could be a designated area in the house or a kennel where he feels secure, with familiar items like his bed and toys. Calming aids, such as pheromone diffusers or anxiety clothing, may also help reduce his stress levels.

Another useful technique is to redirect his focus. When he starts barking, call him to you and ask him to sit. Then give him a toy or treat to shift his attention away from the trigger.

Consistency is key. Rewarding him when he stops barking or remains calm is important for reinforcing the behavior you want to see. Activities, like obedience training or agility exercises, can also help burn off excess energy and keep his mind engaged, which may reduce his tendency to bark unnecessarily.

Dear Cathy,

We have two neutered male cats, who are 15- and 16-years old, who use their litter box. This year, a feral cat delivered two male kittens to our front porch. We had the mama fixed and brought the two male kittens inside. They are six months old and have been neutered. We gave them a litter box in another part of the house, which they use. The four cats get along with no issues.

The problem is that one of my old cats now goes into the room with the kittens' litter box and relieves himself on the floor outside their litter box, even though he still uses his original litter box, too. Any suggestions?

— Bill, Gloucester, Virginia

Dear Bill,

Your older cat may be asserting his status as the "top cat" in the house. The general rule is to have one litter box per cat, plus one extra, and they should be placed in multiple areas around the home. This helps reduce territorial tension and ensures everyone has access to a clean box. However, it's important to know that cats will often use whichever litter box they prefer, and it's hard to prevent them from using multiple boxes.

In the likelihood this is a territorial issue, here are a few things you can try. First, consider using plug-in feline pheromones designed for multi-cat households to help reduce stress and create a calming environment. These diffusers last about 30 days and can be effective for litter box issues.

You might try sprinkling a litter box attractant into your older cat's main box to encourage him to use it. These attractants can help reinforce his habit of using his designated box. Just keep in mind that it might also draw the kittens to his box as well.

Lastly, since he's an older cat, I recommend a vet checkup to rule out any health issues, as changes in litter box habits can sometimes be linked to medical conditions.

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TAKE A DEEP BREATH!

By Dr. Paul Silcox

Well, it's over! The commercials on t.v. The text messages. The phone calls. The emails. And the mountains of snail mail! And no matter how you slice it, half of us are ecstatic and looking forward to 2025. And the other half of us are at our wits end and think the world is coming to an end wondering how we'll make it to 2028!

That's why I titled this month's article, "Take a Deep Breath!" I have a small sign in my office that says, "Sometimes the best thing you can do is not think, not wonder, not imagine, not obsess. Just breathe, and have faith that everything will work out for the best." As much as I have prayed for our country for the last two years, no matter who would have won, I still believe that God is Sovereign and the United States of America.

Remember, this election cycle is only for 4 years. If in 4 years it turns out that its not as good as the winning side thought it was going to be, there will be a chance to fix it. And likewise, if in 4 years it turns out to be better than the losing side thought it was going to be, maybe they won't feel as bad as they do now and might be happy about it. Who knows? Crazy things have happened, right? (bite your tongue Dana! It's an inside joke. lol)

But in the mean time, we have more important things to deal with. Primarily being that we are in the middle of the holiday season and Christmas is right around the corner. It's time to remember that Jesus Christ came here to this earth as a free gift for all. Lets take this opportunity to make sure to tell our neighbors, friends and especially our families, Merry Christmas. And this year especially, Merry Christmas and God Bless us one and all, and may God Bless America!

So, . . . inhale and take a deep breath . . . hold it! Ok, let it out! Now don't you feel better?

Have a wonderful Christmas everyone!

IN YOUR OWN BACKYARD

Continued from page 6

Fremont Lions Club: meeting Dec. 3 at noon at the Fremont Eagles Hall. On Dec. 17, a Christmas Party will take place at 6 pm and will include a buffet dinner at the Eagles.. Reservations by Dec. 13 and members and guests are welcome. Contact Donna at 419 332 3095 for info.

Kiwanis Club of Fremont meets every Thurs. 11:45 am-1 pm at the Fremont Elks Lodge except for the first Thursday of the month when they meet at The Strand Theater 5- 6:30 pm. Guests are welcome . Programs are: Dec. 5-Social meeting at The Strand, Dec. 12-Annual Kiwanis Holiday Auction starts at 6:pm replacing the lunch meeting, Dec. 19-Guest speaker Pat Gerber from the Alzheimer's Assoc., Dec 26-No meeting. For info, email sardisbirchard@yahoo.com.

Multiple sclerosis support group meeting will be held Mon, Dec. 9 @ 6:30pm. Meetings take place at Hayes United Methodist Church on Fangboner Rd (behind YMCA) in Fremont. The December meeting will be a Christmas "White Elephant " gift exchange. 1st timers need not bring a gift but WILL be included in the fun and appetizers will be provided!! Meetings open to all those with MS, their caregivers or anyone who has been touched by the disease.

Dec. 6th: **Downtown Fremont Open House and Sip & Shop All Day** -Grab your favorite beverage and Sip & Shop.

Dec. 7th: **Downtown Fremont Open House and Sip & Shop ALL Day, Indoor Holiday Market** 10-2pm, Santa House 1-3pm,

Holiday Parade 6pm.

Annual Dinner and Concert: Trinity United Methodist Church, 204 N. Wayne St. Fremont will host the annual Taste of the Season Dinner on Dec. 8 at 5 pm followed by the Christmas Concert at 7 pm. The dinner, by reservation, will include appetizers, soup, entree and dessert for \$16 with reservations needed by Dec. 1 with Terri at 419 332 8167. The concert will feature the Fremont Ross Choir along with other seasonal musical talents. The concert is free and open to the public. A freewill offering is taken.

Cheeseball Sale: Orders are being taken for the Cheddar, Cranberry/Orange, Dried beef, Horseradish and Onion Cheeseball spread until Dec. 15. The cost is \$10, orders will be ready for pick-up/payment on Dec. 21, 1-3 p m in Fellowship Hall at Trinity United Methodist Church, 204 N. Wayne St. Fremont. Call Steve at 419 332 8167 or Carol at 419 680 5758., to order.

Holiday Concert: Terra State Community College is pleased to present a Holiday Concert featuring the Concert Choir, Symphonic Band and Orchestra on Dec. 1 at 3 pm in the Student Activity Center at the college, 2830 Napoleon Rd. Fremont. This is a free concert.

The Fremont Area Women's Connection invites all women to join us for "Christmas Fun with the Harvest Amigos!" at our Ladies Luncheon Tues., Dec. 10th. We meet at Victor's Event Center, 2270 West Hayes Avenue.

Doors open at 10:30 for coffee, lunch at 11am; program ends at 1pm. Cost is \$14.

Bobbi Dezarn from Frankenmuth, MI will speak on "What's in a Word?"

Make your reservation before Friday, Dec. 6th. Call/text Donna at 419-680-2251 or e-mail Carrol at fawcluncheon@gmail.com. Reservations as well as any necessary cancellations must be reported in the same way. Follow us on FB.

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