



Pratt Connection

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IN THIS ISSUE:

How to Be a Great Conversationalist

What's the Buzz About Blogs?

What is Trans Fat?

Holly's Household Corner: Home Safety Tips

Gardens and Greenhouses: Love that Lawn

Save \$5 Per Week

Welcome!

Successfully Sold!

Happy Homeowners!

Thanks for Your Referrals!

What Are You Waiting For?

Positive Thinking Corner

May/June 2007
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How to Be a Great Conversationalist

According to etiquette expert Jodi R.R. Smith in *Mannersmith Monthly*, conversing meaningfully in a concise way is an important skill to develop.

Don't be shy. Go ahead and be the first to speak. Ask an open-ended question to kick things off.

Listen to the other person. Try not to fall into the trap of planning what you're going to say next while the other person is talking. Really focus on what the person is saying.

Don't be drab. Be ready to talk about someplace you've been lately or a good book you've read. Talk about something positive.

Be inquisitive. Let your curiosity drive the conversation. People love to be asked questions about themselves. But remember to keep it on the right level; you're not interrogating the person, you're trying to have a pleasant conversation.

Avoid the dirty details of your life. While the other person may be interested in listening to you, you don't want to reveal everything about yourself. There are some things that are best kept private. Use discretion when you converse.

End the conversation at a high point. Remember, this is a quick conversation we're talking about. Average length is probably two to eight minutes.

What's the Buzz About Blogs?

If you don't know what a blog is, you're not alone. Originally known as "web logs" or "weblogs," the term evolved into "blog" and is now recognized as a word by the American Heritage Dictionary. Webster's New Millennium Dictionary takes it a step further and lists "blogger," "blogged" and "blogging," as well!

Simply, a blog is an online diary that's published on a web page and has the following features:

You don't have to know any programs to set up or use a blog. The technology behind blogs is simple and allows anyone to set up one. It's quick and easy.

It's easy for others to comment on your blog. This feature means that blogs are inspiring unprecedented interactivity between writers and readers.

Blogging is considered to be quick and informal. That means they can cut through a lot of unnecessary steps and really reach people.

Blogs are easily linked to other blogs and sites. This means that lots of information can be shared quickly.

Start your own free blog at websites like Blogger.com.

What is Trans Fat?

We hear a lot about "trans fats," but what are they?

Trans fatty acids are made by heating liquid vegetable oils in the presence of hydrogen, according to the Harvard School of Public Health. The process is more commonly known as hydrogenation. It's easy to figure out how hydrogenated an oil is - the harder the oil is at room temperature, the more hydrogenated it is. So, if you have a choice between stick margarine and a soft, spreadable margarine, you know the spreadable one is less hydrogenated, and therefore contains less trans fats.

Processed foods often contain trans fats. Snack foods, prepared baked foods, french fries and other fried snacks usually have a lot of trans fats.

Trans fats are not good for your cholesterol level because they raise the level of bad LDL - low-density lipoproteins, which carry cholesterol from the liver into the rest of the body. When there's too much of it, it can be deposited on the walls of the arteries. Trans fats also lower the level of good HDL, high-density lipoproteins, which carry blood back to the liver and process cholesterol so it can be eliminated from the system.

It's a good idea to educate yourself by checking the trans fats amounts on food labels and asking restaurant staff if they use trans fats in food preparation.

Holly's Household Corner

"Home Safety Tips"



June is National Safety Month and a great time to take these steps to make your home safer for everyone:

- Place a fire extinguisher in your kitchen and on every floor of your home.
- Install battery-powered smoke alarms including in all of your bedrooms. Check your local building codes to make sure you have the right kind of smoke detector and enough of them for the size and layout of your home.
- Install a CO (Carbon Monoxide) detector in your home.
- Use changing your clocks for Daylight Saving Time as a reminder to replace the batteries in your smoke detectors, and to check your fire extinguisher gauges to verify they're still full.
- Have a well-stocked first aid kit where everyone can find it. Include activated charcoal (use only if instructed by a poison control center), adhesive tape, antiseptic ointment, adhesive bandages, triangular bandage, blanket, cold pack, disposable gloves, gauze pads, roller gauze, hand cleaner, plastic bags, scissors, tweezers, and a small flashlight with extra batteries.

- If you have children, or if children come to visit, put plastic covers in your electric outlets so they can't stick objects into them and risk getting shocked.
- Have a ground fault circuit interrupter (GFCI) electrical outlet installed in your kitchen, bathroom and around any other water source. These electric outlets can prevent electrocutions, electric shocks and some electric fires.
- Keep all electronics a safe distance from the sink, bathtub and shower in your bathroom as well as the sink in the kitchen.
- Investigate any water stains or cracks that appear on your ceilings - they could be signs of a serious water leak, either in your roof or in your water pipes. If not taken care of, the ceiling may eventually weaken and fall. If the problem is serious, call a professional.

Home Safety Tour

Take a tour around your home looking in and around everything such as old appliances. Look for fraying wires or overloaded electrical outlets that could be fire hazards. See if there are any pieces of furniture that have sharp edges that could hurt someone.

If you're having visitors over, especially visitors with young children, prior to their visit is a great time to take the safety tour. Think about what kids might get into, especially down at their level. You'll definitely feel more comfortable knowing your home is safe for you and your guests. *~ Adapted from homemadesimple.com*

Gardens and Greenhouses

"Love That Lawn"



Your lawn is the first thing guests see when they walk up to your home, but a healthy lawn can do more than just enhance your home's curb appeal. It can have a cooling effect during the hot summer months, resist insects, trap dust and dirt in the air, and create an overall healthier environment. Follow this grassy guide for a gorgeous, green lawn all summer long.

Wake Up And Water

If fertilizer is the secret to a lush lawn, then watering is the prerequisite. Before turning on the hose, remember these helpful tips:

- Most lawns need at least one inch of water a week.
- Stick to deep, infrequent watering to sustain a healthy and strong root system.
- Water your lawn during the early morning hours. During the day, water can evaporate; at night, if your lawn is already damp, additional watering can risk disease.
- Try to water during periods of low wind and minimal sun.

Fertilizing Facts

To grow healthy and strong, your lawn needs nutrients, and that means regular fertilizing. Fertilizer helps your grass and plants grow evenly, while combating environmental factors such as heat, dry weather, and insects. Fertilizer should be applied four to five times a year, beginning now and continuing through October. Ensure even distribution when applying fertilizer by using a spreader and walking at a steady pace.

Get More From Your Mow

Yes, unfortunately, you have to mow a lawn to keep it looking great. But there are tricks to mowing that can actually make your lawn look better. Try one or more of these techniques the next time you cut the grass:

- Mow at least once a week, twice in the spring when grass is growing faster.
- Never cut more than 1/3 of the length of the grass.
- Keep your mower blade sharp to ensure a clean cut of the mowed grass. Otherwise, the blade tears at the ends of the grass, rather than cutting it clean. This could leave ragged ends that later turn brown and give the lawn a dried-out look.
- Each week, try mowing in a different direction (horizontally, vertically, diagonally) to prevent grass compaction.

~ Adapted from www.homemadesimple.com

Save \$5 Per Week!

If you want to save \$5 a week, adopting any one of these tips is a great way to start. Pay attention to the small stuff:

- Instead of going to a restaurant, organize a lunch swap. One day you make and bring lunch for a coworker. The next day, she does the same for you.
- Brew your own coffee and bring your own soda. You'll save money if you're not putting it into Starbucks' cash register or the soft drink machine.
- Always use your own bank's ATM - avoid those fees.
- When your favorite shampoo or other personal items go on sale, stock up so you won't have to pay full price in the future.

Congratulations!

Welcome...

James & Carol Centivany, Roger & Debby Pinta, Rick, Elizabeth & Brenda Burnett, Susan & Dave Myer, Dwayne & Nancy Klier, Zahira Lehri, Tuncay Sari, Ryan Niro & Erin Farrer, Marshal & Angie Gwynn, Bonnie Nugent, and Richard & Thombra Muhammad

Happy Homeowners...

Ida Gage, Karen Korte & Greg Cunningham, Bryan & Meredith Chmura, Margaret Cromwell, Pat Webster, and Tuncay Sari

Successfully Sold...

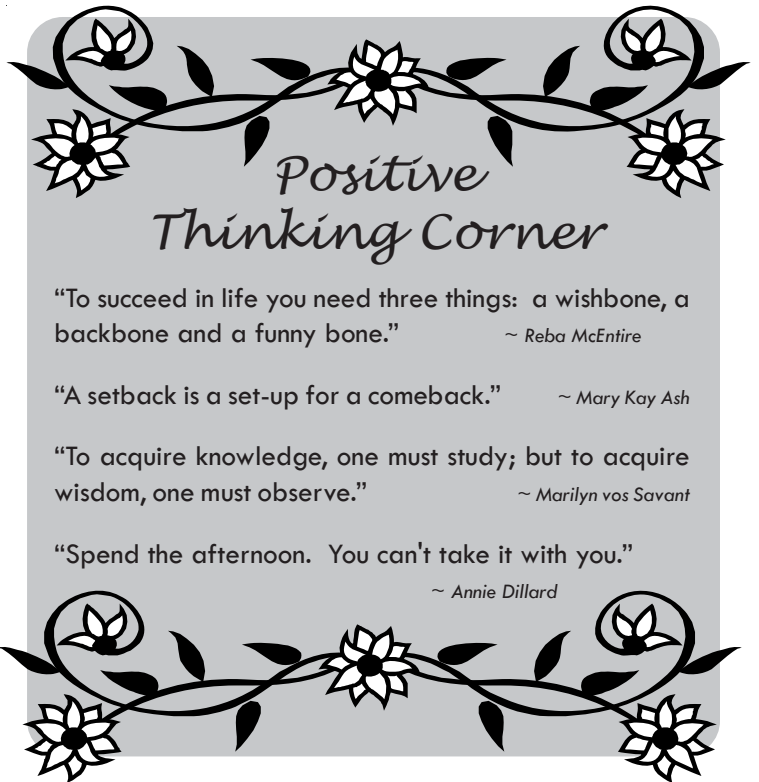
Rusty Grove, Victoria & Miguel Suarez', Maf Koskey, Diane & Jim Hart, and David & Salma Bishara

Thanks for Your Referrals...

Kim & Chris Elgin, Curtis Hopkins, Suzanne Gallman, and Rob Gallman

Referrals are the ♥ of my business!

My purpose is for you to be so *outrageously happy* with the help I provide to you that you'll gladly introduce me to at least two people you really care about before I even sell your home or help you buy a new home.



What Are You Waiting For?

The market is HOT with inventory! Visit my website at www.cleveland-home-finder.com.

15538 Pike, Brookpark - Great starter on quiet side street, 4 bedrms, finished rec. rm. 2-car garage, fenced yard. Close to hwy, shopping and airport. \$129,900.

153 South Point, Avon Lake - Darling, 2 bedrm. Cottage-like home. Remodeled inside. Fresh paint, New carpet this year, 2 car garage w/electric. Close to lake \$99,900.

3002 Elmer, Brunswick - Pulte home built 1999. Traditional 4 bedrm, 2.5 bath center hall colonial. Neutral decor. Family rm w/ fireplace, Master bath. \$269,900.

19756 Ridgeland, West Park - 3 bedrm colonial w/ 1st floor master. 2 sliders to deck over looking Metroparks and Mastick Woods golf course. Finished basement with 2 family rm and rec. rm. Minutes to airport and I-480. \$239,900.

13420 Blazey Trail, Strongsville - 3 bedrm., 1.5 bath ranch w/ partially finished waterproofed bsmt. Cent. air & furnace new in 2006. \$119,000.

33710 Via San Angelo, Avon - Stunning stone front home in Red Tail Golf Club. Walls of windows, beautiful wood floors and cabinetry, 3-story architectural design. \$399,900.

11822 Ronald Dr., Parma - 3 bedrm ranch in subdivision across from Tri-C. 1474 SF plus finished ec. rm. Attached 2-car garage. Needs your decorating touches. \$129,900.

11161 Cinnamon Blvd., N. Royalton - 2 yr old 2 bdrm, 2 bath cluster in Cinnamon Lake. Neutral decor, 1752 s.f. Master bedrm has walk-in closet and bath. \$199,900.

22942 Mastick Rd., Fairview Park - 1 bedrm, first floor ranch condo in Old Orchard Subex. New carpet thru-out in March 2007, Large Living & Dining room, screened in porch. All appliances stay. \$79,900.

24185 Wilderness Trail, Olmsted Falls - Clean 4 bedrm, 2.5 bath colonial on cul-de-sac. Built 997, Huge kitchen w/ dinette, formal liv/din rm, Family rm. great for entertaining w/fireplace. \$239,999.

3587 Trailview Ct., Brunswick - Pulte home built 2000, 4 br, 2.5 bth, cul-de-sac lot. Immaculate! Master bath w/walk-in closet. 1st floor laundry. \$229,900.

689 Lafayette Rd., Medina - 10,000 sq. ft. Commercial building. zoned comm. retail. Needs work; lots of potential! \$99,000

11523 Pearl Rd., Strongsville - Move in condition! 3 bedrm, 2 bath townhouse, central air. New carpet and decor. 2 car attached garage. Priced below market! \$124,900.

10311 Foxwood Dr., North Royalton - Bright 10 yr. young center hall colonial on 106 x 144 lot. 4 bedrooms, 3 1/2 baths, Finished rec room and 3- car garage. \$277,900.

23629 Woodhill, Brookpark - 1800+ sq ft Colonial nestled on cul-de-sac lot overlooking Metroparks. 4 bedrms, 3 full baths, 2 half baths, in-ground pool, sun rm, fenced yard. Startling price of \$198,900!

33612 St. Francis Dr, Avon - French country stone & stucco home built in 2000. Very warm, rich decor! 3 bedrooms, loft, den, 1st floor master with glamour bath. Charming! Priced below market at \$359,900.

4123 Gifford, Old Brooklyn - Charming and well maintained 3 bedrm colonial with 2 full baths, updated eat-in kitchen & baths, beautiful woodwork and refinished flooring. Close to highways. Priced below market at \$94,900.