

A Senior Circle Member Publication

Summer 2008

# InsideCircle



## **More Than Skin Deep**

Safety in the Sun

Going Green ...  
Green Your Garden

Solar Cities

Potluck with a Twist

# Summer!



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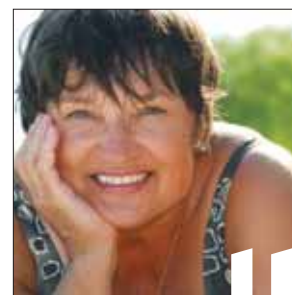
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# Your voice MATTERS and we're listening



Dear Members,

Does this issue look a little different to you? That's because it is! We have taken *Inside Circle* to a larger format – and that's not all. We've redesigned the pages to add more white space to aid with readability and to give the publication a fresh look.

Many of these changes stem from your responses to the Senior Circle survey that was in the winter issue. Here's a bit of what we learned:

- When asked what you liked most about the magazine, the majority of respondents selected 'health information articles and tips.'
- Over half of you are more health conscious as a result of receiving *Inside Circle*.
- On a scale of 1 (don't value) to 5 (highly value), 40% rated *Inside Circle* a "5" and 32% rated it a "4."
- Over 95% of you want to continue receiving *Inside Circle*.
- Almost 50% of respondents told us that *Inside Circle* provides members with preventative care information you need to manage your health risks.

Also, from the open-ended comments, we learned that you want more health-related information, so we're going to provide more health topics. In order to make room for that information, we will be eliminating sections that weren't as widely read.

- Letter from the publisher (formerly on page 3)
- Members of Distinction (formerly on page 2) – your local Members of Distinction will now be featured in your chapter's *Circle News* newsletter.

Thank you to those of you who responded to the survey. Let us know what you think of the new look. Simply send an e-mail to [SeniorCircle@SeniorCircle.com](mailto:SeniorCircle@SeniorCircle.com). Have a great summer!

*Debbie*

## Congratulations!

The following members names were drawn from the survey respondents for a \$100 Target gift card.

**Carl Skipper**  
L.V. Stabler Chapter  
Greenville, AL

**Charles (Gene) Sellers**  
Chesterfield Chapter  
Chesterfield, SC

**Leroy Coleman**  
Lakeway Chapter  
Morristown, TN

**Beverly Bean**  
Lake Wales Chapter  
Lake Wales, FL

**Doris Mack**  
Fallbrook Chapter  
Fallbrook, CA

It seems that the “green” movement is growing in support across the country. We hope that you enjoy this new feature section.

The “green” movement is big. It has come full circle, right to your own backyard. Going green in the garden is easy: by choosing plants wisely and changing a few habits, you can have a beautiful lawn and flower garden that pleases the eye – and the earth.

Gardening is a favorite summer pastime. While you’re communing with nature, a good rule of thumb for your earth-friendly garden is to give back as much – or more – than you’re removing. This means preserving the natural balance of soil nutrients, water and vegetation. When greening your garden, remember that natural is “in” – and it’s also the easiest garden to create and care for.

#### Getting the dirt

Let’s start at the base of your garden: the soil. Test the soil to see what nutrients it contains and what it lacks, and choose your fertilizer carefully. Some fertilizers are made with ingredients that are harmful to the environment. The process of making fertilizers emits chemicals that damage the ozone layer and the finished product contains pollutants, too. Look for fertilizers that are labeled “natural organic” and “slow release” – these are the most environmentally friendly. Better yet, make your own compost and mulch.

Creating compost is easier than you think. A good biodegradable, nutrient-rich compost can be made from a combination of the following: food scraps, shredded paper, coffee grounds, bone meal, leaves or rotting bark and water. Mulch can also come from natural sources, such as leaves or grass clippings.

## Green your garden for environmentalism, beauty and easy maintenance

Think of mulch and compost as a protective blanket to retain ground water and smother invasive weeds.

### Fight & feed with natural products

Organic lawn products are safe for the environment because they are carbon-based and biodegradable. They are also safe to use around children and pets. Though these natural fertilizers don't act as quickly as synthetics do, they offer some advantages: you fertilize less often, water the fertilizer into the yard, and organic varieties don't burn plants.

Natural remedies can solve tough gardening challenges. Dish soap diluted with water and sprayed onto plants can help keep away mites and other bugs. Many gardening centers sell natural pest controls such as ladybugs, praying mantises, and other insects. For those stubborn dandelions, try corn gluten meal, which works well for broad-leafed plants. Corn gluten can be found in the weed and feed section at some gardening stores or farming co-ops.

### Local color

When selecting the flowers and plants for your garden, shop local nurseries and choose plants that are native to your area and grown locally. Flowers and plants that are indigenous to your region will be strong and hardy, more likely to survive and flourish, and easier to care for. Non-native plants are also called "exotic," "invasive," "alien," or "non-indigenous." They displace native vegetation and take water away from their more docile neighboring plants.

Planting deciduous trees (i.e., trees that are fast-growing, bloom seasonally and lose their leaves) close to your house provides shade, lowers electric bills, and cleans the air by removing carbon dioxide.

Some good choices are poplar, ash, birch, or maple. Cherry, crabapple, magnolia and dogwood trees flower when they are leafless or growing new leaves, which helps with pollination of flowers because they attract birds and bees.

An attractive and functional addition to your outdoor landscape is a rain garden, which is a shallow basin in your garden or yard that is filled with native plants. Plants in the rain garden collect rainwater that runs off the surrounding landscape, absorb the water and release it slowly. Rain gardens are growing in popularity because they minimize flooding, stabilize the flow of water and provide a natural filter for toxins.

### Caring for your garden

The primary cause of water waste is watering your garden too long and too often. Water early in the morning to avoid evaporation during the day and mold growth at night. Using a soaker hose or irrigation system will save on water bills and make sure that your garden receives the right amount

of water it needs, and no more. Installing rain sensors that shut off sprinklers when it's raining can provide significant savings on your water bill.

Finally, don't forget about the rest of your yard. Experts recommend keeping your grass longer to discourage weeds and insects, and cutting no more than one-third of the grass length each time you mow. Consider an electric or push mower as an alternative to your gas-powered riding mower. According to one estimate, gas-powered mowers consume an average 800 million gallons of fuel annually. Using a gas-powered lawn mower for an hour produces as much pollution as driving a car for 20 miles, according to the Environmental Protection Agency. Even small power tools like leaf blowers and edgers burn fuel that produces harmful gases. By using an electric or mechanical push mower, you'll be kinder to the environment, and get a good workout in the process. And remember to leave your grass clippings instead of bagging them up – more free mulch for your garden!



### Online resources for greening your garden

Soil testing  
[CSREES.USDA.gov](http://CSREES.USDA.gov)

Native and invasive plants in your area  
[wildflower.UTexas.edu/plants](http://wildflower.UTexas.edu/plants)

Invasive plants by state  
[plants.usda.gov/java/noxiousDriver#state](http://plants.usda.gov/java/noxiousDriver#state)

Creating a rain garden  
[raingarden.org](http://raingarden.org)

# Tradition, folklore & history abound

Contributed by Pamela Neher, Senior Circle Advisor  
Laredo Chapter - Laredo, Texas



**Irish eyes were smiling** on the Laredo Chapter this spring as the group embarked on a tour of the Emerald Isle. Ireland is a country rich with history and customs. Have you ever heard someone described as having 'kissed the Blarney stone?' This famous landmark is a stone said to bestow the gift of eloquence to all who kiss it.

St. Patrick's Day has a different flavor in Ireland than it does in the States. The Irish celebrate this day as a family holiday paying homage to the country's customs. Families gather in pubs for food, drink and music, but the celebration focuses on the history and culture, too. The pubs do not dye their beer green, as we do. "Why alter something that is perfect," we were told. Besides Guinness, a stout beer that locals nicknamed "Mother's Milk," another popular beverage is Bulmers, a strong, fermented apple cider.

Waterford crystal, known around the world for its fine quality and beauty, comes from Waterford, Ireland. Waterford was established during the Viking era and has a watch tower and wall that date from Viking days. Our walking tour included a visit to the Waterford crystal factory, where artisans still create masterpieces.

Part of Ireland's beauty is the country's topography: picturesque villages, national parks, narrow, winding



roads built in the 16th and 17th centuries, spectacular coastal routes such as the Ring of Kerry, the limestone landscape of Burren, known for its stark beauty and Neolithic tombs, and Galway, known as the "City of Tribes." Highlights of our tour were the Cliffs of Moher, 700-foot high cliffs overlooking the Aran



Jane Cripps and Mary Lee at Blarney Castle.

Islands and the Atlantic Ocean, and traveling by horse and buggy through Killkenny and actually seeing the remains of the historical homes of the “Potato Famine.”

Near Blarney, we visited a 10th century monastery and a cemetery with grave markers dating from the 15th century. We dined in grand style at several historic homes and famous castles. Our first meal was a medieval dinner at Bunratty Castle, built in 1425 and complete with original furnishings and tapestries. We ate with our hands, enjoyed Irish bagpipe music and entertainment, and were served “mead,” honey wine made from white clover honey, the drink of 10th century warriors.

We visited famous Georgian homes – all with doors painted a different color – and learned the reasons behind the color scheme were both decorative and functional. The doors are painted vivid colors because the Irish see the door as an extension of the warmth and hospitality of their home. The



Gloria Morales and Elva Hines loved the Waterford Crystal Factory.

different colors also serve another humorous purpose: to identify the house for men after a long night at the local pub. We weren’t sure which story was correct, but both may hold some truth!

No trip to Ireland is complete without a stop in Dublin where we visited the Blarney Woolen Mills, museums, Trinity College, Saint Patrick’s Cathedral, O’Connell Street and Grafton Street. The streets of Dublin were filled with gorgeous, fresh flower vendors.

We left the Emerald Isle with new friendships, great memories and an Irish blessing:

*May you count your blessings,  
one by one  
And when totaled by the lot  
May you find all you’ve been given  
To be more than what you sought  
May your journey be short,  
your burdens light  
May your spirit never grow old  
May all your clouds have silver linings  
And your rainbows full  
with pots of gold.  
– Author unknown*



Mary Lee, Sylvia Vela Cuellar, Mary Ibarra, Elva Hines and Patty Campos at the Castle of Killarney.



Elva Hines, Adelinas Martinex, Mary Ibarra, Sylvia Vela Cuellar and Mary Lee at a 10th Century Monastery outside of Dublin.

## Summer Driving Tips To Save Gas Dollars

Thinking twice about hitting the road this summer? As the travel season shifts into high gear, consumers continue to get pinched at the pump. Here are a few tips for getting around town cost-effectively or going coast-to-coast.

### Before You Go

Check current gas prices at more than 100,000 stations around the country:

GasBuddy.com  
GasPriceWatch.com

### Be smart at the pump

Fill up your car with the right octane level. Higher grades seldom provide a noticeable benefit in car performance. The best time of day to buy gas, according to Kiplinger.com, is first thing in the morning or late at night when less evaporation can occur. Also, stations usually raise prices during the day, prior to rush hour.

### Shop around

Gas prices vary depending on the gas station. Consider joining Sam's Club or Costco, which have discounted gas onsite for members, or shopping at grocery store-based fuel centers which offer discounts to regular shoppers. Several credit card companies offer cards that provide cash rebates for gas purchases.

### Maintain your car

Follow the manufacturer's instructions for car maintenance. Proper maintenance of air filters, spark plugs, fluid levels, the proper motor oil and correct tire inflation all contribute to better gas mileage.

### If you don't need it, leave it

Your car trunk and luggage rack are also culprits when it comes to fuel efficiency. Extra items add weight and decrease fuel economy. Use your luggage rack only when necessary, as it affects your car's aerodynamics, decreasing gas mileage. Keeping your car washed and waxed helps cut down on drag, too.

### Getting there faster is not cheaper

Sudden starts, sharp braking and high speeds all cut fuel efficiency. Ease off the gas and brake during stop-and-go traffic and improve your in-town mileage by up to 5 percent. On the interstate, your costs go up as your driving speed does. The DOE states that every 5 mph you drive over 65 mph represents a 7 percent decrease in fuel economy. According to the Alliance to Save Energy, this is like paying 10 cents extra for every gallon of gas over 60 mph.

### Plan your route in advance

Whether you're running errands, or trekking cross country, consolidate stops and plan your route in advance. AAA's TripTik Trip Planner helps you create an interactive map and calculate the cost of fuel for your trip. The service includes alerts for road construction, heavy traffic and other travel conditions, and can be tailored for fastest route, scenic route, and avoidance of toll roads. Call 1-800-222-1134 to obtain this free planner.



# Here comes the SUN

## **12 Cities Selected to Become “Solar America Cities”**

This past March, the U.S. Department of Energy (DOE) announced that it will make available up to \$2.4 million to 12 U.S. cities to advance solar energy.

The 2008 Solar America Cities were chosen for their commitment to overcoming barriers to and developing infrastructure that supports increased deployment of solar technologies in their municipalities. The development of solar energy technology is integral to President Bush’s Advanced Energy Initiative (AEI), which seeks to change the way we power our homes, offices and vehicles by increasing the use of clean, renewable technologies.

In addition to funding, DOE experts are available to assist with streamlining local regulations and practices (e.g., zoning and building codes) that affect the adoption of solar technologies by residents and businesses.

Cities selected are geographically diverse and have varying degrees of experience with solar technologies. Each city will adopt a variety of approaches to building up their solar infrastructure and deploying cutting-edge technologies, which include solar water heating, photovoltaics – a technology which turns sunlight into electricity, and concentrating solar power – and large-scale solar thermal technology.


Cities designated as 2008 Solar America Cities will each receive up to \$200,000 from DOE to help support their solar efforts.

### **2008 Solar America Cities**

Denver, CO  
Houston, TX  
Knoxville, TN  
Milwaukee, WI  
Minneapolis – St. Paul, MN  
Orlando, FL  
Philadelphia, PA  
Sacramento, CA  
San Antonio, TX  
San Jose, CA  
Santa Rosa, CA  
Seattle, WA

### **2007 Solar America Cities**

Ann Arbor, MI  
Austin, TX  
Berkeley, CA  
Boston, MA  
Madison, WI  
New Orleans, LA  
New York City, NY  
Pittsburgh, PA  
Portland, OR  
Salt Lake City, UT  
San Diego, CA  
San Francisco, CA  
Tucson, AZ



Growing trend of supper clubs  
combine friends, food and fun

# POTLUCK... *with a twist.*

What makes supper clubs so appealing is their adaptability. They can be as simple or fancy as you want – from a backyard barbecue to an epicurean exploration of new recipes. All you need is a willing group of hungry people!

**M**ealtime has always been a gathering time for food and fellowship. Over the last several years, supper clubs have had a rising popularity – an update on the age-old potluck dinners. Supper clubs offer the opportunity to learn new recipes, enjoy good food, and meet new people or gather regularly with friends.

## Getting Started

To organize a supper club, determine the participants, how often and where you will meet. Is the purpose to get to know new neighbors or create an event to see friends more regularly?

If the idea is to meet new people, look for members where your interests lie: put an announcement in your church newsletter or post a flyer at your fitness club, workplace or the specialty food store where you shop.

### Frequency & Invitation

Many groups enjoy regular Sunday suppers, while others prefer monthly or bimonthly meals with host duties rotating among members. Decide what frequency works best. The date and invitation can be as simple as an e-mail or phone call. Other groups use Web sites like evite.com to send virtual invitations.

### Format

The meal can be divided among members in a variety of ways, for example, by ingredient or dish (appetizer, entrée, salad, side item(s), wine, dessert). Members can bring a prepared menu item of their choice; a dish from a recipe that the host sends out prior to the gathering; or bring ingredients and cook the meal together. Sometimes the host prepares the main dish and others bring accompaniments. In other groups, hosts supply wine while others prepare the meal.

### Menu & Theme

Some popular supper club menu themes are ethnic cuisine, finger foods, holiday favorites, vegetarian, healthy cooking, gourmet menus, comfort food, or variations on a single ingredient or spice. Experiment with different food and wine combinations. Have a dessert bar. Ask your guests to bring their favorite casserole (prepared with traditional full-fat ingredients like mom used).

Other suggested themes include a formal English tea, a luau, a Mexican fiesta or an all-fondue meal. If the theme is ethnic food,

play music from that country and ask guests to come dressed in clothing of that culture. Show a classic movie or host a book club discussion, and serve food from that era or the setting for the story. One supper club rented *Some Like it Hot* and served spicy foods that reflected the movie's Miami setting. Another group resurrected old prom dresses and fixed favorite foods from their high school years.



Keep in mind that supper club doesn't have to take place in the evening. Many groups host afternoon barbecues, brunches, lunches and cocktail parties.

### The Setting

Keep it simple. Some hosts insist on matching place settings for each guest; others use paper plates and napkins. If you don't have enough plates for the group, consider putting together a colorful, eclectic table with inexpensive and unique china from yard sales and second-hand stores.

If space is an issue and the weather willing, consider a backyard picnic or a gathering at a local park. This lends itself well to a

casual meal with tailgating food, All-American favorites, sports themes, or a Derby-themed event complete with big floppy hats. An outdoor venue offers opportunities for after-dinner activities: badminton, bocci or croquet.

### Bon Appetit!

Supper clubs offer the opportunity to experiment with new recipes and learn to cook recipes that might otherwise seem intimidating – in a supportive environment with plenty of hands. People in a supper club say they're more likely to try new recipes than they would in their own kitchen. There's something about the camaraderie of cooking together that encourages you to find your inner Emeril or Rachel Ray. As a group, you're more likely to experiment when you have a team of helpers – and taste-testers.

### Online Menu Helpers...

These Web sites offer fabulous recipes, recipe exchange, wine pairings, entertainment suggestions and more.

*Cooking Light, Southern Living & more*  
myrecipes.com

*From celebrity chefs*  
recipelink.com

*70,000+ ethnic cuisine, region  
& type of dish*  
recipessource.com

*Bon Appetit and Gourmet, international  
cooking, food and wine dictionary,  
technique videos & more*  
epicurious.com

foodnetwork.com

allrecipes.com

epicurean.com

kraft.com

foodandwine.com

## MORE THAN SKIN DEEP

### Smart sun safety can protect your appearance and health

#### SPF

To provide proper sun protection, a sunscreen should have a sun protection factor (SPF) of 15 or higher. The number refers to the product's ability to protect the skin, or the amount of time it takes to burn unprotected skin versus sunscreen-protected skin. For example, a sunscreen with SPF of 15 allows you to spend 15 times longer in the sun without burning. It's important to note that SPF protection does not increase proportionally with an increased SPF number. An SPF of 15 absorbs 93% of the sun's rays, but an SPF of 30 absorbs 97% and SPF of 50, 99%.



When you were a child, those freckles sprinkled across your nose were considered cute, and a tan was a 'healthy glow.' Over the years, though, more research has come to light about the damaging effects of sun overexposure.

Most of us have received the majority of the sun exposure that will affect our skin's health: the American Academy of Dermatologists estimates that 80 percent of lifetime sun exposure occurs by age 18. Additionally, your risk of skin cancer increases with age and a prior family history. Skin type and characteristics, ethnicity, and geography also play a role.

By becoming sun-savvy, you can protect your skin and your health throughout the year.



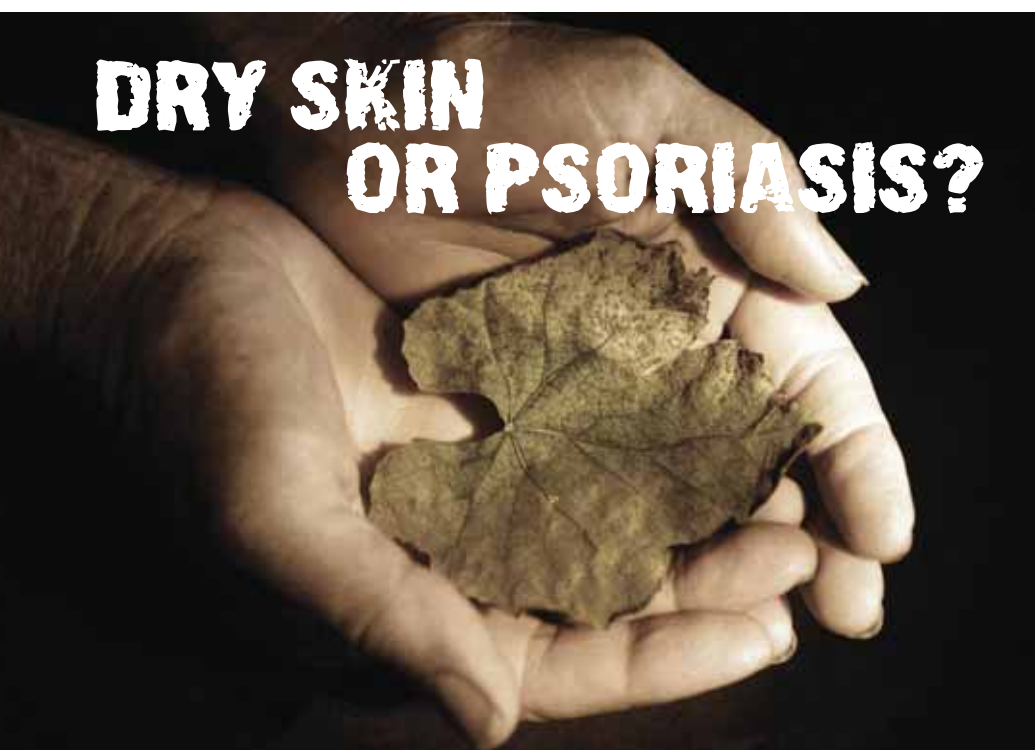
#### Understanding UVA and UVB

We typically associate sunburns with summer, but your skin is exposed to sunlight – and potential sun damage – year-round. The sun's ultraviolet (UV) rays, UVA and UVB, affect the skin in different ways.

#### UVA

UVA rays are a longer wavelength and make up 95 percent of the sun's rays that reach the earth. Though less intense than UVB rays, they actually penetrate deeper into the skin and result in long-term damage. UVA rays are present year-round, even in winter and in the shade, and can penetrate clouds and glass. UVA rays penetrate into the dermis causing DNA and collagen damage. They play a

## DRY SKIN OR PSORIASIS?



Red, dry skin doesn't always indicate chapped or sunburned skin. Psoriasis is skin that is red, dry and crusty or scaly, and usually found where skin folds – such as elbows, knees, palms, feet, scalp, or your genital area. Psoriasis is a genetic condition, meaning that it's inherited: you cannot catch it from another person.

How can you tell if you have psoriasis? If your skin is redder or scaly than usual, particularly in the areas mentioned, see a dermatologist for diagnosis and treatment. People with psoriasis experience a white scaly buildup of skin cells, which reddens and irritates the skin underneath.

Because psoriasis is genetic, it can be controlled, but not completely cured. It

significant role in skin aging and cellular changes that can lead to skin cancer. Experts believe that UVA rays cause 80 percent of skin aging.

### UVB

UVB rays are shorter, more intense rays that affect the outer layer of the skin, the epidermis. These rays are responsible for changes in skin color, such as a burn or a tan, but they can also accelerate skin aging. UVB rays are strongest from 10 a.m. to 4 p.m., and most prevalent from April to October. They are stronger closer to the equator, such as tropical locations, or at high elevations where the air is thinner.

You don't have to be outdoors to get a sunburn. UV rays reflect off other surfaces like concrete, water, sand and snow. Because UVA rays can penetrate glass, you are exposed to the sun while driving.

### Protect yourself year-round

The simplest way to protect your skin is to cover up: with a good sunscreen, protective clothing, a hat and eyewear. When buying sunscreen, look for a product that contains both UVA and UVB protection, usually labeled 'broad spectrum.'

A woman's daily skin care routine is more likely than a man's to incorporate a product

that has sunscreen. However, men should pay special attention to skincare: according to Centers for Disease Control (CDC), damaging sunburns are more prevalent among men than women.

"There is no such thing as a healthy tan," says Dr. Jason Weaver of Brazos Valley Dermatology in College Station, Texas. "Any change in your natural skin color is a sign of damaged tissue. Each sunburn more than doubles your future risk for skin cancer, as well as other ailments from cataracts to a compromised immune system."

Daily, apply about one ounce of sunscreen, 20 to 30 minutes before leaving the house. Reapply this amount every two hours, or more often, if you are in the water or exercising. You can also choose a water-resistant or waterproof sunscreen if you plan to be in the water while outside.

Remember to protect all exposed areas, not just your face: your scalp, ears, neck, chest and hands are susceptible to sunburn and premature aging, as well. Even if you take good care of your face, neglecting these areas will reveal your actual age!

## Skin Cancer

- Skin cancer is the most common form of cancer in the U.S. today, with more than one million cases diagnosed annually.
- One in three Caucasian Americans will develop skin cancer in their lifetime.
- Melanoma, the most serious and fastest-growing form of skin cancer in the U.S., has been linked to childhood sunburns. Melanoma cases have more than doubled in the past two decades.
- Basal cell carcinoma and squamous cell carcinoma, the two most common types of non-melanoma skin cancers, have a cure rate as high as 95%, if detected and treated early.
- Approximately 90% of skin cancers occur on the head, neck, or ears, lips or hands.

Sources: National Cancer Institute, American Cancer Society

may go away on its own, or it can be treated with creams, lotions or oral medication. Sprays, foams and phototherapy (light treatment) are among the newest options.

Various environmental factors can irritate psoriasis: changes in the weather, illness or injury, certain medications or foods. Monitor your skin's reaction to these changes to track what helps – and irritates – your skin.

A few tips from the American Academy of Dermatology for managing psoriasis symptoms this summer:

**Wear sunscreen.** Sun exposure can help psoriasis, but sunburns can inflame

the condition and many treatments increase sensitivity to sunlight. Wear sunscreen that is fragrance-free.

**Use plenty of moisturizer.** Dry skin can cause psoriasis to flare.

**Take a swim.** Swimming is good exercise and helps psoriasis, especially if you're in saltwater.

**Avoid cuts, scrapes and bug bites.** Skin injuries can often lead to psoriasis breakouts.

**Stay cool.** Perspiration can irritate your skin, so seek shade and indoor areas.



## HDL: Your Heart's Quarterback

*A good HDL score can be a star player in protecting your heart health*

**High cholesterol can be a good thing - that is, if you're talking about the right number.**

For many, maintaining the right balance of good (HDL) and bad (LDL) cholesterol can be a confusing two-step. We know what to do when it comes to controlling high cholesterol: a healthy diet, regular exercise, and the “right” fats, among others; yet, we’re not as sure about what to do to boost our good cholesterol number.

Cholesterol comes from two sources: our bodies, and the foods we eat. By making smart choices, we can help our bodies achieve a healthy balance.

### What is HDL?

HDL refers to the high density lipoprotein cholesterol circulating in your blood. Unlike LDL, it is not contained in the foods you eat, but wholly produced by your body. HDL cholesterol makes up 20 to 30 percent of your total blood cholesterol. Evidence suggests that HDL protects against fatty deposits in the artery walls in your heart.

Some research indicates that the ratio of total cholesterol to HDL is actually more significant in determining your risk for coronary artery disease than LDL numbers alone. Studies have found that for every 1mg increase in your HDL number, your risk of heart attack decreases by 2 to 3 percent.

### What's the ideal range?

Cholesterol is measured in milligrams (mg) per decileter (dL) of blood. So, most people should establish a target of 60 mg/dL for HDL cholesterol. Doctors typically consider an HDL level below 40 mg/dL as a risk factor for heart disease. Women typically have higher HDL numbers than men, because the female hormone estrogen tends to increase HDL levels.

### What can I do?

**Make sure your diet includes some HDL building blocks.** While there are no foods that are proven to raise HDL, there are certain foods known to lower LDL and tip the ratio in HDL's favor. Aim for two servings per week of foods rich in niacin (vitamin B3) such as white-meat chicken, mackerel, trout, salmon and peanuts. Concentrate your carbohydrate intake around whole grains, fresh vegetables and fruits, low-fat or fat-free dairy products, and high fiber foods. Good fiber choices include oats, oranges, pears, carrots, dried peas and beans.

**Incorporate soy into your diet.** If you're not a fan of tofu, don't worry – there are other ways to get soy protein. Many varieties of plain and flavored soy milk, and other products, are available. Studies have shown that regularly eating soy may help reduce LDL cholesterol and triglycerides, as well as enhance blood vessel function.

### Two Types

We all have two types of cholesterol in our bloodstream: the good kind, HDL (high-density lipoproteins) and the bad kind, LDL (low-density lipoproteins).

The two types work together in a health balancing act: the better our HDL, the better our protection against the effects of LDL.

**Choose your fat calories carefully.** Limit your daily consumption of fats to 20 to 35 percent of your total calories, and less than 7 percent of this should be saturated fats. Remember that soft spread or liquid butters, margarine and vegetable oils have less saturated and trans fat than sticks have. Also, sparing use of monounsaturated fats (such as those found in olive and peanut oil) is healthier.

**Remember that a low-fat food isn't necessarily a low-cholesterol food.** The American Heart Association's (AHA) recommends limiting your daily cholesterol to 300 mg/day for people with normal LDL (bad) levels and less than 200 mg/day for people with high LDL levels. An egg, for example, has about 213 mg of dietary cholesterol. It's okay to eat an egg, but you should skip other sources of cholesterol for the remainder of the day, such as half-

and-half in your coffee, red meat, mayonnaise, and "hidden" cholesterol in foods prepared with eggs, such as baked goods.

**Exercise moderation.** A glass of wine with dinner may actually help your HDL levels. Research has shown that the ingredients of red wine may contribute to a small increase in HDL levels and help to flush deposits from the cells of artery walls. It's important, however, to limit your consumption: one drink per day for women or two per day for men.

**Learn to decode food labels.** "Low fat" doesn't necessarily mean "low cholesterol." When reading labels, pay attention to the level of saturated fat and trans fat in each serving – and how big a serving size is. The AHA recommends seeking out foods that have zero or low levels of trans fat. Also, be

aware that ingredients are listed on the label according to how much of that ingredient is used in the food product – so, food items where fats and oils appear further down the list will be healthier choices.

**Get moving for 30 minutes, five days a week.** Regular physical activity, in addition to a proper diet, is a major contributing factor to high HDL numbers. According to the Mayo Clinic, for every 2 pounds you lose, your HDL may increase by .35 mg/dL - or 1 mg/dL for every 6 pounds. One study showed that regular aerobic exercise increased HDL cholesterol by 3 to 9 percent in otherwise healthy, sedentary adults.

*Sources: National Cholesterol Education Program, The American Heart Association, Mayo Clinic*

## Seeing Eye to Eye

### *Prompt medical treatment of cataracts yields better outcomes*

Waiting to take care of a cataract? Don't wait too long. The sooner you schedule cataract surgery after diagnosis, the better your outcome will be, according to studies.

Cataract surgery is one of the most common surgeries in the United States, as well as one of the safest and most effective procedures: 90 percent of cataract patients have significant vision improvements after surgery, according to the National Eye Institute (NEI). More than half of Americans will develop cataracts or have cataract surgery by age 80, according to the Mayo Clinic, and surgeons no longer recommend waiting to schedule surgery until the cataract has matured.

Recent studies show that prompt surgical intervention (i.e., having the cataract removed within six months of diagnosis) results in the best outcomes. A study published in the *Canadian Medical Association Journal* found that people who waited six months or longer to schedule their surgery experienced more vision loss, negative events such as falls, and reduced quality of life.

Your age at the time of surgery can also impact your vision, post-procedure. A *British Journal of Ophthalmology* article noted that cataract surgery patients in their 60s were more likely to achieve 20/40 uncorrected vision than patients over age 80.

The best tool for monitoring your eye health is regular eye exams, at least every other year, beginning at age 65.



# Picture Your Prostate

An MRI can help direct future treatment for prostate cancer patients



## Risks linked to prostate cancer

### Age

Being 50 or older increases risk of prostate cancer.

### Race

African-American men are at highest risk, followed by Hispanic and Native American men.

### Family history

Prostate cancer risk is two to three times higher for men whose fathers or brothers have had the disease.

### Diet

The risk of prostate cancer seems to be higher for men who eat high-fat diets with few fruits and vegetables.

Magnetic resonance imaging (MRI) is a valuable tool for detecting and diagnosing abnormalities because of the detailed picture it provides of abnormal and normal tissue.

Traditionally used as a screening tool, new research indicates that the MRI can play a role in helping to predict outcomes and direct future treatment for cancer patients, as well.

A recent study at the University of California at San Francisco compared the MRIs and patient outcomes of 80 prostate cancer patients who had radiation therapy. MRI images were studied for tumor size, stage and the extent to which the cancer had spread beyond the prostate.

Researchers found that the degree to which the cancer had spread (known as “extracapsular extension”) beyond the prostate membrane, as shown on an MRI, was an important predictor of cancer recurrence and further spreading. The

risk level for metastasis was higher among patients with extracapsular extension larger than 5 millimeters (roughly the size of a pencil eraser).

The study, published in the June 2007 edition of *Radiology* magazine, is the first of its kind to show additional value of the MRI in not only detecting abnormalities, but also predicting outcomes for patients scheduled to undergo radiation therapy.

Prostate cancer is the second leading cause of cancer death in American men behind only lung cancer, and accounts for about 9 percent of cancer-related deaths in men, according to the American Cancer Society.

During 2008, about 186,320 new cases of prostate cancer will be diagnosed in the United States – one in six men.

Early detection and treatment of prostate cancer continues to improve. More than nine out of 10 prostate cancers are found in the local and regional stages (local means it is still confined to the prostate; regional means it has spread to nearby areas, but not to distant locations, such as bone).

The proper time for a man to start getting yearly prostate exams is the subject of debate. But by the age of 50, you will most likely have gone through the process at least once. Talk with your physician or urologist for more information and types of tests for prostate cancer.

## A Better Brain

Eating right is no longer just a matter of weight control or energy level. Studies have shown that what you eat can actually affect how you think.

Here are a few smart choices to include on your plate each day.



### Eat your way to an improved memory



#### Start the day with fiber.

A fiber-rich meal in the morning helps concentration and memory. Foods with iron, B-vitamins, folic acid, calcium and magnesium are fuel for the brain. Whole grain breads and cereals are a good choice, and while you may not want them for breakfast, beans have been shown to improve cognitive function.



#### An egg a day keeps the doctor away.

Eggs have a mixed reputation. Eating too many contributes to high cholesterol. However, eggs are a good source of protein. Eggs contribute choline, a fat-like substance responsible for brain function and health which may also protect the brain from Alzheimer's Disease. Other sources of choline are peanuts, wheat germ, flaxseed and olive oil.



#### Fish really is brain food.

Eating foods that are rich in omega-3 fatty acids keep the brain's cell membranes flexible and allows important nutrients to pass through. Good sources of omega-3 fatty acids found in deep sea fish such as salmon, yellow fin tuna, mackerel and herring. You can also take a fish oil supplement daily.



#### Choose fruits and vegetables with deep, bright colors.

Bright-colored fruits and vegetables contain beta carotene, vitamins C and E, and antioxidants that counteract free radicals, nourish and protect the brain, and improve cognitive as well as motor skills like balance and coordination.

## HOWARD HARRIS TRAVELS IN CYCLES

Howard Harris, retired sign painter turned cyclist, turns 81 in August – and he’s still approaching life at full speed.

A member of the South Baldwin Chapter in Foley, Ala., he’s also an author. *The Bicycle Tourist: A Laidback Style of Bike Touring*, details his solo cycling trips from Detroit to Toronto, Pittsburgh to Florida, including visits to hostels, bicycle hospitality houses and tent camping.

The Royal Oak, Mich. native learned to ride his sister’s bike as a youngster. At age 12, he got his own boys’ Schwinn, and an avid cyclist was born. “I rode the bicycle home from the dealer,” Howard says. “It could go fast and I went maybe too fast, as I almost dented a car fender.”

A blind date, combined with a common love of Scrabble and bicycling brought Howard together with his wife, Helena, a Southern belle from Mobile, Ala.

As the couple approached middle age and began to look for exercise outlets that were enjoyable, Helena enrolled in Weight Watchers and bought the couple a pair of matching bicycles from Sears. The pair rediscovered the fun and fitness benefits of cycling and Howard’s affection for peddling took a turn from casual hobby to career focus. Slimmer and healthier than he’d been in years, Howard invested in a touring bicycle and enrolled in a writing class at Faulkner College in Gulf Shores, Ala.



“I was 55 years old, and it was a major turn in my bicycling career. In that basic writing class, I even wrote an essay about my Weight Watchers experience with my wife,” he recalls.

The class and his rekindled interest in cycling lit a spark. After much research at the local library, his first book was published in 2000. *The Bicycle Tourist* (Gateway Press, Inc.) provides “a fascinating ride with visits to bicycle hospitality homes and home hostels, the easy P.A.L.M. rides across Michigan for beginners, the best Mid-West North-South route to Florida, solos from Detroit to Gatlinburg to Florida, bicycle through the valleys, solo trips from

Detroit to Toronto, interesting Alabama rides, new developing bikeways of America, and bike maps of America.”

He has completed a second book about the trails and bike paths of Baldwin County, awaiting a sponsor to be published.

The Harrises reside in Gulf Shores and are active in Senior Circle. It’s not uncommon for Howard to cycle to South Baldwin Regional Medical Center for breakfast. He loves life, learning and adventure.

At age 12,  
he graduated to  
his own boys’ Schwinn,  
... “I rode the bicycle  
home from  
the dealer!”

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The spring issue of *Inside Circle* featured the first-place story, "The Black Cane," by LaNelle Witt of the Eastern New Mexico Chapter in Roswell. We are pleased to share the second-place story and announce the two honorable mention winners:

Honorable Mentions

"The Pool Game"  
by *Walt Friedrich*  
Berwick Chapter  
Berwick, Pennsylvania

"All Queued Up"  
by *Lee Daugherty*  
Bedford County Chapter  
Shelbyville, Tennessee

Congratulations to Walt and Lee!  
You can read their wonderful  
stories on [SeniorCircle.com](http://SeniorCircle.com).

Thanks again to all who  
submitted their work.  
Each of you should feel proud of  
your accomplishment. With 90  
short stories submitted, it is clear  
that our Association's talent is  
abundant - which makes it all the  
more challenging to choose  
our winners. Enjoy the  
following second-place story,  
"Lady of the Fire."

# Lady of the Fire

Edward P. Schmidt,  
Fannin Chapter, Blue Ridge, Georgia



*Prologue – In 1983, I purchased property in the mountains of north Georgia. At the time, I lived in Peachtree City, Georgia. The cabin on the property was new, but just a shell. It took me one year and many weekends to finish off the inside. I loved everything about the place, but especially the warmth, nurturing quaintness of the fireplace. However, there was something strange about the formation of the flames dancing. Somehow there seemed an odd eeriness of the movement of the flames. I never really quite understood what it was I was imagining. Over the years, I totally forgot about it. Now, after an absence of ten years, I am retired and in the cabin full-time.*

**The first time I noticed it, I didn't pay much attention.** I was in my rocking chair listening to my favorite Chopin CD, and watching the warm glow of the logs burning in the fireplace. I felt that someone or something was trying to communicate with me, but I was too mellowed out to give it much thought.

Two nights later in the same situation, my attention was piqued. On the right side of the burning logs, a distinct flame rose larger and higher than any other. It was shaped as a caricature of a lady dancing, arms stretched upward, bobbing, weaving, at once bowing down, then again reaching for the sky. I was fascinated, almost frightened by what I was watching! It was what I had seen two nights ago in the same place. I shivered as I realized that this was the enigma I had puzzled over ten years earlier!

I ruled out coincidence since these were new, different logs I was burning. Previous ashes had been taken out, and yet, there in the same spot was the dancing lady! I was shaken, and began to think of this dancing lady as a poor lost soul whose eternal task was to forever dance as a flame in fireplaces everywhere, or perhaps only always in my fireplace? I cannot describe the fear I felt as I watched transfixed. I would not have been overly shocked had this flame called out my name!

I did not sleep well for a week, nor did I use my fireplace. At the end of the week I searched my woodpiles and carefully selected types of logs I hadn't used the two previous times. I wondered about many things I had heard and read about – “life after death,” “reincarnation,” the “last time around,” and the “next time around.” Someone once said that if a person comes back in a form that entices a living person, that the two will trade places magically! As with so many other theories I considered this laughable.

I carefully arranged the logs I would light in a few hours. I was almost afraid at what I would see again. I sipped on a brandy and listened to Rachmaninoff's Second Symphony, movement III Allegro, which by the way, was to be played during my funeral!

As I watched, unable to turn away, I felt as if my inner self, my very soul, began to move toward the fireplace, ever so slowly, always staring directly in the face of the lady of the fire. When she stopped dancing, I started dancing. It seems I have taken her place now. As I burn and dance to the logs I lit, I watch as she slowly smiles and rocks back and forth in my favorite chair.

*Epilogue – No one knows where I have gone.*



## ALABAMA

**South Baldwin Chapter, Foley**  
June Weber, Senior Circle Assistant Fran Barr and Barry Lawton play a color touching game at the Taste of Italy luncheon.



## Union County Chapter, Anna

Members had the opportunity to meet Union County Hospital's newest general surgeon, Dr. Job Pontillas. L-R: Irene Rendleman, Marjorie Kirkpatrick, Helen Hickam, Dr. Pontillas and Mary Ann Chenoweth.



## ARIZONA

**Payson Chapter, Payson**  
Amy Petersen dressed the part for the St. Patrick's Day member luncheon.

## KENTUCKY

**Three Rivers Chapter, Louisa**  
Elizabeth Smallwood and Carolyn Wellman created award-winning Valentine cards.



## FLORIDA

**North Okaloosa Chapter, Crestview**  
Juanita Snipes and Peggy Aceves, along with other chapter members, took a tour of the Mission San Jose in San Antonio.



## LOUISIANA

**Northern Louisiana Chapter, Ruston**  
Nellie Massey and Maxine Coleman enjoy painting sun-catchers at the Valentine's party.



## ILLINOIS

**Gateway Regional Chapter, Granite City**  
Dorothy Watkins and Ruth Dagon on a chapter outing to St. Louis Mills.

## NEW MEXICO

**Alta Vista Regional Chapter, Las Vegas**  
Alexandra Walter and Kathy Gould at supper club at Dick's Restaurant.



## NORTH CAROLINA

**Martin General Chapter, Williamston**



Food, fellowship and fun! Left: Imogene Ross and Priscilla Baker. Right: Marjorie Roche and Mary Alice Bunting.

## PENNSYLVANIA

### Lock Haven Chapter, Lock Haven

Wayne and Roberta Doyle went all out for the St. Patrick's party.



### Pottstown Chapter, Pottstown

Arline and Russ Scharneck relax at a chapter luncheon.



## TEXAS

### Cleveland Regional Chapter, Cleveland

Tour guide "Rattlesnake Ross" helps Florian Chalfant stick her toe in the Rio Grande River during a chapter trip to the Big Bend area of Texas.

### Hill Regional Chapter, Hillsboro

Members traveled to the National Quilting Convention in Houston.



## SOUTH CAROLINA

### Springs Chapter, Lancaster

Pat and Jim Price enjoy the beautiful Daniel Stowe Botanical Gardens and Orchid Conservatory in Belmont, N.C.



### Laredo Chapter, Laredo

Gloria and Refugio Escobedo at the chapter's Valentine's celebration.

## TENNESSEE



### Dyersburg Chapter, Dyersburg

The 'Sittin and Stitchin' ladies show off their handiwork. L-R: Linda Roberson, Jeanne Huss, Pam Sirmans, Evelyn Stokes and Dorcas Stuckey.

### South Texas Regional Chapter, Jourdanon

Bill and Katie Schuchman pictured on the Great Wall of China on the chapter's trip to Beijing.



### Jackson Chapter, Jackson

Maelene Barnes, Gail Sorensen and Joy Joyner had a ball on the chapter's trip to the Southern Caribbean.



### Weatherford Chapter, Weatherford

Judy Gibson and Reuben Hager at birthday bingo.



### SkyRidge Chapter, Cleveland

Pat Thompson and Viola Keller enjoy coffee served by Jack Bache at our weekly Breakfast Bunch.

## UTAH

### Mountain West Chapter, Tooele

Dana Smith gets up close with a stuffed elk at the Hardware Ranch Elk Refuge in Hyrum, Utah.



I may not dance 'til dawn  
but I can still watch the sun come up.



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