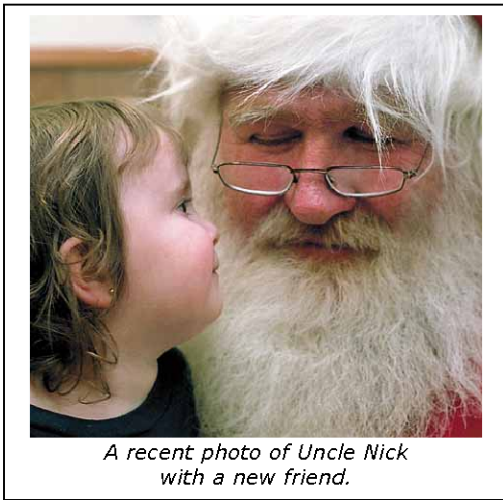




AOC Newsletter – December 2009

The secret to happiness is not in doing what one likes to do, but in liking what one has to do. Anonymous

Arthritis May Affect the Future of Large Distribution Company



A recent photo of Uncle Nick with a new friend.

Mr. Chris Kringle (a.k.a. Uncle Nick) stopped by for a visit last month. He figured while he was in Frederick, he would make an

appointment so I could assess some of his aches and pains. He is a jolly old fellow who owns an established distribution company in the north. His business requires a lot of attention. He prepares all year for one global event.

He said his knees and back have been bothering him lately. I did a complete history and physical examination. I then addressed the weight issue since he was overweight. I told him if he didn't make a greater effort to shed some pounds, his knee pain would only get worse. As for his back pain... weight loss would certainly help, but I told him he might also get temporary relief with IDD. This therapy is non-invasive, has an 86 percent success rate, and requires no surgery.

I also introduced him to a new program I developed this past year called *Have Your Best Year Ever*. The program includes aggressive exercises, a nutritional guide, and systemized goal setting to keep him on track.

I mentioned to him that there are some great regenerative arthritis treatments available to those who are prime candidates - the physically active who are at an ideal weight. I would love to

help him out because he has certainly shown me the true meaning of naughty and nice!

No matter how wonderful he is, Uncle Nick seems to start off with good intentions, but he is easily distracted by the temptation of sweets and his devout attention to his business with less attention to his health. It's difficult to convince people they need to focus more attention on themselves and adopt healthier living habits. Maybe in 2010, he will adopt a New Year's resolution (?!

He's now approaching his busiest time of year. He has a loyal but odd looking staff that have been with him since the beginning. They too are feeling the effects of getting older and have joints that creak with age. And, with an uncertain economy, he is hesitant to increase staff. Uncle Nick also lives in the extreme north (a land of perpetual snow) where cold weather can play havoc with his joints.

Uncle Nick and his wife have been happily married for what seems like hundreds of years. They don't have any children of their own, but make it a point to extend their generosity to children everywhere. In fact each year they receive tons of letters from the kids they meet.

Mrs. Kringle works by his side in his business and travels with him on his annual deliveries. She also helps on the family farm with the livestock and provides support to all their staff. She is the "go to" person when stockings need mending and cookies need to be baked. I haven't met anyone who hasn't appreciated the amazing person she is.

Uncle Nick and his wife are legendary. They're the life of every party, and are the Golden Couple, to whom everyone wants to talk. If you're not sure how to identify them in a crowd, you'll know it instantly, when you hear his laugh, it sort of sounds like, "ho-ho-ho."



To celebrate growing older, I once wrote the 45 lessons life taught me. It is the most-requested column I've ever written. My odometer rolled over to 90 in August, so here is the column once more

Written By Regina Brett, 90 years old, Cleveland, Ohio

1. Life isn't fair, but it's still good.
2. When in doubt, just take the next small step.
3. Life is too short to waste time hating anyone...
4. Your job won't take care of you when you are sick. Your friends and parents will. Stay in touch.
5. Pay off your credit cards every month.
6. You don't have to win every argument. Agree to disagree.
7. Cry with someone. It's more healing than crying alone.
8. It's OK to get angry with God. He can take it.
9. Save for retirement starting with your first pay check.
10. When it comes to chocolate, resistance is futile.
11. Make peace with your past so it won't mess up the present.
12. It's OK to let your children see you cry.
13. Don't compare your life to others. You have no idea what their journey is all about.
14. If a relationship has to be a secret, you shouldn't be in it.
15. Everything can change in the blink of an eye. But don't worry; God never blinks.
16. Take a deep breath. It calms the mind.
17. Get rid of anything that isn't useful, beautiful or joyful.
18. Whatever doesn't kill you really does make you stronger.
19. It's never too late to have a happy childhood. But the second one is up to you and no one else.
20. When it comes to going after what you love in life, don't take no for an answer.
21. Burn the candles, use the nice sheets, wear the fancy lingerie. Don't save it for a special occasion, today is special.
22. Over prepare, then go with the flow.
23. Be eccentric now. Don't wait for old age to wear purple.
24. The most important sex organ is the brain.
25. No one is in charge of your happiness but you.
26. Frame every so-called disaster with these words 'In five years, will this matter?'
27. Always choose life.
28. Forgive everyone everything.
29. What other people think of you is none of your business.
30. Time heals almost everything. Give time.
31. However good or bad a situation is, it will change.
32. Don't take yourself so seriously. No one else does.
33. Believe in miracles.
34. God loves you because of who God is, not because of anything you did or didn't do.
35. Don't audit life. Show up and make the most of it now.
36. Growing old beats the alternative -- dying young.
37. Your children get only one childhood.

38. All that truly matters in the end is that you loved.
39. Get outside every day. Miracles are waiting everywhere.
40. If we all threw our problems in a pile and saw everyone else's, we'd grab ours back.
41. Envy is a waste of time. You already have all you need.
42. The best is yet to come.
43. No matter how you feel, get up, dress up and show up.
44. Yield.
45. Life isn't tied with a bow, but it's still a gift."

Chocolate, and 7 Other Foods to Lower Blood Pressure

A healthy diet is key when it comes to lowering your blood pressure

By Joy Bauer
TODAYShow.com contributor

Optimal blood pressure is at or below 120/80 mmHg.

If you've been diagnosed with high blood pressure, your doctor has probably already told you the basics. You can control blood pressure by getting to, and maintaining, a healthy weight; reducing your "bad" cholesterol (LDL) if it's high; limiting the salt in your diet; exercising; and adding calcium, vitamin D, magnesium, and potassium to your diet.

The following eight foods are among the best of the best when it comes to lowering your blood pressure.

Skim milk

Skim milk provides calcium and vitamin D, two nutrients that work as a team to help reduce blood pressure by about three to 10 percent. Although this doesn't sound like much, it could add up to about a 15 percent reduction in risk for cardiovascular disease.

Spinach, unsalted sunflower seeds, beans (black, white, navy, lima, pinto, kidney)

Spinach, unsalted sunflower seeds and beans are all loaded with magnesium, a key ingredient for lowering and maintaining healthy blood pressure levels. These foods also provide lots of potassium, a primary nutrient in the fight against high blood pressure (see below).

Baked white potato, banana, soybeans

These three foods provide ample potassium. Your blood levels of potassium and sodium are inextricably linked. When potassium is low, the body retains sodium (and too much sodium raises blood pressure). When potassium is high, the body gets rid of sodium. Eating potassium-rich foods is important for maintaining a healthy balance of both minerals and, by extension, for keeping blood pressure low.

Important note: Do *not* take potassium supplements unless specifically prescribed by your doctor. Too much potassium will upset the balance, and could have serious, even life-threatening, consequences.

Dark chocolate

Hooray for dark chocolate! Eating about 30 calories a day — that's less than half an ounce of dark chocolate — was

associated with a lowering of blood pressure without weight gain or other adverse effects, according to a study in the July 4, 2007, issue of JAMA (Journal of the American Medical Association).

How to Know if a Piece of Furniture is an Antique

Steve Tucker

The best way to know if that piece of furniture Grandma left you in her will is an **antique** or faux is to do research about it. You must first examine your furniture and take notes and photos of it. Make sure you keep it in a safe place while doing your research. Remember that the condition of the furniture affects its worth.

Just because it is old, does not mean it is antique. However, this does not mean it has no value. Try your hand at being an antique furniture detective. Borrow books from the library which may help you identify what period and style your furniture is.

Try to find out as much about that furniture from elder relatives or friends who may know something about it. Maybe Grandma had a diary which mentions it, or better yet, it served as a prop in an old photograph.

Remember that the furniture's antiquity is, at times, compromised by its authenticity. For example, refinished furniture loses the original varnish or patina, removing its wear-and-tear look removes its value too. If altered (like re-upholstering), embellished (adding carving to a previously plain area), restored (re-varnishing) or combined (two parts from different pieces are combined as one), the furniture is not original anymore.

Sometimes furniture is a revival piece, replica, or worse, a forgery, which may look authentic to you, but is worthless to an expert antique appraiser.

Visit antique shops and see what are similar pieces and how much they are valued. There are also antique markets published in the newspapers which you may decide to check out. There are also antique dealers associations which have a calendar of events.

Attend family estate auctions, open house restorations and museum exhibits to learn what antiques are being offered for sale and the value people are paying to own them.

Go online. **eBay** has an entire category on antiques - from Egyptian antiquities to Asian antiques. Search each item and possibly find one that matches your own. You may also contact the seller of the furniture similar to yours and ask a few questions.

New words added to Webster's dictionary

Merriam-Webster announced that it has added new words to the pages of its Collegiate Dictionary. Among these additions include: webisode, a television episode viewed from the web; staycation, a vacation that occurs near one's home; and vlog, a form of blog that features videos.

Caramelized Onion and Potatoes

De-stress your dinner prep with this simple make-ahead caramelized onion and potato dish.

Ingredients

- 5 lbs russet potatoes, peeled and quartered
- 1/2 cup butter, divided
- 8 oz cream cheese
- 3 large onions: peeled, halved and very thinly sliced
- 1/2 cup milk or half and half
- Salt and pepper to taste

Method

In a large frying pan, melt 4 tablespoons butter and sauté onions over a low medium heat, until caramelized, stirring often so as not to scorch. Cook until they are very soft, 15-20 minutes. Turn off heat, add cream cheese, and stir until melted. While caramelizing onions, cook potatoes in a large pot of water until fork tender. Drain and mash with remaining butter and milk. When at desired consistency, add onion and cream cheese mixture. Mix well and season to taste with salt and pepper. If needed, thin mixture with some milk or half and half. Place potatoes in a large microwave safe casserole dish and refrigerate overnight or up to two days. When ready to serve, microwave on 1/2 power for 10 minutes. Stir, then heat until very hot, stopping and stirring occasionally, 8-10 minutes.

Notes: You could easily bake this in an oven, but when oven space is at a premium on the special day, it is nice to have dish that you can microwave. Sometimes I stick it under the broiler just to let the top get golden brown. Serves 10

Sweet Potato Casserole

This is a must have recipe for any holiday dinner. This sweet potato casserole is always completely devoured.

Ingredients:

- 3 large cooked sweet potatoes, pureed
- 1 cup sugar
- 2 eggs
- 1 tsp vanilla
- 1/2 cup melted butter
- 1/3 cup milk

Topping:

- 1 cup light brown sugar
- 1 cup chopped pecans
- 1/3 cup flour
- 1/3 cup butter softened

Directions:

Mix the first six ingredients together in processor and process until well blended. Combine the remaining ingredients in another bowl and set aside. Place sweet potato mixture into a greased baking dish. Add topping over potato mixture. Bake at 350 degrees for 25 minutes. Serves 8

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AOC OFFICE REMINDERS

Through December 14th
AOC is a designated *Toys for
Tots* drop off location

December 24th and 25th
Office closed for Christmas

January 1st
Office closed for New Year's
Day

Wei's World

When I was a kid, I couldn't wait for Christmas. About two weeks before the holiday, my Dad would pile us into the old green Chevy and we would go out to get the tree. Back then, trees cost two dollars.

We would bring the tree home, and my Dad would put it into a special stand in the corner of the family room. Then we would start decorating it. The tinsel, the bulbs, then the lights... and finally the star at the top.

And the countdown would begin. How many more days until the "Big One?"

My parents were very religious Methodists so the next two weeks would be church intensive. There were lots of hymns and prayers every day. But, instead of "The Old Rugged Cross" and "Onward Christian Soldiers," we now sang "Silent Night," "Hark the Herald Angels," and "Come All Ye Faithful."

When I was a bit older, I would go to the library and take out a copy of [A Christmas Carol](#). Every year, I would follow the same routine. Get the book out and read it slowly so I could savor it.

I remember the winters were colder then, and snow was the norm rather than the exception. An added bonus was school would let out a few days before Christmas. It seemed like we were being released from prison!

Now, things are different. I haven't been inside a church for many years. Not because I hate religion. It's because I find myself more drawn to private time with my prayers and my spiritual life. And probably burned out from all the time in church when I was younger.

And because of love. You see, I married a Jewish woman. One of the conditions was this... we would raise the children in her faith. That was just fine and dandy with me. (And for my mother, who thought I would never marry!)

I think it's important for children to have a religious identity which will provide them a set of good values and which will help shape the kind of persons they become. I haven't regretted that decision one bit.

Now instead of a Christmas tree, we light Hanukkah candles. The gifts are given out over eight days rather than all at once. And the meaning of the holiday is different.

But what's interesting is this: the major religions that have holidays at this time of year celebrate something meaningful. For instance, the Christian faith celebrates the birth of Jesus. Judaism celebrates a miracle that allowed the deliverance from an enemy.

No religion I'm aware of celebrates the holiday as the sale of a new item at Target, Best Buy, or Nordstrom.