



**AOC Newsletter – June 2009**

I am not afraid of tomorrow, for I have seen yesterday and I love today.  
-William Allen White

**AOC staff member celebrates 22 years this year at AOC!**

This month, we thought it might be interesting to let our readers learn more about our AOC staff. Although you may see our AOC staff when you visit, do you really know them? So, who better to start off with, than the employee who has been here the longest. Debbie Wastler has been with the Arthritis and Osteoporosis Center of Maryland for 22 years.



Debbie Wastler, Administrative VP

Debbie attended Hagerstown Business College and graduated with a Legal Secretarial Degree. She then spent several years at IBM before joining Dr. Wei in 1987. She started working for AOC as a medical secretary and is now our administrative vice president. She has a wealth of information and represents a strong presence and positive role model for AOC.

She recalls, "I remember when I first began working for Dr. Wei, we had a very small staff and did not have the conveniences of computers and fax machines. I can say I have truly enjoyed the last 22 years at AOC, especially getting to know the patients and my co-workers. I have persevered through the years (good and bad), learned so very much, accomplished tasks I never believed I could accomplish, and appreciate the trust Dr. Wei has placed in me." She continues, "Although at times we have disagreed in the past, Dr. Wei knows that I will be honest... but still respect his final word. To know I have been a part of an office where so many of our patient's lives have been made better because of Dr. Wei's expertise is very rewarding."

Debbie credits much of her success to her strong and supportive family. Her mother was a registered nurse at Frederick Memorial Hospital

(FMH). She was actually in charge of the first IV unit at FMH. Debbie recalls her mother telling stories when she worked at the FMH emergency room –the ambulance crew would ring the doorbell of the ER and the nurses would assess the situation and then call the doctor to the hospital if needed. Her mother retired from Walter Reed. Her father was a pilot for the Airforce Army and retired with the Maryland Natural Resources Department. She has two sisters and one brother who live in the Frederick area and work for the Frederick County Teachers

Association. Debbie has two wonderful children, and four amazing grandchildren who she cherishes dearly.

When Debbie isn't working at AOC, she enjoys reading, traveling and spending time with family and friends.

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**AOC is celebrating the newest member of our family,**



Walker Allan Donahue

Walker Donahue. Walker was born on Wednesday, April 1, 2009. He is the son of Megan and Daniel Donahue. Megan has been the manager of operations for clinical research at

AOC for more than two years. We look forward to having Megan back on June 29<sup>th</sup>.

Daddy, Mommy, and Baby are doing very well!

## Hot Air Balloons –A Day Trip You Will Want to Take!

In the early 1700's two brothers, Joseph and Étienne Montgolfier noticed that when they burned paper, small scraps would be carried aloft by the smoke. Believing the smoke must have some mystical lifting power, they experimented by filling paper bags with hot, smoky air. They released the paper bags and watch them float away. They thought they could build a bag large enough to carry a man aloft, but since man had never left the earth, they decided to fly some barnyard animals first. They put the animals in a cage which was suspended underneath a big bag filled with hot, smoky air. It was released, and they chased it to its rough landing causing the cage to tumble quite a bit. However, the animals did survive.

Armed with their success, they went to the King of France to ask him for money to build a bag large enough to carry a man. The King thought this would be a crowning glory for France, and agreed to pay for the undertaking as long as the balloon carried him.

The two brothers set out to build the balloon which was about the size of the balloon we fly in today – but with a few differences. It was built out of paper maché and lined with linen. Remember that they thought it was the smoke that was giving them lift. Instead of the passengers riding in a basket suspended under the balloon, it had a very wide base with a platform around the outside. There was a railing to keep them from falling out. This is where the two men stood for the flight.

Realizing the risk of being the first to go up in the air balloon, the King thought to place two convicts onboard because it would be no loss if they were killed. And, if they survived they would be granted full pardons. Upon further reflection, it was realized that if they did survive they would go down in history as the first men to ever leave the earth, and this was recognition that no convict deserved. So the prisoners stayed in prison and two noblemen, Pilâtre de Rozier and the Marquis d'Arlandes, volunteered for the flight.

On November 21, 1783 from a courtyard in the middle of Paris, they dug a deep pit and filled it with anything they could find that would make the thick, black smoke they thought was providing the lift. Soon the balloon was straining at its ropes – the two men jumped aboard, the ropes were cut, and off they sailed. History was made!

The balloon flew about 25 miles outside town, which in the 1700's was a full day's ride by horse

or carriage. Locals were terrified when they looked up and saw the huge blue and gold orb belching black smoke. They thought it was a fire breathing dragon or evil demon! They attacked the monster armed with axes and pitchforks to defend their property and Mother France. The two men aboard were helpless as they hid behind a haystack while the angry mob approached.

Although Marquis d'Arlandes never flew again, Pilâtre de Rozier continued to fly throughout Europe. However, he realized there was a problem. He had to find a way to appease the people when he landed. So he carried a bottle of champagne. As the balloon came in low over the earth before landing, he would hold up the champagne and shout "My name is Pilâtre – come share this champagne with me." This was quite a treat, since champagne was normally reserved for the aristocracy. Balloonists continue to follow this tradition today.

## DIY – Plumbing Solutions

Everybody knows that plumbing can be altogether nasty job. By following these basic guidelines, you can keep plumbing problems from becoming a major headache.

**Be Aware** – It's easier to unclog a slow drain than it is to open one that has completely stopped. When the drain is slow, pour scalding water down the pipe to loosen any buildup of grease. Also, clean the stopper or drain screen. If more than one drain is clogged, then there is a clog in the main drain pipe.

**Plunge** –Pick a plunger with a large enough suction cup to completely cover the drain and create an airtight seal against the surrounding sink. Fill the fixture with water to completely cover the suction cup. Push out any trapped air beneath the cup, then give the plunger 15 to 20 vigorous up-and-down pumping strokes to jolt loose the clog. This may take three to five times to do the job.

**Snakes** – Plumbing snakes work their way through the drain pipe and physically push through clogs, making them one of the most reliable tools for clearing a clog. Just push in the snake until you hit the obstruction. Then try to hook the clog by twisting the snake's handle. When the clog is hooked, push the snake back and forth until the obstruction breaks up. Then flush the pipe with cold water.

**Chemical Cleaners** - If water is slowly draining but the pipe is not completely clogged, then a liquid cleaner may do the trick. But don't use the thin liquid products on the market as they rush straight past the clog. Instead, use a thick foam or gel.

## Try these recipes to go with your grilled chicken, pork or fish...

### Mango Salsa

1 cup diced plum tomato  
1 cup diced, peeled mango (1 medium)  
¼ cup diced red bell pepper  
¼ cup diced red onion  
¼ cup chopped fresh cilantro  
3 tbsp. fresh lime juice  
1 tbsp. minced, seeded jalapeno pepper (or less, to reduce the heat)  
Dash of pepper

Combine all ingredients in a bowl. Let stand at room temperature at least 30 minutes. Serve.

### Make Your Own... BARBECUE SAUCE

1 can of tomato paste  
2 tablespoons vinegar  
2 tablespoons olive oil  
1 teaspoon dry mustard  
1 teaspoon cayenne  
fresh ground pepper to taste  
3 cloves garlic, crushed  
2 tablespoons brown sugar  
4 tablespoons onion, minced  
1 tablespoon Worcestershire sauce  
1 regular can of tomato sauce

Cook the garlic and onion until soft, and then add all remaining ingredients. Simmer on low for 20-30 minutes. Continue to stir often so it doesn't burn. Refrigerate for 48 hours before using. This allows the flavors to blend and mellow.

### Fasting once a month may lower heart disease risk

Benjamin D. Horne, PhD, MPH.

Having nothing but water for 24 hours allows the body to reset its metabolism and adjust its glucose and insulin sensitivities. A monthly fast for decades can have substantial benefits, including 40% lower risk for clogged arteries. Short-term fasting has not been studied but also may be helpful. *Caution:* People with chronic health conditions, such as diabetes, should not fast.

### Wine and coffee may help prevent Alzheimer's

Guilio Pasinetti, MD

Studies have shown that wine and coffee slow the buildup of a damaging protein that kills brains cells. *Recommended:* One or two four-ounce glasses of red wine a day (Cabernet Sauvignon was used in the study)... or three cups of coffee a day. *Another finding:* People

who drink fruit and vegetable juices more than three times a week have a 76% lower risk for Alzheimer's disease.

### What's so important about Organic?

Organic farmers have a strong commitment to their land. If the land isn't abused, it will provide families with produce for many years.

Organic farmers typically spend a lot of time and effort improving their land. Some benefits of organic food include:

- No pesticide, herbicide, fungicide residues on food
- Less chlorine chemistry into our environment.
- No synthetic fertilizer residuals built into plants
- No genetically engineered organisms or varieties
- Intense, realistic flavors
- Higher vitamin and mineral content

One of the main individual benefits of eating organic is that there are no pesticide residues on your food. In 1995, U.S. farmers applied 566 million pounds of pesticides to food crops and growing fields. Although much of it runs off farms and into your drinking water, a fair portion of it finds its way to your table.

A 1996 study by the California Department of Pesticide Regulation found detectable pesticide residues on 34 percent of more than 5,500 samples of fresh produce, and California has some of the toughest pesticide regulations in the United States.

In a study release in 1999, Consumers Union, publisher of Consumer Reports magazine, found much of the produce sold in this country "contains toxic pesticide levels high enough to be dangerous for young children."

Treating gardens/produce with pesticides also result in:

- loss of topsoil
- toxic runoff and resulting water pollution
- soil contamination and poisoning
- death of insects, birds, critters and beneficial soil organisms

Some of the most pesticide-laden fruits and vegetables are:

|                |                     |
|----------------|---------------------|
| Strawberries   | Bell Peppers (tie)  |
| Spinach (tie)  | Cherries (USA)      |
| Peaches        | Cantaloupe (Mexico) |
| Celery         | Apples              |
| Apricots       | Green Beans         |
| Grapes (Chile) | Cucumbers           |

If at all possible, try to buy organic when purchasing your fruits and vegetables and support your local farmers!

*Hi Readers... I just want to let you in on a little secret! Dr. Wei is working on a mysteriously big project... something to do with stem cell and PRP (platelet rich plasma). I'm not quite sure what it will involve, but we think it will be really helpful for you! Keep your eyes open in the next few newsletters because we're working on exposing this hush-hush project.*

*M*

## ***Wei's World***

June 21<sup>st</sup> is Father's Day. I don't think you can really know what your father did for you until you become a father yourself.

My dad didn't have it easy. He lost his father when he was a baby. His mother took him to a mission school when he was a young boy and he was essentially raised as an orphan. His mother died when he was a teenager. As a result he was left with a lifelong sense of insecurity. That played a role in how he saw life. He always felt he wasn't good enough even though he was plenty good. My dad spent 12 years going to night school to get his master's degree and doctorate in chemistry. My mom did a lot of hard work to watch the four of us kids while holding the household together.

My father, because he was insecure, never asserted himself. Which was not a good thing in the work world. And as a member of a minority in the 1950's, I think he did what he thought he needed to do to survive. Make no waves. When I saw how hard my mom worked and how tough it was for us kids to endure the taunting we got in school because of our race, etc, I resented his approach to life. But, in retrospect, I understood it was a survival mechanism.

One of my dear dear friends once told me this very important lesson, "Go home and talk to your father. Tell him what you thought he did right and tell him what you thought he did wrong. It'll be good for both of you."

So, I did it. About 10 years ago, I went home. By that time, my father, a widower, had remarried. I talked with him about the things I thought he did right and I talked with him about the things I was still angry about. We talked it out. We had a good cry and a hug.

Those of you out there who have kids know how hard it is to be a parent. You do the best job you can. There's no real textbook. There are no exams. You know you make mistakes and sometimes you know you inflict real pain on your kids. The kind of pain they remember for a long time. Maybe their whole lives. But it's good to talk it out. It's good to know what you did right and what you did wrong.

My father is 87 now. His memory is very poor. Sometimes on the phone he'll lapse into Chinese even though I don't speak the language. Sometimes he'll talk about stuff I have no clue about. But the conversation always ends the same way. He'll say, "Nathan, thanks for calling." And I'll say, "It was good to talk with you, Dad. I'll talk with you again soon."