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Dripping Springs OUTLOOK

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And that's a wrap

If I take my time I can wrap a Christmas gift like a pro. Cutting the paper, folding the edges over the sides so they match evenly and don't pucker is only the beginning. Then you must gauge the length of tape you need so that it covers the paper's edge without overshooting it by several inches or needing two, or more, pieces to do the job. Of course every present needs a festive bow or adornment on top. It's an art, and a science, to get it all right.

I've had a lot of practice over the years, and like I mentioned, I'm really good at it if I try. But as the holiday season approaches time seems to speed up. Suddenly it feels like there isn't enough time to accomplish everything I wanted to. My expert wrapping diminishes into something that looks like it has rolled around in my car trunk for a week.

Looking at it from a broader perspective I realize that my entire year of goals and projects look much better if I take the time to wrap them up. Whether I saw something through from idea to manifestation or whether the idea took just a few steps along its path, I recognize the job I did by putting a mental bow around it. This allows me to remember and acknowledge the good work accomplished in the year that's about to conclude. I can either say a fond farewell and give it away or open it again in the new year with reborn enthusiasm.

The purpose is to not have lingering regrets about what you could have, should have done. Instigating this practice not only frees you from the weight of that but trains you to do a better job next time of getting further along in creating what you want.

Besides, there's no time for self criticism. There are Christmas presents to wrap with crisp edges and fluffy bows.

Merry Christmas and Happy Hanukkah! All the season's best wishes. Thank you for joining us.

Victoria

City of Dripping Springs Farmers Market

Wednesdays

3 – 6pm (or dusk)

The Triangle

(Hwy 290 RR12 Mercer)

512 858-4725

/ DSFarmersMarket

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Pedal Ranch Publications

Dripping Springs Outlook

CALENDAR of EVENTS

- Every 2nd Sun. at 2pm, Children of the Confederacy, Magnolia Rangers Chapter #927. For more information call 512-858-1085.
- Every Mon. 12pm, DS Rotary Club meets at Flores, 2440 E Hwy 290 W. For more information visit *DrippingSpringsRotary.org*.
- Every Mon. 9am All Abilities Chair Exercise,Dripping Springs Community Library, 501 Sportsplex DR, 512-858-7825 or *DSCL.org* for info. No exercise on library holidays.
- Every 1st Mon. DS Ag Boosters meet in Ag Building behind DS Middle School at 7pm. Visit *DSAgBoosters.org* for updates.
- Every 1st & 3rd Mon. 6:30pm, Lions Club meets at Dripping Springs Ranch Park located at 1042 Ranch Road 12. Across from the DS Elementary School. For information call Sharon Goss at 512-923-8630 or email *dslionsclub@gmail.com*.
- Every 2nd Mon. G.O.D.S. Moms. Free Childcare. Contact Joanne Thomas at 512 \-894-0581 for more details.
- Every 2nd Mon. Dripping Springs 4-H Club meets at 6:30pm at the Ag Booster Building (located behind DS middle school).
- Every 3rd Mon. Eastern Star meets at Rambo Lodge at 7:30pm. Call Kathy Clark for more info, 512-858-7004.
- Every 3rd Mon. 7pm. Hill Country Centering Prayer Community meets at a local residence. Call Myra at 512-496-1531 or Sharon at 512-413-3248.
- Every 4th Mon. 7pm. Gen. Ben McCulloch 2435 Daughters of the Confederacy meets at Veteran's Hall, Dripping Springs. Call 512-858-7177.
- Every Tues. 6:30pm Toastmasters of Dripping Springs meet at Pioneer Bank, 100 Creek Rd. Visitors welcome. For more info visit *DSToastmasters.com*.
- Every 2nd Tues. Bluebonnet Auxiliary meets at 2pm at Hill Country Care Nursing and Rehab Center, 1505 W. 290. Call Janice Ruyle, 512-264-2538 for more information. Volunteers needed. The Bluebonnet Aux provides entertainment and special events for the residents of HCC.
- Every 2nd, 3rd and 4th Tues. 7pm, DS Boy Scout Troop 101 meets at the DS United Methodist Church. Call Tim Short at 512-743-2537.
- Every 4th Tue. Artists Alliance of the Hill Country meet alternating between The Barn on 4000 Bell Springs Road in Dripping Springs and Artists studios. For more information visit *ArtistsAllianceHC.com*.
- Every Wed. - Sat. Noon-3pm, Dr. Pound Pioneer Farmstead and Museum is open for tours. Call 512-858-2030.
- Every Wed. Farmer's market at the Triangle, 3-6pm. For more info contact *CityofDrippingSprings.com* or 512-858-4725.
- Every Wed. at 8:30am. The Hill Country Christian Business Networking Alliance meets at El Rey. For more info visit Hill Country Christian Business Networking Alliance (HCCBNA) on Facebook.
- Every Wed. 5-6pm. Christ Centered Prayer, meditation and class. McArthur Hall Meeting Room #1, St. Stephen's Episcopal Church 6000 FM 3237. For more info call 512-847-9956
- Every 3rd Wed. Dripping Springs Cook-Off club meetings in the VFW hall in Dripping Springs. For more information call Michele Ryon 512-299-7455.
- Every 1st Thur. 7pm Vince F. Taylor American Legion Post 290 of Dripping Springs invites all eligible veterans to 101 Old Fitzhugh Rd. For information call 512-858-5637.
- Every 1st Thurs. 6-7:30pm, Nonfiction Addiction Book Club at the Dripping Springs Community Library, *DSCL.org*, 512-858-7825. Newcomers welcome. Email *AdultServices@dscl.org* for details.
- Every 1st Thur. Apr.-Dec. *First Thursday Dripping Springs*, merchants extend their hours until later in the evening and have a variety of specials which might include one-day sales, special activities, food, music and art. For more info visit *FirstThursdayDrippingSprings.org*.
- Every 3rd Thur. at 7pm, Thirsty Thursday is co-sponsored by the City of Dripping Springs and New Life Lutheran Church at City Hall, 511 W. Mercer St. Area poets, musicians, songwriters and storytellers share work. For details call 512-858-2024.
- Every 3rd Thur. 7pm, DS VFW Post 2933 invites all eligible veterans with foreign service to 101 Old Fitzhugh Rd. Call 858-5637.
- Every 4th Thur. 6pm, Photographers of Dripping Springs meets at the Holy Spirit Episcopal Church, 301 Hays Country Acres. Visit *Photographersofds.us* or on Facebook.
- Every 2nd Fri. Mothers of Preschoolers (MOPS) group meets at 9am at the Episcopal Church of the Holy Spirit (301 Hays Country Acres at Hwy 290W). Childcare available. For information call 512 858-4924 or email *DrippingSpringsMOPS@gmail.com*.
- Every 2nd Fri. 11:30-1pm, Women in Confidence Brown Bag Workshop, a lunchtime forum addressing legal and financial issues for women with local attorney Jennifer Cochran-Green and financial advisor Amy Colton, at the Dripping Springs Community Library, 501 Sportsplex Dr., 512.858.7825 or *DSCL.org*. Topics vary each month.
- Every 1st Sat. On or after the full moon, 7:30pm, Rambo Masonic Lodge 426 meets. Dinner at 6:30pm. Call 512-858-7177.
- Fri. Dec 1. 6:30-10:30pm, Hill Country Senior Citizens Activity Center Fundraising Party at Stone House Ranch. For more info see ad (pg. 21).
- Sat. Dec. 2, Christmas on Mercer Street. For more info see ad (pg.25).
- Thurs. Dec. 14, 9:30am, Helping Hands Holiday Cookie Bake. For more information see ad (pg.24).
- Mon. Dec. 25 Christmas

Please submit your event details at least six weeks prior to your event to Info@DSOutlook.com.
Distribution is the 1st of each month.

Food and how our body uses it

by Dr. Jeremy Kethley, PT, DPT

Well, Christmas, Thanksgiving and a new year are upon us and that means parties with friends, family get-togethers and new recipes to try out on your coworkers. Let's be honest, nothing says *Happy Holidays* like a big plate full of Grandma's stuffing, Aunt Susie's casserole or Kim's pies. What I want to cover with this month's article is how our body uses food and needs food to operate at its highest level.

Food is an essential part of everyone's lives. It gives us the energy and nutrients to grow and develop, be healthy and active, to move, work, play, think and learn. The body needs a variety of the following five nutrients – protein, carbohydrates, fat, vitamins and minerals – from the food we eat to stay healthy and productive.

Protein is needed to build, maintain and repair muscle, blood, skin and bones and other tissues and organs in the body. Protein rich foods are extremely important in the recovery from operations such as joint replacements. Foods high in protein include meat, eggs, dairy and fish.

Carbohydrates provides the body with its main source of energy. Carbohydrates can be classified into two kinds – starches and sugars. High starch foods include rice, wheat and potatoes and food rich in sugars including fruit, honey, sweets and chocolate bars.

Fat is the body's secondary source of energy. Fat actually provides more energy/calories per gram than any other nutrient, but is more difficult to burn. Food rich in fats are oils, butter, lard, milk, cheese and some meat.

Vitamins and minerals are needed in very small amounts and are sometimes called *micronutrients*, but are essential for good health. They control many functions and processes in the body and in the case of minerals also help build body tissue such as bones and blood. In addition to the above nutrients, fiber and water are also essential for a good healthy diet.

A healthy diet can lead to better overall performance of the mind and body. According to the U.S. Department of Agriculture, foods high in antioxidants can help promote generation of neurons into old age while improving the ability of existing brain cells to communicate with each other, resulting in improved cognitive functioning. According to the *American Journal of Psychiatry*, a healthy diet is associated with a lower incidence of depression, anxiety disorders and dysthymia than a typical *Western* diet high in sugar, processed foods and alcohol.

If your body becomes injured from that family "touch" football game over the holidays, please eat healthy and come see us at Kethley Physical Therapy to help you move better.

Jeremy has been practicing and serving the Dripping Springs community for the past 17 years in Dripping Springs. Kethley Physical Therapy has two locations at both ends of Dripping Springs and they have eight physical therapists ready to help you or your athlete.

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Cold weather coming

by Frank Shuman, DVM

It's starting get a little chillier outside. I know Texas weather can be fickle so preparing for those cold snaps is important to keep your pets healthy. Exposure to winter's dry, cold air and precipitation can manifest multiple issues that can threaten your pet's health.

Repeatedly coming out of the cold into the dry heat of your home can cause itchy, flaking skin. Keep your home humidified and towel dry your pet as soon as he comes inside, paying special attention to their feet and in-between the toes. Never shave your dog down to the skin in winter, as a longer coat will provide the most warmth. If your dog is long-haired, simply trim him or her. If your dog is short-haired, consider getting him a coat or sweater with a high collar or turtleneck with coverage from the base of the tail to the belly. This also provides a bit of fun for the family with a sense of fashion or humor. Bathe your pets as little as possible during cold spells. Washing too often can remove essential oils and increase the chance of developing dry, flaky skin. Ask your vet to recommend a moisturizing shampoo.

Outdoor cats will often take refuge from the cold next to your warm car engine where they will be severely injured or killed when the engine is started. We recommend checking under the hood or providing a warning before starting the engine. Pet proofing your house can be a good idea in general since the pets will spend more time indoors during winter. Preventing your pets from getting into and around the Christmas tree will save you time and trouble.

Make sure your companion animal has a warm place to sleep, off the floor and away from all drafts. A cozy dog or cat bed with a warm blanket or pillow is perfect. Pets burn extra energy by trying to stay warm in wintertime. Feeding your pet a high-quality kibble can provide much needed calories and making sure they have plenty of water to drink will help keep them well-hydrated and their skin less dry. Remember, if it's too cold for you, it's probably too cold for your pet, so keep your animals inside. In addition, don't leave pets alone in a car during cold weather, as cars can act as refrigerators that hold in the cold and can cause animals to freeze to death.

If you notice your pet starting to have any issues with the weather please don't hesitate to have your veterinarian give them a look. Cold weather can exacerbate some diseases that probably weren't obvious beforehand.

Frank Shuman IV is the Medical Director at Drippings Springs Animal Hospital, serving the area for over 30+ years. Located at 1520 E. HWY 290. He can be reached at 512-858-4787.

DaVinci

by Dr. Margaret R. Landwermeyer, MD, FACOG

Isn't technology amazing? When I started my residency in 1993, almost every hysterectomy was performed through a large incision on the abdomen. The surgical recovery was slow due to pain from the incision site and usually took six weeks or more. This situation improved slightly during my residency with laparoscopically assisted vaginal hysterectomy (LAVH).

About three and a half years ago, I was introduced to the DaVinci robot from Intuitive Surgical to assist me on hysterectomies and other gynecological procedures. This technology is a vast improvement over *straight sticks* laparoscopy. The robotic instruments can bend about an inch or so from the tip (similar to the bend in your wrist.) This allows the operation to progress with small movements inside the abdomen rather than the instruments moving in a straight line from the skin incision as in laparoscopy. This also allows more challenging cases to be performed in a minimally invasive fashion to improve recovery time. The operator sits adjacent to the patient at a console where the camera projects 3D binocular vision and the operator directs the instruments with finger controls. A surgical assistant and a surgical tech remain at the bedside to pass instruments and assist with the case.

Robotic surgery is helpful in patients who need a hysterectomy for any reason, endometriosis cases and for the removal of fibroids. Since starting robotic surgery, I have been amazed at the recovery time. Many of my patients find they are able to return to work in about two to three weeks after surgery. In this day and age with so many people working from home, many women only miss a day or two of work. Most women stay one night in the hospital and go home the day after surgery. I have been able to discharge some of my overachiever patients on the same day.

If you have been told you need a gynecologic surgery, but you are afraid of going through with it because of recovery time, I would love a chance to explain in person how the DaVinci robot can help you with faster recovery time. Please call my office at 512-462-1936.

Dr. Landwermeyer enjoys all aspects of being an OB/GYN physician but has a special interest in minimally-invasive surgery. When not working or on call, Dr. Landwermeyer enjoys spending time with her husband and three sons.

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Is it weight loss or a tummy tuck?

by Rocco C. Piazza, M.D

You've seen them – pin after pin that claims drastic weight loss via fancy tea, weight loss supplements and diet fads complete with those transformative before-and-after weight photos. The reason the photos look so unbelievable? Here's a hint, it's not the tea. In many cases, people use before-and-after photos of tummy tuck patients in an effort to drive traffic to their weight loss website. So, how can you tell what's real and what's just a ploy to sell products? Is it weight loss or tummy tuck surgery?

One giveaway is loose skin. Those who have lost a significant amount of weight often are left with loose and sagging skin. Even with the most diligent regimen of healthy diet and intense exercise, skin that has stretched to accommodate a heavier figure simply will not retract after significant weight loss. Skin laxity is correlated with age, genetics and other factors, too. We lose collagen and elastin as we age, so it becomes even harder for the skin to bounce back naturally as we get older. If the person has magically lost excess skin in the after photo, you can bet there was some surgical intervention involved.

Is it weight loss or tummy tuck surgery you're seeing in those before and after photos? Here's a simple guide so you can tell. Tummy tucks aren't weight loss either. Weight loss is kind of a prerequisite though. Surgeons encourage their patients to be close to their ideal weight before undergoing the procedure. Beyond removing excess fat and skin, a tummy tuck can also improve the appearance of the abdomen by tightening the muscles of the abdominal wall. This slimmed-down and toned appearance goes hand-in-hand a healthy and active lifestyle. In other words, there are no shortcuts. Bottom line – if it looks too good to be true, it is.

Next time you're scrolling through before-and-after photos that claim certain supplements tighten the skin on the abdominal region, don't buy it. Now you can see whether or not it was weight loss or tummy tuck surgery. Surgery is still really the only way to get rid of that extra skin.

Rocco C. Piazza, M.D is a Diplomate of The American Board of Plastic Surgery, a member of the American Society of Plastic Surgeons, as well as a national spokesperson for the ASPS. Piazza Center is located at 7900 FM 1826, Health Plaza II Suite 206, Austin TX 78737. Rocco can be reached at 512-288-8200.

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Life is difficult.. *then what?*

by John Williamson, MA

When I found myself on a path of trying to figure out what really made life tick, I was introduced to a classic book on the psychology/spirituality shelf called *A Road Less Traveled* by Scott Peck. The first three words of the book announce, somewhat disappointingly, that "life is difficult." It sets the tone for the book, which explores what to do when you start with that assumption.

The book launched me on a journey I am still on and, 20 years later, I would have to agree with Mr. Peck. It seems that everywhere we turn – the news across the world (or down the street) keeps circling back to how broken, messy and confusing life can be. Then add in natural disasters, health issues, difficulties in marriage, parenting, friendships or just keeping it together in our own heads from day-to-day and it can look like the light at the end of the tunnel is indeed an oncoming train.

What do we do? Psychology says to find ways to put the cares out of mind, relax, breathe and points to ways to do that. All good ideas by the way. I have found that while those, and more ideas like it, are helpful, they fall short. You see, we are still really looking for some kind of hope that tells us it will be ok. And no amount of money, insurance or deep breathing will ultimately give us that hope.

I would propose that the answer to where to find that hope isn't anywhere here on planet Earth. In *Matthew 11:28*, Jesus said, "Come to me, all you who are weary and burdened, and I will give you rest." *Whoa*. Sounds appealing, right? What he doesn't say is to come to him and everything will work out like you want. In fact, in *John 16:33* Jesus tells us, "In this world you will have trouble. But take heart! I have overcome the world." So the promise of Christianity is that we will experience rest, peace, power and hope to get through the challenges that this difficult life brings. Let it.

John Williamson, MA, is a Licensed Marriage and Family Associate who specializes in couples work in Dripping Springs and can be reached at DrippingSpringsTherapy.net.

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Specializing in Marriage/Couples

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The many benefits of beauty sleep

by Karen Laine, Para-Medical Aesthetician

Wrinkles, bags and crow's feet don't stand a chance against plenty of sleep and effective day-to-day skincare. Getting the right amount of sleep every night at regular intervals is essential to leading a long, healthy and productive lifestyle. *Beauty sleep* is not just an expression – it really is the key to beautiful, healthy skin that lasts. Sleep restores the skin's natural balance and increases the effectiveness of skincare treatments. Skin automatically rejuvenates during sleep. New skin cells grow and replace older cells.

Not enough sleep leads to stress, which triggers the adrenal glands to create an over-production of the stress hormone *cortisol*. Once the hormone is released, it stimulates the sebaceous glands to produce more oil. Stress creates a chain reaction that is a recipe for bad skin. Clinical studies have proven stress is the common denominator of many skin problems.

When you don't get enough sleep, not only are you tired, but you physically show the signs of sleep deprivation with dehydrated skin and puffy, under-eye bags. Lack of sleep causes blood vessels to dilate, causing the look of dark circles. The ideal amount of consecutive sleep is six to eight hours in order to allow the body to get through the five sleep stages. During these stages, the cortisol and insulin levels help produce more collagen. During the fourth stage, growth hormones surge and tissue repair occurs.

When a lack of sleep increases the levels of stress hormones, the body undergoes chronic stress, which leads to increased inflammation and subsequent acceleration of aging and worsening of acne and other inflammatory skin conditions such as psoriasis. Poor sleep habits can result in skin sensitivity and irritation. The skin gradually loses its ability to protect itself from all the chemicals, pollutants and dirt it comes in contact with everyday.

By avoiding caffeine four to six hours before bed, limiting alcohol and heavy meals before sleep, getting regular exercise and developing a regular bedtime and morning wakeup call, even on the weekends, your skin will thrive with a healthy glow. Look to sleep as a source of fuel for greater beauty, energy and health.

Karen Laine is a para-medical aesthetician and makeup artist with 23 years experience. Contact her at 512-847-8052. Her office is located at 14500 Ranch Road 12, suite 20, in Wimberley.

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"To-do" lists or relationships?

by Rev. Adam Thornton

Christmas is upon us. It seems as if it arrives earlier every year, no matter what the calendar may tell us – a season of busyness accomplishing tasks on our to-do lists.

Whether you are hosting this year or traveling as a guest, you and I will be entering into a season of extended visits with family and friends. These gatherings can be wonderful experiences that we cherish looking back over the years. However, they can be stressful as well. The simple tasks of preparation can cause anxiety and stress. It is easy to forget why we gather together this season.

Might I suggest that instead of becoming transfixed by planning, that we look deeper into the reason for the gatherings themselves? We long to be in fellowship. Even if we don't care to be with our family (and I hope this doesn't pertain to you) we at least would like to enjoy the company of good friends. It brings to mind the old adage that it is the responsibility of the host to treat their guests as family, and the duty of a guest is to remember that they are not.

After all, we don't look forward to the holidays because of the preparations, do we? No, we look forward to the fellowship that comes because of the plans that have been made. The fellowship is the sweet tasting fruit of our labors. J.D. Walt speaks of fellowship of a different sort in his commentary on the book of *1 John*, *This Is How We Know*. He points out that our relationship to God is inseparably linked to how we treat one another. In other words, he says, "If you want to know what kind of fellowship I have with God, examine my relationships with other people."

Because Christmas is, after all, about Christ's advent into our world, we should seek to strengthen our relationships with one another. We probably shouldn't be consumed in the "best-laid plans" but instead recognize and enjoy the time that we have together. When we do, it says something about our relationship with God.

Merry Christmas.

Rev. Adam Thornton is the Sr. Pastor at Dripping Springs United Methodist Church where he has served in a variety of roles over the last 11 years. Learn more about DSUMC at DSUMCS.org.

Christmas at DSUMC

Dec 8 - Christmas Cantata, 7pm
Dec 17 - Family Interactive Christmas Service, 11:15am, The Foundry

Christmas Eve Candlelight Services
5:00pm (Family)
7:00pm (Traditional)
www.dsumc.org

What is Candida and what to do about it?

by Radhia Gleis

Candidiasis is an infection involving candida, a fungus, which is a form of yeast that flourishes in the mouth, vaginal area and/or intestines. Although it's supposed to be there in small amounts, overproduction of yeast can break down intestinal walls and penetrate your bloodstream, resulting in leaky gut and other symptoms such as:

- Bloating, constipation or diarrhea
- Fatigue and irritability
- Bowel irritation
- Poor memory or difficulty concentrating
- Sugar cravings
- Autoimmune complications
- Nail fungus
- Urinary tract infections
- Rashes and skin disorders

There are many factors that can lead to candida overgrowth and intestinal imbalance. Antibiotics, smoking or drinking, poor nutrition and high stress are all known contributors.

Our wellness consultants recommend Syntol AMD that combines the beneficial properties of probiotics, prebiotics and enzymes to not only kill yeast but also keep them from multiplying unchecked in the first place. It also removes dead yeast and other unwanted debris from the body, making Syntol AMD much stronger than any other yeast cleanse.

Best of health!

Radhia Gleis is a certified Clinical Nutritionist/Holistic Practitioner and is the Wellness Director at Martins Compounding & Wellness Pharmacies with three locations in the Austin area (Dripping Springs Pharmacy, Lamar Plaza Drug Store & Lake Hills Pharmacy.) Call her for private consultation at the Lake Hills Pharmacy, M-F, 1:30 to 6:30pm. Contact Radhialgleis@gmail.com.

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Holidays: *Yay or bah humbug*

by Leslie Tourish, LPC

Nothing drives up our holiday anticipation like memories of past Christmases or projected hopes for how this year is supposed to be. After all, who hasn't seen the Norman Rockwell painting of the three generations of family all gathered around a festive dinner table waiting for father to carve the turkey? Sure, the image is idyllic, but for the vast majority of us such a scene is found in a glossy magazine, not in our own dining rooms.

Take a deep breath and say to yourself, "Christmas is just another day," over and over again. And keep in mind that much of the hype of Christmas is exactly that – Madison Avenue advertising in full swing. Attempt to remember the true meaning of the holidays by counting the blessings you already possess.

Also the holidays may serve as emotional signposts for people who have had deaths or losses in their family and thus reawakens grief. Rather than mask your sadness, acknowledge your emotions by sharing them with someone with whom you feel safe and respected. Write your thoughts and feelings in a journal, allow yourself a good cry or see a counselor or member of your clergy. Feel what you're feeling, then come up for air. Make plans, ask about holiday activities in which you can be a part or investigate volunteer opportunities to help those less fortunate than yourself. Isolating yourself might intensify depression, so fight that urge to binge on Netflix. Instead strive to be with others, even if it's a situation where you don't know many people in the room. At one time your best friend was a stranger until you made the effort to connect, so by extending yourself you're upping the odds of meeting your next great relationship.

For others, anticipation may be more like dread if you're going to be in contact with family members or friends whom you find stressful. As the saying goes, you can always pick your friends, but you can't pick your family. People may be unkind to you, but it is your choice on how you react. While obligation may be great to attend or host family gatherings, you can lower your stress level. Decrease your time spent with family members who are hurtful and increase your time with people who are kind and respectful by including them in a gathering.

By lowering our anticipation, reducing known stressors and creating new traditions, we allow unexpected joys of the holidays to shine through. It's not the glitter of the gift that counts, but the gold in the heart.

Leslie Tourish, LPC, is a Dripping Springs psychotherapist in private practice. To contact Leslie, please go to LeslieTourish.com or DSPsychotherapy.org.

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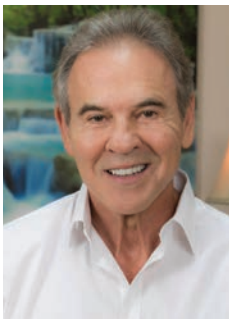
Dripping Springs 78620

Are you suffering from undiagnosed adult ADHD?

by Mike Clark, PHD, Certified Brain Health Coach



Throughout the years of being a brain health coach, I have seen many adults struggling with the debilitating symptoms of ADHD. It is common to believe that only young children suffer from ADHD but undiagnosed ADHD extends into adulthood with the symptoms becoming worse over time.

Lauren, a 34-year-old female, served as office manager at her job. She was a wonderful manager and liked to travel to other locations. However, when she had to substitute for another employee doing accounting or other similar tasks, she was slow and unable to concentrate for an extended period of time. She also had difficulty in her personal relationships. She did not understand why she had these difficulties but just figured that was her personality.

When the opportunity was presented to have her brain tested with the new WAVi brain testing technology, she thought it would be interesting to discover the current health of her brain. She was surprised to find that she had ADHD. Yet, as she thought about it and looked back over her school years and her jobs, she realized that it made sense. Even Lauren's coworkers realized that she most likely had ADHD due to an inability to focus on details as well as a habit of juggling multiple projects but struggling to complete one.

The good news is that she received treatment with natural amino acids and was re-tested after 30 days. She no longer showed ADHD as long as she complied with her natural supplement treatment. More importantly, she could focus on tasks she once found difficult and her personal relationships were improving. Many adults don't realize they have ADHD, leaving them mystified about why their goals seem to slip out of reach.

Brent was 31 years of age when he came in to have his brain tested with the new WAVi technology. He had been diagnosed as having ADHD when he was 8 years of age and consequently was on and off medications for years. Brent never liked the medications as they often caused him to be nauseous and lose his appetite. His relationships with his family and others were rocky.

Brent soon learned that he did not have ADHD, however his brain was very slow due to the medications he was taking. The medications also made him irritable and negatively affected his job performance. As part of his treatment, Brent was placed on supplemental natural brain nutrients as well as a healthy diet and was encouraged to exercise regularly. He was soon able to stop his medications and his brain speed returned to normal. His job performance improved significantly and his family welcomed him to family gatherings. He also entered into a healthy romantic relationship which, in the past, he was unable to maintain.

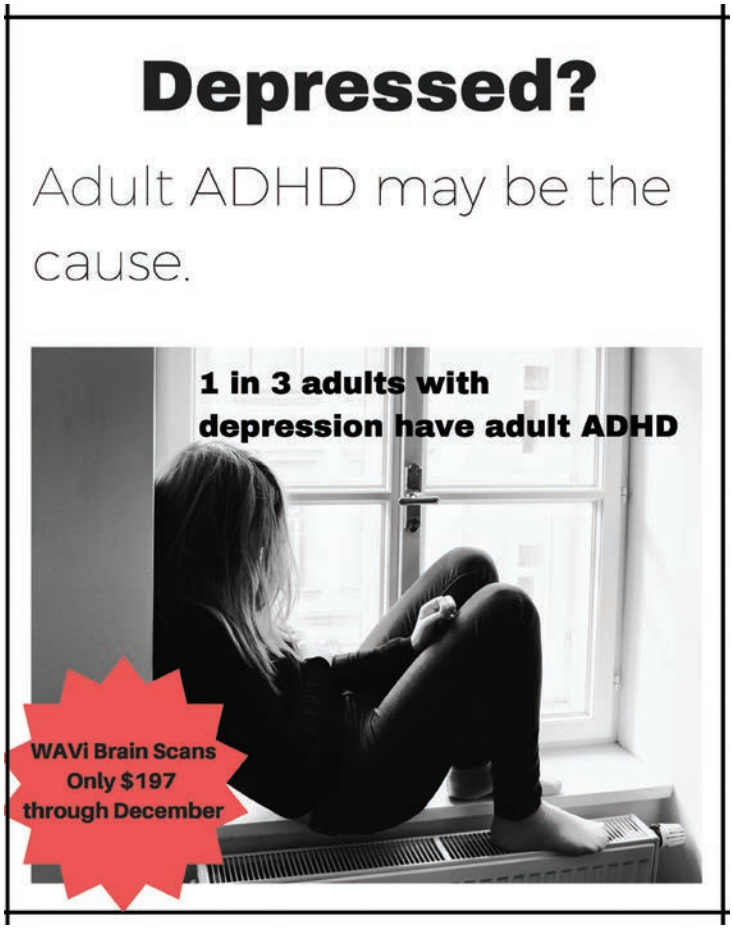
Do you have any of these symptoms?

- Easily distracted
- Problems with self-control
- Mind fog
- Impulsive behaviors
- Have trouble concentrating
- Difficulty controlling anger
- Restlessness
- Easily distracted
- Relationship problems
- Depression
- Alcohol abuse
- Chronically late for work or important events
- Difficulty keeping your mind on the task at hand
- Disorganized

Attention deficit hyperactivity disorder is not limited to childhood – up to 70% of children with ADHD continue having symptoms when they grow up. Many were never diagnosed.

The new test for ADHD is affordable, fast and non-invasive. The new WAVi testing platform, available at the Sebring Clinic in Wimberley on Ranch Road 12 provides objective measurements to help diagnose or rule out attention deficit disorder (ADD) or attention deficit hyperactivity disorder (ADHD). This non-invasive test incorporates cognitive and brain electrical activity information to assess mental function on a real-time basis. Results are available immediately after testing. Testing time is generally 20 minutes. Once a diagnosis is confirmed, there are safe and effective methods of treatment that focus on balancing and improving brain function without prescription medications.

Mike Clark is the founder of Seeking Perfect Health and the developer of the Total Brain Wellness Program. Call or email The Sebring Clinic today to schedule your brain health scan with a certified brain health coach, 512-847-5618 or info@seekingperfecthealth.com. Sebring Clinic is located at 16811 Ranch Rd 12, in Wimberley,



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Have a white Christmas

by Ron S. White, DDS

Have your pearly whites lost their luster because of dingy gray or yellow stains? Stained teeth can occur as we age. Use these secrets to whiter teeth to restore your bright smile!

Preventing Teeth Stains

As we age, the outer layer of tooth enamel wears away. The underlying layer, called dentin, is yellower. That's why it's important to try to avoid staining teeth in the first place, especially after whitening. Some common foods can discolor teeth. Here's an easy way to tell if a food might be at fault: Anything that can stain a white cotton T-shirt can stain teeth. Coffee stains teeth, for example. Other top offenders are beverages such as tea, dark sodas, fruit juices and red wine. These teeth stains develop slowly and become more noticeable as we age. Deep colored fruits and veggies are great nutrition but also leave their color on teeth as well. Eat up for your health, and prevent tooth stains by brushing teeth immediately after eating, rinsing your mouth with water, and using tooth-whitening kits

A home tooth-whitening kit contains carbamide peroxide, a bleach that can remove both deep and surface stains and actually changes your natural tooth color. Bleaching kits from your dentist contain a much higher concentration of carbamide peroxide than what is available over-the-counter.

Home Whitening Strips

Tooth-whitening strips will help get rid of tooth stains. These strips are very thin, virtually invisible, and are coated with a peroxide-based whitening gel. The results with strips are not as dramatic as with whitening kits, but the strips are easy to use and pretty much foolproof.

Whitening Toothpastes

How to get stains off your teeth? Over-the-counter toothpastes, gels, and liquids help remove some surface stains. Many of these products contain mild abrasives, chemicals, or polishing agents. Unlike bleaches, they don't change the natural color of teeth.

One simple strategy can help maintain white teeth: Brush. Brush at least twice and floss at least once daily. Even better, brush after every meal and snack. Brushing helps prevent stains and yellow teeth, especially at the gum line. Both electric and sonic toothbrushes may be superior to traditional toothbrushes in removing plaque and surface stains on teeth.

See your dentist for regular checkups and professional cleaning. The abrasion and polishing methods dentists use can remove many teeth stains caused by food and tobacco.

Dr. Ron White is located at 4189 E. Hwy 290. He has served Dripping Springs Smiles for over 15 years. He and his team strive to provide comfortable, compassionate care in a calm and luxurious office. Appointments can be scheduled by calling 512-858-LOVE Your Smile (5683).

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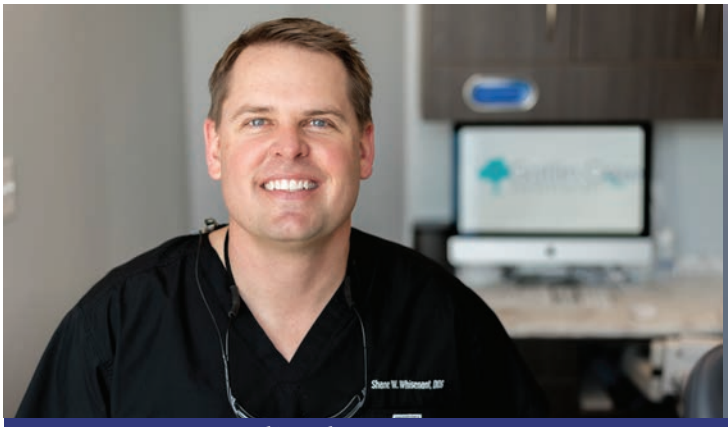

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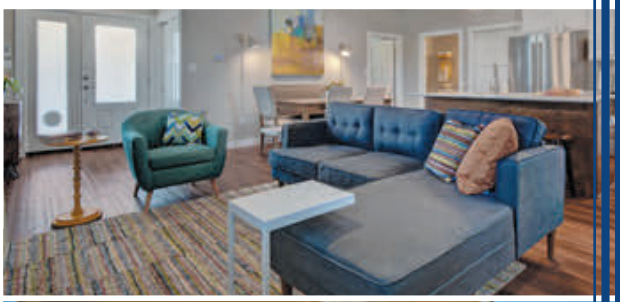

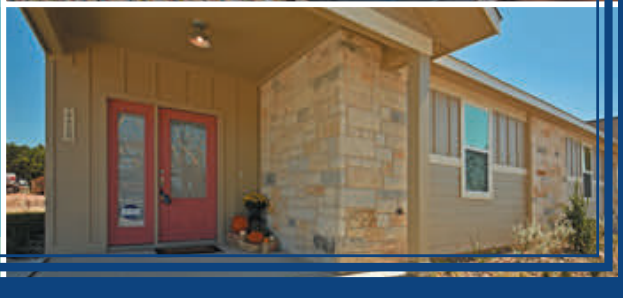

The snowball of debt: *Know your options*

by Trey Powers

If the weight of debt is dragging you down, you're not alone. The average debt in America (excluding a home mortgage) is $97,000. Credit card balances, car loans and student loans have put many of us in a position where we simply cannot see the light at the end of the tunnel. Credit card debt is the most daunting, carrying interest rates as high 20%! If this sounds all too familiar, now is the time to explore your options.

For homeowners one of them is to consolidate your debt and lower your monthly bills by refinancing your mortgage. A cash out refinance allows you to turn the equity you have built up in your home into cash that you can use for whatever you like. It is your hard earned, invested money. Most people use it to pay off high-interest debt, fund a large purchase or finance a home improvement project.

Mortgage interest rates continue to be near historic lows, around 4%, while average credit card rates are around 14%. If you consolidate the credit card debt into your mortgage, you are effectively giving yourself a 10% return on your money.

A cash out refinance will increase your mortgage balance by the amount of credit card debt you're paying off. This might cause your monthly mortgage payment to increase, depending on the interest rate and terms you qualify for. However, compared to the minimum payments each month on your credit cards it is very likely your total monthly obligations will decrease significantly. It is not uncommon in these scenarios to see a total reduction of hundreds of dollars a month.

Switching topics, as we pass Thanksgiving and head into the Christmas season I cannot help but reflect on the community we call home. Dripping Springs is one of a kind. It is the people, it is you. I am incredibly blessed to live here and that you are my neighbor. If I can ever be helpful to you in any way, do not hesitate to call. Here's wishing you and your family a holiday season abounding in joy. God Bless!

Trey Powers is a licensed mortgage loan officer with City Bank Mortgage, a Texas-owned lender. Trey lives, works and volunteers right here in DS. Call or email for help with anything related to your home loan. Contact 512-203-5869 & trey@treypowers.com. Visit TreyPowers.com.

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Gavin J. Loftus

Time to review your investment strategy for the year

This article was written by Edward Jones for use by your local Edward Jones Financial Advisor

As the year draws to a close, it's a good time to review your progress toward your financial goals. But in what areas should you focus your attention?

Of course, you may immediately think about whether your investments have done well. When evaluating the performance of their investments for a given year, many people mistakenly think their portfolios should have done just as well as a common market index, such as the Standard & Poor's 500. But the S&P 500 is essentially a measure of large-company, domestic stocks and your portfolio probably doesn't look like that – nor should it, because it's important to own an investment mix that aligns with your goals, risk tolerance and return objectives. It's this return objective that you should evaluate over time – not the return of an arbitrary benchmark that isn't personalized to your goals and risk tolerance.

Your return objective will likely evolve. If you are starting out in your career, you may need your portfolio to be oriented primarily toward growth, which means it may need to be more heavily weighted toward stocks. But if you are retiring in a few years, you may need a more balanced allocation between stocks and bonds, which can address your needs for growth and income.

Investment performance isn't the only thing you should consider when looking at your financial picture over this past year. What changed in your life? Did you welcome a new child to your family? If so, you may need to respond by increasing your life insurance coverage or opening a college savings account. Did you or your spouse change jobs? You may now have access to a new employer-sponsored retirement account, such as a 401(k), so you'll need to decide how much money to put into the various investments within this plan. And one change certainly happened this past year – you moved one year closer to retirement. By itself, this may cause you to re-evaluate how much risk you're willing to tolerate in your investment portfolio, especially if you are within a few years of your planned retirement.

Whether it is the performance of your portfolio or changes in your life, you will find that you always have some reasons to look back at your investment and financial strategies for one year – and to look ahead at moves you can make for the next.

Gavin J. Loftus, CFP, AAMS, Financial Advisor specializes in helping individual investors and business owners reach their financial goals. He can be reached at 512-894-3801.

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Simplicity is not too much to ask

by Randy Lawrence

Depending upon the quality of your water supply, water treatment systems can range in size from compact units designed to be tucked away in a small closet to multiple pieces of equipment requiring a large area. Often a system will have been modified over time with plumbing repairs and the addition or replacement of equipment. In many cases, these modifications are done in a way which makes the installer's job as easy as possible. Simply connecting a brand new softener to an existing maze of old pipe or running unsupported pipes at odd angles to connect a new piece of equipment are examples of shortcuts which demonstrate a lack of concern for the finished product. The result is a pieced together system which makes access for service difficult, and typically takes up far more space than necessary.

While the operation of the equipment and the product water quality are the most pressing concerns, it is almost as important that the system be simple and streamlined to eliminate problems when the need arises for maintenance or service. When discussing the work to be performed, you should address any concerns you may have about the current system and clarify the scope of work to be done. If a piece of equipment is to be replaced, ask how the new connections will be made. Also, be sure to ask what will happen to the old unit. Many times, the equipment will be simply left in the immediate area for the homeowner to dispose of. Obviously, it affects the equipment dealer's bottom line to perform work beyond a simple "cut and paste" installation, but it's reasonable to expect your water system to be carefully planned and installed in a user-friendly and space efficient manner.

It usually takes a little more time, and a few additional fittings, but when the technician puts forth the extra effort to simplify the system, it can make a world of difference. If you're concerned about the treatment equipment you currently have, a trained and licensed professional can suggest ways to improve the layout, performance and overall efficiency of your system.

Randy Lawrence is the owner of ProQuality Water Systems, a full service water treatment company. He is one of only six Class III Certified Water Treatment Specialists in Hays County (LIC# WT0002693). With over 20 years of experience he has serviced Wimberley and surrounding areas for over a decade.

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Litigation: *Sometimes me first is okay*

by Roland Brown

Me first! Isn't that selfish? Not necessarily. Since the late '70's I have litigated cases on behalf of good, responsible people who fell victim to the thoughtlessness of other folks who chose to violate safety rules. When followed, these written and unwritten rules allow us to travel our roads and highways for business and pleasure without harm to ourselves or to those we love. Over those same decades insurance companies have ramped up efforts to maximize profits while dishonoring the contacts of insurance they collect premiums on. I've watched as decent folks who are the innocent victims of others' carelessness are put through the wringer by these insurance companies, being treated as though they chose to be injured or are liars and freeloaders. The vast majority of people who seek the benefits of the insurance following a wreck are just like you. So, what should you do if you or your child, grandchild or parent is suddenly hit by a truck or car? Follow these *me first* suggestions.

First secure the safety of yourself, your passengers and other persons involved in the collision to the extent reasonably possible. Beyond that, there are things you should and should not do that may have a big impact on what happens in the days that follow. The list of these things is too long to include in this publication but can be found along with reasons for many of the recommendations at RolandsLaw.com (look for *Roland's Law Blog* on the right side ribbon.) Briefly, a few of the do's and don'ts are:

- Do not admit fault
- Do not deny being injured even if you think you are okay at the moment
- Pay attention to anything the other driver says
- Be respectful and truthful to the investigating officer
- If you can safely do so, take photographs of the vehicles and the scene
- Be complete in describing your injuries to EMTs or the ER personnel
- Do not post anything to social media

Future articles will address things that happen later including dealing with vehicle repairs, medical care and adjusters and will discuss how all of this can affect settlements or trial.

Roland Brown is a litigation attorney with forty-plus years experience handling civil litigation throughout Texas. For more information call 512-847-2500 or visit RolandsLaw.com.

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Tax planning in the face of change

by Marlene Van Sickle

The end of the year often brings to mind the holiday season and the many plans we make for spending time with family and friends. Not many people like to think about the tax filing season to follow.

However, the last month of 2017 may present unique planning opportunities to minimize your tax burden for both 2017 and 2018 with proposed changes to the tax code. We likely will not know what the final regulations will be for 2018, but can guess based on the current discussions. Have you considered how these changes will affect you?

The proposals for 2018 include higher standard deductions with many itemized deductions allowed in the past being eliminated. Therefore, one should consider accelerating itemized deductions into 2017. This would include paying medical expenses if they will exceed 10% of your Adjusted Gross Income (AGI), paying property taxes in December instead of January, purchasing a vehicle where sales tax will be paid and possibly paying your January mortgage payment before December 31.

The proposals also indicate that lower tax rates may be in effect in the future. This indicates that minimizing income in 2017 would be a good option. There are several strategies that can be used to do this. Investment portfolios should be reviewed for possible losers to be sold to take a deduction of up to $3,000. Keep in mind your overall investment strategy when considering this option. Those who own businesses should consider their equipment needs and consider purchasing and placing in service items that are required.

People have called for simplification of the tax code for years and the proposals seem to make some progress toward doing this. Many of the deductions that are proposed for elimination are targeted to small groups of taxpayers with limited benefit. What remains to be seen is which of the proposed changes will be enacted and how they will affect individual taxpayers. There will be some winners and some losers, but planning a strategy with a CPA makes it more likely that you will be a winner.

Marlene Van Sickle, CPA holds a Texas CPA License and is the managing member of Marlene Van Sickle, CPA, PLLC. She has worked with individuals and businesses for over 25 years, and has an office in Cedar Valley. Contact Marlene@VanSickleCPA.com, or 512-745-1395, or visit the website at VanSickleCPA.com.

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Change and stress

by Deborah Carter Mastelotto

I love an Australian TV show called *800 Words*. The main character sort of narrates his monthly column as he lives his new life. He writes at the end of one of the first shows, "Experts say some of the most stressful things in life are 1) death, 2) buying and/or selling real estate, 3) emigrating and 4) international travel." I'd also like to add, 5) losing a job or starting a new one 6) kids – having a child and/or sending the last one off or just worrying about them. "Only an idiot would attempt all of them at the same time," he said.

He was referring to himself, of course. But as so often happens in life, when it rains it pours. We seldom get to amortize stressful situations and spread them out evenly over the timeline of our lives. Sometimes stressful things converge at us at once and we have to figure out how to manage without a break to relax and regroup. And sometimes those things change the course of our lives completely without our permission, making it hard to see the silver lining. Change produces stress in everybody, even if you go into the change willingly. Stress (and a loudly opposing opinion) makes us doubt ourselves and our decisions. Sometimes we even beat ourselves up by looking back, thinking we've made a huge mistake by initiating change.

In his book *A Long Way Down* Nick Hornby wrote, ".. Hard is trying to rebuild yourself, piece by piece, with no instruction book and no clue as to where all the important bits are suppose to go." But avoiding anything makes it harder to face when our avoidance techniques stop working for us. For emotional success during times of stress and change Socrates gave us this formula, "The secret of change is to focus all of your energy not on fighting the old but on building the new." Notice he didn't say to use *some* of your energy on your changes while you use the rest to talk about your stress and suffering. Socrates suggests we use all our energy to build, and building implies a step-by-step process of construction starting from the ground up. We need to work at creating our new reality, our new normal. Try it – before you know it, the change becomes the silver lining.

Deborah Carter Mastelotto is a pathological entrepreneur, an obsessive remodeler, a minor student of quantum physics, an unapologetic observer of human nature and an undefatigable advice-giver. And she has a tiny salon called "Pink West" in a hundred-year-old farmhouse in Dripping Springs, Texas. Visit pinkchronicity.com.

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Setting resolutions

by Lindley Pond

Happy end of the year to all of you! What a wild year.. as I'm writing this, we have just gotten another two inches of rain and are eagerly awaiting a cool front. Maybe by the time you read this we will be praying for daylight savings and some warmth, who knows?

Hopefully all you folks growing fall veggie gardens are starting to see great things in greens, onions, carrots and tips of root vegetables waiting to come out of hibernation. Or maybe you are planning and plotting next year's veggie garden. Great time of year to clean things up, and see which fork in the road you will take for 2018.

If you are like me, 2017 was a year for repairs around the house, so I'm excited to be able to focus on *fun* projects now. It's still a great time to plant woodsy things and/or trees. Budgeting and planning keeps us from wasting money on things we see but really don't know where to put so they end up in the ugly plastic pot on our porch or worse, going to plant heaven or the compost pile! Use your hard earned money to get from point A to the end of your wish list.

Just like setting resolutions for the new year, you can set goals for your outdoor living. It might be a secluded nook for lazy afternoon reading in a hammock with barefoot-friendly paths from porch to an outdoor seating/eating area or a small, manageable area for growing your own herbs, cut flowers and veggies. Start with a pie in the sky plan and chip away at it until all the pieces fit together. Your end result will bring you many relaxing days and a feeling of accomplishment! We are here to help you get started or stay to help for the duration. Let us know how we can help.

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