

OPINION

A year of amazement, blessings, gratitude, loss

I spent the last evening of 2016 in the emergency room at St. Barnabas in Livingston. A workplace accident resulted in a cut finger that required four stitches. I reached into an open cart and did not realize that a Cuisinart blade had been stored blade tip up by the homeowner. I carefully sat down in the client's bathroom and tried to stop the bleeding. After I regained my composure, I carefully walked downstairs to show the wound to my assistant, my husband Don. I asked him, "Do you think this will require stitches?" I already knew the answer, but I was focused on remaining calm.

I also was frustrated that our New Year's Eve plans with friends may have to be thwarted because of this minor accident. I was delighted with the efficient and professional care that I received at the ER, and 45 minutes and four stitches later we were on our way home to change and meet up with our friends.

As I am sitting at my desk writing this article for the Dec. 7 issues of Worrall Media's papers, I am wondering, where did 2017 go? I blinked on New Year's Eve and when I opened my eyes we were celebrating Thanksgiving. The last month of each year is filled with so much activity and everyone's task list is overflowing with hard deadlines thanks to the looming holiday season.

I'd like you to take a moment to reflect on the year and think of all the blessings that you have experienced. None of us have the perfect life. But each of us has something to be grateful for. My minor accident on New Year's Eve turned into a moment of gratitude for good health care, a caring and loving husband, and friends who tolerated my less than perfect behavior at dinner as the pain injection was wearing off and I could feel the throbbing in my fingertip.

This year so far has yielded an abundance of joyful events, including travels out

ORGANIZED & CLUTTER FREE

BY EILEEN BERGMAN

west with our son and his girlfriend. We got to experience more than a minute of totality during the eclipse in Thermopolis, Wyoming. We traveled through Beartooth Highway from Montana to Wyoming, one of the most scenic highways in America. We heard a beautiful piano concert at Tippet Rise Art Center in Fishtail, Montana. We got to spend time with my sister and brother-in-law, who have made Thermopolis their home.

The year 2017 also had its share of sadness. The same week that we were on vacation, our beloved Uncle Eddie passed away peacefully. Our return home from vacation began with a funeral for a very special person in my life, who was my inspiration and my biggest fan. I always knew that in Uncle Eddie's presence I was someone special.

I would like to thank my readers for your support and positive feedback for my articles. I would like to thank my clients who have trusted me with their homes, their secrets, their conflict with their overabundance of belongings, and yes, their joy. I am convinced that there is always hope. Even if the glass is only one-eighth full, there is opportunity for change.

I send you all a hug and my wishes for a happy, healthy and prosperous 2018.

Professional organizer Eileen Bergman is a member of the National Association of Professional Organizers and the Institute for Challenging Disorganization. She is listed in the resource directory for the Hoarding Disorder Resource and Training Group. She may be reached at 973-303-3236 or eileen@eileenbergman.com.

Let's make something

LIBRARY MATTERS

BY ISABEL CASTRO

"Makerspaces" in school and public libraries are becoming a common trend. They are dedicated areas where people get together to create and make things, but the spaces can vary from library to library. Making things at the library is not new, but some of the tools and technology are. Makerspaces can be high tech, offering activities involving 3-D printers and computer programming, or they can support low-tech options such as sewing or button-making. Materials and instructions may be provided or people bring their own. Bins of supplies may be kept on a portable cart and moved in and out of an area, or a whole room may be equipped for the purpose of making. Some libraries maintain makerspaces year round and some host a special event once a year. Many libraries, West Orange Public Library included, will have programs on the fourth annual New Jersey Maker's Day, scheduled next year for the weekend of March 9 and 10.

WOPL's maker programs probably fall somewhere in the middle of the makerspace spectrum. We recently opened up our bi-monthly crochet program to sewing and knitting, renaming it "Stitch & Yarn." Participants at all skill levels are encouraged to bring a project they are working on or start a new one. We have Lego Club for the little ones and our higher tech options include STEAM club for ages 8 through 12 and Girls Who Code for girls in grades six through 12. We can also help you research your idea and inspire new ones with our materials and various databases.

Here in West Orange we don't have to go very far to be inspired — we are the home of the original "makerspace," the Thomas Edison laboratory complex. At what is now Thomas Edison National Park, Edison's "muckers" — sounds a lot like "makers" — built and tested various

inventions and then manufactured them for sale to the world. Edison is credited with developing the first research and development laboratory, where teams of workers shared ideas, solved problems and came up with creative solutions. It makes the dreaded group project actually sound like fun!

Any tour of the facilities will include a stop at the stock room, where the materials available for "mucking" varied from metal rods and wood pieces to tortoise shells and elephant skin. Edison wanted it to be a one-stop shop for anything a worker might think of to use to perfect an invention. The stock room is one of my favorite places at the park, along with the library, of course, and I encourage everyone to visit often.

Rangers from the Edison NHP visited the West Orange Public Library in the fall to present a program about national parks and will return early next year. They are sure to mention the Every Kid in a Park program that provides fourth-graders with free passes for up to three adults. Children under 16 are always free and the park has many "fee free" days throughout the year. We have also partnered with the park to offer the first Spanish language tour of the laboratory complex and the Glenmont estate on Dec. 10.

Edison's manufacturing space is currently being developed for a new use but the laboratory complex still stands right in our backyard as a tribute to the spirit of innovation. Get inspired to make and create!

Isabel Castro is the programming and outreach librarian at the West Orange Public Library.

LETTERS TO THE EDITOR

Thank you, DPW

To the Editor:

I would like to thank the DPW for the great job they did Saturday, Dec. 2, sweeping and cleaning the sidewalks and street on our Main Street. It made traveling so easy for me, since I am a permanently disabled West Orange resident in a wheelchair.

Also, I would like to thank the ladies and men of our fire department, police department, recreation department and DPW again for a job well done all year, and to our Downtown West Orange Alliance. Thank you.

Frank Grosso
West Orange

Notice good, website bad

To the Editor:

I found your "Kidde Fire Safety issues recall of plastic-handled extinguishers" article good, but it should have been shorter, as I found the specified URL, or online address, to be flawed. I keyed it in several times with a negative result; it just refused to recognize the one published. Persistently, I tried several times.

A short Google search of "Kidde Fire Safety Issues Recall" brought me immediately to several related topics and the Kidde.com/home-safety website. I was able to download a three-page PDF newsletter from the U.S. Consumer Product Safety Commission. What I found to be particu-

larly good was a list of model numbers of all affected extinguishers — which fortunately excluded all eight of my Kidde fire extinguishers.

The PDF was excellent and specified the remedy. Consumers should immediately inspect the pressure gauge; if it points to the red zone, contact Kidde for a free Replacement. Contact Kidde at 888-345-4407.

I love your weekly newspaper even though we moved to Southern Ocean County — been a loyal subscriber forever.

Sal Sorce
Manahawkin

We'll remember this

To the Editor:

Rep. Rodney Frelinghuysen voted to

advance the tax bill budget resolution, passed by a thin margin in the House. As chairman of the House Appropriations Committee, he endorsed it when only two more "no" votes would have stopped it. Frelinghuysen was the only N.J. representative to vote "yes," citing his aim "to get his appropriations bills done."

Asked how he would vote on the actual bill, Frelinghuysen remained silent, voting "no" only when he knew passing votes were secured. Let's not be deceived by his vote or words, "I simply could not support the legislation due to the very negative impacts it would have on so many of my fellow New Jerseyans." If he cared, he would have stopped the bill.

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