T&D

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SUNDAYMAGAZINE

NORTH OF 40
RED GREEN

Off-hand questions, on-target answers

I've been married for quite a while. In fact, I've been married longer than I was single. You'd sense that in a flash if you saw me in person – the hunched shoulders, the cautious gait, the avoidance of eye contact. And if there's one thing I've learned about women in all this time, it's that you have to watch out for the off-hand questions. Don't worry about the straight-out, interrogation-style stuff where she stands directly in front of you and asks, "Where have you been?" or "Do you know what time it is?" or "Why is the shed on fire?" Those are the easy ones. You can say anything you want because she's already guessed the answer and probably doesn't even expect one.

The important questions are way sneakier. She'll be reading the paper or looking for something in the fridge or removing her make-up, and she'll put on her most casual just-making-conversation voice and say "Did you notice that blonde woman in the blue dress?" Your instincts tell you to say "no" – but don't do it. Just say, "Which woman?" She'll then say, "The one you were talking to over by the pool." (Aren't you glad you didn't say "no"?) Now you have a problem because this next answer will determine your immediate future, especially if it's bedtime. More important than the content of this answer, it must be the perfect length and tone. She asked in a fake-casual way, and your answer should match. Eight words are perfect. Any more or less, and your wife'll be suspicious. I suggest, "She's our new receptionist. I think she's gay."

Keeping trim

I spend most of the winter in Florida. I'm not bragging, I just want to add credibility to my next piece of advice. Old guys should have short hair. There is nothing masculine or artistically whimsical about straggly wisps of curly white hair framing a wrinkle farm. Even if your hair is thick, you must keep it short. Generally, your hair looks older than you are, so letting it proportionately dominate your appearance will make you seem even more ancient than you deserve. When you're 18, maybe it looks good to see long, unkempt hair as a sign that you're just starting out. But at 44, you're not starting out, you're finishing up. And presenting yourself as "straggling" at that age does not enhance your overall image. So if you're an older guy, get your hair cut as often as you can. If you're cheap, get your wife to do it. Just make sure she has her glasses on and she's in a good mood.

The name says it all

Big corporations spend a lot of time and money selecting names for their products and services. But in these days of so many entrepreneurs starting their own businesses, they often don't have the resources to pick their names carefully. If that's your situation, here are some names to avoid:

■ A crematorium called "Fired, But Not Forgotten."
■ A laxative called "Sprint."
■ A steakhouse called "Meat Here."
■ A large-sizes clothing store called "Grandiose Designs."
■ An after-hours vasectomy clinic called "Nick at Night."

Watch out for plus-minus

I was watching hockey on television when I heard the sportscasters talk about a player's "plus-minus." This statistic represents the number of goals scored by his team while he's on the ice, minus the number of goals scored against his team while he's on the ice. For a good player it's a positive number, for a not-so-good player, it's not so positive.

I wondered whether this stat could ever be applied to a married man. His plus-minus would be the number of happy times his wife has when she's with him, minus the number of unhappy times his wife has when she's with him. If it's a positive number, he'll probably finish his career on her team. If it's a negative number, he'll probably be traded for someone younger, and future considerations.

■ Red Green is the star of "The Red Green Show," a television series seen in the U.S. on PBS and in Canada on the CBC Network, and the author of "The Red Green Book" and "Red Green Talks Cars: A Love Story."

CHRISTOPHER HUFF/T&D
The Children's Garden Christmas is one of Orangeburg's top attractions during the holidays. The display was a vision of city officials and local garden clubs that came to life nine years ago.

Orangeburg's wonderland

Wisdom of city planners was force behind top attraction

By GENE ZALESKI
T&D Staff Writer

Nine years ago the Edisto Memorial Gardens, so often alive with flowers and color through the spring and summer months, experienced new life and glory in the coldness of winter.

On a November night, hundreds of citizens, from near and far, gathered to witness the magic moment when Orangeburg's nighttime sky was all aglow with sparkling lights and Christmas cheer.

It was the night when the city welcomed what has since become a cherished Orangeburg tradition: the Children's Garden Christmas.

Since that initial lighting, the drive-through display has been joined by a walk-through for the young, known as the Kids' Walk. Both attractions have not ceased in delighting and wowing the young and old alike who have passed through its environs.

In honor of its popularity, success and lasting attraction the Orangeburg Community of Character Steering Committee has chosen the Children's Garden Christmas and Kids' Walk effort as best exemplifying the December character trait of wisdom.

Defined by Merriam-Webster's dictionary as a "wise course of action or exhibiting good sense and judgment," the steering committee identified the display as being a "tremendous gift to citizens and visitors."

> "It gives our citizens an opportunity to do and see something they can be proud of in Orangeburg County."
> – DEDE BLEWER

"The entire progress of the Edisto Gardens and its meaning to the city is something we are proud of, said Dede Blewer, Orangeburg County Chamber of Commerce president.

"Being the time of year, we felt it important to recognize the Children's Garden Christmas and Kids' Walk. It gives our citizens an opportunity to do and see something they can be proud of in Orangeburg County."

Along with its popularity – an estimated 300,000 cars traverse the Children's Garden Christmas annually – the Christmas display has also assisted in encouraging Edisto Memorial Garden appreciation year-long.

"The Gardens have been ranked in the top 20 attractions in the southeast," Mayor Paul Miller said. "It is a vibrant place for azaleas and roses in the spring and alive with visitors during the coon hunt. The Children's Garden Christmas is just another way to showcase its beauty."

Continuing, Miller said the success of the display can be traced to the wisdom and foresight of the late Orangeburg mayor and frequent garden visitor, Martin Cheatham, and the hard work of many organizations.

"Without the wisdom to look towards the future we would not have been able to move forward," Miller said. "The number of visitors and comments we have had from those in and around the city have been positive. Many charge for this type of attraction, but we don't. It is our gift to the citizens of Orangeburg and surrounding communities."

See LIGHTS, 6C

Children's Garden and Kids' Walk Hours

The Children's Garden Christmas will be open from 6-10 p.m. through Jan. 1 beginning at Russell Street end of the gardens.

The Kids' Walk will be open from 6-9 p.m. seven days a week and will begin in the lower parking lot. Both attractions are free and open to the public.

CHRISTOPHER HUFF/T&D
The rocking horse was one of the original lighted creations that decorated the Edisto Memorial Gardens during the first Children's Garden Christmas.

CHRISTOPHER HUFF/T&D
A lighted nutcracker, left photo, welcomes visitors to the holiday display. The jack-in-the-box, above, is one of the newer displays in the gardens.

SUNDAY BUFFET

A smorgasbord of tips and topics that affect your everyday life.

Wire Reports

Glamour for guys: Elegance never goes out of style

NEW YORK – GQ has a newsflash for well-dressed men: elegance is in again. And it never goes out.

So for all those guys who've been wearing trendy togs for the past few years, the magazine offers a quick primer in its December issue on the timeless pieces that are always in style.

GQ's eight steps to elegance are:

■ **Double-breasted suit.** This wardrobe staple is a natural classic but it doesn't have to be a stuffy suit. Loosen it up with a cashmere T-shirt or a turtleneck.

■ **Navy blazer.** Modernize this conservative classic with a slimmer cut and pair it with jeans to dress-down or nice slacks and loafers for a casual-chic look.

■ **Patek Philippe watch.** The watch of choice of Tchaikovsky and Einstein, this is one of the few watches whose value goes up over time.

■ **Cable-knit cashmere turtleneck.** Soft and warm enough to ward off even the deepest freeze, you can modernize this traditional look with a pale ice blue color.

■ **Shearling coat.** Functional yet "cool." Try a car-coat or peacoat to avoid the bulkiness of the traditional style.

■ **Crocodile moccasins.** Luxury shoemaker Tod's has produced fewer than 1,000 pairs of their new ultra-comfortable crocodile moccasin.

■ **Cashmere bathrobe.** This robe is for the man who has everything.

■ **Fur-lined coat.** Extravagant and functional.

Holiday food for babies

NEW YORK – Holiday gatherings are a time for everyone in the family to come to the table to enjoy each other's company. And food. Even babies can partake in the festivities, but be sure an infant is ready for solid food before sharing the edible "gifts."

The following tips on the do's and don'ts of starting solid foods come from Beech-Nut:

■ Remember that breast milk or formula is still a baby's main source of nutrition for the first full year.

■ Don't start your baby on solids earlier than about four months unless your health care professional tells you otherwise.

■ Don't season baby food that you buy or make. Babies don't need added salt or sugar.

■ Don't serve any food from the microwave without first stirring gently and then testing the temperature.

■ Learn to read a baby's signals. If a baby turns his head away, shuts his mouth tightly, spits food out, the baby is telling you he doesn't want to eat. To keep mealtimes positive, don't force food.

■ Keep a sense of humor. Early feedings can be unproductive, frustrating, messy and frequently hilarious.

For more free baby-feeding tips, call 800-BEECH-NUT.

Seven deadly fashion sins

NEW YORK – Not everyone can look like People's "glamour girls" Julia Roberts, Catherine Zeta-Jones and Nicole Kidman, but West Coast style editor Steven Cojocaru and other magazine staffers offer the "seven deadly sins" that anyone can avoid.

■ Don't wear pantyhose with open-toe shoes.

■ Don't mismatch daytime and nighttime looks, and colors that don't complement each other.

■ Don't wear socks with sandals.

■ Do get adequate support by wearing a proper-fitting bra.

■ Don't wear too-short pants.

■ Do shave your underarms if you're a woman and you live in the United States.

■ Don't show visible panty lines, especially in body-hugging garments.

After disasters, babies need blankets, booties

NEW YORK – Toys and other gifts are nice, but what babies affected by either the Sept. 11 terrorist attacks, fires or other disasters really need are simple booties and blankets to help keep them warm this winter.

Women's Day magazine teamed with the Craft Yarn Council of America for the "Warms Up America Drive," collecting these much-needed baby items for the American Red Cross.

Knitted booties, afghans or even 7x9-inch squares (to be stitched together later) can be sent to WD Warms Up America, c/o Craft Yarn Council of America, 2500 Lowell Road, Gastonia, NC, 28054.

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