



Montclair Local's 'To Your Health': Give yourself the gift of sleep



A cat in the Beit Oren kibbutz in northern Israel sleeps deeply. WIKIMEDIA COMMONS

Editor's note: This series will be written by practitioners in [Summit Medical Group \(SMG\)](#) on health-related topics. This one is by [Dr. Marianna Shimelfarb](#), an integrative family medicine physician who is practicing at Montclair Family Medicine at SMG. Before joining SMG, she served as an associate professor of family medicine at the Icahn School of Medicine at Mount Sinai Beth Israel.

By Dr. MARIANNA SHIMELFARB

for Montclair Local

I am deep asleep, immersed in dreams, when I hear the sound of an alarm. ...

Thoughts rush into my head: "Oh, no! Not again. I don't want to get up." I open my eyes and say, "Tonight, I will go to bed earlier." I get up, start my day, and the next morning the cycle repeats.

If you are among the nearly one in three adults who do not get enough sleep, your tossing and turning is bound to get worse over the holidays. In my practice, I often see patients who complain of fatigue, decreased concentration and frequently catching colds.

Poor sleep doesn't just make us irritable and less productive, it also affects our physical health and immune system. Studies have shown that lack of sleep increases the chances of developing heart disease, diabetes, cancer and depression.

We spend one-third of our lives sleeping, and yet very few of us view it as a precious time of day. When the lights are out, our body and mind take a break and prepare for the next day. Physical changes occur — the heart rate slows down, body temperature drops, and tired muscles mend.

When my patients complain of “always feeling tired,” I ask them about their sleep. While people typically need between seven and nine hours of sleep per day, it is the quality of sleep that most affects our ability to function.

Throughout the night, our body enters alternating stages of light and deep sleep. If you are in bed for eight hours and still feel tired, you are probably not spending enough time in the deepest stages of sleep when dreams occur, known as restorative sleep.

So how can we sleep better? First, we need to think of sleep as both a daytime and nighttime routine. How we act during the day — eating a late meal, drinking too much caffeine or alcohol, or skipping a workout — affects our slumber that night.

Find ways to calm your mind throughout the day. Meditation, yoga and deep breathing exercises can help you slow down and find moments of quiet in your busy day. Physical activity also helps reduce stress and decrease pain or stiffness that can make us uncomfortable at night.

Practice good sleep hygiene. Dim the lights and turn off electronics at least a half-hour before bedtime. The brain confuses the blue lights emitted by smartphones as sunlight and stops making melatonin, a hormone that helps your body fall into deep sleep.

If you are overloaded with tasks and glued to the TV or phone until 10 p.m., it may be difficult to wind down. You may collapse into bed at first, but you are less likely to enter restorative sleep because your brain is still processing the news you saw on social media.

Finally, one of the hardest pieces of advice to follow is, don't panic. If I wake up in the middle of the night, I never look at the clock or my phone because knowing the exact time will make my mind worry about how much sleep I might be missing. Even if you can't get back to sleep, resting quietly can still help restore your body.

When patients come in this time of year, I remind them to give themselves the most important present of all — the gift of sleep. It doesn't cost anything and it never goes out of style. And I guarantee, if you are well rested, your holiday will be filled with even more cheer.



Montclair eats: stuffed pasta is comfort food



Pasta from Fascino. COURTESY STEVEN DESALVO

By STEVEN DESALVO

For Montclair Local

“Montclair Eats” is a new column from food writer Steven DeSalvo. DeSalvo works as a personal chef in Montclair, has a degree in hospitality business management from the University of Delaware, and has worked extensively in restaurants and hotels. He can be contacted at steven.desalvo@comcast.net.

In this column DeSalvo will explore food around town in the form of short lists and “best of”s. Is there something you’d like to see covered? Interested in eating a particular thing and need a recommendation? Write to us at culture@montclairlocal.news.

When I was thinking about the food I wanted to explore in Montclair restaurants for the first edition of Montclair Eats, I decided to start simply.



STEVEN DESALVO

Pasta has been one of my favorite foods. I love to make it and I love to eat it. Our recent weather that seemed to go almost directly from summer to winter helped me realize that all I really wanted on a cold night was a

hot plate of stuffed pasta, comforting, filling, and delicious.

I chose three different stuffed pastas from three of Montclair's fine-dining restaurants. All are seasonal, and rely on ingredients associated with fall or winter, and they are the perfect dish for a cold night when you do not want to leave the house. I know that you would be as gratified by eating these delicious pastas as I was. Titles of dishes below come from the restaurant menus.

1. Delicata squash and mascarpone mezzaluna with a sage brown butter emulsion and toasted pumpkin seeds.

This dish comes from Chef Ryan DePersio's Montclair staple, Fascino. The restaurant has been around for 14 years, and the experience he has amassed over the years is evident in this dish.

The pasta filling is just slightly sweet, the mascarpone adding creaminess and that flavor element that only this cheese can provide, and that makes for a very satisfying bite. The filling is nestled inside the perfect amount of pasta, which is expertly cooked al dente.

But what brings this dish together is the sauce, a purée of sweet onions and a splash of lime juice, necessary to cut the richness of the brown butter. The dish is finished with crunchy pumpkin seeds and fried sage.



Agnolotti. COURTESY STEVEN DESALVO

2. Potato-stuffed agnolotti with Taleggio fonduta, brown butter, and fresh burgundy truffles.

This dish comes from Turtle and The Wolf, owned and operated by Chef Lauren Hirschberg.

The agnolotti resemble little sweet-potato-stuffed pillows. These are enriched by the creaminess of the Taleggio fonduta, which is a glorious mixture of melted cheese and warm milk or cream. This plate is further enhanced by the brown butter and the generous shaving of fresh Burgundy truffles. The nuttiness of the brown butter married with the textbook earthiness and indescribable bouquet of the black truffles adds many complex layers of flavor to this dish.



Ravioli. COURTESY STEVEN DESALVO

3. Porcini mushroom-stuffed ravioli in a sauce of Parmigiano cream and black truffles.

From Scala Del Nonna and Chef Michael Cetrulo. This dish is a prime example of elevated comfort food: it makes customers happy. I could have eaten the truffle oil-infused parmigiano cream sauce with a spoon after I finished my ravioli. The proportion of perfectly cooked pasta to flavorful mushroom filling was exactly right,

and these flavors along with the cheese and truffle oil in the sauce offered a haunting umami finish (umami is the fifth taste, often described as meaty or rich). One portion of this dish was a meal in and of itself. Yet it still made me want to come back for more.

In this column:

- Fascino, 331 Bloomfield Ave., fascinorestaurant.com, 973-233-0350
- Turtle and The Wolf, 622 Valley Road, turtleandthewolf.com, 973-783-9800
- Scala Del Nonna, 32 Church St., scalinifedeli.com/scaladelnonna/, 973-744-3300



Diversity in Food: A taste of Macau and Hong Kong is in the heart of Montclair



Sam enjoys the scent and heat of a cup of tea. COURTESY MELINA MACALL

By Melina Macall

For Montclair Local

Melina Macall is a writer, researcher, community organizer and college lecturer focusing on issues around food access. She has lived in Montclair for 18 years and runs Boxed Organics, an organic food service,

boxedorganicsnj.com. Macall is co-founder of *The United Tastes of America*, and the *Syria Supper Club*, which builds bridges across cultures and communities through dinners held in people's homes and prepared by recently resettled Syrian refugees. For more information visit TheUnitedTastesOfAmerica.org.

Meet Sam, just Sam, owner of The Pie Store and the newly opened Tea Store on Watchung Avenue in Montclair.

Sam is a transplant, originally from Essex in England, but by way of Hong Kong. She has lived in Montclair for almost 20 years. Sam went to Hong Kong to work in printed textile design and worked in styling for a number of publications. from home decor to food styling.



MELINA MACALL

Once she settled in Montclair she opened The London Food Company, synthesizing her talents in art styling and food, both of which Sam sees as forms of textile design: “When I put down a tray of scones or pies I subconsciously put things in an apparent repeat.” And Sam uses her artistic vision in her baking decisions too, she said: “I know how something will look. Before I make it I can see it. Most of the time I know if it’s going to work out or not.”

Soon she was hungry for a new project, and started offering home-style pies in the store. The pies were made in a licensed kitchen in New York and delivered. But, having them made off-site meant Sam couldn’t be guaranteed consistency. So Eventually Sam opened The Pie Store with her own kitchen, after originally offering pies made in New York.

“Even now, 10 years on, every day, if you’re not watching everything... You’ve got to check consistency, taste, everything. People will let you know if the chicken pie this week tastes different from last. I feel that’s what will break you.”

Sam’s favorite pies are turkey and stuffing — Thanksgiving every day! — and blackberry-raspberry-apple, for a taste of summer year round.

With a flourishing trade in pies, so much so that this year it’s first-come, first-served for Thanksgiving, she soon wanted a new challenge. Her many years in Hong Kong gave her an eternal love of tea, appreciating the many kinds available beyond her traditional British cuppa drunk with milk.

Just three weeks ago, two doors down from The Pie Store, she opened The Tea Store.

While Sam isn’t making the tea, she takes just as much care over her offerings. The teas do not smell like potpourri when dry. Instead, their delicate aromas are released when they are steeped in hot water. Black and herbal steep at 200 degrees, oolong and green at 180 degrees, and delicate white tea 160 Fahrenheit. You can get these temperatures at home without a calibrated machine by waiting 20 to 30 seconds after your kettle has come to the boil before pouring out water onto tea.

All the teas available at The Tea Shop are sourced from people as passionate about tea as Sam is about pie, bought from estates that utilize sustainable, ethical and organic or beyond organic practices. It is a point of pride for Sam that she has met the people she is buying from and, for the most part, they have personal relationships with their tea growers and workers, traveling and spending a few months a year sourcing the teas. The Tea Store offers snacks, baked at The Pie Store, to accompany a steaming cup of tea. Sam's custard tarts have their origins in her time in Hong Kong. On weekends she would visit the market in Macau, a Portuguese enclave until 1999, where she would buy *pasteis de nata*, egg tarts, from Lord Stow's Bakery. Eventually the bakery opened a stand in Hong Kong and now Sam offers her version of this Hong Kong custard tart right here in Montclair.



Montclair's Robin's Nest: culture, couture, crafts and more



Holiday wreaths make Church Street festive. NEIL GRABOWSKY/FOR MONTCLAIR LOCAL

By ROBIN WOODS

For Montclair Local

Now that the frost is on the pumpkin and out of our lattes, we're psyched up for the holiday season. Don't stress out, stay and shop local while exploring events right here in town. Mark your calendars for the Montclair Arts Alliance four day Festival of Visual and Performing Arts starting on Wednesday, Nov. 29 from 6 to 8 p.m. with an art gallery opening on Wednesday.



ROBIN WOODS

Enjoy wine and cheese while listening to harpist Violetta Norrie, followed by a jazz performance. On November 30, five theater companies present sit down and staged readings as well as musical theater performances. The festival runs through Saturday, December 2 with more music, modern and African dance plus daytime performances for children at The United Way Theater, 60 South Fullerton Avenue.

Need a little black dress or something festive and fabulous to wear for entertaining or party going? Stop by Barbara Eclectic, 594 Valley Road and see owner Holly Felber. She'll help you find the LBD of your dreams. Some of the dressy embellished tunic tops are long enough to wear as a dress over opaque leggings or tights. A glittery peacock butterfly top, along with a black embroidered tunic followed me home as my purchase while exploring the shop. The accessories and gifts start as low as \$10, to designer couture creations for \$230.

While you're in the Upper Montclair Business District, the 5th Montclair Pop-Up Shop opens on Nov. 25 at 127 Valley Road. Co-founders Selma Avdicevic and Helene Richman advise that this is the final year of the short term local holiday shop featuring artisans and makers selling everything from gourmet food, fragrances, soap, handmade jewelry, home décor to accessories, furniture and artwork. Take part in jewelry making and cooking demonstrations, too. The Pop-Up Shop will be open for business until Christmas Eve, December 24th.

Need some decorating inspiration to get yourself in the mood for a holly jolly holiday? Take time out to tour the first floor of the historic Van Vleck House and Gardens, 21 Van Vleck St., Nov. 16-18. Enjoy cider and cookies while viewing the oversize trimmed tree, mantle covers and wreaths made and donated by local residents. View and bid on silent auction items while you're there. No RSVP required, tickets \$5 each for adults, free for children.

Christmas means a photo op with Santa for many of us and our children. Applegate Farm, 616 Grove St., is booking 10 minute sessions with Santa on Dec. 2 and Dec. 3 from 11 a.m. until 3:50 p.m. You and the little ones will enjoy the warmly decorated living room set up where Santa will pose in front of a fireplace to make a holiday memory photo print or holiday card for you. Bring back the good old days or just make it a better day with their shakes, sundaes, ice cream cakes, pies, chocolates or apple cider donuts on your way to doing more shopping.

We're known for being a multicultural town, so early shopping and planning are key since Hannukah falls early this year, starting at sundown on Dec. 12 and ending at sundown on Dec. 20. It's as easy as buying jelly donuts in a supermarket, bakery or cafe to commemorate the Festival of Lights and enjoying homemade or store made potato latkes. Latke recipes are like snowflakes, handed down through families or easily found online.

Dec. 8 is Nutcracker Day at Montclair Public Library, 50 South Fullerton Ave. Events begin at 11 a.m. with a dress up story time for children, continuing with a kid friendly screening of The Nutcracker. Young ballerinas talk about performing the ballet while demonstrating some of the dances before a classical concert of German and Russian selections, followed by the final screening of The Nutcracker at 7 pm. All events are free and open to the public.

Have no fear, there's more seasonal fun to come to take you through The New Year.

In this article:

- Montclair Arts Alliance
www.MontclairArtsAlliance.org
- Barbara Eclectic
www.Villagevogue.com
- Montclair Pop-Up
MontclairPopUp@gmail.com
- Van Vleck House and Gardens
<http://vanvleck.org>
- Applegate Farm
<https://applegatefarm.com/>
<https://applegatefarm.com/book-photo-with-santa/>
- Montclair Public Library Main Branch, 973-744- 0500 x 2235



Montclair Local's Ask Task: where can I find

happiness?



ALLISON TASK

By ALLISON TASK

For Montclair Local

Allison Task is a career and life coach in Montclair who hosts the WMTR radio show "Find My Thrive." Her website is allisontask.com. Need advice? Send questions of no more than 150 words to allison@allisontask.com, or to us at arts@montclairlocal.news.

Dear Allison,

Which is right, "happy wife, happy life" or "happy husband, happy wife"?

— **Java Love John**

JLJ,

I've heard (and probably said) #1 before, but when read with #2, it becomes evident that both are fundamentally broken. Happiness isn't an if/then situation. If you appease your wife to make her (insert air quote) happy, so that she'll let you watch the game or whatever floats your boat, that's just trading favors. And there's a place for trading favors in a marriage, but let's not mistake that for happiness.

And with "happy husband, happy wife", the basic concept is akin to all boats rise in a high tide, and the husband is....the ocean? Blech. Does the whole family seek cover in a storm? I'm guessing so. Partner happiness as cause-and-effect is broken. If you make one side happy and call that compatibility, someone's getting short-changed.

A clever relationship therapist I know once told me, "I don't treat husbands or wives. I treat the relationship." The relationship deserves a seat in the therapy room, just like individuals. It needs to be taken care of. And these, ahem, philosophies, don't acknowledge the relationship.

If your happiness is based on someone else's happiness, you can't succeed. It's too much pressure on the other, and too little accountability for you. Don't short-change yourself and make your happiness dependent on another.

Dear Allison,

I feel low and degraded. I'm not feeling any love from my family or friends. My grandmother who raised me is sick and will pass soon. I want to do better with my life but I'm stuck at a crossroads. I want to leave town but

I have no plans, and I'm not sure what I want to do. I have limited funds but I dream big. What should I do next?

— **S.O.S.**

S.O.S.,

Thank you for reaching out. I am sorry to hear about your grandmother.

In your note, you describe feeling unloved, low and degraded, and you anticipate that your grandmother, who raised you, will be passing soon. I would encourage you to speak to a therapist. Please ask for referrals from people you know, a medical doctor, or find your own on www.psychologytoday.com. You can go to their web site, type in your zip code and you'll have many options. Please find support from a professional if you are feeling low, degraded and disconnected from family and friends.

For immediate relief, there are web sites geared to helping you improve your state of mind. Try happify.com. The Greater Good Science Center in Berkeley, California has a terrific web site where you can read about positive psychology research and find exercises that can help you. You may also want to try short daily meditations with an app called Headspace.

In terms of moving forward with your life, try the book *Pathfinder*, or the classic "What Color is Your Parachute?" Many people like "You Are A Badass." If you have limited funds and big dreams, you may want to look for a career or life coach on www.noomii.com. You can also use LinkedIn Profinder to find a professional coach. Some coaches who respond to your posts are open to working at a reduced rate.

But please, at this point, the first step is to call that therapist. Coaching, setting big goals and going after them are a wonderful thing to do when you're in a mentally healthy space. If done prematurely, it can add to your stress.



Montclair Local's To Your Health: 'Tis the season for self-control



WIKIMEDIA COMMONS

By **KENNETH BANNERMAN**

For Montclair Local

Editor's note: This series will be written by practitioners in [Summit Medical Group](#) on health-related topics. This one is by cardiologist [Dr. Kenneth S. Bannerman](#). Before earning his bachelor's degree in English, Dr. Bannerman studied bass at the Oberlin Conservatory of Music. He is a member of the recently formed Montclair Orchestra and has been a member of the Society of Musical Arts Orchestra.



DR. KENNETH BANNERMAN

The most wonderful time of the year is upon us. From family get-togethers to office parties, it is truly a season of celebration as we ring in the holidays. But if you are dieting, it can also be a treacherous time as we control that impulse for just one more bite.

Each holiday has its own food traditions, and eating and drinking is part of the merriment. For me, a Thanksgiving meal would not be the same without a piece of my cousin's pecan pie, and Hannukah festivities would feel remiss without a plate of oil-laden potato latkes.

So how do we enjoy the holiday trimmings without damaging our health? As obesity has become epidemic in the United States, this is an important lifestyle choice. In 2015, nearly three out of every four Americans were either overweight or obese, according to the Centers for Disease Control.

This is a serious problem. There are medical consequences to these excess pounds — high blood pressure, kidney and liver disease, sleep apnea, arthritis, and cancer, to name a few. Over time, being overweight increases your risk for heart attack, heart failure, and stroke.

Packing on too many pounds also raises the risk of developing type 2 diabetes. Nearly 87.5 percent of adults with type 2 diabetes are overweight or obese. Unlike in juvenile-onset diabetes, in type 2 diabetes, the pancreas produces insulin, but something called insulin resistance occurs and prevents the insulin from getting into the cells. Consequently, the amount of sugar in the blood increases and complications may ensue.

Ironically, November — the month when you are most likely to stray from your diet — is also National Diabetes

Month. As the prevalence of obesity doubled from 15 percent in 1975 to 30 percent in 2000, it is not surprising that the CDC also reports a parallel increase in the prevalence of diabetes from affecting 1.5 percent of adults in 1960 to 7.4 percent in 2015.

I tell patients if they lose weight, their blood pressure and blood sugar will almost surely come down. Some have been able to come off diabetic and blood pressure medications entirely.

So what should we do these next two months when our self-control is constantly put to the test? First, remind yourself that how we eat is a lifestyle choice. The problem with a diet is that if it has a beginning, we often think of it as having an end. Instead, we need to recognize that we are going to have lapses. The key is to prevent a lapse from becoming a collapse.

When I go to a party, I look at all the food choices. Before I put anything on my plate, I ask myself, "Is the taste worth the calories?" Some foods warrant only a nibble. After a holiday binge, I also take stock the next day. If I ate an extra 2,500 calories, I know that equals about one pound of fat. So I make sure to burn it off over the next few days. Do not give up — assess the damage and move on.

As a hiker, I look at dieting as a lifelong hike. It is a trail with twists and turns that I will try to follow for the rest of my days. This holiday season, I know I will wander off the path, but this will be the exception not the rule. I plan to be back on track the following day — and I hope you will too.



Montclair Local Voices' College bound: getting a

handle on financial aid



WIKIMEDIA COMMONS

By PAT BERRY

For Montclair Local

Columnist Pat Berry is a communications consultant and the founder of College Application Camp & Coaching (collegeapplicationcamp.com). Berry can be reached at pat@collegeapplicationcamp.com.

Parents ask me all the time, “Where can my child receive the best college financial aid package?” In the past, I deflected the question. I’m an essay coach; the money piece is not in my wheelhouse, I would say.

But the paying-for-college question fuels anxiety, incites confusion, and diminishes what could otherwise be a positive, finding-the-right-college experience for a family. And as a parent who’s been through the application process three times, I can relate.



PAT BERRY

Nowadays I try to help parents offload some of the stress by being informed enough to point them toward dependable resources and the sound advice of people whose business it is to know this stuff.

One of my go-to resources when it comes to understanding the ins and outs of financial aid is JoAnn McCullough, executive director of IMANI, whose College Advocacy Center supports many first-generation college prospects (<http://imaniprograms.org/programs/cac.html>).

“There are some 4,000 U.S. colleges and universities, and every school addresses financial need differently,” McCullough says.

That’s the bad news. The good news is financial aid is available. It just may take some research to find it.

According to The Washington Post, each year some 2 million students who are eligible for financial aid don’t apply for it. The Free Application for Federal Student Aid (fafsa.ed.gov), or FAFSA, is the form the government and colleges use to help students access more than \$150 billion in available grants, loans, and work-study money. FAFSA recently moved up the window for submitting these forms from January to October of senior year, which will help schools be more timely than they’ve been in the past about delivering notifications on financial aid packages.

The FAFSA can be tricky to fill out, and the Washington Post recently published a guide with useful tools that may help (<https://tinyurl.com/y9nywoyd>)

Timing matters. According to the Post article, the sooner the FAFSA is submitted, the better a student's chance of receiving more money, as some state schools award aid on a first-come, first-served basis.

Some 400 schools also accept the College Scholarship Service Profile, or CSS Profile (cssprofile.collegeboard.org), a College Board platform that helps schools award non-federal aid to eligible students.

As application season approaches, during the fall of a student's senior year in high school, McCullough meets with her students — IMANI helps up to 40 annually — and parents, and the financial aid conversation begins.

Sort of.

"The conversation should start with what a student is looking for in a college and a list of schools that meet those criteria," McCullough says. Once students have created a college list (I provided tips on building one in my Sept. 25 column, (<https://tinyurl.com/ybmresxy>), McCullough reviews it with the parent and student, sometimes making suggestions to round out the list with schools known to provide generous support.

At this point, the deep dive into financial aid begins.

You might think there are rules of thumb, such as, small, private liberal arts schools don't have much aid to give. McCullough says that's not necessarily the case.

"When the information is available, we research whether a school has given need-based assistance in the past and at what rate. Some of those small and not-so-small private colleges are heavily endowed and can afford to provide full or a significant percentage of tuition," McCullough says. As examples, she cites Oxford College of Emory University (in Atlanta) and Cooper Union (in New York City).

McCullough points to Naviance (naviance.com), the College Board (collegeboard.com) and Peterson's (petersons.com) as data-rich college search engines with financial aid information about specific schools and their capacity for providing financial support.

Sites like COLLEGEdata (collegedata.com) direct students to merit-based grants and scholarships.

After the aid packages arrive, there may still be a gap between what your family can pay and what the government and colleges are able to provide. Keep in mind the scholarship money offered by a huge array of organizations looking to provide support. Left-handed? Suffer from sleepwalking? Child of an immigrant?

Organizations like My Scholly (myscholly.com) help students connect with niche scholarships that often go untapped. The snag is that each scholarship application typically asks for an essay or two, so the extra work for an already-busy student may be an issue.

Student loans are a common way to meet remaining need. I'm a big fan of The New York Times' financial writer Ron Lieber, who often provides reality checks on paying for college. Last spring, Lieber published a student loan calculator (<https://tinyurl.com/hfplcdg>) to help students figure out how long it would take to pay back the debt of financing college.

McCullough encourages her students to do their research and to stay open-minded.

"I am confident there is a best-fit school for every student who wants to attend college," she says. "And cost — scholarships, grants, financial aid, work-study — is part of measuring that fit."



Montclair Local Voices: For Halloween, it's pumpkin Everything if you're keen



About 1,000 pumpkins and gourds that fill the Pumpkin Patch on the Lawn annual sale and festival at St. Luke's Episcopal Church on South Fullerton Ave., on Saturday afternoon, Oct. 14. The sale extends from Oct. 1 through the 31st, from 10 a.m. to 7 p.m. ADAM ANIK/FOR MONTCLAIR LOCAL

By ROBIN WOODS

For Montclair Local

So much excitement about harvest time and Halloween, with pumpkins abounding and many events around town.

During a recent visit to CVS, I found an amazing seasonal selection of pumpkin-flavored food and drink items. I don't know about you, but eating pumpkin is like candy corn to me. You either love it or hate it. If you're a fan, a special themed section has pumpkin spice Milano wafers, soft baked pumpkin cheesecake cookies, pumpkin spice NutriGrain bars, Starbucks Hearty Spice fall blend coffee and pumpkin spice latte, Ghirardelli Squares

milk chocolate pumpkin spice caramels, Nature Valley pumpkin spice crunchy granola bars, Larabar pumpkin pie, Cheerios pumpkin spice limited edition cereal and more.

Don't forget to stop by St. Luke's Episcopal Church Pumpkin Patch. It's open seven days a week through Oct. 31, and you can find pumpkins for sale in many sizes and colors. Check the sample pumpkins on display in front for prices, and place your money, cash or check, in the mail slot at the house to the right of the lawn. It's an interesting social experiment as well, using the honor system for payment.

We filled our car with white, blue, green and pink pumpkins. The kids enjoyed running around in circles and rolling in the hay while exploring. Proceeds support children's and youth programs.



The pumpkin patch at St. Luke's Episcopal Church. ADAM ANIK/FOR MONTCLAIR LOCAL

Plan to join us as well in St. Luke's Great Pumpkin Patch on Sunday, Oct. 29, at 7 p.m., for a free showing of the 1966 animated classic "It's The Great Pumpkin, Charlie Brown." Popcorn, snacks, and cider will be provided. Feel free to bring your friends, lawn chairs, and blankets.

Once you've chosen your pumpkins and are ready to carve them into jack-o'-lanterns, here are some safety tips provided by Angela Fennelly, licensed Occupational Therapist at Pro Staff Institute:

"Stabilize the pumpkin by leveling it out on the bottom. Place it on a towel on a flat surface. Make sure that you have the right tools and use a special pumpkin cutting knife sharp enough to do the job.

"Don't point the knife in the same direction as your hand. Dry hands are best, and don't push or pull too hard on the knife." Angela sees many patients this time of year who require therapy for tendon injuries and cut fingers: "An occupational therapist assists with skills for the job of living, and looks at all activities that occupy your time."

For a festive, safe and controlled environment for trick-or-treating on Halloween day, Oct. 31, Montclair Center BID is sponsoring a family friendly event, "Halloween Stop," from noon to 6 p.m. in the Central Business District. The event will span Bloomfield and Glenridge Avenues up through Church Street.

Diane E. Israel from BID said that "children accompanied by adults can walk around the area and stop in at any business displaying a Halloween Stop poster in their window. There will be candy and toys ready to welcome trick or treaters at each designated child friendly store or restaurant." Bring big bags with you!

Are you tired of doing dishes and utensils after pumpkin carving? Go to Doin' Dishes on Church Street to decorate Halloween-themed ceramics pre-made for children and adults alike. Luba Slepoy, co-owner of this business, said, "We have a selection of plates and mugs all ready with monsters, bats, coloring book themes and more. Allow for a week after creating your ceramics for us to fire them and have them ready for pickup. We use only child safe natural ingredients and materials." Luba has plans for future programs for younger kids

ages 3 to 5 to attend afternoon storytelling sessions, with name stickers ready to personalize one-of-a-kind art. Doin' Dishes' staff set you up with everything you need during your session, and supervise to make sure that the paint goes on the ceramics and not on the coveralls.

Why should kids have all the fun? Tuesday nights from 6 to 9, adults take over the studio for an evening of pottery painting and socializing. You bring your creativity, they provide the rest: wine and cheese, good music, and a selection of over 150 pieces to paint, all for a flat studio fee of \$7 for the whole night; the cost of your piece is additional. Reservations are recommended. Adults are welcome to BYOB.

Nothing's better than painting, provolone and Pinot Grigio. Bring a pumpkin spice beverage if you must.

In this article:

- St. Luke's Episcopal Church, 73 South Fullerton Ave, 973-744-6220, slechurch.org



Jack Ingvolstad of Brooklyn paints his pumpkin picked from about 1,000 pumpkins and gourds that fill the Pumpkin Patch on the Lawn annual sale and festival at St. Luke's Episcopal Church on South Fullerton Ave., on Saturday afternoon, Oct. 14. ADAM ANIK/FOR MONTCLAIR LOCAL

- Pro Staff Institute, 49 Claremont Ave., Suite 5, 973-680-8390. prostafpt.com
 - Montclair Center Business Improvement District (BID), 7 North Willow St., 973-509-3820, montclaircenterbid.com/
 - Doin' Dishes, 50 Church St., 973-744-8589, doindishes.com
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Montclair Local Voices' Ask Task: Help! My relatives voted for Trump



ALLISON TASK

Allison Task is a career and life coach in Montclair who hosts the WMTR radio show "Find My Thrive." her website is allisontask.com.

Need advice? Send questions (150 words or less preferred) to allison@allisontask.com, or to us at culture@montclairlocal.news.

From Allison: This week I chose to focus on a single reader question. It was thoughtfully written and required an in-kind response, especially with today's political climate and the leanings of our town. Next column, we'll return to the popular trifecta of sex, marriage and difficult neighbors.

Dear Allison,

How do you recommend I deal with friends and family who voted for Trump? After the election I tried to understand why someone might have voted for "change" but can't for the life of me understand how anyone could still support someone who is so obviously unfit to hold the office of president, and seems keen on degrading America's standing in the world.

Some of my closest friends and family members — my uncle, my father-in-law most notably — have always been more conservative than me, which is fine. I like to hear differing opinions and to challenge my own

thinking. In the past, we had some interesting, intelligent debates about various policies, the role of government in our lives, and politics in general. But what's going on now is an entirely different beast (literally) and there isn't much to debate, at least not on an intellectual level.

I tried to engage some of them before Charlottesville to see if they were having buyer's remorse and now I'm afraid to hear the answer.

What do you advise? Am I better off avoiding these people? Avoiding talking politics? It's great to live in Montclair among (mostly) like-minded people but to paraphrase Shimon Peres, you don't make peace with your political allies.

Thanks,

Montclair Man

Montclair Man,

Thank you so much for asking the question that is on so many Montclair minds, especially with holidays approaching.

Play with me a bit; can we shift the focus to you? Let's put your friends and relations, and even the president to the side for a moment. To paraphrase your words, you say that you "can't understand how anyone can support our current president, who is unfit, and degrading our country's global status."

Strong words.

And in the past, you mention that you've engaged with your loved ones on the topic of politics, enjoying an intellectual debate on policy and the role of government. You engaged some of these folks throughout the Trump presidency, but after Charlottesville, you're afraid, and contemplating a strategy of avoidance.

So here's the question: What are you afraid of? Are you afraid of finding out that your friends and family are racist? Hateful? That they agree with Trump, and are hiding a white robe in their closet?

If your worst fears are true, once you learn it you can never un-know it. Avoidance has long been a strategy for folks living with challenges they don't want to or don't know how to address; it postpones the inevitable and can give you peace (for the moment).

"If a problem has no solution, it may not be a problem, but a fact — not to be solved, but to be coped with over time."— Shimon Peres

To quote your pal Peres, are you afraid of the fact?

If you ask the question and you realize you're allied in your perspectives that may be comforting. If you are faced with the reality that they have different values from you, and these are key values of yours, then what?

First, there is the feeling of un-ease, disappointment, sadness and anger. There is grief over a longstanding relationship that may have reached a critical impasse.

And then what are you left to do? Whether they're with you or against you, what action are you taking to support your own values? In the past, you've debated with these folks. If you are past the point of debate, have you moved toward the time of action?

I'll see your Peres and raise you a Weisel:

"We must always take sides. Neutrality helps the oppressor, never the victim. Silence encourages the tormentor, never the tormented." — Elie Wiesel

So if avoidance is neutrality, how can you take a side instead? Prior to Charlottesville, you may have debated, but to what end? What is your responsibility, as a citizen of this country, with deeply held beliefs about our president, and the damage he is doing to your fellow citizens, and to the world at large?

Can you raise your voice instead of silence it? There are options right here in Montclair. You may want to look into an active local group, New Jersey 11th For Change, which has a strong organizing core on Facebook. You may want to support another Montclair local, Congressional candidate Mikie Sherrill. For more on this, visit her website: mikiesherrill.com.

Perhaps you're not ready to directly address your friends and relatives, but instead can double, triple and quadruple your efforts to act upon your own morals and beliefs. At this point, you may better serve yourself by acting what's on your mind instead of speaking it.

"If we could change ourselves, the tendencies in the world would also change." —Mahatma Gandhi



Montclair Local Voices: Building a realistic college list



Some students may prefer a rural school like Champlain College. Others might prefer the city.

Local Voices columnist Pat Berry helps teens write their college application essays. She is a communications consultant and founder of College Application Camp (collegeapplicationcamp.com). Berry can be reached at pat@collegeapplicationcamp.com. Future columns in this series will address financial aid, interviewing, and other aspects of the college application process.

By PAT BERRY

For Montclair Local

The big question on the minds of college-bound seniors is, “Where will I be a year from now?” The answer will depend on realistic planning, a college wish list filled with schools they would like to attend, and some degree of luck.

As an application essay coach and a parent of three adult children, I have many stories — good and bad — about the



PAT BERRY

application process.

But for this column on creating a college list, I turned to Montclair-based college counseling professionals for help.

Building a list of colleges and universities to which a student ultimately will apply begins with a reality check.

If there are geographical and/or financial constraints, parents and students need to discuss those limitations early.

Robin Abramowitz, an independent college consultant, told me, “It’s sad when a student gains admission to the school of his or her dreams, and then parents explain that it’s just too expensive.”

More often than not, students have no idea where they want to go to college. To find right-fit schools, it’s important that students take stock of their interests and strengths.

How do they learn best? Where do they see themselves thriving — a big school, a small school, a city school? How do they like to spend free time? What do they want to study — biology, gender studies, cybersecurity, business? Until they start looking, students don't realize the vast array of study options open to them, explained education consultant Barbara Gottesman.

Gottesman is the owner of College Help! Organizing and Advising Services (nostresscollegehelp.com).

Knowing what a student doesn't want — say, a school with fraternities and sororities or one that's set in a suburb — is also important.

"There's a college for everyone — actually, there's more than one," Abramowitz said. "Even lower-than-average students have something unique to offer a school."

A student's transcript offers another reality-check opportunity. A strong GPA does not necessarily mean a student is ready for a college with high academic standards, said Gottesman. When it comes to measuring a student's qualifications, the rigor of their high school classes will matter, she said.

"Many students, and some parents, don't realize how 'intellectual' a specific college may be," she said, adding, "A student with a GPA of 4.6 or 4.7 may not be ready for a Swarthmore or a University of Chicago if they aren't also an avid reader of books or seminal articles, or follow some kind of higher-level political and cultural media."

High-achieving students and extremely competitive colleges receive much attention, but the vast majority of college applicants have transcripts and scores that place them in the middle of the academic spectrum. Both Abramowitz and Gottesman see this as an opportunity to discover some gems, schools that may travel under the radar, where students can thrive because of a special interest or talent, or some other factor.

The college sections of libraries and local bookstores typically offer great resources for compiling lists of possible schools. Last year, several of my clients spoke glowingly of the book "Colleges That Change Lives: 40 Schools That Will Change the Way You Think About Colleges," first published in 1996 by retired New York Times education editor Loren Pope.

Abramowitz has a copy in her office. Pope's aim was to dispel conventional wisdom about college choice and bring attention to lesser-known colleges. The 2012 edition, revised by education journalist Hilary Masell Oswald, highlights institutions that offer programs for students with learning disabilities.

College websites are also good resources.

"Reach," "target," and "safety" are familiar terms when it comes to handicapping how likely a school is to accept a student. Abramowitz says many subscribe to the theory that a realistic list has two to three reach schools, four target schools, and at least two safety schools, for a total of eight or nine. But she stresses that students should have a genuine interest in attending each school, no matter how likely or unlikely they are to get in.

Aside from identifying one or two “safe” schools — schools that all indicators suggest will accept a student — education consultant Barbara Gottesman has dropped the other categories altogether from her college-planning lexicon.

“There is usually safe, and then there is what I like to call ‘luck with credentials,’” Gottesman told me. “So many kids are eminently qualified for the same colleges, but schools can’t take everyone.” This is especially true for students from New Jersey, which has a disproportionate number of highly educated families.

What should high school underclassmen be doing in terms of planning for college?

Typical advice includes visiting schools they’re curious about, and making sure schools know they’re interested by signing onto the school’s mailing list. For many schools, these “touches” are evidence of genuine interest.

But Abramowitz hopes students understand there’s more to life than college. She advises them to “embrace their high school experience and remember that not every decision should be based on securing admission to college.”

Abramowitz also cautions students not to let the U.S. News and World Report college ranking determine their choice of college. She said, “Success in life does not depend on attending a college with admissions rates in the single digits.”