

"On the Homefront"

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Bookmark your favorite road

Planes and trains may have their place in our society, but for the dedicated traveler there's still nothing like getting in your car and taking a trip along America's highways.

Half the fun of road trips, in the minds of many, is getting home and telling friends and family about the adventure - and the roads they traveled.

In the past, drivers' road stories were largely told by word of mouth to a few people at a time. Now drivers can tell their tales to millions via the Internet. FavoriteRoad.com is a new Web site that features America's favorite highways and byways.

The site encourages you to post your favorite roads and explain why you like them. Simply log on to submit a photo and story of your favorite road. Use links posted on the site to share your road via popular social networks such as Facebook and Twitter. Your submission may even win a prize in contest giveaways.

The past year's economic downturn has

When it comes to home improvement, small projects pay off

Current economic conditions have forced many families to re-evaluate their spending habits and cut back in certain areas that are no longer deemed necessities. Dining out, family vacations and the purchase of that new TV are all being postponed until the economy makes it out of the red - but some things, like home improvement projects, can't be pushed off quite as easily. And while you may not be ready to invest in a whole new set of tools to begin your home improvement project, a trip to your local rental store provides a cost-effective solution to help you tackle those jobs that just can't wait.

Protect your largest investment

Your home is your largest investment and no matter what the economic conditions, you don't want to cut corners on projects around the house. Taking the time to do these projects right the first time will not only ensure the safety and well being of your family, but it will also ensure your financial security for years to come. Investing some energy and money into fixing little problems, like a crack in your home's foundation, will prevent larger repairs down the road. Even something as unassuming as a clogged drain or leaky faucet can lead to much more costly problems if not addressed properly, and can negatively impact the overall value of your home.

Simple 'refresher' projects, like a fresh coat of paint or a little landscaping work, will not only make your home feel more warm and inviting, but will also yield a large return on investment when it comes time to put your house on the market. Other projects, like adding a skylight or fireplace, can make your home more energy efficient and help reduce bills in the long run - and with most family budgets still in survival mode, projects that can produce long-term savings are a smart investment.

Upgrade your house without upgrading your bills

Although many home improvement projects appear to be simple, they often require tools that most weekend warriors don't have just lying around. This is when it makes sense to enlist the help of your local rental store. And since you will most likely only need the tools or equipment once, renting is a much more cost-effective solution than buying new or hiring a handyman. Plus, you get the added satisfaction of knowing that you had a hand in sprucing up your home and increasing its value.

Stocked with pressure washers to clean off your siding or deck, jackhammers to tear out that uneven front walk and concrete polishers to give your garage floor a distinctive new finish, your nearby rental store is like the ultimate workshop - filled with professional grade tools. Your local rental professionals will make sure you get the right tools for your job, and they will teach you how to properly use the equipment you will need. And no need to worry about storing the tools once you are done with your project; just return them to the rental store and let them handle the storage and maintenance.

Find your local rental store

Don't go running all over town to find the tools you need - save your time and energy and make one stop at your local rental store. To make finding the rental store nearest you even easier, the American Rental Association (ARA) offers RentalHQ.com, the world's largest and most comprehensive rental store locator. Here, people planning a home upgrade can find the rental store nearest them, read how-to tips and get ideas and inspiration for their project.

Source: <http://helloelizabethtownftknox.com/tls/?action=article&itemId=3743>

reintroduced the word 'infrastructure' to our vocabulary. As a result of stimulus legislation passed in 2009, the federal government has allocated millions of dollars to specifically improve state roads and highways. And, with more affordable gasoline prices, people are increasingly using America's roads for leisure travel.

By posting on FavoriteRoad.com, you're doing more than just 'telling a good story.' Your testimonials may help encourage lawmakers to push for increased infrastructure spending to keep America driving smoothly and safely for years to come.

What's your favorite road? Log on and tell the world at FavoriteRoad.com.

Source: <http://helloelizabethtownftknox.com/tls/?action=article&itemId=3714>



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Green power makes lawn and garden care more eco-friendly

When the sun shines on a beautiful summer day, it's easy to gauge how important our yards are. Take a walk around your neighborhood and you'll likely see a majority of your neighbors out mowing lawns, pulling weeds, cutting flowers and more. And once the work of maintaining the yard is done, it becomes the scene of garden parties, backyard barbeques and games like bocce and croquet.

The amount of time that we spend in our yards also tells us something about how we value nature and the environment. If you're taking the time to meticulously care for your lawn and garden, it makes sense to do so in an eco-friendly way.

When you use green power to care for your lawn and garden, not only will you be watching out for yourself, your family and your pets, you'll be doing good for the environment by using methods and products that are gentle on the Earth. Plus, you'll be popular with your neighbors - your yard will be in perfect shape without the annoyances of noisy equipment and harsh fumes.

Here are some eco-conscious tips to keep in mind as you care for your lawn and garden throughout the summer.

* Mow with low emissions. The costs of mowing a big lawn with a conventional lawnmower are high, both on your pocketbook and the environment, but it's a job that needs to be tackled with the help of a mower.

In the past, using a more environmentally friendly mower would have meant dealing with the cord tangles and tugging that go along with keeping an electric version plugged in or the tedium of pushing a reel mower by hand. Luckily, the Recharge Mower combines the best of both worlds: a full-size, cordless mower with no emissions and which requires no gas or oil because it is electric and fully rechargeable. Because it has hand operated controls rather than confusing gear shifters, it makes lawn care easy. For more information, go to www.rechargemower.com.

* Use green power instead of gas power. Tackling the other trimming jobs in the garden, other than just mowing, often leads to people pulling out gas-guzzling, oil-burning tools that are so noisy you need to wear protective headphones while using them. They add to the clutter in your garage with environmentally unsound canisters of oil and gas, and turn those fluids to noxious fumes when used.

Instead of revving up a noisy, harmful engine when it's time to trim hedges, consider using a rechargeable lithium-ion battery powered tool. They're cordless, which makes maneuvering between plants easier, plus they recharge quickly and can be stored for long periods of time without losing their charge.

* Plant organic, grow organic. If, like so many other people, you're choosing to grow vegetables and fruits in your yard, look for seeds or starters that have been organically produced and grown. By doing that, you'll be starting out with plants that have a minimum of pesticides and chemicals in them - then it's up to you to keep the theme going. Choose plant foods and treatments, along with pest repellents, that are organic - look for certification from independent agencies like OMRI, the Organic Materials Review Institute.

With the world's environmental consciousness expanding more and more, it's easier than ever to find natural, organic and eco-friendly garden and yard solutions. And when you choose to trim your lawn and plants with an environmentally friendly mower or power tools, and use organic plant care, you'll be giving back to the environment that you value so much.

Source: <http://helloelizabethtownftknox.com/tls/?action=article&itemId=3756>

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Beat the heat: Tips for keeping your family safe and healthy this summer

The smell of the barbecue grill, the sounds of children playing and the feel of warm sun on the skin are all signs of summer. With increased outdoor activities, there also comes a list of precautions you should take to keep your family safe and healthy.

'We know women are usually the caretakers of the family,' says Elizabeth Battaglino Cahill, a registered nurse and executive director of HealthyWomen. 'Summer brings lots of great opportunities for family fun, but also requires some special planning to keep kids and adults safe and healthy in the sun and heat.'

Limit sun exposure

Because exposure to the sun causes most of the skin changes associated with aging, protecting the skin from the sun is the single most important skin care practice you can adopt and impart to your children. Significant exposure to the sun will wrinkle and dry the skin. Uneven pigmentation - from freckles to small or large brown spots - is another side effect of frequent sunning.

The most serious consequence of sun exposure is skin cancer. Most sun damage occurs before age 18, but skin cancer can take up to 20 or more years to develop. Children who experience just a few serious sunburns are believed to have an increased risk of developing skin cancer later in life. Protect children by applying sunscreen at least an hour before heading outside and frequently reapplying sunscreen with an SPF of at least 15. Also have them play in the shade and wear protective clothing. Babies younger than 6 months should never be in direct sunlight and should always wear a hat and clothing that protects them from the sun's ultraviolet (UV) rays.

Keep an eye on your vision health

Wear sunglasses and a wide-brimmed hat when you're in the sun. These two simple steps can reduce your exposure to eye-damaging UV rays up to 18-fold. And, if you wear contacts, ask your eye care specialist about contact lenses with UV protection. Don't forget your children and their eyes. If you are going to be in the sun, make sure your children are wearing hats that provide coverage. Use your stroller hood when out for a walk and pay attention to the sun's direction. When

out for a walk with your stroller, try to walk so that the sun hits your back. You may also want to consider purchasing children's sunglasses.

Practice water safety

Before you start splashing, remember safety first. Take the time to enroll your kids in swim instruction classes, and teach your children to take precautions before diving into the water. Make sure to read the safety and warning labels on all children's toys, inner tubes and water wings so that you understand their safety capabilities. And remember to reapply sunscreen every few hours after being in the water.

Avoid foods exposed to excess heat

During the summer months, many people enjoy going for a picnic. Before packing your basket this summer, think about how long your food will be exposed to the outdoors. Avoid packing meat, dairy and egg products that may spoil if not kept cold. If you decide to bring these types of food products, pack them separate from each other in a cooler, and keep the ice in a sealed container to avoid a soggy sandwich.

Stay hydrated

Increase fluid intake as appropriate based on the weather. High temperatures or humidity outside, heated indoor air and high altitudes all cause you to need more fluids.

When exercising, drink one cup of fluids every 15 minutes, advises Dr. Werner W.K. Hoeger, a fellow of the American College of Sports Medicine and director of the Human Performance Laboratory at Boise State University. Add more for big events. If you're going to be in a race or charity walk, make sure you drink enough to be well hydrated the day before, Hoeger adds. Also, drink a glass of fluid, such as water or a sports drink, an hour before the event.

Watch out for overheating in vehicles

Even on a relatively mild day, the temperature inside your vehicle can quickly escalate. These temperatures can put both children and pets at risk for heat stroke, dehydration and even death. Never leave your child or pet unattended inside your car, even to run a quick errand.

For your sun safety checklist, visit www.HealthyWomen.org/summersafety. For other health and wellness information, visit www.HealthyWomen.org.

Source: <http://helloelizabethtownftknox.com/tls/?action=article&itemId=3750>

Did you know...

The big differences between pythons and boa constrictors: Pythons are longer and lay eggs. Boas give birth to live babies.

The most common seasonings found in American homes are chili powder, cinnamon, and seasoned salts.

Every Person, including identical twins, has a unique eye and tongue print along with their finger print.



Easy ideas for elegant outdoor Summer entertaining

To really impress your guests this summer, give your outdoor soirees a little extra elegance that goes beyond the usual grill-out. The good news is that it's easier than you'd imagine to create an ambiance that is welcoming and sophisticated.

One of the keys to throwing an upscale backyard get together is to plan in advance. Once you have an idea of what you'd like to do, it's time to start letting people know. And we all know how busy summer schedules are, so informing your guests as much as a few weeks ahead of time is a courtesy they'll appreciate.

Here are some of the elements you'll need to create the perfect atmosphere for outdoor entertaining this summer.

* **Decor:** Having a jumble of mixed and matched chairs can be either charming or a visual distraction. If you have an assortment of old wooden chairs, it gives things a rustic feel; if it's decades-old folding chairs in clashing colors and styles, it looks mismatched. Aim for a consistent look, whether it's shabby chic or modern. If your tables and surfaces don't tie in perfectly, there's an easy fix: simply cover them with a tablecloth that has the same feel as the rest of your decor. Add planters of flowers in colors that coordinate with your theme.

* **Comfort:** Swatting at insects during a party is almost impossible if you're holding a beverage and a plate of hors d'oeuvres and uncomfortable even if your hands are free. Warm summer evenings often mean bare legs and arms, and the last thing you want your guests to remember is how many bug bites they got. To add

beautiful, soft lighting while discouraging bugs, opt for mosquito blocking candles. Place them on tables or around your patio. The Conceal line from Yankee Candle will not only block mosquitoes, it also has a pleasant, garden-fresh scent that will add to your party's ambiance.

* **Menu:** Food does not need to be elaborate to be both beautiful and delicious. Take a cue from the rustic food traditions of Italy, France and Spain, where simple foods like garden vegetables, artisan breads and grilled meats make a major impact with surprisingly easy preparation. Keep the focus on vegetables and fruits, with one or two meat, poultry or fish options, to create a beautiful, healthy arrangement of dishes.

* **Music:** Depending on the mood you want to establish, you can choose from an endless supply of music available for download. Try salsa music for liveliness, flamenco guitar for dramatic artistry, Malian kora music for serenity or updated bossa nova for an unmistakably summery, beachy feel.

Outdoor entertaining is one of the best things about summer, whether you're a host or a guest. When you're hosting, the main goal is to create a relaxing, lovely environment during which your guests can forget their every care, whether it's the stress of work or the usual summer annoyances of mosquito bites. For more information about the Conceal line of outdoor mosquito candles from Yankee Candle, go to www.yankeecandle.com. When you provide your guests with a perfect escape for one evening, you've mastered outdoor entertaining.

Source: <http://helloelizabethtownftknox.com/tls/?action=article&itemId=3762>