



MEMORIES MUSINGS

By Cheri Sims

Cheri lives, writes and gardens in Charleston.

Spring has sprung and I am thrilled. Never mind the seasonal allergies, the daffodils and jonquils are blooming and even the hyacinths are peeking up out of the dirt. The birds are singing and I have seen an amazing number of people out walking in shorts. As I just typed the above, the weather report came on the TV and advised me that it will be 28 tonight. Wow, 70 this afternoon and freezing tonight. Don't we just love the Midwest?

With the warmer weather I have started a new outside project. The drainage on this property has been neglected for years and I decided to implement one of Hubby's long ago ideas. I am having all new guttering installed on the house and a new sidewalk poured on the north side with pvc drainage installed under the concrete. The north yard has always been a very wet area even when we lived here fifty years ago and Hubby thought a patio with drainage connected to the downspouts would have been a good idea. The previous owners installed a patio at the back of the house but it does not get any sun, just

like the north yard, so I did not see any reason to extend a patio, so I opted for a sidewalk instead.

A sidewalk will connect the back with the front allowing me to walk all around the house without having to step in the mud. I am sure the neighbor cats will also like the new walking path because when it is wet outside and they come to visit; I pick them up and their feet are always muddy. I will solve the mud problems and decrease the amount of dirt the kitties deposit on my clothing, when I pick them up for cuddles; thus decreasing the amount of washing I have to do. It is a win, win situation.

After I solve the drainage on the north side I will have to set my mind to work on solving the same problem on the south side; which will be a much harder endeavor because of the slope of the asphalt driveway. I was told that I should remove the driveway and re-grade the whole property but that will not happen due to the cost of the project. I was also told that French drains will be less expensive; so I had better get out the shovel, now,



and start digging because this project will take a long time to execute.

I am planning a trip to Prairie Gardens in Champaign just as soon as they receive their shipment of blue Hydrangeas'. I had two of them here years ago and the soil was acid enough to produce the beautiful blue color that one sees in Maine. I have not been able to grow blue plants successfully any place else I have lived so I am excited to try again. I also want to reintroduce some of the other native plants that grew in this area years ago. Most of the houses had huge displays of bluebells, columbine, Jack-in-the-pulpit and Jacob's-ladder, along with various ferns and naturalizing lilies. It will be so interesting to bring back a bit of the his-

tory in the garden. I will have to get in touch with my former neighbor, Joyce, my Master Gardener friend, for advice as I have forgotten quite a lot about shade gardening. I have gardened in the sun for over fifteen years and the difference between sun and shade gardening is amazing.

With spring flowers beginning to bloom, I have been anxiously awaiting the first signs of the perennial herbs I planted last year and this morning, I smelled the aroma of newly budding basil as I walked down the back steps. Oh what a joy, the starts survived, and I have continued the migration of the same basil I planted when I lived two doors south of this old house. The starts have traveled with me over a span of twenty-five

years and four houses. Another unbelievable floral migration; which also survived the winter, are the lilac starts I planted at the house I just sold. I have mentioned that I am helping the new owners as they travel by feeding my stray cats whom they have adopted and I am also supervising the garden clean-up for them. Those lilac bushes were started from the bushes I planted at this house fifty years ago and I have moved starts with me all these years. The mother bush has not fared well and was over pruned before I arrived here last year and it needs much love and attention. Ahhh, the wonders of nature!

One last Easter candy mention: my friend sent a link to a web site which contains nineteen ways to use leftover Peeps Easter

candy. Delish.com is always a fun site to visit and I think you might just enjoy these ideas;

Peepsie Treats

Peeps + Rice Krispies = match made in heaven- Peeps-Infused Vodka

It looks like a science experiment gone wrong, but it tastes so right. Just stick Peeps in a large mason jar or pitcher, fill with vodka, and let it sit for 2 to 3 hours for pastel-tinted, marshmallow-flavored booze.

Peeps S'mores

There's no such thing as too many s'mores. I mean, they're called "some more" for a reason, right? It's a great way to use up all kinds of Easter candy.

(<https://www.delish.com/holiday-recipes/easter/g3312/peeps-hacks/?slide=2>)



REAL LIFE WELLNESS

By Dr. Bill Hemmer

How to Live Your Best Life Now

Sounds pretty good doesn't it? No matter how old you are, we all want to be healthy, happy and vital. But how can you do it consistently given our current societal circumstance?

Be very conscious of your lifestyle every day!

I know we have heard to have a good lifestyle thousands of times before, but

in the new book called Regenerate by Sawyer Ji, he shares the best explanation I have heard in a long time about why it is so important and how you can literally learn to regenerate yourself at any age to become more vital and healthy.

It all comes back to our genes. Thirty percent of our genes are fixed and

date back 100's of thousands, if not millions of years to the time when we were all hunting and gathering our food and living in caves. Back then, we had no choice other than to eat what we killed, caught, and gathered.

That 30 percent of our genes really haven't changed and are important for basic survival. The other 70 percent of our genes can and do change. These changes can be done in seconds. These changes are called Epigenetic changes. In other words, you can literally turn on or turn off genes by your environment. Environmental changes in

your genes are an essential part of our adaptive mechanism to stay alive and vital.

We all learn to adapt to our environment. The air we breathe, the thoughts we think, the movements we make and the food we eat are all parts of our environment we can control. These things, in turn, can turn off or turn on genes that can help us get and stay healthy, or cause us to get sicker.

So, to live your best life, you need to get outside at least 30 minutes every day. Fresh air, sunshine (even if it is cloudy, you still benefit) and grounding (putting your bare feet on the Earth) all help your

body to get into better balance with the Earth.

Your self-talk is also extremely important. The thoughts you tell yourself in your on-going conversation you have inside your head will either fuel your vitality or suck the life right out of you. Everyone reading this is an important part of our community and can add value. Don't let anybody ever tell you any different.

Walking and stretching are the two most basic movements anyone can do to improve their health and vitality. Even if it is only walking around your house a few times a day, our core

genetic code has used walking since we have been able to stand on two feet. It is vital to walk for health. Learning techniques like yoga also connect you to the Earth, increasing your vitality and health.

But the final and most important way you can increase your vitality and health on a daily basis is by what you put into your mouth. Your food has so many more things inside of it than calories, proteins, carbohydrates and fats. It is the key piece of changing your life and living your best life ever.

I will talk more about that next week.

Master Naturalists announce Field Day of Learning at Douglas-Hart Nature Ctr.

Local Master Naturalists want to inspire you to get outside and appreciate Illinois' natural beauty. Join us for our Field Day of Learning on Saturday, April 10, 8:30 am to 3:30 pm. Come learn about the many species of butterflies found in Coles County, the seventeen varieties of turtles in Illinois, and the many beautiful spring wildflowers that grow in Illinois.

The day will start at Douglas-Hart Nature Center with a butterfly program where participants will learn about the most common butterflies in our area and how to support them through all stages of their lifecycle. This will be followed by a session about turtles found in our area. Learn how to identify them and their habitats as you hike along the nature center trails. Lastly, we will travel

to Warbler Ridge to identify spring wildflowers and learn some historical information. Participants will need to be able to hike moderate trails.

Check-in and welcome will begin at 8:30 a.m. at Douglas-Hart Nature Center, 2204 Dewitt Ave. E, Mattoon. Light snacks and water will be offered in the morning. Lunch and travel to Warbler Ridge, Rt. 130 and Daleyville Rd, Charleston, will

be on your own.

Workshop participation is limited to twenty individuals. To register go to <https://go.illinois.edu/DayofLearning> or call the Mattoon Extension office at 217-345-7034. Cost is \$25.00 and includes handouts and door prizes at each session. Social distancing and masks required. Please bring drinking water for the hikes and wear proper clothing.

If you will need an accommodation in order to participate, please email uieccdms@illinois.edu. Early requests are strongly encouraged to allow sufficient time to meet your access needs.

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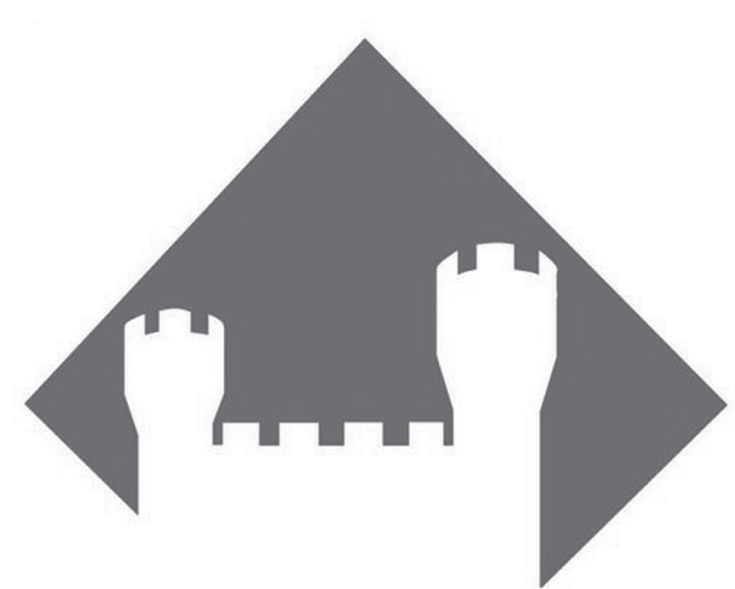


Eastern Illinois University's Professor Ryan Burge pens new book on American religion

Research explores reasons for growing number of Americans claiming no religious affiliation

Eastern Illinois University Assistant Professor and Graduate Coordinator of Political Science Dr. Ryan Burge has authored a new book, *The Nones: Where They Came From, Who They Are, and Where They Are Going*. In the book, Burge details a comprehensive picture of Americans who say they have no religious affiliation. His analysis and commentary have been featured on Vice News and a variety of other national media outlets.

In the book, Burge works to give readers a nuanced, accurate, and meaningful picture of the growing number of Americans who say they have no religious affiliation. His book explains in part how this rise may have happened, who these folks – who he defines in the book as “nones” – are, and what their lack of religious connectivity might mean for the future of



American religion.

Burge teaches in a variety of areas, including American institutions, political behavior, and research methods. His research focuses largely on the interaction of religiosity and political behavior, especially in the American context. Previously, Burge

completed an appointment as a post-doctoral research fellow at the Paul Simon Public Policy Institute in Carbondale, Illinois. While there, he served as an adviser on issues of survey methodology and polling, as well as providing data collection and analysis. Burge has published over

twenty articles in a number of well-regarded, peer reviewed journals, including *Politics & Religion*, the *Journal for the Scientific Study of Religion*, the *Review of Religious Research*, the *Journal of Religious Leadership*, *Representation*, *Politics & Gender*, *Politics, Groups, and Identities*, the *Journal of Communication and Religion*, the *Journal of Religion, Media and Digital Culture* and the *Social Science Computer Review*. Burge also serves as a pastor in the American Baptist Church, having served in his current church for more than thirteen years.

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