

# YOUR Bliss

Health, Wealth, Happiness & Spirit

FREE

## Pride Month

A Q&A of Coming Out with  
the LGBTQIA+ Community

## Men's Health Month

Why Our Mental Health  
Matters Beyond Words

## Hiking Spots

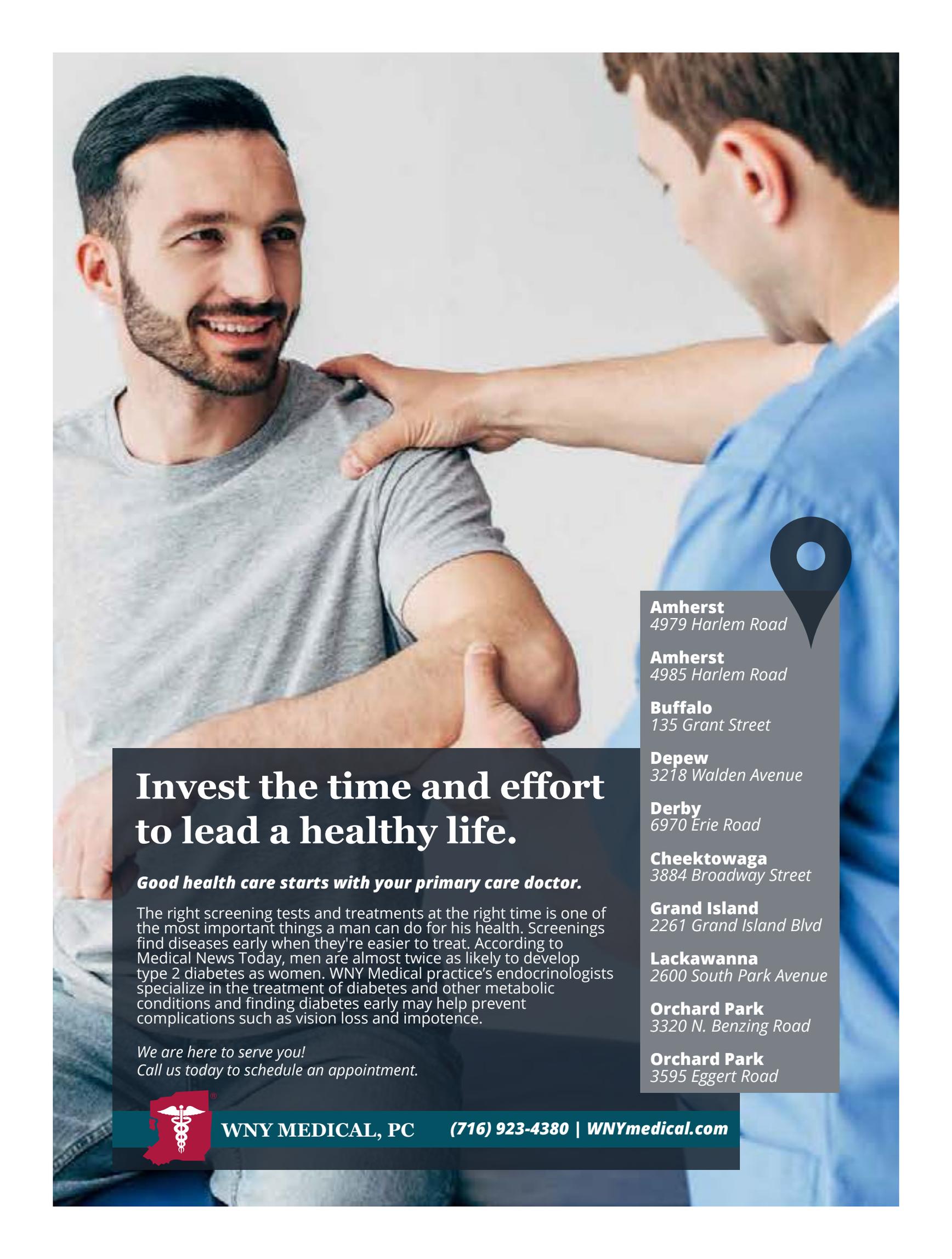
A Variety of Walking and  
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## Elements of Design

How We Use Shapes and  
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June 2023





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## Our Mission

Your Bliss Magazine explores the power of overall wellness. We look to push past the boundaries of physical health and explore the aspects of mental health, financial health, and health of the spirit. Our goal is to bring you information that you can use to live a happy, healthy, and spirited life. We find tips for the short term as well as more expansive information for the long term.

With the ever-expanding technology, knowledge, and evolution of the health field, there is a growing supply of data to take from. With Your Bliss, we find the information for you and put it all in one place. Every month we bring you new articles on a wide range of topics so you can live a more fulfilled and whole life.

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# Benefits of Earthing

By: Lana Shapiro



When was the last time you took a leisurely walk through the grass barefoot? Walked barefoot on the beach? Dug into the earth with your bare hands? If you're like most of us, it's been way too long.

## What is Earthing, and why do we need to do it?

We live on this planet, yet we're separated from its inherently healing energy. Grounding or earthing is the practice of reconnecting the human body to the Earth. The theory of grounding states that our modern lifestyle has disconnected humans from the electrons naturally present in the ground. This loss could be responsible for increased inflammation, affected sleep, and chronic pain.

A direct physical connection to the Earth's natural electrical charge stabilizes our physiology, resulting in profound and transformational health benefits. Getting connected can be as simple as standing barefoot on the ground to reestablish our lost and needed connection with the Earth. This Earth energy, which comes from a virtually unlimited supply of sub-atomic particles called electrons, is constantly replenished by the sun, lightning, and our planet's deep molten core, giving our landmasses and oceans a subtle negative electrical charge.

Scientists have found that it's these free negatively charged electrons, from the Earth, that keep our bioelectric bodies balanced by altering the positively charged free radicals, which are the hallmarks of inflammation.

Our original ancestors earthed around the clock, they were constantly connected to the Earth's frequency. To receive full benefit of Earthing, it is recommended to be done for a minimum of 30 minutes.

## Benefits Earthing has been shown to help with are:

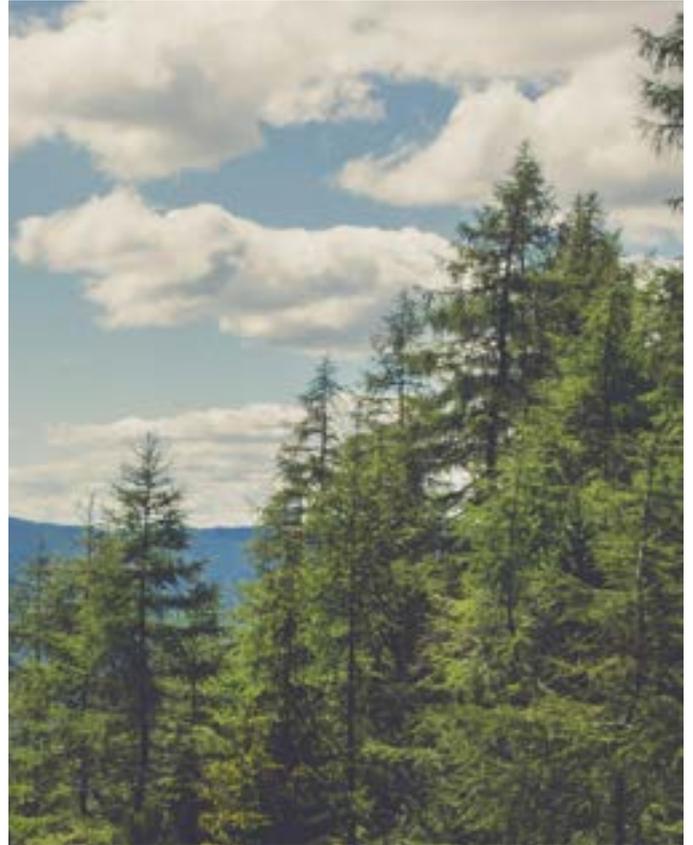
- Defuse the cause of inflammation, and improve or eliminate the symptoms of many inflammation-related disorders
- Reduce or eliminate chronic pain
- Improve sleep and promote a deeper sleep
- Increase energy and vitality
- Lower stress and promote calmness in the body by cooling down the nervous system and stress hormones
- Normalize the body's biological rhythms
- Thin the blood and improve blood pressure and flow
- Relieve muscle tension and headaches
- Lessen hormonal and menstrual symptoms
- Dramatically speeds healing time and can help prevent bedsores
- Reduce or eliminate jet lag
- Protect the body against potentially health disturbing environmental electromagnetic fields (EMFs)
- Accelerate recovery from intense athletic activity

## Other Ways to “Earth”

- Swim in the ocean or lakes
- Garden with bare hands
- Lay on the Earth
- Hug a living tree
- Lean up against a living tree
- Sleep on the earth while camping
- Wear natural leather-soled shoes instead of synthetic rubber/plastic shoes

## Consistency is Key!

In order to receive the full benefits of this practice, it is important to make it a consistent part of your routine. If you live in an area where Earthing year around is not possible due to seasonal changes, there are products that you can invest in that can be used around your house that can provide similar benefits, such as Earthing pillows, blankets, frequency mats, etc.



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# CLIA Approves Clinical Lab Services at WNY Medical

By: **Ralph Hernandez, Director of Medical Services, WNY Medical PC**

Starting June 1, 2023, WNY Medical PC, a leading provider of primary care services in Western NY, announced hiring Dr. Bing Su to manage and operate its new Physician Office Laboratory (POL) at 4979 Harlem Road, Amherst, NY location.

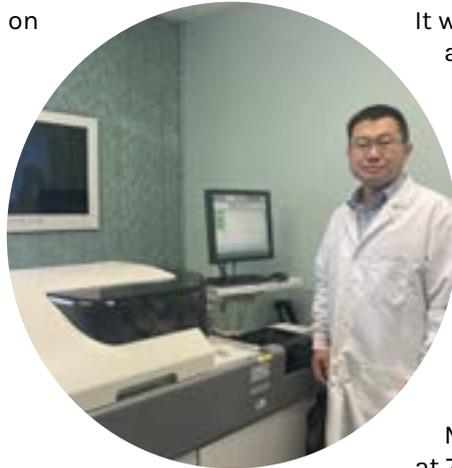
Dr. Su will oversee lab services, following manufacturer guidance on operations, including quality control and quality assurance, and seeing that all staff performing tests are qualified and educated on laboratory procedures and trained annually.

Services will include:

- IGRA - TB
- CBC (Includes Diff/PLT)
- Comprehensive Metabolic panel
- Lipid panel
- Vitamin D
- 25-OH Total,
- Hemoglobin A1c

Coming soon:

- TSH
- PSA
- Free T3
- Free T3 & T4
- Folate (Vitamin 9 & 12)



“Taking the next step on our journey to providing quality healthcare requires a highly qualified and dedicated pathology service provider, like Dr. Su. Hiring Dr. Su will allow us to get test results much faster, which is very helpful to patients. Another advantage is performing more tests and cutting down on follow-up calls to patients, extra visits from patients coming to pick up results, and the paperwork required. The lab is one of the few in the region that is physician owned.

It will serve all WNY Medical PCs, primary care, and multispecialty clinics.” Said Dr. Riffat Sadiq, President & CEO of WNY Medical PC.

The POL is physician-centered and designed to work seamlessly with the network practitioners and provide direct consultation when needed. The goal is to drive better patient outcomes through high-quality, high-service diagnostics from a single point of contact. The new lab will offer outpatient services by appointment only from 7:00 AM to 3:00 PM Monday-Friday. For information, call our office at 716-923-4380.

## Gut Health

By: **Food as Medicine; Dr. RS Youtube Channel**



Gut health is all about our digestive system, which is filled with bacteria and other micro-organisms that help with digestion and can help with other health-related conditions. There are many conditions that can be partially caused by disturbances in your gut, such as Crohn's Disease, diabetes, obesity and it has even been linked to mental health disorders. Gut health can be affected by things such as what we eat, but it will also be affected if we aren't sleeping, exercising, or taking care of our mental health. It's almost like our gut bacteria are another organ in our body. You might be asking yourself, so bacteria are actually helpful to our bodies? This is correct, not all bacteria are bad, and your gut bacteria can do a lot for your health. These healthy bacteria contribute to your immune system,

digest fiber and keep your digestive tract and bowel function working properly.

Many choices we make can have an impact on our gut health. So, an important part of every diet should be choosing probiotic foods, which are foods that help support and build healthy bacteria in our digestive system. Fermented foods or those that have cultures in their ingredients are typically sources of probiotics. There are some very good probiotic options out there for all sorts of diets such as yogurt, kimchi, kefir, sauerkraut, kombucha, and pickled vegetables. There are many choices we make that can ultimately harm our gut health, these include alcohol, cigarettes, sleep deprivation and even stress can harm your microbiome.

Always make sure you're taking care of your whole body, keep a balanced diet, and include probiotics when you can. Pay attention to your sleep and exercise and your whole body, including your gut bacteria will thank you for it!



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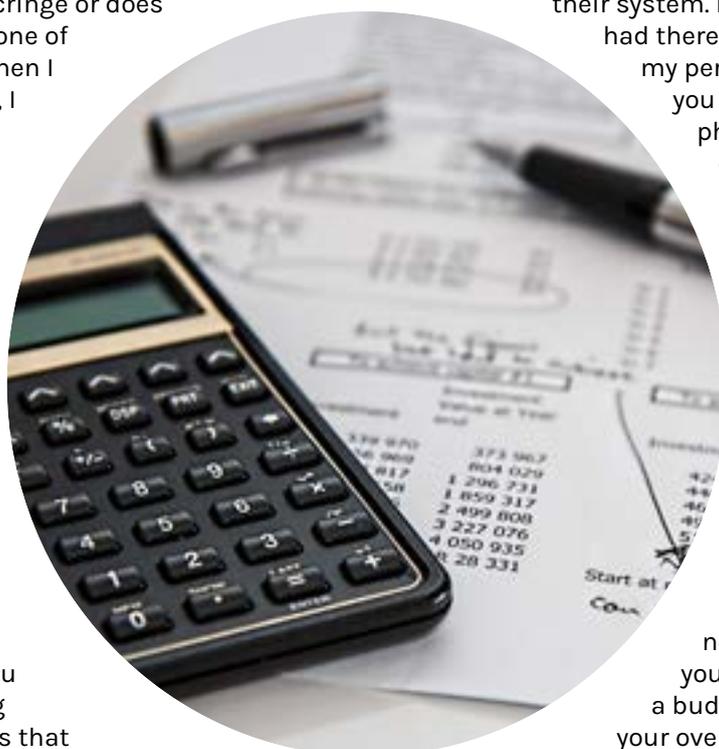
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## Living on a Budget

By: Timothy Kelheart

Does the word budget make you cringe or does it make you happy? For me, I am one of those people who felt confined when I heard the word budget. Last year, I did not budget anything. I would always wonder how I wound up hardly making anything after my expenses were paid off. This year, I decided to finally break that habit and create my own personal budget for expenses. It honestly has proven to be one of the best decisions I have ever made!

With a budget in mind I am able to do fun things with friends and family with my allotted entertainment section, pay off all my bills and still have enough money set aside to grow interest in my bank account. If you struggle with finances try looking at some of the example templates that Microsoft Excel already has programmed in



their system. I based my budget off of what they had there already and I customized one to my personal finances. The best part is if you download the Excel app on your phone and you have your budget on the app you can easily update your expenses instead of waiting till you arrive home where you might have already forgotten what you spent.

In the end, a budget has proven to work for me with only using one for half of this year. I already know I will have enough set aside for the holidays at the end of the year and will not be scrambling to find money to pay for everything. One day when it's rainy, why not use that time indoors to set yourself up for financial security with a budget? It will prove to be good for your overall wellness and give you piece of mind.

# Men's Health Month: Mental Health Significance

By: Brody Walsh

Ask a man if he's healthy and he may answer with some comment about his size, he might brag about his prowess, or complain about his bad knees. When we talk about health, so often we assume it references only the physical. Especially with men, there is a tendency to let an equally important element of one's well-being fall by the wayside: mental health. With June comes National Men's Health Month, and it's a great opportunity for us to bring attention to the issues that surround men's mental health and our approach to those who may be struggling with mental health issues.

There are some troubling statistics when it comes to how men handle their mental health. Not only are they less likely to seek out treatment, but they are also underdiagnosed when it comes to common mental health conditions like depression and anxiety. These tendencies often result in worse outcomes for men who are struggling with mental health issues. Compared to women, men are more likely to turn to harmful coping mechanisms like drugs or alcohol and are also more likely to take their own life. These terrible outcomes are why it is so important to raise awareness for men's mental health and peel back the stigma around seeking help.

The stigma around mental health is by no means limited to men, often, those who struggle with mental illness suffer from social norms established

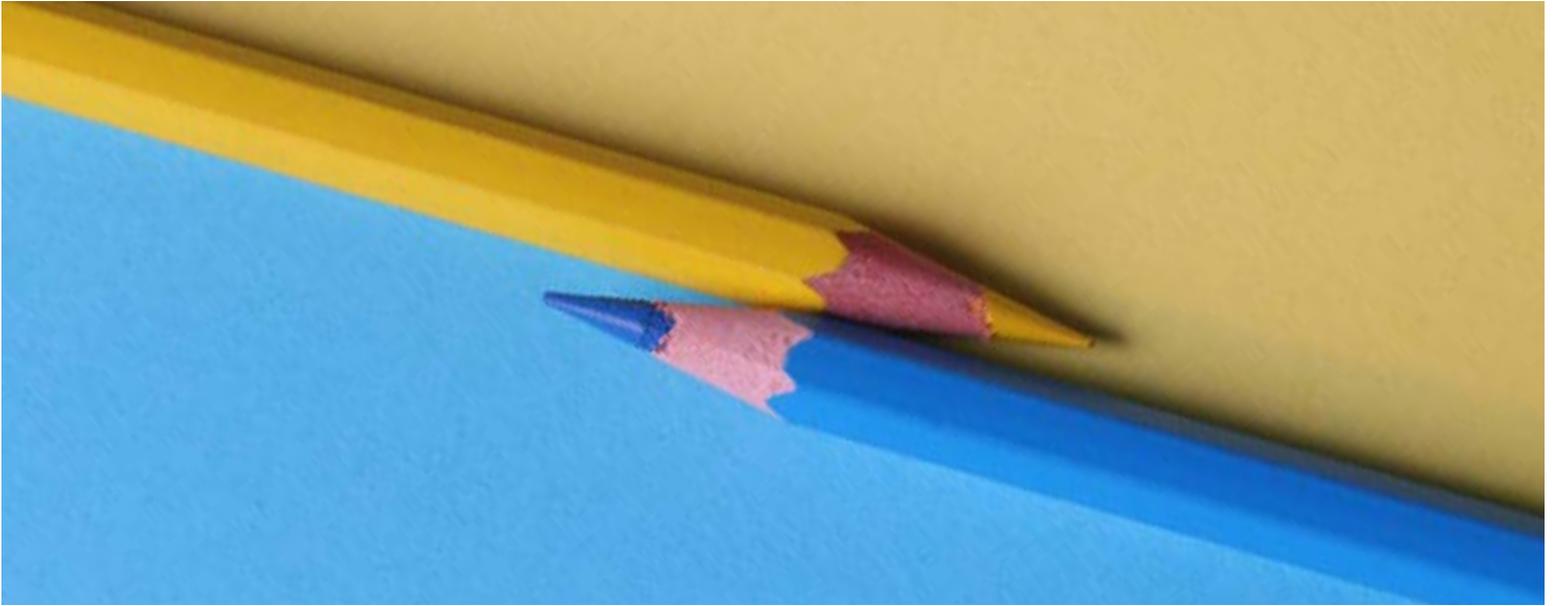
long before we understood mental illness and its consequences. However, men are also subject to outdated ideas of masculinity and gender roles. They hesitate to reach out for fear of seeming weak or emotional. Suffering in silence will often only exacerbate problems or increase the chances of one turning to harmful coping mechanisms like drugs or alcohol. So, in approaching this issue, it is important to acknowledge the strength it takes to reach out and be honest about the struggles of dealing with mental illness. Fundamentally, the only way to combat the outdated stigmas surrounding mental health and gender roles is to normalize seeking help and allow safe spaces for people of all genders to share honestly their struggles.

Our understanding of mental illness grows by the day, but knowledge alone cannot combat the deeply ingrained preconceptions our culture proliferates surrounding mental health and gender. Take care in how you speak on mental illness, and be mindful of those around you, and slowly we can outgrow the old-world attitudes that make mental health so difficult for so many to approach. To ask for help is not a sign of weakness, but a sign of strength, and allowing those around us to be vulnerable without fear of judgment will go a long way in peeling back the harmful stigmas around these issues. Mental health is as important as the physical, and helping people understand that is a great way to celebrate Men's National Health Month.



# The Elements of Design, continued

By: Roberta Schlehr



Recently, I wrote an article regarding principles of design or design principles. I wrote about how the principles of design are all around us in our everyday life, they are not just for the graphic designers, photographers, or interior designers.

## **The principles:**

**Alignment**  
**Balance**  
**Contrast**  
**Emphasis**  
**Hierarchy**  
**Repetition**  
**Unity**

These are found in the things we read, how we dress and how we decorate our homes. The elements of design work much the same way, except they are the support to the principles.

## **The elements of design:**

**Shape**  
**Color**  
**Form**  
**Line**  
**Texture**

These provide a connection or link to the principles. They work together, for example, if you have pictures on a wall, you want to create a sense of balance (a principle), you may use color (an element) to unite the images.

Visual design can produce a certain mood, draw the eye in a specific direction, or make you feel a certain

way. When we walk into the store, how do you feel by the space around you? Is it cluttered, or are there clear aisle ways and paths for you to walk? You may not think of these paths as lines, but they are, leading you to different departments or to the items on sale.

Start looking a little bit deeper than just the basic principles of design, look at what shapes are created with the pattern on your sofa, or the shapes that are using negative positive space. When you are looking at one object, can you see another? Do you remember seeing the optical illusion of the vase and two faces? This is called Rubin Vase, look it up on the internet if you are not familiar. There is an optical illusion of an old man and a young woman, in the same image, some can see both and some can only see one image. It is fun to look at optical illusions that use negative positive shapes or letters to create words within words.

How does this work in your everyday life when you are choosing artwork for your home, or choosing different colors or different patterns for your furniture? As you are starting to incorporate the elements of design, be sure to have the design principles in place. Make connections of the elements to your living space, this will help to create a warm and welcoming environment.

Start to look around and see all the possibilities when you apply the design elements into your everyday life. Think and see differently.

“  
Start  
looking a little  
bit deeper than  
just the basic  
principles of  
design.  
”

# Pride Month: The Power of Coming Out

By: Various Contributors



The LGBTQIA+ community is full of love and trust for all. Having a welcoming environment is half the battle while embracing one's true self is the other. Unfortunately it can be difficult and anxiety inducing to those struggling to identifying a place within our community. What advice do you have to those in the community who are not "out" in their community due to fear or anxiety? If you could give advice to those in fear or coming out, what would you say?



It is important to find a support system. This can be a trusted friend, family member, or even a therapist. It is also helpful to connect with other members of the LGBTQIA+ community, either online or in person, to find others who have gone through similar experiences.

Remember that coming out is not a one-time event, and it is okay to take things one step at a time. It is important to prioritize your safety and well-being and to come out when you feel ready and in control.

To those who are already out and proud, it is important to be an ally and offer support to those who may not be as open. By creating a safe and welcoming space for everyone, we can continue to build a stronger and more inclusive LGBTQIA+ community.

Lastly, it is important to remember that coming out is a personal decision, and everyone should do it in their own time and on their own terms.

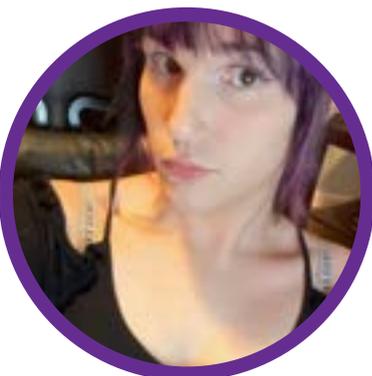
- Jordan James (he/him)



Growing up with a last name that rhymes with lesbian, coming out was nothing but a struggle for me. I never felt fully comfortable coming out to anyone until my late teen years.

A sense of self is something I've always struggled with. Whether it be who I was, what I felt or how I presented myself, I was always concerned with other people's perceptions of me. I've come to realize in my late twenties, that I am ME and there will only ever be one me. I am proud of who I have become, and who my future self will be. My advice to anyone questioning or wanting to come out, would be to live your life regardless of what people think. Come out to a trusted individual no matter who that may be. Find your own safe space and create your own "family" if you need to. You are you for a reason, and no one can take that away from you. Love yourself first, always.

- Kaitlyn Ledzian (she/her)



When considering the fear of coming out as LGBTQIA+, it's important to first acknowledge that YOU are VALUED, and there is nothing wrong with you! You simply are who you are, and that is beautiful! That being said, it's important to consider your circumstances (family/friends/etc.) to determine whether you're in a safe environment and situation to do so. Your safety is paramount!

If you're living with parents that are openly hostile towards queer people, it might be a good idea to wait it out until you are in a safer situation to tell them. Those around you that love you will love you for you, no matter what that may be. Also, don't underestimate the perceptiveness of those closest to you. You might be surprised to see that they're not as surprised by your coming out as you might expect. In the end, those that truly care about you and value you won't see you any differently, and if I've learned one thing in my trans/queer journey -- family isn't defined by blood.

- Cassie Schipani (she/her)

# BUFFALO HIKING SPOTS

Easy

## Reinstein Woods

93 Honorine Dr,  
Depew, NY 14043

## Stiglmeier Park

810 Losson Rd,  
Cheektowaga,  
NY 14227

**Tonawanda  
Rails-to-Trails**  
486 Brighton Rd,  
Buffalo, NY 14223

Medium

**Franklin Gulf**  
9998 Larkin Road,  
Eden, NY 14057

## Griffis Sculpture Park

6902 Mill Valley Road,  
East Otto, NY 14729

Hard

## Eternal Flame at Chestnut Ridge

1.5 miles south of park  
entrance on Route 277,  
Orchard Park, NY 14217

## Little Rock City

Little Rock City Road,  
Little Valley, NY 14755



Hidden Gems



## Beaver Meadow Nature Center

1610 Welch Rd,  
North Java, NY 14113

*Wear boots as it is  
marshy, and leave  
pets at home please!*

## Buckhorn Island State Park

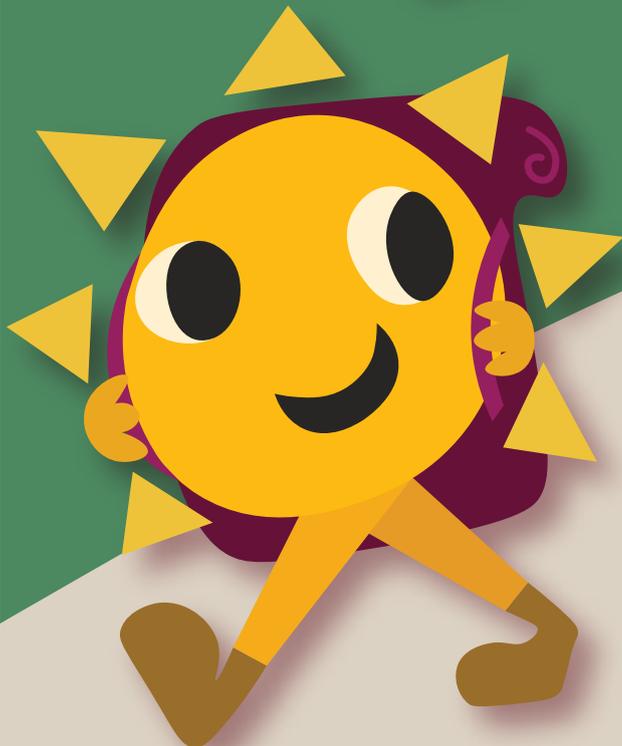
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# Keeping Up on New Year's Resolution Goals

By: Sue Perbody



Can you believe we are halfway through the year 2023? At the start of the year, you may have set some resolutions for yourself. What have you done throughout the year to stick to those goals? It's ok if you say nothing. Sometimes we need a half-year kickstart to re-establish what it is we want to accomplish. I am here today to tell you that it is ok if you're slacking a little bit this year. It is never too late to re-evaluate your goals from January, and to start fresh! Here's how you can do so without feeling guilty.

Do you have a list of your goals written down somewhere? This can be a note in your phone, or in a physical journal or notebook. Keeping things written down somewhere will help trigger your memory into knowing that there is something to be done. Has your motivation level deteriorated throughout the year? Stay on top of things by re-visiting that list you made at the beginning of the year. What have you done so far to stick to those goals? What have you stopped doing? Re-starting where you left off is still a sign of moving forward. Take your large to-do list of items and break them down into smaller goals. This can feel more rewarding because you are accomplishing little things slowly, instead of something too big all at once.

When getting discouraged, remind yourself that hitting your goals or even not hitting your goals does not define your character. This is a positive thing that you

should want to do for you and yourself alone. When it comes to short-term and long-term goals, you are the first priority. You are your own personal cheerleader, your number one support system, and the main reason why you should want to better yourself.

Do you have a routine in place for accomplishing your resolutions? Be sure to set time aside for accomplishing these goals. This doesn't necessarily have to be a big chunk of time. Take 10 or 20 minutes after work or after dinnertime to review what it is you wish to accomplish by the end of the day, week, month, or year. Don't be afraid to set reminders, either! Write little notes around your living space, such as a motivational quote or reminder on your bathroom mirror.

Remember, it is never too soon to set goals for yourself. Motivation is everything, and sometimes the hardest part is simply finding that motivation. Once you gain that drive, take it, and run with it! Me personally, I am ready to get myself in better physical and mental shape by the end of this year. I am being more mindful of what I am consuming, and journaling my daily activities as a reminder that everything is going to work out in the end. There will be easy days, and there will be hard days. Balance the good with the bad, and everything will work out for the better. Stay positive and remember that little progress is better than none at all.

“  
**There will be easy days, and there will be hard days. Balance the good with the bad, and everything will work out for the better.**  
”

# Get Involved: Places to Volunteer in Buffalo

By: Various Contributors

Are you looking for a way to get involved in your community and give back in a helpful way? Volunteering for an organization providing help to a cause you care about can be a great way to start! Also, if you don't have much time to spare, but still want to help, donating to charitable organizations is always a great thing to do to help. Luckily in the Buffalo area we have many opportunities for volunteering or donating, we have listed below some great options we have found to consider.

## **VOLUNTEERING:**

### **Environmental Help/Clean Up:**

Buffalo Olmsted Parks Conservancy  
Bfloparks.org

Tift Nature Preserve  
Tift.org

### **Helping with Rescue Animals:**

The SPCA  
Yourspca.org

Ten Lives Club  
Tenlivesclub.com

### **Providing Meals to Those in Need:**

Feed More WNY  
Feedmorewny.org

Catholic Central Food Pantry  
Blessedtrinitybuffalo.org

### **Programs and Activities:**

The YMCA  
Ymca.org

### **DONATING:**

The Teacher's Desk  
Theteachersdesk.org

Feed More WNY  
feedmorewny.org

North Buffalo Food Pantry  
<https://parksidelutheran.org/ministries/north-buffalo-food-pantry>

Hearts for the Homeless  
heartsthehomeless.org

Stitch Buffalo  
stitchbuffalo.org

Veterans One-stop Center of WNY  
vocwny.org



# A Review of Lord of the Rings: The Rings of Power

By: Alex Tilton

I ignored this series for a long time because of two cynical assumptions.

One: the events the series portrays come from a book called *The Silmarillion*, which is written as a fictional history book. It presents these events as happening over the course of centuries. Therefore, I believed you could not make a decent TV series out of them.

Two: a great many intellectual properties have been infected and destroyed by what I call MCU Syndrome. Essentially, whoever owns the IP says to themselves "The Marvel Cinematic Universe formula has grossed 29 billion dollars. I want 29 billion dollars. So I'm going to take this classic, beloved property and I'm going to do it like an MCU series. And since *TRoP* was an extremely expensive show to make, I figured they'd do the same thing here.

But they didn't. To my shock I was wrong on both counts. Not only did they not bastardize the source material to maximize revenue, but they also managed to make the story work. There were things they did that I didn't like...but this show was really good. I was stunned by how much it exceeded my expectations. The casting was overall excellent, the production value was amazing. The writing, acting and the pacing are all top notch.

I wanted to complain about a few annoying changes to the story that I believed were made, and then I had the presence of mind to go and actually check to see what they actually changed. And there were some changes. Even some significant ones. But it feels wrong to complain about them because it required a fair amount of research to even discover what they were. And I distinguish here between changes and inventions. Inventions are things they just made up.

Very briefly here are the major changes that I noticed; 1) The motivation for the elves to make their rings of power is reframed from an act of hubris, to an act of desperation. 2) They made Galadriel into a physically badass soldier, when the books are clear that she was far too valuable to be a foot soldier and did almost all of her work behind the scenes. 3) they created a character as a cover identity for Sauron so his real identity could be a big reveal at the end of the first season.

As for the inventions...I liked them. They invented a plot where ancient hobbits are the ones who discover Gandalf when he first arrives in Middle Earth, which is helpful for him because he's disoriented and has no memory. They invented a plot where an elf soldier leads a group of humans in a resistance to Sauron in the south. The source text indicates that something like this happened but it is never described in detail so maybe 'extrapolated' is a better word.

I also learned what all the kerfuffle was about when the show originally debuted. A bunch of racist online trolls were complaining about casting actors of color for the show. Having finally sat down and watched it, I find that, quite apart from their obviously racist motivations, the trolls don't even have their facts right. Of all the major parts in this show exactly *four* of them are actors of color, and only one of those is canonical. If anything, they didn't go far enough.

Season 2 is already filmed (or nearly), and 5 seasons are planned. As a *LOTR* nerd, I find myself quite satisfied with what they've done. It's an adaptation, to be sure, but it stays very true to the spirit of the source material. And in the end you can't ask for more than that.

Image Source: [parade.com](https://www.parade.com)



# Is Your Wealth Working for you?

By: Faizan Haq, Editor-in-Chief & Publisher, Your Bliss



## **“Wealth is all of the resources you have available to you”**

As I wrote in a previous issue about the difference between money and wealth, in this issue I would like to further explore the definition of wealth as it pertains to one’s well-being.

Once you have taken an inventory of all the wealth that you have now, you must find ways to make that wealth work for you. All the good things that you have done for others have been spread at home, among your friends, and at work. Start giving your dividends in small amounts. Your job is to capitalize on that dividend, to make yourself better today than yesterday.

Among your skills and knowledge base, decide what are the top three skills that you would like to acquire and what is the shortest distance between you and the acquisition of those skills that are going to add to your wealth as an individual. So, remember it does not necessarily mean you will have to borrow a lot of money. There are, in this time and age of artificial intelligence, all kinds of resources. You can learn anything if you discipline yourself and set your mind to it.

One way of looking at it is giving yourself small gifts of time. Time is such a gift, that once you give it to somebody, you can never take it back. When we end up watching screens for YouTube, Tik Tok or anything else, we are giving away part of our life. We are spending it away. Just like that. Decide how much time is worth giving to yourself and during that gift of time, you should focus on acquiring your wealth. The more time you give to yourself over a period, the wealthier you will become. The more you give to other people, the less you will have for yourself so be sure to not become overcommitted and overwhelmed – leave time for yourself, your loved ones and your family.



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# The Perfect Acai Bowl



Servings  
2



Calories  
248



Prep Time  
3 hrs 10 mins



## Equipment

High-speed blender with tamper

Baking sheet

Parchment paper

Bowls

## Ingredients

- 1 banana
- 1/2 cup blueberries
- 1/2 cup strawberries
- 3/4 cup milk or juice
- 1/2 cup plain yogurt
- 200 grams frozen acai
- assorted toppings (nuts, seeds, fresh fruit or berries, granola, coconut, honey, etc)

## Instructions

1. Slice your banana and transfer it to a small baking sheet lined with parchment paper. Add blueberries and strawberries to the the same sheet. Transfer the tray to the freezer and allow fruit to freeze completely.
2. Once frozen, add the milk or juice and yogurt to a large, high-speed blender. Add the frozen fruit and broken up acai. With the blender on low, use the tamper to push the fruit down. Mix until smooth, only adding additional liquid when needed.
3. Divide the smoothie into two bowls and add your favorite toppings. Best enjoyed immediately.

For the full recipe, visit:  
[theforkedspoon.com/acai-bowl](http://theforkedspoon.com/acai-bowl)

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