

American families don't fit one definition

By Natalie Angier, New York Times

CHELSEA, Mich. — Kristi and Michael Burns have a lot in common. They love crossword puzzles, football, going to museums and reading five or six books at a time. They describe themselves as mild-mannered introverts who suffer from an array of chronic medical problems. The two share similar marital résumés, too. On their wedding day in 2011, the groom was 43 years old and the bride 39, yet it was marriage No. 3 for both.

Today, their blended family is a sprawling, sometimes uneasy ensemble of two sharp-eyed sons from her two previous husbands, a daughter and son from his second marriage, ex-spouses of varying degrees of involvement, the partners of ex-spouses, the bemused in-laws and a kitten named Agnes that likes to sleep on computer keyboards.

If the Burnses seem atypical as an American nuclear family, how about the Schulte-Waysers, a merry band of two married dads, six kids and two dogs? Or the Indrakrishnans, a successful immigrant couple in Atlanta whose teenage daughter divides her time between prosaic homework and the precision footwork of ancient Hindu dance; the Glusacs of Los Angeles, with their two nearly grown children and their litany of middle-class challenges that seem like minor sagas; Ana Perez and Julian Hill of Harlem, unmarried and just getting by, but with Warren Buffett-size dreams for their three young children; and the alarming number families with incarcerated parents, a sorry byproduct of America's status as the world's leading jailer.

The typical American family, if it ever lived anywhere but on

Norman Rockwell's Thanksgiving canvas, has become as multilayered and full of surprises as a holiday turducken – the all-American seasonal portmanteau of deboned turkey, duck and chicken.

Researchers who study the structure and evolution of the American family express unsullied astonishment at how rapidly the family has changed in recent years, the transformations often exceeding or capsizing those same experts' predictions of just a few journal articles ago.

Read the whole story

Tips for shopping safely online

The dramatic increase in online shopping for the holidays has led to the creation of Cyber Monday on the Monday following Thanksgiving.

While cyber shoppers are hoping to find some great deals on Cyber Monday, this is also an important time for shoppers to increase their awareness of the risks associated with shopping online.

Washoe County Sheriff's Office offers the following safety tips for cyber shoppers:

- Read your credit card statements as soon as you get them to make sure there are no unauthorized charges. If there is a discrepancy, report it immediately.
- Always type a website address yourself or access it through trusted search engines.

- Never click on an email link, taking you to a purchase site. The link may take you to a fraudulent site.
 - Don't allow online sites to maintain your credit card information. Although it's convenient, this is risky.
 - When having items shipped to your residence, make sure they are taken inside timely, preventing thieves from taking them or realizing nobody is home and potentially leaving yourself exposed to a burglary.
 - Always use a credit card instead of debit or check. Credit cards have an additional level of consumer protection in the event of a fraudulent purchase or disputed transactions.
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Alpinist to give talk in Tahoe City

Alpenglow Sports second installment of the 2013-14 Winter Film Series involves world-famous alpinist Freddie Wilkinson.

Wilkinson is an adventure writer known for his original and substantive style. On Dec. 5 he will share his tale "Mountain/Story," which focuses on the 2008 K2 tragedy. The New England native's in-depth reporting on the issue changed the public perception of the tragedy by telling the story through the eyes of the climbing Sherpas.

Wilkinson will share tales from the tea houses of Khumbu Himal, obscure glaciers of the Alaska Range, and storm-lashed Patagonian spires.

Wilkinson believes that any mountain adventure is only as

valuable as the stories brought home.

The 7pm show at the Tahoe City shop is free and is designed to motivate, inspire, and educate.

For more info, call (530) 583.6917.

Study: Boredom can be dangerous

By Karen Kaplan, Los Angeles Times

Boredom is a lot more interesting than scientists had thought.

A study of students in Germany reveals that there are five distinct types of boredom. That's one more than researchers had expected.

What's more, the newly discovered category – which they labeled “apathetic boredom” – was quite common among high school students, according to the study, published this week in the journal *Motivation and Emotion*.

Boredom isn't just boring. It can be dangerous, either for the person who is bored or for the people around him. For instance, people who are bored are more likely to smoke, drink or use drugs. Kids who are bored are more likely to drop out of school and become juvenile delinquents. Studies have also linked boredom with stress and other health problems.

Read the whole story

Tahoe Tails – Adoptable Pets in South Lake Tahoe



Chad

Chad is an 18-month-old playful shepherd mix who is happiest when playing with other dogs or people, but he'll also play with toys by himself if he has to.

Chad will do best with an experienced owner who is willing to take him to classes and give him lots of exercise, because he's a young, strong boy who's had little training. But his personality more than makes up for that!

Chad is neutered, microchipped, and vaccinated. He is at the El Dorado County Animal Services shelter in Meyers, along with many other dogs and cats who are waiting for their new homes.

Go online to see photos and descriptions of all pets at the shelter.

Call (530) 573.7925 for directions, hours, and other information on adopting a pet.

For spay-neuter assistance for South Tahoe residents, go online.

Thanksgiving, Hanukkah converge on same day

By John Przybys, Las Vegas Review-Journal

It's a once-in-a-lifetime event that might just rank up there with the return of Halley's Comet, Super Bowl III or the Apollo 11 moonwalk.

Call it (as many already have) Thanksgivukkah, the confluence that arrives this week of the secular holiday of Thanksgiving and the beginning of the Jewish holiday of Hanukkah.

Hanukkah this year begins at sunset Wednesday. So, Thanksgiving will mark the first full day of Hanukkah, and that's a combination of words no one sees, or will see, very often.

Hanukkah and Thanksgiving last shared the same date during the 1800s, although, technically, there wasn't a national Thanksgiving Day holiday back then. And it won't come again, according to some estimates for another 77,000 years or so.

Given both Thanksgivukkah's rarity and its novelty, it's not surprising that Americans – never ones to miss a chance to celebrate something new – have jumped all over it.

Commemorative T-shirts? Check. Collectible doodads? Check. Hanukkah turkey menorahs? Check (seriously).

But beyond all of the novelty and well-meaning fun is a more practical question: How do you do a Thanksgiving-Hanukkah

mashup when there's no real precedent for anyone having done one before?

Read the whole story

Last Chair Festival returning to Squaw

A celebration of music, culture and community, the Last Chair Festival welcomes an eclectic mix of world-renowned music acts including The Flaming Lips, Jurassic 5, Matisyahu, Fitz & the Tantrums, Mayer Hawthorne and more.

The second annual event at Squaw Valley is Jan. 9-11.

Last Chair's 2014 lineup includes:

- The Flaming Lips
- Matisyahu
- Jurassic 5
- Mayer Hawthorne
- Fitz & the Tantrums
- Random Rab
- Chali 2na (and the House of Vibe)
- Ben Rector
- Tennis
- West Water Outlaws.

This year's Last Chair Festival features a slate of cultural seminars and after-party events.

For more info, go online.

Costco labels Bible as fiction

By Jason Wells, Los Angeles Times

A Costco in Simi Valley found itself in a flap this week after a local pastor posted a photo on Twitter showing Bibles at the big-box store labeled as fiction.

Caleb Kaltenbach, pastor of Discovery Church, came across the Bibles while shopping for a gift and tweeted the picture on Friday with the comment: "Costco has Bibles for sale under the genre of FICTION Hmmm..."

That didn't sit well with members of his congregation.

Read the whole story

Giving is something to be thankful for

By Mandy Kendall

It makes sense that Thanksgiving is the perfect time to focus

more intensely on giving, but sometimes it can end up being just about friends and family. Don't get me wrong, there's is nothing wrong with that at all, but there are many people out there not as fortunate. Thanksgiving could be a time to spread the love a little further.

No matter how big or small there are so many ways in which to give.

Here are a few *Qwik-e* tips to help your Thanksgiving be all about the giving.

Donate



Mandy Kendall

Your time – There are so many places to donate your time. Organizations in your community will always be grateful for extra sets of hands, especially during the holidays. Food distribution centers or soup kitchens are usually very short-handed at this time of year. Animal shelters are always looking for help, plus you get to spend time with really adorable animals that will love you unconditionally. Everyone is so busy I'm sure there is someone you know who would really appreciate the offer of some help, perhaps with babysitting or with a cumbersome chore. Senior centers always welcome volunteers, even if it's just to sit and chat. You get to meet some very interesting people and often get to hear some amazing stories. This is a great website to investigate opportunities to donate your time locally in ways that you might not have thought about before.

Money – This may not be possible for everyone, but you could consider redirecting money you may be planning to spend on yourself to someone more in need. A friend puts aside money she would have spent on her daily coffee for the month of November and donates that to her favorite charity. Double your donation. Many grocery stores will offer to match a donation when you buy a bag of groceries to donate. So \$10 donated will turn into \$20 worth of groceries that go to a family in need.

Gifts – Finding it hard to find the perfect gift for someone? How about donating some money to a worthy cause on their behalf.

De-clutter – Are your closets full of things you never use? Clearing out and reorganizing before the holidays might just unearth some items that are suitable to donate to a local organization that will forward them to someone who could use them. If you're making a trip to deliver items, you could ask your friends, neighbors or work colleagues if they want to donate too, saving everyone a little time and energy.

Share

Local churches are a great source for knowing where help is needed.

Skills – Most of us have skills that we could share with others. If it's a flair for decorating, maybe a neighbor needs a hand. Perhaps you're an expert at computers. There will be plenty of people who need a hand getting connected.

Equipment – Many of us have expensive equipment and tools that sit in our garages mostly un-used. Offering your time and equipment to the community in need is a great way of sharing, and as a bonus you get to meet people you may have otherwise never met.

Random Act of Kindness (things you do just because.) – There are an infinite number of ways to be kind to someone, even a

total stranger. Perhaps pay for someone's meal at a diner, tip someone who wouldn't normally get tipped or deliver a home cooked meal to a neighbor's house. RAOs don't have to cost anything. Shoveling someone's driveway or raking up his or her leaves is cost free and you get a good workout at the same time. Be anonymous if you like, that feels good too.

Happy Holidays!

Until next time.

Mandy Kendall operates Health Connective in South Lake Tahoe, which aligns wellness seekers with their ideal wellness provider. If you have questions, would like some advice, or would like to request some Qwik-e tips on any health and well-being topic, drop her an email at connect@healthconnective.com or keep an eye out on Lake Tahoe News for regular Qwik-e tips on how to make healthy changes one Quick and Easy step at a time.

Common sense can prevent Turkey Day fires

By Teri Mizuhara

The Amador-El Dorado Unit of CalFire wants to make sure

everyone's Thanksgiving holiday is a fire safe holiday.

Across this nation there are approximately 2,000 house fires reported on Thanksgiving Day, the highest number of house fires for any single day of the year. These fires result in injury, death and over \$21 million in damage in one single 24 hour period.

Over 70 percent of these fires occur between noon and 4pm and nearly 70 percent are cooking fires which are mostly small, but any fire has the potential to destroy lives.

So what can you do to prevent a holiday disaster?:

- Leaving your food cooking unattended is the leading cause of cooking fires. It is best to never leave food cooking unattended. If you must leave the cooking area, turn off the burner, oven, etc.
- Be sure to turn the handles of the pots and pans toward the back of the stove where they are out of reach and are less likely to get bumped.
- Keep a lid or baking sheet nearby to cover a pot or pan that has caught fire.
- Frying poses the greatest risk of a fire, so consider an alternative such as the infrared oil-less fryers available for less than \$100.
- Avoid wearing loose fitting clothes with long sleeves while cooking because clothing catching on fire accounts for 16 percent of cooking fire deaths.
- Establish a "no kid zone" for a minimum of 3 feet around any cooking surface.
- Make sure your smoke detectors are working and linked throughout your home.

Teri Mizuhara works for the Amador-El Dorado Unit of CalFire.