

March 2011



Scoop!

In this issue:

- Doing Good: The SPCA for Monterey County
- Somoas® Brownies
- Planning the Future for a Special Needs Child



Special thanks to this month's **Scoop!** contributors:

Jill Airola, M.D., FAAP - *House Calls*

Dr. Airola is a pediatrician with the Monterey Peninsula Pediatric Medical Group, located in Monterey's Ryan Ranch. Jill is married and is the mother of two boys ages 16 and 9.



Kristen Atkins, M.S. - *Education*

Kristen is the Chartwell School Outreach Director, specializing in working with children with learning differences. In addition to having been Dean of Students, a Math Educator and an Upper Division Head, she has trained teachers to teach mathematics at the college level.



Laurie Bend - *Sweet Stuff*

Laurie is a mom, community volunteer, Girl Scout leader and small business owner. As a mother of 3, she loves to test out fun and easy recipes with her kids so she can pass them on to **Scoop!** readers.



Michelle Chisum - *MamaPreneur*

Michelle is the co-founder of Project Playroom, owner of The Stork Ladies and manager of Celebrate Mama!™ Monterey. Her most important role in life, however, is being mama for two young sons.



Dawn Fenton - *Pet Corner*

Dawn is the Community Outreach Coordinator at the SPCA for Monterey County. Dawn lives in Salinas with her firefighter husband Scott, her amazing stepdaughter, Jamie, and their four dogs and one cat.



Laura Harris - *Special Needs*

Laura is the Executive Director of Special Kids Crusade, servicing children with disabilities and their families. She is the mother of an 11 year-old daughter with autism.



Ben Kaatz - *Daddy's Day*

Ben is the owner of Ben Kaatz Photography and has been a full-time stay-at-home dad for five years. He and his wife Sarah live in the Monterey area with their two daughters, ages 5 and 8.



Jennifer McDonnal - *Arts & Crafts*

Jennifer has been involved with the production of **Scoop!** since its inception in 2006. Jennifer has a passion for music & theatre arts and is a freshman at York School in Monterey.



Kathy Pimentel - *Photographer*

Kathy is the owner of Katalina Photography and is a "locally grown" photographer, having lived in Salinas nearly all her life. She and her family enjoy living in our beautiful area!



Puppy Love

I need a puppy.

Seriously. It's not that I don't have enough craziness in my life already. (I do.) It's not that I feel compelled to start paying grooming and vet bills. (I don't.) It's just that, well, with my daughter now in her early teen years, I sort of miss the pitter patter of little feet following me around the house all the time.

I love having a teenager but I'm discovering that parenting a teen is quite different from parenting a toddler. Experts disagree, claiming that because toddlers and teens have similar needs, they require similar parenting. As justification, they offer the observances that kids in both groups live by the motto, "I want what I want, when I want, which is NOW!" They also note that both teens and toddlers desperately need boundaries and rules. My favorite comparison, though, is that teens and toddlers both believe, with all their hearts and souls, that the world – and everyone in it – revolves around them.

Oh, *please!* There are days I fit these descriptions.

Parenting a teen really is different. On the up side, my "little girl" no longer requires diaper changes. She can actually use her words to tell me what hurts. And, we can now enjoy a movie together that hasn't one hint of Disney animation.

However, the pitter patter of feet is a distant memory. I haven't had a tea party in ages. And, when I tried smelling my 15 year-old's hair the other night, after she took a bath...

Well, let's just say I won't be trying *that* again!

So, it was with great restraint that I did not adopt the 3 month old puppy we photographed for our **Scoop!** cover this month. Only after I considered the fact that I probably *did* have a life that was too crazy and we really *don't* need the added expenses right now, was I able to hand the little darling back to Dawn at the SPCA after the photo session...

...but not before Darcy, without complaint, let me take in the sweet smell of her clean hair.

Lori McDonnal
Editor



Katalina Photography

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On our cover: *Puppy Time!*

Nicholas Vega (age 3) has fun with 3 month-old Darcy, a terrier/chihuahua puppy available for adoption at the SPCA for Monterey County. Learn more about the SPCA in our new "Doing Good" column on page 4.

Cover photo by **Kathy Pimentel, Katalina Photography**

Published 8 times per year, **Scoop!** is a supplement to our website, **MBayKids.com**. **Scoop!** is mailed to Central Coast parents FREE of charge and is available at select family-friendly locations throughout the Central Coast. To receive future free copies of **Scoop!** magazine, register at www.MBayKids.com/sign_up.asp. For information on how your organization or school can distribute issues of **Scoop!** each month, contact us at (831) 751-1678.

For information on advertising opportunities, contact **Kim Georgalos (831) 595-6943**.



The SPCA for Monterey County

Assuring compassionate & humane treatment of all animals in our community

by Dawn Fenton

The **SPCA for Monterey County** has been serving the animals and people of Monterey County since 1905. Its doors are open to *all* animals in need, from dogs and cats to horses, wildlife, exotics and more. The SPCA never turns an animal away for any reason.

In addition to helping families find a perfect pet, the SPCA offers a number of valuable animal-related services. Its humane officers are responsible for investigating, preparing cases for prosecution and educating the public regarding animal cruelty and neglect. The SPCA's Wildlife Rescue and Rehabilitation Center helps injured and orphaned wildlife. And, an on-site veterinary clinic offers low-cost spay/neuter services, vaccinations and microchips.

The SPCA is committed to educating children about the role that animals play in our lives and why it is important to help animals in need. It offers free presentations and tours to schools, homeschool groups and scouting troops, covering topics ranging from animal care and dog bite prevention to wildlife rescue and rehabilitation.

In addition, the SPCA has two summer camp offerings for kids. Children entering first and second grades can enroll in a half-day "ABCs of The SPCA" camp. For those entering third through sixth grades, the SPCA offers full-day "Animal Camps." Both offer animal-related arts & crafts as well as educational games for the purpose of educating, nurturing compassion and building an understanding of the shelter environment.

Get involved! As an independent nonprofit, the SPCA for Monterey County does not receive funding from a national SPCA organization. The programs and services offered by the SPCA are only possible because of the generosity of its supporters - and kids can be a huge part of the support effort. Some children have held their birthday parties at the SPCA and asked for donations instead of gifts! Others have held bake sales or other fundraising events. While money is wonderful, collecting blankets, towels, treats and toys for our shelter animals is also a big help.

Do YOU know of a person or an organization "doing good" in our community who should be featured in a future issue of **Scoop!**? Email Scoop@MbayKids.com and tell us about them!

Children ages 12 to 17 can also volunteer with their parents to help socialize and train dogs and cats, groom and care for barn animals, feed orphaned baby birds, do laundry, and help with a wide variety of projects.

The SPCA for Monterey County is located at 1002 Monterey-Salinas Highway, across from the Mazda Raceway Laguna Seca. For hours and information about tours or other services, visit www.spcamc.org or call (831) 373-2631 or (831) 422-4721.

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Samoas[®] Brownies

by Laurie Bend

No one really needs an excuse to buy Girl Scout cookies. Sometimes, though, it's good to have a tiny one on hand when you are contemplating the purchase of "just one more box" from the hard-working Girl Scouts in front of your grocery store this month. Your excuse is here! These brownies, made with Samoas[®] cookies, truly are as good as they look. Just ask third grader, Kyle, who helped make these for this issue.



INGREDIENTS:

- 1 box devil's food cake mix
- ½ cup evaporated milk
- ¾ cup melted butter
- 1 ¼ cup semi-sweet chocolate chips
- ¾ cup caramels (about 20 unwrapped)
- 10 Samoas[®] cookies, chopped

DIRECTIONS:

1. Preheat oven to 350°F.
2. Mix together cake mix, evaporated milk and butter until combined. (Batter will be very thick.) Scoop and spread half the batter into a 9"x13" greased pan.
3. Bake for six minutes at 350°F and remove from oven.
4. Place unwrapped caramels in a microwave-safe bowl and melt in microwave until pourable.
5. Sprinkle 1 cup of the semi-sweet chocolate chips evenly on top of the mixture. Pour the melted caramels over the chocolate chips. Lastly, add the chopped Samoas[®] on top.
6. Spread the remaining cake batter on top, trying to cover the middle layer, and bake 10-12 minutes.
7. Finish the brownies by melting the last ¼ cup of chocolate chips and drizzling over the top.



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This recipe was adapted from one found on www.littlebrowniebakers.com. Little Brownie Bakers is the official producer of Girl Scout cookies in our area.



Laura Harris with daughter Corinne

Planning the Future for your Special Needs Child

by Laura Harris

My daughter, who has high-functioning autism, will enter middle school next year. For all parents, this can be an exciting, but frightening time. It is a time of increased independence for the child and the beginning of parent's "letting the child go" to allow them to find their place in the world. It's a time for them to explore their values, their potential career paths, and the possibilities in relationships.

This, of course, is only one of several big transitions soon to come. It has heightened my awareness that not only will she transition out of elementary school, but she will transition out of middle school, then high school.... Then what?

For a special needs parent, this journey can be challenging no matter what the severity of the child's disability. Future possibilities could be limited, but we still want to set high expectations to ensure our child's full potential is met. Sooner, rather than later, is the time to contemplate what the child's future will hold.

For the typical student, curriculums, classroom frameworks, and educational goals are set by our educational system. The ultimate goal is to graduate students who are well prepared to go onto college and into the work force to lead fulfilling, productive lives.

For the special education student, parents are allowed to contribute to the education plan and goal setting each year because the ultimate goal following graduation may be different depending upon the severity of the child's disability or based on the fact that the unique needs of the child are such that extra support is needed in reaching that goal. This is a powerful right that should include significant and frequent thought and consideration.

Appropriate participation by the entire Individualized Education Plan (IEP) team, which includes the parents, teachers, administrative and support staff, cannot take place unless the entire team fully understands what the ultimate goals are for your child following graduation. It is most fitting for the family to establish what that future looks like for their child, first. This should then be communicated to the team.

Life after graduation for students with disabilities becomes outlined in a statement of needed transition services, which is part of the actual IEP document (potentially in place through age 21). The Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (IDEA) mandates that this be accomplished by the time the child is sixteen.

The statement of needed transition services should include information regarding

Continued on page 15

Trainable

by Ben Kaatz

The other day, I was warming up for a spin class next to two young housewives who were apparently unaware I was able to hear their conversation and were also seemingly oblivious of my gender. The gist of their chat? The men they married weren't holding up their end of the household bargain and, reluctantly, they had come to the conclusion that they were being forced to accept their husbands' apparent deficiencies.



Photo by Joely Kaatz, age 8

Did I say anything? Of course not. Did I want to say something? Oh, yes I did. If I had, it would have gone something like this:

"Ladies, your spouses are capable of learning in the same way your kids are. It may take time, energy, and commitment, but I am living proof that such efforts can, indeed, be rewarded."

The way I see it, these ladies have two options. Option A: They can "accept" their spouses as being unhelpful around the house and then use valuable gym time to complain about them. Option B: They can attempt to train their spouses, offering the same level of support and encouragement as would be required for anyone being groomed for a new and challenging task.

Perhaps, too, they could learn to accept their surroundings as a little less than "perfect."

In my previous life, I lived with a significant other who, one day, announced that she didn't like the way I did the dishes. Taking the Option A route, she took over the responsibility entirely and, sure enough, the dishes were done "perfectly." No doubt, I was the subject of some gym conversations back then, myself.

In my current life, it's safe to say that my wife Sarah and I don't share the same need for tidiness and order in our house. It's also safe to say that the house would be much neater if Sarah was the stay-at-home parent.

Sarah, however, chose Option B in her approach to my "apparent deficiency" and has, over the years, worked on nurturing my burgeoning homemaking talents. Do I clean the house as well as she would? Nope. Has she been tempted to kick me out of the kitchen and do those dishes herself? Probably. But she hasn't. She gave me a chance, resisting the urge to micromanage and has let go of her need for perfection.

Our home is not as neat as Sarah would like, that's for sure. But, as I've picked up some housekeeping skills over the years, Sarah's learned a thing or two, as well. For starters, she's learned that letting me handle things to the best of my abilities means she has more time to spend with the kids.

And what could be more "perfect" than that?

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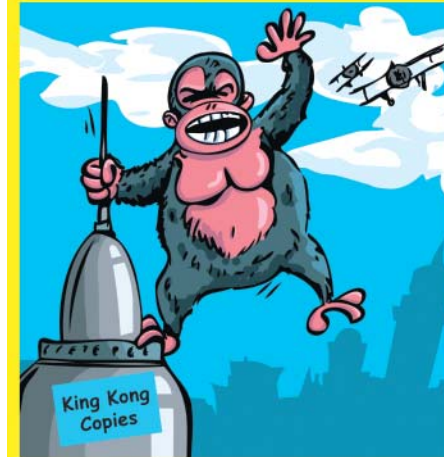
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Springtime Fun!

What kind of book does a rabbit like at bedtime?

Decode the answer to this riddle by placing the letter on each space that corresponds to its number, below. For an even greater cryptogram challenge, cover up the letter bank and see if you can solve it on your own!

A	B	C	D	E	F	G	H	I	J	K	L	M	N	O	P	Q	R	S	T	U	V	W	X	Y	Z
21	14	20	7	5	17	3	19	1	9	6	15	24	13	25	10	8	23	11	2	26	16	18	22	12	4

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B K E J S G H B G S S
 R U G N R E A K R E H
 E I T E I S E E A I A
 C R E T E H W D S N M
 C N U B E O S M S N R
 O P A T L R H N Y U O
 S L N F A R F C U B C
 L S P R I N G L R S K
 G N I M O O L B Y A V
 R A I N B O W O R G M
 S R E W O H S K I T E

Can you find these words in our Spring Word Search?

- BASEBALL
- MARCH
- BLOOMING
- NATURE
- BUNNIES
- RAINBOW
- BUTTERFLY
- SEEDS
- FLOWERS
- SHAMROCK
- GRASS
- SHOWERS
- GREEN
- SOCCER
- GROW
- SPRING
- KITE
- SUNSHINE





Ahhhh...Chooo!

by Jill Airola, M.D.

Ahhhh....the budding leaves on the trees, the flowering shrubs, the yellow pollen coating our cars, houses, roads and us! Ahhhh, ahhhh, ahhh-choooo!

It is allergy season here on the Peninsula so if you or your child suffers from allergies, you may be feeling miserable right now. When living in a temperate climate like ours, allergy season sometimes seems to last all year long.

Families tend to have allergies together. According to the Asthma and Allergy Foundation of America (www.aafa.org), if one

parent has allergies, each child has a 50 percent chance of also having allergies. If both parents have allergies, each child has a 75 percent chance of having allergies. Aren't genetics amazing?

Not everyone has problems with allergies. However, a person can develop an allergy at any point in their lives. When your body becomes "sensitive" to something, it sees that something as a "foreign" object that needs to be destroyed. In the case of allergies, the body has a histamine release from white blood cells called eosinophils. This histamine release can cause a runny nose, itchy eyes, sneezing, itchy skin, hives, a scratchy throat and, in some cases, "wheezing" of the lungs (otherwise known as asthma). A very, very small number of people can actually have a severe allergic reaction that is life threatening. These people require a full evaluation and special medicines in the event that should happen.

Luckily, there are many over-the-counter medicines that can stop those eosinophils from producing histamine. During the day, it is a good idea to take something that is non-drowsy so you/your child can function. Good choices include Zyrtec®, Claritin® or Sudafed®. (Note: Generic brands are cheaper and work just as well.)

At night, it is okay to take an antihistamine-type medicine that causes sleepiness such as diphenhydramine, the active ingredient in Benadryl®.

Plenty of time squirting normal saline nose spray into the nose to "clear out" the allergy-causing particles (allergens) will help tremendously!

Eye drops targeted for allergy symptoms related to the eyes are also fine to use in children over 3 years of age. There are many different brand names, but the generic name is ketotifen ophthalmic drops.

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Springtime Stepping Stones

by Jennifer McDonnal

"April showers bring May flowers" so get that garden ready in March with decorative stepping stones! Kids and kids at heart will have fun playing in cement. And, while mosaic tile pieces are often used for decoration, we found that a big bucket of plastic beads worked great, too!



For two to three stepping stones, you will need:

- 10 lbs. gravel-free, fine-grade cement or stepping stone mix*
- 2+ cups water
- Bucket or large bowl
- Plastic or foil tray for mold
- Wooden spoon
- Beads, buttons, shells, mosaic tiles, etc.

INSTRUCTIONS:

Note: This is a very messy craft. Be sure to wear an art smock and cover your surface area completely with newspaper, especially if working indoors.

1. In a large bucket or bowl, pour 2 cups of water over the 10 lbs. of cement. Stir thoroughly using a wooden spoon. Add additional water, one tablespoon at a time, and stir thoroughly until mixture is the consistency of sour cream.
2. Pour cement into the mold and gently shake the filled mold to smooth out the top and remove any air bubbles.
3. You will have approximately one hour to decorate the top, as desired. If your mix is a bit on the wet side, you may need to let it sit for about 30 minutes before a handprint will leave a deep impression.
4. Once decorated, allow to dry for 24 - 48 hours before removing from mold. Our stones easily popped out of both our aluminum and clear plastic trays.



*At Michaels, we found ArtMinds™ Stepping Stone Mix in a 10 lb. box for \$5.99 and a bucket of Creatology™ Beads (1 lb.) for \$9.99.



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Making Math Count

Issues & Strategies for Preparing Kids for their Future

by Kristen Atkins, M.S.



Editor's note: This past December, the results of an international education assessment indicated that fifteen-year-olds in the U.S. ranked 25th among peers from 34 countries in math proficiency. In an economy that is increasingly dependent on global interaction and technological competencies, this is sobering news. What can be done to reverse this trend? And, perhaps of more immediate concern, what can we, as parents, do to help our own struggling children?

In last month's Scoop!, math education expert Kristen Atkins addressed the subject of math standards and offered some suggestions for how parents can help their children develop a love and appreciation for mathematics at an early age. We asked Kristen to continue the discussion this month to talk about some of the specific issues facing schools and teachers today and to offer some thoughts on ways parents, teachers and the community at large can, collectively, work toward possible solutions.

There is an ongoing dialogue about what is the best way to teach math. We attempt to answer that question by our educational standards but we are "stuffing" too much material into a short period of time. An experienced teacher can combine some standards in an attempt to "do two things at once" and this can solve some of the challenges of covering the curriculum but problems remain.

Math Vocabulary & Symbols - Case in point: Mathematics has a vocabulary that is specific and many teachers and students struggle with this aspect of the curriculum. For example, is subtraction "take-away," "minus," "less than," or "finding the difference"? Math textbooks will often use one term and teachers supplement with other materials that use different terms and this can cause confusion.

Symbols, too, can be challenging and they change over the course of a student's mathematical career. When you are in elementary school, the sign for multiplication is an "x." When you get into high school, it becomes a dot or a set of parentheses. Some exams even use an asterisk! Experienced teachers point out these challenges because they know they can cause frustration.

Curriculum Changes - Teachers in public schools must use state approved textbooks in their classrooms and some districts change textbooks every 2-4 years. This requires the teachers to learn to use a new curriculum that often focuses on different techniques. We tend to think that "new" means "better" but sometimes these new textbooks do not meet the needs of all the students. Think of the scenario of a

If you suspect your child is falling behind in math, here are some things you can do:

- **Find a tutor.** Tutoring your own child, while convenient, often confuses the role of teacher versus parent. If you cannot afford a private tutor, contact your local library for information on their afterschool homework and tutoring programs.
- **Inquire about options for support at your child's school.** Many schools provide remedial math instruction through afterschool programs or summer school.
- **Consider having your child repeat his/her math class.** Research suggests that if your child earns a C in Algebra, they will most likely struggle with Geometry and Algebra 2. A "C" is, indeed, passing but it does not indicate that you have mastered the material in enough depth to apply it in a higher-level math class.

new teacher who does not have the best confidence in their ability to do math, using a new textbook that illustrates techniques they have not really used, trying to teach a class of 30 students with minimal support. They might have the best intentions but things could be missed over the course of a year.

What can we do? If you suspect your child is falling behind in math, don't wait until the problem gets worse. Talk to your child's teacher immediately and discuss a strategy for support. The box, at left, lists some options available to you.

Until we, as a state or a nation, decide that it is better to learn mathematical concepts in depth, as opposed to spending only one or two days on each key concept, the fear is that we will remain a nation that is not meeting the demands of the twenty-first century. Parents should discuss these issues at school board meetings and with their principals.

When budgets permit, some schools have hired elementary math specialists who demonstrate a passion and expertise for teaching students in ways others cannot. This may seem like an odd approach at first, but it is not much different than the practice of hiring specialists to teach music, art and physical education at the elementary and middle school levels.

The subject area of math is not difficult to master if it is taught in an inspiring manner. Overloaded classrooms, strapped budgets and already-frustrated students present tough obstacles for which there are no easy fixes. Working together, school districts, teachers, parents and community leaders can and should encourage an open dialogue for discussing solutions. More effort needs to be put into solving this problem and it needs to happen quickly!

Mark your calendars!

"Math - Why is it so hard for students?"
Wednesday, April 13 from 6:30 - 8:30 pm
McMahan Hall, Chartwell School
2511 Numa Watson Road, Seaside

Come hear Kristen Atkins, M.S. speak on the importance of math education, how it should be taught and how to help with math at home.

For more information, visit
www.chartwell.org

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Celebrate this MamaPreneur!

Jennifer Fahselt ~ Epoch Style Image Consulting

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by Michelle Chisum

"As moms, we tend to give so much to everyone and leave ourselves off of our to-do lists," declares personal stylist Jennifer Fahselt. This was the motivation behind the creation of **Epoch Style Image Consulting** nearly one year ago.

With a twenty year background in both the fashion and beauty industries, this busy wife and mom of four children, Brennan, age 15, Madeline, age 13, Isabella, age 9 and Tiernan, age 6, empowers moms to look and feel their best, so that they can give back to their children, husbands and community. Jennifer explains, "I offer clients advice on wardrobe planning, personal shopping, make-up, hair style and coloring." One of the most important things Jennifer teaches is how to dress according to your body type and proportion.



Between the roles of wife, mother and MamaPreneur, Jennifer has found a healthy balance. She loves the benefits of being her own boss, which allows flexibility to "kiss the boo-boo's, take the temperatures and tuck them in at night." Her advice to other moms who are thinking about starting their own business? "Do some soul-searching, allow yourself to dream, ask yourself what you feel passionate about. Then do the research on turning that passion into a career." She stresses the importance of creating a business plan so that you have a guide of how you want your business to grow. It also provides a "sales tool" for seeking business funding, if desired. "Running your own business takes guts, determination, persistence and confidence," asserts Jennifer. It also requires a dream that you just can't let go of!"

Jennifer concludes, "In this season of our lives, we, as mothers, want to celebrate our femininity and feel beautiful while we are doing one of the most important jobs, raising and nurturing our families." Sure makes me want to march to the closet, peel off this sweat suit and put my high heels on!

Special Needs - continued from page 6

instruction, related services, community experiences, the development of employment and other postschool adult living objectives and, if appropriate, acquisition of daily living skills and a functional vocational evaluation. Annual goals, based on long-term future adult goals, should also be established.

When thinking about the future for your special needs child, ask yourself the following: What do you want for your child? What does your child want for him/herself? What are your child's strengths and interests? What are your goals for your child's future? If you want your child to grow up to be an independent, productive adult, what does your child need to learn before he or she leaves the public school system?

A statement of needed transition services becomes mandatory for a child at age 16, but a vision for your child's future will certainly be a part of your thoughts before then. So, too, should your IEP team be thinking about them, at some level, through all of your child's years in school.

Learn more about special education law and how you can become a strong advocate for your child by attending **Special Kids Crusade's seminar, Wrightslaw: Special Education Law & Advocacy** at CSUMB's World Theater on Thursday, March 24. Registration information is available at www.SpecialKidsCrusade.org.



House Calls - continued from page 10

If over-the-counter medicines do not help, it is time to visit the doctor! There are some fabulous allergy medicines by prescription only (nose sprays, liquid and pill medicines) and if those medicines don't help, it may be time to see the allergist. Allergists are physicians who have trained an extra 3 years to master the science of allergies. They understand how the body responds to allergens and they can do testing to pinpoint the exact cause of a person's allergies. If the cause can be found, then avoiding that allergen can "cure" the person struggling with allergies.

Solutions to puzzles on page 8.

B	K	E	J	S	G	H	B	G	S	S
R	U	G	N	R	E	A	K	R	E	H
E	I	T	E	I	S	E	E	A	I	A
C	R	E	T	E	H	W	D	S	N	M
C	N	U	B	E	O	S	M	S	N	R
O	P	A	T	L	R	H	N	Y	U	O
S	L	N	F	A	R	F	C	U	B	C
L	S	P	R	I	N	G	L	R	S	K
G	N	I	M	O	O	L	B	Y	A	V
R	A	I	N	B	O	W	O	R	G	M
S	R	E	W	O	H	S	K	I	T	E

What kind of book does a rabbit like at bedtime?
 ONE WITH A "HOPPY" ENDING

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