

NOT A TOY

Fire officials seek ban on novelty lighters



The cartoonish plastic frog with bulging eyes could be a children's toy — but for the torchlike flame that bursts from the novelty lighter's head. "They look like something you would get in a McDonald's Happy Meal," said John Dean, president of the National Association of State Fire Marshals, who often shows off the device. "They're cute, they're little" — but they can be deadly.

Dean's group is backing an effort to ban novelty lighters across the country, and a handful of states are considering it. In California, Washington and Arkansas, local ordinances have been passed to keep the lighters off store shelves. Novelty lighters can look like anything from tiny skateboards and cell phones to farm animals and butterflies. Some light up or make noises, including the tiny green frog that elicits a "ribbit" when its flame is ignited.

"They look like toys so kids play with them, and that's caused a number of injuries and ... deaths," Iowa state Sen. Keith Kreiman said. —AP



BREAK A SWEAT

Hello goodbye's "Touchdown Turnaround"

Looking for a song to add to your MP3 player that will get your heart pumping while working out? It may or may not be a new release, but it will certainly get you in the mood to burn some calories and get in better shape.

NEWS TO USE

CRUISE LINES NOW OFFER HEALTHIER FOOD CHOICES

Sailing away on a cruise ship with a midnight buffet no longer means waving goodbye to your diet.

Keeping with the times, cruise lines are promising spa-like cuisine alongside the buttery lobster and piles of crab legs. The hope is that lighter selections will lure health-conscious baby boomers and others who fear being trapped at sea with a 24-hour pizza bar.

Royal Caribbean Cruises Ltd. last year introduced its "Vitality" program, which weaves healthier meals and exercise into the sailing experience. Carnival Corp. now has lighter dishes with nutritional stats on menus for hawk-eyed calorie counters. In the past year, most major cruise lines have tossed trans fats overboard. —AP



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COOKING WITH KERRY DUNNINGTON

Dining in on Valentine's Day

By Kerry Dunnington
Special to The Examiner

On the front of a Valentine's Day card my husband Nick had drawn and hand-delivered to me were two beautifully shaped hearts that were bound together almost as one. Inside was a poem he composed that read:

*To my wonderful wife
who is the love of my life
who in everyway makes my day
I love you so much
all I want to do is touch
so on February 14th when we sit down to dine
I want you to be my Valentine
Isle of view, isle of view, isle of view*

This was the first of many surprises planned for me on Valentine's Day. Our romantic evening began fireside eating a variety of cheeses accompanied by slices of ripe red pears Nick had artistically plattered. We sipped Kir Royales, champagne with a splash of Crème de Cassis, from long-stemmed champagne glasses.

For dinner, lobster tails were briefly marinated in lemon juice, oil, mustard, salt and garlic and broiled until crimson red. Tender red potatoes were seasoned with fresh parsley, salt, pepper and olive oil. Colorful salad greens were tossed with a zesty lemony vinaigrette

What to pour?

- » Cabernet Sauvignon: Benziger 2005; costs \$26
- » Rose: Wattle Creek Yorkville Highlands 2006; costs \$15
- » White: St. Supery Virtu - 2006; costs \$26



and topped with shredded radicchio, julienned carrots, toasted sunflower seeds, black olives and feta cheese. We swirled Matrot Bourgogne in our Riedel stemware and reminisced about the wonderful Valentine's dinners we've enjoyed together. For dessert, we fed each other pieces of angel food cake dipped in chocolate fondue. Our Valentine's dinner was simple, colorfully Valentine heart red, delicious and romantic.

This Valentine's Day, if you're not inclined to go out to dinner but don't know what to prepare at home, check out my dining in menu suggestions. Many side suggestions are naturally Valentine-red.

Catch Kerry Dunnington's column biweekly in *Healthy Life*. She can be reached at thisbookcooks@verizon.net.

HEALTH BRIEF

Can a drug that helps hearts be harmful to the brain?

Cognitive side effects like memory loss and fuzzy thinking aren't listed on the patient information sheet for Lipitor, the popular cholesterol-lowering drug. But some doctors are voicing concerns that in a small portion of patients, statins like Lipitor may be helping hearts but hurting minds.

"This drug makes women stupid," Dr. Orli Etingin, vice chairman of medicine at New York Presbyterian Hospital, declared at a recent luncheon discussion on women and the brain. Etingin told of a typical patient in her 40s, unable to concentrate or recall words. Tests found nothing amiss, but when the woman stopped taking Lipitor, the symptoms vanished. When she resumed taking Lipitor, they returned.

"I've seen this in maybe two-dozen patients," Etingin said later, adding that they did better on other statins. "This is just observational, of course. We really need more studies, particularly about cognitive effects and women."

Lipitor maker Pfizer Inc. says the drug's safety and efficacy have been demonstrated in more than 400 clinical trials and 145 million patient years of experience, and that the extensive data "do not establish a causal link between Lipitor and memory loss." —WSJ/AP



Source: Kerry Dunnington

V-day menu ideas

- » Poach shrimp, chicken or fillets of fish in lemon, olive oil and garlic, and accompany with steamed red Swiss chard and couscous.
- » Marinate filet of beef and top with sautéed mushrooms. Serve with roasted red potatoes and a salad of red leaf lettuce tossed with red pepper, red onion and cherry tomatoes.
- » Add sautéed tofu to stir-fried vegetables and serve with wild rice and sliced red beets tossed with feta cheese, toasted walnuts, red onion in a vinaigrette dressing.
- » Top slices of roast pork loin with baked red apples or red pears, and serve with sautéed red cabbage and baked sweet potatoes.

Surprise! Even those with chronic disease can live to 100

NEW YORK - Living to 100 is easier than you might think.

Surprising new research suggests that even people who develop heart disease or diabetes late in life have a decent shot at reaching the century mark.

"It has been generally assumed that living to 100 years of age was limited to those who had not developed chronic illness," said Dr. William Hall of the University of Rochester.

Hall has a theory for how these people could live to that age. In an editorial in Monday's Archives of Internal Medicine, where the study was published, he writes that it might be thanks to doctors who aggressively treat these older folks' health problems, rather than taking an "ageist" approach that assumes they wouldn't benefit.

For the study, Boston University researchers did phone interviews and health assessments of more than 500 women and 200 men who had reached 100. They found that roughly two-thirds of them had avoided significant age-related ailments.

But the rest, dubbed "survivors," had developed an age-related disease before reaching 85, including high blood pressure, heart disease or diabetes. Yet many functioned remarkably well — nearly as well as their disease-free peers.

Overall, the men were functioning better than the women. Nearly three-fourths of the male survivors could bathe and dress themselves, while only about one-third of the women could.

The researchers think that may be because the men had to be in exceptional condition to reach 100. "Women, on the other hand, may be better physically and socially adept at living with chronic and often disabling conditions," wrote lead author Dr. Dellara Terry and her colleagues. —AP