

Decision Making

From No Kidding with our Kids Foundation

Once upon a time, authoritarian parenting was the standard. You might remember the style: Mom and Dad make the rules, and the children are expected to obediently follow those rules. But today, gaining cooperation from children – rather than demanding it – is the new parenting norm, and educational and parenting experts alike recommend empowering children to practice decision-making skills and make their own choices about a whole lot of things.

Childhood is a time filled with enjoyment and discovery – at least, when we're unburdened by the sometimes-stressful realities around us. Few things characterize what childhood represents better than learning to make choices and how they cause consequences, from eating a delicious handful of dirt as an infant to becoming the "class clown" in high school.

It is crucial for young people to understand this process to help empower them to make confident, positive decisions regarding the social-, emotional-, and

physical-wellbeing of themselves and those around them as they move toward independence. Generally, the most influential figures in this process are family members and teachers as they support these young people at home and during their time in formal education. Therefore, it is important for them to recognize ways to develop such an important life skill.

The best way to learn a new skill, as they say, is to practice it. If you want to be good at piano, the theory is not enough; you need

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How drug-resistant pathogens in water could spark another pandemic

People around the world are unknowingly being exposed to water laced with antibiotics, which could spark the rise of drug-resistant pathogens and potentially fuel another global pandemic, warns a report from the United Nations Environment Programme (UNEP).

The study, released last month, ahead of World Health Day on April 7, found that, globally, not enough attention is being focused on the threat posed by antimicrobial resistance with most antibiotics being excreted into the environment via toilets or through open defecation. In 2015, 34.8 billion daily doses of antibiotics were consumed, with up to 90 per cent of them excreted into the environment as active substances.

While 80 per cent of wastewater in the world is not treated, even



A student analyses sewage samples at the University of Athens, during the COVID-19 pandemic in 2020. Photo: Reuters/Stelios Misinas

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What we should do

By Kenneth Cook

Last week, I advocated for the establishment of an outpatient facility that can assist teenagers to stop using weed and other drugs. There is another type of facility that can be constructed on St. Maarten – a facility that can also aid teenagers in learning a trade where they could become a mechanic, an electrician or a carpenter, among other trades.

This type of facility is needed as soon as possible. A lot more individuals have spoken to the author of this article about witnessing many teenagers smoking cannabis across the island. Since the last time the author wrote about this issue, he has also observed teenagers outside several schools smoking cannabis.

What we should do as an island is to actively endeavour to aid these students to stop using drugs and to assist them in living meaningful lives. In the absence of a facility, the Government of St. Maarten should make an arrangement with an institution or two that can provide a way to help teenagers to stop using drugs. Last week, I mentioned some of the signs that show that a teenager is using drugs.

The following are some other signs: Appetite changes, excessive lying, changes in sleep patterns; drugs lying around in the bedroom. Of the teen rehab centres located in the Netherlands, one is called Yes We Youth Clinics. According to this centre, it

offers rehab services for persons between the ages of 13 and 25 years old. This facility offers residential treatment for 10 weeks.

Teenagers using cannabis or

any other drug are at a serious risk; also those who have learning disorders, as this is an added strain on them mentally. The Ministry of Justice must take this issue seriously. Otherwise, more



of these teenagers will fall through the cracks.

Happy Easter Carnival



By: Sharon Van Arnhem

The doctor tells you the three dreaded words: "You. Have. Cancer." Your heart sinks at first, but then you quickly refocus and make up your mind to trust God to heal you. What you need is a supernatural healing so that by the next time you visit the doctor, the tumour would be gone. So you pray, and you get churches and healing ministries to pray, and you ask everyone you know to help you pray for your miracle healing.

But the tumour does not disappear. You go through surgery and chemotherapy and radiation, and experience all the pain and discomfort and suffering that go along with it. But in the process, you also experience God's closeness and grace; you get a new understanding of His purposes and a heightened sense of His presence. Your relationship with others also becomes more meaningful as you see the value of the people around you and gain a fresh perspective of the joy of having others in your life.

You're facing a mountain of a situation. If anything is beyond you, this one is! There's just no way out, as far as the eye can see. To even drop a hint here and there in the hope

that someone's heart might be moved to help you out is pointless, you reason. If this need is going to be met, it must be God – and you are determined to trust Him. So you pray and you trust and you wait on God. You confide in a handful of close friends and family – folk you know you can count on to pray for you. And pray they do! Everyone prays; everyone hopes; everyone believes God will come through with a bang! Then the deadline for the need to be met arrives, but there are no fireworks; there's no dramatic answer to prayer; there's no spectacular miracle; there's no unexpected breakthrough... just divine whispers and gentle promptings as God quietly tugs on the heartstrings of the very ordinary people within your little circle,

testing their faith, challenging their devotion, daring them to allow Him to use them to each do what little they can to meet that need of yours.

And before you can fully comprehend what is happening, one friend is stirred to make a stunning contribution to your need; this begins a domino effect that results in the seemingly impossible becoming possible in the most unremarkable of ways: No fanfare! No thunder and lightning! No drum roll! That sensational ending you had long anticipated just never materializes. You are speechless. Overwhelmed, you dissolve into tears. You feel humbled, unglued, grateful and happy all at the same time, as you experience the preciousness of the everyday

people around you. You are amazed at the love and support of your family and friends, the sacrifices that others are willing to make for you, the inconveniences your besties will put up with for you – and you feel so blessed. You see, sometimes, God chooses to come through quietly, answering us in the most practical of ways.

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Love & Inspiration

Building stronger relationships and inspiring lives

Greetings to one and all! Here's wishing you a safe and enjoyable weekend.

This column equips you to build a successful marriage, long-lasting friendships, and family- and work-relationships, and to experience hope, joy, happiness and inspiration.

Today's topic: What to do during a rough patch

Rough patches are inevitable in any relationship, and they can be caused by any number of things. One or both of you may be going through a hard time, you might be arguing constantly, or you may have simply drifted apart.

There is no guilt or shame involved with hitting a rough patch. It can be the jolt your relationship needs to come out stronger and more valued on the other side.

Here's what you can do to reconnect with your partner during a rough patch:

1. Own your part.

Recognize your role in how the two of you got to this place in your relationship. Are there things you can work on?

2. Spend some quality time together.

When was the last time you two went on a date or had sex that wasn't functional? Great relationships need tending.

Source: Gottman/ What to do during a rough patch

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Looking up at the night sky

~ St. Maarten's Backyard Astronomy for April 22 - 24 ~

Sun rises at 5:50am
Sun sets at 6:30pm
Lunar phase: 3rd quarter, waning half moon
Moon-rise: 12:52am
Moon-set: 12:09pm

This is the weekend for celebrating Earth Day. It's officially today, Friday, but let's keep the focus on our amazing planet all week-end long! Keep the party going! And you can't celebrate the Earth without a tip of the hat to the solar system and the universe that surrounds our celestial home.

Earth is of course the third planet from the sun, and like all the planets in our local group, we orbit the sun, revolutions of which constitute our calendar year. Our closest neighbours in the solar system are Venus and Mars, both of which are easily viewed these days in the predawn eastern sky. Jupiter and Saturn are there too – lately, an arrangement that allows us to glimpse the solar system's plane. A plane is nothing more than a flat surface, like a table top or a dinner plate. A plane turned edge-on to the observer forms a line, and thus we see this line by admiring the eastern pre-dawn sky and appreciating the line of Jupiter, Venus, Mars and Saturn. Howdy neighbours!

Earth sits in what astronomers call – believe it or not – the “Goldilocks Zone” of our solar system. You guessed it, a region of the solar system that is not too hot, and not too cold, but is just right. Mercury is certainly too hot to support life, being quite close to the sun. Venus is near the edge of what is considered habitable, but a bit too hot, especially due to its thick atmosphere that pumps up the pressure to crushing effects. On the other side of Earth, there is Mars, a bit cold and barren,



but possibly able to support life. Outside the orbit of Mars, the sun's heat is too distant to warm planets, it can barely provide light. Ah, but the Earth is just right. We have it all – periods of light and darkness, regions of warmth and coolness, water and air, with atmospheric pressures perfect for supporting trees and people, birds and butterflies, giraffes and gerbils, worms and whales. Earth is the source of life; the many varied environments provide the water, soil

and air to sustain humanity and the myriad forms of life all around us – life-forms as plentiful as the stars overhead.

Breathe in some of that beautiful air, feel the warm sun on your skin and the light breeze fluttering your hair, dig your toes into the sand or soil. Be grateful for the miracle of being alive on planet Earth! It's a good place to be! Happy Earth Weekend!

Thank you for keeping up with the Night Sky articles,

backyard astronomy designed for St. Maarten sky viewing. FYI: If you are out later on in the week, note that each star rises about four minutes earlier each day than written here, and the moon rises 50 minutes later. Night Sky is researched and compiled by Lisa Davis-Burnett. Earthsky.org is a key resource for information and images. Questions or comments? Email davisburnettlisa@gmail.com

pathogens

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in developed countries, treatment facilities are often unable to filter out dangerous bugs. This could breed superbugs that can evade modern medicine and trigger a pandemic, the report's authors warned.

In 2019, antibiotic-resistant infections were linked to the deaths of nearly 5 million people. Without immediate action, those infections could cause up to 10 million deaths per year by 2050, the report found. “Another pandemic is hiding in plain sight,” the report said. “The consequences of the continuing development and spread of anti-microbial resistance could be catastrophic.”

Antimicrobials are agents intended to kill or inhibit the growth of pathogens. They include antibiotics, fungicides, antiviral agents, parasiticides, as well as some disinfectants, antiseptics and natural products.

Antimicrobial resistance occurs when microbes, such as bacteria, viruses, parasites and fungi evolve to become immune to the drugs to which they were previously susceptible. The more microbes are exposed to pharmaceuticals, the more likely they are to adapt to them.

“Antibiotics and other drugs are lifesavers, but their environmental fate in the course of our waters matter. They need to be used carefully to prevent antimicrobial resistance that poses social, environmental and financial risks to businesses and society at large,” said Leticia Carvalho, Head of UNEP's Marine and Freshwater Branch.

What can be done?

According to the report, this global threat can be tackled by curbing the release of antibiotic-tinged pollution, including through improved wastewater treatment and more targeted use of antibiotics – too often these drugs are used when they need not be. The report recommended improving data and monitoring of antimicrobials and how they are disposed of. It also called for enhanced environmental governance and national action plans to limit the release of antimicrobials.

The report urged countries to embrace the One Health approach, which is centred on the idea that human and animal health are interdependent and linked to the health of the ecosystems in which they co-exist. The strategy, for example, calls on countries to limit deforestation, which often brings humans face-to-face with virus-carrying wild animals, giving pathogens a chance to jump species.

“The COVID-19 pandemic provides lessons learned, one of which is the need to prevent and tackle various health threats concurrently, especially their environmental dimensions,” the report said.

Five main sources

A recent study on pharmaceutical pollution of the world's rivers concluded that higher levels of antibiotic-resistant pathogens were found in low- to middle-income countries and were associated with areas with poor wastewater and waste management infrastructure and pharmaceutical manufacturing.

According to the UNEP report, five main pollutant sources contribute to the development and spread of antimicrobial resistance. They are as follows:

- #1: Poor sanitation, sewage and waste effluent, aggravated, for example, by open defecation and the overuse of antibiotics to treat diarrhoea.
- #2: Effluent from pharmaceutical manufacturing.
- #3: Waste from healthcare facilities.
- #4: Use of antimicrobials and manure in crop production.
- #5: Releases from animal production.

Climate change dimensions

Higher temperatures are also associated with increased antimicrobial resistant infections, says the report. Many diseases are climate-sensitive, and changes in environmental conditions and temperature may lead to an increase in the spread of bacterial, viral, parasitic, fungal and vector-borne diseases.

Severe weather events and rising water tables can cause wastewater and sewage to overwhelm treatment plants, allowing untreated sewage rich in antimicrobial resistant microbes to contaminate surrounding communities.

The report, which presents highlights from a more detailed study to be released later this year, urged policymakers not to let down their guard, even as the COVID-19 pandemic recedes. It said, “The COVID-19 pandemic is a wake-up call to better understand and improve all areas of preparedness for and prevention of infectious diseases, including their environmental dimensions.”

Tackling the pollution crisis forms a core pillar of UNEP's new global strategic priorities for water, and antimicrobial resistance is specifically included in UNEP's 2022-2025 Medium-Term Strategy under Chemicals and Pollution Action. The “One Health” approach, supported by UNEP, is a cross-cutting and systemic approach based on the fact that human health and animal health are interdependent and linked to the health of the ecosystems in which they co-exist.

Since 1978, UNEP has run the Global Environment Monitoring System for Freshwater (GEMS/Water) Programme, mandated to support Member States in monitoring and assessing their water quality and reporting their data to UNEP's global database on water

quality.

The World Water Quality Alliance, launched by UNEP in 2019, advocates the central role of freshwater quality in achieving prosperity and sustainability, and is tasked with preparing a World Water Quality Assessment. The Global Wastewater Initiative, for which UNEP provides Secretariat services, is raising awareness on antimicrobial resistance.

To fight the pervasive impact of pollution on society, UNEP launched #BeatPollution, a strategy for rapid, large-scale and coordinated action against air, land and water pollution. The strategy highlights the impact of pollution on climate change, nature and biodiversity loss, and human health. Through science-based messaging, the campaign showcases how transitioning to a pollution-free planet is vital for future generations.

The World Health Organization (WHO) in collaboration with the Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations (FAO), the World Organisation for Animal Health (OIE) and UNEP have developed a Strategic Framework for collaboration on antimicrobial resistance (AMR).

This news story was published by UNEP on April 6 on www.unep.org. For more information, contact Tessa Govere: govere@un.org or Riccardo Zennaro: riccardo.zennaro@un.org.



By Lucinda Frye

Kiribati (Kiribas!) – Kiribati, officially Republic of Kiribati, Island country, central Pacific Ocean

I was intrigued to hear that the pronunciation of this area (the spelling up above in brackets) is so very different to the actual way it is spelled! The total land area of these islands is 313 square miles. Temperatures are usually in the range of 80-90° F. Oceania is the collective name for the islands scattered throughout most of the Pacific Ocean.

Spanish explorers sighted some of the islands in the 16th century, but most of Kiribati was not charted until the early 19th century. Whalers and then coconut oil traders reached the islands and from the mid-19th century, Gilbert Islanders were recruited to work on plantations elsewhere in the region. During World War II, the islands were occupied by Japan, which was later ejected by Allied forces. The colony had few services until aid-funded development programs were introduced after the war.

There are three major island groups – Gilbert, Phoenix and Line islands – in this country that consists of 33 islands. However, there are many small exclusions, such as the three Line Islands that are actually US territories. All the islands of Kiribati are low-lying coral atolls built on a submerged volcanic chain and encircled by reefs. About 20 of the islands are inhabited with nearly all of the population of Kiribati living in the Gilbert Islands. There is an island called Banaba – also a coral island – that has a slightly higher elevation. Of course, the economy is based on subsistence farming and fishing.

English being the official language, the indigenous people are mostly Micronesians – their language is known as Gilbertese. Religious beliefs are mostly Roman Catholic and Protestant. Currency is the Australian dollar. Building and racing of sailing canoes is popular. Musical composition

and dancing in customary styles are regarded as art forms and are the basis of widespread competition. Volleyball and football (soccer) are popular sports.

The people of Kiribati are conservative; ties to family and traditional land remain strong. There is a strong discouragement to all of showing off individual achievement or wealth. The national flag is based on the coat of arms granted to the islands in 1937. It has six wavy horizontal stripes of white and blue beneath a red field bearing a yellow (frigate) bird and sun. "The name Kiribati is the local rendition of Gilberts in the Gilbertese, or I-Kiribati, language, which has 13 sounds; [ti] is pronounced [s] or like the word [see] – thus Kiribati is pronounced Ki-ri-bas.

"The islands were settled by Austronesian-speaking people before the 1st century CE. Fijians and Tongans arrived around the 14th century."

1765: The British commodore John Byron discovered the island of Nikunau.

1777: Kiritimati (Christmas) Atoll was sighted on Christmas Eve by English navigator Captain James Cook

1788: Capt. Thomas Gilbert sighted Tarawa and Capt. John Marshall discovered Aranuka.

1799-1826: The remaining islands were discovered.

1820: The group of islands was given the name Gilbert Islands.

1837: The first permanent European settlers arrived.

1854: An American whaling ship was wrecked there and the name of the ship was given to the atoll.

1856: The atoll's guano deposits were worked until depleted, first by American interests and then by British.

1889: Britain claimed Canton (as the name was then spelled) for use as a transpacific cable station.

1892: The Gilberts were claimed as a British protectorate.

1916: The Gilbert and Ellice Is-

lands and Banaba became a crown colony of Britain.

1927: The Line Islands joined the colony.

1930: The atoll gained importance as a transpacific air stop.

1937: The Phoenix Islands joined the colony.

1939: Canton and Enderbury Atoll were placed under joint US-British control so that airplanes of both countries could use them – when long range planes came into being, the airbases were used for emergencies only.

1941: The islands were occupied by Japanese forces.

1976: The Ellice Islands were separated and in 1978 they formed the country of Tuvalu.

1977: The colony became self-governing.

1979: The colony became the Republic of Kiribati (Kiribas!).

1979: The spelling of Canton was changed to Kanton.

A few of the islands are compact with fringing reefs. Kiritimati, which we would call "Christmas" Island, is the largest atoll! When I was younger, I had this idea that Father Christmas had his summer vacation house there!

Kiritimati Island was used for US and British nuclear weapons testing in the 1960s; now there are large coconut plantations, fish farms and several satellite telemetry stations there.

Most of the atolls and islands rise no higher than 26 feet above sea level, Banaba reaches 285 feet above sea level. Once its top layer was rich in phosphate but heavy mining took place from 1900 to 1979. Today it is pretty much a sparse atoll with few if any inhabitants.

It is in these atolls/islands that one sees the sea rising. Of significance, two unpopulated atolls/islets were covered by the sea in 1999. However, contrary to this, there are some atolls that are increasing in size. Many studies are being done on this. Global

Diverse and indigenous cuisine brought by the many ethnic people to St. Maarten from all over the world piques our interest. To this end, we are on a quest to find where it comes from, if it is used for celebrations, if it is exotic to some but everyday food to others. Anything to do with keeping the body and soul nourished with that which is produced from good old terra firma, is what makes the world go around.

warming and the threat of rising sea levels would be disastrous for these islands.

Agriculture is limited. Coconut palms dominate the landscape; coconuts play a major part in the inhabitant's diet. Coconuts are used the same way as in the Caribbean islands but they also use the sap of the palm trees, making a fermented drink that is quite intoxicating. This sap is also used in cooking.

Breadfruit and pandanus are grown and they also cultivate a course taro-like plant. However, plants like taro, bananas, and sweet potatoes are scarce. The protein comes mostly from the sea; they raise pigs and chickens.

"The population of most islands remains fairly static as migration to the rapidly growing urban centres of South Tarawa is ongoing. Most of the population lives there. South Tarawa, including Betio (the port and commercial centre of Tarawa) has an extremely high population density.

Housing is not high-rise; most people live in single-story structures. The rural population of Kiribati lives in villages dominated by Western-style churches and large open-sided thatched meetinghouses. Houses of Western-style construction are seen on outer islands and are common on Tarawa.

Primary education is compulsory; pupils attend government- or church-run secondary schools. Kiribati has its own technical and teacher training; the University of the South Pacific operates a centre on Tarawa that offers degree and certificate programs. Any further education needs be done overseas. There are hospitals on Tarawa and Kiritimati and clinics on all of the inhabited islands.

Since the depletion of the mined mineral that the economy depended heavily on, the islands have been exporting copra; they have licensing fees from foreign fishing fleets which include a special tuna-fishing agreement with the European Union. Commercial seaweed farming has become an important economic activity as has sea salt! Factories are not a thing but they do produce clothing, furniture and beverages for domestic use.

"The country's proximity to the Equator makes it a desirable location for satellite telemetry and spacecraft-launching facilities; several national and transnational space authorities have built or have proposed building facilities on the islands or in surrounding waters. Such projects bring capital, additional employment, and infrastructure improvements, but Kiribati continues to depend on foreign aid for most capital

and development expenditure."

Food is imported from Australia, Japan, Singapore; Japan and Thailand are the countries that most of their exported goods go to. Interisland shipping is provided by the government, and most islands are linked by a domestic air service. Tarawa and Kiritimati have major airports. There is a festival called Yap Day, held the first weekend of March. Here villages have competitions that include dancing and eating different dishes.

Rice is the most important dish and is served with most meals. Fresh fish, shellfish, crabs, and shrimps are the most consumed protein. Seafood is prepared as uncooked, marinated in vinai-grette, grilled, stuffed with onions wrapped in banana leaves then put into the fire. Veggies and stews are often coconut milk based as are the desserts. Coconut rice pudding is popular.

RECIPES

Palusami – coconut cream and taro-filled bundles were traditionally baked in an underground earthen oven

Ingredients

36 young taro leaves
2 cups coconut cream / coconut milk
1 tsp curry powder
6 wilted banana leaves
6 breadfruit leaves
2 smaller peeled, finely diced onions
Hot water
Salt
Black pepper

Method

Combine onions with coconut cream.
Add curry powder, mix well and set aside.
Remove thick stems of taro leaves.
Dip each leaf into hot water to make them more pliable.
Layer six taro leaves together, larger leaf used as the base.
Fold leaves into a cone.
Pour half cup of the seasoned coconut cream mixture into the taro leaf cone.
Secure opening by folding delicately.
Place in a banana leaf.
Fold banana leaf around the taro cone and secure the top.
Place leaf bundle in the centre of a breadfruit leaf, wrapping the leaf around the bundle and securing it at the top with toothpicks.
Wrap the bundle in foil paper to secure it further.
Place finished bundles in a baking tray.
Bake in preheated 350° F oven for thirty minutes.
Remove from oven, place bundles on serving platter.
Unwrap bundles and enjoy the creamy taro leaf and coconut cream filling. Serve hot or cold.



Picture credit: Palms Australia



Picture credit: National Foods

WEEK IN REVIEW

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COVID-19 updates:

The 5th wave driven by Omicron, which has dwarfed all previous waves, is at its end. Cases are relatively low, but there is an uptick in cases on the French side. The island is in the beginning phase of treating the virus as endemic.

(Free) Dutch side testing: Community Help Desk, Hope Estate (8:30am to 11:00am Monday to Friday). Hotline 914 operational 8:00am to 5:00pm Monday-Friday and 9:00am to 1:00pm Saturday.

Vaccines available: On the Dutch side – the CPS office (Vineyard building) on Monday and Friday 8:30am-12:30noon, Wednesday from 8:30am-12noon and 1:30pm to 3:30pm. Paediatric: Wednesdays by appointment, 3:00pm to 5:00pm; Fridays 8:30am to 12:30pm. Second boosters available for persons aged 60+. CPS closed for the holidays April 27 through May 2. French side – at the hospital, preferably by appointment (www.doctolib.fr). Doctors and pharmacies can also offer the vaccines.

The vaccination rate has been low on the island, and stagnated. According to last update on February 28, just under 27,900 on the Dutch side received at least one shot. VSA only reports this number. French side: Some 41% of the general population received the first jab, 38% the 2nd, and 17% their boosters.

The Dutch Side counts 26 active cases (2 hospitalised). The French side reported 95 new cases in week 14 (0 hospitalised), and there are 142 active cases.. Dutch side death toll is 86, the French side 63.

FRIDAY

~No newspaper printed. Happy Good Friday~

MONDAY

~No newspaper printed. Happy Easter Monday~

TUESDAY

Basic study financing per 2023

Students from the Dutch Caribbean islands will be able to make use of the



The Mature, Teen, and Senior pageants were held over the past week. Talya "Mizzy" Pantophlet was crowned Ms. Mature, while Serenity Martinus was crowned Ms. Senior, and Doraniya Pascal was crowned Ms. Teen Carnival Queen. Five contestants vied for Ms. Mature, with Milline Gumbs coming in as first runner-up, and Jessinia Lazzaro second runner-up. In the Senior pageant, Laetitia Cozier was first runner-up and Denecia Williams second runner-up. In the Teen pageant, Fara Vilssaint Dracon was first runner-up and Thamare Milcet second runner-up. Pictured: Ms Mature Talya "Mizzy" Pantophlet (left), and a collage of the Teen (right, top) and Senior (right, bottom) Carnival Queens.



basic study financing regulation when it is reintroduced in the Netherlands in 2023. Dutch State Secretary of Kingdom Relations and Digitisation Alexandra van Huffelen confirmed this in a letter that she sent to Member of the Aruba Parliament Mike Eman of the opposition party AVP on April 12.

Request approved to seek advice

Members of Parliament (MPs) approved a proposal to seek advice from the Advisory Council regarding the draft consensus kingdom law for the Caribbean Body for Reform and Development (COHO). The matter was handled in an urgent meeting of the Central Committee as well as a public meeting, which were both held on Thursday.

Threat of closure for Key to Freedom

Dozens of addicts found shelter at Passion Fruit Road 19 for short or long periods of time and rehabled from cocaine, crack, marijuana and alcohol addiction. Key to Freedom Christian Rehabilitation Centre has been offering intervention therapy in this house for six years, but now the foundation itself urgently needs assistance. The nine

men who currently live in the house – two addiction counsellors and seven clients – are in danger of ending up on the street. The foundation, which is run by volunteers and relies on donations, cannot pay the rent of US \$2,600 per month.

WEDNESDAY

State secretary wants solution to 12.5% cut

Dutch State Secretary of Kingdom Relations and Digitisation Alexandra van Huffelen is prepared to discuss the 12.5 per cent cut to the labour conditions of employees in the (semi) public sector in Curaçao and St. Maarten, and the 12.6 per cent in Aruba, with the governments of the countries. The state secretary said this in a debate with the First Chamber of the Dutch Parliament, the Senate, on Tuesday.

Whether decolonisation complete centre stage

The team of experts who participated in the first roundtable panel discussion on the Charter of the Kingdom of the Netherlands coordinated by Parliament's Committee for Constitutional Affairs and Decolonisation on Tuesday saw eye-to-eye to a certain

extent on the subject of whether the decolonisation process was completed, but differed vastly in their opinions on whether there was a democratic deficit in the Kingdom, two issues discussed intensively in an interactive session with MPs.

Experts differ: existence democratic deficit

Whether a democratic deficit exists in the Kingdom of the Netherlands, depends on who you ask. Some of the experts who were part of the first roundtable panel discussion on the Charter of the Kingdom of the Netherlands hosted by Parliament's Committee for Constitutional Affairs and Decolonisation on Tuesday did not completely see eye-to-eye on whether a democratic deficit exists in the Kingdom.

Minister: restructuring to begin shortly

Following several news reports on the absence of the justification announced by Minister of Justice Anna Richardson in November for the use of funds from the St. Maarten Crime Fund, the minister announced that the Crime Fund "currently carries a balance of over one million Antillean guilders." How much

money has been invested in crime prevention since Minister Richardson took office on March 28, 2020, and what projects have been financed with money from the Crime Fund, is not known. The long-awaited spending plan announced by Richardson in Parliament in November last year has not yet been presented and, according to a press release from the minister, is still six months away.

THURSDAY

Financial supervision prolonged

The Kingdom Council of Ministers RMR recently prolonged the financial supervision of Curaçao and St. Maarten until 2024. The April 8 decision was based on the findings of the 2021 Evaluation Committee. The 2021 Evaluation Committee advised to fully continue the financial supervision of St. Maarten and Curaçao, because both countries have not complied with the norms of the Financial Supervision Kingdom Law RFT in the period 2018-2020.

Hoogers dissects draft COHO law

Professor Gerhard Hoogers

dissected the draft Consensus Kingdom Law on the Caribbean Body for Reform and Development COHO on Wednesday and offered Parliament some tips on how they can address some of the existing sticking points in the draft law.

Rehab to get bars, food trucks next door

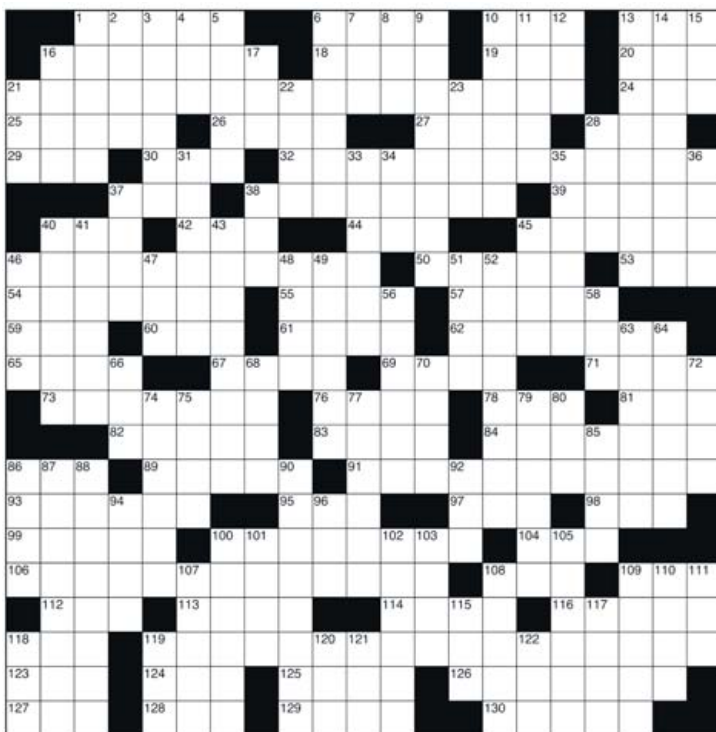
Nine months after Minister of Justice Anna Richardson announced that Turning Point Foundation was to receive the Pointe Blanche prison's unused container cells to house forensic patients on land adjacent to the rehab centre on Pond Island, the patients' counsellors were shocked to learn this plot has now instead been allotted to the Ministry of Tourism for the use of alcohol and tobacco. The purpose of the site was changed recently after the land already had been earmarked in 2019 by former Minister of Justice Cornelius de Weever for the installation of at least eight of the 11 container cells on island. It is unclear why Government has deviated from what was made public on September 1 last year.

CROSSWORD PUZZLE

Love Letters

...Why say it when you can show it in a letter?

By Merl Reagle



ACROSS

- 1 "What a pity"
6 Best Actress of 1987
10 Jinx-breaking team, in 2004 headlines
13 NBA nickname
16 Feb. 14 figure?
18 Half a spy
19 Early flood insurance?
20 Pal of Pooh
21 Feb. 14 entreaty?
24 Flow's partner
25 Keep ___ on
26 Be a boulder?
27 ___ dancer
28 Waited, perhaps
29 Call for assistance
30 ___ Day Now
32 Feb. 14 plea to a rival?
37 Brave moguls
38 False belief
40 Hoboes may ride them
41 Sailor's back
42 Ledger doc
44 ___ About You
45 Delhi dough
46 Gershwin classic?
50 Silas Marner author
53 One of its letters stands for "Olds"
54 Outfoxing
55 This isn't working
57 Starting stakes
59 Visceral
60 Alice in Wonderland party drink
61 Ms. Moreno
62 Falling-in-love observation?
65 ___ Spumante
67 "No way, comrade"
69 RPM device
71 Indistinguishable mass
73 Feb. 14 greeting?
76 Related to circuitry: abbr.
78 Long-legged Australian
81 With Bee, a honey brand
82 Author Alexander
83 Board sticker
84 Sonora saloon
86 Hypo units
89 Certain Prot.
91 Frankie Valli hit?
93 Meg and Jo's creator
95 U.N. VIP
97 Trav. heading
98 Balaam's beast
99 Carefree walk
100 Stranded
104 Prom getup
106 Feb. 14 sentiment from twins in old ads?
108 Word with eared or sided
109 Fitting
112 Actor Barker

- 113 James who co-scripted The African Queen
114 Piece of "the San Francisco treat"
116 Former Houston player
118 Maude's portrayer
119 End of a Feb. 14 refrain?
123 Capt.'s subordinates
124 "Cloud-hopper"
125 Harsh element
126 Unloved one's sentiment?
127 Good place to go for a drive
128 For each
129 Connectable things
130 Night, in Naples

DOWN

- 1 Markdowns
2 Part of SRO
3 Need oiling
4 P.D. alert
5 Vaguely
6 Wedding setting
7 Shallow title role for Jack Black
8 Afore
9 As close to the action as you can get
10 It fell in 1975
11 "Ready ___"
12 Classic Jaguar
13 More marvelous, to a teen
14 U.S. Grant foe
15 Assignment
16 The Flintstones pet
17 Certain salon bottle
21 Used to be
22 Singer Jerry
23 Up ___ good
28 Clothes closer
31 Council or Creed of 325 a.d.
33 Upoar
34 Letters on a stamp
35 Yahoos
36 Old oil co.
37 Town, to the Dutch
38 Little bit of goo
40 Red in the face
41 Tutti-
43 Violinist
45 Niccolò
46 Goes bad
47 Byte or dose precursor
47 Footnote
48 abbr., op. ___
48 Old Italian money
49 Cut for TV
51 Secular

Solution: 'Home Sweet Homophone (3)'



Business Week in Review

April 15–21, 2022; Vol. 31 No. 234–236

FRIDAY

~No newspaper printed.
Happy Good Friday~

MONDAY

~No newspaper printed.
Happy Easter Monday~

TUESDAY

In observance of the International Day of Pink, **RBC Financial (Caribbean) Limited (RBC)** announced donations to eight Caribbean charities that take a stand against bullying and discrimination. Each charity will receive a donation of US \$500 from RBC. **UNICEF St. Maarten** is one of the charities that is set to receive a donation. RBC said in a press statement that it is proud of its long history of strategic partnerships, donations, sponsorship initiatives and employee volunteerism to support organisations, academic institutions, and non-profit groups working to address diversity issues important to the organisation and its stakeholders. Other charities which received donations were Trinidad and Tobago's Credo Foundation; Barbados' Supreme Counselling for Personal Development; The Bahamas' Caribbean Voice; Cayman's Families Resource Centre; Aruba's Justice4Courtney; Curacao's Human Rights Defence Foundation; Turks and Caicos' The Youth Empowerment and Mentorship Conference and St. Maarten's UNICEF SXM.

President of the Collectivité Louis Mussington received Interprofessional Consular Chamber of St. Martin **CCISM President Angèle Dormoy** and her team on Thursday, April 14, to review current issues of importance. Several topics were discussed, such as the 2021-2026 Mandate Plan and CCISM's partnerships with the Collectivité, the Chamber's Strategic Plan for 2027, CCISM's 2022 budget and, finally, the Maison des Entreprises itself.

WEDNESDAY

Social and Health Insurances SZV says it has seen a slight increase in **employers** who are proactively requesting payment arrangements via the Employer Portal for their outstanding premium amounts. "This is good news; however not

good enough, as most of these companies do not follow up with SZV to finalise the process," said SZV in a press release on Tuesday. SZV continues to remind employers that compliance with the law and payment of social security premiums is not optional. Company directors are personally liable for the payment of outstanding social and health insurance premiums. SZV Director Glen A. Carty commented, "In every business sector on the island, there is a trend of scattered willingness to pay SZV premiums – an obligation we all have, which pays for our healthcare system. SZV will be tackling those employers who are withholding employee premiums, but not paying them to SZV."

Caribbean Telecommunications Union (CTU) Secretary General Rodney Taylor gave an overview of the **Caribbean Internet Exchange Carib IX** initiative at a press conference Tuesday following a meeting with Collectivité President Louis Mussington. The recently launched Carib IX initiative coordinated by CTU will initially benefit French St. Martin, St. Barths and Guadeloupe, but Dutch St. Maarten will also be integrated. The project aims to set up Internet exchange points IXPs in all three territories. Trinidad-based Taylor and his delegation are visiting all three territories.

THURSDAY

Windward Islands Teachers Union (WITU) has started a petition for full payment of the 2022 vacation allowance for all civil servants and employees of government-subsidised school boards. President of WITU Stuart Johnson said in a press release on Wednesday, "Today is the day we put the rights of teaching and non-teaching staff back as a priority in St. Maarten." In the release the WITU President outlined the contents of the petition that has nine points of motivation and called all WITU members to sign it in solidarity.

St. Maarten is now officially the first base of operations for **Basilisk Caribbean** with their launch of three specialised concrete enhancing products, Basilisk Healing Agent for concrete mixtures, Self-Healing Repair Mortar and their Liquid Repair System. The launch of

this international brand was held recently and brought together a large cross-section of the construction, engineering and building community of the island to showcase the benefits this product will bring to the building capacity of the island. Invitees were able to question one of the founders of the self-healing concrete technology behind these new products, Bart van der Werd, who along with his colleague Marc Brants, who focuses on customer support, marketing and projects, answered many of the questions about the unique technology of self-healing concrete.

Passenger arrival numbers to the country for the first quarter of 2022 "outperformed" numbers in 2021 by 209 per cent. Airport passenger arrival numbers in the first quarter of 2021 were a mere 62,865, while in that same period for the previous year (2019), the arrival numbers were 195,064. According to the Economic Indicators report from the Ministry of Tourism, Economic Affairs, Transport and Telecommunication (TEATT), "PIJA reached 194,516 passenger arrivals for the first quarter [of 2022 – Ed.] and is on pace to achieve 90 per cent of its 2019 pre-COVID total arrivals of 716,569." The airport passenger arrival numbers for the first quarter are much closer to the numbers of visitors we saw pre-COVID-19," said TEATT Minister Roger Lawrence.

St. Maarten **firefighters and first responders** have received training from Oakland, California Fire Departments **Chief Reggie Freeman** and **Dr. Kwame Cooper**. The programme focused on transformational leadership and service leadership. The first week of March 2022 provided an opportunity for leaders and members of these departments to participate in the Junior Officer Leadership Academy (JOLA) and the Senior Officer Leadership Academy (SOLA). The focus of this professional development included team-building, critical decision-making, managing change, being aware of the importance of vulnerability as a great leader, and a focus on developing relationships for stronger teams.

Brenda's Corner

HOUSEHOLD HINTS

- Soak toothbrushes regularly in a cup of hydrogen peroxide to keep them germ free.
- Slice apples, spray with some lemon juice, and they will keep for a couple of days in a Ziploc bag for lunches or quick snacks from the fridge.
- Use Velcro between buttons on a blouse to stop gaping.

QUICK & EASY RECIPES

Spinach and Parmesan Dip

Ingredients

10 ounce frozen pack of spinach
1 cup sour cream
½ cup parmesan cheese
1 garlic clove chopped finely
Salt and pepper

Method

Cook the spinach and squeeze out liquid. Combine the spinach with the other ingredients and mix well. Serve with sticks of carrot, red pepper, or crackers.

Picture credit: The Cookie Rookie



KEEPING UP WITH ROY

THE WEEKEND RADIO SCENE

Greetings to one and all! Here's wishing both you and yours an enjoyable and safe weekend.

Be inspired as a student and entrepreneur through both Student Vibes and InSpire Business informative nuggets in this weekly column.

Student Vibes

Tips for successful students – continued

#6. Take good notes.

Successful students take notes that are understandable and organized, and review them often. Why put something into your notes you don't understand? Ask the questions now that are necessary to make your notes meaningful at some later time. A short review of your notes while the material is still fresh on your mind helps you learn more. The more you learn then, the less you'll have to learn later, and the less time it will take because you won't have to include some deciphering time, also. The whole purpose of taking notes is to use them, and use them often. The more you use them, the more they improve.

Source: *fastread.in*

InSpire (pronounced: I-inspire) Business
(Formerly: Good Business Cents)

Nine ways to grow your business in 2022 – continued

Here is #5: Practice gratitude. Stay positive by counting your blessings (you probably have a lot more than you realize) and remember to thank your clients, team and suppliers. Kindness is catching. Gratitude can sometimes play a crucial role in creating a healthy company culture and a productive working environment, notes Intellect Change.

Source: *Forbes.com/ Nine-ways-to-grow-your-business-in-2022*

Check out Love & Inspiration on Power 102.7FM, pjd2radiosxm.com, or tunein.com every Sunday from 3:00pm to 5:00pm. You can catch a rebroadcast of the show on Sundays at 8:00pm and Mondays at 10:00am AST on www.voiceofthecaribbean.net and on Mondays at 3:00pm on bshaniradio.com – based in New York City through which Love & Inspiration reaches over 2 million listeners per month.

This Sunday afternoon, be inspired by VIP guest Sabina Asadova (Certified Holistic Health Coach and CEO of Global Health 2 Wealth Solutions) as she shares about her inspiring and transformational health journey when she took ownership of her own health. Learn how you can too.

Best wishes,
Roy Cotton Jr.

Swedish study did not find that Pfizer COVID-19 vaccine permanently alters human DNA

By Reuters Fact Check

Social media users are falsely claiming that a Swedish study conducted by Lund University found that mRNA COVID-19 vaccines permanently alter human DNA.

The text in one post reads: "BOMB-SHELL: Biological Study PROVES Pfizer mRNA Vaccine Permanently Alters Human DNA".

The posts share articles such as [ones archived] saying the study, which was published in the Current Issues in Molecular Biology, shows mRNA from the Pfizer COVID-19 vaccine can enter human liver cells and convert to DNA as quickly as six hours after receiving a dose.

Lund University addressed the misinterpretations circulating on social media, featuring the authors of the

study, Associate Professor Yang de Marinis and Professor Magnus Rasmussen.

"These findings were observed in petri dishes under experimental conditions, but we do not yet know if the converted DNA is integrated into the cells' DNA in the genome – and if so, if it has any consequences," Rasmussen says in the article.

The authors said that they chose to study liver cells as Pfizer had reported that about 18% of the vaccine accumulated in the liver in 30 minutes after mice were injected.

"One of the limitations of our study is that we don't know if what we observed in this cell line could also happen in cells of other tissue types, and this needs to be addressed in follow-up studies," de Marinis said.

"Cell lines differ from cells in living organisms and, therefore, it is important that similar investigations are also studied in humans," Rasmussen also said.

Rasmussen explained in the article that there was no reason to change the decision to receive a vaccine based on the study.

The claim was also debunked by fact checker Health Feedback, which delved into the scientific claims in more detail.

Reuters has previously fact checked the claim that mRNA vaccines alter human DNA.

Verdict

Missing context. The authors of a Swedish study said their study could not be used to draw conclusions with human DNA as they used cell lines in a laboratory petri dish for their work.

This article was produced by the Reuters Fact Check team. Read more about its fact-checking work at <https://www.reuters.com/fact-check/about>. It has been adapted for print media. For the original article with several links to the sources mentioned, including the documents in question, social media posts and statistics, visit [Reuters.com](https://www.reuters.com).

BOMB-SHELL: Biological Study PROVES Pfizer mRNA Vaccine Permanently Alters Human DNA



Decision Making

continued from page 1

to actually play the piano. Make some mistakes, solve a few problems and then try again and again until you "get" it.

The same goes for decision-making skills; they have to be practiced if you want to get good at them. Whether it's a toddler choosing a toy or a

teenager selecting a college, all kids have to make decisions. As they get older, decisions can get more difficult, so it's important to teach them the right skills at an early age. When they're young, give them two options to choose from, such as what to eat at a restaurant or what color shoes to wear. You can also model decision-making by thinking out loud when you're weighing options.

If there's a decision that affects them, ask them what they think and then discuss the choices together. The earlier you can help kids be thoughtful about how their decisions may impact others, the better. Questions they can ask themselves include the following: What are all the options? What are the pros and cons of each? How will the decision impact others? Once you trust your child with

a decision, let them do it themselves. It will help them build skills and self-confidence. When they're young, start with small decisions, such as the kind of ice cream they want to eat.

Tweens and teens will have bigger decisions to make. These may require negotiation and compromise. Even so, you shouldn't always jump in if you see your child making a bad decision. Children often learn best from their mistakes. If it's a safe situation, it may be good for them if you let them make the bad decision. When they do make mistakes, help them learn by staying calm and not placing blame. If they regret their choice, support them while they feel the difficult emotions and think about what they would do differently next time.



NPO Spotlight

By Foresee Foundation

EPIC: Taking strides in protecting the environment

Environmental Protection in the Caribbean (EPIC) has been for over 20 years a constant "north star" for environmentalists, leaders and volunteers making a positive impact on protecting the Caribbean environment. EPIC's ethos is to have their work always rooted in a commitment to combine the tools of scientific research, education, advocacy, and community empowerment to affect change. Using this grass-roots approach, EPIC assures its continuing impact by inspiring local communities, empowering the people within them, and recruiting local leaders to run and manage EPIC's programs.

What does your organization do and who is your target group?

Environmental Protection in the Caribbean (EPIC) is an independent non-profit foundation founded in 2000

with the mission of protecting the Caribbean environment through research, restoration, education and advocacy. EPIC is a results-driven organization that works on challenging, under-addressed issues through holistic programs resulting in strategic community-based actions. By recognizing the connections between ecological health, economic vitality, and the quality of life for Caribbean residents, EPIC's work supports the vision of Caribbean communities leading the way towards a more resilient and sustainable future for everyone.

How does your organization contribute to a better St. Maarten for all?

The economy of Sint Maarten depends on a beautiful environment to attract tourists. Caring for nature contributes not just to our economy but also to our health as we need clean water, air and land to thrive.

Natural areas also contribute to improved mental health, offering calm in an increasingly busy world.

Give examples of activities you usually host or have hosted to achieve your organization's goals?

Four program areas make up EPIC's scope of work: Science, Education, Advocacy and Stewardship (SEAS). Scientific research has included a variety of work, such as bird surveys, resulting in the establishment of Important Bird Areas and an economic valuation of the Simpson Bay Lagoon. Our educational programs have reached thousands of participants through schools as well as the general public through nature walks. We continue to advocate for the protection of natural areas and sustainability legislation, such as reducing single-use plastics. Stewardship actions include litter clean-ups that have removed thousands of pounds of litter from our

coastal areas as well as planting hundreds of mangrove trees.

What message would you send out to the community to encourage support for your group's mission?

Sustainability and nature protection is something everybody can do in their daily lives by making more eco-

friendly choices and speaking out for the environment. It's a global movement that starts with each person.

How can someone sign up to volunteer or support your organization?

We encourage people to follow us on Facebook and Instagram to stay up to date on activities or just reach out to

us directly about ways to get involved. Contributions are always welcome and are easily made through our website.

Contact Board President Fleur Hermanides at +1 721 586-0808 or epicsxm@epicislands.org. Visit www.facebook.com/epicislands and www.epicislands.org.



'NPO Spotlight' in collaboration with The Daily Herald offers you a glance into the varied and multifaceted world of Non-Profit Organizations (NPOs) on St. Maarten.

If you are a NPO and would like to be showcased please visit our website www.npowersxm.com to register.

DIY WITH EVE DIY KITCHEN HACKS 2

Secure your kitchen towels

Hanging a dish towel from an oven or dishwasher door makes sense. The towel is in a convenient location, and the oven's warmth quickly gets rid of dampness. However, the one drawback with hanging your towels here is that they are constantly falling off! Here's a way to keep the towel from slipping off: Fold your towel into its desired form and attach Velcro strips in two spots, one on the front and one on the back, as shown in the photo below. Stitch in place, or use fabric iron-on Velcro strips and follow the directions on the packaging. Finally,



hang your towel from the oven or dishwasher door and match Velcro ends together.

File folders for under the kitchen sink

File folders can be used for more than just organizing papers



and magazines in your office. They can also be used for organization in your kitchen. Fill the folders up with the clutter that normally barricades the cabinet under the kitchen sink. Place all of your kitchen cleaning supplies into file folders, putting the most frequently used items towards the front. This kitchen organization hack is so easy and satisfying!

Mobile kitchen storage and organization cart

A rolling kitchen cart is the next best thing to adding cabinets and countertop space. The top provides extra work space when you're preparing that big Thanksgiving dinner. And the shelves below hold items that would otherwise consume countertop



space. If you plan to use a cart for food preparation, choose one with a tough top like butcher block, stainless steel or plastic laminate. Some cart tops are glossy finished wood – beautiful, but not very durable. Carts come in a variety of wood

finishes, so there's a good chance you can match your existing cabinets. Or you can go for an eclectic look with a shiny metal or painted cart.

Plastic bag holder

An empty rectangular



tissue box makes a convenient holder for small garbage bags, plastic grocery bags and small rags. Simply thumbtack it to the inside of a cabinet door. This will be one of your favourite kitchen storage ideas that you would want to share with friends.

Jars on jars

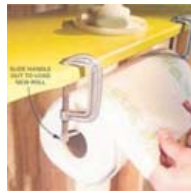
You can easily organize your dry goods by storing them inside



jars and canisters. Not only can you create uniformity in your pantry storage this way, but you can also see at a glance where your lentils, rice, or oats are stashed. Arranging these jars on display on open shelves can also give your kitchen a rustic, homestead-chic look.

C-Clamp paper towel rack

Have you ever seen such clever storage ideas? Create an in-



stant DIY paper towel dispenser in your shop with two C-clamps. Position and clamp them a roll's width apart in a convenient spot, hold up the roll and push in the handles to hold it. Buy slick-looking C-clamps and install them in the kitchen, then fib to visitors about your chic designer hardware.

Get creative with shelf storage

Even if you don't have



a separate pantry, you can incorporate these organization ideas into your kitchen. Take the wine glass storage, for example: Mount a

hanging wine rack under a cabinet to save space and prevent glasses from knocking into one another.

Turn one shelf into two

With wire shelf risers, you can multiply vertical storage space, giving you even more room to store all of your dishware. See? Just because you're short on space doesn't mean you have to compromise your love of cute mugs and dishes.



Feedback and comments:
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