



CLOCKTOWER CHRONICLE



Tour with a view

After tours of campus, students attended short seminars about academic advisement, financial aid, orientation, and other student services in the RLC Theatre. Warrior Days is designed to bring students to campus before classes begin to register, pick up textbooks, get a photo ID, and much more. Click on the image for a larger view. (Photo by ReAnne Palmer / RLC Public Information)

Financial Advisor Mooney talks value of RLC

INA, Ill. – Straight out of the mouth of a financial advisor: Rend Lake College makes “financial sense” when preparing for higher education. For graduate Karissa Mooney, it was easy to figure that out.

Mooney, originally from Mt. Vernon, is a resident of Carbondale who works at Edward Jones as a financial advisor. Specifically, she helps her clients prepare to pay for their education and retirement. Coming from Mt. Vernon Township High School in 2008 with the intention of becoming an accountant, Mooney enrolled in some of the most difficult math and science courses available to better prepare herself for a four-year university. She says that preparation, in addition to scholarships, made attending RLC the logical option.

“Going to Rend Lake College made financial sense, and I think it was meant to be,” said Mooney. “I was offered a full-ride scholarship from my high school. Rend Lake was also close to home and I didn’t want to leave Southern Illinois yet.”

With hindsight as a financial advisor, Mooney says now that she sees the benefits to community colleges like RLC. No matter where her clients live, she always suggests the community college route.

“When I talk to clients about school, I tell them not to forget

“I would encourage [students] to go to Rend Lake and use it as a stepping stone to a university. Get involved with a program or club, and if there’s not one, then start it. Rend Lake was a good place for me to start having lived and grown up in Mt. Vernon. It just makes a lot of sense.”

- Karissa Mooney, Class of 2010

about community college,” said Mooney. “A lot of people don’t realize how expensive school can be, but a community college is a good value and they give a solid foundation for general courses. I took a lot of math courses and most of them transferred after I graduated. Even the ones that didn’t still gave me a great education to take with me.”

Some of those math courses and their instructors made the biggest impact on Mooney’s education at RLC. Specifically, she recalls a physics course with Dr. Linda Denton, retired Physics and Physical Science Professor, and calculus with Kay Shaw, Developmental Math Professor.

“In the classroom, I remember Linda Denton, my physics professor, and she was a big influence on me when it comes to learning physics and differential equations,” said Mooney. “The

classes I took with her were made of mostly men who wanted to be engineers, and then me, so I used to bounce ideas off her. She always encouraged me to take difficult classes to help me figure out if accounting was what I wanted to do.”

“I also took Calculus 2 and 3 with Kay Shaw, and she really made me learn it,” added Mooney. “I really enjoyed her classes and they’ve stayed with me on my path through the business degree and concentration in finance. She and Linda Denton were both very important in my education.”

Outside of class, another RLC official makes Mooney’s list of “very important” staff. Jena Jensisik, Director of Academic Advisement, offered her the chance to be a part of something brand new at the college – something Mooney says she never thought

she’d enjoy.

“Jena was a huge influence on me in both my education and in the National Society of Leadership and Success (NSLS),” explains Mooney. “I was the first student from Rend Lake to go to Truman State University, and Jena went out of her way to research the school with me and help me get both of my associate degrees to transfer.”

“I was also the president of the National Society of Leadership and Success after Jena asked

me to help start it the first year I was on campus,” said Mooney. “NSLS is a club based around educating yourself on how to be a better leader and be successful. We held weekly meetings in the South Oasis where we talked about what the members’ goals were and what they were struggling with. There were training videos and courses we could take to help us get more information on the skills we wanted to

MOONEY..... continues on page 2



Karissa Mooney, Class of 2010

Street Rods, Race Cars to highlight August Cruise Night

MT. VERNON, Ill. (Aug. 4, 2015) — One-of-a-kind street rods and race cars will be featured at Friday’s Cruise Night, held at the Rend Lake College MarketPlace and hosted by the Kingsmen Auto Club of Mt. Vernon.

The Aug. 7 Cruise Night begins at 6 p.m. in the east parking lot, across from the RLC Golf Outlet, at the MarketPlace in Mt. Vernon. Classic and show cars of all kinds are welcome to attend; however, one participating street rod and one race car will be drawn to win a Featured Car plaque. The event is free to the public and ends at 9 p.m.

There will be prizes and a 50/50 drawing during the evening, and attendees can take advantage of free refreshments and live music.

Both participants and attendees can also make

the most of several sale opportunities at the MarketPlace during the event, including 15 percent off a purchase of \$100 or more and buy one get one half off all clothing at the RLC Golf Outlet, a free cut and style with chemical service at Studio RLC, 20 percent off regular price or 10 percent off sale prices at Shoe Stop, new sale items at BonWorth, and 10 percent off a meal at Lone Star Steakhouse.

Two more Cruise Nights are scheduled for this year, including Sept. 4, featuring GMs (Buick, Olds, and Pontiac) and Orphan Cars, and Oct. 2, featuring Chevrolets (1958 and newer) and Corvettes. Cruise Nights are held from 6 – 9 p.m. on the first Friday of every month.

To learn more about the Cruise Nights, contact Jim Hutchison at 618-244-7711 or 618-242-6279.

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Mooney

continued from page 1
 improve. For some reason, I didn't think I could get that kind of education at a community college, and have those conversations with my peers."
 And NSLS did its job. As the president, Mooney led each meeting and learned how to become a better public speaker, a skill she initially dreaded but now uses in her everyday life.
 "Being the president helped me realize that I can be a leader and serve in that lead role. Now, I take on more leadership roles without batting an eye," said Mooney. "It makes sense to me now and NSLS helped pave the way. When I used to run those meetings, I was nervous about speaking to our group, and I had a summer speech class that I didn't like, but I'm so glad I did it. Between speech class and NSLS, I now do public speaking events often. I enjoy public speaking, and I never thought I would. Being at RLC helped me break out of that fear."
 As if her time wasn't already filled, Mooney was also a member of the Phi Theta Kappa Rho Xi Chapter at RLC. In 2010, she was nominated as an All-USA student for her academic excellence and leadership and service skills both inside and outside the classroom. She was also crowned Homecoming Queen in 2010.
 After graduating from RLC with two associate degrees in art and science in 2010,

Mooney transferred to Truman State University in Kirksville, Mo., where she learned the importance of internships and decided to change her career goals.
 "I chose to go to Truman State because they are a top-notch accounting school. While I was there, I had the opportunity to interview for a lot of internships, and I received one with an accounting firm and another with Edward Jones," Mooney explained. "It was after I completed both of those that I chose to switch my accounting major to finance."
 For the next two years, Mooney would work on a business administration degree with a concentration in finance. She graduated in 2012 with a Bachelor of Science and immediately found a position at Edward Jones as a financial advisor.
 "I definitely suggest getting serious about your résumé and interviewing early in your college education. And apply to lots of internships," said Mooney. "It's the only way I would've ended up here, because I had no idea what financial advising was like. I was always told I was good at math and that I should be an accountant, so that's what I went to school for, but the lightbulb went on when I got to Edward Jones. You can't know what you love until you do it."
 As an advisor, Mooney helps individual investors reach their retirement and educational savings goals.

Working with Series 7 and 66 licenses, Mooney can sell stocks, bonds, and mutual funds to help her clients prepare for retirement, pay for education, and prepare for the unexpected. She can also help manage a client's money and plan an estate or inheritance.
 Much like with her time at RLC, Mooney also keeps up with several service and professional organizations, including the Rotary Club of Jackson and Williamson Counties Sunset, Business Networking International P.R.O.F.I.T., the Carbondale Chamber of Commerce, the Sesser Chamber, and the Christopher Area Betterment Association.
 "The Rotary is my service organization club and I'm an active member there. The Rotary was built on networking and service projects, and I'm the only financial advisor in the group because everybody brings a different set of skills to the group. We're always looking for someone new to bring different ideas in. This is the club to make my heart feel good by doing service projects in the area," said Mooney.
 She added, "The rest are professional networks, including Business Networking International, which helps generate more business for the members of the group; and three chambers, the Carbondale Chamber of Commerce, the Sesser Chamber, and the Christopher Area Betterment Association. I'm the Vice President of the Sesser Chamber and we have the main goal of helping businesses in the community. The Christopher Area Betterment Association is another group where we welcome new businesses to the area and work on local projects. I am also a part of the Ambassador Committee, which helps welcome businesses to the Carbondale area and host events for members. I really enjoy being around new people, and meeting

and helping businesses in my communities."
 With her hands in so many different activities in communities across Southern Illinois, Mooney said she and her husband don't plan on going anywhere anytime soon.
 "I plan to continue my career as a financial advisor in Carbondale for the long-term. My husband is in school, looking to go to medical school in the future, and we're staying here because we love it," said Mooney. "Carbondale has been a great place for us and we plan on being here for a long while and buying a home. I love that I can continue my career here at Edward Jones and have a flexible schedule so that, down the road, I will have time to allow me to do things in my personal life."
 For aspiring RLC or business and finance students, Mooney has many words of advice that helped her along the journey.
 "The other night, I heard a speaker give some really good advice. She said, 'Make sure you take classes that you like and might want to use down the road.' So my advice is similar," said Mooney. "Don't take easy classes just to get credits, because easy isn't the best. Take courses that will get you closer to where you want to go down the road. And at Rend Lake, take the hardest classes you can, because they just get harder."
 She added, "For someone wanting to go into business or finance, I would encourage them to go to Rend Lake and use it as a stepping stone to a university. Get involved with a program or club, and if there's not one, then start it. Rend Lake was a good place for me to start having lived and grown up in Mt. Vernon. It just makes a lot of sense."
 To learn more about Rend Lake College, visit www.rlc.edu/journey.

RLC's West elected IHLS Treasurer

INA, Ill. (Aug. 4, 2015) – Earlier this week, Sandy West, Rend Lake College Coordinator of Technical Services and Collection Management, was elected treasurer for the Illinois Heartland Library System (IHLS) for the 2016 fiscal year. She will serve as treasurer for one year, unless reelected in the future.



West was elected by the IHLS Board of Directors at their regular meeting Tuesday night. She was originally seated as an Academic Library Representative for the IHLS in June of 2014. In addition to her new position with IHLS, West also serves on the SHARE (Sharing Heartland's Available Resources Equally) Bibliographic and Cataloging Standards Committee.
 West has been employed full-time at RLC since September of 2001. She currently works in the Learning Resource Center and is responsible for collection development, cataloging, and processing materials

for circulation. West holds a Bachelor's Degree in Business and Leadership from Judson College.
 "It's an honor to be elected an officer on the IHLS Board of Directors," said West. "I look forward to working with the board and the IHLS staff to ensure the system stays fiscally sound and transparent to their members."
 Also elected as IHLS Board Officers are Leander Spearman, Director of the Belleville Public Library, as president; Sarah Isaacs of the Illinois Early Intervention Clearinghouse as vice president; and Susan Justice of the Eldorado Memorial Public Library District as secretary.

RLAY Otters swim team meeting Aug. 20

INA, Ill. (July 30, 2015) – The Rend Lake Area Youth Otters swim team will hold a parent meeting from 6 to 7:30 p.m. Thursday, Aug. 20, at the Rend Lake College Aquatics Center. The meeting is to provide information to parents who are interested in

their children joining the Otters for the upcoming season. Returning swimmers can also register and pick up packets at this meeting. For more information, contact Laura Johnston by phone at 618-437-5321, Ext. 1207 or by email at johnston@rlc.edu.

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Sudoku

	1		2	3	4	5
		6				7 2
7			4			
3			8	1		
	8					9
		7	2			6
			9			6
6	4			8		
2	5	9	3			7

Solution to Sudoku puzzle printed on page 3.

DO JUST ONE THING

DANNY SEO

Are you sending a care package or mailing a letter to a faraway destination? There's a good chance the label or envelope could get wet and cause whatever you wrote on the label to fade or wash out. Instead of using plastic tape to create a barrier to waterproof the address, reach for a white candle. When you rub the candle over the label or envelope, you create a waterproof shipping label or envelope. Plus, because you didn't use tape or a plastic pouch cover, the whole thing is still recyclable.

Invest in a tire pressure gauge to check the air pressure inside your tires. Once a month, check the pressure to make sure it

meets the suggested guideline in your car's manual. If it reads lower, use an air pump at the gas station to add air. This simple test can improve the overall average miles per gallon for your car by as much as 3 percent.

Planting trees in your yard is one of the simplest ways to add value to your home and create future energy savings, too. Since trees provide shade and shaded air is cooler, you can strategically plant trees so they provide shade wherever your air conditioning unit is. The unit draws in the cooler air, which means it uses less energy to lower the temperature and circulate air conditioning around the house. In just one year, you'll save about \$250 in electricity costs alone.

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Buttered coconut pie a throwback to Sunday dinners past

BY ALICIA ROSS

Today's recipe is a throwback to my childhood Sunday dinners, when an array of pies lined the sideboard at every family gathering. There were a few standards -- pecan, apple and sweet potato always made a showing. But that fourth pie was always something different, a surprise for the gathering that day.

I don't know why this classic Buttered Coconut Pie made an appearance only once in a while. To my young palate, it was the most decadent morsel imaginable. Of course I wanted the entire pie to myself, but as the youngest I was usually last to the dessert spread. Thank goodness I



By Alicia Ross

was one of the few coconut lovers in the family, so I was most assuredly guaranteed a huge slice.

It really is an easy pie, although many recipes garner that description these days. Basic ingredients, straightforward directions -- what more could you want? I hope you enjoy this splendid, rich and buttery result!

COCONUT PIE

Start to finish: about 45 minutes, plus cooling time

Yield: 8 servings

- 1 (9-inch) unbaked piecrust
- 1 1/2 cups sugar
- 3 large eggs
- 1/2 cup butter, softened
- 1/2 cup whole milk
- 1/3 cup cornstarch
- 2 teaspoons vanilla extract
- 1/4 teaspoon salt
- 1 (7-ounce) bag real shredded coconut (about 2 2/3 cups)

DIRECTIONS:

Preheat oven to 325 degrees. Place the piecrust in a pie plate. Crimp or trim the edges in a decorative fashion. Set aside.

In the large bowl of an electric mixer, combine the sugar and eggs and mix well. Add the butter and whip together well.

Add milk, cornstarch, vanilla and salt. Mix on low until well combined. Stir in the coconut by hand. Pour mixture into prepared piecrust and bake for 1 hour or until pie is golden-brown and set in the center. Cool on a wire rack for at least 30 minutes before slicing and serving. (Leftovers should be covered tightly and stored at room temperature for up to two days, if desired.)



Classic pie, simple recipe, divine results! (Photo by Alicia Ross for Kitchen Scoop.)

Approximate values per serving: 503 calories, 30 g fat (17 g saturated), 102 mg cholesterol, 5 g protein, 57 g carbohydrates, 3 g dietary fiber, 310 mg sodium.

(Alicia Ross is the co-author of "Desperation Diners!" (Workman, 1997), "Desperation Entertaining!" (Workman, 2002) and "Cheap. Fast. Good!" (Workman, 2006). Contact her at Kitchen Scoop, c/o Universal Uclick, 1130 Walnut St., Kansas City, MO 64106, or send email to tellus@kitchenscoop.com. Or visit the Kitchen Scoop website at www.kitchenscoop.com.)

Do you suffer from FOBO

BY JIM MULLEN

UNIVERSAL

Do you get the shakes when you haven't checked your email in the last 30 seconds?

Have you ever checked Facebook in church? In the shower? On a first date? While making love? Have you ever attended a concert where they ask you to turn off your cellphone, but you just put it on vibrate instead? Has a flight attendant ever had to tell you more than once to put away your cellphone during takeoff? Have you ever asked a stranger to call your phone to make sure it's working because you haven't gotten an alert for two minutes? Do you panic when you think you left your phone charger on your last Uber ride?

These are the dreaded warning signs of FOBO, the Fear Of Being Offline -- a syndrome that has no known cure. Then again, maybe it's perfectly normal.

Much has been written about how social media has changed young people's lives, and not for the better. We read about the bullying, the divorces and the sexting, and the talking heads wonder: Where will it all end? In the complete breakdown of society as we know it? Or just in utter chaos and confusion, a horror movie come to life?

Every new type of communication since written history began has been denounced as the end of mankind as we know it, including the writing down of history.

"Why on Earth would we possibly need written history?" I can hear ancient leaders asking their minions. "We don't need our children knowing about all the bad things we did before they were alive. Just write down the stuff that makes me look good. You know, 'His Glorious Majesty, the Greatest of the Great, blah, blah, blah...'"

Sure enough, that's about what half the Egyptian hieroglyphs say, as well as most of the monuments in today's dictatorships.

And censorship followed the written word in short order. After

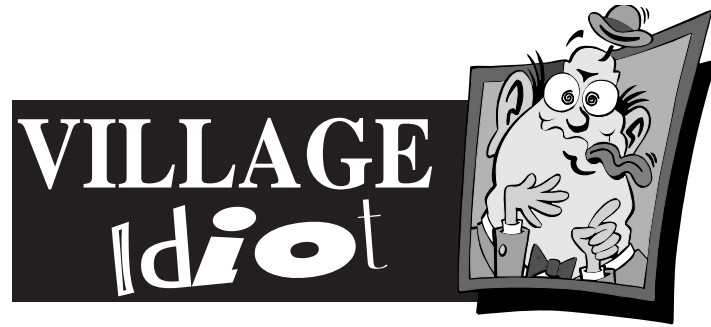
Gutenberg started printing less expensive (but still not cheap) books, banning and burning books that some leader objected to became a regular thing. People are still trying to ban books all the time, right here in the Land of Free Speech -- the American Library Association keeps a current list of them -- and yet "Fifty Shades of Grey" still tops the best-seller list.

The world may be crasser, but it has not come to an end.

When the telegraph and telephone came along, there were plenty of peo-

ple who thought those inventions were the worst things that ever happened. Most of them were check bouncers and scam artists who could no longer simply move to the next town and start over, because a telegram would beat them there. But there were many who really thought those tools would change the world for the worse.

A hundred years after the invention of the phone, most parents thought the idea of a teenager having a phone in her bedroom (the boys didn't seem to care that much), where they couldn't eavesdrop on



the call, was the silliest idea to come down the pike. The Princess phone broke that logjam forever. Now it's hard to find a child without his own phone.

And still, the world did not end.

TV has been pervasive since the early 1950s. For 65 years, people have been complaining that it's too sexy, or it glamorizes bad behaviour, or its politics are unfair. I practically make a living whining

about how bad TV is, how toxic it is, what a bad influence it is on our culture. It's so bad that I can only watch it 10 hours a day. After that, I binge-drink.

And now the slick, grown-up, all-knowing Internet has come to wreck all that has come before, to destroy all that was good and holy, to corrupt our children and steal our souls.

Or maybe it's just the latest Gutenberg.

Solution to page 2 Sudoku puzzle.

8	1	7	4	9	3	9	5	2
3	2	9	8	1	5	7	4	9
4	9	5	7	6	2	3	1	8
9	3	8	5	2	7	4	9	1
1	9	2	6	3	4	5	8	7
7	5	4	1	8	9	6	2	3
9	8	6	3	4	1	2	7	5
2	7	1	9	5	6	8	3	4
5	4	3	2	7	8	1	9	6

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A look around campus — Jason Swann, LEFT, Dean of Admissions and Enrollment Management, leads a group of students in a walking campus tour during Warrior Days Friday morning. Students on the tour could see where they will be attending classes later this month. (Photo by ReAnne Palmer / RLC Public Information)



(ABOVE) Students took a break from Warrior Days — a welcome event for freshmen — to grab a popsicle and information on tutoring last Friday on Rend Lake College's campus. RLC will hold two more Warrior Days on Aug. 7 and 15. Registration is going on now for the Fall semester, which begins Aug. 17. Walk-in registration will begin Aug. 10. (Photo by ReAnne Palmer / RLC Public Information)

RLC offers Super Saturday event Aug. 15

RLC PUBLIC INFORMATION
INA — Good news for Rend Lake College students who still have a crammed "to-do" list.

RLC's Super Saturday event from noon to 2 p.m. on Aug. 15 will allow students to speak with college staff in the school's academic advisement and testing, financial aid, student records, and the business offices. Representatives will be available to help students

take the placement test, enroll in courses, discuss financial aid, obtain a student identification card, and get a parking sticker, according to a RLC statement. The RLC Bookstore will also be open so students can purchase or rent textbooks.

Those interested in taking the placement test are encouraged to call ahead to reserve an appointment for Super Saturday, according to a RLC statement. Payment is

due at the time of registration, and those without processed financial aid will need to establish a payment plan. A nominal fee is required to set up the plan, according to a RLC statement.

All RLC offices will be closed before and after the event. Additional information is available by contacting the RLC Academic Advisement Center at 437-5321, Ext. 1266, or by sending an email to jensikj@rlc.edu.

Smart Money

BY BRUCE WILLIAMS

DEAR BRUCE: I am an 82-year-old woman whose husband died recently. I was left as the trustee of an estate that is worth approximately \$1 million, which includes real estate, a stock portfolio (that I manage quite well), bonds, CDs and personal items. My son is named executor in my will.

My lawyer has become unpleasant. At first I thought I would just change attorneys, but as I go about the business of closing my husband's accounts and making necessary ownership reassignments, vehicle registrations and so forth, I am wondering why I need an attorney at all. — E.B.

DEAR E.B.: I wish you had told me what your lawyer is being unpleasant about, but if you feel uncomfortable with him, there is no reason why you shouldn't select another attorney. I would first review my will to be certain it says exactly what I want it to say.

Do you absolutely need an attorney? Perhaps not, but even though you appear to have a good handle on things, with a million bucks at stake, I would certainly have one.

DEAR BRUCE: My mother-in-law has said that she is leaving her estate in a trust for her three children. She

lives in Florida, and my wife and I are in Massachusetts. I assume a trust is used mainly to avoid taxes, but what does it mean as far as our ability to get our third of the estate when we want it, and what does it mean for our children and me if something should happen to my wife? — B.B.

DEAR B.B.: You ask some interesting questions and I can't give you answers, other than to say it depends on what type of trust you're dealing with and what the trust allows and doesn't allow. It may be that the trust does not allow for the money to be withdrawn, period. On the other hand, there may be exceptions to the trust, or you may take money out whenever you want. As to what it means to your children if something happens to your wife, once again, that depends on what the trust calls for.

I assume you have a copy of the trust. Take it to an attorney and have it analyzed, and he/she should be able to answer all those questions without any problem. If you disagree with anything in the trust, by all means discuss it with your mother-in-law.

(Send questions to bruce@brucewilliams.com. Questions of general interest will be answered in future columns. Owing to the volume of mail, personal replies cannot be provided.)

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Keep it fresh with new fridge features

BY THE EDITORS OF CONSUMER REPORTS

UNIVERSAL



Grocery shoppers are demanding more fresh foods, and retailers are responding by making more room for produce, meats and other "perimeter foods" along the outer edges in stores, according to Consumer Reports. The freshness trend isn't only having an impact on the layout of American supermarkets; it's also influencing refrigerator design.

Take the Samsung Chef Collection RF34H9960S4 (\$6,000), a top-scoring model in Consumer Reports' tests that stands out for its special four-door configuration. The unit's bottom-right chamber can switch from freezer to refrigerator for families who would rather have more room for produce than Popsicles. "Our data show that most people are keeping that flex chamber in the refrigerator mode most of the time," says Justin Reinke, director of refrigeration product marketing at Samsung.

Another freshness-enhancing feature Con-

sumer Reports has seen more of in its labs is dual-evaporative cooling. With standard refrigerator design, the fresh-food compartment is cooled with air from the freezer. "Dual evaporators let us create two unique climates," says Michael Mattingly, a product manager for refrigeration at GE. Consumer Reports' tests confirm that refrigerators with them are better at maintaining optimal humidity in the fridge. And they also keep ice cubes from tasting like fish and other smelly foods.

Some other freshness claims are more difficult to verify. Whirlpool, for example, has been putting filters inside many of its crispers drawers. That's supposed to extend freshness up to 25 percent by absorbing the ethylene gas that certain fruits and vegetables give off, accelerating the

ripening process. Kenmore's AirTight Crisper has a special gasket and dimpled surface that the company claims will help retain moisture in produce.

Then there's the novel door-in-door compartment on several new Kenmore, LG and Samsung fridges. It lets you access beverages, condiments and the like without reaching all the way into the fridge's main compartment. In theory, that can preserve freshness by reducing temperature swings. Consumer Reports can't guarantee the claim, but the new door is definitely a cool new place to keep the ketchup.

SHOPPING TIPS

Refrigerators that maintain a uniform and consistent 37 degrees F in the fridge and 0 degrees F in the freezer will keep your food the freshest. Here's what else Consumer Reports suggests that you consider as you shop:

- **Pick the style.** Bottom

freezers keep fresh food items at eye level. Side-by-sides have narrow door swings and require more bending. Top freezers cost the least but are the least stylish. Built-in fridges sit flush with cabinets, but they're pricey and hold the least overall. Cabinet-depth French-doors and side-by-sides offer a streamlined look for less.

- **Check the specs.** If you're doing a full kitchen renovation, any size refrigerator will probably do. If not, carefully measure the height and width of the existing space, adding an extra inch or so for air circulation. Consumer Reports also recommends that you make sure the door swing won't create a problem with other appliances, neighboring cabinets or walls.

- **Choose the features.** Through-the-door ice and water dispensers are convenient, but they add to the cost, and models with that feature tend to be more repair-prone. Pullout shelves, split shelves and deep door bins help with storage. Stainless-steel is sleek, but it shows fingerprints; newer matte finishes, like slate and graphite, minimize the mess.

ASK DOCTOR K

By Anthony L. Komaroff, M.D.
UTI SYMPTOMS CAN CHANGE WITH AGE

DEAR DOCTOR K: I am a woman in my 80s. I went to my doctor because I suddenly developed back pain. It turned out to be a urinary tract infection that had spread to my kidneys. Why didn't I have any other, earlier symptoms?

DEAR READER: If you had urinary tract infections (UTIs) when you were younger, you probably remember the burning, pain and intense urge to urinate frequently. But these symptoms don't always appear in older adults.

UTIs commonly occur when bacteria from the rectum (such as *E. coli*) infect the skin around the opening of the urethra (the tube leading to the bladder). From there, the bacteria can work their way up to the bladder or kidneys. (I've put an illustration of this on my website, AskDoctorK.com.)

A sharp drop in estrogen levels after menopause encourages bacteria to grow near the urethra. This increases the tendency of older women to get UTIs.

UTIs may also occur when urine pools in the bladder. This is more often a problem in older men than in older women. For example, an enlarged prostate gland can slow the outflow of urine and cause it to build up in the bladder. In older women (and men), pooling of urine in the bladder may be caused by problems with the aging of nerves that cause the bladder to empty. Whatever the cause, pooling of urine in the bladder creates an ideal setting for bacteria to grow.

It's not clear why an older

person wouldn't experience the same symptoms as someone younger. It may be because UTI symptoms are caused by the immune system's fight against the infection. And the immune systems of older people may not fight as fiercely.

Another possibility is that conditions that affect the brain—such as stroke, Parkinson's disease and dementia—affect the brain's ability to feel or describe pain. And, just as aging nerves may make the bladder less efficient in passing urine, those nerves also may not feel pain as effectively as they once did.

UTIs produce subtle signs even when common symptoms don't occur. For example, an older person may experience confusion or agitation, fatigue and loss of appetite. Other signs may include cloudy and foul-smelling urine, abnormal urine color or blood in the urine. Back pain may be a sign that the infection has spread to the kidneys.

UTIs should be treated with antibiotics. Left untreated, a UTI may spread to the kidneys and then cause a potentially fatal infection in the bloodstream.

To reduce your chances of developing another UTI, drink more fluids, which help wash away bacteria. Also, empty your bladder as soon as you have an urge to do so. You should also empty your bladder after sex, to flush out bacteria.

If you have frequent UTIs, consider using a vaginal estrogen cream. The estrogen will help discourage the growth of bacteria near the urethra. A low dose of certain antibiotics, taken every day for several months, can also help prevent future UTIs.



The Samsung Chef Collection RF34H9960S4, a top-scoring model in Consumer Reports' tests, stands out for its special four-door configuration. (Photo courtesy of Consumer Reports)

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