

# Outlook on Lifestyle

## Clever ways to use plastic foam trays

By Polly Fisher

**DEAR POLLY** — I have many uses for the plastic foam trays that come under meats and bakery products.

For example, I use them for warming food or baking potatoes in the microwave. To cook bacon in the micro-

### POLLY'S POINTERS



POLLY FISHER

wave, I place folded napkins in the bottom of the tray, put the bacon on top, then cover it with a paper towel. There's no grease to clean up.

Also these trays are nice to put baked goods on. The packages look nice covered with plastic wrap, and there's no pan or dish for the recipient to return.

I also use them for freezing food wrapped with foil. The food doesn't get crushed easily when placed on the trays first.

They're also nice to put under fruit baskets or food that might drip when stored in the refrigerator. —

MARGERY

**DEAR MARGERY** — You win the prize for sending in the most helpful hints using these plastic foam trays in one letter! Your helpful pointers earn you the Pointer of the Week award, a copy of my book "Polly's Pointers: 1,081 Helpful Hints for Making Everything Last Longer." Others may order it for \$6.50. Make your check payable to POLLY'S POINTERS and send to POLLY'S POINTERS, P.O. Box 93863, Cleveland, OH 44101-5863.

— POLLY

**DEAR POLLY** — Vinyl changing pads made for babies are nice to sit on at football games (rainy season — wet seats!).

And here's a quick recipe for French pancakes: Combine ¼ cup fine dry bread crumbs, 1 egg, ¼ teaspoon vanilla or maple extract and 1 tablespoon milk in a blender. Whip till smooth. Cook as for pancakes. — M.J.H.

**DEAR POLLY** — If you have a problem with rust stains in your toilet bowl, put ¼ cup of chlorine bleach in the tank once a week. — A FRIEND

*Polly will send you a Polly Dollar (\$1) if she uses your favorite Pointer, Peave or Problem in her column. Write POLLY'S POINTERS in care of this newspaper.*

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The Halton Hills Library and Cultural Centre gallery is hosting an exhibit of photographs and paintings by Georgetown artists Tom and Ruth Gibson. The show, which features some of Mr. Gibson's best photographic prints and selected water colors and oils by Mrs. Gibson, runs until Dec. 11. Mr. Gibson specializes in landscape

photography and several of his prints on display were shot in the Maritimes and in the Rocky Mountains. Mrs. Gibson is showing several floral display water colors as well as an array of oil paintings depicting outdoor scenes.

## Beware doctors who recycle patients

By Peter H. Gott, M.D.

Dr. Ethan Mergatroyd, the consummate dermatologist, was increasingly inclined to offer unsolicited advice to the Almighty. Often — in his fashionably lavish, southern California office suite — he acted as though he had an 800 number to God. This hubris, however, simply reflected another attribute: He had succeeded, where other M.D.s had failed, in beating the system.

After years of trial-and-error schemes, he had finally hit on a sure-fire method to milk his herd of patients and, at the same time, bilk private insurance companies and Medicare.

He had taken his cue from the Japanese automobile manufacturers, whose values of productivity and volume he embraced with the single-minded enthusiasm of a Trappist. Most especially, the volume.

After struggling to build his practice for several years, during which he had dutifully assigned each patient a 15-minute time slot and charged accordingly, Mergatroyd realized that he would never become rich following mainstream medicine. Rather, with a little maneuvering and some creative appointment scheduling, he saw that he could see three — maybe four — patients in 15 minutes.

Because third-party payers shell out according to office-call units, not time spent, the doctor discovered that he could triple or quadruple his income by merely spending less time with each patient — and still charge the full fee.

The only problem: how to coerce more cases into the office. The solu-

tion came to him after little, if any, thought: Recycle the patients he already had.

Here is a synopsis of how the Mergatroyd Method works.

Visit No. 1: Middle-aged man with small skin cancer on upper lip. Brief

### DR. GOTT



PETER GOTT, M.D.

examination. Mergatroyd properly concludes that the lesion should be removed. Most doctors would remove the cancer then and there, and see the patient for a follow-up. This is not our hero's style, however. Patient told to return next week. Initial evaluation: \$100.

Visit No. 2: Patient presented with written consent form for surgery. Expected to read the document and sign it before leaving the premises. No examination. Appointment scheduled for next week. Office visit: \$75.

Visit No. 3: The operation. Cancer excised under local anesthesia and sent to "lab" for analysis. Patient not allowed out of examining room until surgical fee is paid by cash or check. Patient instructed to return next week. Removal of skin cancer: \$500. Anesthesia service (Mergatroyd): \$100.

Visit No. 4: Removal of two (2) sutures. Wound healing well. Patient to return in two weeks. Suture removal

and extended post-operative care: \$200. Lab fee (Mergatroyd): \$300.

Visit No. 5: Wound healed. No new skin cancers. Patient to be followed every four months. Post-operative care: \$100.

Visit No. 6 and ad infinitum: \$75 per office call, until the cycle of new skin cancers repeats itself.

Bingo. A \$300 skin cancer removal that could have been taken care of in 15 minutes burgeons into a \$1,450 expense with no end in sight. Insurance or Medicare pays these ballooned-up charges without a blink. By repeatedly using this imaginative fandango to perfection, Mergatroyd can easily afford to drive and maintain his new Dino Ferrari.

The patient is terrified and intimidated by the term "skin cancer." He doesn't care how much the treatment costs or who else pays for it, he just wants the cancer gone.

But you and I, fellow consumers of medical care, are paying for it through bloated taxes and inflated insurance premiums. The system is greased by this legal larceny, and woe betide any physician who squawks that the system needs renovation.

The answer: an informed public that will demand responsibility through fiscal restraint and common sense.

P.S. The Mergatroyd story is true. Only the name has been changed to protect the gullible.

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## fabric forum

Prepared by the International Fabricare Institute (IFI), the association of professional drycleaners & laundromats

### As Smooth As...

Velvet is an evenly napped fabric that can be made from a variety of fibers. The deeper and denser the pile, the more luxurious the fabric. True velvet is woven with extra yarn inserted to create the pile. Flocked velvet is created by adhering fibers to the face of the fabric. This is a less durable construction, because the pile wears off more readily.

Velvets usually require drycleaning. Because of the deep colors, all matching items should be cleaned at the

same time. Velvet should be finished very carefully and gently. Store velvets on hangers rather than folded, with space around them to keep the pile lofty.



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