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# CLASSIC INTERIORS FURNITURE

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## Computer is handy, but has its limits

I made a little note on this day and tucked it away for the children to open long after I am gone. It says, "Jan. 24, 2002, Joe gets into this computer." What it doesn't say is how interesting all of this is. Here it is, 1:30 in the morning and I've been fooling around with this thing since 10 in the evening.

All I can say at this point is that this is one heck of an appliance. Valente taught me how to get into it and how to do searches on the subject of major appliances. While getting to that point I notice a caption that says something about men looking for women. I wouldn't open that in a million years for fear of someone out there recognizing who I am.

Can you imagine the embarrassment of talking about sex on a computer and getting caught at it. Anyways folks, I finally got to the appliance section, and I'm amazed at how much there is on the subject of appliances. There is some really good information that can teach a lot to even a novice.

Another important thing that jumped out at me are the phone numbers given out by some expert technicians, or so they say they are. These phone numbers will allow you to ask a question about a product and spend a certain amount of time talking and get-

### APPLIANCE DOCTOR



JOE GAGNON

something like that. I guess I can't blame anybody for trying to make a buck but now I'm feeling sorry for myself. I spent 20 years in business giving out do-it-yourself information for free and even went through a Harry Truman experience.

I'm thinking that if I spent the next 10 years on this computer doing what they do at \$13 per 15 minutes, I could come out with a nice little pile. That's 40 hours per week times 50 weeks times \$2080 per week equals \$104,000 per year. WOW, that's big bucks.

Now I know what people mean when they tell me to get with the program, Joe, these computers are the way of the future. To be honest, I'm learning, but it doesn't

ting the solution to your problem. It tells you to get out your charge card because this time they spend with you on the phone will be billed to your account.

An example is something like \$13 for 15 minutes or

mean I have to fall in love with it. It doesn't have the sound of a human voice when I ask a question about why my refrigerator doesn't cool. It doesn't give me a street address where I can visit a business owner to either complain or compliment his or her business. It gives me a sense of impersonality. When I'm talking to someone and in the real business world, I don't do business with someone who is not warm to me. I'm so touchy that I even throw out those envelopes I get in the mail with a bunch of discount coupons inside. The reason is simple: half of them don't have a street address on them and a whole bunch of toll free numbers. Who are those guys?

Yes, I'm learning to use my computer and I have enjoyed what I do with it. I write this column and a few books and prepare for the radio show and if I didn't have it, I'd use a typewriter. Now for business reasons, I have no choice but to expand my horizon of communications, but I must assure you that I won't be charging you \$13 for a phone call. Stay tuned.

Joe Gagnon can be heard Saturday and Sunday on 760 WJ.R. He is a member and past president of the society of Consumer Affairs Professionals. His phone number is (313) 873-9789.

## Fight the cold bug with some tender loving care

Don't let the mild winter fool you and your family. Colds are running rampant. When one of the nasty little bugs zaps someone in your household, get right down to the ABC's of nursing more than a sneeze. Fight back with a lot of tender loving care.

Stock up on cold remedies. You keep first aid supplies in stock in the event of such incidents as cuts, scrapes and burns. So why not keep cold remedies in stock in the event someone in your family comes down with a cold or the flu? It's far more reassuring to treat a fever, aches, a cough or a stuffy nose at the first sign of symptoms than it is to wait until you can drive to a store or pharmacy to purchase items such as pain relievers, decongestants, a thermometer or a vaporizer.

Put a welcome smile in your kitchen. Keep a few comfort items in your cupboard, pantry and refrigerator to help put a smile on someone's face when you think he or she really needs it. Consider favorite juices, ice cream, Popsicles, crackers, candy, and chicken soup as starting points.

You might also want to consider replenishing some stay-at-home favorites. Think about what simple, yet comforting, forms of entertainment you can keep within arms reach for the time when a cold medicine just isn't enough to help cure a nasty cold or virus. Is your deck of playing cards complete? Will your young child take comfort in the touch of a small, plush, stuffed animal? Does your spouse enjoy working on a puzzle, a crossword puzzle or a word search to take his or her mind off ails? Slip a little something in for yourself — a book or a new journal — while you are stocking up in the event you catch a cold or flu bug. Your cold care nurturing might be all your responsibility if everyone

### CELEBRATING FAMILY



LISA LUCKOW-HEALY

No good doctor should question your concern for yourself or your child, even if the diagnosis is a common cold. It's better to be safe than sorry by having symptoms checked out. Peace of mind is good medicine.

Cure the cold blues with creature comforts. Make your child or spouse feel as comfortable as possible under the circumstances. Assuming your cold remedy cupboards are fully stocked and you and your "patient" are heeding your doctor's advice, go beyond the limits of basic comfort with special touches to help get through the rough spots.

Read a good book to your child or spouse, or listen to an audio book. Listening to the plot of an exciting story will help transport your sick loved one into another world away from the discomforts on his or her mind.

Have fun with simple games like Tic Tac Toe, Hangman, and connect the dots. The more energetic "patient" might enjoy some of his or her favorite board games that require a little more effort and strategizing.

Watch family movies. Transport yourselves back in time to nostalgia, laughter and good cheer. Your child might find it intriguing to watch your wedding

video and comment on the way things were "back then."

Open up family albums and wade through pictures that find themselves generating stories your child has never heard, or likes to hear over and over again. Steer your recovering patient toward a favorite hobby you've both been meaning to start. Assemble a model car. Make a beaded bracelet. Work on an upcoming holiday project (i.e. make Valentine's Day cards).

Full out toys your child may have forgotten about because they were hidden in the back of a closet. Sort through toy cars or action figures, dress Barbie dolls, or build with Legos.

If your patient is up to it, give him or her a back or foot massage. Treat your daughter to a manicure. Cuddle up together under a blanket and enjoy a roaring fire. Fluff up the pillows. Have your patient sit back, relax and enjoy the sounds of his or her favorite music.

Open mail together. Talk about interesting stories in the newspaper or a new magazine. Provide your loved one with some writing tools and encourage him or her to write a letter to a long distance friend or relative. Remember yourself when the cold bug bites. Keep this list in a place where you can hand it off to your spouse when you need tender loving care. Add a few of your own favorites to it. In doing so, you will avoid the frustrations that set in when you are under the weather and assume everybody knows your wants and needs... but they don't because you haven't told them, which makes you feel even worse.

To leave Lisa Luckow-Healy a message from a touch-tone phone about how you celebrate family, call (734) 953-2047; or e-mail your suggestions for future family top-

### PLUMBING TIPS DO YOU RUN OUT OF HOT WATER?



JEFFREY MOSS

Are you always running out of hot water when you take a shower? Does your family have to wait until your water heater recovers to take another shower? Let me introduce you to the newest water heater on the market today. It is called the Takagi Instantaneous water heater.

The Takagi Instantaneous water heater delivers nearly 7 gallons of hot water continuously, enough to shower and still fill the washing machine or run the dishwasher. No more waiting until the water heater recovers to take a shower.

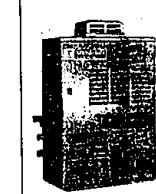
The tankless design and computerized temperature control insure the unit will provide an endless supply of hot water at the desired temperature. The electronic ignition feature means that gas is consumed only when hot water is not in use.

Features:

- Endless hot water

- Space saving
- Highly energy efficient saves money
- Made using the best quality materials for durability and long life

For more information, please contact your licensed plumbing contractor or Advance Plumbing Supply Company at 248-669-7474.



Jeffrey Moss is vice-president of Advance Plumbing Supply Co.

in Walled Lake and Detroit.

Call (800) 560-7474

or write to:

Have a plumbing question?

Write to Jeffrey at

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