

**Zippy's day**  
*By Don Downing*

I recently discovered a snapshot my mother took nearly 75 years ago, and the photo allowed me to relive many memories of my childhood.

We lived in the Presbyterian parsonage with our mother and dad. It was a beautiful, white, two-story house with plenty of room for playing with our friends. I was 5 years old and my brother was 3.

Fond memories of that special place still come to mind, like the time I was sick on Christmas Eve. Santa Claus came to our house from the church next door. I was afraid and hid behind a big living room chair.

Almost every night before bed, mother would read us Bible stories. One night, as she read and showed us a picture of Jesus, I could not concentrate on the story. I said to my mother, "Did Jesus have to wear long-handled underwear?" We laughed about that for years.

These are vivid memories that I hope will be passed on to my children. But the story of Zippy's funeral was the only one recorded with a photograph. And as I looked at the faces in the photo, I could see sorrow and unhappiness.

Zippy was an enthusiastic little brown, black, and white fox terrier puppy. We loved him, and all the kids in the neighborhood loved him. He would run and play with us in the big yard around our house.

One night, he did not come home. The next morning, my dad told us that he had searched everywhere and could not find him. We joined our mother and dad, calling out for our beloved pup. Later that day, Dad found him. He told us that Zippy had been poisoned and was found lying under the front porch of the Baptist church, just down the street.

We cried, my cousin cried, and all our friends cried. My Grandpa Downing dug a grave in the back yard. Mother found a nice box that we used as a coffin. Sixteen children came to Zippy's funeral. We all walked to the grave. My brother, Bob, pulled Zippy in our little red wagon.

According to my mother, "The children only knew a table prayer, and they all recited that prayer."

Grandpa carefully lowered him into his grave.

Following the graveside service, mother served cookies and candy in our nice warm house. This helped all of us say goodbye to Zippy.

*Don Downing lives in Prairie Village.*

**SOY**  
**The joys and benefits of an ancient, healthful food**  
*By Dorri Alexander*

No doubt you've sprinkled a tasty, dark fermented liquid on top of your Chinese food. You may even have a bottle of soy sauce in your kitchen cupboard, proof that soy products are increasingly part of our American lives.

While Asian cultures have long used their "little honorable plant" as part of a meatless and milkless diet, food shortages during World War II greatly increased the importance of the soybean and its recognition as a food in the Western world.

Today, the soybean is the most widely grown and used legume in the world. While legumes—the bean and nut family—are a good source of protein, the soybean

alone has more protein than beef and more calcium than dairy milk, and is low in cholesterol and saturated fat.

Does this mean you can simply use more soy sauce to improve your diet? Actually, no. The sodium content in one tablespoon of soy sauce, 910 mg., erases any health benefits.

While soy sauce tends to give processed soy products a bad name, the soybean is the most well-researched, health-promoting food product available. The Food and Drug Administration recommends four servings a day of 6.25 grams of soy protein, for a daily total of 25 grams.

Under their Japanese name, edamame, whole soybeans are available either fresh or frozen. Their simple preparation involves steaming the pods in hot water, then popping out the beans. They can be eaten as a snack or added to soups and stews. Eating the whole bean is the best way to get all the nutrients that soybeans provide, as well as their dietary fiber.

Soybeans are increasingly used as a main ingredient in processed food products. Often marketed to those who are lactose-intolerant or vegetarian, soy-based foods can be consumed by anyone looking for more healthful eating.

Processing soybeans to create other nutritious food products began in China centuries ago. Traditional soy products include tofu, tempeh, and miso. Miso is fermented bean paste used as a flavoring in Japanese dishes; like soy sauce, its nutritional value is nonexistent. But tempeh (an Indonesian fermented bean cake) and tofu (a Chinese bean curd with a Japanese name) have long been known to provide as much protein and calcium as animal meats and cheeses.

Unless you're an adventurous eater who likes to frequent Asian markets and restaurants, it's unlikely that you'll add tofu or tempeh to your diet. But these products and their manufacture have opened the door for a gamut of soy-based products designed more for American tastes. Soy milk, for example, has only been mass-marketed in the past decade, but it has been around for centuries and is the main ingredient in tofu.

In addition to its use as a dairy milk alternative, soy milk is the base for a whole range of non-dairy "dairy" products, such as cheese, butter, cream, sour cream, cream cheese, pudding, and frozen desserts. Soy milk is available in original, vanilla, and chocolate flavors and can be substituted for cow's milk in recipes. Soy cheeses are available in many popular flavors, such as cheddar and mozzarella, and many styles, including shredded, sliced, and block. These cheeses may melt differently because they lack casein, which occurs naturally in cow's milk.

Just as the creation of tofu has segued into alternative dairy products, the Indonesian tempeh has inspired a new range of meat alternatives. Shoppers can find beef- or sausage-flavored crumbles, deli meats, burger patties, hot dogs, chicken-flavored patties and nuggets, and bacon-like strips, all created from textured soy flour or concentrates.

Read the nutrition labels to be sure, but these meat alternatives are generally high in protein, B vitamins, and iron, and low in fat. Be aware that these products may be high in sodium from the additional flavorings added to simulate the taste of meat.

The only major drawback to adding soy food products to your diet could be that soy is included in the "big eight" of known food allergens. Under the Food Allergen Labeling and Consumer Protection Act, all foods that have soy listed as an ingredient must carry the additional warning, "Contains soy." In fact, however, a severe reaction to soy protein is rare; those who must avoid peanuts usually have no reaction to soy-based foods.

The versatile soybean continues to find its way into new food products—not just as a bean, but as a grain, oil, starch, milk, and textured protein. For more information about soy products and nutrients, visit:

[www.soyfoods.com](http://www.soyfoods.com)  
[www.soyfoods.org](http://www.soyfoods.org)  
[www.soynutrition.com](http://www.soynutrition.com)

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### **A young girl's fancy** *By Jane Perry*

When I was young, Santa brought me a doll every Christmas. Nothing was more exciting than opening that special present every year.

I loved my first doll for her soft, cuddly body. We would snuggle while I held her, wrapped in a flannel blanket; she fit perfectly in my arms.

The following Christmas, my new doll came with a bottle and diapers. Suddenly I was responsible not only for snuggling but also for feeding and diapering. Could I manage these new responsibilities? She was my first doll to have hair that wasn't painted on. I would run my hand over the tiny brown curls that covered her head, enjoying the feel of the springy bumps. I named her Edith, for the kind nurse in our doctor's office whose smile always reassured me.

One year Santa brought me "Amosandra," just as I had requested. I'd seen her in the toy department at the local hardware store and heard her advertised on the Amos 'n' Andy radio show. She was dark skinned, with a dimpled smile and the prettiest bright-pink layette you've ever seen.

By the time I was in first or second grade, I began yearning for bigger dolls in frilly dresses. I found the perfect doll—a bride doll—in the glass case at that same hardware store. She was graced in a white satin gown edged with lace and a matching veil, and her beauty was enhanced by her eyes, which opened and shut. She was stunning. I promptly named her June, for the month of weddings.

It wasn't long before our father realized that my older sister and I needed a place for this growing family of dolls. He cleaned out a small room in the basement and built play furniture for us from peach and apple crates. He created a tall cupboard with doors on the bottom for dishes and open shelves above with little hooks to hold our teacups. He painted four black burners on the top of the white stove, put knobs on the front, and made an oven door that opened for our baking. A small table covered with blue oilcloth and two matching chairs, plus a high chair for dolls, completed the kitchen. In one corner were identical doll beds, where our babies napped. The room was perfect.

Once or twice each summer, we were allowed to take our dolls and their beds outside to the back yard. Moving day was exhilarating. We would gather up the dolls, blankets, clothes, and baby bottles and carry everything from the basement to a blanket spread under the shade trees. It took many trips, but we were excited about our new place to play. Sitting outside under an apple tree with all our dolls on a sky-blue summer day. What could be better?

After feeding the babies, we would take them for a walk. We'd cram them into our doll buggies and push them in big circles around the cement driveway until, I'm sure,

they were as dizzy as we were. Then we unloaded the buggies and carefully placed each doll on the blanket for nap time.

Crickets chirped, doves cooed, breezes sighed.  
And the dolls slept.

*Jane Perry writes from her home in Olathe.*

### **The rewards of hospital volunteering**

*By Nancy Julien Kopp*

Every hospital has a corps of hard workers. Nurses, doctors, lab technicians, dietitians, physical therapists, occupational therapists, social workers, food service workers, engineers, clerks, and housekeepers are all salaried employees. But let's add one more category: hospital volunteers, who don't receive a paycheck. Not a dime!

I've been a hospital volunteer for nearly 30 years. I've never been able to cash my rewards or put them in the bank, but I've definitely collected them.

I earned most of my volunteer hours in the hospital gift shop. I've also staffed the information desk and served as a floor aide, doing small things that help patients through difficult days. I've delivered flowers and mail, freshened water pitchers, and helped new moms fill out birth certificate forms. I've listened to patients who were lonely or worried. I've done a myriad small jobs that nurses don't have time to do, and I've felt appreciated by patients and staff alike.

I've learned to be a good listener. People come to the hospital gift shop to browse and pass the time while they wait for someone in surgery, for a baby to make an appearance, or for a person having tests. Often they're worried, or so excited that they can't concentrate. Whatever is on their mind pours out before we've barely said hello. Somehow, a volunteer wearing the hospital auxiliary smock and a smile reassures them, and they share both joys and sorrows.

When asked, "Which of these flower arrangements would you choose?" I give an honest opinion, and sometimes I'll suggest other items. Occasionally I offer sympathy to a grieving person. Reaching the happy medium between ignoring someone's plight and being too consoling is not always easy, but volunteers find a comfort zone as they become seasoned workers.

I've gotten to know hospital employees when the aroma of the cookies we bake lures them to the gift shop to pick up snacks and drinks. They like to look around the shop at new merchandise. Busy staff members also come to our shop to do last-minute hunting for a gift. "Best gift shop around," said one. Another told her friend, "I like to shop here. They have great stuff, nice people to help, and the profits go back to the hospital."

Retired people are highly qualified to become hospital volunteers. They have time, and a life's worth of varied experience. Besides that, patients and visitors appear to have confidence in the seniors who help them.

When I talk to fellow seniors about hospital volunteering, some show reluctance. They don't want to be tied down, don't want a weekly commitment. But guess what? A volunteer can take time off as often as he or she likes. There are substitute hospital volunteers to fill in when needed.

Someone asked me once why I gave so much time to the hospital when I received nothing in return.

"That's where you're wrong," I answered. "I receive the satisfaction of knowing I've made someone's day a little easier. I like listening to the stories customers share with me. I enjoy being an ambassador for my hospital, and it's a way I can give back to my community."

I've reaped a great many tax-free rewards.  
Call a hospital near you and ask for the director of volunteer services. You'll be glad you did.

*Nancy Julien Kopp is a senior and a freelance writer who lives in Manhattan, Kan.*

### **Light for aging eyes**

Lighting can be your eyes' best friend as you age.

All of us experience changes in our eyesight as we age. For many, the eye changes mean buying glasses to read a menu, newspaper, or other small print. Changing the lighting in your surroundings can also go a long way to enhance reading ability and increase comfort.

"Often, the first thing people notice as they get older is their loss of ability to see distance," notes Terry McGowan, director of engineering and technology for the American Lighting Association. "That happens around age 45, and is called presbyopia. By 60, most people have a 'fixed focus' optical system and need glasses. After age 60, eye and visual system changes accelerate, so less light reaches the eye. Therefore, people need more light to see details as they age."

Basically, the following changes are occurring:

- Reduced visual acuity (inability to see small details);
- Reduced contrast sensitivity (harder to see differences between light and dark objects and surfaces);
- Reduced color discrimination;
- A longer time required to adapt to large and sudden differences in brightness; and
- Increased sensitivity to glare.

Paul Eusterbrock, a lighting manufacturer who has championed lighting developments and products to help aging eyes, agrees.

"The main issue is the quality of light," he says. "Research shows that a 60-year-old needs twice as much light as a 30-year-old. Most of the commonly found lighting guidelines are written with the 30-year-old user in mind."

Eye fatigue during the day is another side effect.

"Because the eye loses the ability to accommodate, the muscles of the eye have to work harder," McGowan says.

Eyes get tired faster, especially when performing difficult visual tasks such as driving at night or reading fine print. The solution is to make seeing easier. That means large-print books, reducing glare, setting up special lighting for task areas, and having regular eye exams to catch problems promptly.

According to McGowan, having a few table lamps turned on while watching TV can help reduce the contrast that occurs between the bright screen and the surrounding darkness of the room. He recommends a torchiere that provides an upward-directed light as well downward illumination for versatility. This could be accomplished with a style that has a separate task light attached or by a torchiere with a glass bowl at the top that will bring some light downward.

"It is one of the cheapest and best ways to light a room for someone with aging eyes," McGowan adds.

Is there a magic lightbulb that will work for everyone? McGowan and Eusterbrock say no.

“Individual vision varies so much—especially as people age—that it’s difficult to develop lighting recipes that are one-size-fits-all,” McGowan says.

It is indeed a matter of preference, agrees Eusterbrock.

“There are fluorescents, halogens, and even LED bulbs bright enough for reading tasks,” he says. “What’s most important is to have light that you can direct, such as a pivoting or adjustable head on a task lamp. Designs with a reflector inside the head are even more effective for focusing the light where you need it.”

McGowan recommends that older homeowners provide for light-level adjustments through use of dimmers, so they can match the lighting levels to the tasks at hand. Dimmers are ideal in the bathroom to add a bit of illumination to navigate during the night, and to make it easier to get up on dark mornings without blinding glare.

“A dimmed incandescent bulb does not emit blue wavelengths of light that can upset circadian rhythms, which is another ‘healthy lighting’ consideration,” McGowan says.

The basic rules of good lighting: Have sufficient illumination, with little or no glare, and use diffused lighting to minimize shadows. If energy savings is a concern, select compact fluorescent lights and LED bulbs with warm tones (look for 2,700–3,000K on the box) and a color-rendering index of 90 or more.

McGowan and Eusterbrock advise consulting with a professional who can tailor a lighting selection to meet your specific needs. That’s most easily done in a lighting showroom run by an American Lighting Association member. To find a store near you, visit [www.americanlightingassoc.com](http://www.americanlightingassoc.com).

### **Mr. Fixter**

*By Joyce A. Brown*

“Spring showers bring May flowers. Bah! Spring rains are real pains, I say.” Every year at this time, Mr. Fixter vowed to quit. To retire.

“I’m getting older—into my eighth decade,” he always thought. “I don’t need to be dealing with flooded basements and water-logged landscaping anymore.”

“Mr. Fixter” wasn’t his real name. For the first year of the 26 years he’d held his retirement job as superintendent of the Arrowhead Creek Apartments, he’d been just Robert Brown, Super. That was until everyone found out that he could fix almost anything. From then on, Mr. Fixter it was.

Fine with him. But every spring the rains came, and the apartment building was built so close to the creek.

“What was that developer guy thinking?” Mr. Fixter grumbled to himself.

He flipped on the basement light switch and carefully descended the steps wearing his rubber snow boots and carrying a squeegee. Mr. Fixter was ready. He’d finally gone to bed at midnight last night after trying unsuccessfully for hours to keep up with the backed-up drains and overpowered sump pumps. Then it continued to rain all night.

At the bottom step, the water came almost to the top of Mr. Fixter’s boot.

“Confound it, the water is knee-deep down here,” he yelled aloud.

No worse expletive ever escaped Mr. Fixter’s lips. Many innocent children lived in the apartment building.

"I'd have to get me a pair of hip boots to get to my tool room down here," he thought. "Maybe I'll go to Cabela's and buy those boots the fly fishermen use. Then I'll learn a hobby so I can retire."

He raised his foot and shook it to flick the water off the boot.

"Hmmm. Bob Brown, Fledgling Fly Fisherman."

He pretended to cast a line into the flooded basement with his squeegee pole.

"Better than Bob Brown, Bad Bowler. Or Robert Brown, Shiftless Shuffleboard Player."

Mr. Fixter grinned to himself as he left the basement and sloshed his way through the spongy yard to see what damage the flood had done to his grounds. The mud sucked his boots almost off his feet as he neared the ruined flower beds close to the creek.

"Bob Brown is boring," he thought as he mentally planned the basement clean-up and repairs he would begin as soon as the water receded. "Mr. Fixter is a name that means something."

*Joyce Brown lives in Leawood.*

### ***Daughters' Day: A conversation with a father-author***

*By Maril Crabtree*

During a recent visit, Graham Porter's Prairie Village house was full of balloons. He had two reasons to celebrate. First, he had just saluted a birthday, his 94th. Second, he had published a new book this past year, at the age of 93.

*Daughters' Day: A Father's Memories of Tender Moments* is a compilation of earlier writings, journal entries, reflections, and notes from Porter's years of parenting four daughters, now ranging in age from 50 to 61.

"I write about all sorts of things we did together as a family," Porter said. "A parent would be wise to make notes as things happen—but of course there's usually no time for that."

Time has always been a precious commodity for Porter. His creative career began in earnest when he retired from banking and devoted himself to writing, photography, and painting. In years past he contributed regularly to *Reader's Digest* and authored a national bestseller, *Small Wonder*, as well as several other books, including *Lochinvar*, chosen by *The Chicago Tribune* as the Best Humor Book of the Year. He traveled extensively and turned to photography as a way to capture his memories visually, ultimately perfecting a technique to turn his photographs into paintings with a distinctive impressionistic look.

But what gave him perhaps the most pride of all was being the father of four daughters.

"I don't think any father is as lucky as I've been," he said.

His book underlines the fact that "Boys are fun, but only the father of girls can unashamedly open the floodgates of his heart as often and as liberally as he pleases."

For the past 20 years, since the death of his wife, Mary (the girls' mother), Porter and his daughters have gathered each year for what came to be known as "Daughters' Day." Only one daughter lives in the area, in nearby Fairway. The others live in Maryland, Colorado, and California. But they have made it a point to reunite with their father and each other at least once a year. They look forward to it as a time when they can share their lives and relive some of their best moments as a family, "in joyful celebration of a half century of happy connection," as Porter writes in his book's introduction.

Porter's face beamed as he explained why he worked so hard to complete the book and see it published: He wanted it to be a tribute to his daughters, as well as an inspiration for parents everywhere.

Too often, Porter believes, dads are disappointed if they don't have a son to carry on the family name. His book makes it clear that, by the birth of his fourth daughter, six years after the third, "Wishing for a son had become only my public façade. Serving as father to little girls was now not only my stock in trade, but my full time happiness."

Porter finds it relaxing to write. Since he finds writing by hand physically difficult, he dictates his notes and other thoughts into a recorder and has them transcribed. He encourages others to collect notes and family memorabilia, and write a little each day.

In addition to his book, one of his paintings—based on a photograph of his two oldest daughters when they were children—was printed in the national AARP Calendar for 2011, and a song (he composed both the music and lyrics) was recently sung by a soloist at his church.

"It has been a productive year," Porter said.

What projects are under way for next year?

"I'm going to focus more on the visual," he said. "It's been awhile since I've had a showing of my art work. I'm looking forward to that."

He also looks forward, of course, to celebrating another Daughters' Day.

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Graham Porter's book *Daughters' Day: A Father's Memories of Tender Moments* (\$10.50, paperback) may be ordered from local bookstores or online from [www.Amazon.com](http://www.Amazon.com).

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