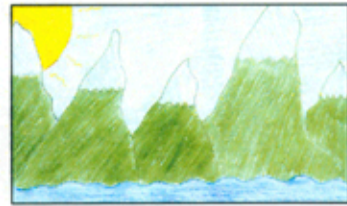


Today's weather picture by Ashlea Luong Nguyen, 9, Vancouver, Ilalhee Elementary School



FRIDAY, AUGUST 4, 2006

Online medical advice: Be careful

By LISA ROBERTS
The Orlando Sentinel

Are you looking for a cure for what ails you? According to a recent survey, almost 80 percent of Internet users search for health or medical information.

There are millions of sites offering advice on everything from treating abrasions to getting rid of warts. Unfortunately, erroneous advice is rampant, and some of it is tailored specifically to sway consumers toward a particular product.

"The problem with the Internet is there is good information and bad information, and to the uneducated eye, it's hard to tell the difference," says Dr. Alan Keck, president of the Florida Psychological Association.

Keck recommends asking your health-care professional for advice on where to find information pertinent to your illness or condition. "Look for something that's an official site of an organized group of professionals, as opposed to a 'Dr. Schmooze I-Know-Everything' Web site," Keck says.

The sites of licensed health-care professionals frequently link to such areas, which often have suffixes of .gov and .org, Keck says. The Centers for Disease Control's site, www.cdc.gov, offers a wealth of information on such topics as diseases, obesity, workplace safety, vaccines and birth defects.

Consumers should carefully scrutinize the sources and evidence behind medical advice on the Web, says Leigh McKinney, director of online publishing for the American Academy of Family Physicians. "And always, always talk to a physician about what you read online before you make some change, start a new diet or (take) an herbal remedy," she says.

The organization's home page (familydoctor.org) guides users to advice on such topics as flu shots, smoking cessation and pregnancy, as well as primers on insurance and choosing a general practitioner.

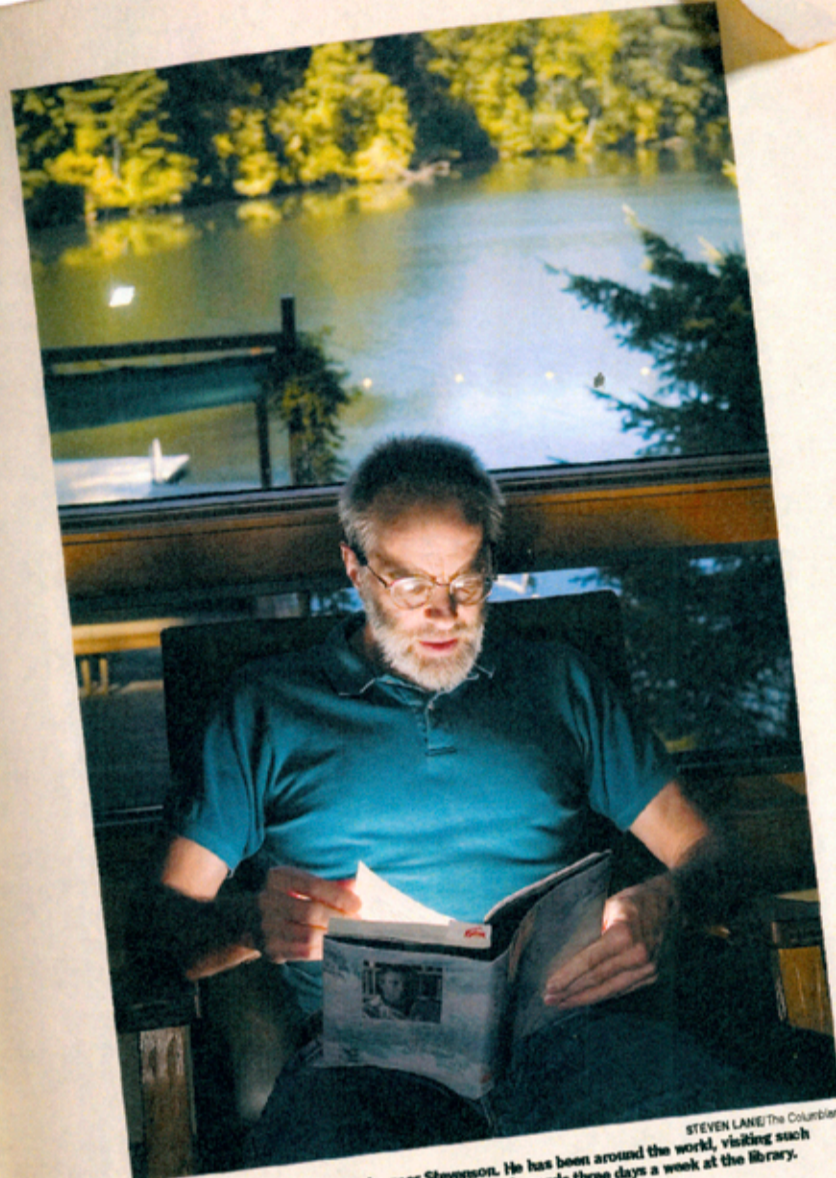
Many well-known national hospitals, universities and medical schools also have Web sites on which useful information can be found. Shands Health Care (shands.org/health), affiliated with the University of Florida in Gainesville, offers guidance on surgical procedures and the Health Illustrated Encyclopedia — an A to Z guide to injuries, disease, nutrition and symptoms.

Health advice online

According to Nielsen/NetRatings, the top health Web sites in June were:

1. WebMD (webmd.com)
2. MSN Health & Fitness (health.msn.com)
3. About Health & Fitness (about.com/health)
4. Drugstore.com
5. AOL Health (health.aol.com)
6. Walgreens (walgreens.com)
7. Yahoo! Health (health.yahoo.com)
8. Weight Watchers (weightwatchers.com)
9. RealAge (realage.com)
10. Mayo Clinic (mayoclinic.com)

The Orlando Sentinel



Nick Zeller lives in a cabin on a lake near Stevenson. He has been around the world, visiting such places as Bali, Nepal and Afghanistan. The 57-year-old spends three days a week at the library.

Real page turners

By BRETT OPPEGAARD
Columbian staff writer

Mary Tabor of The New York Times once wrote, "One sure window into a person's soul is his reading list." We wonder, can that apply to a community as well?

The Fort Vancouver Regional Library District in September will be asking voters to take on \$43 million in bonds to fund a new main library, a new east Vancouver library and major technology upgrades at the Vancouver mall library.

The district — which operates the main public library system in Clark, Skamania and Klickitat counties, plus the city of Woodland and the Yale Valley in Cowlitz County — has about 750,000 items in its collection, including books and magazines as well as audio and video materials. Patrons check out 2 million to 3 million of those each year. So we decided to take a sampling of the recent use in the system by the more than 200,000 active registered borrowers, to see what that says about us.

"Knowledge is free at the library. Just bring your own container."

— Anonymous

Inside meet some local avid readers
Pages D4-5

Study: Women outnumber men at U.S. colleges

Educational gender gap widens among poor

By JODI S. COHEN
Chicago Tribune

Women are increasingly outnumbering men at America's colleges, a gap that is widest — and most troublesome — among low-income and minority students, researchers said in a report released Tuesday. The share of males age 24 and

younger dropped to 45 percent in 2003-04 from 48 percent in 1995-96. The gap is even wider for students older than 25, and among African-Americans and Latinos, particularly those from low-income families.

"Yes, this is a matter of concern, but let's put it in context," said Jacqueline King, the author of the study by the American Council on Education, a group that represents more than 1,600 colleges and universities. "Gaps by gender are still much smaller than gaps in higher

education participation by race and by income."

At Northwestern University, where about 53 percent of undergraduates are women, the gender gap is more pronounced among low-income and minority students. Of low-income students registered last fall, 57 percent were women. For African-Americans, 71 percent were female. Hispanic women also made up a greater share of that low-income group's enrollment, at 60 percent.

"If it's that imbalanced, it definitely

warrants scrutiny," said Mike Mills, Northwestern's associate provost for university enrollment. The proportion of women would be even higher, he said, if it weren't for the School of Engineering, which overwhelmingly attracts men.

Researchers cautioned that the study does not suggest that fewer men are going to college or getting college degrees. The number of men entering and graduating from college continues to rise, although the number of women is rising more rapidly.

your Guide:



Health and Fitness:

Better breathing may lead to better blood pressure /D3

In survey of obese people, most say they have healthful eating habits /D3



Television:

Networks give their fall lineups the big sell /D7



Coming Saturday:

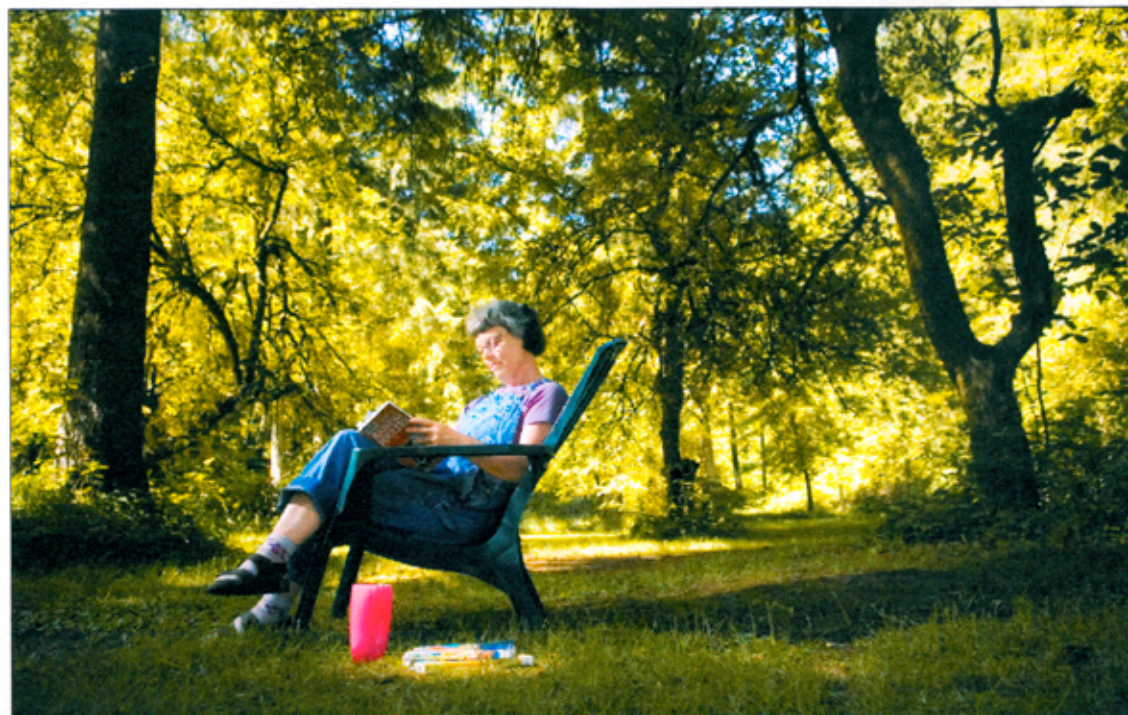
We take a look back at MTV's 25 years /D1

"The more that you read,
the more
things you will
know.



Kate McMurry, who describes her work as "habitat manager," has adjusted her reading habits around raising her 10-month-old, Seamus, and 11-year-old son, Keegan.

The more that you learn, the more places you'll go." —Dr. Seuss
American author



Lottie Stoll-Smith, 14, gets rides from Yale into Woodland once or twice a week to visit the library branch there. At last update, she had 73 books checked out.



Kathi Wheeler, top photo, raises 15 goats on a small farm in Ariel. She takes breaks in her orchard with a book. She says the setting helps her get into a rhythm of sorts, among the noises of the animals, the birds and the breeze. Doug Staples of Ridgefield explores libraries with a systematic approach, alphabetical, by author. He has logged more than 3,000 books over the past 20 years that way, and he visits his local branch just about every day. He loves to read mysteries.

Top 10 most sought-after books this year

TITLE	AUTHOR	HOLDS*
"The Fifth Horseman"	James Patterson	386
"Two Little Girls in Blue"	Mary Higgins Clark	347
"Twelve Sharp"	Janel Ertowich	319
"Beach Road: A Novel"	James Patterson	266
"At Risk"	Patricia Cornwell	260
"Celtic A Novel"	Stephen King	236
"Gone: An Alex Delaware Novel"	Jonathan Korman	215
"Motor Mouth"	Janel Ertowich	211
"The Cat Who Dropped a Bombshell"	Lillian Jackson Braun	201
"Dark Harbor"	Stuart Woods	183

* Holds are requests for the book that are unable to be filled, due to demand or location, until a later date. There are holds for 2006, as of July 7.

Did you know?

Patrons can have their library cards blocked from future use by either having five or more items overdue or by owing more than \$40 in lost or damaged items. As of July 2, 900 people were over the limit on the number of items overdue and 6,700 owed \$40 or more. For comparison, the latest population estimate for the county's fastest-growing town, Ridgefield, is 3,225.

(Continued from page D1)

Real page turners: Well-read borrowers weigh in on the spellbinding, bizarre and boring

◆ Nick Zeller

57, retired broadcast news photographer, Stevenson (pictured on page D1)

Library habit: "I'm usually three three-days a week. ... I know most of the (Stevenson Community) libraries by first name."

What's the strangest book you've discovered? "Free-Range Poultry," by Katie Thoe. About how they raise chickens in England. They have chickens every place. ... They have people who go and rescue chickens (from farms) and find them homes, just like we do with dogs and cats here."

What book has changed your life? "A Match to the Heart: One Woman's Story of Being Struck By Lightning" by Greta Ehrlich. It's about a woman who lives in Wyoming and gets struck by lightning and how her life changes after that. ... I'm much more like for the moment now."

What's the last one you didn't finish? "A Heart-Breaking Work of Staggering Genius," by Dave Eggers. It just got bogged down at the very end. A bit too verbose for me."

What's the best book nobody seems to know about? "Sailing Alone Around the World," by Joshua Slocum. He sailed a small boat around the world. He was a very strange character. A crusty old guy, quite pompous, very self-assured, very self-contained, very reserved. He has a great attitude. ... It's everybody's dream, but very few actually do it."

◆ Kate McMurry

37, homemaker, Vancouver.

Library habit: "When I was going to the library, it got to the point where I was bringing home a grocery bag of 15 to 20 books every week."

What's the strangest book you've discovered? "Bottle-feeding Without Guilt," by Peggy Robin. ... The author was defensive about not breast-feeding, so she wrote a book and included a whole section on breast-feeding Nannies, that we were out to denigrate people who would bottle-feed their child. Being part of the La Leche League, I thought that was funny in a sad sort of way."

What book has changed your life? "Winning the War Against Asthma and Allergies," by Ellen W. Collier. It gave me a new way of looking at allergies and encouraged me to consider alternative medicine, including going to a naturopath and acupuncturist. ... I don't completely understand why it works. But I used to be sick all of the time, and now (after satirical treatment) I just have a little bit of hay fever."

What's the last one you didn't finish? "The Grapes of Wrath," by John Steinbeck. I was just falling asleep, it was so wordy. ... It was my first month of a book group, so I decided I would start the next month instead. It's supposed to be a classic, but I don't know who decides "the classics."

What's the best book nobody seems to know about? "A Vision of Light," by Judith Merkle Riley. It's about a woman in the 14th century who survives the plague and gets a priest to teach her to read and write. ... Angela comes and talk to her, and she's always talking to God. It's very witty and fun, and there's some deep thoughts. It's not a spiritual book, but it is a spiritual book."

◆ Kathi Wheeler

60, dairy goat farmer, Ariel.

Library habit: "When I was going to try to raise a dozen roasting chickens and chickens for eggs (earlier this year), I checked out all the chickens books in the library to learn how to do it. Last year, I checked out every book on canning."

What's the strangest book you've discovered? "Free-Range Poultry," by Katie Thoe. About how they raise chickens in England. They have chickens every place. ... They have people who go and rescue chickens (from farms) and find them homes, just like we do with dogs and cats here."

What book has changed your life? "Julia Child's 'Mastering the Art of French Cooking.' The French have a very specific way of doing things, and that just made cooking fall into place for me."

What's the last one you didn't finish? "Ghosts of the Apalotlah," by Mark Bowden, about the hostage taking in the mid-'70s at the American embassy in Iran. Bowden's a journalist who wrote "Black Hawk Down," and he just has a good way of making a complicated story easy to understand. He brings all of these threads together and weaves a true story. ... You know what happens, and you want to tell (the characters) what's going to happen, but you can't."

◆ Doug Staples

60, residential home designer, Ridgefield.

Library habit: "I walk to the library just about every day it's open. I have a Rolodex that keeps track of my last 30 years of reading. I keep my authors alphabetical. I have at least 600 authors and 3,000 books in it, and I have little symbols to lay into the ones I like and the ones I never want to read again. ... The worst books get sour faces. The best, five stars, which I only have given to a half-dozen or so."

What's the last one you didn't finish? "The Lord of the Rings: The Two Towers." I got in a slow spot, so I put it down to read something else."

What's the strangest book you've discovered? "Double Whammy," by Carl Hiaasen. Most of his books have to do with environmental issues, but he's got a world of strange and wonderful characters that recur in this case inadvertently saving the Everglades. ... This is sort of an important historical novel, about the things that happen with the one-eyed ex-Governor of Florida, who eats road kill and lives in the woods and has a special affection for extraordinarily large fish. It's quite bizarre."

What's the best book nobody seems to know about? "There's one in particular that's so amazing I've probably read it 10 times. 'Water Music,' by T.C. Boyle. It's the only book I've ever read from front to back and instead of putting it down, I started reading it again for the second time. It chronicles the life of (Scottish explorer) Mungo Park, searching for the source of the Niger River in Africa in the late 1700s. But the primary protagonist is an awful character, a deformed street urchin. ... It's raw. It's too dark for most people."

◆ Lottie Stoll-Smith

14, student at Woodland High School, Yale.

Library habit: "I have 73 books checked out right now."

What's the last one you didn't finish? "The Lord of the Rings: The Two Towers." I got in a slow spot, so I put it down to read something else."

What's the strangest book you've discovered? "Lottie's New Friend," by Petra Mathers. I don't think my name's very common, so I thought the title was interesting. This is a little kid's book about a chicken meeting a new friend. ... Lottie's a chicken."

What's the best book nobody seems to know about? "Peter Pan," by James Barrie. I thought it was just a movie. ... The book is more up-to-date about (what's taking place) and not every line is some part of the Disney version, it's much more kid-ified."

Land of the Lost

Patrons check out millions of books per year from the Fort Vancouver Regional Library District. In the process, 50,000 to 80,000 of those things don't come back within the required 21 days, earning the library a perpetual status of "lost." Some are eventually recovered. Some are not. An end-of-July hunt are not. An end-of-July hunt are not. An end-of-July hunt are not.

The Lord of the Lemons. Oves \$3.95 (1) for 105 items. More than half of which were taken on two days in early May. These include two audiocassettes of "The Lord of the Rings," \$40 and \$59.95, a couple of Harry Potter books, several expensive classics in audio form. ... "David Copperfield," \$39.95, "The Canterbury Tales," \$47. ... and a wide variety of children's books, including educational titles, including "Everything You Ever Wanted to Know" Wonder if there is a chapter about returning borrowed books?

Reading Speltham Outcomes. Oves \$2,026.59 for 172 items, with 170 of those checked out on the single day, Dec. 8. Many of the items include a diverse range, such as "God's Lie Chicken Soup and Murder," "The Fellowship of the Ring," "God's Messengers," and "The Holy Grail" and "The Story of the Bible." Perhaps the next time this person should check the library about karma.

"The Wind Color" Cracked. Oves \$1,328.80 for 95 items, several seemingly related to the book series by Dan Brown. These include "The Knights Templar in the New World," "The Bible Code II," "A History of Secret Societies," "Da Vinci's Deception," "Ancient Secrets of the Bible," "Secrets of the Great Pyramid," "The Holy Grail," "The Holy Grail" and "Secrets of the Holy Grail." "The Holy Grail" is kept in the bottom section of the building for a reason.

Bookies Steals a Hollywood Movie Card. Oves \$1,712.58 for 14 items, all about one of which are expensive videotape recordings (most ranging in price from \$144.95 to \$199 per item). These include "Eating Disorders," "The Pumpkin Show," "The Love in a Pumpkin Show," "The Discovery of Deam," "The Reality of Drug Use" and "Can You See My Point?" Web site list and the list. ... yes, we can.

The Wizard of Odd. Oves \$1,053.86 for 78 items. One weird list, which includes "The Picture Book of Vespene," "Mantle's Cup," "Squid Mutilates," "Judy Hears Vespene," "Collecting Aluminum" and "Bobbing Head Dole, 1940-2000." It's like a junk hoarder or incredibly hoard.

Editor's Note: In response to a public information request about Fort Vancouver Region of Library decided to provide identifying information. But, first round cases under investigation as of June. On Aug. 2, the library adopts a 50-item checked limit.

Photos by Steven Lane of The Columbian