



When it snows on your parade ...

A Few Tips for a Simple Life

by Michael Guilfoil, *The Spokesman-Review*

Organic farmer MaryJane Butters long ago embraced Thoreau's dictum to "simplify, simplify." As a Forest Service ranger in the 1970s, she spent two summers roaming Utah's Uinta Mountains with her home on her back. Later, she maintained the most remote wilderness ranger station in the Lower 48. Today, Butters and her family live eight miles outside Moscow on their farm, headquarters of her mail-order dry-foods business. But even e-commerce hasn't tempered Butters' enthusiasm for simplicity.

MaryJane's

2. Organize Your Purse and Put on a Hat

The "stuff" of life gets overwhelming at times. I'm not talking about head issues, I'm talking about STUFF. My approach to surface chaos and clutter is to clean and organize my purse. The world can wait—I'm cleaning my purse! For some reason, it feels like a significant fresh start, and it's such an easy thing to accomplish. Maybe it's because chaos seems magnified when you're out and about, away from home. I think we call a purse a clutch for a reason. A clean, organized purse gives me a renewed grip on order and predictability. And a flamboyant hat? Head stuff GONE!

3. Give a Kiss, Get a Kiss

For us farmers, a peck is a unit of measurement, smaller than a bushel. When my father told me to "pick-a-peck," I knew exactly what bucket he wanted me to use—easier to fill when picking apples as opposed to cherries. The Mother Goose Peter Piper tongue twister made the work go faster when a sibling was around. If we were on cherry duty, we played the game with pits in our mouths. If you want to gather lots of "happies," pick someone for a peck. For every kiss you give and get, your happy basket fills up faster. Four pecks and you have a bushel load o' love!

4. Grow Something ... Anything

When you see a gardener one-on-one with nature in their backyard or even tending to some potted plants on a fire escape, they're being totally self-indulgent. Sure, kneeling in the garden as if in prayer gives you veggies to eat, but more importantly, you've given yourself a respite from life's daily slog. In fact, growing plants or even something as carefree as okay-to-forget-to-water mosses and lichens seems to make us brighter, happier, and healthier in ways that can't be explained. It just does. It's the ticket to "much more centered" EVERY time.

5. Go with the Flow

Years ago when Tambrands, the maker of Tampax, awarded a woman from every state of the Union a trip to New York City to receive their "50 Women Who Are Saving the Earth" award (I was Idaho's), the keynote speaker joked about "going with the flow." Sure enough, flow just happens when you're a woman. But this year, there's a different kind of flow you need to welcome into your life ... run a river! It's the change-of-life experience you've been waiting for. Turn to page 76 to map out your "go with the flow" plan for next summer.

6. Realize a Dream

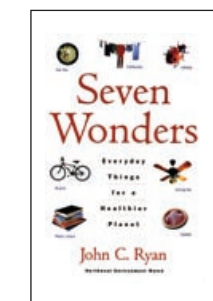
This solution is a little tricky because it involves mustering up some serious moxie. It seems the dreams of women tend to be viewed as impractical, or sometimes, well, yes, loony. (I've always claimed that one—I'm lunar and proud of it!) But I'm here to tell you, my loony dreams have always turned out. It's as if the universe has challenged me to override that who-do-I-think-I-am programming. Read about Sherri, who created her dream B&B from a lowly shack in the woods.

7. Switch to Organic

This one happens to be my passion. Why? I've seen over and over again the miracle that happens when someone changes their diet for the better. It can happen to you! Organic food is ever-abundant now. And if you're thrifty, you can make the switch and actually save money on your food bill! Think of it this way: You can pay the organic farmer now, or pay the doctor later. Here's your new mantra: I'm gonna change my food and change my life. Say it 50 times and it will *become* you.

Simple Solutions

for everyday ORGANIC™



In December 1999, a newspaper reporter from Washington called. He was writing a review of the book *Seven Wonders: Everyday Things for a Healthier Planet* by John C. Ryan. Michael Guilfoil of *The Spokesman-Review* newspaper asked me if I had my own "seven wonders." The story that ensued was headlined

"Simple Solutions." Here, then, is the continuation of that story. Each issue of *MaryJanesFarm* will feature in detail new solutions, and will give you all the information you need to make them your own.

Solutions from previous issues are available on my website:
www.maryjanesfarm.org



seven wonders

Seven Ways to Lift Your Spirits

The inevitable bumps and rough patches that life dishes out can be smoothed out by incorporating a few simple habits into your daily routine—a kiss here, a care there, better food NOW ... flavored with a bit of shopping and creative make-do! Here are my favorite seven salvations.

1. Reboot

This make-your-day-better solution is pure child's play. Adorning our feet with the colors and textures that make us happy works every time. Since we're all about nifty thrifty, we took out our paints/glitter/glue and made new wearable shoes from some shoes and boots I'd retired. I've always wanted ruby-red slippers, *Wizard of Oz* style. All it took was three clicks of the clock and we transformed my black velvet shoes into over-the-rainbow red heels.