

HOME & GARDEN

CRAFT FAIRS

Vendor party

Lisa's Crew will hold a "Shop Til You Drop" Vendor Party with all proceeds benefiting the Multiple Sclerosis Society. The event will be held from 10 a.m. until 3 p.m. Saturday, March 28 at Crowne Plaza across from South Hills Village. Cost of admission includes three free basket raffle tickets. A 50/50 raffle will also be held, and refreshments will be available.

Flea market

An indoor flea market benefiting Washington County Community Youth Center in Canonsburg will be held 9 a.m. to 6 p.m. Friday, Saturday and Sunday, March 27-29.

Funds will be used for youth activities. For details, call Jean Popp at 724-745-3801.

Spring craft fair

PRIME TIME Adult Care will hold its annual Spring Craft Fair from 9:30 a.m. until 3 p.m. Saturday, March 28 in the Christian Life Center at Christ U.M. Church, Bethel Park.

Sixty-two crafters will be selling hand-painted items, dried and silk flower arrangements, jewelry, candles, wood-working, pet items and more.

Refreshments will be available and a silent auction will be held with items donated by each of the crafters. For details, call Mary Ann Weber at 412-835-6661.

Arts/crafts show

Washington Crown Center will sponsor a spring arts and crafts show March 26 through 29. To reserve space, call 724-225-1838.

Flea market/bake sale

St. Valentine Christian Mothers will host its Annual Flea Market and Bake Sale from 9 a.m. until 2 p.m. Saturday, April 18 in Frawley Hall. There will be 67 tables of treasures from various vendors, as well as a homemade lunch and baked treats. Admission is free.

Vendors needed

The Women of St. Benedict, St. Benedict the Abbot Church, McMurray, will sponsor a "Spring Fling" Arts, Crafts and Antique Fair from 9 a.m. to 4 p.m. Saturday, April 18.

Vendors, crafters and artists are needed. To reserve space, call 724-941-4686.

Bethel Presbyterian

The young people at Bethel Presbyterian Church will hold a yard sale 8:30 a.m. to 2 p.m. Saturday, April 11. Sports equipment, furniture, clothing and baby items will be included.

Proceeds will be used for mission trips.



A Stratford patio with sitting walls and firepit are the focus at the Gerhardt-Perry home in Upper St. Clair.



Pittsburgh Stone & Waterscapes displayed a "Country Stone formal waterscape" for the Duquesne Light Home & Garden Show.

Investing in nature

As seasons change, it's time to focus on outdoor living

By PJ Rittiger

For The Almanac
writer@thealmanac.net

At this time of year, homeowners are ready to think about moving outdoors and what better way to do it than in comfort and style?

Although recession is in the minds of many, one local company officer says that the best way to invest is to improve your home and outdoor living space.

Jeff Blunkosky, chief operating officer of Pittsburgh Stone & Waterscapes in McDonald, said that showcasing retaining walls, patios, walkways and driveways, waterfalls, ponds, pondless waterfalls, drainage solution projects and landscaping around your home is an excellent investment.

"One thing our company has learned is that during a tough economy homeowners feel more comfortable investing money into their homes on projects that not only add property value but also add a lifestyle upgrade as opposed to spending money on a new car or a pricey vacation," he said.

Blunkosky recently displayed his company's projects at the Duquesne Light Home & Garden Show in Pittsburgh and said that visitors to the venue enjoyed looking over the many options for home improvement. At the Duquesne Light Home & Garden Show, the display presented by Pittsburgh Stone & Waterscapes included a waterfall with colored water, a built-in grill and wet bar, a sitting wall and a paver patio.

"The nice thing about the outdoor kitchen pieces is that anything you have in your kitchen inside the home, you can take it outside," said Blunkosky. "We have refrigerators and ice makers, stainless steel sinks, stove tops that are actually meant to be kept out-



Angela and Francesca Mollenauer of Collier Township in front of a country stone fireplace.

side and they resist the elements. That's great for people who want to take the entertainment outside."

Blunkosky believes firmly that the outdoor living space products allow people to make the great outdoors as comfortable as the insides of their homes, which automatically increases living space and potential.

"This is a great way to retreat, whether it's going outside for breakfast or retiring there to relax at the end of a busy day, it's very enjoyable," said Blunkosky. "Instead of heading

for the living room couch, and turning on the television, which can make people tense, people can enjoy the sun and the wind

on their faces. They can enjoy the relaxing sound of the water feature. The backyard becomes a sanctuary."

Blunkosky said he renovated his own property to include a small patio with a water feature.

"It is a great escape and a great way to relax. I really enjoy it whether I am out there for five minutes or for a couple of hours, but this kind of thing is great for entertaining," Blunkosky said. "Kids, teens and adults want to be outside in the nice weather. To invest in outdoor living space, it caters to a wide range of individuals. How many people do not use a grill or a patio table in the nice weather? It's great for people who are selling their home, people who are interested in improving their homes and people who have just purchased a home."

Blunkosky also said that renovations don't have to break the bank, but says it is important to hire certified contractors and check their references thoroughly.

"The homeowner puts themselves at risk if they don't do that," Blunkosky advised. "People may not have or need a million dollar home, but they can have a little piece of paradise at an affordable price."

For further information, call Pittsburgh Stone & Waterscapes at 724-746-0704.

Program to benefit homeless animals

Allegheny County Executive Dan Onorato and Western Pennsylvania Humane Society (WPHS) Executive Director Lee Nesler announced a free recycling program for old electronics, which will benefit homeless animals.

"We are proud to partner with the Western Pennsylvania Humane Society for this e-waste recycling project," said Onorato. "Through Allegheny Green, we are committed to promoting sustainable practices within county government and through countywide policies and programs. This is a perfect opportunity to recycle old materials in an environmentally friendly way, while helping our four-legged friends."

The e-waste collection sites will be located at the swimming pool parking lots in North, South, Boyce and Settler's Cabin parks, the Round Hill Park duck pond parking lot, and WPHS' North Shore Shelter parking lot between March 28 and April 11. The drop-off sites will be open Monday through Friday 10 a.m. until 7 p.m., and weekends 10 a.m. until 5 p.m.

For every 100,000 pounds of electronics collected, the Western Pennsylvania Humane Society will receive \$10,000.

The following items will be accepted, both functional and non-functional: All batteries, cables/wiring, camcorders, cameras, CB radios, CD players, cell phones, circuit boards, computer monitors, computer software, computers/laptops, DVD players, electric lawnmowers, electric pianos, electric wheelchairs, fax machines, game consoles, generators, microwaves, photo copiers, plotters, power tools, printers, projectors, radios, speakers, stereos, telephones, typewriters, VCRs video cameras.

There will be a \$15 charge for non-plasma/flat screen televisions due to the delicate and expensive nature of recycling older televisions.

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