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CENTRAL TO YOUR NEW LIFE



"All of the support, encouragement and compliments from staff made it that much easier to have natural childbirth. And the birthing center is wonderful, accommodating and really comfortable."

This little girl is definitely the engine and not the caboose! Reeve Dorothea Russell arrived quickly on March 23, in room 205, with the help of Dr. Glaess. Her sister Grace (21 months) and her 4 older cousins were all born in room 204 with the help of Dr. Yanowitch. But Reeve has a mind of her own (and a full head of hair!) She weighed 8lb/6oz and was 21" long. Her mom Sara and dad Darin are thrilled. Sister Grace is getting accustomed to the idea of a baby sister but Alex (15) looks pretty smitten. The Russell family lives in Johnson.



Sheila R. Glaess, MD, Ob/Gyn



Krissa Hammond, RN, Ob Nurse



Margaret Lindsay, MD, Pediatrician



Christine Bernardine, RN, Lactation Consultant

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Let's Talk About Money

with Peggy Munro



There are certain immutable truths in life, and most of them can be found in the kitchen.

It all started with the stove—or more precisely, the new under-burner inserts that cost \$14 at my local grocery store. I knew they were the right size, but, somehow, they didn't fit correctly. So for the better part of two weeks, I cooked at an angle—everything from omelets to soups slid along the bottom of my pans, collecting in pools on one side, and leaving the other side high and dry. Within an hour of the insert replacements, I knew there was a problem; by the end of the first day, the sight of the tilting burners was edging me towards psychosis.

Clearly, the skewed burners had to be rectified, and there were obvious solutions. I could buy better quality burner inserts, and try again. Or, we could eat out three meals a day, every day, and I could stay away from the kitchen. And then there was door number 3: buy a new stove.

Since it was the end of tax season last year, I felt I deserved a reward. So I bought the new stove, with shelves that roll out on ball bearings, and an oven light that gently rises and dims like theater lighting. With all its other assorted bells and whistles, it quickly became apparent that this stove would turn out gourmet meals with very little input from me.

With the stove in place, my dishwasher began to look shabby. Yes, it ran, and it more or less cleaned the dishes. But the racks were broken, it didn't fit many dishes, and those it did fit didn't always come out as clean as I would like. While I could have solved the problem and purchased new racks for a relatively small price, I had a better solution: replace the despised dishwasher with the companion to the new stove. Same sleek electronics, matching shiny stainless steel exterior, similar astronomic price.

The dishwasher is now installed. So is a new stainless steel kitchen sink complete with a high-tech goose-neck faucet; its hated beige predecessor with the leaky faucet just had to go. But now I look around my kitchen and see the cabinet doors hanging off damaged hinges at precarious angles, and the Formica kitchen counter now clashing with all my beautiful stainless appliances. I'm trying to hang on to some remnants of sanity, but know it won't take much convincing to send me scurrying to find the money to redo the cabinets, the counters and the floor (which cries out for hardwood to replace the vinyl).

I'm sensing a disturbing trend here: replacing things that work adequately and still have much life remaining with counterparts that work equally well, but are more stylish.

Okay, the new stove does make cooking more pleasurable, and we've eaten at home much more as a result. And the new dishwasher is much quieter, uses less water, and is overall more efficient. But there was really little wrong with the old appliances, and I could have muddled along with them for many more years.

Since I'm spending all this money in my kitchen, I clearly have June Cleaver meets Jane Jetson issues. Evidently, I'm willing to prepare meals for my family, but only if I have space age technology and aesthetics. But I'm also realizing that what's space age today will quickly become dated tomorrow.

You may think that the appliances I disposed of were ancient; they were not. According to the records provided to us when we purchased this house two years ago, everything in the kitchen (including the yet-to-be-updated counters, cabinets and flooring) was installed in 2000. Everything that's been replaced thus far is 10 years old, or less.

The distance between cutting-edge and obsolescence is shrinking. But unlike the computers in my office, which are constantly being called on to run more and more complex programming, the wizardry in my kitchen still prepares the same food in the same amount of time. Cooking times don't shrink even when the oven baking the cake looks sleeker, and water won't boil any faster than water will boil.

So why am I doing this? Because from tiny acorns, giant oak trees grow; from miniscule repairs and updates, monster makeovers develop. Evidently, I am not immune to acquisitiveness. I see the latest and greatest, whether on a showroom floor, or by looking at advertising, and I add one of these and two of that to my theoretical list of "must-have-before-I-die." It may be a result of turning 50 last year, but I've realized I'm closer to the end than the beginning; if I don't hurry up, I'll reach the finish with items left unbought.

Understanding my compulsion should make it easier for me to withstand it, and I'm going to keep the kitchen renovation monster at bay for the moment. But Sirens lurk in every corner of my house, and right now, there's one in my upstairs bathroom, filling my head with visions of a new whirlpool tub.

Margaret Atkins Munro, E.A., is a licensed tax professional living in Essex Junction. She is the author of 529 & Other College Savings Plans for Dummies, and coauthor of Taxes 2009 for Dummies, and her new book, Estate & Trust Administration for Dummies (coauthored with Katbryn A. Murphy, esq.), all of which are now available at your local bookstore.

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About the Perpetual Blogger:
 Zak Schmolli is a business administration major at the University of Vermont who has also been a lifelong Central Vermont sports fan. He has been published in area outlets such as the Central Vermont Sports Network, the Times Argus, and the Bridge.



Exploring the Many Ways That Sports Occupy My Mind and Time

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