

Recovery is Possible!

PROSUMER—A PERSON WHO IS PROACTIVE IN HIS OR HER RECOVERY AND WHO PROVIDES OR GIVES BACK TO THE COMMUNITY.



A Prosumer is not who you are, it is what you do!

PROSUMER NEWS

December 2008

Janet Paleo—Editor

Volume 6, Issue 12

Daytime Prosumer Meetings

The 2nd Friday of the Month
12 Noon to 3 PM

University Health Center —
Downtown (the Old Brady Green)
All Welcome!

527 N. Leona (Near Frio and Martin)
Buses 20, 77, 79, 89

Evening Prosumer Meetings

The 3rd Tuesday of the Month
6 PM to 9 PM

La Paz Community Health Center
530 San Pedro (just south of SAC)
Buses 4, 92

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: **December 16, 2008 Evening Meeting** will be the same topic of discussion as the Daytime Meetings. This is a potluck and bring a wrapped gift (no more than \$5 if you buy something) for the Evil Gift Exchange. **January 20, 2009** will be our Evening Meeting with the same speaker.
:

REFLECTIONS ON RECOVERY: Transformation through Acceptance & Forgiveness - by Sarah Ho, Kona, Hawaii

Since I'm still emerging from the depression of last summer, my thoughts and energies are focused on its meaning. If you read last month's article, you know that that depression was triggered by external circumstances: my mother's mental decline, and my sister's addiction to alcohol.

Summing it up, my efforts are aimed toward transformation: of the old to the new; of pain into healing; of negative challenges into opportunities for growth.

One of the most helpful pieces of advice I've gotten recently came from my therapist. When I expressed concern over my next conversation with my sister, she said that Harriet already knows what's going on; she's only too well aware of the power alcohol holds over her right now, and of the deep hole she's dug herself; therefore, bringing up the subject of her drinking would probably be fruitless — and needlessly provocative. So, said Barb, "Just send her your love; just pour it on out." Whenever I think of her, I should send her love and light and the most sincere wishes of my heart that she be well and at peace.

How powerful. Stunning.

My first reaction was, "I can't possibly do that." Years of habit lie behind my responses to my sister, judgment and anger among them. I didn't think I could turn away from such huge feelings. But, surprisingly, I've been trying this 'sending love' thing with noticeable results.

My thoughts turn to Harriet many times a day, usually beginning with

December 12, 2008 Meeting

This is it!! Our Celebration of

the Holidays with Gift Exchange!!

Come celebrate the Holidays with your peers and experience the Evil Gift Exchange. **Bring an gift, totally gift wrapped** of something you want to get rid of or if you are buying a gift, no more than \$5.00. **This will also be a potluck however nothing red please.** We are going to have so much fun. Don't miss out and join us!!

January 9, 2009 Meeting

Dr. Gilbert Gonzales, a huge supporter of the Prosumer group, will be with us to begin a New Year with a presentation on wellness. What a perfect way to start this new year with a focus on bringing wellness in your life. This is an awesome presentation and I know that you will come away from the presentation inspired and with a new understanding of what is possible in life.

Prosumer meetings start with food, so please remember to RSVP to 210-653-5267 so that we have enough food to feed everyone and also to let us know if you will be using the parking lot. Remember: first come, first serve. We will see you there!!

AHRQ and ODPHP Announce Redesigned healthfinder.gov

An improved and more accessible version of healthfinder.gov has been launched to provide even more news, tips, and tools to help people stay healthy. Information is available in English and Spanish. The site includes these new and easy-to-use features:

- The [Quick Guide to Health Living](#) - basic, easy-to-understand information on key prevention topics, including the benefits of taking recommended actions and tips on how to get started.

- **Myhealthfinder** - <http://beta.healthfinder.gov> - personalized health recommendations based on age and sex from the U.S. Preventive Services Task Force, supported by AHRQ.

- **Personal Health Tools** - <http://beta.healthfinder.gov/HealthTools> - menu and activity planners, health calculators, online check-ups, and more.

some like these: "Let's see, what time is it on the East Coast? How drunk is she right now? Poor Harriet, so lonely and angry. I feel sorry for her. Does she have any friends? She's wrecked her life. This is a tragedy.... etc., etc."

Sweet, huh? Just a string of ego-centered judgments that allow me to be the 'well' sister, the non-addict, the wise one. All these thoughts arise so quickly and automatically that I seldom nip them in the bud. But I have been able to make some headway this way:

1. I 'wake up' into whatever judgmental head trip I'm having.
2. I reject it; I let it go; I stop doing it.
3. I rephrase the words, such as, "She's doing exactly what she needs to do to learn what she needs to learn. I can honor that."
4. I send her my love. I wish her well. I center myself in my heart, and remember that she is a spiritual being too.

These steps break up my self-indulgent, ego-masturbatory thought patterns, and move me into universal caring. The more quickly I can do step #2 especially, the thinner my own anger and dismissal feel; and I'm then freer. I'm making myself into a more loving person by changing my thought patterns. I attempt to linger over #4.

I talked this process over with my psychiatrist the other day. He said that recently he'd been considering two essential aspects of Recovery which are seldom adequately addressed in psychiatric training: **acceptance** and **forgiveness**. We agreed that these qualities are not talked about because they are ineffable (beyond words); and because their effects on body, mind and spirit are not clearly understood. But their power is undeniably real.

Where I need to be in relation to my sister is accepting her drinking as her choice, a way she deals with her pain. This is not to say that I don't care, or that I haven't talked to her about her use of alcohol, or that I won't be there to help her if she decides she wants to get free of it. She knows all this. I want to honor her as my equal. I cannot know her private pains nor her inner biology, nor the life experiences that have moved her to these choices. And they are not for me to judge. (Just for fun, try this some time: try letting go of **every** judgment you have about another person, and see how freeing that feels. It's amazing.)

So, these four steps (above) are my efforts to retrain my automatic mental and emotional responses to her drinking. I am moving toward accepting her. And, in accepting her, I'm finding

it easier to take complete responsibility for the codependent patterns I slipped into last summer. In forgiving myself for becoming so lost, I am also forgiving her for being a trigger. Actually, she was my teacher – of some terribly painful, difficult lessons. Maybe some day I'll even be able to thank her.

I invite you to try this process for yourself. Think of someone you have conflicts with, or simply don't like; or feel separate from or annoyed by ...just pick one. And then practice. Whenever you think of this person, and your response patterns of anger or dismissal arise, **WAKE UP, OWN THE RESPONSES, RELEASE THEM** (that's the hardest step); and instead send this being heartfelt wishes for peace and happiness. When you have the courage and self-discipline to try it, you will find your **own** inner movement toward freedom, and a richer, fuller Recovery.

P.S. Don't take my word for this. Do it for yourself, for those who love you, and for humanity. When one of us is freer, all of us are freer.

S.A.L.S.A.

San Antonio League of Self-Advocates

An organization of people with intellectual disabilities, speaking up

for their human and civil rights

All are welcome at our meetings.

We meet on the 1st & 3rd Tuesdays of the month.

Dec 2, 2008

Regular Meeting

6:30-8:00 p.m.

Dec 16, 2008

Regular Meeting

6:30-8:00 p.m.

Meetings are held at Brighton, the Center for Inclusive Communities
14207 Higgins
(One-half mile west of Nacogdoches, between Thousand Oaks and O'Connor)

For More Information call Jomel Crayton, chair

210-590-1348

Judith Laufer, Advisor
210-828-7125.

GOOD SAMARITAN IS OFFERING LEGAL ASSISTANCE

Legal Assistance Every Monday 1:30 PM- 3:30 PM
Good Samaritan Community Services Senior Center
1600 Saltillo

210-434-5531 x2043

No appointments. Walk-In Only
Do you need an attorney? Not sure?

Common Legal Issues—Consumer Rights—Bankruptcy-Credit Rights—Debt Collection-Social Security—Family Law-Divorce (custody/visitation/child support)—Protective Orders/ Restraining Orders—Crime Compensation—Identity Documentation

Home Comforts Seeks Volunteers

A small non-profit which works to help people with mental illness who are moving into independent housing with household furniture and cleaning supplies. They need volunteers who can do physical labor of moving furniture. If you would like to help, please call 222-8736.

To use these services, have your case manager call 222-8736 for more information, or e-mail bexarhomecomforts@satx.rr.com. Brochures and applications for assistance are available on request at the same contact number.

The Power of Gratitude

I'm a researcher. As a professor of bioethics at Case Western Reserve University's School of Medicine, I deal in facts. I'm also a father and a husband—a man blessed with a rich family life. Like many researchers, I've always felt that my clinical and my personal lives were two different things. Two different worlds, really.

Then, in 2001, I created a research group called the Institute for Research on Unlimited Love (IRUL), dedicated to testing and measuring the effects of love and other positive caring emotions in human life. Our findings surprised me, as I think they will you. Our studies have shown that love-related qualities—like gratitude—actually make us physically healthier.

The implications of this research have changed the way I look at my life all year 'round, but they're especially meaningful to me during the holiday season. Here are five discoveries from our work at IRUL to keep in mind as you gather together to give thanks with your loved ones.

1. Gratitude Defends

Just 15 minutes a day focusing on the things you're grateful for will significantly increase your body's natural antibodies.

2. Gratitude Sharpens

Naturally grateful people are more focused mentally and measurably less vulnerable to clinical depression.

3. Gratitude Calms

A grateful state of mind induces a physiological state called resonance that's associated with healthier blood pressure and heart rate.

4. Gratitude Strengthens

Caring for others is draining. But grateful caregivers are healthier and more capable than less grateful ones.

5. Gratitude Heals

Recipients of donated organs who have the most grateful attitudes heal faster.

Stephen Post, PhD, is the author of *Why Good Things Happen to Good People*. Check out unlimitedloveinstitute.org for more on his research and order his book at whygoodthingshappen.com.

Guideposts Magazine 1

Web: <http://www.guidepostsmag.com>, Email: info@guidepostsmag.com

SAMHSA's Mental Health on Campus Report Now Available Online

Since 1997, the Center for Mental Health Services (CMHS), within the Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration (SAMHSA), has sponsored a series of participatory dialogues that offer mental health consumers and representatives from other groups an opportunity to enhance communication and build partnerships to improve mental health services and promote recovery. These meetings have led to concrete outcomes, including advances in networking, training and technical assistance, and valuable recommendations for CMHS and the field.

Student mental health consumer leaders on college and university campuses met in December 2005 with representatives from a variety of sectors of the college mental health system, including researchers, clinicians, college administrators and counselors, and leaders of national and local organizations that address student mental health issues.

The Mental Health on Campus dialogue meeting provided an opportunity for student mental health consumers and college representatives to discuss openly attitudes and practices that either hinder or promote recovery. Meeting participants identified attitudinal, cultural, and systemic barriers to mental health, and developed a set of recommendations to overcome them.

This report can now be accessed online at http://download.ncadi.samhsa.gov/ken/pdf/SMA07-4310/Building_Bridges_62p.pdf

SOURCE: CMHS CONSUMER AFFAIRS E-NEWS 13 NOVEMBER 2008

Guide for College Students Seeking Mental Health Services


"Campus Mental Health: Know Your Rights!" is a guide for college and university students seeking mental health services. The guide informs students about their legal rights and offers guidance on topics including where to seek help; academic accommodations; and hospital care. The guide was developed by the Leadership21 Committee, a group of young adults advising the Bazelon Center. It is available as a free download at www.bazelon.org/l21/rightsguide.htm. The Judge David L. Bazelon Center for Mental Health Law is the leading national legal-advocacy organization representing people with mental disabilities. Learn more about the Bazelon Center at www.bazelon.org.

SOURCE: Mental Health & Rehabilitation eCast November 2008

2008

December

2008

S	MON	TUE	WED	THUR	FRI	SAT
30	Dec 1 DBSA 7 pm @8026 Floyd Curl	Dec 2 DBSA CF 6 pm @210 South Grimes	Dec 3	Dec 4 DBSABC 7pm @758 Ramsey BiPolar/Depression Peer Support Group 7-9pm @ 3011 N. St. Mary's Candle- light Coffee House	Dec 5	12/6
7	Dec 8 DBSA 7 pm@8026 Floyd Curl	Dec 9 DBSA CF 6 pm @210 South Grimes NAMI 7 pm 510 Belknap	Dec 10 Mental Health Support Grp 7 pm St. George Episcopal Church, 6904 West Ave 342- 4261	Dec 11 DBSABC 7pm @758 Ramsey BiPolar/Depression Peer Support Group 7-9pm @ 3011 N. St. Mary's Candle- light Coffee House	Dec 12 Prosumer Meeting 12-3 University Health Center- Downtown	12/13
14	Dec 15 DBSA 7 pm@8026 Floyd Curl	Dec 16 Prosumer Evening Meeting 6-9 LA PAZ 530 San Pedro DBSA CF 6 pm @210 South Grimes	Dec 17	Dec 18 DBSABC 7pm @758 Ramsey BiPolar/Depression Peer Support Group 7-9pm @ 3011 N. St. Mary's Candle- light Coffee House	Dec 19	12/20
21	Dec 22 DBSA 7 pm@8026 Floyd Curl	Dec 23 DBSA CF 6 pm @210 South Grimes	Dec 24 CHCS CLOSED 1/2 day	Dec 25 CHCS CLOSED 	Dec 26	12/27

*** Please call and verify time and place prior to going to any of the meetings.**

Conference Dates to Remember

**2009 World Congress of the
World Federation for Mental
Health**

**“Working Together for Mental
Health” September 2-6, 2009
Hilton Hotel, Athens, Greece**

www.wfmh.org/09WCongress.htm

**Mental Health
Support Group.
St. George Episcopal Church
6904 West Avenue
in Conference Room.
Every 2nd Wednesday
at 7 pm.
Call 342-4261
for more information**

The Alliance will not have any meetings or events until further notice. Thank you for your consideration and I will let you know our schedule as soon as we are able to host any particular meetings or events. Have a great holiday season and I hope to see you sometime during the holidays. -Tina Pierce

Christmas Cards

When doing your Holiday cards this year, take one card and send it to this address. If we share this information and everyone sends one card, think of how many cards these wonderful special people who have sacrificed so much would get. When you are making out your Holiday card list this year, please include the following:



**A Recovering American Soldier
c/o Walter Reed Army Medical Center
6900 Georgia Avenue, NW
Washington, D.C. 20307-5001**



If you approve, please pass it on.

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www.ProsumersInternational.org

The views expressed in this newsletter do not necessarily reflect the views of the editor or any of its sponsors.

CALENDAR NAMES, ADDRESSES and PHONE NUMBERS

Prosumer Group- 210-212-6586 ext 207 or 210-653-5267 www.ProsumersInternational.org Mailing Address: PO Box 120394 San Antonio, TX 78212 Office located at 1921 Burnet, **Michelle Mata, Office Manager**

Day Meeting Foundation Room on the 3rd. Floor (University Health Center-Downtown—Old Brady Green) at 527 N. Leona St from 12-3

Evening Meeting at La Paz on 3rd Tuesday of the Month, 530 San Pedro from 6-9

24/7 Crisis Clinic—Address is 527 N. Leona 2nd Floor (the Brady Green). 210-225-5481.

Crisis Hotline for people feeling suicidal, homicidal or people not doing well mentally 210-223-7233 or 1-800-316-9241.

CHCS - Center for Health Care Services address is 3031 IH 10 West (Central Office) 210-731-1300

BHPNAC—Behavioral Health Planning & Networking Advisory Committee for individuals with mental health and/or substance abuse issues

CHCS Adult Mental Health Intake—210-223-4061

CHCS Consumer/Family Support—Address is 1921 Burnet 210-212-6586

Children's Clinic for Crisis 7 Eligibility/Enrollment—Address is 711 E. Josephine 210-299-8139

Burnet Clinic - Address is 1920 Burnet 210-227-3401

Palo Alto Clinic—Address is 2711 Palo Alto Road 210-533-2577

North West Clinic—Address is 9502 Computer Dr # 100 210-615-5700

Zarzamora Clinic - Address is 806 S. Zarzamora 210-434-7001

Advocacy Inc. - Address is 6800 First Park Ten Blvd. 210-737-0499 www.advocacyinc.org

AMHCR - Alliance for Mental Health Consumers Rights For more info call 210-212-6586

or SaMentalHealth@sbcglobal.net or www.SaMentalHealth.org. Office located at 1921 Burnet

DARS (Formerly TRC) Albert Olague is the liaison to CHCS clients. For services call 210-561-8600

Bipolar/Depression Support Group meets at Candlelight Coffee House. Call Wendy for more info at 210-403-0433

DBSA --Depressive Bipolar Support Alliance meets at 8026 Floyd Curl 210-945-0689

DBSA BC—Depressive Bipolar Support Alliance Bexar County meets at 758 Ramsey, Holy Cross Church Call Michael at 214-532-3896

DBSA CF --Depressive Bipolar Support Alliance Christian Family meets at 210 South Grimes St. Call Willie 210-413-4094

Fair Housing Council of Greater San Antonio- Address 4414 Centerview Drive, Suite 170 210-733-3247 Office

Home Comforts —210-222-8736 for help getting furniture and cleaning supplies.

NAMI SA - National Alliance for the Mentally Ill of San Antonio 210-734-3349

Mental Health Support Group — St. George Episcopal Church 6904 West Avenue 210- 342-4261 for more information

Peer-to-Peer and Family Support Group -San Juan de los Lagos Church at 3231 El Paso St. Call 210-436-8018 for more information

SAILS - San Antonio Independent Living Services address is 1028 S. Alamo Drive 210-281-1878

VIA Metro Center — Address is 1021 San Pedro 210-362-2020 Monday - Friday 7:00 a.m. - 6:00 p.m. Call for help with bus schedules and bus transfers.

These committees are open to the public and will receive public comment. If you are interested in serving on one of these committees, contact: Evelyn Sanchez at 210-731-1300 ext 269



Our Elected Officials

SENATOR LETICIA VAN DE PUTTE,
SENATE DIST 26
700 N. Saint Mary's St., Suite 1725-A, SA, TX 78205
(210) 733-6604 Closest Bus Route: 30

REPRESENTATIVE TREY MARTINEZ FISCHER,
HOUSE DIST 116
1910 Fredericksburg Road, SA, TX 78201
(210) 737-7200 Closest Bus Route: 92, 91

REPRESENTATIVE JOE STRAUS,
HOUSE DIST 121
7373 Broadway Suite 202A SA, TX 78209
(210) 828-4411 Closest Bus Route: 9, 10, 505, 647

REPRESENTATIVE, JOE FARIAS
HOUSE DIST 118
601 S. Seguin Road Converse TX 78109
210-659-9071 Closest Bus Route: 21, 639

SENATOR JUDITH ZAFFIRINI, SENATE DIST 21
12702 Topperwein, Rd. Suite 214, SA, TX 78233
(210) 657-0095 Bus Route 640 stops 1 1/2 miles
away from Zaffirini's Office

SENATOR CARLOS I. URESTI, SENATE DIST 19
2530 SW Military Drive, Suite 103, SA, TX 78221
(210) 932-2568 Closest Bus Route: 551, 550, 520

REPRESENTATIVE ROLAND GUTIERREZ
HOUSE DIST 119
3319 Sidney Brooks Bldg. 510 Suite 2 SA, TX 78235
(210) 532-2758 Closest Bus Route: 34, 20

REPRESENTATIVE FRANK J. CORTE,
HOUSE DISTRICT 122
2040 Babcock Rd., Ste. 402, SA, TX 78229
(210) 349-0320 Closest Bus Route: 91, 92 522, 532

REPRESENTATIVE RUTH JONES MCCLENDON,
HOUSE DIST 120
403 South WW White Road, Suite 210, SA, TX 78219
(210) 225-2107 Closest Bus Route: 25, 550

SENATOR JEFF WENTWORTH,
SENATE DIST 25
1250 N.E. Loop 410, Suite 925 SA, TX 78209
(210) 826-7800 Closest Bus Route: 10

REPRESENTATIVE DAVID LEIBOWITZ,
HOUSE DIST 117
9107 Marbach Road Suite 111, SA, TX 78245
(210) 645-4400 Closest Bus Route: 613, 615

REPRESENTATIVE JOAQUIN CASTRO,
HOUSE DIST 125
6502 Bandera, Ste. 106, SA, TX 78238
(210) 684-6896 Closest Bus Route: 88

REPRESENTATIVE MIKE VILLARREAL,
HOUSE DIST 123
1114 S. Saint Mary's Suite 110 SA, TX 78210
(210) 734-8937 Closest Bus Route: 34, 36, 42

REPRESENTATIVE JOSE MENENDEZ,
HOUSE DIST 124
7121 US Hwy. 90 West, Suite 240, SA, TX 78227
(210) 673-3579 Bus Route: 616

Useful Websites and Links

An Online Wellness Tool

www.ProsumersLightaCandle.org

Recovery TV

www.WorldTV.com/RecoveryTV

The Prosumer website

www.ProsumersInternational.org

PRO International for Empowermentware

www.TheProInternational.com

National Consumer/Survivor Coalition

www.ncmhcs.org

The Center for Health Care Services

www.CHCSBC.org

A website for all TX government departments www.texas.gov

NAMI

www.nami.org

Texas Mental Health Consumers

www.tmhc.org

Mental Health America of Texas

www.mhatexas.org

Texas Legislature Online

<http://www.capitol.state.tx.us>

Texas Administrative Code where you find the laws pertaining to the running of MHMR Centers <http://www.sos.state.tx.us/tac/>

The Texas Election Division to find voter information, and candidates

<http://www.sos.state.tx.us/tac/>

Substance Abuse Mental Health Services Administration

www.SAMHSA.gov

SAMHSA's Mental Health Information Center <http://www.samhsa.gov/centers/clearinghouse/clearinghouses.html>

Website for Medications, Assistance Programs, Discount programs

www.needymeds.com

TX Department of Housing and Community Affairs <http://www.tdhca.state.tx.us>

Patient Assistance with Medications

<http://www.phrma.org/>

Free Online Computer Classes through Global Community Foundation www.gcflearnfree.org/

For more information specific to their current situation and the transition to Medicare Rx www.texasmedicarerx.org



In this season of celebrating that which is important to us, may you find peace, happiness and contentment. May your journey on your life's path be filled with joy and unexpected delights. May you always find those perfect people to walk beside you. May you never forget how much you are loved!

Joy to you from all the Prosumers.

MODELS, PROGRAMS, AND TECHNICAL ASSISTANCE TOOLS: SAY IT OUT LOUD

Launched on May 1, 2008, the [Say it out loud](#) public awareness, engagement and education campaign was developed to increase awareness of mental health as a vital component of our overall health and well-being and motivate sustainable change in behaviors that promote good mental health. The campaign was developed and launched by the State of Illinois, Illinois Department of Human Services, Division of Mental Health, and The Illinois Children's Mental Health Partnership supported by a network of more than 30 organizations. May is traditionally known as Mental Health Awareness Month, but on May 1, 2008, Illinois Governor Blagojevich proclaimed May 'Say it out loud' month in Illinois.

The [Say it out loud](#) campaign is based on current research indicating that the best way to reduce the discrimination associated with mental illnesses is via the contact approach, by interaction through which people can engage with one another on this subject in a truly meaningful way and share their experiences and knowledge.

[Say it out loud](#) reframes mental health as a key component of our overall health and well-being by raising the subject in a non-threatening way that is both empowering and informative. It creates both 'virtual' and real contact opportunities with people who have mental illnesses, as well as medical and mental health professionals, family, employers, colleagues, neighbors or friends. It transmits reliable and valued information through the media, the Internet, advertising, word-of-mouth, and through personal stories that are the essence of the campaign.

Visually, the campaign is represented by photographs of people wearing T-shirts that tell their stories of mental health promotion or recovery. Other people in the photographs are wearing [Say it out loud](#) T-shirts that will be available to the public for purchase. These images will be used to share stories about mental health on posters, in advertisements and other printed materials.

For further information on the Say it out loud campaign, contact Katherine Rush, Senior Communication Director of Metropolitan Group; 35 E Wacker Drive, Suite 1750, Chicago, Illinois, 60601-2208; 312-628-1452; krush@metgroup.com.

GET a GREAT DEAL on ANYTHING

Editor's Note: This article was in the Readers Digest", Oct. 2008 edition and I thought that some of this may be very useful to you. I had to cut many of the ideas due to space, so I encourage to find the magazine and read the whole article as there were many great ideas on a lot of things.

COUPONS

Dealcatcher.com is a good resource for coupons, rebates, and Sunday newspapers circulars listing weekly deals. The printable coupons don't require special software (some sites do). A recent check found a coupon for \$10 off a \$60 purchase at the athletic shoe store **finishline.com** and a printable coupon for 25 percent off a pair of jeans at Gap. You can also compare prices here. We searched for 1.7-ounce bottle of Vera Wang's Princess fragrance and found the lowest price (\$43.95) through Deal-Catcher, verses \$55 at **sephora.com** and **norstrom.com**. The Canon PowerShotSD790ISten-megapixel digital camera was \$299.99 at **bestbuy.com**. But Deal-Catcher found it at **dell.com** for \$243 (including free shipping).

COMPARISONS

If you're short on time and want to do a quick price comparison, use "shopping bots" like **pricegrabber.com**. It won't catch every deal---it can miss low prices on some less technologically advanced sites---but it does give a good overview. Check several different ones (**shopping.com**, **mysimon.com**, **shopping.yahoo.com**), and remember to sort by price.

At PriceGrabber, search by products, retailers, individual sellers, prices, or ratings. You'll find just about everything here sporting goods, auto parts, furniture, musical instruments, toys, video games and electronics. The site's bottom-line-price tool shows how much your product will cost at the various sites with the shipping included. Even if you don't end up buying something online, you'll know what's a bargain. For one popular GPS system, we saw prices from 41 sellers ranging from \$348.85 (yes!) to \$749.95 (are you kidding?).

CLOTHING STRATEGIES

BUY at the RIGHT TIME A department store will usually mark down merchandise five to eight weeks after an item has been put on the floor. "If it's been an exceptionally warm winter," says Kathryn Finney, author of *How to Be a Budget Fashionista: The Ultimate Guide to Looking Fabulous for Less*, "coats will go on sale earlier." The best day to shop in most stores is Thursday, especially late in the day, because they'll start marking down for the weekend. For the best online deals, shop from Tuesday to Thursday.

HAGGLE "A lot of people don't realize you can negotiate when shopping in stores," Finney says. If a shirt is missing a button, ask the floor manager for a discount. She usually has the discretion to give you up to 15 percent off.

OPT for EXCESS **Overstock.com** partners with name brands to sell its excess inventory of clothes, jewelry, and many other goods at discounted prices. There was a sharp Bill Blass men's silk sport coat here for \$99.99 (it retailed elsewhere for \$295) and a Nine West women's two-piece suit in red for \$39.99 (it was \$240). At \$2.95 shipping is a bargain and applies to most orders in the continental U.S. If you find a better price elsewhere, overstock.com will give you a credit of up to \$500 as part of its Best Price Guarantee, but there's a long list of conditions to qualify.

KIDS' CLOTHING

Parents have swapped clothes and gear informally for years. Now they have a formal network for doing it at **freepeats.org**, which gives access to baby, kid, and maternity finds in 25 cities for a onetime charge of \$4.95.

GAS- Find inexpensive gas in your area by checking several sites---**gasbuddy.com**, **autos.msn.com**, **gaspricewatch.com**, and **gasprices.mapquest.com**. Many are community-driven sites, some more comprehensive than others. And remember, it's probably not worth driving 15 minutes out of your way to save 10 cents a gallon. Here's Gary Foreman's rule: "Unless you'll save more than a nickel a gallon and will be buying ten or more gallons, it's best to buy the cheapest gas you find along your usual commute."

TIRES- Save money by purchasing your tires online. The Goodyear Assurance Triple Tred tire (size P205/60HR16) is \$141.99 per tire at Sears (add \$15 for installation). It's \$109 at **discounttire.com**, \$102 at **tirerack.com**, and \$95 at **discounttires.com**. Some sites require store pickup; others deliver. Even adding shipping and installation costs (about \$30 per tire); you'll save up to 17 percent.

COMPARE INSURANCE QUOTES

Insweb.com is a good resource for obtaining quotes---on life, health, auto, and other type of insurance---from 6,400 agents representing 21 companies. You'll have to scroll through several screens, answering questions (the kind an insurance agent would ask), then you'll receive an e-mail with your quotes. A single 25-year-old

woman in San Francisco, for example, is currently paying \$1,771 a year for auto insurance. The lowest quote on **insweb.com** was \$1,124, a savings of \$647. Many factors---your health, your driving record, the location of your home---determine the actual cost of an insurance policy. As a result, quotes can vary widely.

LEISURE STRATEGIES

WATCH FREE VIDEOS You may not need that Netflix subscription for \$16.99 a month if your local library has a good DVD collection. And **hulu.com** has free full-length movies---including *Liar Liar*, *Sideways*, and *Jerry Maguire*---whenever you like. There are hundreds of videos from 56 studios and networks, including Fox Movie Channel, NBC Universal, National Geographic, and Sundance Channel. Catch a variety of primetime TV shows, too (and not all of them from NBC, which co-owns Hulu), including *The Office*, *In Plain Sight*, *the Colbert Report*, and *Family Guy*.

RENT IT Need a trombone, power saw, or bow and arrow? Rent an amazing assortment of stuff---you name it, it's available---from individuals at **zilok.com**, which covers 50 cities in 17 states. Type in what you're looking for, where you live, and how long you'll need it, then make arrangements with the owner for pickup. Mason Carroll, a software professional in San Francisco, rented a kayak for \$40 a day. He enjoyed paddling around Shasta Lake for less than if he'd purchased the same kayak for \$350. You can rent your stuff to others too. Both parties sign a contract detailing their agreement, but there is the possibility your renter might damage or disappear with your item.

\$1 MOVIES **Redbox.com** offers recent releases---such as *The Bucket List*, *Charlie Wilson's War*, and *Juno*---for just \$1. There are more than 9,000 of the distinctive red kiosks in 48 states, mostly in supermarkets and McDonald's restaurants. Use the website to find them in your zip code. Best day to go? Tuesday---it's new-release day. You can reserve your title in advance via the website. Or try the lazy way: Next time you're at the grocery store, choose a movie from the available titles, watch it that night, and return it the next day for \$1 plus tax.

Helping with your Personal Medicine in San Antonio

SAN ANTONIO MUSEUM OF ARTS

200 W. Jones Ave. 978-8100
Free Admission on Tuesdays 4-9 pm
www.samuseum.org

WITTE MUSEUM

3801 Broadway 357-1900
Free Admission on Tuesdays 3-8pm
www.witemuseum.org

SALON MEXICO

4707 Broadway
Basic Latin dance lesson every Friday 7-8pm with social dancing until 10:30pm in the Garden Room in the Villa @ Incarnate Word - **\$3.00 donation** covers lesson and dancing
Lesson is repeated on the following Monday 7-9pm at an intermediate level for those who want to learn more about the dance. **\$5.00 donation.**
www.salonmexico.20m.com

MEXICAN AMERICAN UNITY COUNCIL AND THE OFFICE OF CULTURE AFFAIRS

978-0500 ask for Sylvia. **Free Adult & Senior Canvas Painting Art Classes** Westside and Northside of San Antonio

"DANCE THERAPY" DANCE YOUR DEPRESSION AWAY INC.

The Neighborhood Place El Hogar de los Vecinos 3014 Rivas St. Ballroom Suite 431-7500 **Free** Every Wednesday 5:30-7pm Punctuality Required Leather Soles shoes. No Partner Necessary No Tennis shoes

THE MCNAY

6000 N. New Braunsfels 824-5368
Free Admission on Thursdays 4-9pm and 1st. Sunday of the Month
www.mcnayart.org

Old School Gamers

All community seniors and adults come join the fun at the Lincoln Community Center. Various games along with refreshments. Workout room available as well. **FREE to participants.** Monday, Tuesday and Friday 2 pm—6 pm. Call Dora or Esther at 210-271-7741 for more information.

Bazan Branch Library

Beginning Guitar in Spanish. 2200 W. Commerce, San Antonio 78207. 12pm on Saturdays. Bring own Guitar. **Free**

Lincoln Community Center Sewing Class

2915 E. Commerce. Wednesdays from 3:30-5:30 pm. Call 210-271-7741 for more information.

Pan American Branch Library Tai Chi

1122 W Pyron Avenue 78221. Free. 6:30 pm on Mondays. Wear loose fitting clothes. Come in 5-10 min early. Call for info at 210-924-8164

Memorial Branch Library Family Fun Nights

3222 Culebra 78228. Stories and crafts. **FREE!** 1st and 3rd Tuesdays of the month at 6:30 pm. Call 210-432-6783 for more info.

Maverick Branch Library Maverick Knitters

8700 Mystic Park 78254. Sundays 2-5pm. **FREE!** Call 210-680-9346 for more info.

Cinema Soledad

"Meet Me in St. Louis"
Film Series @ Central Library
December 16, 2008 @ 6:30pm
Auditorium, 1st. Floor.
Free and open to public. Patrons Encouraged to bring snacks. 1 hr. free parking with validated ticket. For more info. Call 207-2500

Cinemark Movies 16 5063 N.W. Loop 410 (210) 210-522-9660

Can't beat the prices At Cinemark Dollar Movies!
Mondays – Fifty-cent admission on family parties of 3 or more.
Tuesdays - \$1 Admission all day
All other days - \$1 first matinee.
\$1.50 other matinees before 6 pm and evening shows

Guadalupe Cultural Arts Center

Presents the 21st Annual
Hecho a Mano
Made by Hand
December 5-7, 2008
723 S. Brazos
Exhibit and Sale \$2 suggested donation or 2 cans of food.
Opening Night Preview on Dec. 5 is Target Community Night
Free Admission on this night only.

Arts in Our Parks

December 6, 2008
Woodlawn Lake Park
1103 Cincinnati
11am-3pm
Music, dance and poetry readings along with visual arts activities and information fair. Free admission
For more info. 207-6960

GET a GREAT DEAL (cont from page 7)

EDUCATION STRATEGIES

TAKE FREE COURSES Prestigious universities--- including MIT (ocw.mit.edu) and the University of California, Berkeley (webcast.berkeley.edu/courses.php)---offer online courses in everything from art to astrophysics. They don't count toward a degree, and you may need an iPod, Media Player software, or assigned texts to participate fully.

LEARN a LANGUAGE The BBC offers free lessons in seven languages---French, German, Spanish, Italian, Portuguese, Greek, and Chinese---at bbc.co.uk/languages. If your tastes run to more exotic tongues, go to freelanguague.org, and you'll be directed to sites to learn everything from Afrikaans to Luxembourgish. And it's all free.

TEXTBOOKS for LESS You can save some serious money by buying used books, renting them, or downloading freebies. The publisher's price for the ninth edition of *Organic Chemistry*, by T.W. Graham Solomons, is \$192.95. Buy it new at textbookx.com for \$187.50 or used through its Marketplace for as low as \$75.99. At chegg.com, its \$59.16 to rent for a semester. Booksprice.com factors in the shipping costs for the bottom line at a glance. Download more than 25,000 free electronic books at Project Gutenberg (Gutenberg.org). You won't find new titles here, only books that have expired copyrights, the list is strong on classic literature and history, but it's not the place to go for math or science texts.

EXCHANGE Books (paperbackswap.com), CDs (swapacd.com), and DVDs (swapadvd.com), that is. The tagline says it all: "No risk. No spam. No advertising. No gimmicks. No gotchas. No kidding." The sender pays the shipping costs and can send by any method he chooses. "I've gotten rid of an entire bookcase this way and then refilled it with books that I really wanted," says Kelley Neylan, owner of an apparel business in Columbia, Maryland. The book site recently listed more than 439,000 titles and is updated every five minutes. Barbara Walters's memoir, *Audition*, and Scott McClellan's *What Happened* were there, as well as friction by Dean Koontz, Lee Child, and Danielle Steel. The swapping currency is simple: One book, CD, or DVD equals one credit, but you'll have to list ten items before you earn any credits. If you don't see what your looking for here, try swaptree.com (you'll find video games too) an bookmooch.com (you can donate your points to sick or low-income kids).

SOURCE: Readers Digest", Oct. 2008

If you can't feed a hundred people, then just feed one.—Mother Teresa