

Ring in the New Year at the Holiday Inn!



Gourmet Buffet Featuring Chef Carved Prime Rib, Cherry & Goat Cheese Stuffed Pork Loin, Herbed Boursin Cheese Chicken, Fire-Roasted Red Pepper Alfredo Fartalle **\$24<sup>95</sup>** not inclusive

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**\$134<sup>99</sup>\*** Standard Room for Two includes Buffet and Bottle of Champagne \*upgrade to Jacuzzi Room for \$30 more.

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**Fruitport Library**

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**Library Hours**

Mon. 11 am - 7 pm  
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**Closed Thursday**

Fri. 11 am - 5 pm  
Sat. 9 am - 12 pm



**Clothes Encounters of the Used Kind**

*established 1988*

- We accept clothes, small appliances & toys
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- Lots of Winter items for \$5 bag
- Any profit is donated to charities within Muskegon County
- All workers are volunteers who donate their time

**HOURS**  
Tues: 3:30 - 6:00  
Thurs: 12:00 - 3:00  
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Phone 865-3637

284 N. 3rd Ave. Next to Word of Hope Church



**Thunderhoofs 4-H Club**

By Nancy Hartman and Mary Weimer

Fruitport resident Nancy Hartman, along with Lorrie Gabert and Lori Wright, are the leaders of the Thunderhoofs 4-H Club. Their members are from Grand Haven, Bailey, Grant and Ravenna.

The club has been in existence for about four years, and the members have earned many ribbons, plaques and trophies

at the Muskegon County Youth Fair. The members raise beef cows, pigs, rabbits, dogs, and complete inanimate projects in addition to the usual horses.

They are already preparing for the 2010 fair, and would like to thank their sponsors, Murphy Oil and Harbor House Inn for their support, and the members' parents for their continued encouragement. •

**The best record keepers**

By Dr. E. Kirsten Peters

As a record keeper, I'm pathetic. I often can't keep track of where my checkbook is, let alone the balance in the account. The chief problem determining the balance isn't my arithmetic skills, it's that I don't enter all the checks that I write for merchandise in the ledger. No wonder the amount I show I have becomes a tad different from what the bank feels I have in my account.

As I say, I'm not a good record keeper.

So I marvel at people who can keep highly ordered tax papers, favorite family recipes, instructions on how to run their appliances, notes on when they last had the furnace serviced, etc.

But in some ways, Mother Nature keeps better records than we ever shall, at least when she wishes to. And she keeps them, potentially, for billions — literally billions — of years.

I'll explain this feat by way of my favorite seasonal analogy: Food.

Consider the last time you belied up to a long and varied brunch buffet. I recently did this at church. (I may miss midnight services, but never brunch buffets.) You may have done it at a commercial establishment of the all-you-can-eat-variety. In any such place, if you are lucky, you had an egg-and-bread based entrée called strata.

Besides eggs and cheese, strata ingredients may be ham, Canadian bacon, a few select veggies like spinach, onions and tomatoes, or (if you are particularly lucky) all of the above.

Strata gets its name from the layers of bread in it. It's like a layer cake, except hot and full of protein rather than sugar. What could be better, in particular as late autumn slips away toward the first day of winter?

To a geologist, each bread layer in the dish is a stratum (singular). The more strata (plural), the better. Naturally, you place the lowest stratum into the pan first. Next, the middle one; finally, the top one.

When Mother Nature makes sedimentary rock — the greatest of all record books on earth — she "lays down" a single stratum first. It's likely to be a layer of sandstone (made of sand

grains) or shale (made of mud) or limestone (which may be made almost entirely of shells) or coal (made of ancient plant remains). The next stratum, of necessity, goes on top the earlier one. So the second stratum is younger than the first. Similarly, a third stratum above is younger than the first two, etc.

If you can conjure up an image of the Grand Canyon in your mind's eye, you know that there are places on earth where dozens of layers are piled up, one atop the next. Those places are heaven to geologists. They are strata-meccas where we go to get inspiration — and to retire when we are just too old for any work beyond baking and eating strata (the egg dish, I mean).

It's the basic ordering of the sedimentary layers — oldest, middle, youngest — that gave geologists our first way of fully unraveling the history of the earth. Essentially, we dated (and named) all the sandstone and mud layers, listing them out in terms of which happened first, second, third, fourth, fifth, sixth, seventh, and so on, all around the whole earth. (Yes, we did the work patiently and carefully, and it really worked. Some geologists can keep much more careful records of their work than others!)

It's because the strata of sedimentary rocks contain fossils that we developed not just a history of mud and sand, but of swimming and crawling and even flying creatures, as well. That's how we "got the picture" that great fishes came first in the fossil record, followed by amphibians and reptiles, then followed by dinosaurs and mammals and birds.

And that's what impresses me so much about earth's strata. They taught us the grand story of life. The record of life, sometimes including delicate fossils, was maintained over epochs, eras and eons in those layers. Although the record of fossils and sedimentary rocks have to be interpreted carefully, no paper records or programming on DVDs could ever compare in full and rich complexity to what Mother Nature preserved — and that we can study whenever we wish. •

Dr. E. Kirsten Peters is a native of the rural Northwest, but was trained as a geologist at Princeton and Harvard. Questions about science or energy for future Rock Docs can be sent to epeters@wsu.edu. This column is a service of the College of Sciences at Washington State University. •

**45 life lessons**

by Regina Brett, age 90

(Courtesy, The Cleveland Plain Dealer)

1. Life isn't fair, but it's still good.
2. When in doubt, just take the next small step.
3. Life is too short to waste time hating anyone.
4. Your job won't take care of you when you are sick. Your friends and parents will. Stay in touch.
5. Pay off your credit cards every month.
6. You don't have to win every argument. Agree to disagree.
7. Cry with someone. It's more healing than crying alone.
8. It's OK to get angry with God. He can take it.
9. Save for retirement starting with your first paycheck.
10. When it comes to chocolate, resistance is futile.
11. Make peace with your past so it won't screw up the present.
12. It's OK to let your children see you cry.
13. Don't compare your life to others. You have no idea what their journey is all about.
14. If a relationship has to be a secret, you shouldn't be in it.
15. Everything can change in the blink of an eye. But don't worry, God never blinks.
16. Take a deep breath. It calms the mind.
17. Get rid of anything that isn't useful, beautiful or joyful.
18. Whatever doesn't kill you really does make you stronger.
19. It's never too late to have a happy childhood, but the second one is up to you and no one else.
20. When it comes to going after what you love in life, don't take no for an answer.

21. Burn the candles, use the nice sheets, wear the fancy lingerie. Don't save it for a special occasion. Today is special.
22. Over prepare, then go with the flow.
23. Be eccentric now. Don't wait for old age to wear purple.
24. The most important sex organ is the brain.
25. No one is in charge of your happiness but you.
26. Frame every so-called disaster with these words: "In five years, will this matter?"
27. Always choose life.
28. Forgive everyone everything.
29. What other people think of you is none of your business.
30. Time heals almost everything. Give time time.
31. However good or bad a situation is, it will change.
32. Don't take yourself so seriously. No one else does.
33. Believe in miracles.
34. God loves you because of who God is, not because of anything you did or didn't do.
35. Don't audit life. Show up and make the most of it now.
36. Growing old beats the alternative — dying young.
37. Your children only get one childhood.
38. All that truly matters in the end is that you are loved.
39. Get outside every day. Miracles are waiting everywhere.
40. If we all threw our problems in a pile and saw everyone else's, we'd grab ours back.
41. Envy is a waste of time. You already have all you need.
42. The best is yet to come.
43. No matter how you feel, get up, dress up, and show up.
44. Yield.
45. Life isn't tied with a bow, but it's still a gift. ••