

It's that time of year again. And don't let a few unseasonably warm days this week, or Al Gore's reminders about global arming lull you into a false sense of hope for spring. It's the time when all sane people on Nantucket hunker down and do what high-paid marketing consultants call "nesting."

This is the time of year when wet feels wetter and cold feels colder and spending time outdoors on or around the island is not nearly as attractive as sitting by the fire. And all of you people who built homes on Nantucket without fireplaces — with no box of warm, orange flames to feed bundles of logs from the Stop & Empty Your Wallet sidewalk bin — are kicking yourselves. "I wish we had spent the extra money on a real fireplace," friends often say. Maybe your neighbors will invite you over for hot cocoa. (Some houses here on Nantucket have six or eight fireplaces. You'd think that people would be happy to share.) Soon the temperature will drop below those under which scallopers may no longer ply their trade and fishermen will seek indoor work. Deer season is over. So are the holidays, so there's no reason to be walking from house to house with gifts for others. This is the time to stay at home and enjoy the gifts you have received. Especially if they are fleece

lined down throws, warm sweaters, slippers or the Nintendo Wii.

The discipline of hunkering down, something I have obviously perfected over the years as evidenced by my sedentary physique, is easily learned and maintained. (Don't you just love a discipline that requires no sacrifice or hard work? I do.) Here are a few tips that I'm happy to pass on to you.

1. Make a big pot of something. Chili. Beef Stew. Chicken soup with escarole and linguica. Something hearty and satisfying that you can eat with crusty bread and slabs of cheese. Keep it on the back porch in the snow and when you're hungry, bring it in and brush the ice chunks off the side of the stew pot and fire it up. Nothing's better than being hungry and knowing there's a massive pot of good stuff waiting on the back porch half submerged in a small snow bank.

2. Make some real cocoa. Not some instant, just-add-water, reconstituted weak substitute for cocoa with mini marshmallows that look like they are refugees from a war-torn marshmallow principality. Make it with real, dark cocoa powder and hot milk and real sugar. And put a big dollop of Marshmallow Fluff on top. Yeah, so what if it means there's an extra saucepan to clean up. Live a little, will ya? You're nesting.

3. Get to know iTunes. If you don't already have an iPod, crawl out from the cave you've been living in and fire up the old Commodore 64 and order one. Or better yet, go to the local Radio Shack store. I think they have them

there. Then go to iTunes and download a bunch of music you've never hear before. Or put all of your Rick Springfield and Gilbert & Sullivan CDs on your new iPod. You can spend hours on end downloading songs and copying cover art for your favorite bands into iTunes. Before you know it, it's springtime and you can create a special springtime play list to express your earnest feelings about vernal inevitability.

4. Get a huge TV. We recently upgraded our television situation and I can offer these words of advice with confidence. You'll never regret getting the largest TV you can afford or comfortably fit in your viewing area. Flat panels are the best. LCD? Plasma? It doesn't matter. If you like the picture in the showroom, you'll like the picture at home. Get the complete digital channel line-up. The international channels are hilarious. I could watch Japanese TV with no subtitles for hours. Keep in mind that you may only have four weeks left to watch the Patriots, so get that new TV soon. I'm anxious about NFL-withdrawal symptoms already. What will I do with myself on Sundays? Clean out the shed? Yeah, right.

5. Bundle up. See above mentioned fleece-lined down throw (Eddie Bauer, \$39.00 online). Several layers are also a good idea. And warm socks. Then hit the couch with a big bowl of pistachios and the remote. Nothing is better.

6. Gain warmth from your dog. They say that you lose 80 percent of

your body heat through your head. My dog, Seven, compensates for this by climbing onto my chair and attempting to drape himself over my head like a hat. As much as I enjoy wearing a 65-pound furry hat, I do prefer him draped over my feet, curled up on the ottoman next to my work space. He keeps me warm and reminds me to take breaks for playtime and ear scratching. If you don't have a dog, I pity you, for you are missing out on one of the most rewarding relationships you will ever have. Although I will admit that cats make better hats. Not to mention bait.

7. Check out the ramblings and blatant negativity at yackon.com. It helps an average of over four thousand visitors a day while away the winter hours indoors. Yes, a day.

8. Whatever you do, stay inside. The only people out of doors this winter will be me and my dog. I'll be trying out the new coat and hat and gloves that Santa brought me while I scour the island looking for people to alert who should be indoors hunkering down. I might also take in some of the incredible scenery on this, the most beautiful place on earth, during its most quiet and peaceful time.

Bundle up. And YACK on. ■

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Grant Sanders

YACK on: Happy Returns

NEWHOUSE

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the United States and around the world. He opened an office in Rhiyad, Saudia Arabia, where he and Virginia lived for three years.

In 1982 he sold Behring International and bought his beloved 46-foot CSY "Whistler" and commercially fished in the Caribbean until he began winter cruising in the Caribbean, Guatemala, Belize and the Bahamas. Many Nantucketers crewed with him, including Arnie Seaquist, Bill Stevens, Al Borneman, Bruce Coursen, Alan Worden, Melissa Wickser, Larry Miller, Steve Marcoux, Dave Dubock, Marc Dawson, Mark Duffield and many others.

Worden is deeply saddened by the loss of his friend, but holds many fond memories of their times together.

"He was probably my best friend. He was the kind of guy who really transcended relationships — sometimes you felt like he was the grandfather you never had, sometimes he was your father and sometimes he was your friend," said Worden. "I think that was because of his ultimate optimism. I don't think I ever saw him but happy about the day before him and he wanted to have fun. He loved Nantucket and all the island had to offer, but he made fun a priority. He was truly an individual believer. He believed in the power of an idea and the ability of an individual to follow that through. If he determined it was a good idea he would dive in and do it, and I think there is a message in there about the power to change a community. He was ultimately impactful."

Alan's contributions to the communities in which he lived were many. He and Virginia were founders of the Friends of the Bellaire Community Library. Alan and his friend Val Thompson started a tennis clinic for the neighborhood kids on the public courts. He was a volunteer at Bentaub Hospital. He was President for many years of the World Trade Association in Houston. In Nantucket he was voted Man of the Year by the Rotary Club.

In Nantucket, Alan's contributions to the sailing community are legend. He was a founding member of Nantucket Community Sailing which now teaches over 700 children how to sail each summer. He revived the Rainbow fleet by fixing up Rainbows for any owners who agreed to race, and he was the leader of the Sunday Rainbow Parade for the Opera House Cup. He was single-handedly instrumental in reviving the Indian class, having a mold made and reproducing fiberglass copies. There are as many as 18 Indians now racing because of him.

Alan was often the winner of the Rainbow and Indian series with his crew Nat Philbrick, Alan Worden and Nick Judson and Allen LaFrance.

Judson said his and Alan's family knew each other from before the time Judson was born. About 10 years ago Alan encouraged Judson to become involved with Nantucket Community Sailing, of which he is now executive director.

"The thing I value about Alan is that he was such a great people person. He had a dynamic quality to bring people together for a common goal. That was certainly true with Community Sailing, but for everything he has done," said Judson. "Whatever he touched he seemed to always have a positive focus. Everyone around him would embrace it. I wish there were more people out there like Alan Newhouse, and I hope all his friends can help keep his legacy for working together. He was a very caring individual, always interested in everybody and everything. In the last couple of years we'd meet for breakfast and talk. He was such a voice of reason and such a mentor. I wish in my life I could do a fraction of what he's done. He has just been extraordinary. And there was a fun-loving, impish nature to his personality — he always had a little smirk. He saw how to make the most miserable work fun. If Alan was doing it you knew it would be fun."

Alan also enjoyed playing tennis with Hank Irvine, the Nantucket Yacht Club tennis pro, and with the Wednesday men's group.

In 1999, Alan married Sondra Cross. They met

playing paddle tennis in Nantucket and were married eight years. During that time they traveled to Europe and Belize. They enjoyed entertaining by holding many waffle breakfasts for their friends and delighted in sharing their Nantucket and Vero Beach homes with friends who traveled to see them.

Alan's ROMEO and Thursday Lunch Bunch were highlights of his week. He also enjoyed his beekeeping with friends Jim Gross and Ernie Latham. Long-time friend Dual MacIntyre admired Alan's wit, his down-to-earth principles and his philosophy on life.

"He was a wonderful man. Two things stick out in my mind when I think of him: he was always jolly, always upbeat about things. It was infectious. And he was a great sailor but he was never afraid of doing the dirtiest, least attractive jobs. He was a wonderfully positive man. Anyone who came in contact with him thought of him as a treasured uncle. He was just great to be around. I remember several years ago when Community Sailing started they were moving floats to the Boat Basin in March for the school kids to use for practice. Alan's boat flipped over and he went in the water. The Coast Guard got him out, but it didn't faze him. He just went home and changed his clothes and came right back to work."

Alan's life was a happy one, enriched by his family, friends and the community. He was predeceased by Virginia Sharp, his wife of 54 years, and a brother, Edgar Newhouse. He is survived by his four children: Nancy Newhouse, Gerry Newhouse, Deborah Dunham and Christopher Newhouse, and their spouses, four grandchildren and four great-grandchildren. He is also survived by his wife, Sondra Cross, three step-children, Tiffany Vittorini, Holly Hanlon and Daphne Borowski Muller and five grandchildren.

A funeral Mass will be held at Holy Cross Catholic Church in Vero Beach. A memorial service will be held in Nantucket next summer. Donations may be made to Nantucket Community Sailing, which is setting up a scholarship in Alan's name, and to Hospice of Vero Beach. ■