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ACCENT

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SECTION **C**

Island people usher traveler into paradise

My bruises, blisters and burns are my badges of honor this week. I earned them during a seven-day stay on the mystical, tranquil and enchanting islands of St. Kitts and Nevis in the eastern Caribbean.

The tiny islands are billed as two islands, one paradise. They are more.

About two miles apart, St. Kitts and Nevis are breathtaking in their natural beauty — from the majestic and powerful Atlantic Ocean waves and the calm, turquoise Caribbean waters to the lush, tropical rain forests and sturdy remnants of old sugar plantations.



Daily Journal editor Scarlett Syse

But it was the people of the islands who really took my breath away.

I, a stranger with a different skin color, put my life in their care many times.

Each time, they took my hand and pulled me up mountains, through sugarcane fields and into the bluer-than-blue Caribbean. These strangers gave me memories I will never forget. I trusted them instinctively and listened to the stories of their life, too.

Twenty-three-year-old Brent took us up St. Kitts's Mount Liamuiga, a dormant volcano, once known as Mount Misery. Misery schmisery. We were going to hike it even if we were Hoosiers from the flatlands.

As Brent drove us to the base of the mountain, we caught our first glimpse of the St. Kitts countryside.

Children in clean and pressed uniforms walked to school. Families emerged from their small homes, painted in light hues of oranges, teals and greens. And we maneuvered around goats, chickens and cows, all born free and roaming free.

Soon we were off-road, on rutted, bumpy paths cut in the middle of sugarcane fields. Brent pulled out his machete and whacked down cane so the next passengers would not have it so rough.

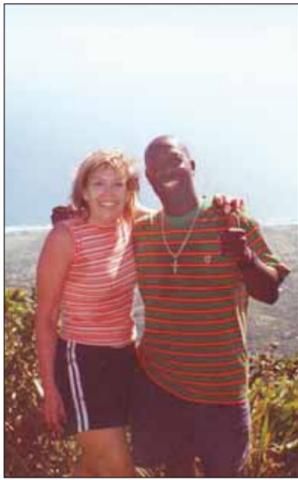
We reached the mount's base and learned we would be hiking to a peak about 3,000 feet high.

Over and over again, Brent took our hands, guided us and taught us lessons about the ancient trees, wildlife and vegetation. He found sap that smelled like turpentine. He showed us the weatherman leaves.

At one point, he helped us play Tarzan. We climbed a step or two up the tree, grabbed the vine and swung like an ape.

More than two hours after we started, we

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SUBMITTED PHOTO

Scarlett Syse, editor of the Daily Journal, and Lynnell Liburd, a guide, are triumphant as they stand at the top of Mount Nevis overlooking the Caribbean.

Surprise your sweetie Feb. 14

Scrrips Howard News Service

Looking for something sweet yet stylish for your loved one this Valentine's Day?

From pj's to timepieces, here are some ideas to show you care:

- Slatkin & Co. "Passion" Kabbalah candle (\$22). The scent: red jasmine, apple and mahogany. www.xanadus.com/Slatkin
- Victoria's Secret Sexy Little Things 365 days of romance cards with different romantic sayings (\$12). victoriasssecret.com
- Mimi Maternity Valentine's Day Photo Box Sleep Set (\$38). www.mimimaternity.com.
- Chuck Taylor All Star sneaker with heart detail (\$49.99). www.amazon.com.
- Gap Body flannel pj pants (\$29.50) and cami (\$24.50). www.gap.com
- Montblanc Love Letter Ink (\$13), a rose scented ink. www.montblanc.com
- David Yurman Thoroughbred Watch on Red Alligator (\$1,750). www.davidyurman.com.

Candles are a simple yet potentially sensuous gift option.



Method to the madness



STAFF PHOTO BY MATT OOLEY/mooley@thejournalnet.com

Surrounded by stacks of decades-old phone books and auto parts, Thomas Peters paints in his spare time at Peters Radiator Shop in Franklin. Peters has worked at the business his father opened in 1946 for more than 40 years.

Some people organize their closet by color. Others have underwear from two decades ago. Meet four offenders from both camps.

STORIES BY SHERRI EASTBURN



STAFF PHOTO BY SCOTT ROBERSON/sroberson@thejournalnet.com

Emily Wood stores dry goods such as powdered sugar and white rice in labeled resealable containers. The mother of three children, including 5-year-old twins, says organization keeps her sane.

Don't mess with textbook neatniks

Emily Wood still has her Christmas list from 1994. It's filed away with every holiday list since then. As Wood flips through her very organized organizer, she can confidently say she has never been a repeat gift-giver.

Wood plans her family menus one month at a time and grocery shops twice every month.

Friends tease her about her extremely organized life, said Wood, a Franklin resident.

As a wife and a stay-at-home mother to Garrett, 7, and 5-year-old twins Sam and Katie, Wood insists organizational skills make life a lot less chaotic.

"This morning before the kids went to school I had my supper ready," Wood said.

A pot of green beans simmered on the stove while beef burgundy heated in the slow cooker.

To stay on top of the busy world she shares with her husband, Dave, Wood utilizes a day planner. She jots notes in it daily.

"Today, I wrote down that I needed to thaw smoked sausage for tomorrow," Wood said. "If I don't write it down, I'll forget."

(SEE NEATNIKS, PAGE C6)



STAFF PHOTO BY SHERRI EASTBURN/seastburn@thejournalnet.com

Some of Cynthia Adams' mess is evident on her kitchen table. Adams' is the self-proclaimed clutter bug of her family. "I just happen to like clutter," she says. "I feel comfortable in clutter."

Pack rats comfortably co-exist with jumble

If it's a flat surface, it's fair game. Mess inevitably finds its way to the top of the washer and dryer, the seats of chairs and especially the kitchen table in Cynthia Adams' Greenwood apartment.

Her car is not immune either. Boxes fight for space in the backseat, still there from moving more than a year ago.

As the middle child in a family of three daughters, Adams said she's been the family pack rat since early childhood.

She keeps recipes clipped from newspapers 20 years ago. Books gather dust, waiting to be read.

Crossword puzzles, empty cups and medicine bottles clutter Adams' kitchen table.

Until six weeks ago, her winter coats were in the backseat of her car; piled on top of the boxes.

"Now the coats are on my bedroom floor," Adams said with a laugh.

A table-top Christmas tree still decorates the living room. She will put it away one of these days. There's no hurry, she said.

Adams scribbles appointments on a wall calendar in the laundry room. A day planner is tucked in her purse.

Other people might think her apartment is in such disarray that she would lose things.

That's not exactly true.

"I root around until I eventually find whatever is it I am looking for," she said.

Through the years, Adams, 58, occasionally lived with her oldest sister, the late Nonie Shields.

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CLUTTER QUIZ

Test your pack-rat rating.

- Are shoes from the past decade piled in your closet?
- Do you want to don a helmet before opening closet doors in your home?
- Do you have mail addressed to your name from two husbands ago?
- Does your teenage daughter borrow your clothes for disco day at school?
- Do you still have size small underwear in your drawer when you wear extra large?

If you answered yes to two or more of these questions, you might be a pack rat. You're definitely not alone, but consider setting aside time to organize your stuff.

Emily Wood uses a spreadsheet to keep track of her grocery list. She plans meals four weeks ahead and grocery shops twice a month.

