

# LIFESTYLES

## SHARE YOUR STORY

The Journal welcomes ideas for stories about people in our community who have gotten married, graduated, joined the military, etc.  
Call the Journal at 285-7411

# Taking St. John's wort for depression

**Q. I have friends in France who take St. John's wort for depression. Do you think this stuff works?**

A. St. John's wort (Hypericum perforatum or Klamathweed) is one of the most commonly purchased herbal products in the United States. However, do not take this product unless you have consulted your family physician.

The St. John's wort plant has been used as a medicine for many centuries. It was popular in ancient Greece. Today in Europe, it is used widely to treat mild-to-moderate depression.

St. John's wort is a shrubby plant with clusters of yellow flowers.



Fred  
CICETTI  
HEALTH CARE WRITER

Both the flowers and leaves of the plant are used as medicine. St. John's wort can be obtained in capsules, tablets, tinctures, teas, and oil-based skin lotions. Chopped or powdered forms of the dried herb are also available.

The plant grows in

Europe, Asia, Africa, and the western United States. The plant is often in full bloom around June 24, the day traditionally celebrated as the birthday of St. John the Baptist.

St. John's wort has antibacterial and antiviral properties. It fights inflammation and has been used to treat wounds. St. John's wort may help relieve some types of depression but the evidence is *not definitive*.

There is some scientific data indicating that St. John's wort may be helpful in treating *minor* depression. However, two large studies showed that the herb was no more effective than placebo in treating major depression of moderate severity.

One of these studies was sponsored by the National Center for Complementary and Alternative Medicine (NCCAM), which is part of the National Institutes of Health.

St. John's wort contains several chemicals, including hypericin, hyperforin, and flavonoids. Researchers aren't sure how St. John's wort works. Some have suggested that the herb acts like antidepressants by making more of the brain chemicals serotonin, dopamine, and norepinephrine available. These chemicals — known as neurotransmitters — are mood elevators.

It should be stressed that the herb can cause serious side effects. In

general, herbal therapies are not recommended for the elderly, pregnant women, children, or those taking certain medicines.

It is also important to note that the U.S. Food and Drug Administration has not approved St. John's wort for use as an over-the-counter or prescription medicine for depression.

Combining St. John's wort with certain antidepressants can lead to a potentially life-threatening increase of serotonin. St. John's wort can also limit the effectiveness of many prescription medicines such as antidepressants, some blood-pressure drugs, birth control pills, the heart medication

Digoxin, some HIV drugs, blood thinners, antihistamines, cough medicines, sedatives, some cancer medications, and statins that lower cholesterol.

Other less threatening side effects of St. John's wort include stomach upset, hives or other skin rashes, fatigue, restlessness, headache, dry mouth, and feelings of dizziness or mental confusion. St. John's wort can also make the skin overly sensitive to sunlight.

*If you would like to ask a question, write to fred@healthygeezzer.com.*

**Cicetti is a health care writer with more than 40 years of journalistic experience.**

## SENIOR MENU

Hot meals for people 60 or older are served at noon Monday through Friday at Koochiching County Senior Center, 307 Fourth St.

Meals are for anyone, regardless of income. A \$4 donation is suggested. Meals are subject to change. Participants under age 60 are welcome at \$7.50 each.

For reservations call 283-3460 the day before the meal. Cancellations may be

made the day of the meal.

### MONDAY

Pulled pork sandwiches  
Fresh potato wedges  
Baked beans  
Fruit

### TUESDAY

Turkey  
Gravy  
Mashed potatoes  
Sweet potatoes  
Dressing  
Fresh fruits

### WEDNESDAY

Spinach and ham egg  
bake or alternative  
Seasoned fresh fruit  
Apple juice  
Cinnamon rolls

### THURSDAY

Closed

### FRIDAY

Fish sandwich on a bun  
or alternative  
Carrot raisin salad  
Tater Tots  
Tarter sauce  
Fresh fruit

## MEMORIAM

In loving memory of our father, **Carl Erling Olson**.  
*One year has passed since you were here,  
Oh how we miss you, father*

*dear.  
God took you home, it was His will,  
But in our hearts you linger still.*

**Sadly missed by  
Tim, Chris, children,  
grandchildren and  
great-grandchildren**

# LOOKINGBACK

### 25 YEARS AGO

Tammy Harmening is among 99 individuals who are student teaching winter quarter through a supervised program conducted by the professional education department at Bemidji State University.

Evelyn Stevens, the new owner of Second Act, located in the International Mall, was recognized by the Greater International Falls Chamber of Commerce Ambassadors Carol Schumacher and Karen Nellen.

### 40 YEARS AGO

Falls High debaters captured two trophies during the Smokey Bear Christmas Debate Tournament held in Borderland last weekend. Debaters were Dave Misner, Patty Borden, Richard Oswald, Keir Johnson, Bob Oswald, Tom Williamson, Dan Ganter and Julie Mielke.

### 50 YEARS AGO

First consolation winner in Virginia's Early Bird Curling Bonspiel was the International Falls rink

skipped by Rube Julien. Curlers are Alec Pleimling, lead; George Ballan, second; Rube Julie, skip; and Paul Reuter, third.

A boy, Charles Edward, was born Dec. 20 to Mr. and Mrs. Herman Steinbach, Loman; 2 pounds, 3 ounces.

Radioman Third Class Bernard N. Walls, USN, son of Mr. and Mrs. Norman K. Walls of 1513 Third Ave. E., participated in a joint U.S.-French amphibious assault landing exercise conducted on the Island of Corsica off the coast of Italy while serving aboard the ocean minesweeper USS Assurance.

National Food Stores — Kipperd snacks, 10 cents a can; Morton's frozen cream pies, three for \$1; Twin pack Ripple chips, 39 cents a package; cleaned, ready to use shrimp, 1 1/2-pound package, \$2.19.

### 60 YEARS AGO

Gordon E. Lyngstad, 518 Eighth St., is serving in Japan with the base squadron of Marine helicopter trans-

port group 16.

Kenneth Blanchard, son of Mr. and Mrs. Bob Blanchard of South International Falls, enlisted in the United States Air Force on Dec. 15.

Joann and Mary Ann Arch are spending the holiday weekend with their parents, Mr. and Mrs. W.B. Arch, 1114 Sixth St.

Mr. and Mrs. Wilbur Byman, 010 12th St., had a family reunion Christmas Day at their home. Guests were Mr. and Mrs. Roger Perle and daughter and Mr. and Mrs. Ernest Byman.

### 70 YEARS AGO

A son was born this morning at Northern Minnesota Hospital to Mr. and Mrs. John Skrumeda of Goldville Addition.

Helmer Oien, who has owned and operated the Diamond Taxi Company for a little over a year, completed transactions this week transferring his interests to Cy Kirvan, former owner of the Kirvan Trucking Company.

## COMMUNITY CAFE MENU

The Community Cafe offers free meals, to anyone in Koochiching County, regardless of income, with no restrictions. The program is sponsored by the Falls Hunger Coalition and Citizens for Backus/AB with the support of local volunteers. Reservations are not required. There is no charge for the meals, but donations are accepted. Take-out meals are also available. Meals served on Tuesdays and Thursdays from 5:30 to 6 p.m. at Backus Community Center, 900 Fifth St. Call the Backus office for information, 285-7225.

### January 1

*New Year's Day — No meal.*

### January 6

*Volunteer Group — First*

### Lutheran Church

Tomato basil chicken  
Parmesan angel hair  
pasta  
Fruit  
Dinner roll

### January 8

*Volunteer Group — First  
Lutheran Church*

Roast beef  
Potatoes and gravy  
Green beans  
Dinner roll

### January 13

*Volunteer Group — St. Thomas  
Church*

Turkey gravy over biscuits  
Hash rounds  
Peas and carrots  
January 15

*Volunteer Group — St. Thomas  
Church*

Chicken and wild rice  
Vegetable  
Dinner roll

### January 20

*Volunteer Group — Zion  
Lutheran Church*

Chili  
Corn bread  
Fruit

### January 22

*Volunteer Group — Zion  
Lutheran Church*

Deli turkey sandwich  
Hearty vegetable soup  
Fruit

### January 27

*Volunteer Group —  
Evangelical Covenant Church*

Pasta with sauce and meatballs  
Fresh salad  
Bread sticks

### January 29

*Volunteer Group — United  
Health Group*

Chicken Teriyaki  
Vegetables  
Fruit  
Dinner roll

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(Once. You're done!)

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(Comment blog.)

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Preparing for labor to postpartum care

All expectant mothers are welcome to attend FREE classes.

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8, 15, & 22  
6:30 - 8:30 PM

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