

Bringing Snow White to life

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Thursday

NOVEMBER 10, 2011

SECTION

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TRAINED FOR SUCCESS

Dane Miller operates Garage Strength in Ontelaunee Township, combining an exercise regimen for his clients with a manifestation of his ideals. He also raises free-range chickens and sells the eggs.

BY ANDY SCHELL
READING EAGLE CORRESPONDENT

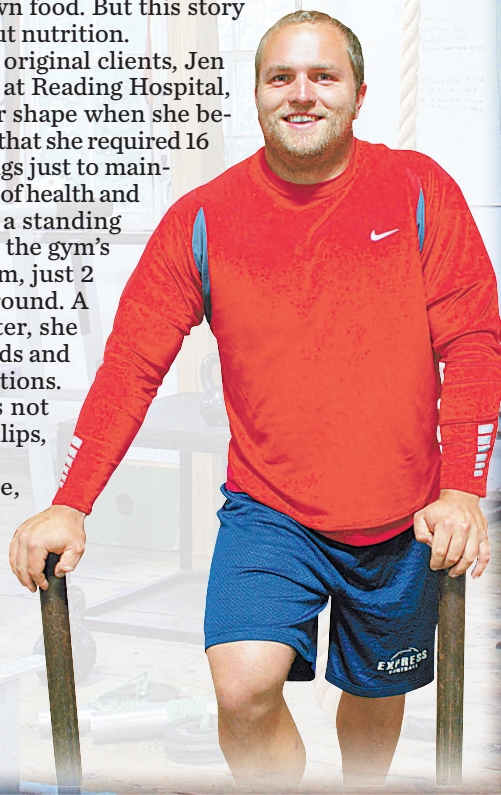
DANE MILLER'S gym occupies the upper floor of an 18th century barn in rural Ontelaunee Township. But this story is not really about fitness.

Garage Strength, giving a nod to its humble beginnings in 2008, is perhaps the only gym in the world that raises its own food. But this story is not really about nutrition.

One of Dane's original clients, Jen Phillips, a nurse at Reading Hospital, was in such poor shape when she began working out that she required 16 prescription drugs just to maintain a semblance of health and could not, from a standing start, jump onto the gym's smallest platform, just 2 inches off the ground. A year and half later, she has lost 65 pounds and takes no medications. But this story is not really about Phillips, either.

In 2006, Dane, then 22, dropped out of Penn [See *Garage* >>> D3]

Dane Miller is the owner of Garage Strength in Ontelaunee Township.



Noelle Koonce, 16, of Leesport on the climbing rope.

COURTESY OF ANDY SCHELL



THE ASSOCIATED PRESS

TV host, producer and actress Oprah Winfrey

Winfrey's philanthropy earns her honorary Oscar

THE ASSOCIATED PRESS

LOS ANGELES — Oprah Winfrey said she understands why some balked when the film academy announced it would give her an honorary Oscar for her humanitarian contributions.

The 57-year-old media mogul will receive the prestigious Jean Hersholt Humanitarian Award on Saturday at the Academy of Motion Picture Arts and Sciences' third annual Governors Awards.

When the announcement was made over the summer, some criticized the academy for choosing Winfrey to receive its Hersholt award, which is presented periodically to "an individual in the motion-picture industry whose humanitarian efforts have brought credit to the industry," according to the academy's website.

Previous recipients include Elizabeth Taylor, Quincy Jones, Jerry Lewis and Paul Newman.

Critics said Winfrey belongs more to the world of TV than that of film.

"I understood it because I was equally surprised," Winfrey said in a recent interview.

Products can help give you skin that glows

BY MELISSA MAGSAYSAY
McCLATCHY-TRIBUNE

I don't think I'm alone in wanting instant gratification from my beauty products, especially when it comes to items that claim to brighten, lighten and deliver overall radiance. If a product makes those claims, then I want to emerge from wearing a goopy mask or tingly serum on my face with skin so brilliant, it's practically blinding.

Yes, I am pretty impatient when it comes to the efficacy of skin brightening products. But now that I've switched almost all my skin care to include a more natural regimen, sometimes the results take a little bit longer to surface.

Thankfully, I've found a few all-natural products and a treatment that deliver bright and shiny skin almost immediately. I've been getting comments on how glowy my skin has been looking, and I'm chalking it up to the following:

Ren Radiance

I've been using Ren's top-selling Glycolactic Skin Renewal Peel Mask for a few years now, and every time I wipe the orangey slime off my face, I've got bright and beaming skin. It tingles a little and smells like orange-flavored Vicks cough drops, but most important, as with all Ren products, there are no petrochemicals, sulfates, parabens or synthetic dyes or

fragrances.

Ren recently expanded on the Glycolactic mask to encompass a whole range of treatments, which include a micro-polish cleanser (\$30), a resurfacing AHA concentrate (\$45) and a radiance-perfecting serum (\$55). Key ingredients in each product include glycolic, lactic, tartaric and citric acids; hyaluronic acid; licorice; and Tyrosinase, an enzyme that disrupts the production of melanin so dark spots stop dead in their tracks.

Caudalie

For a nighttime treatment, a product from cult beauty brand Caudalie seems to be doing wonders for evening out my skin tone. It's the Vinoper-

fect Cell Renewal Night Cream (\$68), and the stuff seems to be lightening up some sun spots that tend to gather mainly on the left side, or driver's side, of my face. It has a fresh, green smell and soaks right into skin. Caudalie is another label that omits synthetic ingredients and focuses on the antioxidant-rich grape seed polyphenols that are at the center of all their products.

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McCLATCHY-TRIBUNE

Fitness

Fitness profile: Dan and Donna Swinford



Donna and Dan Swinford of Sinking Spring work out at Colonial Fitness.

Ages: Dan, 47; Donna, 46
Address: Spring Township
Occupation and employer: Dan, transporter for the Reading Hospital and Medical Center; Donna, compliance analyst, The Benecon Group.
When and why you began to exercise: Dan: February 2007, I came home from work and was thinking that my jeans were getting too tight. As I pulled into the driveway, a commercial came on the radio for Colonial Fitness. I drove there and joined that day. I still go faithfully, and feel great afterwards. Donna: I decided to join when I noticed how winded I got from walking up one flight of stairs. I got weighed when preparing for an elective surgery, and couldn't believe how much weight I had gained over the years. I joined with Dan after I recovered.
Typical you do: Dan: treadmill, elliptical, body flow class,

free weights. I also walk for extremely long distances at a rapid pace. Donna: treadmill, elliptical, body step class, body pump class, body flow class. I also have started running.
Hardest hurdle to overcome: Dan: portion control at meals (still struggle sometimes). Donna: I was nervous about entering an exercise class.
Biggest exercise achievement: Dan: The day I traded my size 40 jeans for the size 34 was just as exciting as the day I was able to add the third 45-pound plate on the bar and lift it. Donna: I am just as excited about my 60-pound weight loss as I am about the recent completion of my first 5K.
How exercise helps you: Dan: I am stronger than I have ever been, and I have successfully quit smoking. Donna: Exercise helps me feel mentally better, because I feel physically better.
Tips to others: The staff

at Colonial Fitness, along with our friends and family have made it possible for us to achieve our current level of results. If you want to make a lifestyle change, surround yourself with many positive people to encourage you. One activity that we had a lot of fun with in the beginning of our transformation was cleaning out the refrigerator and pantry. Once we had to re-shop all of our food, we had the opportunity to make better, healthier choices. We are both works in progress: We're not where we want to be, but we're not where we used to be.
Compiled by Courtney H. Diener-Stokes
Once a week Lifestyle will profile a person who has made exercise a part of his or her life. If you know someone who enjoys being physically active, write to Fitness profile, Reading Eagle Company, P.O. Box 582, Reading, PA 19603, or email life@readingeagle.com. Include the person's name, address and telephone number and why you think he or she should be profiled.

These running shoes are stripped to their basics

McCLATCHY-TRIBUNE

A fleet of minimal running shoes has hit the market, designed to mimic barefoot running, which is all the rage.

They come in all shapes and sizes, with wider toe boxes and slimmer heel cups. Some even have articulated toes.

These slippers trace their inspiration to a blend of cultural factors, but also to an evening in 2008 at a downtown Colorado Springs, Colo., sandwich shop.

That night, Anton Krupicka, an ultra-runner working at Colorado Running Co., was having a post-run beer with the product manager of New Balance, a running shoe manufacturer from Massachusetts.

The product manager, Bryan Gothie, was in town showing off a new trail shoe and asked Krupicka what he thought.

It's all wrong, Krupicka said.

Krupicka, a lanky, tan runner with long, wavy brown hair and a wild beard that had earned him nicknames like Tarzan and Jesus in the running world, recently had racked up a number of wins in big trail races, including the second-best-ever time in the Leadville Trail 100.

Most modern shoes had a half-inch of rise in the back, encouraging runners to land on the heel.

Krupicka had been modifying his own shoes in various ways to encourage landing on the forefoot instead. In the process, he noticed he was getting fewer injuries, which meant he could train more, which meant he could run faster.

The shoe New Balance was releasing was full of foam and cushioning but did not address the heel issue.

"It's overbuilt; it's too much of a shoe," Krupicka remembers saying.

When Gothie asked what he meant, Krupicka held up his shoes.



NEW BALANCE

The New Balance Minimus Trail is a lightweight shoe designed to be worn with or without socks.

They looked like they had been attacked by Freddy Krueger.

Four years before, as a cross-country runner at Colorado College, Krupicka had had a revelation. For much of his life he had been running in clunky, motion-stabilizing shoes with orthotic inserts, and for most of that time he had struggled with stress fractures in his legs.

He wanted a shoe that would mimic the design of the human foot, which spreads out shock through the foot's arch and the runner's bent knees.

"But there were none," Krupicka said. "I was so frustrated."

Every shoe he looked at, with the exception of racing flats, had a big fat heel getting in the way. And racing flats could not hold up on the trails.

So one day he pulled out a kitchen knife and started hacking the heel of a pair of old New Balances. Over the next few months, between runs, he cut off more and more pieces he felt he did not need. He did the same to every new pair of shoes he bought.

The shoes Krupicka held up at the sandwich shop had undergone the same surgery. The heels were shaved low to encourage landing on the front of the foot. Extra padding on the sides meant to stabilize the ankle were gone.

"Since I started running in those shoes I haven't had a stress fracture," Krupicka said.

"It encourages you to run in a much more natural way."

New Balance asked Krupicka to work with them on a new line of shoes. The company would come up with designs. He would test them on the trail, then, Gothie said, "take the switchblade to them."

He cut more and more away, always arguing that shoes should not get in the way of running.

"The last 10 years were an arms race of adding more and more shiny plastic things to shoes, like, who can get the most stuff in one shoe," Gothie said. "All that has changed. We are now looking at how we can do more with less, pushing the weight limit."

The result is the Minimus Trail, a featherweight shoe (just 7 ounces) with almost no drop between the heel and forefoot and a stripped-down upper with almost no padding.

"We basically cut the typical running shoe in half," Gothie said. "And the Minimus gets you off your heel so the muscles in your feet and knees and back can spread out the shock instead of jamming it all into your knees."

Gothie said Krupicka's hacked-up shoes were only one factor in the Minimus. If there had not been a growing market for slimmed-down shoes, there never would have been a product.

But a collision of factors has runners scrambling for simpler kicks.

Dane Miller of Garage Strength trains his clients for success

[From D1 >>>]
 State University and hitchhiked across Canada. A state-champion shot putter at Schuylkill Valley High School, Dane had had a disappointing run with the Nittany Lions, realized he was partying too much and was not happy with his life. So he fixed it.
 After months on the road — "I was sleeping on strangers' couches, finding houses online on that 'Couch Surfing' website," he said — Dane re-enrolled at PSU and went on to complete two degrees, in history and religious studies, was named a track team captain and graduated a four-time Big Ten scholar-athlete.
 Dane returned to Canada in 2007, to Kamloops, British Columbia, to train with Dr. Anatoli Bondarchuk, a former Soviet Union Olympic coach and an Olympic champion. The Ukrainian Dr. B was legendary, so Dane took a chance. He ran a paper route at 4 every morning, trained, ate and slept during the daytime and worked as a bouncer until 3 a.m. to make it work financially. He returned to Berks County in 2008, enlightened.
 "Dr. B is the best in the world," Dane said. "During the year I trained with him, we talked endlessly, and that was when I told myself, 'I want to train people.' My parents taught us to think for

ourselves, and expected us to act on our beliefs, so I did."
 Two of Dane's high school throwers reminisced about the days when Garage Strength was really in a garage.
 "We'd pull a sled up this little grass hill," Jason Coon said.
 "It was a broken-down toboggan," interrupted Evan Arnott.
 "With a dumbbell on it!" Jason said, finishing the statement.
 Dane, 27, is training his 70-odd membership clients at the farm on Snyder Road, which he has steadily built into a formidable exercise space and a manifestation of his ideals. Out back he has three throwing circles, and in an adjacent field he keeps 130 free-range laying hens, who do the yard work for him.
 He sells the eggs, with the most beautiful, deep-orange yolks, in the gym. He has raw milk and pastured meats on hand and two freezers full of chickens he raises for slaughter.
 Dane's methods are gleaned through experience and his evenings spent reading books and watching old Olympic competitions. He guesses that he counted this as work, he would be putting in almost 90 hours per week. The methods are fundamental and effective.



COURTESY OF ANDY SCHELL

Cathy Kopicz, 56, of Mohrsville, the second female client at the gym back when it was in the garage, hammers on the tractor tire.

In addition to several Olympic platforms, there is a specialized sled, the prowler, that his clients haul across a turf runway. An oversize tractor tire rests in the corner next to a selection of sledgehammers he uses as part of a cardio routine. The walls are stacked with dumbbells; there is a monkey-bar set and climbing

ropes out front; and the rest of the equipment assists with body-weight exercises focusing on functional strength. A huge soapstone woodstove provides heat and ambience in the wintertime.

It is easy to imagine the place full of tough-guy, body-builder types. In fact, it is just the opposite. There is a wel-

come hominess in the barn; the clients help each other, and Dane keeps the attitude positive. When asked if he consciously tries to maintain this good-natured feeling, his long, meandering answer indicated that in fact he does not.

The atmosphere emanates from Dane. More than just a trainer, Dane has molded himself into a model human being, taking cues from the important people in his life while eliminating the things he does not truly love in an almost spiritual quest for happiness. His clients are not only fitter in body, but admit they are stronger in mind as well.

"As far as what Dane's taught me in terms of nutrition, ethics and all-around discipline, I can't thank him enough," said Jason, who has been training with Dane since he was 13. "I respect him. I look up to him like a mentor. He tries to guide us through life, through, like, his mistakes. He tells us, you know, the main goal is to try to be a good person."

Dane recalled a teacher he had in high school, Phil Kissinger, known as Herr K. (Dane was Helmut in the class.) As a freshman, Dane, with no good reason, only that this Herr K. had something about him, convinced a friend to transfer into his German class, from Spanish. As it turned out, Herr K.

became that special teacher who affects people in an indefinable way. Still a teacher at Schuylkill Valley, Kissinger with a straight face maintains that he is 18 years old, a running joke in his class and one of the many traits that made him special. Dane could not pinpoint why, exactly, but though he learned German, Herr K.'s class seemed to him to be about life.

Dane has the same aura. He and his fiancée, Caitlin, had their first child, Lincoln, in August, and the glow on his face is palpable.

"Because of Dane, everybody works their best, and encourages everybody else, pulls them along the way," Jen said. "He reminds me continually, look where you've come from."

On the verge of tears, she said: "I told him, 'I will never be able to repay you for what you have done for my life.'"

For Dane, Garage Strength was never about making money. It was never about the gym, just as Herr K.'s class was never about German. The garage, for Dane and his growing list of devotees, is really about life and how to live it responsibly, live it to the fullest, share it with others and truly, utterly enjoy every minute. Dane is setting a pretty darn good example.

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