

Memory Corner

Celebrating St. Patrick's Day

To this day Ella W. follows a family tradition – of wearing orange on St. Patrick's Day. "The other children at school didn't like it," Ella remembers, "but I didn't care. I was celebrating my heritage. My grandmother, who came here from Ireland, always told me that she was an Orangeman. We were Irish Protestants, so we wore orange."

Ella likes Irish green, too, and has inherited some serving pieces decorated with beautiful green shamrocks.

Favorite memories are of the times Ella spent in her grandmother's store. Her grandmother would take a break and make two cups of tea, using just one teabag to be thrifty. Ella loved to listen as her grandmother told stories about life in Ireland. Then it was back to work, grinding meat and stocking the shelves, getting ready for the next customer.



Winter is melting away and spring hastens to greet us! We hope very much that you enjoy this, our third newsletter, and find that it adds a bit of zing to your day.

Diane Johnson, President & CEO, VIP HomeCare, Inc.

Signs of Spring Days Are Growing Longer

March is an in-between month. It can shower us with snow and ice, but it also brings the first whispers of spring. What's the earliest sign of spring in your neighborhood? A warm day can be the first hint. The sun – bright but cold during the winter months – finally has some warmth to it. And now the days are growing noticeably longer. Even the rays of the evening sun feel warm.

As days grow longer and a bit warmer, bulbs begin to push upwards and show their tips in the garden. Trees also prepare for their spring growth. Maples take on a reddish tinge as their buds form at the end of each twig, and willow buds begin to show yellow along the trailing branches.

These early days of spring bring the first robins back to our region. Songbirds, too, return after their winter migration, and the sound of birdsong brightens the city streets as well as the countryside. In some neighborhoods, the first sign of spring is not birdsong but the sound of children playing outside. The sounds of a basketball bouncing or the cries of kids playing catch are sure signs that spring will soon be here.

Best of all is the smell of spring in the air. This is a great time to open the window and see if you can detect that earthy smell of the world putting winter behind it and coming back to life.

Twice-Baked Potatoes

Perfect for St. Patrick's Day!

- 2 large baking potatoes
- 4 slices bacon, cooked & crumbled
- ½ cup sour cream
- ¼ cup milk
- 4 green onions, chopped, divided

- 2 tablespoons butter
- salt and pepper
- ½ cup cheddar cheese, shredded, divided

Bake the potatoes at 350 degrees for 1 hour or until tender. Allow to cool for 10 minutes. Slice in half lengthways and scoop the insides into a bowl. Save the skins.

Mash the insides with the sour cream, milk, butter, salt, pepper, ¼ cup cheese and 2 chopped green onions. Divide the mixture between the skins. Top with bacon and remaining cheese and green onions. Bake for 15 minutes more.

VIP Spotlight

Meet Melissa Hall



Melissa Hall is in charge of human resources at VIP HomeCare. She recruits and interviews

Home Health Aides and also trains the Aides she hires.

Melissa started with VIP in 1995, working as an Aide. "That experience is a help to me in this job," she says. "I know what the work is like. I know what's expected of you and the empathy it takes to do the job. So I know what to look for in a Home Health Aide."

Melissa conducts extensive background checks on all the Aides she hires and reviews all their references. Once she has trained the Aides, she knows them well. "Sometimes they'll drop me a note to thank me for my help with something," she says, "and that's nice."

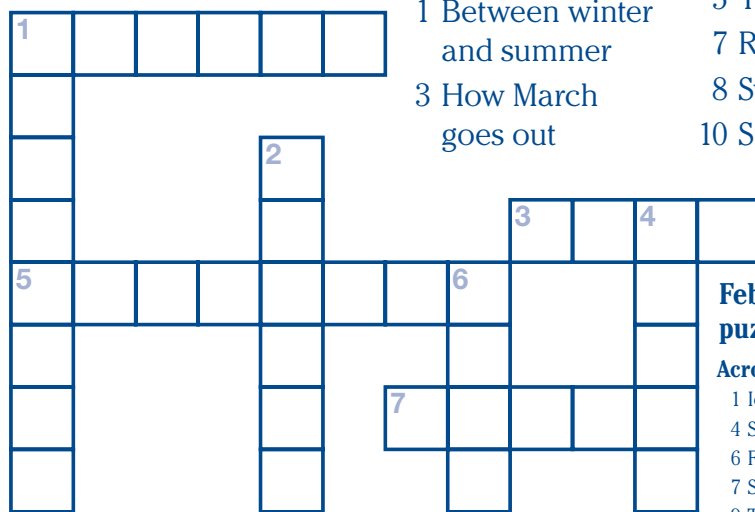
What Melissa enjoys most of all is getting compliments from clients on the Aides she hires. "It's very rewarding when I've taken the time to hire and train someone and then I get positive feedback from the clients. That feels good!"

Crossword

Signs of Spring

Across

- 1 Between winter and summer
- 3 How March goes out
- 5 Yellow trumpet
- 7 Redbreast
- 8 Sweet sounds
- 10 Sign of growth



February puzzle answers

- | | |
|---------------|-------------|
| Across | Down |
| 1 Ice | 1 Icicle |
| 4 Snowflake | 2 Cocoa |
| 6 Frost | 3 Snow |
| 7 Sled | 4 Skating |
| 9 Teapot | 5 Fireplace |
| | 8 Mittens |

Down

- 1 First flower
- 2 Gold or purple
- 4 Basketball tournament
- 6 How March comes in
- 8 Vacation from school
- 9 Not old

Answers will be in next month's newsletter.