

# Friends offer too much temptation for overeater

**DEAR ABBY:** I'm a 30-year-old woman who has battled compulsive eating and binge eating since my teens. (Yes, I still have a weight problem.) I see a counselor and am trying to find solutions that work for me.



**DEAR ABBY**  
Universal Press

My problem stems from well-meaning friends and family who try to send me home with leftovers when I visit them. Because I am single, they think I would like a home-cooked meal. I politely refuse these offerings, but my hosts keep insisting I take food until I give in just to avoid addition-

al argument. How can I convince them I can't take the offer without offending them or revealing my "problem"? — **Stuffed in California**

**DEAR STUFFED:** It's difficult for me to believe that family and close friends are completely unaware of a problem with which you have struggled since your teens. However, if that's the case, thank these loving saboteurs and tell them you have more than enough food at home and don't want to waste anything by having more than you can use. If

that doesn't deter them, offer the food to a neighbor or someone who might need or enjoy it. But under no circumstances should you bring it into your house if it will trigger a binge.

**DEAR ABBY:** I am in my early 50s and have great difficulty driving at night. My daughter says my problem is a "lack of confidence." I say my problem is being unable to SEE.

One night I had to pick up my son outside city limits, and I was scared. I couldn't read the street signs and had difficulty telling how far out of town I was and how close to him I was getting. I didn't

have my cell phone with me and couldn't call him.

To me, this vision problem at night could be just as dangerous as driving drunk. Would you please give me your opinion — is this all in my head? — **Gail in Texas**

**DEAR GAIL:** Yes and no. Because your eyes are located in your head — on that score you are correct. However, your problem is your vision, not an overactive imagination.

The person to tell you exactly what is causing the problem with your night vision is an ophthalmologist — an M.D. who specializes in diagnosing and treating diseases of the eye. He or

she can also tell you whether it is correctable or if you should refrain from driving after dark because driving blind is, indeed, as dangerous as driving drunk, and I don't recommend it.

**DEAR ABBY:** I have a close friend, "Janelle," who is 15. I'd like to spend time with her, but her parents are very strict. They don't allow Janelle to go anywhere without one of them. They let her hang out only with a few girls from their church.

I am neither a member of her church nor a girl, but I am also 15 and I'd like to be able to make plans with her. Is there a way I can convince

her parents to let us see each other? — **Wishing in Peoria, Ariz.**

**DEAR WISHING:** When parents are as hyper-protective as Janelle's seem to be, there probably isn't. However, if you begin making friends with Janelle's friends, it's possible you can spend some time with ALL of them. It's just a thought.

*Dear Abby is written by Abigail Van Buren, also known as Jeanne Phillips, and was founded by her mother, Pauline Phillips. Write Dear Abby at www.DearAbby.com or P.O. Box 69440, Los Angeles, CA 90069.*

## Froggie loses her marbles in life-saving surgery

McClatchy-Tribune News Service

**BILOXI, MISS.** — Froggie, the marble-eating Albino African Claw Frog, is home after recovering from innovative stomach surgery that allowed Dr. James Askew to remove three offending large glass beads — one clear, one turquoise, one blue.

Admittedly, that's not normal frog food, but she was hungry. Vela Taconi thought Froggie was getting fat, so she cut back on "his" food. "His" is a key word because everyone thought the white aquatic frog was male. Wrong.

Froggie got fat because her body was manufacturing eggs and she needed more nourishment. The diet was bad timing. Marbles looked edible.

When the panicked Taconi brought her grandson's beloved amphibian to the Saucier Veterinary Hospital, no one knew what was going on except for the blue marble visible through Froggie's white skin.

Continued life wasn't promising for the frog, now 9 inches with legs outstretched but barely an inch when they

bought her two years ago at Wal-Mart for about \$3.

"I can't believe I've been so upset over a frog," Taconi admitted July 24 when the family came to retrieve Froggie. "But he, I mean she, has such a personality. He, I mean she, wraps her little claw hands around my finger. I guess I'll have to put a sign on her tank, 'Frogette.'"

The surgery was in mid-July and Askew breathed relief when Froggie finally started eating. Then on July 21, while in New Orleans for classes (on what else but amphibians?), Askew received a panicked call from staff.

Froggie's aquarium was full of white stuff. Had the surgery gone bad? Nope. Final diagnosis: Eggs.

"Thank you," 5-year-old Haedyn said as he wrapped his little arms around Askew's leg and spurted out little boy questions.

"I just gave her some good drugs to make her feel better," Askew answered, "and if you want those eggs to become tadpoles, you'll have to put a little boy frog in with her."

## GUITAR: Students' success satisfying

### At A Glance

Ryan Lano buys and sells used and new music equipment, does repair work and hosts open jam sessions Saturdays.

For more information, visit [www.ryanlano.com](http://www.ryanlano.com), call 341-4140, or visit 11 Park St., Minnesota Lake.

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professionals like Kirk Hammett of Metallica have teachers.

Music, he noted, is a lifelong study — and joy. It helps people with life, from succeeding at school to communicating emotions. "If you're happy, play guitar. If you're sad, play guitar," he advises students. "A lot of great songs come out of this."

Having taught for the past decade, Lano finds a great deal of personal satisfaction knowing that some former students have attended the Minneapolis Institute of Production and Recording and play in bands around the area.

"I was at the What's Up Lounge not long ago, and when I was there, one of the guitar players in one of the bands was one of my former students," he said.

"The next band that got up, the lead singer and the bass player and the guitar player were former students of mine ... and they thanked me personally that night."

## MEADOW: Weeds a threat to early growth

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birds and butterflies.

"A meadow for all seasons," Cregan calls it.

Converting traditional lawn to meadow isn't a snap, though. It takes planning and three or four years to mature. It's much more complicated than tossing seeds into the air, despite the tease of "meadow-in-a-can" wildflower mixes.

And while keeping watch over a meadow can be less trouble than maintaining the perfect lawn, it isn't

carefree. Cregan must be vigilant or her meadow, now in its fourth full season, will be overtaken by aggressive, nonnative weeds.

"It's relatively difficult for these invasives to get established once the meadow is dense and thick," says David

J. Robertson, executive director of the Pennypack trust, which offers free meadow consultations to the public.

Birds spread those seeds. So do deer.

## An Academic All-Star

By Sara Gilbert Frederick  
Special to The Free Press

When Landon Thro heard his teacher call his name during the annual awards ceremony at Washington Elementary School, he was completely surprised.

Landon had no idea that his fourth-grade teacher had been keeping track of his achievements all year long. He had no idea that she was noting his contributions in the classroom, especially the times he came to her desk to help her figure out a problem with the Smartboard. He had no idea that she had recommended him and three of his classmates as Academic All-Stars.

But when she called his name in front of the rest of the students, he was delighted.

"I was just like, whoa," the fourth grader says with a smile.

Although Landon was surprised by the award, his teacher, Angie Sheldrup, has no doubts that he deserves the recognition.

"I look at Landon as a learner," she says. "Most fourth graders are still trying to figure out their place in the world, but he's beyond that. He's already trying to figure out the secrets of the world - global problems, scientific theories."

Sheldrup has been equally impressed by her young student's technological abilities. She admits that she had to call him up to her desk from time to time to help her figure out a problem with the Smartboard - an electronic "chalkboard" that's used as a learning tool in the classroom.

"He just has a natural ability when it comes to technology," she says. "He's so curious."

This weekend, Landon was among hundreds of other

Academic All-Stars from across Minnesota recognized at the Gathering of Champions at the Mall of America in Bloomington. The Center for Academic Excellence, a North Mankato-based nonprofit organization that supports and recognizes high levels of academic achievement for both students and teachers, presented certificates to each student throughout the day Saturday.

Landon was excited about the prospect of going to the celebration, as much for the opportunity to meet new people as for the chance to go to Legoland and Nickelodeon Universe.

"I think it will be fun to see how many other people are there," he says. "I'm excited to see people with the same interests."

In Landon's case, that would be math, science and technology.

His favorite television channels are science and nature related; he especially likes to watch "Beyond Tomorrow" on The Science Channel. The books he brings home from the library are mostly nonfiction, and mostly related to technology; he often chooses titles related to robots, space exploration and biology, for example.

When he travels with his family, his favorite stops are at science and natural history museums. And at home, his favorite toys are Legos and Bionicles. He hopes to be either a scientist or an inventor when he grows up.

Even though he excels in math at school (he's been identified by the school district as gifted in math), Landon says that it doesn't always come easy to him. Still, he enjoys the process of figuring out problems - "unless there's a lot of noise," he says with a smile.

He's even looking forward to moving beyond basic division

## Everyday PEOPLE



Landon Thro, who will start fifth grade in the fall, was recognized as an Academic All-Star at the Mall of America Saturday.

and multiplication in fifth grade math.

"I'm just excited about getting to the more advanced math," he says.

**Know of an Everyday Person with an interesting story to tell?**

E-mail names and contact information to [sgfrederick@mac.com](mailto:sgfrederick@mac.com)

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