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Humanure: Goodbye, Toilets. Hello, Extreme Composting

PENNSYLVANIA- For more than a decade, 57-year-old roofer and writer Joseph Jenkins has been advocating that we flush our toilets down the drain and put a bucket in the bathroom instead. When a bucket in one of his five bathrooms is full, he empties it in the compost pile in his backyard in rural Pennsylvania. Eventually he takes the resulting soil and spreads it

over his vegetable garden as fertilizer. "It's an alternative sanitation system," says Jenkins, "where there is no waste." His 255-page *Humanure Handbook: A Guide to Composting Human Manure* is in its third edition and has been translated into five languages, but it has only recently begun to catch on. His message? Human manure, when properly managed, is odorless. His audience? Ecologically committed city dwellers who are looking to do more for the earth than just sort their trash or ride a bike to work. He "flushes" by tossing in a scoop of sawdust, which not only neutralizes smells but also helps speed the breakdown of material for compost. Like many back-to-basics sophisticates, he believes Jenkins' humanure system is more sanitary and more rational than the conventional alternative. "Human waste is a perfectly good source of an important resource, nitrogen," Knutzen observes. "Water is a valuable resource too. Why mix the two and turn all of it into a problem?" Wastewater treatment is much more energy-intensive than composting, which needs little more than time (about a year) for complete decomposition and pathogen elimination. In Austin, Texas, a sustainably minded nonprofit called the Rhizome Collective succeeded this year in getting the city to approve what may be the first legal composting toilet in the U.S. "The hypocrisy is amazing," says Lauren Ross, 54, a civil engineer involved in Rhizome's four-year battle to get a permit. "The city will buy you a low-flow toilet, but they'll fight you all the way if you want to build one that uses no water at all." [\(Full Article\)](#)

Cozy-crazy couple makes tight all right in the city's tiniest studio

NEW YORK- If they can make it there, they can make it anywhere. Zaarath and Christopher Prokop -- and their two cats -- live in the smallest apartment in the city, a 175-square-foot "microstudio" in Morningside Heights the couple bought three months ago for \$150,000. At 14.9 feet long and 10 feet wide, it's about as narrow as a subway car and as claustrophobic as a jail cell. But to the Prokops, it's a castle. "When you first see it, the first thing you say is, 'Holy crap, this place is small,'" said Zaarath, 37, an accountant for liquor company Remy Martin. "But when I saw it, all I could think of is, I can do



something with this. This is perfect for us. We love it." The co-op is on the 16th floor of a doorman building on 110th Street, between Broadway and Amsterdam Avenue. But it's only accessible by a staircase on the 15th floor. It has two small windows with views of upper Manhattan; hardwood floors; a tiny kitchen with a mini-fridge and hotplate; and a closet-sized bathroom with a shower, sink and toilet. "I'm amazed we can fit two people and two cats in there," Zaarath said. "But it's harmonious at this point. I have friends who say they could never live with their husbands in a place this small. It's a good thing we like each other enough to live there." [\(Full Article\)](#)

Man, 93, adopts 64-year-old man

MISSOURI- It was Christmas Day 1969 when a 14-year-old Steve Harland came into Lee Bevelheimer's life. Bevelheimer and his wife, Ellen, ran an emergency foster care service out of their home at the time. Over the years, the Bevelheimers provided foster care for more than 180 children, but there was something different about Harland. First, the Bevelheimers usually only took young children. Second, the Bevelheimer's home in Henry County, Ill., was usually only a temporary stop for the foster children. Nearly 40 years after that fateful Christmas morning, Lee Bevelheimer, now 93 and of North Liberty, and Steve Harland left the Johnson County Courthouse as father and son. "He forgot to go away," Bevelheimer jokes. After being seriously injured in a car accident in 1961, the Bevelheimers opened up their home to children in emergency foster care situations. Because of their disabilities after the crash, the Bevelheimers preferred young children, as opposed to school-aged children. Lee Bevelheimer recalls coming home one day to find his wife giving baths to five boys under the age of two. "She'd wash them all in the double sink," he said. Harland's mother died when he was four years old and a decade later he ran away from home. He noticed almost an immediate change in his life when he was taken in by the Bevelheimers. "I was an 'F' student in seventh grade," Harland said. "In freshman year, I was an 'A' student. That's how fast she turned me around." While he never left the family, Harland never became an official member of the family. Ellen Bevelheimer died in 1989. Over the years, Harland moved to Missouri, where he works on a farm; and Lee Bevelheimer moved to Country View Retirement Home in North Liberty. Then, around 7 a.m. on morning in mid-October of this year, Harland got a phone call. It was Kelly Quigley, a family friend and owner of Country View. Quigley told Harland that Bevelheimer wanted to talk to him, Harland recalled. Bevelheimer got on the phone and told Harland he wanted to adopt him before he died. "Steve was speechless when his dad called that morning," Quigley said. On Monday morning, Bevelheimer and Harland made it official when they appeared before a judge and completed the adoption. "It feels good," Harland said.



Feathers flying: PETA, Louisville again tangle over chicken statue

KENTUCKY- The crippled chicken looks angry; he is bloodied, on crutches and has bandages across his beak and belly. It's a look that People For The Ethical Treatment of Animals would like to share with Louisvillians as public art, namely a 5 ½ foot fiberglass statue on the corner of Fourth and Market streets. On Thursday, PETA applied for a city permit that would allow display of the statue for three months, as a way to get out its point of view that the corporate restaurant chain KFC treats chickens inhumanely. The base of the statute, which was designed and created by The New Yorker magazine cartoonist Harry Bliss, reads "KFC Cripples Chickens." "Louisville is the headquarters for KFC and we want to remind residents that KFC is in their own back yard," said Kristina



Addington, PETA's crippled chicken campaign coordinator. "This is a corporation that allows chickens to have their throats cut open while fully conscious and allows chickens to be scalded alive." KFC spokeswoman Laurie Schalow called the statue request "yet another despicable publicity stunt that we hope the city will have the good sense to disapprove." There could be a fight brewing over the approval or disapproval of a permit for the statute. PETA applied for the same permit in July, but no decision was given after the city instituted a 45-day moratorium on temporary structures in public rights of way.

Chapman University students to pet and play with puppies during "cram week"



CALIFORNIA - Some students at Chapman University in Orange have added a weapon to their arsenal for coping with finals week -- puppies. A bunch of them will be stationed outside the university library for students to pet and play with Wednesday, in the middle of "cram week." The event, called "Furry Friends for Finals," is being organized by the university's Active Minds club, which promotes mental awareness and sought to find a way to relieve stress during finals week, the Los Angeles Times reported. "It has been proven that having a dog helps relieve stress, so we thought it would be a cute idea if we brought some furry friends on

campus," Jennifer Heinz, a sophomore and integrated educational studies major who helped organize the event, told The Times. She said her poodle-and-Maltese mix, Bindi, helps her relax. "I love my dog," she told The Times. "Dogs are always so happy and want to play, and that helps make you happier." Active Minds will also have pamphlets and resources available on how students can reduce stress and take care of themselves during finals, Megan Brown, the group's advisor and a counselor for Student Psychological Counseling Services, told the newspaper. "Research has shown that animals can reduce anxiety and stress," said Brown, who is also a licensed marriage and family therapist and says many students miss the pets they left behind at home.

Central Talent Booking