

Oh, my achy, flaky parts



PHOTO ILLUSTRATION BY
KENNETH SILVER AND
ALLEN WALKER/DAILY PRESS

Dermatologists say moisturizers are the best way to heal dry winter skin

BY KATHY VAN MULLEKOM
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Magazines are filled with product ads that promise you smooth, silky skin. User beware, because those creams, balms and lotions could contain fragrances and texture enhancers that could irritate your skin, even result in an unpleasant burning sensation, according to dermatologists.

What should you use, especially this time of year when your hands and heels are dry, rough, scaly and cracked from cold weather?

Basic petroleum jelly or something similar, according to Hampton dermatologist Leslie Coker.

"The greasier, the thicker, the better," she says.

"Runny lotions just aren't that impressive. I tell patients if they have a

favorite lotion, they should add a finger full of petroleum jelly to it and create a thicker cream."

In addition to petroleum jelly, creams or lotions that benefit you will contain mineral oil, linoleic acid, ceramides, glycerine and dimethicone. Products with urea or lactic acid also

help drive moisture into rough, dry, thick skin areas, but they may burn any cracks or fissures in your skin. Lanolin, which nursing mothers often use to keep their nipples from cracking, is another good ingredient to use.

When you shop for a skin-care product, look to see if any of these moisture protectors are listed first on the product label; ingredients are always shown in the order of their predominance.

Please see DRY SKIN/D2



Petroleum jelly is the best to use for dry skin. Creams or lotions that also work well contain mineral oil, linoleic acid, ceramides, glycerine and dimethicone.

FamilyLIFE

Cartoons aren't bad, they're just drawn that way

Where is the outcry, the clamor for congressional hearings?

They're obviously needed to investigate the matter of homosexual characters infiltrating cartoons for American kids.

It started last month when news broke that SpongeBob SquarePants has involved himself with a Web site and video promoting tolerant attitudes towards gay people.

More in-depth reporting revealed that SpongeBob has been filmed holding hands with a same-sex starfish named Patrick.

Actually, it's worse than that. It turns out SpongeBob is a hermaphrodite, as are most other sponges of his ilk.

Probably, they try to excuse themselves by saying they can't help it because they were born that way.

But just imagine explaining this confusing phenomenon to a 10-year-old.



On Parenting
ANNETTE CLIFFORD

It rates right up there with giving rational answers for why guys have nipples.

Getting back to the growing problem of gay characters in children's cartoons, the next instance involves a male rabbit who travels around the country to visit different children and learn about their lives on the PBS show "Postcards from Buster."

Boy, is Buster busted. Last week, new Secretary of Education Margaret Spellings took time off from leaving no child behind to hang

Please see CLIFFORD/D2

My favorite dictator

Congolese villagers yearn for bygone days with Mobutu

BY CRAIG TIMBERG/THE WASHINGTON POST

GOMA, CONGO

Here on the tranquil shores of Lake Kivu, Mobutu Sese Seko, the country's onetime dictator, often repaired to his sprawling villa, relaxing with a glass of pink champagne or fishing for succulent tilapia. He even doffed his trademark Big Man's leopard-skin cap for a more casual cowboy hat.

Mobutu's affection for Goma, residents say, was often reciprocated by a populace that reveled in the presence of their charismatic leader, who visited regularly in the 1970s and 1980s, before this picturesque town near the Rwandan border became the scene of massacres, pillaging and civil wars.

Even though Mobutu, who was driven from power in 1997 and died soon afterward, came to be viewed as one of the world's most corrupt leaders, there is a certain nostalgia here for the days when Goma was a favored presidential tourist spot in Zaire instead of a trouble spot in Congo.



Mobutu Sese Seko was driven from power in 1997 and died soon afterward.

"If you ask the people today, they will tell you they prefer Mobutu to what they have today," said Albert Prigogine, 63. At least then, he added, "they had something to eat. They had jobs."

Prigogine, who has an outdoorsman's husky voice and steady gaze, enjoyed an especially close connection to Mobutu. For more than 20 years, he was the president's personal safari and fishing guide. They traveled north together into Virunga National Park to observe lions, and Prigogine said he introduced Mobutu to cowboy hats, which they often wore together.

Conversations with more than two dozen residents supported Prigogine's contention that the much-vilified Mobutu enjoys a substantial residue of affection here. Many said they could recall him walking happily through town, grasping hands or chatting with elders. His speeches were thrilling, his presence formidable, they said.

Please see CONGO/D2

POP CULTURE 101 | BUSTED

Evangeline Lilly

Sure, Lilly, pictured, is making a name for herself on the ABC hit "Lost." But you may also recognize her as the "spokesmodel" for Livelinks, a paid phone chat service. Livelinks is airing the heck out of the TV spots featuring Lilly and also includes Lilly on the home page of the Livelinks.com Web site.



INSIDE

Larger than life ▶ "Whale World" at the Virginia Aquarium & Marine Science Center examines the lives of earth's largest creatures. **Ticket Calendar, D3**



Survey says Pet owners are more dedicated than ever to their companion animals. **Animals at Home, D3**

COMING/TOMORROW

Cock-a-doodle-doo.

Items of interest about the Year of the Rooster and the beginning of the new year.

