

Personal technology

Physical fitness is just a Web browser away. But be aware that it's not just as simple as dialing up and working out. Some sites are great, some are sloppy. Learn how to choose and where to look. **E3**

ENTREPRENEURS

TELEVISION



Gayl Bousman and Zoi, her Australian shepherd, round up the goats at the end of the day at Evening Shade Farms.

PHOTOS BY WENDI FITZGERALD/POST-DISPATCH

The success of sweet smell

Gayl Bousman of Osceola, Mo., lives amid fragrance, milk and honey as she makes and sells soap on her farm.



Patchouli is swirled into an olive oil and goat's milk-based soap in a heart-shaped mold. Bousman made the heart-shaped soap for Mother's Day.

BY DAWN FALLIK
 Of the Post-Dispatch

It is wishful thinking to come to Evening Shade Farms and believe it is the good life. Sit on the porch, wave away the lazy wood bees, drink mint tea and pretend an existence like this comes naturally on an Osceola, Mo., farm.

But Gayl Bousman knows it's only the hard work that makes the good life look easy.

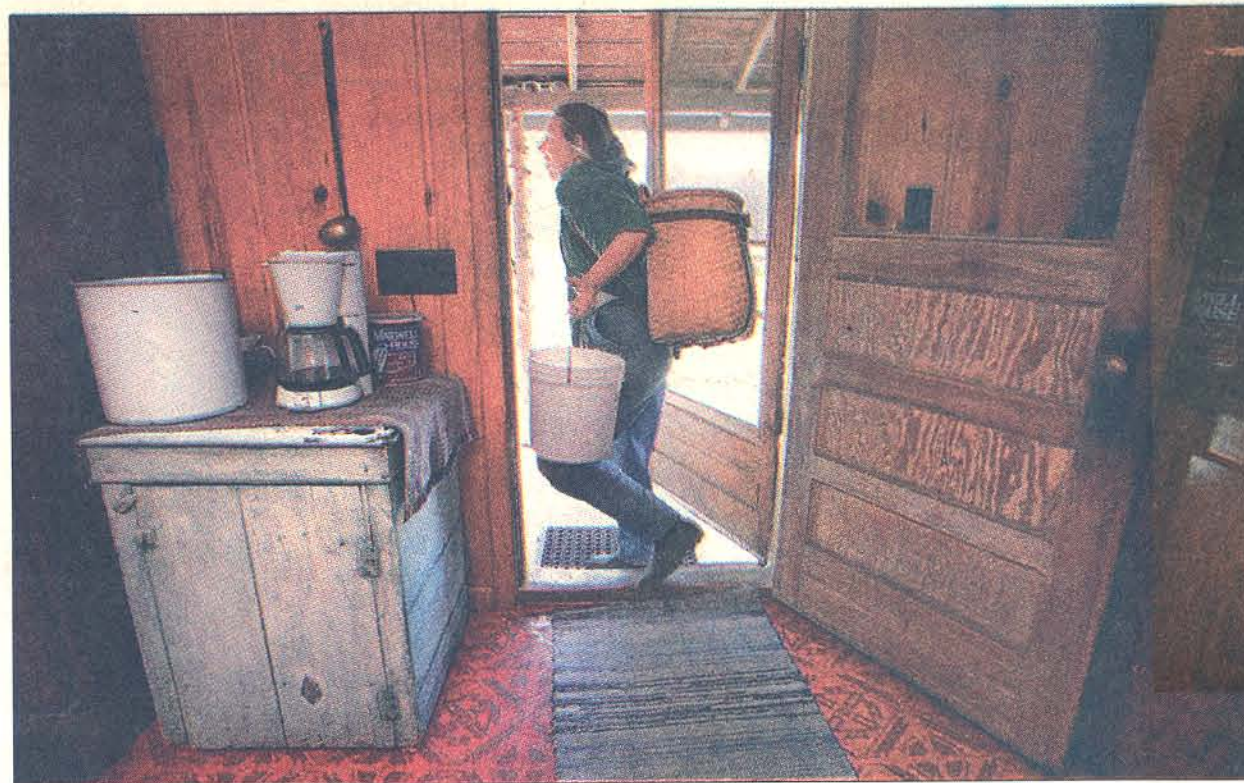
Up at 7 to feed the goats and water the chickens and steal from the bees to make the tea and then weed the garden to get the chickweed that makes a potion before making the dinner and stuffing the guests with peanut soup and asparagus salad.

"It's pretty much a day off," said Bousman, bright blue eyes peering out from a tanned sun-lined face.

That was before Madonna the goat started having contractions, with two, possibly three kids, and Bousman's daughter called from Kansas City to warn of impending tornadoes.

Welcome to Evening Shade Farms, where scents are spun into soap, a call of "girls, come on in," is directed at the goats, not the guests, and even city girls can pretend they've gone country — without getting their hands too dirty.

For the past 18 years, here's where Bousman practiced her secret prayer of saponification — go ahead, say it — saponification. It sounds like a magic word, and it is: Where caustic lye



Bousman goes out with bucket and basket to collect chicory to use in a salve she makes.

meets solid fat and gels into a lathering, bubbling, smelly mess you rub all over your body in a search for clean.

More than a thousand customers know the Evening Shade name — even if it's only on the pretty packages of patchouli soap or rose moisturizer they get in the mail.

For almost two decades, Bousman hid behind her farm's name. Without a phone (she was part of a four-party line

or e-mail, the only way to get to her products was the old-fashioned way: pen and paper. Customers speculated wildly about her existence. Perhaps she was in the CIA, said one customer, or maybe the witness protection program.

This year, a phone number and an e-mail appeared on the Evening Shade Farms brochure. A slight revolt ensued among the 1,500 mail-order customers.

See Soap, E2

Evening Shade Farms Catalog

How much: \$1, refunded in the first order

More info: e-mail at eveningshade@tri-lakes.net, call 417-282-6985 or write Evening Shade Farms, 12790 SE Hwy. TT, Osceola, Mo. 64776



Kim Delaney stars as a defense attorney in "Philly," which will debut in the 9 p.m. Tuesday slot on ABC.

Bochco's "Philly" gets a berth at ABC; "Once and Again" breathes a sigh of relief

Life goes on for "Once and Again," not for "Gideon's Crossing," "Norm" or "Two Guys and a Girl."

The end also arrived Tuesday for "Roswell" and "Popular," as both ABC and the WB announced their fall schedules.

As expected, ABC picked up the new Steven Bochco drama "Philly," with "NYPD Blue" veteran Kim Delaney as a defense attorney in Philadelphia.

ABC's fall schedule are the sitcom "Bob Patterson," starring Jason Alexander of "Seinfeld" as a motivational speaker, and "The Dad," with Jim Belushi as a father who remains a big kid.

ABC renewed "Once and Again" for a third season despite marginal ratings. In a second surprise, the romantic drama will move to 9 p.m. Fridays, the slot occupied since 1987 by "20/20."

See Pennington, E6

ABC's week shapes up like this.
New shows are in bold.

SUNDAY
 Wonderful World of Disney, **Alias**, The Practice

MONDAY
 Who Wants to Be a Millionaire, Monday Night Football

TUESDAY
 Dharma & Greg, What About Joan, **Bob Patterson**, The Job, **Philly**

WEDNESDAY
 My Wife & Kids, **The Dad**, Drew Carey, Spin City, 20/20 (NYPD Blue)

THURSDAY
 Whose Line Is It Anyway? (two episodes), Millionaire, PrimeTime Live

FRIDAY
 The Mole, **Thieves**, Once and Again

SATURDAY
 Movies

WB's week shapes up like this.
New shows are in bold.
 (The network does not air programs on Saturday.)

SUNDAY
Lost in the USA, Steve Harvey, **Men, Women & Dogs**, Nikki, **Off Centre**

MONDAY
 7th Heaven, Angel

TUESDAY
 Gilmore Girls, **Smallville**

WEDNESDAY
 Dawson's Creek, Felicity

THURSDAY
 Popstars 2, **Eliminate Deluxe**, Charmed

FRIDAY
 Sabrina, **Maybe I'm Adopted**, **Deep in My Heart**, **Raising Dad**

TELEVISION

"West Wing" finale deals with familiar theme

President Bartlet (Martin Sheen) prepares to go public with the cover-up of his illness on the season finale of NBC's "The West Wing" (8 tonight on Channel 5). Meanwhile, the White House must cope with the loss of Bartlet's secretary, Mrs. Landingham (Kathryn Joosten), who died in a car wreck in last week's episode.

PLAN AHEAD

Chinese Culture Days at Botanical Garden

See the world of the Orient during Chinese Culture Days, opening at 11 a.m. Saturday at the Missouri Botanical Garden, 4344 Shaw Boulevard. As visitors walk through a Chinese gate, they will enter the world of art, dance, music and food that embody Chinese heritage. The Incredible Acrobats of China will perform at 12:30, 3:30 and 6 p.m. Saturday and at noon and 2 p.m. Sunday. A special closing ceremony is at 3 p.m. Sunday. \$7, seniors \$5, children free. (314-577-9400 or 800-642-8842)



A member of the world-famous Incredible Acrobats of China

Soap

Sweet smells mean success on Missouri farm

Continued from E1

"Most of my customers won't use the phone or e-mail now. They still send in their orders and their checks," said Bousman, her thin frame folded into a chair, gnarled hands wrapped around a jelly glass of iced tea. Although she is starting to distribute her products through different stores, most customers discover her products through word-of-mouth or by chance at a summer craft show.

Bousman calls the mix of chemistry, spice and suds her "passion." It began at her grandmother's shoulder as a child in Arkansas, growing up in a small town called Evening Shade (yes, the same one from the television show). Many years later, a bout of psoriasis sent her back to the lessons she learned as a child, trying to make a soothing olive oil soap.

"I barely remembered it, but I remembered enough to get started," she said.

Some lessons came hard, particularly the one about how lye and aluminum don't mix — the pan melted and the caustic mixture hardened into a puddle on



WENDI FITZGERALD / POST-DISPATCH

Gayl Bousman puts bars of soap she has just made into the soap house to cure.

the floor instead of cakes of useable soap.

Friends started asking for bars of the soap, just as Bousman started evaluating her work as a highway road crew worker. She decided to try to sell the soap full time, while living off her farm as much as possible.

"My family probably thought I was crazy," she said.

But they probably knew she'd

succeed. After all, this is the same woman who got her welding degree in Seattle, shucked salmon in Alaska and moved her family from Kansas City to the Ozarks and went to work on a highway construction crew.

Now walk into her soap house and smell her success. Patchouli, mint and bay rum gel with open air and fresh earth to create a scent that Bousman wears without putting on a thing.

Bousman (who says she is "on the rim of 60") built her own soap house, complete with air conditioning, three years ago, so there would be plenty of room for the soaps to harden for 30 days, a place to store different herbs and scents, a separation of work and life. Last year, she made about 35,000 bars of soap, selling at about \$4 each.

"I didn't realize I worked that

hard," she said, after calculating that she makes three 200-bar batches of soap per week, more for the Christmas season.

She is proud that her soaps, lotions and lip balms come from the earth around her. The milk in the "milk and honey" comes from the goats, the honey from the bees, the dose of rose from those in her yard.

That bound-to-the-earth attitude is part of Bousman's entire life. Tree limbs support the porch of her home, a snake skeleton found in the barn becomes a necklace decorating the fireplace; naked stumps form steps in the bathroom. The rugs were bartered with a friend in Kentucky, she and her then-husband built the lodge/greenhouse that is her living room, a friend created the benches used for loitering on the front porch.

There is nothing fancy about the small four-bedroom house, but there is no place more inviting. It is easy to understand how Bousman hunkers down here in the winter, wood in the fireplace, tea with homemade honey on the table.

She is the kind of person who would welcome you in if you showed up on her front step, and not make you feel bad about it. She's that gracious, tucking an errant 7-year-old under an arm and making the child so comfortable she becomes one of the flock, following Bousman around the farm for hours.

"I'd like to do a lot more things wrapped around children," she said, adding that she is thinking of opening her home so that disadvantaged or seriously ill children can come to the farm and learn from whence that egg came and how the soap bubbles.

For adults, she holds several seminars each year, from soap making to a "pamper yourself" day offering a facial, massage and lunch on her western Missouri farm. They are always sold out.

Bousman gets her inspiration from her surroundings, and she never pushes her muse. Last year, three new soaps came to mind: the year before, nothing. She's not afraid to retire those that don't work, like a soap for babies, or the sandalwood soap, which had to end because she couldn't get the quality essential oil on a regular basis.

With more than 17 different kinds of soaps, as well as lotions, potions and lip balm, Bousman's daughters regularly chip in to help, as do two part-timers. They keep the books and clean the soap and send out packages. But the soap making is Bousman's alone, the magic of scent, lye and oil.

"To tell you the truth, I don't know why it works, how it works," she said. "But I'll tell you, I'm always learning."

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