

# Better Home Living

*The Newsletter That's Both Informative and Fun!*

## To Keep the Bedroom Healthy, Keep on Dusting

The dust that accumulates on your furniture, floors and knickknacks has nothing to do with poor housekeeping. It's a natural and continual collection of stuff caused by microscopic dust mites, the breakdown of fibers from household fabrics and furniture, and human and animal dander (skin flakes).

The average house in the United States collects about 40 pounds of dust each year, says allergist William Berger, author of *Asthma and Allergies for Dummies*.

Dust is a large part of indoor air pollution, mainly because people spend about 90 percent of their time indoors, says the Environmental Protection Agency. And dust can trigger allergies and asthma attacks.

While you can't eradicate dust altogether, there are steps you can take to reduce its accumulation. The first step is getting rid of clutter.

Things like books, clothing, and stuffed toys are big collectors of dust. So are pennants and posters kids tack to their walls.

Molly Hooven, an EPA spokeswoman, suggests concentrating dust-fighting efforts on bedrooms, because you spend about one-third of your time there. Some things you can do:

- \* Remove extra furniture and any objects that will give dust mites a place to land on.
- \* Vacuum the bedroom carpet using a vacuum cleaner with a HEPA filter. Vacuuming can eliminate dust mites that have settled on the floor.
- \* Clean surfaces such as your vanity, television, side tables and headboards with a damp cloth or a cleaning furniture polish. Close closet doors.
- \* Wash your bedding. Use 140-degree water to eliminate dust mites.
- \* Place stuffed animals and fabric items that can't be machine-washed into plastic bags and freeze, which will eliminate dust mites.

## With Help, You Really Can Declutter Your Home

Called "The Queen of Clean" New York's Barbara Reich, simplifies decluttering projects for others by having categories they can use.

\* Give. Pass family heirlooms to your kids as holiday or birthday gifts, except for things that have significantly increased by value, such as art work or a vintage sports car. Leave it to an heir in your will so a receiver doesn't have to pay capital gains taxes.

\* Sell. Beyond garage sales, there are consignment shops and the Internet. Fairly new electronics like cellphones bring money on uSell and Gazelle. A used book store can determine the value of your books.

\* Liquidate. A liquidator will run an estate sale. Julie Hall of the American Society of Estate Liquidators suggests interviewing several. Hall is the author of *The Boomer Burden: Dealing with Your Parents' Lifetime Accumulation of Stuff*. Ask for references, fees (an average of 35 percent) and a copy of the contract.

\* Trash it. Before renting a dumpster, call a junk hauler or local bulk-trash pickup service and drag your trash bags to the curb. Don't include electronics, which contain heavy metals. Some recycling sites charge a few dollars for handling old computers and such, but at least they aren't damaging the landfill.

Keeping your home decluttered

Get a label maker. Label storage drawers so you and your family know what's in them.

Use trash bags. Collect items you'll donate. Then be sure to do it.

File folders. Keep categories broad. Narrow categories make filing hard.

Get nice storage boxes. Use for items you want to access. They can be stacked, labeled and displayed.



*We hope you enjoy this month's newsletter!*

*Mari & Staff*

## There's Something Magical About Holly

Friends and loved ones who gather at Christmas time will see holly wreaths and on mantles, its image on cards, stockings and presents.

As it has done every winter since long before the Roman conquest, holly will work its magic, evoking feelings of tradition and spreading cheer. In forests and in yards, the berries are appreciated by robins, bluebirds and mockingbirds. Hardy as the bushes are, they can thrive in a city's salt and exhaust.

"There's something magical about holly, especially this time of year," says William N. (Bill) Kuhl, an expert on the species who has done his part to preserve this Yuletide tradition for the past 40 years. His nursery has hundreds of holly trees, many 70 and 80 years old and in more than 100 varieties.

An old English carol claims holly has "prickles as sharp as thorns, bark as bitter as gall, and berries as bright as life-giving blood." But to those who love it, like gardeners, growers, retailers and botanists who belong to the Holly Society, it's endlessly fascinating. It's attractive in unique ways, blending dark and bright, the harsh and the inviting.





***...Someone that could use our services? Perhaps a friend, family member, co-worker, or someone from church? When a new client signs up for regular cleaning services at your recommendation, you will receive \$50 off your cleaning after their 3rd cleaning! If you would think of 3 or 4 people that could use our services, then don't hesitate to call them and give them our name and phone number. Be sure to have them mention your name when they call so we can send your Bonus!***

I have a residential home that we rent. Mari's staff has done an outstanding service for me for the last two years. Cleaning is very thorough and professional.

~ Todd  
Sun City, AZ

## **No Mouth-To-Mouth: How to do simple CPR**

We've all heard that CPR can be done without mouth-to-mouth contact, but there are other instructions to keep in mind when you set out to save a heart attack victim's life.

Experts say to call 911, but don't wait for paramedics' arrival to offer help. Bystanders who perform CPR improve survival rates and reduce the risk of brain damage that can result from cardiac arrest, a new study finds. The hands-only approach is the best technique for bystanders. They start and keep it going until help arrives.

Put one hand on the patient's chest and put the other hand on top of it so you can press deep enough to reach the heart. The goal is to get blood to flow from the heart to the brain.

There's no set number of presses for you to make, and you should do your best to keep pressing until help arrives. Sometimes another bystander or a friend is available to take your place so you can rest for a few minutes.

The American Heart Association recommends doing it to the tempo of "Stayin' Alive" or similar music.

Hang in there. You can do it. The patient and his family will be very grateful for your saving the patient's life.

Whether he or she lives or not, you will always know you did your part.



"I don't care if it's on sale. We have a perfectly good dust magnet at home."

## **Swedish Glogg: The Perfect Holiday Drink for all!**

Your genes don't have to come from Nordic stock to enjoy the heavenly aroma and taste of a hot, mulled wine after a day of shopping, putting up the Christmas tree, hanging strings of lights on the house, skiing or shoveling out from the last storm.

Whether you make this glogg (pronounced gloog and meaning 'glow') for two or 20, it will warm your body and soul.

King Gustav I Vasa of Sweden loved "glodgad vin" (glowing hot wine) way back in 1609. In 1755, Samuel Johnson, who published the first English-language dictionary said, "Claret is the drink for boys, port for men, but he who aspires to be a hero must drink brandy." Gloggs have brandy.

Swedish glogg contains brandy or caraway vodka. The Finnish gluggi uses vodka, the French vin chaud uses cognac, the Irish use Irish whiskey, the English wassail uses ale, the Germans and Austrians gluhwein, often served at their Christmas markets.

### **Traditional Swedish Glogg**

**Ingredients (4 servings)**

- 2 1/2 cups water
  - 3/4 cup golden raisins
  - 2 teaspoons whole cloves
  - 1 tablespoon whole cardamom seeds or 2 pods cracked open
  - 1 3-inch stick cinnamon
  - 1/2 cup sugar
  - 1/4 cup blanched almonds (raw, no skin)
  - 2 bottles dry red wine (750 ml each). Use burgundy or port.
- Brandy to taste (optional)

Tie the cloves and cardamom pods in a cheesecloth bag. Add to the water, raisins and almonds in a medium saucepan. Bring to a boil and simmer for 30 minutes.

Remove and discard the spice bag. Strain the raisins and almonds from the liquid and save.

Stir in sugar until dissolved with the wine in a larger pot. Reheat to a simmer. (do not boil). Serve in mugs with a few raisins and almonds.

You can prepare the spiced water mixture early in the day for a larger gathering. Fill a decorative bowl with the raisins and almonds. Just before your guests arrive, reheat the mixture in a larger pot, add the wine and simmer. Serve from an electric slow cooker (on low) or at the stove. Add brandy for those who want it.

God jul! Cheers! Bon noel!





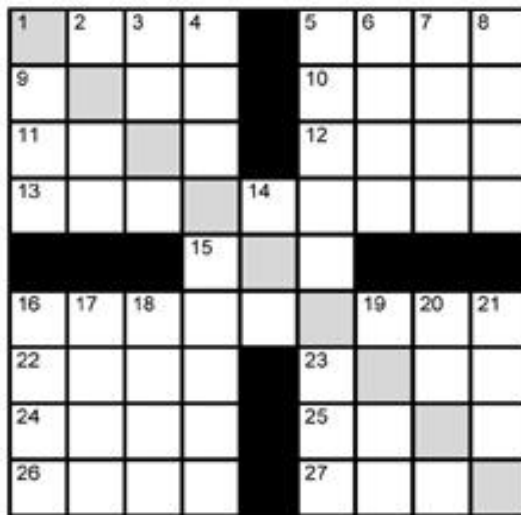
## A fix for a flip

### Across

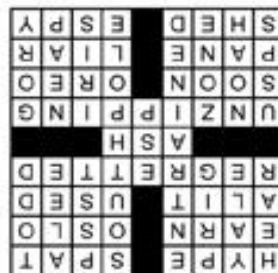
1. Hoopla
5. Petty quarrel
9. Make, as money
10. Nobel Peace Prize city
11. Came to rest
12. Employed
13. Rued
15. \_\_\_ Wednesday
16. Decompressing a zip file
22. Presently
23. Hydrox alternative
24. Philatelist's purchase
25. Fibber
26. Molt
27. Catch sight of

### Down

1. Try, as a case
2. Its motto is "Lux et veritas"
3. Snob
4. Boarded
5. Antarctica
6. "Check this out!"
7. Sheltered, at sea
8. Mrs. Lincoln's maiden name
14. Clairvoyance, e.g.



16. Mail carrier, for short
17. Ark builder
18. Area
19. Colored eye part
20. \_\_\_ tide
21. Bloody



The title is a clue to the word in the shaded diagonal.

## Kids Are Gone. What to do with the Extra Money?

When children are finally self-supporting, parents don't have big bills for braces, private lessons, college tuition and cars.

But a new study by Boston College Center for Retirement Research shows they contribute very little more to their 401(k)s, as little as 1 percent of income more, in the first eight years after they become empty nesters.

During the same time, researchers calculate that more than half of them are at risk of being unable to maintain their standard of living when they retire.

With children gone, money may go for travel or household projects.

"There is often a long list of pent-up projects," from updating kitchens and bathrooms to adding landscaping, says Carol Hoffman, a financial planner in Blue Ash, Ohio. Another financial planner says that within two years of becoming an empty nester, he and his new wife blew through about half of his nest egg by throwing parties, going on a Mediterranean Cruise, and buying a home theater.

Some empty nesters have empty pockets because they continue to spend on their adult children. They may help them pay for graduate school, health or car insurance, car repairs or a down payment on a house. Some do prepare for retirement by buying long-term-care insurance or paying down debt.

Savings rates can rise by another 2 percent of income due to accelerated mortgage payments. Financial academics make these suggestions.

\* Think about what you're spending on and whether it's worth the price.

\* Check online programs like Mint and Yodlee's MoneyCenter for advice and budgeting.

\* Plan less-expensive indulgences. Do fun things that cost less.

\* Increase your automatic savings through payroll deductions that go to your 401(k).

## Trivia Teaser – Let it Snow

1. Who played Jon Snow on the HBO TV series "Game of Thrones"?

a-Peter Dinklage, b-Kit Harington, c-Ian Somerfelder, d-Ben Barnes.

2. Which U.S. state has a name that means "snowclad" in Spanish?

a-Nevada, b-Utah, c-Alaska, d-Wyoming.

3. The snow leopard is native to which continent?

a-Africa, b-North America, c-South America, d-Asia.

4. Which song was a hit for singer Phoebe Snow?

a-"Poetry Man," b-"At Seventeen," c-"God Bless the Child," d-"Let It Snow."

5. What American city shoveled and plowed a record 108.6 inches of snow during the 2014-2015 winter season?

a-Philadelphia, b-Raleigh, c-New York City, d-Boston.

6. Who was the narrator for the TV Christmas special "Frosty the Snowman"?

a-Donald O'Connor, b-Fred Astaire, c-Jimmy Durante, d-Gene Kelly.

7. Quarterback John Huarte and wide receiver Jack Snow finished in the top ten of Heisman Trophy balloting in 1964 while both played at what university?

a-UCLA, b-Oregon, c-Florida State, d-Notre Dame.

8. Which TV character had three cats named Snowball?

a-Mork, b-Lisa Simpson, c-Olivia Benson, d-Samantha Stephens.

9. Who wrote the 1845 fairy tale "The Snow Queen"?

a-Charles Dickens, b-Heinrich Hoffmann, c-Harriet Beecher Stowe, d-Hans Christian Andersen.

10. Who had a hit in the summer of 1970 with the song "Snowbird"?

a-Anne Murray, b-Terry Jacks, c-Gordon Lightfoot, d-Rita Coolidge.

- 1-b, Kit Harington  
2-a, Nevada  
3-d, Asia  
4-a, "Poetry Man"  
5-d, Boston  
6-c, Jimmy Durante  
7-d, Notre Dame  
8-b, Lisa Simpson  
9-d, Harriet Beecher Stowe  
10-a, Anne Murray

Answers to 'Let it Snow'



## The Glorious Lives and Myths of Dolphins

Dolphins always look like they are smiling.

How can we not love them?

So asks author Susan Casey whose book, *Voices in the Ocean*, is an exploration of dolphin life and their interactions with humans.

According to the *New York Times*, the book is a mix of science, pseudo-science, and a kind of New Age mysticism.

But Casey's book is intended, in part, to be mystical. Casey fell in love with dolphins during a difficult time after a divorce and the death of her father. Feeling lonely, she went for a swim in Hawaii only to be joined by a pod of spinner dolphins. The experience, she says, was a bolt of lightning, filling her with awe at the fun of swimming with the squeaking creatures. The experience, mystically, lifted her spirits.

Joyous is the way she portrays the gleeful creatures of the oceans. They are clowns, she says, and also incredibly intuitive and empathetic.

Some reviewers say she goes off the deep end saying things like dolphins can tell if a woman is pregnant. This has never been proven but it is treated as fact in the book. At other times, she quotes, without skepticism, people who assert dolphins are mind readers who can transmit messages about opera.

Still, Casey's book offers many examples of dolphins displaying great acts of apparent selflessness, courage and empathy and reviewers say it is a lively read.

Her *Voices in the Ocean* is based on her years of swimming the open seas with dolphins, interviews with leading experts and protectors, and her extensive travels.

## Your fast food will be coming even faster

Technology has entered the world of fast food dining. Some patrons are calling it the "robot restaurant." The co-founder of this San Francisco restaurant, Tim Young, says, "What we've designed creates a sense of mystery, a sense of intrigue."

After customers punch in and pay for their orders on one of nine iPads, they can choose from ingredients like lemon-herb toasted quinoa and many other choices. Screens summon them to a nearby wall of cubbies that flashes their names (taken from their credit cards). It instructs them to "tap" to pick up their food. No humans can be seen.

The restaurant, Eatsa, and its sci-fi aesthetic is definitely intriguing. Young and his founding team have built a cashless 21st century version of the Horn & Hardart automat. They were early 20th century cafeterias where people could survey dishes placed in windowed compartments and pop in a nickel to serve themselves a helping of pie or macaroni and cheese.

All the nations you have made will come and worship before you, Lord; they will bring glory to your name. Psalm 86:9

## Sauerbraten

### Ingredients:

- 4 pounds of boneless beef roast, bottom round or chuck (1.8 kg)
- 2 cups red wine vinegar (or 1 cup vinegar and 1 cup red wine) (475 ml)
- 1 onion, sliced
- 1 carrot sliced
- 2 bay leaves
- 6 thyme sprigs
- 1 teaspoon whole allspice (5 ml)
- 1 teaspoon peppercorns (5 ml)
- 4 cloves
- 2 tablespoons tallow, lard, butter or coconut oil (15 ml)
- 6 pitted dates, roughly chopped



### Directions

Bring 2 cups (475 ml) of water plus the vinegar, onion, carrot, bay leaves, thyme, allspice, peppercorns and cloves to a boil. Let cool. Place the meat in a glass bowl or stainless steel pot (avoid plastic, aluminum and cast iron) and pour the marinade over the meat. Cover the container and refrigerate for at least 72 hours and up to 5 days. The meat won't be completely submerged, so you'll need to turn the roast several times while it marinates in the refrigerator. Take the meat out of the marinade and pat it dry. Generously season the roast with salt and pepper. Strain the marinade and discard the solids. Set the liquid aside. Heat oven to 325 °F (190 °C). Heat the lard/butter/coconut oil over medium heat in an ovenproof pot. Brown all sides of the meat. This will take a total of 15 minutes or so. Pour the marinade in the pot, scraping up any browned bits of meat on bottom. Add the dates. Bring the liquid to a simmer. Cover and put in the oven. Check the roast after 30 minutes. The braising liquid should be at a very gently simmer; if the liquid is bubbling really rapidly, then turn the oven heat down to 300 °F. Braise the meat for 1 hour more, use tongs and a spatula to turn the roast over, and braise for another 1 1/2 to 2 hours, for a total braising time of around 3 hours. The meat should be very tender. Remove the meat from the braising liquid. Skim excess fat off the top of the braising liquid. Pour the liquid into a blender and puree until the dates are smooth. Return what is now the sauerbraten sauce to the pot and simmer on the stove for 10 minutes, stirring frequently, to reduce and thicken the sauce. If you find the sauce to be unpleasantly acidic, a teaspoon or two of sugar can be added. Or, once the sauce is off the heat then stir in a few large spoonful's of sour cream to give the sauce a smoother, richer flavor and texture. Slice the meat and spoon the sauce on top. <http://www.marksdailyapple.com/sauerbraten-a-classic-german-pot-roast/#axzz2cu3R8roC>