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Better Home Living™

The Newsletter That's Both Informative and Fun!

Time to come clean about mold

New research shows that household mold will rarely cause a serious illness.

A study of common molds found in homes in five regions of the U.S. by the University of Arizona shows that molds can worsen symptoms in asthma patients. In healthy people they may cause coughing or throat irritation. The symptoms are linked to moisture, which encourages the growth of mold.

Mold may not cause serious illness, but it's definitely ugly. To keep it from forming, check your home for damp areas such as basements. Do what you can to dry them out. In addition, building-safety experts recommend these steps.

*Wipe your feet. Get a good door mat that loosens dirt from your shoes. Dirt may hold spores which turn into mold. Stomp your feet before entering the house or leave your shoes at the door.

*Ventilate. Open windows or run fans in steamy bathrooms and hot kitchens. Get the warm, humid air out of the house, or try to dry out the air with the fan.

*Check the humidifiers. They add moisture to the air and require frequent cleaning to prevent mold buildup inside the units. If you must humidify, opt for a warm-mist model which boils the water so mold can't grow in the unit. Clean it often.

*Pay special attention to the bathroom. If you see mold on shower walls, ceilings, sinks, or toilets, scrub it with a diluted bleach mixture or a bathroom cleanser containing bleach. That will eliminate the problem for a time.

Study: Photos may improve your vacation

Beautiful mountains, ancient churches, or glistening water--these are the experiences we want to keep and snap with a camera.

You may have heard taking pictures can make you miss the wonder of the experience. According to one study, that isn't true.

Researchers at the University of Southern California, Yale and the University of Pennsylvania conducted nine experiments with 2,000 participants. Some people took pictures, and some people took no pictures.

The study found that people who take photos rate their enjoyment of an activity higher than those who don't snap away.

Photography of views or activities tends to increase a person's engagement in the scene as photographers look for an interesting viewpoint or the most intriguing moment. Picture takers examine each scene more thoroughly.

On the other hand, if people are painting or crafting, photography makes little difference in their enjoyment. They are already immersed in the experience.

In one situation, photography made an experience less enjoyable. If people were asked to photograph unpleasant experiences, like watching a lion kill its prey, then photographers had a more negative reaction than those who just watched.



I hope you enjoy this month's newsletter!

*Susie Duncan
Two Ladies & A Bucket*

Why is a roller coaster thrilling?

You feel light. You feel heavy. You're wrong-side up and upside wrong.

Welcome to the roller coaster thrill.

According to Science, the rush a coaster brings is because of constant changes on your body. You have two principles of physics to thank: gravity and acceleration.

When the coaster dives down a steep hill, you feel an upward pull as acceleration lifts you up, and gravity pulls you down at the same time.

If the coaster is going fast enough, you experience the same sense of weightlessness as a skydiver in free fall. You might not realize it but one of the reasons this seems thrilling is that your body, organs and muscles are accelerating at different times. Your organs are not left in place as they normally are but instead they are each weightless. That is what makes the thrill hill feeling.

When the coaster goes fast up a steep hill, the gravity and acceleration pull you in the same direction, making you feel heavier.

"If you were to sit on a scale during a roller coaster ride, you would see your weight change from point to point on the track," writes Tom Harris, structural engineer, for Science.

That is the physics of the experience, but part of the tingle is the sensory experience. You feel the air. You see the height. You see you are upside down. You feel yourself pressing against the seat.

You know you are going fast because you see yourself passing structures. But you never actually feel velocity. You only feel change in velocity.



Do You Know...

... 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 a personalized hand written thank you card containing a special little pick me up from me.



Thanks a Bunch!

"The ladies did an awesome job. I could not be more pleased. The ladies really worked their back sides off."

Connie L.



Dryer Sheets

These little pieces of cloth are pure magic, even after they've been used in the dryer! A used dryer sheet can buff out water spots from your mirrors and bathroom/kitchen fixtures, tackle water spots on your shower doors, and even get rid of that loathsome ring in the toilet that just won't budge! Use new dryer sheets to wipe your baseboards clean, and you'll be not only be cleaning them but adding a dust-fighting layer to them as you go!



Humans get lift from nature

A family medicine professor has identified four main benefits of being surrounded by nature.

Sara L Warber of the University of Michigan has studied the benefits humans experience when they get out in nature.

Physical: People tend to be more active when out and about, Warber says. When people repeatedly go out for walks or just enjoy the outside, they tend to move more, conferring benefits on the immune and endocrine systems. Blood pressure can also improve.



Mental: Thinking improves when people experience nature. They begin to have a sense of well-being, less stress, and less depression. They might also recover more quickly from stress. Group walks are especially helpful.

Emotional: People in parks, camp settings, or group activity, like bird watching, experience more positive emotions.

Spiritual: Spending time in nature gives adults a sense of transcendence, serenity and tranquility.

Warber studied park users in the United Kingdom and found that the most people reported feeling relaxed.

Writer Michael Grothaus tried his own experiment to discover if his city spirit could be calmed by parks. Turned out it was. He wrote in Fast Company that after dedicating no less than one hour in nature, he immediately felt less stressed. It was as if the parks acted like a cocoon, sheltering him from city noises and his own racing thoughts.

After two weeks, he found her overall mood improved.

By the third week, he felt more creative.

On the fourth week, he was surprised and excited to realize his memory improved and he no longer needed to write out a list of tasks.

Warber said everyone could benefit from an hour of nature immersion each day.

Trivia Teaser – Light in August

1. Who made his debut playing James Bond in the 1987 movie "The Living Daylights"? a-Daniel Craig, b-Roger Moore, c-Timothy Dalton, d-Pierce Brosnan.

2. What was the highest charting song on the Billboard pop chart, reaching #4 in 1979, for the Electric Light Orchestra? a-"Mr. Blue," b-"Sweet Talkin' Woman," c-"Hold On Tight," d-"Don't Bring Me Down."

3. What former football player sang the number one country songs "Leave the Light On" and "Take Your Time"? a-Tim McGraw, b-Sam Hunt, c-Mike Reid, d-Terry Bradshaw.

4. What is the maximum weight for a boxer in the lightweight division? a-120 lb., b-125 lb., c-130 lb., d-135 lb.?

5. What sitcom starred Judith Light as a working mom? a-"Step by Step," b-"Who's the Boss?," c-"She's the Sheriff," d-"Growing Pains."

6. Who wrote the classic poem "Charge of the Light Brigade"? a-William Blake, b-Sir Walter Scott, c-Alfred, Lord Tennyson, d-Henry David Thoreau.

7. Beethoven's "Moonlight Sonata" was written for what instrument? a-Violin, b-Cello, c-Piano, d-Glass harmonica.

8. "Ray of Light" was a 1988 hit song for what singer? a-George Harrison, b-Linda Ronstadt, c-Gloria Gaynor, d-Madonna.

9. Tom Hiddleston stars as what legendary country singer in the 2015 movie "I Saw the Light"? a-Hank Williams, b-George Jones, c-Johnny Cash, d-Merle Haggard.

10. What is the surname of the family that visits the Isle of Skye in the Virginia Woolf novel "To the Lighthouse"? a-Ramsay, b-MacDowell, c-Nichols, d-Andrews.

11. A hussar was a light cavalryman of the 15th century, originally from what country? a-Scotland, b-Hungary, c-Italy, d-India.

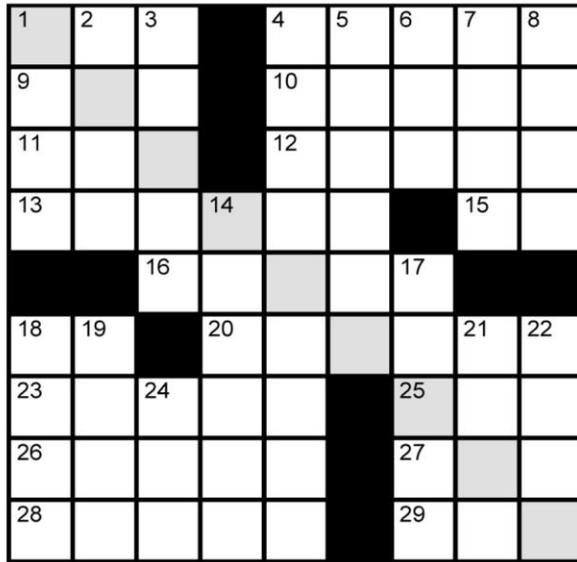
Answers to 'Light in August'

- 1-c, Timothy Dalton
2-d, "Don't Bring Me Down"
3-b, Sam Hunt
4-d, 135 lb.
5-b, "Who's the Boss?"
6-c, Alfred
7-c, Piano
8-d, Madonna
9-a, Hank Williams
10-a, Ramsay
11-b, Hungary

Fan of water life

Across

1. The ___ Four
4. New England catch
9. Fanciful story
10. Two-door car
11. Infomercials, e.g.
12. Watery eye discharge
13. Giggle
15. Hence
16. Link
18. Radio mode
20. Pinch pennies
23. Collar attachment
25. Jersey call
26. Free-for-all
27. Prevent
28. Brenda, of the comics
29. Setting for TV's "Newhart"



8. Floor model
14. Many a snake
17. Rain clouds
18. "___ for the poor"
19. Encounter
21. Bellyache
22. Smut
24. In the style of



Down

1. Off-pitch
2. Adjutant
3. Attack
4. Like an owl
5. Legacy sharer
6. Parisian way
7. Creative work

In season now: Peas

Green peas, also known as English or garden peas, are out of the garden and ready for dinner this month.

Not only are they delicious, but they contain some surprising health benefits.

Bite for bite, peas have twice the folate of raw spinach and more fiber than cooked broccoli. Doctors have long known that getting more dietary fiber is one of the best ways to lower cholesterol, and with it the risk for heart disease.

In the intestine, the fiber in peas binds with bile from the liver and traps it in the stool. By removing bile, which is very high in cholesterol, the body automatically brings cholesterol levels down.

Here's an important, but little-known fact: The chlorophyllin in peas has a special molecular shape that allows it to grab cancer-causing chemicals in the body. Nutrition experts at the University of Toronto say the chlorophyllin attaches to carcinogens and helps prevent them from being absorbed. They recommend eating peas and other bright, green vegetables as often as possible.

Studies in Denmark show that the fiber in peas can result in a reduction of total triglyceride levels if eaten regularly for just two weeks.

Peas fresh from the garden have more nutrients than others. Canned peas lose some nutrients, but frozen are almost as good as fresh.

Though the pods of some peas are edible, the peas themselves contain most of the fiber, folate, niacin, phosphorus, riboflavin, thiamin, vitamin C, and vitamin A.

For a nutritious treat, cook a 16-oz bag of frozen peas in 1/4 cup of water for 3 minutes. Drain and add 1 tablespoon minced chives, 2 teaspoons minced tarragon, 2 tablespoons butter, and a sprinkle of salt. Delicious!



Two Ladies & A Bucket

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American Red Cross

The American Red Cross is currently experiencing a critical blood shortage in our area. Please contact your local donation center and schedule an appointment to donate blood today.



The Fitbit cheat

Don't have the inclination to place high in the company's Fitbit step competition? Here are some legendary cheats, according to the Wall Street Journal:

- Strap the Fitbit to the dog (13K-30K steps) or to an electric saw blade (57K steps in 24 hours).

- Attach to a hamster on a wheel.

A hamster has been known to win a step competition but was later disqualified.

Staff Members Making the News

Please join me in welcoming the newest team members:

- Erica Gilmore
- Casey Allred

I look forward to a long and successful future with both of you. Oh....and Happy Birthday Casey!

~~ Susie Duncan

"What good is the warmth of summer, without the cold of winter to give it sweetness."

-- John Steinbeck, "Travels with Charley" In Search of America

Calamity Jane figured she would be a legend

"I figure, if a girl wants to be a legend, she should just go ahead and be one."

Calamity Jane, the self-styled heroine and cowgirl of the Wild West, said that in her sensational 1890 autobiography, "Life and Adventures of Calamity Jane, By Herself." It was a pamphlet-size story she dictated to a printer, but eager fans paid several pennies to re-live her tales of the West.

She was born Martha Jane Canary, the oldest of six children. Her father was an inveterate gambler, and her mother was a part-time prostitute. By the time she was 12, both her parents were dead, and she had to support her siblings.

She grew up fast. She earned money as a cook, dishwasher, dance-hall girl, and even a prostitute. Along the way, she took on a male persona. She chewed and spat tobacco, guzzled booze, cussed and bragged about her exploits with equal audacity. She was a crack shot and a fearless rider, shooting from the saddle like a cowboy.

Part of many Indian and Calvary conflicts, she claimed her heroics earned her the nickname Calamity.

She met Wild Bill Hickok on a wagon-train from Wyoming to Deadwood, S. Dakota. Some say they were romantically involved. When Hickok was murdered August 2, 1876 while playing poker, Calamity was devastated.

For the next 25 years, she traveled from state to state. Still a sharp-shooter, she joined Buffalo Bill's Wild West Show. Her insatiable thirst for whiskey got her fired.

She returned to the Black Hills but soon discovered the Old West had moved on.

Calamity Jane died in a motel room not far from Deadwood on August 1, 1903. Her dying request was to make her death date August 2 and to bury her next to Wild Bill Hickok.

Has this ever happened to you?



Fill a coffee mug with water. Place the mug in the microwave. Microwave on high power for five minutes. Leave the mug sit in the closed microwave for 30 minutes. Wipe clean. Repeat the cycle if needed.