



February 2016

Volume 1, Issue 2



Better Home Living™

The Newsletter That's Both Informative and Fun!

Four 10-minute cures for clutter

Over time, most people have acquired a lot of food storage containers. Some aren't used, have missing lids or are stained.

In the kitchen, use 10 minutes to pull everything out of your container shelves. Keep only those you often use and have lids that fit. Discard the others and nest the saved containers to save space.

In 10 minutes more, check every lid that has a container it fits. Toss the stray ones, but don't keep more than two lids for any container. Stack lids of similar shape under their nested containers, or place lids together on their sides in a single storage container so they stand up vertically.

Use 10-minute time chunks to clean an area of the refrigerator. Pull all items out of the area you choose and place them on the kitchen table or counter. Throw out any questionable food, produce and leftovers if you wonder whether they're still good. Wipe the shelf or drawer with a clean damp sponge sprinkled with baking soda. Dry with a dish towel and replace the fresh items.

In the bathroom, organize the shelves under the sink (5 minutes). Measure the cabinet and fit stacking drawers inside (buy them or order online). Each stack should be at least two drawers high and narrow enough to fit on either side of the sink's drainpipe. Allow space for taller glass and toilet bowl cleaners.

In your home office, sort scattered papers into stacks and label Call, Write, Pay, Return, or Order. Insert stacks in colored folders and keep them handy and visible.

When you have a few minutes, go through a folder and take action. Sometimes you can go through an entire folder in about 10 minutes.

Less sleep can make you feel better than longer, often-interrupted sleep

Getting enough sleep is about more than the number of hours you are in bed.

Johns Hopkins University School of Medicine has found that people forced to waken multiple times during the night showed a greater decline in positive mood than those forced to go to bed later. The study, published in the journal *Sleep* showed those whose sleep was interrupted multiple times to go to the bathroom or tend a baby also had less deep sleep, the third stage of non-rapid eye movement sleep.

One study done in Israel and published last year, found that a fragmented night of sleep for a full eight hours impacted mood and attention as much as sleeping just four hours a night.

In the Johns Hopkins study, healthy people without any diagnosed sleep problems were given eight hours to sleep in the lab for three consecutive days.

Another healthy group, whose sleep was disrupted, was awakened each hour for seven or eight hours. A third group slept just four hours. Both of these groups' moods dropped after the first night, and those in the forced-awakening group continued to show a decline in mood.

Those in the four-hour sleep group saw their moods stabilize over the three days.

The researchers conclude that consolidated sleep, even if shorter than one's accustomed to, is less detrimental to positive mood than disrupted sleep.

How many Leapers do you know?

February

Happy Valentine's Day!

*Susie Duncan
Two Ladies & A Bucket*

Leap Year Lore

It's time to bone up on your understanding of Leap Year and Leap Day, February 29, 2016. The science is pretty simple. Most of the world uses the Gregorian calendar (also called Western or Christian calendar) after it replaced the Julian calendar because of its inaccuracies.

The 365 days are divided into 12 months and divided into 30 or 31 days, except February, which has 28. Well, except for Leap Year, when it has 29. Remember the rhyme? The extra day was added to February, because it had fewer days after the adjustments calculated by how long it takes the earth to go around the sun.

That trip takes five hours, 48 minutes and 45 seconds longer. If the solar year can be divided by either 4 or 400, it's a Leap Year.

All sorts of folklore, superstitions and traditions have developed over the past 2000 years. The Irish supposedly balanced the tradition of men proposing to women by allowing them to do the honors during Leap Year, but not on Leap Day.

In several European countries, Leap Day was called Bachelor's Day; any man who refused a woman's proposal paid a penalty of 12 pairs of gloves, one for each month to hide her embarrassment of a bare engagement finger. Greeks considered it unlucky to marry in a Leap Year and the Scots deemed it unlucky to be born on Leap Day.

Are you a leaping? If so, you share your birthday with Lord Byron, Dinah Shore and Tony Robbins, among others, and the odds were only one in 1,461. With a real birthday coming every four years, you're just 11 years old, not 44.



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 in advance for your help and I look forward to sending you a special surprise your way!

Thanks a Bunch!

"These girls did an outstanding job of cleaning my house. They were very professional and thorough in their cleaning and I'll be looking forward to their return in the future."

~~Mary B.~~

"All is well. Sonnett is a good worker and always ready for any special requests and always with a smile!"

~~Patty S.~~

Is it heartburn or a heart attack?

A bad case of heartburn can be very similar to something much worse -- a heart attack.

For heart patients, already hyper-aware of pain, the heartburn bluff can be frightening.

Heartburn and heart attack have some major symptoms in common, including chest pain, but they are entirely different problems. Heartburn is a digestive problem that can cause actual pain as stomach acids irritate the stomach lining and back up into the throat. A heart attack, meanwhile, is all about the heart and has nothing to do with the stomach.

But each does a pretty spooky imitation of the other, causing chest pain, pressure and burning.

When to suspect the heart:

- Cardiac pain and pressure radiates from the chest, arms, neck, jaw and back.
- Changing position doesn't help. Heartburn, for example, can be somewhat relieved or diminished by sitting up or standing. Heart attack pain does not respond to this.
- Cardiac episodes are usually accompanied by nausea and cold sweats.
- Shortness of breath and fatigue characterize heart attacks.
- Dizziness and lightheadedness.
- **Most important:**
When in doubt, call 911.



Happy Valentine's Day!

Chocolate is good for you, so eat your candy, but not a lot of it all at once

It's hard to believe that what was once considered to be an indulgence has now proved to be good for your heart, your lungs, and your brain.

There's even more good news. The flavonoids liberally found in dark chocolate appear to produce the greatest health benefits, but researchers now say milk chocolate is also a rich source. It contains about 75 milligrams per 100 grams, or more than found in red wine. Of course, all flavonoid levels vary by brand of chocolate.

The Heart study

A new study of some 21,000 participants was done in the EPIC-Norfolk research. It shows that after 11 years, those who ate the most chocolate every day (3.5 ounces or about one chocolate bar) had an 11 percent lower risk for heart disease. They were 25 percent less likely to die of any cardiovascular causes than those eating the least (.5 ounces per day on average).

But these results are not a prescription for eating candy. They were observational studies where food questionnaires were used. Scientists did not randomly assign subjects to groups and compare the results to a control group. The study depended on recall.

In spite of this disadvantage, doctors at Tufts University say the results are supported by other studies.

Going dark

If you love chocolate, remember that it contains calories. So choose chocolate instead of indulgences like donuts and other treats.

It's still best to choose dark chocolate that's higher in flavonoids, say researchers at Tufts University. Note that the Food and Drug Administration doesn't require producers to list flavonoid content on their products.

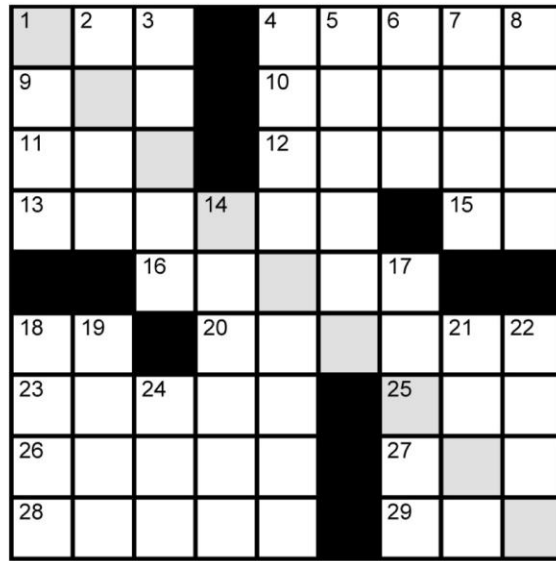
To maximize flavonoids, Jeffrey Blumberg, PhD, of Tufts, recommends dark, bittersweet or baking chocolate. Milk chocolate is processed to make it smoother and less bitter, which also decreases natural flavonoid content.



Docs, Cops, and Prof tactive

Across

1. "Days of ___ Lives"
4. Archaeological find
9. Animal that beats its chest
10. Varnish resin
11. Garden tool
12. Parkinson's drug
13. Locked up
15. Therefore
16. Bakery supply
18. Commercial
20. Stellar
23. Arson, for one
25. U.N. agency
26. Indy entrant
27. Bill and ___
28. Decorative jugs
29. Barbie's beau



Down

1. Diamond Head locale
2. "Once ___ a time..."
3. Like an atoll
4. Those who set free
5. Firstborn
6. "Seinfeld" uncle
7. Little devils
8. Italian farewell

14. Pipe smoker's tool
17. Bridge unit
18. "God's Little ___"
19. Tie
21. Balm ingredient
22. Crackpot
24. Diamonds, slangily



Considering a trip: one parent, one child at a time

More parents are taking solo trips with children as young as 10. Sometimes a mom or dad take the trip to celebrate a milestone and sometimes it's simply to connect with their child. Travel agents say it's about breaking up the usual family dynamic and allowing yourself some one-on-one time with your child.

Moms are taking trips with their sons and dads are arranging tours with their daughters, but sometimes both parents take one child on a solo trip. The kids left at home don't feel left out because they know their turn is coming. And sometimes the trip is taken while the at-home child is at camp or taking a special-interest course.

Not everyone can afford to take the big trip to a foreign country with their child. But there are many opportunities for domestic travel adventures, and there are week-long in-state trips or across the country tours to a major U.S. city. The intimacy gained by being with one child for a week, or even an enjoyable weekend, can be significant.

Don't take a child to an interesting city if you are going there for business and will be leaving him or her alone in a hotel room for parts of the day.

You could take your child to Chicago, for example, where you both could ride a Segway and visit the Shedd Aquarium and museums of interest. Or take them to a professional sports game if they have an interest in that. And take a boat tour on the Chicago River. Every large city has many attractions.

Sometimes it works to spend one overnight with family members the child likes as part of your trip.

The important thing for a parent is to make sure it's what you really want to do and that you won't become impatient or bored with the itinerary. If you're not enjoying it too, the time and expense won't be worth it.

Trivia Teaser – Food for Thought

1. What kind of meat is used to prepare the dish coq au vin? a-Lamb, b-Veal, c-Chicken, d-Frog.

2. In 1990, George Bush declared that as President he never had to eat what vegetable ever again? a-Sweet potato, b-Turnip, c-Peas, d-Broccoli.

3. Kalamata and Picholine are popular varieties of what food? a-Olive, b-Tomato, c-Fig, d-Pepper.

4. The macadamia nut is native to which country? a-Australia, b-Iraq, c-Brazil, d-United States.

5. Applied to grilled meats, what color is a chimichurri sauce? a-Green, b-Red, c-Orange, d-Black.

6. What part of a cow does filet mignon come from? a-Leg, b-Neck, c-Loin, d-Belly.

7. What food is fried to create the Greek appetizer saganaki? a-Puff pastry, b-Pickles, c-Cheese, d-Figs.

8. What fast food chain reintroduced the Yumbo, a hot ham and cheese sandwich, 40 years after it was removed from the menu in 1974? a-Hardee's, b-Burger King, c-Arby's, d-McDonald's.

9. What method of cooking food comes from the French word for jump or bounce? a-Braising, b-Flambeing, c-Sauteing, d-Poaching.

10. What humorist and chef hosted the "Cookin' Cajun" TV show? a-Tim Sample, b-Grandpa Jones, c-Henry Phillips, d-Justin Wilson.

11. Cachupa, a slow-cooked stew of corn, beans, and fish or meat, is regarded as the national dish of which island country? a-Cape Verde, b-The Maldives, c-The Philippines, d-Micronesia.

12. What Russian dessert, traditionally eaten at Easter, is made from cottage cheese and other ingredients set in a wooden mold? a-Pirozhki, b-Pimik, c-Pavlova, d-Pashka.

- 12-d, Pashka
11-a, Cape Verde
10-d, Justin Wilson
9-c, Sauteing
8-b, Burger King
7-c, Cheese
6-c, Loin
5-a, Green
4-a, Australia
3-a, Olive
2-b, Broccoli
1-c, Chicken



Two Ladies & A Bucket

5139 Lemay Ferry Road
St. Louis, MO 63129
(314) 229-1736

www.twoandabucket.com

Email me at clean@twoandabucket.com

About Our Company

Two Ladies & A Bucket is a full service residential cleaning company that operates in the following areas: Clayton, Ladue, Oakville, Mehlville, Lemay, High Ridge, Imperial, Arnold...and many more. I also have an Illinois route.

Services include: general cleaning, appliance cleaning, types of hard floor care, and window washing.

Owner Susie Duncan has been in the cleaning industry for more than 12 years, and she feels that it's important to provide cleaning services that place the utmost importance on the health and safety of her clients and employees. For that reason, she is an active member of the industry association ARCSI (Association of Residential Cleaning Services International).

Susie is also bonded and insured because accidents do happen to all of us. She feels this is just another way to serve her clients and staff.

Best exercise for balance: Tai chi

Doctors at Harvard say the slow, deliberate movements in tai chi can improve your stability and balance. The flowing motions and deep, slow breathing can exercise the body and calm the mind. The motions can train you to shift your weight while maintaining your balance.

Like yoga, tai chi has a meditative quality that can trigger the relaxation response. This physiological change can help lower blood pressure, heart rate, breathing rate, oxygen consumption, and adrenaline levels.

Staff Members Making the News

Please join me in welcoming Karen Haggard as our newest addition to the Bucket Team. Karen brings several years of cleaning experience with her. She always has a smile on her face and a pleasant good morning or hello for all she greets. You will most likely find Karen with Nicole on our Montana Team.

Welcome aboard Karen. I look forward to helping you grow within Two Ladies & A Bucket ~~ Susie Duncan.

"Getting over a painful experience is much like crossing monkey bars. You have to let go at some point in order to move forward."

-- C.S. Lewis, author of The Chronicles of Narnia and many Christian books

Author says new ideas emerge from the bottom up, not top down

The New York Times bestselling author Matt Ridley, of The Rational Optimist and Genome returns with a fascinating argument for evolution that challenges the idea that advances are made from the top down.

In his new book, The Evolution of Everything: How New Ideas Emerge, Ridley, an evolutionary biologist, says that when a line of cyclists picks up a headwind, no one directs each rider to move into the slipstream. Skeins of geese form Vs in the sky without meaning to; termites build cathedrals without architects, and bees make honeycombs without instruction.

In fact, he says all great ideas and inventions pop up in more than one location at roughly the same time. Once the groundwork has been completed, no Invention Leader is needed to say: Now invent the telephone.

Wall Street Journal Reviewer Michael Shermer points out that Ridley says when we think, "Someone should do something about X, we think of a government agent, religious leader, company CEO or a governing board. He insists that its parishioners, employees and members who bring about the most change."

In making his bottom-up argument, Ridley says that scientific evidence shows that smarter, more creative, happier, and worthy people are not created by villages, social engineering, better schools, or more facilities. In fact, these qualities appear to be innate.

\$5.00 Off Your Next Cleaning!

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www.facebook.com/2LadiesBucket

Two Ladies & A Bucket
(314) 229-1736
www.twoandabucket.com

Take the Trivia Challenge



Which type of chocolate has been proven to lower the risk of heart disease?

- A – Milk Chocolate B – White Chocolate**
C – Dark Chocolate D – Chocolate & Peanut Butter

HINT: The answer is hidden somewhere in this newsletter.