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Better Home Living™

The Newsletter That's Both Informative and Fun!

Making Silver Shine Again

1. Using silver polish, start with thick, soft cloths and apply polish according to label directions. Rub the polish onto one utensil at a time going in an up-and-down direction. Liquid polishes are less likely to create tiny scratch marks.

Work the polish into tight areas such as between the tines of forks or between pattern crevasses. If it is an antique piece where areas are part of the decoration, leave the shading in. Rinse and polish dry with a soft cloth.

2. Using aluminum foil, you can get results that are almost as good but a lot less work, say the editors of Good Housekeeping. Line a plastic basin with foil, shiny side up. Place silverware inside, making sure all pieces are contacting the foil or touching a piece that is.

Add 1/4-cup of baking soda to one gallon of water, stir, pour over the silverware and let stand for 10 to 15 minutes. Wearing rubber gloves, remove the silver. Rinse and buff with a clean soft cloth.

The Touch of His Father

Buddy Valastro Sr. was folding and stretching dough in the family's Hoboken, N.J. bakery shop.

Watch me, he said to his son. He pulled the dough, worked it thin into the nearly translucent sheet of pastry necessary for the perfect sfogliatelle. Lobster tails, some call them: incredibly light and flaky pastries filled with cream. It was the signature dish at Carlo's Bakery Shop.

Buddy Jr. just hadn't been able to make that pastry. He had mastered the fancy cakes and baked delights at the store, but sfogliatelle mocked him. There was a special magic in being able to stretch the dough thin as parchment, yet not tear it; to pull it out, but not bunch it.

Buddy Sr. had the touch that escaped his son. Maybe it was because Buddy Sr. came from three generations of bakers, all the way back to Italy. And it was certainly because Buddy Sr. spent 30 years making lobster tails. The locally famous shop in New Jersey was opened by Carlo Guastaffero in 1910 and purchased by Buddy Sr. in 1964. He had grand plans, then. Maybe to bake a cake that would grace a wedding magazine. Maybe to expand.

But that particular night was just about one thing. "Watch me," his father said. "I'm not here to play around. I'm here to show you how to make lobster tails one more time."

So, Buddy Jr. watched his father again and moved his hands in the baker's dance until he, too, pulled out a thin layer of dough. No bunches. No tears. Perfection.

And then Buddy Jr. woke up.

Buddy, who took over the shop at age 17, after his father died of cancer, awoke in excitement and, in life as in his dream, rushed to the bake shop. For the first time, Buddy Jr. pulled out the perfect sfogliatelle pastry. His father's last visit to the bake shop was not merely a dream; It was a gift.

Today, fans of reality television know Buddy Jr. as The Cake Boss. That little shop in Hoboken is now an industry with 18 locations worldwide. The shop's cakes have graced the covers of wedding magazines. And Buddy Jr. is a television star, who still grieves for his dad and is still grateful for the perfect sfogliatelle.



I hope you enjoy June's newsletter!

*Susie Duncan
Two Ladies & A Bucket*

The Dog Who Owned the Mail

He was a likable, stray border terrier who had two hobbies: He liked to travel and he liked mail bags.

It all started in 1888 in Albany, NY, when the dog showed up at a post office and was adopted by the postal workers. They noticed Owney liked to sleep on mail bags and one other thing: Owney was friendly toward postal workers but he was decidedly unfriendly to non-postal workers.

The talent was a useful one as Owney traveled from one post office to another, guarding mail bags in return for food and water. Once, a mail bag fell off a train and Owney stayed with the bag until a worker came back for it.

An 1893 book by Cushing Marshall has this description: "The terrier 'Owney' travels from one end of the country to the other in the postal cars, tagged through, petted, talked to, looked out for, as a brother, almost. But sometimes, no matter what the attention, he suddenly departs for the south, the east, or the west, and is not seen again for months."

Albany postal workers worried when Owney disappeared for months. They had a special collar made with the address of the Albany Post Office, just so he could be identified.

At the various post offices he visited, Owney got a new tag clipped to his collar until finally he jingled loudly with every step.

The circumstances of Owney's death are disputed. But all agree he was put down June 11, 1897.

He is still honored at the Smithsonian National Postal Museum in Washington, DC, where 397 of his medals and tags are on display.



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 receive a special gift from me and our new client will receive a \$25.00 additional cleaning service for free!

If you think someone 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 gift!



Thanks in advance for your help!

Thanks a Bunch!

"Oh my gosh- I could not be more pleased with your company and the team that gets my house so miraculously clean every other week! Thank you to the two sweet ladies that put up with our filth! I even received a phone call today from either Erica or Nicole (I forget which one!), letting me know they were early and asking if that was ok. So incredibly thoughtful!"

~~ Chris B

Witch Trials Begin

Life wasn't easy in Salem Village, Mass., in 1692. Smallpox had ravaged the village. Native American tribes threatened attacks. A recent British war made commodities scarce. Residents already had plenty to fear when a group of young girls conjured up witches amongst the villagers, according to history.com.

Two girls began having screaming fits and convulsions earlier that year. After a doctor diagnosed bewitchment, other girls began having the same symptoms. And thus began the search for witches which quickly focused on three easy targets: an unpopular resident, a beggar woman, and a slave.

By May 1692, there were trials and on June 2, 1692, the first death sentence was handed out to the unpopular resident.

In all, about 150 men, women and children were accused of witchcraft until the hysteria abated and, by September 1692, public opinion turned against the trials.

Interestingly, a study in 1976 published in Science magazine speculated that the girls might have had convulsions because of a fungus found in cereals. Toxicologists say the fungus can cause delusions, vomiting and muscle spasms.



Tick Season: Prepare for An Increase

You can tell by the acorns.

A bumper crop of acorns means good times for mice and that means lots of food for ticks.

According to Richard S. Ostfeld, a Cary Institute scientist, there was a bumper crop of acorns in 2015. Lots of ticks therefore survived on mice and reproduced.

Since ticks have a two-year life cycle, the number of nymph-stage ticks should be huge this spring. In areas with lots of snow cover this winter, the tick population might be mitigated, but in areas with a mild winter, the tick population should be big.

Naturally, where there are ticks, there is Lyme disease. That's going to be big, too.

Of course, not every tick bite transmits Lyme or any other disease but more ticks carry pathogens today than in the past.

Connecticut, whose Agricultural Experiment Station collects and studies ticks, found in May that 38 percent of collected ticks tested positive for Lyme disease, according to the Wall Street Journal. That is up from 27 percent in the last five years.

The deer tick can transmit up to seven pathogens that cause diseases in humans, one of which is Lyme disease.

Connecticut also found that 10 percent of ticks tested positive for a pathogen that causes Babesiosis, a disease similar to malaria. About 5 percent tested positive for Anaplasmosis, a serious disease that causes anemia and an increase in the heart rate. In 2009, talk show host David Letterman revealed he got the disease from an infected tick while camping with his son.

According to the Centers for Disease Control, there are more than 300,000 new cases of Lyme disease every year, about three times the number 20 years ago.

If you spot a tick quickly, chances are you will not be infected. Ticks latch on for three to five days but a tick that bites for only a few hours probably won't transmit an infection, according to the CDC.



Trivia Teaser – Pig in a Poke

1. Which nursery rhyme character was a pig thief? a-Little Boy Blue, b-Little Jack Horner, c-Tom, Tom the Piper's Son, d-Georgie Porgie.

2. The Bay of Pigs Invasion was a failed attempt to oust which world leader? a-Mao Tse-tung, b-Pol Pot, c-Mobutu Sese Seko, d-Fidel Castro.

3. If you are eating pig's trotters, which part of the pig are you feasting on? a-Feet, b-Tongue, c-Stomach, d-Head.

4. Ralph, Jack, and Piggy are central characters fighting for survival in which novel? a-"Lucky Jim," b-"Heart of Darkness," c-"Catcher in the Rye," d-"Lord of the Flies."

5. Pig iron is usually quite brittle because it contains a high content of which element? a-Sulphur, b-Lead, c-Carbon, d-Tungsten.

6. Inflatable flying pigs were props seen at live shows by which band? a-The Rolling Stones, b-Pink Floyd, c-Led Zepplin, d-The Grateful Dead.

7. What was the name of the old pig who called for the meeting of the animals at the beginning of George Orwell's "Animal Farm"? a-Major, b-Boxer, c-Snowball, d-Napoleon.

8. Which role in the Christmas play was given to Pigpen in "A Charlie Brown Christmas"? a-Innkeeper, b-Shepherd, c-Angel, d-Joseph.

9. More than half of the pigs in the world are living in what country with an apparently insatiable appetite for pork? a-Spain, b-China, c-Turkey, d-Germany.

10. What was the name of the lovable pig in the children's book "Charlotte's Web"? a-Oliver, b-Fred, c-Wilbur, d-Templeton.

Answers to 'Pig in a Poke'
1-c, Tom, Tom the Piper's Son
2-d, Fidel Castro
3-a, Feet
4-d, "Lord of the Flies"
5-c, Carbon
6-b, Pink Floyd
7-a, Major
8-a, Innkeeper
9-b, China
10-c, Wilbur

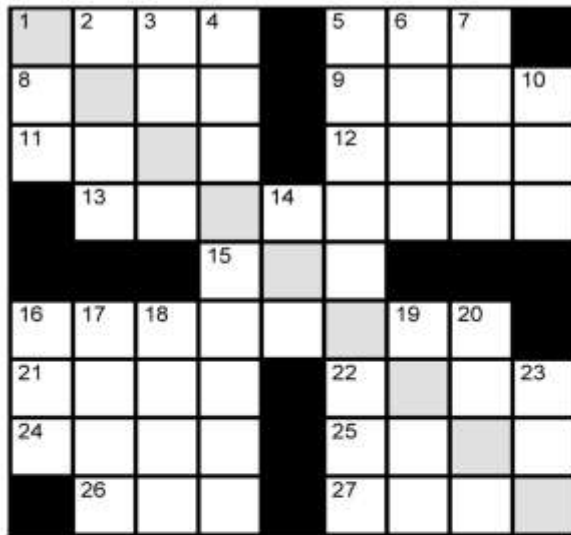
Sun highs and lows

Across

1. Bypass
5. Bloodshot
8. Pocket problem
9. Needle case
11. Building additions
12. Future's opposite
13. Military attacks
15. "___ be an honor"
16. More desirable
21. Hindu princess
22. Be sore
24. Concludes
25. Opponents
26. ___ Perignon
27. Fraternity letters

Down

1. Any boat, affectionately
2. Kind of nut
3. Misfortunes
4. Dark attitude
5. Disavow
6. Abbr. at the end of a list
7. Clean the furniture
10. "___ De-Lovely"
14. 20's dispenser
16. Grand ___, Nova Scotia
17. Touch down
18. Annul
19. Genuine, in Germany
20. Perlman of "Cheers"
23. Dash lengths



The headline is a clue to the answer in the diagonal.

Using Up Zucchini

Zucchini are a great example of a plant that can keep feeding you even in winter. You can eat the orange-colored blossoms and the fruit. Zucchini also keeps well shredded in the freezer.

Fried zucchini blossoms:

- Flour
- Salt
- Beer
- Blossoms



Make a simple batter with flour, salt, and a 12-oz. beer. Dredge the blossoms in the batter and fry them in some oil.

Grilled zucchini:

Slice the long way. Place the slices on the grill and brush them with Italian dressing on each side. They make an excellent side dish at any barbecue.

Freeze the rest:

The rest of your zucchini you can throw in a food processor to grate and then store two cups worth in freezer bags and pop them in the freezer to use all year long. The grated zucchini is a great way to hide some extra veggies in your tomato sauce. You can also use it in a quiche, muffins or bread.



Two Ladies & A Bucket

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Is It Too Dangerous for Your Kids to Play Outside?

With the exception of the last two generations in the U.S., it is safe to say that every child since the beginning of time was able to play outside alone.

Certainly every Baby Boomer remembers walking to school, roaming the neighborhood until the street lights came on (that meant you had to be home), and generally doing anything you could think of outside by yourself or with your friends. Kids even waited in the car, alone, for their parents to come out of a store.

But today, especially in certain urban areas, allowing a child outside alone is unthinkable. At least that is what New Yorker Lenore Skenazy found out when she wrote a blog column about letting her 9-year-old son take the subway alone. The child wanted to do it. He had money, a MetroCard and quarters for emergency calling. He knew the route and had taken it many times before. He came home safe and he loved the experience.

Nonetheless, Skenazy says she was immediately invited on four television shows to prove she wasn't America's worst mom.

Have things changed so much that these things are incomprehensible?

Skenazy points out that information has changed more than anything else. "I can instantly name five girls who met ghastly ends, but our parents could never do that," she writes in her blog, Free Range Kids. "We're swimming in fear soup -- fear of lawsuits, fear of injury, fear of blame (People love to blame parents for not being responsible enough.)"

Operation Open Pantry

We all have had experiences where we have donated our over-abundance of blessings to those needing a few more blessings.



Food pantries tend to experience extreme shortages of food during the summer months.

During the month of **July** I am offering a free pantry cleaning for all clients that donate six non-perishable food items (preferably not in glass containers).

Simply empty items from the pantry prior to your **July** cleaning, set aside the items you would like to donate, the ladies will vacuum and wipe out your pantry, you can reorganize your food items in your sparkling clean pantry after the ladies have left.

Call today to schedule your **July** pantry cleaning .

Benefits Of Whole Grains

Two studies by Tufts University have found whole grains have a wide role in producing healthy bacteria in the gut.

Whole grains include whole wheat, brown rice, rye, oats, barley and quinoa.

The first study found benefits from whole grains in gut bacterium that enhance the immune system and prevent infection. At the same time, the grains reduced bacterium that contribute to inflammation.

The second study suggested that whole grains increase metabolism and encourage weight loss. A whole grain diet increases calorie loss by decreasing calories retained during digestion, according to HealthNews.

Typically, whole grain foods have a higher content fiber and protein. These two nutrients are super power houses when it comes to helping us feel fuller longer. When we aren't hungry we can stay more focused on more critical details.

Dietary guidelines released in January 2011 suggested that adults should be eating 3 to 5 servings of whole grains each day. Oatmeal in the morning for breakfast and maybe a turkey sandwich with two slices of whole wheat bread for lunch and that is all it would take to meet the minimum suggested requirement.

Staff Members Making the News

Please join me in welcoming my newest employee Rachel Evans. Your best for meeting Rachel most likely will be on Sonnet's team.

Rachel applied for a position with our company a year ago. At that time, I asked Rachel to make a couple of personal improvements. She did the things I asked her to do and came back to see me a year later almost to the day.

Welcome aboard Rachel!

The smallest deed exceeds the grandest intentions.

~~ John Burroughs

