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# Better Home Living™

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

## Getting Rid of Household Germs Can Help You Avoid Colds

You can give yourself a good chance to stay healthy this winter by thoroughly washing your hands and attacking germs where they hide.

**In the kitchen:** Sink handles, sinks, and counters are the biggest offenders. Clean sinks, sink drains, and counters with antibacterial soap at least once a day. Wash your sponge in the dishwasher to kill germs.

**Fresh vegetables and fruits:** They may carry salmonella, campylobacter, or E. coli, say microbiologists at New York University. Rinse them thoroughly.

**In the laundry:** Add bleach to a load of white clothes that includes underwear. It kills virtually all the germs on underwear so they don't spread. Move the load immediately to the dryer and dry at a high temperature.

**In the bathroom:** Use a disinfecting cleaner on the bathtub weekly. If someone with a skin infection uses the tub, wash it with bleach right away so you don't pick up the germs.

**Shared devices:** Use antibacterial cleaner frequently on telephones, TV remotes, door handles, and shared keyboards, especially if someone in the household has an illness.

## Wishing You Joy and Peace!

It's common these days to complain during the holidays about how commercialized the season has become. In fact, complaining about the holidays has become as much of a tradition as the holidays themselves.

Well let's break tradition for a moment.

Call it commercial if you want, but when your family members gather around the Christmas tree, each one hopes the gift he gives delights the receiver. Call it commercial, but when you light the last candle of the menorah and give the last gift, you hope you have given light and joy.

We are hoping this year you'll enjoy the fruits of all your good work for the year. You are appreciated by your family, your employers and your nation.

So this year, maybe we should complain less, delight in giving more, and then open our hearts and be thankful for the season -- maybe a little commercial but also a lot of fun. Here's hoping you'll be joyous!



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

*Susie Duncan  
Two Ladies & A Bucket*

## Nutcrackers Have Origins Deep in Human History

Nuts have been a staple of the human diet for millennia and where there are nuts, so there are also nutcrackers.

Nutcrackers, today one of the symbols of Christmas, have a long evolution from simple stones to elaborate, and mostly decorative, figurines.

The oldest existing metal nutcrackers were made about 300 BC and were levers. By the 13th century, iron and brass nutcrackers began to take on shapes, and after the 15th century, wood carvers began to make lovely, intricate figures.

The colorful wooden soldier figures were first seen in the Erzgebirge regions of Germany during the 1800s. In 1872, Wilhelm Friedrich Fächtner, known as the "father of the nutcracker," initiated the first mass production of nutcrackers in the shape of human figures. Sometimes those figures were of real people such as queens and kings. That tradition continues today when you can buy nutcrackers wryly made into the likeness of politicians.

Nutcrackers became associated with Christmas during the Victorian era when children began to receive small nutcrackers in their Christmas stockings.

Today, their popularity has been enhanced by the traditional performances of Tchaikovsky's "Nutcracker Suite" ballet during the Christmas season.

While some decorative nutcrackers can still crack nuts, most are decorative pieces brought out as the tree goes up and the wreath goes on the door.



## 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!

What is Santa's favorite cereal?



## The Adventurer and the Christmas Flower

Born to wealth in South Carolina in 1779, Joel Roberts Poinsett rejected the life of a southern aristocrat and, instead, traveled the world becoming an expert in foreign affairs and an amateur botanist, bringing to North America the lovely flower now known as a poinsettia.

His travels spanned hot spots in Europe, Asia, and South America. In 1806 in Baku, Azerbaijan, Poinsett speculated that pools of petroleum might be used for fuel. In Persia, he told a great Khan about the United States and President Thomas Jefferson. In Russia, he told the empress that her country could not industrialize so long as serfs worked for free, though as a plantation owner he presumably had slaves. He later led an abolition movement.

Then in 1825, Poinsett, an avid botanist visited Taxco del Alarcon, south of Mexico City. There he saw for the first time the lovely, winter-blooming Flor de Noche Buena, or Christmas flower. He sent samples back to the States where the flower immediately became popular. By 1836, the plant the Aztecs called *cuetlaxochitl* had another name: Poinsettia.

Although Poinsett was famed in his own time for military, diplomatic and domestic accomplishments, it is the Christmas flower for which he is commonly remembered today.



## Christmas Eve Tourtiere is the Toast of Canadian Tables

Tourtiere, or meat pie, is a traditional part of French Canadian Christmas and New Year's Eve fare, although the dish is enjoyed throughout Canada.

Like many traditional dishes, the exact ingredients vary by family with recipes handed down throughout generations.

Typically, the meat pie consists of tiny cubes of pork, veal and beef, slow cooked and served in a pie shell. Meats very

often differ based on availability by location. You'll find fish served in some meat pies in coastal areas, for example.

Spices also vary. Some tourtieres feature a festive spice combination of cinnamon, cloves and all spice. Others feature sage and thyme, or a combination of spices.

This recipe from [hiddenponies.com](http://hiddenponies.com) features ground pork plus bread crumbs. Many recipes call for mashed potatoes instead of bread crumbs.

### Ingredients

1 tablespoon vegetable oil	1/2 teaspoon pepper
2 pounds ground pork	1/2 teaspoon summer savory or thyme
1 1/2 cups beef stock	1/3 teaspoon cloves, ground
3 onions, finely chopped	1 cup bread crumbs
3 cloves garlic, minced	1/2 cup fresh chopped parsley
2 cups finely sliced mushrooms	Pastry for a double crust 9-inch pie
1 cup finely chopped celery	1 egg, beaten
3/4 teaspoon salt	1 teaspoon water
1/2 teaspoon cinnamon	

In large skillet, heat oil over medium-high heat and cook pork, breaking it up, until no longer pink. Drain fat.

Stir in stock, onions, garlic, mushrooms, celery, salt, cinnamon, pepper, savory and cloves. Bring to boil, reduce heat and simmer 45 minutes or until 2 tablespoons of liquid remains. Stir in bread crumbs and parsley.

Refrigerate to allow the flavors to meld.

Spoon filling into bottom shell, situated in deep pie plate or iron skillet. Cover meat mixture with top pastry and press edges to seal. Cut vents in top crust.

Brush top crust with egg and water.

Bake at 375 for 40 to 45 minutes or until golden brown. Let cool at least 10 minutes before serving.



## Trivia Teaser – Camera Ready

1. Who was the longtime host of TV's "Candid Camera"? a-Arthur Godfrey, b-James Daly, c-Allen Ludden, d-Allen Funt.

2. How many soldiers are shown raising the flag over Iwo Jima in the famous WWII photograph by Joe Rosenthal? a-4, b-5, c-6, d-7.

3. Jurgen Vollmer's book "From Hamburg to Hollywood" was a collection of photographs of which band? a-The Beatles, b-The Kinks, c-The Rolling Stones, d-Kraftwerk.

4. Whose photograph of Abraham Lincoln was used for the depiction of the president on the \$5 bill? a-Matthew Brady, b-Ansel Adams, c-Mary Todd Lincoln, d-Gilbert Stuart.

5. Who played the title character in the 1928 silent film "The Cameraman"? a-Harold Lloyd, b-Buster Keaton, c-Fatty Arbuckle, d-Charlie Chaplin.

6. Which creature appears in the logo for the Snapchat mobile app? a-Bat, b-Dragon, c-Ghost, d-Gorgon.

7. Which actor appeared in a series of Polaroid TV commercials with Mariette Hartley? a-Andy Griffith, b-Pernell Roberts, c-James Garner, d-William Shatner.

8. Which legendary creature was the subject of the "Surgeon's Photo" taken in 1934? a-Bigfoot, b-Chupacabra, c-Mothman, d-Loch Ness monster.

9. Which photographer was the only American to play a significant role in both the Dada and Surrealist movements? a-Man Ray, b-Alfred Stieglitz, c-Charles Sheeler, d-Dorothea Lange.

10. Who was the first president to be photographed on his inauguration day in 1841? a-Warren G. Harding, b-Ulysses S. Grant, c-William Henry Harrison, d-John Tyler.

1-d, Allen Funt  
2-c, 6  
3-a, The Beatles  
4-a, Matthew Brady  
5-b, Buster Keaton  
6-c, Ghost  
7-c, James Garner  
8-d, Loch Ness Monster  
9-a, Man Ray  
10-c, William Henry Harrison

Answers to 'Camera Ready'

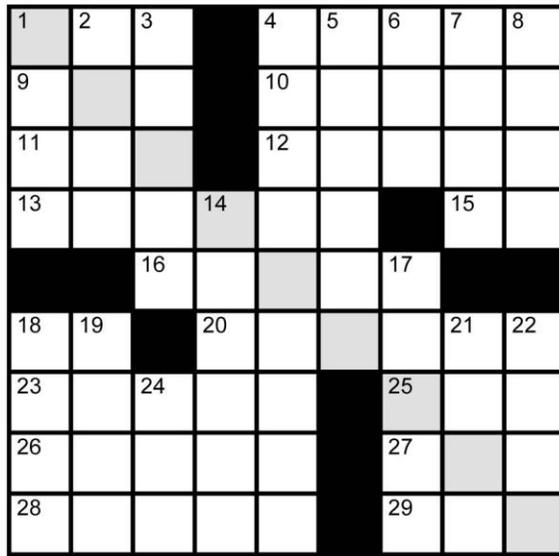
## The Spirit of Giving

### Across

1. "Silent Spring" subject
4. Imitating
9. Aussie hopper, for short
10. Harness racer
11. Dusk, to Donne
12. "La Boheme," e.g.
13. Oily
15. "\_\_\_ thee I sing"
16. Vintage
18. Tagged player
20. Carpenter's tool
23. Bedding item
25. It needs refinement
26. Star bursts
27. Econ. statistic
28. Lock of hair
29. Survey choice

### Down

1. Remnant
2. Live wire, so to speak
3. Copier need
4. Deserters
5. Ancient scrolls
6. Swelling reducer
7. Adopted son of Claudius
8. Five-time U.S. Open champ
14. Lover of Dido, in myth
17. Science suffix
18. George Harrison's "\_\_\_ It a Pity"
19. God with a hammer
21. Marine eagle
22. Gym set
24. Genesis name



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

## The Reality of Same-Day Deliveries

The days -- plural -- of waiting for packages ordered online are quickly coming to a close as several of the most prominent online retailers are leading the charge to make same-day delivery a reality. According to Forbes magazine, Amazon and other retailers are flexing their industry clout and expertise to reset consumer expectations around how long it should take to receive a package. Amazon, especially, has made grand steps to reach this milestone and their same-day deliveries continue to grow as they add more distribution centers and improve their logistics.

In its essence, same-day delivery isn't a complicated idea. According to Time Magazine, Amazon simply has the massive scale required to build warehouses in major cities that give them a feasible distance to work with. Once an order is placed, they then use a sophisticated algorithm, honed with decades of fulfillment experience, to give the warehouse picker the best route to find all of the items needed to get the order out the door almost immediately. Having that edge allows for issues that might come up with local delivery services or, in the case of one-hour shipping, even traffic jams.





# Two Ladies & A Bucket

5139 Lemay Ferry Road

St. Louis, MO 63129

(314) 229-1736

[www.twoandabucket.com](http://www.twoandabucket.com)

Email me at [clean@twoandabucket.com](mailto:clean@twoandabucket.com)

## Ho, Ho, Ho! Santa is on his way!

New Customers only -- claim this offer NOW!

Sign up for reoccurring cleanings and we'll leave behind that Elf on the Shelf for you to find.

Your house will be CLEAN and bright for the holidays.

Offer Expires 12/24/17.

New Re-occurring Clients Only.

One-time/Move-In/Move-Out Cleans Excluded.

Call or email to schedule first cleaning. We are excited that we get to serve you!!!



## Frozen Versus Fresh Vegetables

Frozen vegetables are just as healthy as fresh, and they're less expensive.

According to a recent USDA study, a pound of fresh broccoli is about 70 cents more expensive than frozen. There is very little loss of nutrients such as vitamins C and B during the freezing process of vegetables.

A recent paper in the Journal of the Science of Food and Agriculture found that frozen foods lose only a small amount of nutrients.

Frozen vegetables also keep longer, resulting in less waste.

## Garbage Disposal

### Garbage disposal seen better days?

Consider sending ice, salt, and citrus slices down the disposal and run it.

Another option is to fill the sink with very hot soapy water. Release the stopper and let the water run through. Run the disposal and cold water for a few minutes.

*Each day comes bearing its own gifts. Untie the ribbons.*

- W.J. Cameron

## Chewbacca Miracle: Mom Laughs Her Way to Prayers Answered

You probably saw the video: A young woman sitting in her car, dons a Chewbacca mask and laughs. And laughs. And growls. For about five minutes.

It was a moment so silly and fun that Candace Payne decided to upload the video to Facebook. Her friends got a kick out of it. Then their friends. And their friends and, by the next day, 24 million people were laughing along with her -- a Facebook viral video record.

Payne told Guideposts that she hadn't intended to put on a Star Wars Chewbacca mask that day. In fact, she was just going to buy some yoga pants. But when she saw the mask, she couldn't resist buying it.

What she didn't know then was that a silly mask and video would be the answer to prayers.

A stay-at-home mom, Payne spends most days making a home for her husband and their two children. He works as a warehouse manager and the kids are in grade school.

They were overdue for a family vacation and Payne's own happy memories of Disney World loomed large in her mind. They just couldn't afford to take the kids to the Magic Kingdom, not that year. So she prayed for this big thing: That God would make a way for her and the kids to go to Florida and visit Disney World.

A week later she was Chewbacca Mom and a week after that she got a call from, where else...Disney World. They offered her an all-expenses paid trip for her family.

She burst into tears and so did the caller from Disney.

Her big prayer received a big answer and, later, sailing through the Small World ride, she tried not to laugh in amazement.

## No time for a grooming appointment?



The solution is simple and probably something you already have in your pantry. Baking Soda...yes Baking Soda! All you have to do is liberally shake the baking soda onto your dry four legged family member. Remember, your pet **must be dry** when you do this. It wouldn't hurt to sprinkle some in their bedding too!

*Happy Holidays!*