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Better Home Living™

The Newsletter That's Both Informative and Fun!

Make a fan cleaning tool with items you already have

Cleaning ceiling fans is an aggravating job. You can get the blades clean, but the dust falls below onto the kitchen table or the living room floor. And you probably have to tackle fans in more rooms than one or two.

Cleaning ceiling fans

You can solve these problems by taking a few minutes to make your own cleaning tool. All you need is a new paint roller, an extension pole for the paint roller frame, a couple of dryer sheets, and two rubber bands.

Put the sheets around the roller, overlapping them, and wrap with a rubber band at each end.

Slide the roller onto the frame and attach the frame to the extension pole. Now you're ready to clean.

Carefully roll your tool over the top sides of the blades. Keep rolling over the blades from the center outward. The roller sheet will collect the dust without allowing it to fall.

Getting rid of cobwebs

When you're finished with the fans, change the dryer sheets. Then you can use your tool to get rid of cobwebs on the ceiling and in hard-to-reach places like around ceiling mounted lights and where the ceiling meets the wall.

Cleaning wooden blinds

Here's a tip for cleaning 2-inch wooden blinds or shutters at the windows. Advisor Shelly Miller Leer, writing in the Indianapolis Star recommends using wet Magic Eraser cloths from Mr. Clean.

The cloths need to be rinsed often, but they will pick up all the dirt, dust and nicotine that may have accumulated on the slats over several months.

Simple precautions workers can take with coronavirus, flu

If you are sick, stay home.

If you get sick, go home and stay home.

If you are not sick, frequently wash your hands. Follow with lotion.

These simple actions are the most important with any contagious disease, including coronavirus.

If you are well, the best thing you can do is properly wash your hands. Here is the description, direct from the Centers for Disease Control.

"Wet your hands with clean, running water (warm or cold), turn off the tap, and apply soap. Lather your hands by rubbing them together with the soap. Lather the backs of your hands, between your fingers, and under your nails. Scrub your hands for at least 20 seconds."

Follow with lotion to make sure your hands don't become dry and cracked. Cracks in the hands can invite viruses.

Forget the masks. Health officials around the world have asked the public not to buy face masks if they are healthy and not caring for someone who is ill.

Handshakes? The friendly kiss in Europe and the Mideast are gone for now, as are handshakes. In the U.S., people still shake hands, but fewer do in churches or public settings. In China, some videos suggest Chinese are doing a foot bump.



I hope you enjoy this month's newsletter!

*Christopher Dunlap
Mops & Buckets, LLC*

Arbor Day: The world's loneliest tree has roots in New Zealand

Although trees don't experience emotions as humans do, it's nevertheless difficult not to feel some pity for a specimen in New Zealand that's been nicknamed, "The World's Loneliest Tree."

The single Sitka spruce is located on Campbell Island, more than 170 miles from any other tree. It was planted by New Zealand governor Lord Ranfurly around the turn of the 20th century, although it's unknown why only one tree wound up there. The lonely Sitka has another claim to fame: its rings include a clear radioactive trace from the A-bomb tests of the 1950s and 1960s, according to the BBC. Scientists are studying whether this could qualify as a marker to indicate the start of the Anthropocene Epoch, or "Age of Humans," a new time segment in the geological history of Earth.

That's pretty heavy stuff for one tree to carry. Meanwhile, all of the other trees get their due on the last Friday of April, when National Arbor Day is celebrated.

Interestingly, though National Arbor Day is always celebrated on that date, individual states will observe it on different dates that coincide with the best planting times in their area. In Florida, for example, Arbor Day is observed on the third Friday in January; in Texas, the first Friday in November; and Alaska, the third Monday in May.



Flickr photo by Kim Collins

Free Cleaning Tips at www.mopsnbuckets.com

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 \$100 after their 4th 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 \$100 Bonus!

Thanks in advance for your help and we look forward to sending cash your way!

Thanks a Bunch!

A special thanks to all our customers who referred us!

Refunds confuse taxpayers, survey finds

Nearly half (46%) of taxpayers don't know a refund comes for overpaying taxes to the federal government.

That is one finding of a survey of taxpayers by Credit Karma.

About 70% of Americans typically expect to receive a refund check each year, and many are unsure about the origins of the money.

While 46% knew their tax refund money comes from their paychecks, an equal percentage thought the money was given to them by the government.

Forty percent knew that getting a tax refund means they overpaid income taxes.

About 11 percent knew it meant they were essentially giving the government an interest-free loan.

More than half of respondents (51 percent) did not know they could determine whether they get a refund each year by adjusting their withholding amounts.

More than half said they would rather get a tax refund than consistently have more money in their paychecks throughout the year.

Only 34% said they would prefer to have proper withholding.

According to data from the IRS, the average refund amount as of Feb. 7 was \$1,952--up 0.2 % (or \$3)--when compared with 2019. The number of refunds issued was down 4.8%, as the tax agency paid 4.6% less cash.



"They're not the tastiest, so try hiding them in a piece of cheese before you take them."

Lenten breakfast: Uova in purgatorio

As a Lenten dish, Eggs in Purgatory (uova in purgatorio) makes perfect sense since it has no meat and you can make purgatory as mild or as hot and spicy as you want!

The dish is nothing more than eggs poached in a tomato sauce -- making it a favorite in Italy -- but it really transcends cultures.

In Muslim countries, it is called Shaksuka, often made with lamb and feta. In Israel you'll find it for dinner with lovely challah bread.

There is even a version made with kosher Spam. In Mexico, Huevos Rancheros are generally made with fried eggs with a spicy tomato salsa.

The one thing you really need with this recipe is a crusty bread for dipping. Sliced and toasted French bread works well.

Once the eggs are finished, use a soup ladle to dish out a generous portion onto plates.

Super-easy heresy

Here's one idea for the dish, which will be a Lenten heresy to purists, but is very fast and tasty.

Use olive oil to warm in pan. Take pasta sauce (without meat, if you are observing Lent) and mix in your favorite salsa, in whatever proportion you prefer. Unlike the proper recipes, you don't have to sauté onions, peppers or other ingredients. Simply warm up the sauce on medium low heat (preferably in an iron skillet) until it is hot and shimmery. Then make openings for your eggs. Most important, cover the pan so the eggs poach slowly and thoroughly. Cook 2 or 3 minutes for runny yolks.

Add chopped parsley on top for a colorful presentation.

Proper

Many variations on this dish add all sorts of ingredients.

The New York Times recommends browning garlic, red pepper flakes, and (optional) anchovies in the pan, then adding a can of diced tomatoes and a basil sprig. Mash down tomatoes and cook slowly until it becomes a thicker sauce. Add salt and butter and stir in Parmesan.

Bon Appetit recommends using 20 ounces of cherry tomatoes, slightly smashed during cooking, for a three-dimensional look.

Some recipes advise adding greens to the sauce.

For a more Middle Eastern flair, add peppers, sweet paprika, and cumin. Many recipes for Shaksuka offer some wonderful variations.



Trivia Teaser – On Your Feet

1. Which First Lady of the Philippines was noted for her enormous collection of shoes? a-Evita Peron, b-Jiang Qing, c- Aung San Suu Kyi, d-Imelda Marcos.

2. Rosa Klebb, played by Lotte Lenya, hides a poisoned blade in her shoe in which James Bond movie? a-"Diamonds Are Forever," b-"For Your Eyes Only," c-"From Russia With Love," d-"Goldfinger."

3. Who starred as George Armstrong Custer in the 1941 film "They Died with Their Boots On"? a-Errol Flynn, b-Gary Cooper, c-Henry Fonda, d-George Montgomery.

4. Who won a record sixth Golden Boot (Ballon D'Or) in 2019 as FIFA's best male soccer player? a-Lionel Messi, b-Cristiano Ronaldo, c-Gareth Bale, d- Zinedine Zidane.

5. Which musical ends with the line "Eliza, where the devil are my slippers?" a-"Cinderella," b-"My Fair Lady," c-"Brigadoon," d-"Gigi."

6. Which fictional character stored his tobacco in the toe of a Persian slipper? a-Popeye, b-Frosty the Snowman, c-Scrooge McDuck, d-Sherlock Holmes.

7. Which of the Beatles is pictured without shoes on the cover of the "Abbey Road" album?

a-Paul McCartney, b-Ringo Starr, c-George Harrison, d-John Lennon.

8. The men who died fighting in the Gunfight at the OK Corral were buried in Boot Hill in which city? a-Deadwood, South Dakota, b-Dodge City, Kansas, c-Tombstone, Arizona, d-Little Falls, Minnesota.

9. Boots the Monkey is the companion of which adventurous cartoon girl? a-Kim Possible, b-Pippi Longstocking, c-Dora the Explorer, d-Peppa Pig.

10. Who featured birds as newspapermen in his comic strip "Shoe"? a-Will Eisner, b-Darby Conley, c-Frank Cho, d-Jeff MacNelly

1-d, Imelda Marcos
2-c, "From Russia With Love"
3-a, Errol Flynn
4-a, Lionel Messi
5-b, "My Fair Lady"
6-d, Sherlock Holmes
7-a, Paul McCartney
8-c, Tombstone, Arizona
9-c, Dora the Explorer
10-d, Jeff MacNelly

Answers to 'On Your Feet'

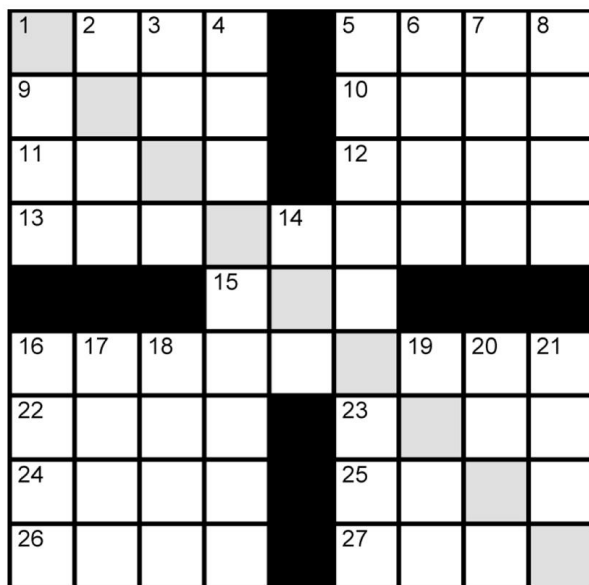
Fool's Fun

Across

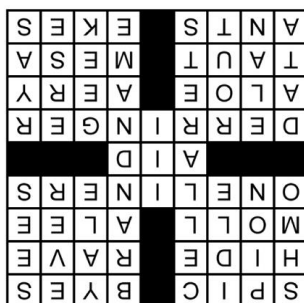
1. ___ and span
5. Parting words
9. Cover up
10. Rant
11. "___ Flanders"
12. On the safe side, at sea
13. Some jokes
15. Lend a hand
16. Pocket pistol
22. Soothing succulent
23. Eagle's nest
24. Stretched
25. Large butte
26. Myrmecologist's study
27. Squeaks (out)

Down

1. Jerk
2. Subatomic particle
3. Not being used
4. Minibars
5. Subject of a trade mark
6. Brown rival



7. Always
8. Understands
14. Sundial number
16. Computer info
17. Brio
18. Beat badly
19. Nerd
20. Gaelic tongue
21. Scandinavian rugs



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

How to entertain an old dog

Just like people, dogs don't lose their desire for entertainment and play as they age. It just may take some adjusting.

Playtime helps with an older dog's mental faculties as well as their physical abilities, and just plain makes them happy. So treat your dog right and consider some strategies to keep them entertained well into their senior years.

He may not be able to go for a run or hike up hills anymore, but a good game of hide-and-seek is a great way to get an old dog to play. A dog's sense of smell usually remains strong, so you can use that.

Put some stinky treats in a few small boxes, then scatter the boxes on the floor along with boxes that are empty. Encourage him to find the treats -- you can use a "Find it" command and point, to start with -- and cheer him on when he does. You can then work on using other containers, mixing up the hiding spots, and the like.

Consider hiding treats in the folds of a towel or blanket as well, which gets your dog to sniff around and uncover it. An old dish towel works well, too, and you can increase the level of difficulty by tying the ends in loose knots.



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About Our Company

Mops & Buckets is a full-service residential cleaning company that operates in both Miami Dade and Broward Counties.

Services include general cleaning, deep cleaning, carpet cleaning, construction cleaning, move-in/out cleaning, and window washing.

Owner Christopher Dunlap has been in the cleaning industry for 10 years and feels it is important to provide cleaning services that place the utmost importance on the health and safety of his clients and employees. For that reason, Mops & Buckets is an active participant in the industry association ISSA (International Sanitary Supply Association). They also use Green Sealed Certified products to minimize toxins being released both in the environment and your home.

Cnet does Galaxy drop test

The Galaxy S20 Ultra, Samsung's most expensive and largest S20 phone, comes clad in Gorilla Glass 6, but the glass case won't survive a drop from your pocket.

Cnet.com put the \$1400 phone through its paces, dropping it from distances of three feet to five feet. The glass back broke on the first 3-foot drop, but the camera survived. When dropped from three feet on its face, the screen broke. The phone's camera survived drops up to five feet completely intact.

Lesson: Put this phone in a case immediately.

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<https://msd.reviewability.com/f-57728>

Courage is not simply one of the virtues, but the form of every virtue at the testing point.

~C.S. Lewis

The Twinkie: A treat shaped by current events

The legendary Twinkie, once America's most irresistible shortcake, started out as a toss-off product created to mark time until strawberry season.

The maker, now known as Hostess Brands, introduced the cake in 1933 literally because they had a bunch of shortcake pans not being used. The company's main product was a shortcake filled with strawberry cream. After strawberry season ended, there were plenty of pans but no product -- or sales.

Company vice president, James A. Dewar, decided to make a simple sponge cake and fill it with banana cream. (Legend has it that he named the confection Twinkies because he noticed a sign for Twinkie Toe Shoes.)

But current events and customer preferences intervened to change the new treat.

Bananas were rationed in World War II and banana Twinkies became hard to source. So the company whipped up a sugary vanilla flavor so beloved that banana never returned.

Twinkie sales soared throughout the 1950s, due in part to Hostess' sponsorship of the children's TV show, "Howdy Doody." Twinkies made the movies, too, most notably 1984's "Ghostbusters," in which Egon Spengler uses a Twinkie to explain psychokinetic energy.

Throughout subsequent decades, the product maintained its acclaim. In 1999 President Bill Clinton even included a Twinkie in the Millennium Time Capsule.

When Hostess filed for bankruptcy in 2012, devoted Twinkie fans snapped up every package they could find. Mere months later, store shelves throughout the nation brimmed with Twinkies again.

Today, the Twinkie is an authentic icon in American business history.

FREE Refrigerator Cleaning

**with Whole House Deep Cleaning
\$150 minimum purchase**

Schedule your appointment by April 30, 2020

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