



# Better Home Living™

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

## News from home: prevent mold; undecorating

### To prevent mold, eliminate moisture

Little black spots forming near the bathroom ceiling mean you've got it: mold. Wash it off with detergent and water and dry the area completely with towels. Then have a bathroom exhaust fan installed.

To save the cost of additional wiring and switches, select a fan that goes off and on with the light switch. Because you don't spend many hours a day in the bathroom, you won't notice the difference in your electric bill.

For a problem in the basement, a dehumidifier is the answer. Have your plumber send the water it collects outside through the basement wall so you don't have to empty it frequently.

### The 'undecorating' trend

If your home demonstrates your minimalist tendencies, this trend won't interest you. If you think displaying collections and many art objects just takes too much time to dust, it may not interest you either.

The trend in interior design today is called "undecorating." It emphasizes a lived-in feeling of comfort including objects of personal style and unfussy imperfection.

In her book, *Undecorate: The No-Rules Approach to Interior Design*, Christian Lemieux recommends do-it-yourself style. Lemieux is the founder of DwellStudio.

She says perfection is overrated and emphasizes cleverness over money, taste over expense, and personality over hired expertise.



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

*Christopher Dunlap  
Mops & Buckets, LLC*

## In every culture and era, humans have wanted a Valentine

Each year on February 14, millions of decorated cards are exchanged by husbands and wives, friends and lovers, boys and girls. In spite of its great popularity, little is actually known about the origin of Valentine's Day.

There are several people in history to whom the honor of being the original St. Valentine might be given. Here is the story of two.

In third-century Rome, young men did not want to enlist in the army. Claudius II ordered young men not to marry, believing they would be more willing than to leave Rome. Moved by compassion for the young men and their sweethearts, Valentine the priest married them secretly.

Another Valentine, a priest and physician, was imprisoned for his Christian beliefs when he met the blind daughter of his jailer. He offered prayers for her healing, and the girl's sight was restored. On the night before he was martyred, he wrote the girl a farewell message and signed it "From your Valentine."

In pre-Christian Rome, February 15 was the date of the holiday Luperalia and later the holiday Juno Februata. Young women would write love notes and deposit them in a large urn. Young men would draw the notes and then court the ones whose messages they received.

When Christianity became the religion of Rome, the holiday was merged with the martyrdom of St. Valentine on February 14.

American colonists had a break from outdoor work in winter. It was then that young men made their own valentines, sealed them with wax and delivered them personally.

## Cardiology moves forward for 2020

In recognition of American Heart Month, here are some cardiovascular research developments to keep an eye on in 2020, courtesy of Harvard Health Publishing:

\* Digital stethoscopes. Featuring specialized microphones and sensors that filter, buffer, and amplify sounds from the heart, digital stethoscopes then convert the sounds to a digital signal sent wirelessly to a smartphone. There, the patterns can be visualized and further analyzed.

\* Safer anti-clotting treatments. A chip the size of a postage stamp contains miniature channels, valves, processors, and pumps that enable precise manipulation of different fluids. The chip can screen hundreds of compounds in a few hours and was developed by Australian scientists who aim to identify better and safer anti-clotting treatments.

\* New ways to lower cholesterol. An experimental injectable drug called Inclisiran requires just two injections a year (rather than others that are monthly) and may cut LDL -- the "bad" cholesterol -- in half. Another new drug called bempedoic acid, taken in pill form, can lower LDL by about 25 percent in people who can't tolerate high doses of statins.

\* Cuffless blood pressure monitor. The Biobeat device uses a small skin patch to measure light absorbed or reflected by blood vessels; paired with a special smartwatch, it continuously measures a person's heart rate and oxygen level in addition to blood pressure. The patch is placed on the upper torso and lasts for 10 days.

\* Handheld ultrasound. Miniaturized ultrasound devices that fit in a doctor's lab coat pocket are plugged into a smartphone or tablet, providing images that can detect problems with the aorta or the heart valves and also determine the severity of heart failure. Though they won't replace standard echocardiograms, the goal is faster diagnosis and treatment of common heart problems.



## 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!*

## Do you actually need to pay someone to do your taxes?

Those forms look daunting. And those crazy tax words seem intimidating.

But the fact is, 100 million workers probably don't really need a tax person to do their returns, according to the IRS. They can do their taxes with the easiest forms (such as the 1040EZ -- available online) or just hop to the IRS 'free file' website.

If your adjusted gross income is \$69,000 or less you can use the Free File website to do your forms, file them electronically (and track your refund) -- completely free of charge. Go to: [irs.gov/freefile](http://irs.gov/freefile).

Getting all the ingredients together for your tax return probably takes the most time. But, here is what you need if you work for a company and don't have any complicated business interests:

### Identity:

Your social security number and a copy of your last year's tax return.

### Income forms:

W-2 forms from your employer that show your annual wages. If you made interest on a savings account, for example, your bank will send a 1099-INT form. If you got income from retirement accounts, you should receive a 1099-DIV or 1099-R form.

After that, it is mainly a matter of filling in the blanks. Your W-2 will show you how much you made and how much was deducted. After you know how much money you made, you get to subtract a chunk from it. This is called the Standard Deduction. What is left is your Adjusted Gross Income. That's the money that is taxed. You'll figure out how much money you've already paid (through paycheck deductions by your employer). If you paid too much, you get a refund. If you didn't pay enough, you pay.



"Figures, doesn't it? I've been perfectly healthy since I've met my deductible."

## Heart Month special recipe is tasty and healthy

In honor of American Heart Month, here is a recipe that adheres to guidelines for a heart-healthy meal and is also delicious: roasted balsamic chicken with baby tomatoes.

According to a story on the Cleveland Clinic's website that included an interview with a preventive cardiology nutrition expert, a heart-healthy recipe should pay attention to fat and carbohydrates, use lean proteins and vegetables, plant-based fats, and limit any added sugars or sodium.



In this roasted balsamic chicken recipe from the website All Recipes, we've hit the high notes: it contains 38 grams of protein per serving, has 323 calories, and contains 9.1 grams of fat (just 2.8 percent of the total calories). But it gets plenty of flavor from the balsamic vinegar and Dijon mustard, two excellent alternatives to higher sodium seasonings.

Garlic and just a pinch of salt round things out, along with some veggies. Though it's delicious as-is, it would also work well served over lettuce or alongside more veggies and basmati rice.

### Ingredients

- \* 1/2 cup balsamic vinegar
- \* 1 tablespoon olive oil
- \* 1 tablespoon Dijon mustard, or more to taste
- \* 1 clove garlic, or more to taste, minced
- \* Salt and freshly ground pepper to taste
- \* 4 large skinless, boneless chicken breast halves
- \* 1-pint cherry tomatoes, halved
- \* 1 lemon, zested and juiced

### Directions

Mix balsamic vinegar, olive oil, mustard, and garlic together in an oven-safe baking dish; season with salt and pepper. Place the chicken breasts in the vinegar mixture.

Marinate chicken in the refrigerator for at least 4 hours.

Preheat oven to 400 degrees Fahrenheit.

Roast chicken in the preheated oven for about 30 minutes. Add tomatoes to the baking dish and continue cooking until the chicken is no longer pink in the center and the juices run clear, about 10 minutes more. An instant-read thermometer inserted into the center should read at least 165 degrees F (74 degrees C).

Sprinkle lemon zest and drizzle lemon juice over the chicken before serving.

## Trivia Teaser – Arms and Legs

1. Which constitutional amendment gives American citizens the right to "keep and bear arms"? a-First, b-Second, c-Fourth, d-Sixth.

2. What Texas band had a top ten hit in 1984 with the song "Legs"? a-Ten Years After, b-The Cars, c-ZZ Top, d-The Edgar Winter Group.

3. What is the occupation of Frederic Henry in the Ernest Hemingway novel "A Farewell to Arms"? a-Skiing instructor, b-Ambulance driver, c-Private detective, d-Architect.

4. Who hit the baseball that trickled through the legs of Red Sox first baseman Bill Buckner in game 6 of the 1986 World Series? a-Ray Knight, b-Marty Barrett, c-Rafael Santana, d-Mookie Wilson.

5. The Gulf of Bothnia and the Gulf of Finland are both arms of what sea? a-North Sea, b-Sargasso Sea, c-Baltic Sea, d-Adriatic Sea.

6. What American composer had his legs crushed when his horse fell on him at the Piping Rock Club, in Long Island, in 1937? a-Scott Joplin, b-Fats Waller, c-George Gershwin, d-Cole Porter.

7. In flag semaphore, if both arms are extended horizontally, what letter is being sent? a-M, b-N, c-Q, d-R.

8. With the aid of three servicemen, what actress and pin-up girl left an imprint of one of her million-dollar legs at Grauman's Chinese Theatre? a-Raquel Welch, b-Betty Grable, c-Rita Hayworth, d-Lauren Bacall.

9. What Everly Brothers song includes the lyrics "When I want you in my arms, when I want you and all your charms"? a-"All I Have to Do is Dream", b-"Let It Be Me", c-"I Kissed You", d-"When Will I Be Loved?"

10. What Pro Football Hall of Fame receiver was nicknamed "Crazy Legs"? a-Elroy Hirsch, b-Bobby Layne, c-Dante Lavelli, d-Don Hutson.

1-b, Second  
2-c, ZZ Top  
3-b, Ambulance driver  
4-d, Mookie Wilson  
5-c, Baltic Sea  
6-d, Cole Porter  
7-d, R  
8-b, Betty Grable  
9-a, "All I Have to Do is Dream"  
10-a, Elroy Hirsch

Answers to 'Arms and Legs'

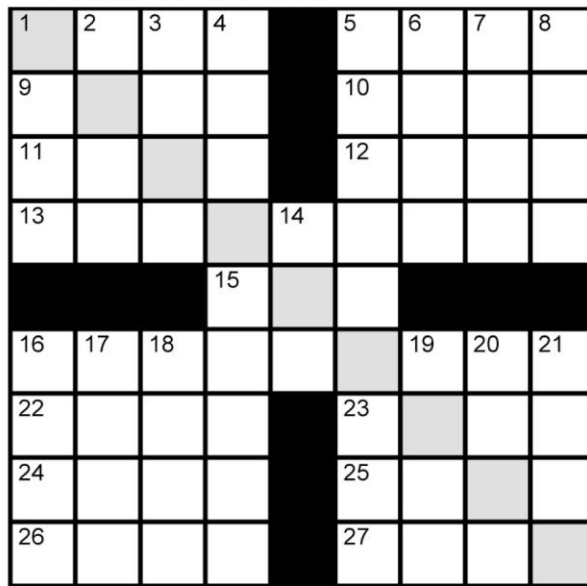
## Fruit of a Pine

### Across

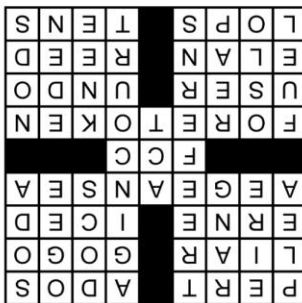
1. Chipper
5. Hubbubs
9. Pinocchio, at times
10. Kind of dancer
11. Coastal raptor
12. Like some tea
13. Greece/Turkey separator
15. TV watchdog org.
16. Ominous omen
22. Tech support caller
23. Reverse
24. Enthusiasm
25. Marsh plant
26. Cuts off
27. Change for a 20

### Down

1. Entreaty
2. Cork's country
3. Telephoned
4. Some rain forest flora
5. Where Henry V triumphed
6. Rx writers



7. Curved molding
8. Fizzy drink
14. Do something
16. Petrol
17. Nobel Peace Prize city
18. Harvest
19. "Trick" joint
20. Genesis garden
21. Silent assents



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

## Take a selfie for your health?

Imagine taking a selfie and using it for your health. New technology may allow for just such a use.

A recent study tested a smartphone-based technology that takes a short video of your face and then provides a blood pressure reading.

According to Harvard Health, researchers took two-minute videos of 1,328 Chinese and Canadian adults. Using an iPhone equipped with transdermal optical imaging, the software measures blood pressure by detecting blood flow changes in a person's face.

When compared to readings taken using a traditional blood pressure cuff, the video blood pressure readings were about 95 percent accurate.

Researchers made the videos in a controlled environment with good lighting, so it's unclear how the technology will perform in the real world. Additionally, although the study volunteers had a variety of skin tones, none had extremely fair or extremely dark skin, and most had normal blood pressure.



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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.

## More people working; More flu

The better the economy, the more people working. The more people working, the more flu.

With the unemployment rate at 50-year lows, more people are out in the world and that means more opportunity to spread infectious disease.

In December, the CDC reported widespread flu in 16 states: Alabama, California, Connecticut, Georgia, Indiana, Louisiana, Massachusetts, Mississippi, Nevada, New Mexico, New York, Pennsylvania, South Carolina, Tennessee, Texas, and Virginia.

Workers, especially in those occupations with high public contact, should be aware that at the first symptoms of flu, they are contagious.

The way to stop the flu: Stay home when sick, don't share.

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*Confidence, like art, never comes from having all the answers; it comes from being open to all the questions.*

~Earl Gray Stevens

## Things to do when the wind howls

In the north, there is snow and ice, but even in the south there are rainy, windy days of winter. What to do?

Here are some ideas:

\* Indoor gardening. You can go the terrarium route or find a good spot for some pots. Peas, green beans, and strawberries grow well indoors, as do some small peppers. Bonus: Get artsy and paint the pots you find for your gardening hobby.

\* Learn to play an instrument. You're inside anyway. What better time than winter to practice a new instrument? This can involve lessons at a studio or an adult ed class or watching videos you find online.

\* Join a book club. Who says summer beach reading is the only time to break open a book? There's also fireside reading or curling up on the couch with a comfy afghan and a great read.

\* Exercise. Don't forget to get the blood pumping during the winter, and it doesn't need to be complicated. You can do stretches at home, weights, yoga, even some rounds up and down the stairs.

\* Learn to video chat. If you've never figured out how to use Skype or other video chat services, find someone who can teach you. It's an easy and pleasant way to talk with friends and loved ones and seeing a friendly face can help during the dark months of winter.

\* Decorate a bird house or feeder. Great way to put yourself in the spring mood. Plus, birds need a little something extra in February. Gather up your paints and little flowers for a festive project that will actually be useful.

## FREE Couch Cleaning with Whole House Carpet Cleaning

**\$250 minimum purchase  
Couches up to 7 feet wide  
(up to \$100 value)**

*Schedule your appointment by February 29, 2020*

Mops & Buckets, LLC  
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