

# Better Home Living™

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

## Yucky wolf spiders actually help

It's not your imagination -- there really are more big, fuzzy brown spiders in your house in the fall.

But don't let them scare you. They are harmless.

They're called wolf spiders, and every autumn they seek warmth while they search for mates. While you might not like the uninvited guests, these spiders are actually doing some good.

Despite its daunting appearance, the wolf spider is mostly harmless to humans, according to Healthline. These shy, non-aggressive arachnids are more likely to run and hide than fight. Since their venom is not toxic to humans, a rare wolf spider bite is mildly itchy at worst.

Wolf spiders do not spin webs and instead hide during the day and emerge at night to feast on other household pests -- any bug will do.

Most wolf spiders sneak in through tiny cracks around windows and doors, so check for openings and caulk these entrances as needed. Spray spider-friendly areas, like potential points of entry and hiding spots, with a mixture of water and peppermint or citrus oil to repel them. Wolf spiders will also hang out wherever they can find bugs, such as porches where lights attract other tiny critters. Turn the light off at night and seal and spray the area to encourage wolf spiders to choose another hunting ground.

If you find a wolf spider in your home and don't want to become roommates, try not to kill it, if possible. Simply trap it under a glass, slide a piece of stiff paper underneath and escort it back outside -- no touching involved. Even if you didn't invite it inside, you're both on the same team in a never-ending battle against less desirable household pests.

## Be polite: Don't be this person

Here are the seven most impolite things you can do at a holiday dinner or any other dinner.

1. Not acknowledge the invitation. Still show up.

If you are coming, say so. Make a decision.

2. Bring a stranger.

If you want to bring your love interest, tell your host long before the dinner.

3. Come late.

Grandma spent \$200 on that standing rib roast and you are an hour late for dinner. No.

4. Come empty-handed.

Ask what you can bring at the time you are invited. If the host needs nothing, bring a bottle of wine, if appropriate.

5. Complain.

If you don't like cranberries, don't take any and don't point out that you don't like them. It's also rude to show up and say you aren't hungry.

6. Watch TV.

Sorry your football game is on, but you have to interact with humans. Don't plant yourself on the couch.

7. Ignore the cleanup.

At least offer and if your offer is accepted, then help.



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

*Christopher Dunlap  
Mops & Buckets, LLC*

## Being thankful: It's healthy

If we didn't have a Thanksgiving, we would invent one because giving thanks -- feeling gratitude -- creates health and happiness.

We really don't need a study to tell us that a thankful person is just plain nicer to be around than one who is critical and displeased with everything. But that study exists anyway.

In 2003, Robert A. Emmons of the University of California, and Michael E. McCullough of the University of Miami conducted three experiments on the effect of a grateful outlook. They concluded: Results suggest that a conscious focus on blessings may have emotional and interpersonal benefits.

The lore of Thanksgiving Day in the U.S., seasonally criticized by the critics, does offer some genuine lessons in the practice of gratefulness. The pilgrims in 1620 didn't have all that much to be grateful for. They were oppressed in England and had to leave the country. Then they sailed for the New World, where they had to literally build themselves a place to live. Half of them died the first year.

For the Pilgrims, there was plenty of hardship and death in the past, with plenty more to come that they didn't yet know about. But they did manage to set aside a day in gratitude for their hard-won harvest.

That is the thing about gratitude -- it is always about the present. You can't know what will happen tomorrow. But right now, if you have to clean up your house, be grateful for the house. If you have to make dinner, be grateful for the food.

So happy Thanksgiving right now to you and yours. Be grateful.



## Want to Receive a FREE cleaning?

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 do not 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!*

## Finding the best holiday deals

Looking to save money on Christmas spending this year? If so, you may have to put in a bit more effort compared to seasons past. Still, hard work may result in substantial savings.

Financial consultants at Deloitte project that holiday sales will increase by 7 to 9 percent this season, with e-commerce sales expected to grow by 11 to 15 percent. Rising wages may mean that many families have more to spend compared to years past, but inflation and supply constraints could mean higher than normal prices.

Electronics may be hard to come by. However, through electronic outlet stores, you can pick up lightly used electronics at a great price, often under warranty. Apple, for example, sells certified refurbished Mac laptops for \$150 or more off. You can score substantial discounts on Apple Watches, iPhones and other devices as well.

Dell, Acer and other brands now offer official outlet stores on eBay. You can frequently save 30 percent or more. You can also pick up lightly used video games on eBay and at Gamestop.

If you've been looking at a Kindle or another Amazon device, Cyber Monday remains a good bet. Google also offers steep sales as well through their online store. Amid supply chain constraints, larger companies like Amazon may enjoy more stable supplies.

In-store shopping might also help you secure good deals, especially if you're willing to wake up early. Best Buy, Walmart and other brick-and-mortar retailers are still expected to offer big sales. At home, check Amazon and other websites for flash sales.



"I'm trying to eat healthy. Where do you keep the organic donuts?"

## Tips for a perfect pie crust

Pie crust -- it's simple in theory, but even seasoned cooks sometimes shy away from this Thanksgiving essential and rely instead on frozen pie shells or pre-rolled boxed crusts.

There's nothing wrong with saving time and energy with a ready-made crust, but a buttery crust from scratch is easier and faster than you might think.

\* First, choose the right recipe. Most pie crust recipes are similar, but a classic butter crust should contain only flour, butter, a little salt, some sugar and water or a water mixture to bind it all together. A single crust recipe will make enough dough for one pie shell, while a double crust will make two pie shells or a shell with a top. Pie crust keeps in the refrigerator for three or four days and freezes well.

\* Don't skimp on good ingredients. High-quality unsalted butter, such as European-style, is easier to work with and provides great flavor. For flour, fresh all-purpose flour works well. Gold Medal flour is beloved by pie makers for its wide availability and ideal protein content. You can also try a lower-protein pastry flour. Avoid bread flours, which are higher in protein and will make tougher crusts.

\* Make sure all your ingredients are very cold. Cube and chill butter. Refrigerate the water or drop in a couple of ice cubes. You can even freeze your flour first.

\* If you're blending the butter into the flour by hand, run your hands under cold water first to cool them down. Make sure that any tools, such as pastry cutters or knives, aren't warm from the dishwasher or storage near a hot stove. A chilled ceramic work bowl is also helpful. If you're using a food processor or a stand mixer to blend your fat and flour, make sure the pieces are cool.

\* Butter should be broken down until your mixture resembles roughly-ground cornmeal, but a few slightly larger chunks help create flaky layers and bursts of butter flavor.

\* After you add the liquid, be careful not to overwork your mixture. Too much handling or stirring develops gluten, which leads to a tough pie crust. Try using a silicone spatula to gently fold and press the mixture until it just barely holds together.

\* Always chill your dough in the refrigerator after assembly -- at least two hours, but overnight is best. This gives gluten time to relax and allows your liquid to fully hydrate your flour, forming a solid dough that you can roll out.



## Trivia Teaser – Comic Books

1. What Harvey Comics character was billed as "The Friendly Ghost"? a-Homer, b-Boomer, c-Casper, d-Wellington.

2. Which superhero briefly adopted a black costume that turned out to be a symbiotic alien creature? a-Spider-Man, b-Batman, c-The Phantom, d-The Flash.

3. Jason Todd, Tim Drake and Damian Wayne were all alter egos of what comic book hero? a-Captain America, b-Robin, c-Thor, d-The Shadow.

4. In the Archie comics, what female beanpole was enamored with Jughead? a-Big Ethel, b-Big Mona, c-Big Bertha, d-Big Midge.

5. In DC Comics, what city is under the protection of the expert archer Green Arrow? a-Central City, b-Astro City, c-Metro City, d-Star City.

6. The Abomination, The Rhino and The Absorbing Man are characters in the Rogue's Gallery of what Marvel Comics character? a-The Hulk, b-Spider-Man, c-Daredevil, d-Iron Man.

7. Which of the following was NOT a Harvey Comics character? a-Little Dot, b-Little Lotta, c-Little Iodine, d-Little Audrey.

8. In Marvel Comics, who was the original partner of Iron Fist in their Heroes for Hire business? a-Jessica Jones, b-Black Knight, c-Luke Cage, d-Human Torch.

9. What DC Comics hero altered reality when he traveled back in time to save his mother from being murdered? a-The Atom, b-The Flash, c-Rip Hunter, d-Black Lightning.

10. Villainy Inc. was an all-female group of supervillains who battled what comic book heroine? a-She-Hulk, b-Black Canary, c-Supergirl, d-Wonder Woman.

1-c, Casper  
2-a, Spider-Man  
3-b, Robin  
4-a, Big Ethel  
5-d, Star City  
6-a, The Hulk  
7-c, Little Iodine  
8-c, Luke Cage  
9-b, The Flash  
10-d, Wonder Woman

Answers to 'Comic Books'

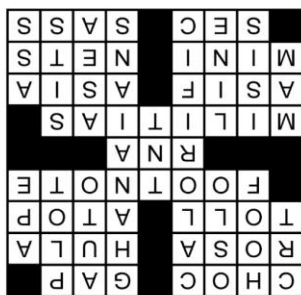
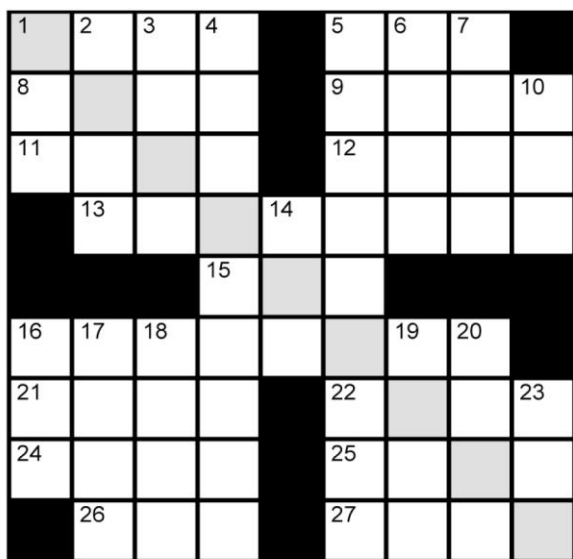
## Settlers

### Across

1. Van. alternative
5. Mountain pass
8. Santa \_\_\_\_, Calif.
9. Maui dance
11. Turnpike fee
12. At the peak of
13. Annotation
15. Genetic material
16. Groups of minutemen
21. "Dream on!"
22. Atlas section
24. Short skirt
25. Fishing gear
26. "Hold on a \_\_\_!"
27. Back talk

### Down

1. Computer monitor, for short
2. Horseshoe site
3. Nobel Peace Prize city
4. Relating to heat
5. Inhabitants of the Gold Coast
6. Vehicle
7. Scheme
10. "Tarzan" extra
14. Atlanta-based station
16. Mayan Indian
17. Egyptian fertility goddess
18. Queue
19. Fishing, perhaps
20. Takes a seat
23. Blockhead



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

## 6 things you should never plug into a power strip

Powerful appliances should never be plugged into a power strip and you might be surprised which appliances count.

1. Space heater.

Portable heaters cycle on and off, with each on-cycle drawing a surge of current. If plugged into a power strip, this surge usually causes an overload, which can cause a fire.

2. Microwave.

Requires a dedicated wall outlet.

3. Slow cooker.

These common appliances may not draw surges of power, but they use power continuously over long periods. Plug them into wall outlets instead.

4. Toaster and toaster oven.

Those red-hot coils inside don't heat up without a lot of current, which can quickly overload a power strip.

5. Hairdryer, curling iron.

These draw significant amperage to get hot -- too much for a power strip.

6. Coffee maker.

All it does is heat up water. But it does it with a lot of amps. It is misleadingly simple. Always plug into the wall.



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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.

## Traditional puzzles come in many forms

If you like solving jigsaw puzzles, be sure to check out the various styles available.

3-D: You actually build something. Many subjects are available.

Mystery: Read the story that comes with the puzzle, piece together the puzzle (it usually doesn't come with a full picture), then figure out the killer.

Wasgij: Jigsaw backwards. The box only gives a clue to the whole picture.

Hidden image: A tiny image is hidden in the puzzle. For example, a puzzle of ice cream cones that has a hidden lollipop.

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

*Remember that not getting what you want is sometimes a wonderful stroke of luck.*

~Dalai Lama

## Home remodeling costs rise ... and fall

Lots of people are doing home improvement projects this year, but there are stumbling blocks.

Prices are higher, some materials may be limited and contractors don't have enough help, but these difficulties should ease in the coming months.

A survey by Harvard University's Joint Center for Housing Studies found that 80 percent of respondents had started DIY home improvement projects as of May 2021.

Meanwhile, costs for home improvement and construction materials have risen. The petrol-chemical supply chain was disrupted by a deep freeze in the South last winter, just one factor that caused painting and coating prices to rise 10.6 percent from 2020.

Lumber prices are up but cooling off. In May, lumber per thousand board feet surged to over \$1,600, up from \$500 in October last year. Prices have since fallen to roughly \$600 as of Sept. 23.

An Autodesk-AGC of America Workforce Survey found that 90 percent of contractors surveyed had openings for hourly craft positions.

## Buy the Gift of a Home Cleaning for a Friend, Get 50% Off Your Next Cleaning!

\$150 Minimum Purchase

Schedule by December 31st

Mops & Buckets, LLC

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