

Better Home Living

The Newsletter That's Both Informative and Fun!



Bald Eagle Population has Recovered from 1963 Low Point

The Bald Eagle thrives. Just 40 years ago, you could not say the same thing as majestic bird dropped out of sight, its number shrinking to under 500 pairs nationwide.

Today there are more than 10,000 mating pairs in the U.S. and there is so much interest in the eagle's welfare that web cams of their spectacular nests abound.

"The population continues to grow and doesn't seem to be slowing down," according to Center for Conservation Biology's Director Bryan Watts. It's been growing by about 10 percent a year since the 1980s.

In 1963, the population was estimated to be 487 nationwide.

The reason for the bird's rebound is often attributed to the removal of insecticide DDT and conservation efforts that put it on the endangered species list. But, human attitudes toward the bird have changed as well. The birds were once heavily hunted and even persecuted.

Since the eagles often preyed on farm and game animals, they were seen as pests. In the 1800s and 1900s and for hundreds of years before that, the birds were considered to be of poor character. Benjamin Franklin considered the eagle to be lazy, according to Frank Bildstein of the Hawk Mountain sanctuary in Pennsylvania. The birds were even depicted in early movies as being child killers.

By the 20th century the enthusiasm for killing Bald Eagles, along with environmental factors, had devastated their populations and human attitudes began to change.

Today, raptors are seen as part of the chain of life and hunting or killing them is illegal and, most people think, it is morally wrong. For the first time in decades, spotting a Bald Eagle is possible, even in populated areas, and the sighting is usually a cause of excitement, experts say.

Computer Bug Hides for 19 Years

Those pesky Windows updates. Do you sometimes wonder if they are trivial and designed just to annoy you?

Well, here is a story that might clarify how important those updates are.

Microsoft has just released a patch to Windows 95 operating system -- and to every version of its desktop operating system since then. That's 19 years worth of operating systems.

In all that time, a major bug was 'sitting in plain sight,' according to C-Net. The bug is so serious that it earned a vulnerability score of 9.3 out of 10.

Dubbed WinShock, the vulnerability could allow a hacker to run code remotely on an infected computer. Like many operating system vulnerabilities, the user would first have to be enticed to click on a link or open an attachment.

Still, it appears even the legions of evil hackers did not discover the security hole before it was patched in November 2014.

On the underground information market, this vulnerability, if detected could have been worth six-figures, says an IBM researcher.

If your computer is set for automatic updates, the patch has long since been made and your computer is safe.

However, if you update your computer manually, be sure to keep up with the Tuesday updates from Microsoft.



We hope you enjoy this month's newsletter!

Mari & Staff

Common Superstitions about New Year's Day

Superstitions abound about New Year's Day and may differ according where you live. Here are a few you may know about and a few that may befuddle or amuse you.

* Take nothing out of the door: Nothing, not even garbage, should leave your house on New Year's Day. Don't even take Grandma home.

* Don't eat chicken or turkey on January 1: Like these birds, you'll scratch in the dirt all year long for your dinner.

* Don't wash your laundry on New Year's Day: If you do, a family member may be "washed away."

* Don't cry on the first day of the year: Tears set the tone for the next 12 months.

* Let out the old year: At midnight, open all the doors of your house to let the old year escape unimpeded.



...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 \$50 off your cleaning after their 3rd 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 Bonus!

The Best

"We have been using Mari's service for many years. They are extremely competent, reliable, and trustworthy. I really can't say enough about them. I definitely recommend them to anyone."

Alan L.
Scottsdale, AZ
12/26/2014

Vitamin B12 is Essential for Thinking Skills

It pays to have your vitamin B12 level checked, because you need it to think well.

Dr. Anthony Komaroff, editor in-chief of the Harvard Health Letter had his own level tested and discovered it was low!

We get B12 from our diet, particularly from meat, eggs, milk and other dairy products. Our stomach enzymes need to "shake it loose" from foods it comes with. Then the vitamin can attach itself to protein in the stomach so it can be absorbed.

If you suspect you're like Harvard's Dr. Komaroff, your body isn't absorbing B12 as well as it should. But the answer to that problem is simple, he says.

Take a vitamin B12 pill every day.

How to Sell More of Your Stuff at a Better Price

Authorities at bankrate.com consulted with Aaron P. Pedis, author of *The Garage Sale Millionaire*, for his advice on selling various kinds household goods. These are his suggestions:



* Large items like a roll-top desk, an easy chair or anything weighing 25 pounds or more, are best sold on Craigslist so you don't have to ship them.

* Small electronics, like cellphones that are 1 or 2 years old, can be sold on eBay. Check Gazelle.com for the value of older small electronics.

* Books or sets of books that may be valuable can be sold on eBay. List it even if you just suspect it has value. Sell other books at garage sales, to second-hand book stores or donate them.

* Kids' and teens' clothes are big sellers at garage sales. Mention them on your sign. Batch them together to sell on eBay or sell to a resale shop for cash. For lightly worn famous brand clothing, consider a consignment shop.

* Sell vintage or designer clothing on eBay, especially items and brands such as Chanel bags and shoes or Gucci and Coach hand bags.

* Collector items should never be sold at a garage sale. Things like Hummels, Precious Moments, or Beanie Babies should be offered for sale on eBay. To get an idea of what they're worth, check the eBay website, Pedis says.

* Toys are expensive to buy, take up a lot of space and may be in good condition when you're through with them. The garage sale is your best bet. Or sell in lots so they look like a bargain.

* China and dishes. At eBay, lookers often want to fill in or expand their place settings and are willing to pay well. Sellers often break up a set so they can sell it piece by piece.



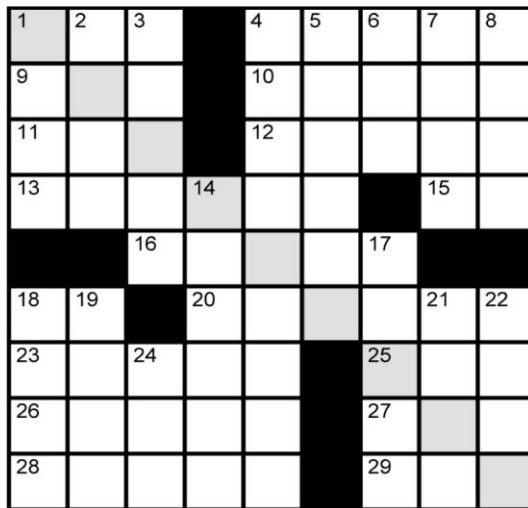
"Dad, did the stork bring me or did you get me in a fantasy draft?"

Trivia Teaser – Over Hill, Over Dale

Moniker of a President and a city

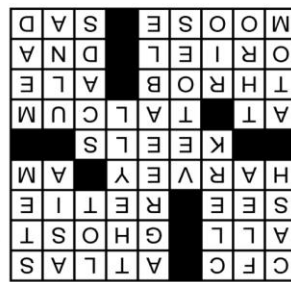
Across

1. Freon letters
4. Book of maps
9. "That's ___ folks!"
10. Mrs. Muir's beau
11. "Didn't I tell you?"
12. Adjust, as laces
13. Jimmy Stewart film
15. Alternative to FM
16. Falls (over)
18. @
20. After bath powder
23. Beat
25. A pint, maybe
26. Bay window
27. Modern courtroom evidence
28. Bullwinkle, e.g.
29. Dejected



17. Lots
18. Elementary particle
19. "Comin' ___ the Rye"
21. Arm bone
22. "Beowulf" beverage
24. "___ Bravo"

The title is a clue to the word in the shaded diagonal.



Down

1. Alternative to plastic
2. Dog biter
3. Court employee
4. Cooperative
5. "___ never believe it!"
6. Auction unit
7. ___ Minor
8. Kind of cell
14. Nixes a bill

The Push to put a Computer into Each Child's Hands

Last year, President Obama announced a federal effort to get a laptop, tablet or smartphone into the hands of every student and every school in the U.S.

The plan was to pipe in enough bandwidth to get all 49.8 million American kids online simultaneously by 2017.

And there is a great reason. Steve Graham, professor of education at the University of Arizona, says of computer use, "From first grade to 12th grade, we have the same effects with these types of programs. It's basically a 20 percentile jump" in learning.

But there have been stumbling blocks for schools to overcome before all students can work on computers at the same time. For one thing, just one in 5 schools has the wiring to get all students online at once.

There's a steep learning curve for both teachers and parents.

Matthew Gudenius, a 36-year-old computer whiz is moving his 6th graders to computers for part of the day. But some parents like books better and others complain that they can't help their kids with homework.

The move toward more computer use in grades K to 12 marches on.

1. What song was sung by Roy Rogers and Dale Evans at the close of their 1950s TV show? a-"Back in the Saddle Again," b-"Jesus Loves Me," c-"Happy Trails," d-"Home on the Range."

2. In what country did Theodore Roosevelt and his Rough Riders lead the battle charge up San Juan Hill? a-Peru, b-The Philippines, c-El Salvador, d-Cuba.

3. What daughter of the Emperor Ming was Dale Arden's romantic rival for the interest of comic strip spaceman Flash Gordon? a-Aura, b-Frigia, c-Amber, d-Regna.

4. In Washington, D.C., what structure stands atop what used to be known as Jenkins Hill? a-Treasury Building, b-Washington Monument, c-White House, d-Capitol Building?

5. For what artform is American artist Dale Chihuly noted? a-Puppetmaking, b-Glassblowing, c-Photography, d-Etching?

6. Country singer Faith Hill is married to what other country singer? a-George Strait, b-Tim McGraw, c-Ty Herndon, d-Alan Jackson.

7. In what movie did Jon Cryer play the role of teenage Duckie Dale? a-"Pretty in Pink," b-"Higher Learning," c-"Ferris Bueller's Day Off," d-"Sixteen Candles."

8. Capitoline Hill is the tallest of seven hills in what European city? a-Amsterdam, b-Copenhagen, c-Rome, d-Sarajevo.

9. What is the surname of the race car driving family whose members include Ned, Glenn, Jason, and Dale? a-Wallace, b-Petty, c-Earnhardt, d-Jarrett.

10. What Tennessee Williams play is set in the small town of Glorious Hill, Mississippi? a-"Summer and Smoke," b-"Orpheus Descending," c-"Suddenly, Last Summer," d-"Sweet Bird of Youth"

- Answers to 'Over Hill, Over Dale'
- 1-c "Happy Trails"
 - 2-d, Cuba
 - 3-a, Aura
 - 4-d, Capitol Building
 - 5-b, Glassblowing
 - 6-b, Tim McGraw
 - 7-a, "Pretty in Pink"
 - 8-c, Rome
 - 9-d, Jarrett
 - 10-a, "Summer and Smoke"

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Delicious Chocolate Chestnut Cream Cake with Coffee + Rum {gluten-free}

Click on the link or copy and paste in internet browser for cooking ingredients and instructions ☺ Enjoy!

<http://www.bojongourmet.com/2014/12/chocolate-chestnut-tiramisu-cake-gluten-free.html# a5y p=3080773>



Men Can Age-proof Their Muscles and Prevent Injuries

A study by the International Osteoporosis Foundation shows that a third of all hip fractures occur in men, who are twice as likely as women to die afterward.

It's muscle mass that helps strengthen and support bones, but it dwindles as the body ages.

Reporting in Time, John P. Porcari, a professor of exercise and sports at the University of Wisconsin, La Crosse, recommends these simple moves for improving strength and muscle mass.

1. Shoulders: His No. 1 move for shoulder strength is the dumbbell shoulder press. While seated, lift dumbbells from shoulder height up to full arm height using both arms at once.

2. Arms: Concentration curls are best for building biceps. While seated, lift one arm holding a dumbbell from inside the knee almost to the armpit of the other.

3. Chest: Push-ups are best. Start with wall push-ups, as you strengthen, move to knee pushups, then to fully extended pushups as you get even stronger.

4. Core and abs: Kettlebell classes have led to big increases in core strength. Without equipment, however, the traditional crunch activated even more muscles.

5. Lower body: For thigh and backside strength, do lunges with a dumbbell in each hand. Lunges work the hamstrings and glutes more than squats.

6. Back. To make up for your abdominal weight, which can strain the lower back, lie on your stomach and lift your legs for 15 seconds at a time.

Don't Panic Because of Market Gyration

When the stock market lost about 500 points over several sessions in October of last year, an investing expert was asked where people could find a safe place for their cash.

His guest on the cable news investing show replied that the only safe place was under the mattress, which was not very assuring. Of course, the analyst could not know that within the next two weeks, the market was close to recovery.

Still, if that particular financial counselor scared some people enough to withdraw money from retirement accounts, they might find that putting money back in is not so easy.

In one Roth IRA program, only \$6,500 can be deposited in one year, but if you've been in the program for five years or more, you can withdraw as much as you want.

Moral: Market dips are usually not forever.

Take the Trivia Challenge!

From which of these sources of food do we NOT get vitamin B12?

A – Meat B – Eggs C – Green vegetables D – Milk

HINT: The answer is hidden somewhere in this newsletter.

“Because of the LORD's great love we are not consumed, for his compassions never fail. They are new every morning; great is your faithfulness.”

Lamentations 3:22-23