

BETTER HOME LIVING

THE NEWSLETTER THAT'S BOTH INFORMATIVE AND FUN!



WHY BOYS SHOULD HELP WITH THE HOUSEWORK

There are probably good reasons why there has been a 25 percent drop in the amount of housework kids do today as compared with 30 years ago.

Kids spend more time on schoolwork, youth groups and athletics. And parents do less of it themselves because of modern appliances and hiring help to do it for them.

In any case, parents are more likely to assign household chores to girls. But studies at the University of Maryland show that girls hoped to share housework and child care with spouses when they marry. And studies reported in the American Journal of Sociology show that marriages are more stable when domestic duties are shared.

What else can you tell your son about doing chores? Remind him that he will probably have his own apartment in a few years. He should know how to care for his own place.

At the University of Massachusetts Amherst, sociologists say housework helps to develop the habit of serving others. Stocking the bathroom, cleaning up, and mowing the lawn help boys learn that the world is not all about them.

VIRTUAL REALITY HEADSETS POSE SAFETY CONCERNS

For kids and young people, the top item on their list of fun things to have is probably a virtual reality kit. However, according to one tech writer, VR comes with a load of safety issues.

According to Scott Stein, writing for cnet.com, VR is amazing but it isn't especially safe.

Stein points out that when VR technology is demonstrated to tech writers, it is always in an empty demo room with a staffer standing behind each person to prevent trips and slips. Nonetheless, trips happen.

Among Stein's concerns:

* VR-induced nausea - Although developers are working on this, players may frequently develop nausea in their immersive experiences. Taking breaks can help limit fatigue, nausea and dizziness.

* Blind and deaf in the real world - The standout safety feature of VR is that the user is immersed in unreality while reality still exists in the form of walls and objects. Also, people and pets. Stein recommends no pets or people in a room where someone is playing VR. There is no way to see toddlers or pets. No way to see the location of the coffee table or television set. If you draw the boundaries for your VR game incorrectly, you stand the chance of punching a wall.

* Tripping over wires - With VR you can even lose the sense of where your own body is. Imagine how difficult cables will be in that situation. VR gaming systems may have cables leading back to gaming sets. When you play, you can't see the cables. You don't even have a sense of where your body is in relation to itself.

* Eye damage - Users have reported troubling side effects of having an image 1 inch from their eyes. Eye strain is documented. After-images are possible, so when you look out into the real world, you see images of the game. More studies are coming.



WE HOPE YOU ENJOY THIS
MONTH'S NEWSLETTER!
MARI & STAFF

KIDS STARTED THIS U.S. EASTER TRADITION

In the 1800s, the rolling lawns of the U.S. Capitol were an irresistible target for kids on Easter Monday.

One of the few days off for kids and adults, Easter Monday also included lots of leftover hard-boiled eggs.

Naturally, the Capitol soon became the site of egg rolls, in which children would compete to see whose egg could roll farther without breaking. It became quite the thing. In fact, around 1876, 10,000 kids showed up to egg roll. According to history.com, the spectacle was so noisy that no business could be done in the House and Senate chambers. By the end of the day, the lawns were in ruin. Outraged Congressmen immediately wrote legislation protecting the Capitol turf. President Ulysses S. Grant signed the bill two weeks later.

A showdown was avoided the next year when rain discouraged the annual invasion of egg rollers.

Police discouraged the children the following year but, to the rescue, came President Rutherford B. Hayes who, on April 22, 1878, welcomed players to the White House backyard, the first official White House Easter Egg Roll.

Today, the White House holds a lottery to distribute 35,000 tickets for the Egg Roll. If you win one, get ready for hours of lines and a fairly short experience on the White House lawn, but a very memorable family photo.



1929: The informal egg roll on the White House lawn was a family event.

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 \$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!

THANKS A BUNCH!

Professional Caring and Competent! The staff from Mari's Cleaning Services provides detailed, professional, well organized, and competent cleaning services. This is certainly one of the better and more consistent cleaning services in the valley. They are an asset to this company and a blessing to us. Highly recommend! May God continue to bless this business!

- Tony

ROBOTS AS PACK MULES

If you carry equipment to do home repairs, remodeling or gardening, you'll soon be able to have a robotic pack mule.

Fast Forward Piaggio, the company that wowed post-war Europe with its speedy Vesta motorcycle, is producing a cargo robot.

The round 24-inch robot is a bit like a land drone, according to the company. Named Gita (Gee-ta), it can roll while hauling 40 pounds of equipment. It follows a human who can teach it to remember routes. It can even remember how to get back home by itself.

Search 'gita robot' for videos.

The company hopes it will be of use to wheel-chair users or anyone that must carry heavy loads.

Although introduced in February this year, it is not entirely clear whether the robot can actually be purchased or what it will cost.



"Oh, yeah, they're cute until you can no longer claim them as dependents on your tax return."

HOW TO STOP DAYDREAMING AND BE PRESENT WITH YOUR FAMILY

People can be so busy, with complicated lives and many obligations that they forget to enjoy the present and the little moments that matter.

So much of the time that parents spend with their children has a habit of becoming a chore. Feeding, changing diapers, tantrums and late

nights becoming grueling tasks and not special moments. This is especially true if your mind is at home during work and at work while at home.

But, according to a study reported in sciencemag.org, people living in the present are happier in general than those whose mind is always somewhere else.

Create presence. According to AFineParent.com, there are lots of ways to stay in the present with the family:

- *Enjoy the messes: Children often learn by making messes and exploring the world in their own way. They are still delighted by new feelings such as squishy mud and smells in the garden

- *Help when asked: When a child asks for help it is because they consider that thing to be crucial. Learning when to say no is also important, but recognize that this is how they feel.

- *Accept the bad times: Holding a sick child at 3 a.m. can be dreadful for a parent. Accept the situation and don't ask for a cosmic answer about why this is happening now.

- *Put away your toys: Putting away the phone allows for engagement with the kids -- and even pets, who are also abandoned by technology.

- *Keep the conversation going: Talking to children is one of the best ways to help them learn and grow so don't be afraid to chat, even in public.

- *Relive it through writing: Tiny little events and moments are something to be cherished later. Why not write down just one sentence a day to capture the highlights.



TRIVIA TEASER – SHARK SIGHTINGS

1. In what country did shark fin soup originate? a-China, b-The Philippines, c-Australia, d-Russia.
2. The phrase "jumping the shark" originated with an episode of what TV sitcom? a-"Gidget," b-Happy Days," c-"WKRP in Cincinnati," d-"Maude."
3. What cable network has broadcast an annual Shark Week since 1987? a-Animal Planet, b-Discovery Channel, c-National Geographic Channel, d-WGN.
4. What gang was the rival of the Sharks in "West Side Story"? a-Warriors, b-Jets, c-Rogues, d-Hurricanes.
5. What is the largest variety of shark? a-Leopard shark, b-Lemon shark, c-Whale shark, d-Great white shark.
6. What was the name of Captain Quint's boat in the movie "Jaws"? a-Argo, b-Cadence, c-Remora, d-Orca.
7. What Beach Boys song featured "two cool sharks standing side by side"? a-"Shut Down," b-"409," c-"Little Honda," d-"Little Deuce Coupe."
8. Who plays the heroic Fin Shepard in the "Sharknado" movie series? a-Luke Perry, b-Zac Efron, c-Aiden Smith, d-Ian Zierling.
9. Drafted second overall in the 1991 NHL Draft, what hockey player was the first-ever draft pick for the San Jose Sharks? a-Ray Whitney, b-Pat Falloon, c-Jeff Friesen, d-Alexandre Daigle.
10. What actress played a surfer trying to outwit a great white shark in the 2016 movie "The Shallows"? a-AnnaSophia Robb, b-Saffron Burrows, c-Blake Lively, d-Nicole Kidman.
11. The voice of the TV cartoon shark Jabberjaw was reminiscent of what film comedian? a-W.C. Fields, b-Groucho Marx, c-Curly Howard, d-Paul Lynde.

1-a, China
2-b, "Happy Days"
3-b, Discovery Channel
4-b, Jets
5-c, Whale shark
6-a, Argo
7-a, "Shut Down"
8-d, Ian Zierling
9-b, Pat Falloon
10-c, Blake Lively
11-c, Curly Howard

Answers to "Shark Sightings"

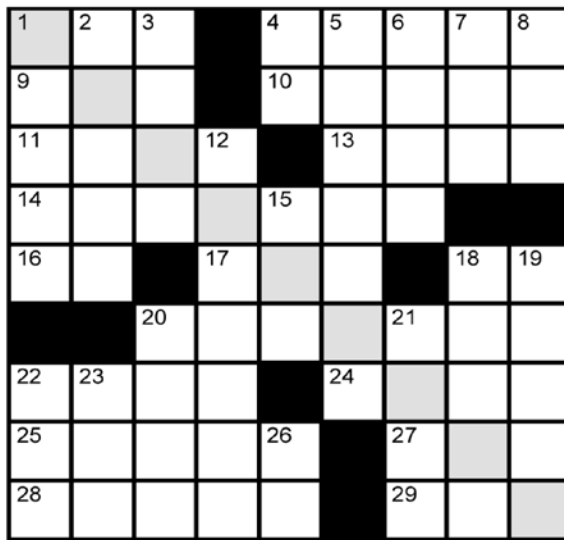
Triumphant winners

Across

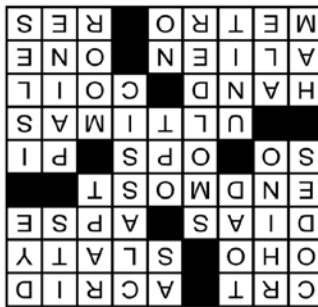
1. Computer monitor, for short
4. Like thick smoke
9. "So that's it!"
10. Gray
11. "Buenos ____"
13. Basilica feature
14. Last in a series
16. Hence
17. Harvest goddess
18. "Life of ____"
20. Last syllables
22. Full house, e.g.
24. Heating device
25. Extraterrestrial
27. It's next to nothing
28. Newspaper section
29. ____ publica

Down

1. Ciphers
2. Safari sight
3. Warty amphibian
4. "Stubborn ____ a mule"
5. Enduring literary work
6. Absorbed
7. "____ alive!"
8. Batiking need



12. Do a slow burn
15. Make a choice
18. "Common Sense" writer
19. British ____
20. The U in "Law & Order: SVU"
21. Anchor
22. Lunch meat
23. A pint, maybe
26. Nyet



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

THE PLANTS OF AUGUSTA HORTICULTURAL HERITAGE OF THE FAMED GOLF CLUB

The Masters Tournament could be held in no month but April. The reason in one word: Azaleas.

The 300-acre grounds of the famous course at the Augusta National Golf Club, the site of the tournament, was a nursery from 1857 to 1910 and it was full of thousands of varieties of plants.

Generations of landscape architects since the 1930s have preserved the various plantings and added more than 80,000 new plants in 350 varieties.

No plant is more picturesque and television-ready than the 30 varieties of azaleas. April brings mountains and mounds of blazing pink azaleas in bloom for the Masters Tournament. It's a perfect setting for photos of serious pro golfers concentrating on a shot at the 13th hole, which is known for its bank of blooms.

Some of the most notable plant features existed before the course was created. The well-known 330-yard entryway to the course is lined with Magnolias planted in the 1850s, per masters.com. An enormous, sprawling live oak by the clubhouse is thought to be more than 150 years old.

The clubhouse also features the largest, and grandest, wisteria vine in the country.

The allure of the private course was summed up by Arnold Palmer. "When I got here, I felt like I was walking on a cloud."

FIGURING OUT THE MONTHLY FOOD BUDGET

When creating the family's budget, it is easy to look at individual categories and determine that they are too expensive or that there are cheaper alternatives elsewhere.

If the cell phone bill is \$200 a month, a basic online search could reveal that another provider offers the same service for half the price. In this respect, budgeting is often a very apples-to-apples comparison that promises easy decisions.

Food, on the other hand, is a bit different. A family does not want to overpay for the specific items they buy, but finding the total dollar figure for the budget can be a little nebulous. People may say they want to spend less, but how low is low enough?

What is a normal budget? Luckily, the USDA tries to do a little bit of the homework when it comes to food spending. According to their monthly reports, for instance, a thrifty family of four should be paying \$554 per month while the liberally spending family spends \$1084. That is quite a gap, but at least it provides some baseline for spending.

Tallying up spending over a few months will show the monthly average which can then be compared to the national averages, but remember that budgeting is highly dependent on factors such as income and location as well as food preparation habits. There is no one-size-fits-all number.

How to reduce spending. According to Forbes, there are many ways to help reduce spending at the grocery store, such as:

- Limit Alcohol: Alcohol can be a very expensive addition.
- Bulk up: Making bread at home or bulk cooking staples like rice or beans can save time and money
- Plan menus two weeks ahead: Planning ahead helps avoid impulse buys and fast food. It also makes dinner quicker to prepare on busy nights.
- Have a meal prep day: Take a few hours every week or two to make casseroles, soups and simple meals that can be frozen and quickly prepped later.

Remember that making changes to a budget should happen step-by-step to avoid giving up quickly due to discomfort. Incremental changes are easier to maintain and help to make adapting easier.

ITEMS THAT WILL PUT THE POUNDS ON

A basic double hamburger can cost you about 600 to 1,200 calories, depending on size and condiments.

But that is chump change compared to dishes such as fried chicken and waffles from The Cheesecake Factory. This sumptuous Sunday brunch offering has crispy fried chicken strips on top of Belgian waffles. These are topped with poached eggs and a Hollandaise sauce. Plus, it is served with Maple Butter syrup. It's a diet killer at 2,580 calories.

Coming up just a tad under is Buffalo Wild Wings dessert nachos. A crispy flour tortilla "sprinkled with cinnamon and sugar, loaded with ice cream and gooey breaded cheesecake bites" topped with chocolate and caramel sauce. It's a sugar high that packs on the pounds at 2,100 calories.

5 For if we have been united with Him in a death like his, we will certainly also be united with Him in a resurrection like his. Romans 6



Ingredients for Easter Chick Cupcakes:

- 1 1/4 cups cake flour
- 1 1/4 tsp baking powder
- 1/2 tsp baking soda
- 1/2 tsp salt
- 2 large eggs
- 3/4 cup sugar
- 1 1/2 tsp pure vanilla extract
- 1/2 cup olive oil
- 1/2 cup buttermilk

For the vanilla buttercream and decorations:

- 2 cups butter
- 8-10 cups icing sugar
- 2-4 Tablespoons cream or milk
- 2 teaspoons vanilla
- Yellow gel food coloring
- 4-5 maraschino cherries or orange candies for beaks
- 48 mini chocolate chips
- 1 cup shredded coconut

<http://www.inthekidskitchen.com/baking-with-kids/cute-easy-chick-cupcakes/>