

Better Home Living

The Newsletter That's Both Informative and Fun!



De-stress holidays with tips from Tidy Tutor

Do holidays mean family, plenty of shopping, rushing home from work, with one-day to get it all together: Stress.

According to Kathy Roberts of TidyTutor.com, you can do four things that will significantly de-stress your holiday in the days leading up to the big events.

1. Do it now.

Maybe you can slack off later, but in the days leading up to December 24 and 25, try to do the little things immediately. Little pickups and put away tasks. Start to do it early.

2. Pay attention to laundry and dishes.

Dishes. Keep them done. Always in the dishwashers or dish drainer before bed. Use one cup and don't grab a new one for the second cup of tea.

Laundry. Load in the washer at night. Morning to the dryer. Night fold and put away. You must put away. If you don't the cat is going to sleep on them, and the family is going to rifle through them.

3. Clear out the house early in the month for cleaning, cooking and company.

Put everything out of your schedule for cleaning and pickup except the living room and bathroom.

Get boxes and put every knick-knack, end table thing, clutter from the entrance way, bottles and jars from the bathroom into boxes. Mark them so you know what is there. Hide the boxes until Christmas is over. When the guests have left, give yourself 15 minutes to toss or restore the stuff you removed.

You might try this at the time you put up your Christmas tree since you will end up with empty boxes. But in any case, you could use produce boxes from the grocery store for this.

4. Create a present wrapping station early. Gather all the things you need:

Scissors, paper, tags, bags, tape and ribbon. Start a list on paper of each present, who it goes to, what it costs and where you hid it. Have an envelope ready for receipts.

Then wrap as you go.



We hope you enjoy this month's newsletter!

Mari & Staff

History of the British Christmas Pudding

In the traditional song, carolers first enthusiastically sing "We Wish You a Merry Christmas" then move on to the second verse, which is a puzzling demand for figgy pudding.

Figgy pudding is a desire not likely to be satisfied in the U.S., which has not embraced the British tradition of a Christmas (also called figgy) pudding.

But the Christmas pudding endures in Britain, lingering in America mostly in song.

Christmas puddings, or dishes like it, appeared in England as early as the 14th century, but the dish became a tradition in the 1800s.

Experts generally agree that English puddings started as savory meat dishes with made with beef or mutton and doused with sufficient alcohol to allow the mixture to keep well for weeks or months. Even as it evolved into a sweeter dish, the pudding was aged considerably in a pudding cloth typically hung on hooks.

By the 1830s, noble families were making sweet Christmas Puddings in a more modern form in steamed basins.

Ingredients included raisins, currants, prunes, wines and spices. Puddings were and still are doused with brandy or rum to set it alight for a festive display.

There is also an array of ancient traditions that surround Christmas Pudding. One holds that this dish should be made using 13 ingredients, to represent Jesus and His disciples, and that every member of the family should take turnabout stirring the pudding with a wooden spoon. The stirring should be done by moving from East to West, to honor the Wise Men.

Good sleep habits encourage rest

If you do the same things every night before you sleep, you can expect to fall asleep faster and sleep deeper.

Called Sleep Hygiene, these considerations make sleeping better:

- Don't eat large meals before bed.
- Avoid caffeine, nicotine, and alcohol before bedtime. Chocolate milk is no good because it has caffeine.
- Establish a bedtime routine. Read in a chair for a time before bed, for example. Brush your teeth. Put on pajamas. Whatever you do, make it a regular part of your sleep routine.
- Don't read in bed, play with your phone or watch television in bed. The bed should be associated with sleep.
- Consider not reading the news or your favorite websites before bed. You want to retire with a calm mind.

During the day, you can exercise to help you feel tired at night. Be sure you are exposed to natural light, which maintains a healthy sleep and wake cycle.

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!

I have been with Mari's cleaning for about 5 years now and during that time Jasmine and Mari have been absolutely wonderful people to work with. Jasmine always checks to make sure we are always satisfied with our services and is always available to discuss any situation or changes to our cleaning services. I would highly recommend this company to anyone.

-Kathy

Guilty pleasure can rule buying choices

Guilt and pleasure are oddly intertwined, says Yale Professor Ravi Dhar.

In fact, in his experiments with researchers from Northwestern and Penn State Universities he found induced feelings of guilt can actually make things more pleasurable.

A prime example: The Las Vegas slogan "What happens here, stays here." Dhar says the slogan is crafted to attract tourists by emphasizing guilt associated with pleasure.

The naughty feeling of indulging in a chocolate bar, when you know you shouldn't, gives rise to pleasure, not pain.

Guilt can work the other way, too. In his experiments, Dhar found that giving people a choice of an indulgent coffee drink or a \$5 donation to charity, made them give to charity. On the other hand, fewer people gave to charity when presented with the choice of a \$5 laundry detergent versus the donation.



"I'd like a boy of my own!"

When what to my wondering eyes should appear, but...A miniature sleigh, and eight tiny . . . caribou

'Twas the night before Christmas when everyone knew, the sleigh of St. Nicholas was not pulled by caribou. That would be reindeer.

Truth be told, reindeer and caribou are the same species, Rangifer tarandus. But the two words are used in different parts of the world to describe the same animal: the arctic deer. In North America, wild arctic deer are called caribou and domesticated arctic deer are called reindeer.

Clement Moore wrote that eight tiny reindeer pulled Santa's sleigh in his 1823 Christmas poem "A Visit from Saint Nicholas" and he was probably right.

A brilliant professor of Asian and Greek literature and a biblical scholar,

Moore knew caribou were wild, and there was no written record of them ever being tamed, not even by Santa. He also knew reindeer had been domesticated for over 2,000 years and were used to pull heavy loads, like a sleigh packed with toys.

According to Moore's famed Christmas poem, the reindeer went up on the rooftop 'click click click.' It sounds nicer than it is. Reindeer walk with a clicking sound so loud it resonates up to 150 feet away. (Imagine the sound of the 400,000-strong migration of the North American herd.) The sound is made by tendons snapping over foot bones.

Reindeer are amazingly adapted for living with Santa at the North Pole. Large four-toed, hairy hooves expand or contract with the weather to act like snowshoes or shovels or water paddles. Specialized noses densely covered with short hair (even the nostrils) to warm cold inhaled breath because they shove these muzzles into the snow all day long to root out food.

They can run up to 50 mph when chased. Caribou calves can follow their mothers an hour after birth and gallop up to 45 miles an hour.

Both males and females grow antlers every year and males lose theirs in early winter or early spring, but females shed theirs in the summer. Santa's reindeer are always pictured with antlers. That means they're probably she-deer or young bulls. They love raisins, so be sure to leave some out along with Santa's cookies!



Trivia Teaser – King of the Jung

1. A roaring lion is the mascot of what film studio? a-RKO, b-Paramount, c-Lionsgate, d-MGM.

2. As a symbol of the Rastafari religion, a lion appears on the flag of which nation? a-Ethiopia, b-Mozambique, c-Bhutan, d-Cyprus.

3. What was the name of the female lion cub raised by George and Joy Adamson in the movie "Born Free"?

a-Elsa, b-Moana, c-Merida, d-Aurora.

4. What city is home to the Lions of the Canadian Football League? a-Calgary, b-Hamilton, c-Toronto, d-British Columbia.

5. What was the name of the regal lion in C. S. Lewis's Narnia book series? a-Eustace, b-Aslan, c-Pantalaimon, d-Azrael.

6. Which English monarch was portrayed by Peter O'Toole in the 1968 movie "The Lion in Winter"? a-George III, b-Richard I, c-Henry II, d-Edward I.

7. What receiver led the NFL with 12 touchdown receptions while playing for the winless Detroit Lions in 2008?

a-Larry Fitzgerald, b-Steve Smith, c-Greg Jennings, d-Calvin Johnson.

8. What mandrill served as a royal advisor to the lions in Disney's "The Lion King"? a-Sarabi, b-Rafiki, c-Zazu, d-Pumbaa.

9. What group had a number one hit with a doo-wop version of "The Lion Sleeps Tonight" in 1961? a-The Slades, b-The Coasters, c-The Tokens, d-The Capris.

10. According to the Bible, what was the name of the king who banished Daniel into the lion's den? a-Jehu, b-Darius, c-Herod, d-Ahab.

- 1-d, MGM
2-a, Ethiopia
3-a, Elsa
4-d, British Columbia
5-b, Aslan
6-c, Henry II
7-d, Calvin Johnson
8-b, Rafiki
9-c, The Tokens
10-b, Darius

Answers to 'King of the Jungle'

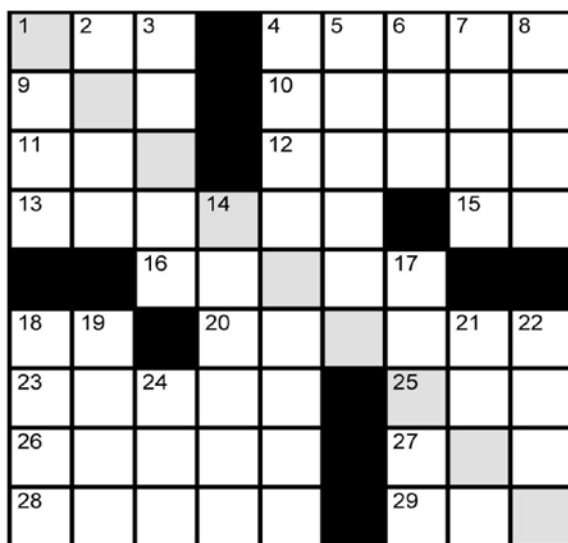
Holiday Favorite

Across

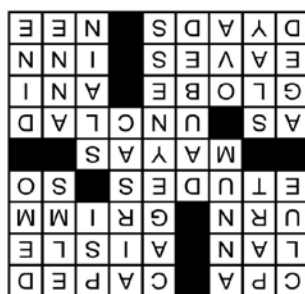
1. Tax prep. expert
4. Like Batman and Superman
9. PC linkup
10. Bridal path
11. Ashes holder
12. Fairy tale brother
13. Piano pieces
15. Therefore
16. Yucat-n natives
18. "Stubborn ___ a mule"
20. Naked
23. Boston newspaper
25. "Wheel of Fortune" purchase
26. Overhangs
27. Place to stay
28. Twosomes
29. Born as

Down

1. Hint
2. Hair line
3. Per ___ (yearly)
4. The trait of being cautious and wary
5. Lung compartment



6. Fraternity letter
7. "Desire Under the ___"
8. Showroom model
14. Smear
17. Assassinated
18. Got mellow
19. Do away with
21. Author Rice
22. Eat
24. Eggs



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

To give or not to give

Do you find yourself acting out the continuing role of everyone's favorite Christmas elf during the month of December? Cheerfully buying, wrapping and distributing gifts to everyone you've said 'hello' to during the year while asking yourself if you are going crazy?

Millions of others feel the same stress.

Some ideas about gifting

Giving isn't trading. Completely eschew the idea that you should gift someone who brings you an unexpected gift. Instead, receive the gift in joy and spend a moment with the giver.

Give holiday cards with a short personal note. Or a tip, if customary. Housekeepers, hairdressers and other service people you regularly visit need a tip on the holidays. Put it in a card. For neighbors, occasional friends, distant relatives, a card alone is perfect.

Give good deeds. Shovel an elderly neighbor's walkways. Make an extra casserole for the single mother of three who works.

Give treats. Hey, you don't even have to bake cookies. Just buy assorted goodies, some festive cellophane and wrap up on a paper plate.

Far-flung Cubs fans

Who loves the Cubs as much as Chicagoans? The people of the Caribbean nation of Belize.

It seems that up until the 1980s, if Belizeans even had television sets, they were just used for video tapes. But then an enterprising couple began snagging the Chicago television station WGN and retransmitting it to their fellow citizens.

According to Atlas Obscura, the Belizeans, who already had a taste for baseball, became enthusiastic Cubs fans in the 1980s. Belizean fans became part of the accepted fan base, and even Harry Caray would give them a shout out! Belizeans living in Chicago went to the game with Hi Belize signs. It was a love affair.

The romance slightly soured during the Cubs' long dry streak. That, coupled with more television stations, gave Belizeans more choices.

Some observers predict that the Cubs in World Series will spark the old flame and Belize will once again be in the Cubs' corner.

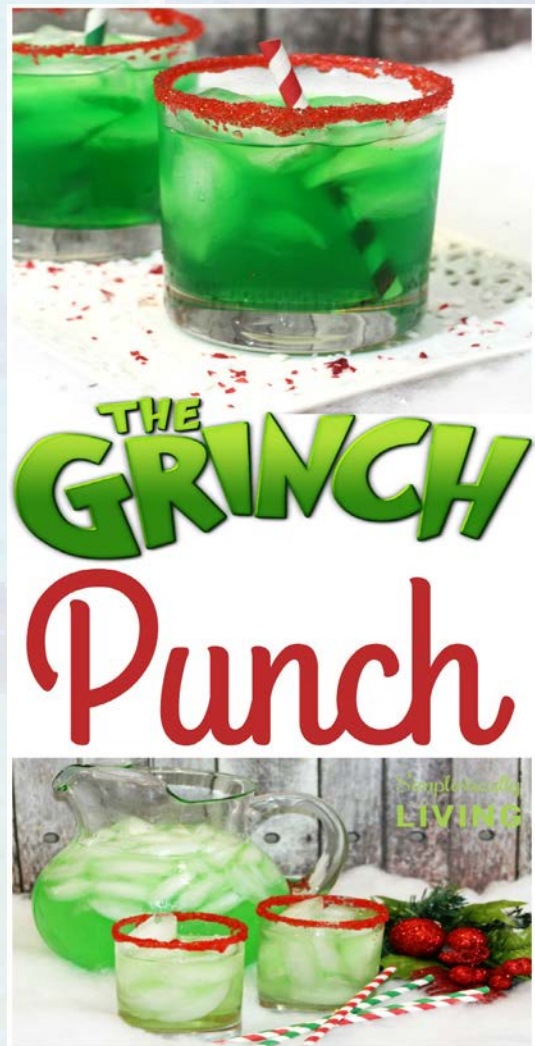
Holiday spending

According to a consumer survey by the National Retail Federation, planned holiday spending per person is about \$935.58. That includes food, decorations, gifts, and cards.

The president and CEO of the NRF, Matthew Shay, notes that advertising spots that would normally be full of holiday ads are now full of election ads. Consumers were expected to put off buying until the election is over.

More than half of people polled by the survey plan to spend an average of \$139.61 on themselves.

9 An angel of the Lord appeared to them, and the glory of the Lord shone around them, and they were terrified. 10 But the angel said to them, "Do not be afraid. I bring you good news that will cause great joy for all the people. 11 Today in the town of David a Savior has been born to you; he is the Messiah, the Lord. 12 This will be a sign to you: You will find a baby wrapped in cloths and lying in a manger." - Luke



Supplies Needed to Make Grinch Punch:

- 2 13oz packets Unsweetened Lemon-Lime Kool-Aid
- 2 Cups Sugar
- 1 12oz Can Pineapple Juice
- 1 12oz Frozen Lemonade Concentrate, thawed
- 1/2 liter of Sprite
- Ice
- Red Sanding Sugar for Glass Trim

How to Make Grinch Punch:

Pour 2 quarts of water in a 1 gallon pitcher. Add the Kool-aid mix and sugar and stir until the sugar is dissolved. Add the pineapple juice and lemonade and stir well. To top the rim of a glass, dip the top in water then dip into the sanding sugar.