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Better Home Living

The Newsletter That's Both Informative and Fun!

Kitchen Counters Sport New, Attractive Devices

Juicers are invading kitchen counters as more consumers buy pricey appliances that will turn vegetables into healthy, great-tasting drinks. Some want to get five servings of fruits and vegetables every day, and turning them into juice is one way to do it.

There was a 71 percent increase in sales of juice extractors for the year ended November 2012. Hoping to slim down and get healthier, Americans are buying juicers. Some buyers want to go on a multi-day diet composed of fruit and vegetable juice.

The Breville Juice Fountain Elite (\$299) can turn a whole apple and much more into juice in just seconds.

Single-cup coffee makers (\$199 to \$399) have made their way into the mainstream. Sales doubled from 2011 to 2012. About a quarter of households with coffee machines now have a single-cup unit, that's probably in addition to an 8- or 10-cup coffee maker.

The single cups are usually large and can easily be divided into two cups. Users say the taste is great and the convenience is a plus. There's no chore of washing a pot, emptying grounds, washing the coffee holder and fitting in a filter.

They can just pop the little coffee container into place, press a button and have their coffee in a minute or two. A selection of coffees can be purchased, including those that brew espresso, regular coffee and flavored coffees.

Refillable containers are available online for those who want to save money

New Grocery-Shopping System Takes Shape

Somewhere between visiting the supermarket and ordering groceries to be delivered to you (if you live in a city), a new choice is evolving across America.

The hybrid grocery shopping model is taking form: you can order your items online and simply drive to a nearby depot to pick them up.

So is it really a time saver if you have to start your car and go to the grocery depot anyway? Yes. Proponents say you won't have to find a place to park, walk through the store, and search through the aisles.

The depot system is especially helpful for those who are physically less capable of the supermarket routine.

As for driving to the depot, you can schedule your pick up for a convenient time, like on your way home from work or after your kid's ball practice.

The depots are already popular overseas at distributors like Tesco. In the U.S., chains like Whole Foods and Harris Teeter are starting pilot programs.

Relay Foods is the leading startup in the U.S. According to Time it has expanded from its home in Charlottesville, VA, to Williamsburg, VA, and Baltimore, MD.

April

We hope you enjoy this month's newsletter!

Mari & Staff

Earth Day is April 22nd Researchers find energy in plastic bags

Plastic bags are everywhere: in the seas, in the landfills and in your kitchen cabinets.

But not to worry. Researchers in Illinois have found a way to make plastic bags into petroleum products, and the process actually makes more energy than it uses.

This finding from the Illinois Sustainable Technology Center is one of a number of recent technologies for recycling plastic bags into useful materials, such as carbon fiber, which could be used to make inexpensive car parts according to the Oak Ridge National Laboratory.

Plastic bags have also been found to be a good source for making carbon nanotubes. The nanotubes are used in making solar cells, batteries, and stretchable electronics. The latter could be used for — get ready — touch sensitive skin for robots.

The Illinois research focused on making various types of petroleum products from bags. Researchers produced natural gas, naphtha, gasoline, waxes, and lubricating oils.

They even produced diesel fuel from plastic bags. When plastic-bag diesel was blended with regular diesel, the researchers found it had no compatibility problems.

In fact, the process of making energy from plastic bags actually produced more energy than the process required. That's an important factor in repurposing the plastic bags.

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!

Health in the News: Bacterial Infection may Cause Low Back Pain

For millions of people with low back pain, there is often no clear cause.

Recently, a study in Denmark, published in the April 2013 issue of the European Spine Journal, suggests that a small percentage of such cases may be related to bacterial infections. The study involved adults who had a herniated disk in the lower back and chronic low back pain for more than six months.

Participants had a type of bone change that can only be detected with an MRI. This type of bone change can be associated with low-grade bacterial infection in an adjacent herniated disk or damaged disk. Those taking antibiotics (amoxicillin, clavulanate and others) had less constant pain, fewer days of sick leave, and fewer disruptions in sleep.

Mayo Clinic experts say the findings can only be verified through repeated studies, and less than 10 percent of low back pain patients would be candidates for the antibiotic treatment.



"Mom, when you need parenting help, do you call grandma for tech support?"

Thanks a Bunch!

I have known Mari for over 4 years and she provides excellent and professional cleaning services. Not to mention, she makes it so simple to pay for services. She accepts checks and credit/debit cards and her teams are very professional. They are kind and always willing to do whatever I ask. Thank you Mari for providing such great services!

-Pickering
Glendale, Arizona

If you find yourself procrastinating, get started by doing something easy

About 20 percent of adults claim to be chronic procrastinators, based on studies at DePaul University in Chicago.

Some individuals try to avoid anxiety about a task by doing things they think will put them in a better mood, like going to Facebook or taking a nap. But these activities only make them feel worse.

In fact, psychologists have a new strategy that's helping procrastinators see how attempts at mood upgrades can sabotage their efforts to regulate their emotions.

Timothy Pychyl, a professor of psychology at Carlton University in Ottawa, Canada, recommends adopting a new organizing system to build willpower. Steps include:

- *Imagining the good feelings you'll have if you stop procrastinating, work on the job or even finish it.
- * Just get going. Instead of focusing on the whole project, just start one or two steps.
- * Stop feeling guilty and having negative thoughts about yourself. Think of your positive characteristics and talents.
- *If you're stuck on a project from your to-do list, first tackle an item that's easy or that you'll enjoy. Build momentum.
- * In his 2013 book, *Solving the Procrastination Puzzle*, Dr. Pychyl says picturing your future success will help you avoid anxiety and worry about the future.
- * He says you shouldn't beat yourself up with negative thoughts about why it would be so difficult for you to do.

* One good mood repair technique is self-forgiveness. It aims to dispel guilt and self-blame.

These techniques are effective at home too. When you stop feeling guilty about not cleaning the garage, painting the kitchen, or gathering items you want to give to a charity, you're more likely to tackle the job, or at least part of it.

One man, quoted in *The Wall Street Journal*, was beating himself up for not unpacking more boxes after he moved.

When he decided to spend just an hour a day doing it, he stuck to the plan and felt good about it.



Trivia Teaser - Short Stack

1. Standing 5'4" tall, who was the shortest U.S. President? a-Thomas Jefferson, b-Franklin D. Roosevelt, c-Martin Van Buren, d-James Madison.
2. What American writer wrote short stories narrated by an alter ego named Nick Adams? a-Ernest Hemingway, b-Edgar Rice Burroughs, c-William Faulkner, d-J.D. Salinger.
3. What is the medical term for shortsightedness? a-Presbyopia, b-Hyperopia, c-Myopia, d-Ambylopia.
4. Which planet has the shortest year? a-Mercury, b-Venus, c-Earth, d-Jupiter.
5. Which of these was NOT the title of a Wallace and Gromit animated short? a-"The Wrong Trousers" b-"Fractured Friendship" c-"A Close Shave" d-"A Grand Day Out."
6. In what sport might you be penalized with a "short corner"? a-Rugby, b- Field hockey, c-Soccer, d-Cricket.

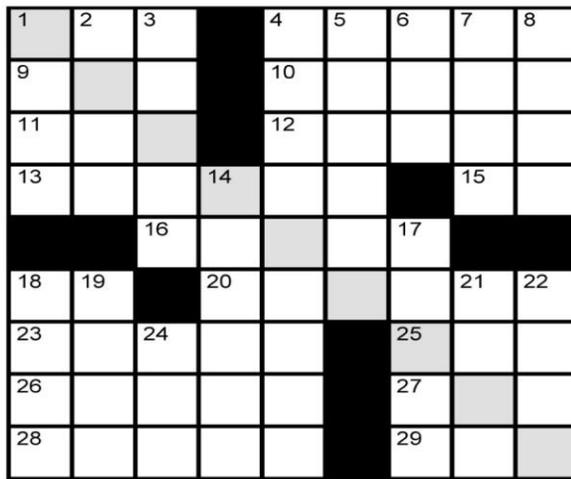
7. Which of Shakespeare's plays is the shortest? a-"Coriolanus," b-"Two Gentlemen of Verona," c-"A Comedy of Errors," d-"Twelfth Night."
8. "A Short History of Nearly Everything" is a scientific work by what bestselling travel author? a-Donald Hamilton, b-Bill Bryson, c-Paul Theroux, d-Donovan Webster.
9. What band had a hit in the 1950s with "Short Shorts"? a-The Royal Teens, b-The Four Seasons, c-The Knickerbockers, d-The Champs.
10. What was the nickname of Indiana Jones's young companion in "Indiana Jones and the Temple of Doom"? a-Short Round, b-Short Stuff, c-Shortcake, d-Short Circuit.

Answers to 'Short Stack'
 1-d, James Madison 6-c, Field hockey
 2-a, Ernest Hemingway 7-c, "A Comedy of Errors"
 3-c, Myopia 4-a, Mercury
 5-b, "Fractured Friendship"
 9-a, The Royal Teens
 10-a, Short Round

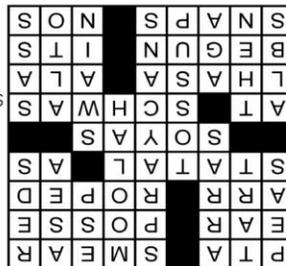
Shindig chapeau

Across

1. "Harper Valley ____"
 4. Attack ad, maybe
 9. Canal site
 10. Sheriff's group
 11. Music sheet abbr.
 12. Caught, at a rodeo
 13. Of Ohio, Florida, etc.
 15. "Stubborn ____ a mule"
 16. Nutritious beans
 18. @
 20. Unstressed vowels
 23. ____ apso (dog)
 25. Carte start
 26. Kicked off
 27. "____ show time!"
 28. Ginger cookies
 29. Discouraging words
- Down
1. Subjects of Mendelian experiments
 2. Lip-puckering
 3. Tapestry
 4. Pam comes in these



5. Dough
6. Clairvoyance, e.g.
7. Fishing, perhaps
8. 1990 World Series champs
14. Even chance
17. Beau
18. Priestly garb
19. Consequently
21. Countertenor
22. Back talk
24. ____ Khan



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

Backyard Gardens, Pot-grown Vegetables and Chicken Coops Make the News

People are looking for wellness, simplicity and bliss in their lives, and in 2013, backyard farms are making it happen.

Gardening itself is a stress-free and active pursuit. It ranks somewhere between moderate exercise and a higher level, depending on whether you are weeding or digging and planting.

Concerns about food safety, a desire for better-tasting vegetables and saving money, are sending more people to their gardens.

Some hobbyists spend more on accoutrements than seeds. Think of fancy watering cans, herb-garden kits, enamel pails, or a \$1,300 two-story cedar coop for four or five chickens.

People wonder if raising chickens will disappear as a hobby. At naptownchickens.org they say it's getting bigger all the time. Even Oprah has her own chicken coop. Vendors say many consumers can afford backyard farms and thoroughly enjoy them.

Nationally, 33 percent of all households grew vegetables, fruit, berries or herbs in 2011, according to the National Gardening Association. In the Midwest, 36 percent of households grew food.

If you're not interested in a great deal of physical activity, join the foodies who grow vegetables and fruits on their balconies and patios. They've been growing tomatoes, peppers and herbs for years. And now plant breeders have introduced small fruit trees and shrubs that do fine year-around in all-weather containers. Sweet Lifeberry Goji Berries can be grown year-round in most areas of the country.

Blueberries are big with container growers. North Star blueberries are prolific and gorgeous plants, according to the Indianapolis Star and The Wall Street Journal.

Easter Nest Cookies

Ingredients

1 pouch (1 lb 1.5 oz) Betty Crocker sugar cookie mix
1 tablespoon Gold Medal all-purpose flour
1/3 cup butter or margarine, softened
1 egg
1 container (12 oz) Betty Crocker Whipped fluffy white frosting
1 cup flaked coconut
Food color
Jelly beans



Directions

1. Heat oven to 375° F. In medium bowl, stir cookie mix, flour, butter and egg until dough forms.
2. Shape dough into 24 (2-inch) balls. Place 1 inch apart on ungreased cookie sheets.
3. Bake 7 to 9 minutes or until edges are light golden brown. Cool 1 minute; remove to cooling rack. Cool completely, about 15 minutes.
4. Frost cookies. Add coconut to a 1-quart resealable food-storage plastic bag. Add 2 to 3 drops food color, shaking bag to blend color. It may be necessary to add 1 to 2 teaspoons water to help disperse the color evenly or additional food color until desired color is reached.
5. Sprinkle about 1 teaspoon coconut onto each cookie. Top with jelly beans.

New ways to play golf attracts younger players

At the 2014 PGA Show, top golf pros and equipment execs pondered how to get the game growing, with the number of golfers dwindling since 1980.

About 30 years ago, there were 30 million golfers walking the greens, but the game has lost at least 5 million since then. The number of golfers in the 18-34 age group fell by 30 percent in that period.

TaylorMade chief executive Mark King generated the buzz at the show introducing Hack Golf.

The game is designed to decrease frustration and time required for a game. Golfers use a set of oversized clubs and a larger ball to shoot at 15-inch cups. In the beginning the clubs and cups would be funded by TaylorMade and 100 courses will try the game out.

They want to make entry into the game easier with the hope that players will later move to the traditional game. King says if you've never hit a ball before, it's tough. TaylorMade pledged \$5 million over the next five years to foster the growth of golf.

Foot Golf is also a new attempt to change the game and make it more friendly.

Described in GolfWeek, it's a game that uses a soccer ball on a traditional golf course with 21-inch diameter cups.

The Haggin Oaks Golf Course in Sacramento, Calif., has 18 holes built within the front nine of the Arcade Creek Course. It's designed to be played as traditional Golf and FootGolf simultaneously.

Ken Morton, Sr., the facility's CEO said they have attracted a young and more diverse demographic.

Take the Trivia Challenge!

What % of adults are chronic procrastinators?

A – 60% B – 40% C – 20% D – 5%

HINT: The answer is hidden somewhere in this newsletter.

For God so loved the world that he gave his one and only Son, that whoever believes in him shall not perish but have eternal life.

-John 3:16