



December 2013

Volume 4, Issue 12

# Better Home Living

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

*Holiday greetings, best wishes, and thanks!*

It's hard to believe that another year is almost ended. But it's true, holiday time is here again!

We're thinking about you and wishing you a wonderful holiday season. But more than that, we want to express our hearty appreciation for both our clients and employees in 2013. Holiday festivities are more special when an organization is connected to people like you.

There are many ways for individuals to celebrate this season. Gathering with family is one central theme, and it may include music, kids who still believe in Santa Claus, gifts and plenty of good food.

If this is a season of faith for you, we hope you have a beautiful gathering and celebration.

Many of our people also celebrate in a secular way. They observe their own traditions which are equally joyful and satisfying.

To you, and especially you, we say:

- Merry Christmas.
- Happy Holidays.
- Happy Hanukkah.
- Happy New Year.
- Best Wishes.



## December

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

*Mari & Staff*

### CHASE QUICK PAY

Mari's Property Management and Cleaning Services now accepts Chase Quickpay as a method of payment. Email Mari to find out more information: [Mari@CleaningSolutionsByMari.com](mailto:Mari@CleaningSolutionsByMari.com)

Send money to virtually anyone, anywhere (or have someone send you money) - without cash or checks. With Chase Person-to-Person QuickPay you can send money to nearly anyone using their email address or mobile number. As long as both of you have a U.S. bank account and at least one of you has a Chase checking account, you'll be able to send or receive money.

Chase Person-to-Person QuickPay is FREE and it's . . .

**Convenient:** No need to wait for a check in the mail or cash in hand.

**Everything is done online or through your mobile phone.**

**Simple:** Only one person has to have a Chase checking account.

**Secure:** You don't see the other person's account information and they don't see yours.

## *To keep the bedroom healthy, keep on dusting*

The dust that accumulates on your furniture, floors and knickknacks has nothing to do with poor housekeeping. It's a natural and continual collection of stuff caused by microscopic dust mites, the breakdown of fibers from household fabrics and furniture, and human and animal dander (skin flakes).

The average house in the United States collects about 40 pounds of dust each year, says allergist William Berger, author of *Asthma and Allergies for Dummies*.

Dust is a large part of indoor air pollution, mainly because people spend about 90 percent of their time indoors, says the Environmental Protection Agency. And dust can trigger allergies and asthma attacks.

While you can't eradicate dust altogether, there are steps you can take to reduce its accumulation. The first step is getting rid of clutter.

Things like books, clothing, and stuffed toys are big collectors of dust. So are pennants and posters kids tack to their walls.

Molly Hooven, an EPA spokeswoman, suggests concentrating dust-fighting efforts on bedrooms, because you spend about one-third of your time there. Some things you can do:

\* Remove extra furniture and any objects that will give dust mites a place to land on.

\* Vacuum the bedroom carpet using a vacuum cleaner with a HEPA filter. Vacuuming can eliminate dust mites that have settled on the floor.

\* Clean surfaces such as your vanity, television, side tables and headboards with a damp cloth or a cleaning furniture polish. Close closet doors.

\* Wash your bedding. Use 140-degree water to eliminate dust mites.

\* Place stuffed animals and fabric items that can't be machine-washed into plastic bags and freeze, which will eliminate dust mites.

*Gift Certificate*

*Tis the season for giving! Having a hard time finding a gift? Look no further! Cleaning gift certificates make the perfect gift. Buy a gift certificate for \$100 (covers 4 hours of cleaning) or customize a gift certificate.*

*Individuals to consider*

*-Mother*

*-Grandmothers*

*-Expectant mothers*

*-Aunts*

*-Best friends*

*-Mother-in-law*

*Mari's cleaning solutions does a great job every time! They are thorough and professional and I recommend them to all my friends and family.*

*-Huss  
Arizona*

*Holiday Cream Pesto Pasta*

When you're involved in holiday preparations, menu ideas for a family dinner are far down your list, but any recipe with pasta in the title signifies easy, time-saving and satisfying. Pesto is Italian green sauce that gets its name from the process of crushing basil, garlic and pine nuts in olive oil with a mortar and pestle. Here's an effortless pesto pasta recipe bound to please your family or guests any day of the month, but made doubly so, because it uses the already prepared sauce found in the refrigerated section of your grocery stores.

*Holiday Pesto Pasta - (serves 4-6)*

**1 16-oz of your favorite pasta, or 2 9-oz packages of refrigerated fresh fettuccine**

**1 container (7 ounces) refrigerated pesto with basil**

**A few fresh basil leaves**

**10 baby spinach leaves**

**1/2 pint cherry or grape tomatoes, halved**

**1/4 cup pine nuts (or walnuts), toasted**

**1/4 cup freshly shredded Romano or Parmesan cheese**

**2 tablespoons butter**

**1/2 cup heavy cream**

While waiting for pasta water to boil, wash and halve tomatoes and toast the nuts in a small skillet over high heat until browned. Then stack a few basil leaves, roll up like a cigar and slice diagonally into thin strips. Do the same for the spinach leaves.

Cook the pasta, and drain, saving 1/4 cup of the cooking water for thinning the pesto, if necessary.

Add the tomatoes to the hot pasta and stir a couple minutes to slightly soften them.

Heat cream and butter over low heat and stir into pesto.

When your guests are seated at the table, fold in the cream pesto and swirl until the pasta is evenly coated. Toss in the shredded fresh basil and spinach, leaving a few of each for garnish. Serve immediately on a heated platter and top your masterpiece with the nuts and shaved cheese (you could also add plump, ready-cooked shrimp). Enjoy!



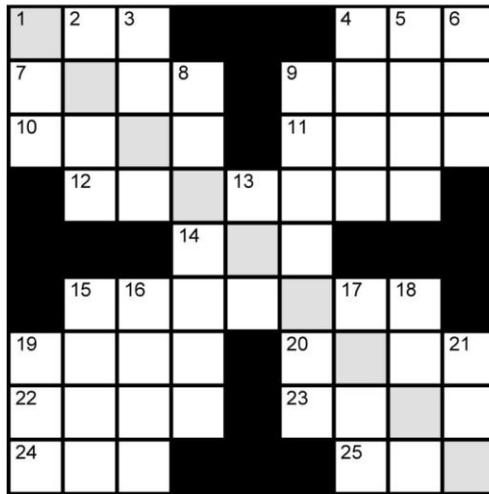
## A joyful holiday toast

### Across

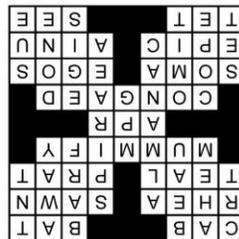
1. Jazz singer Calloway
4. Louisville Slugger
7. Perlman of "Cheers"
9. Cut, as a log
10. Blue hue
11. Kind of fall
12. Embalm in ancient Egypt
14. 30-day mo.
15. Danced in a line
19. Body
20. Prima donna problems
22. Cast-of-thousands film
23. Japanese aborigines
24. Vietnamese New Year
25. Bishopric

### Down

1. Computer monitor, for short
2. "Don't forget about me
3. Steady
4. Throw up
5. Kind of game, with "keep"
6. Explosive units.
8. Farmer's calendar
9. Ornamental plant in temperate climates
13. It's higher on the



- highway  
15. Deal with problems  
16. Leave out  
17. Sponsorship  
18. Exhausted, with "in"  
19. Put in rollers  
21. "So \_\_ me!"  
*The title is a clue to the word in the shaded diagonal*



## Trivia Teaser - Wonders Never Cease

1. What was the first name of the lovelorn teen played by Fred Savage on "The Wonder Years"? a-Mike, b-Kevin, c-Paul, d-Alan.

2. What singer won the 2003 Grammy for Best Male Pop Vocal Performance for his song "Your Body is a Wonderland"? a-Harry Connick Jr., b-Justin Timberlake, c-John Mayer, d-Daniel Powter.

3. In "It's a Wonderful Life," who was George Bailey's guardian angel? a-Melvin, b-Fred, c-Clarence, d-Arthur.

4. What color is the star on Wonder Woman's tiara? a-Yellow, b-Blue, c-White, d-Red.

5. Wonder Bread claimed it "helps build strong bodies" how many ways until a 1973 Federal Trade Commission ruling called the claim as deceitful? a-3, b-7, c-9, d-12.

6. What movie directed by Tom Hanks featured a Pennsylvania-based rock 'n' roll band called The Wonders? a-"The Philadelphia Experiment," b-"That Thing You Do!," c-"The Commitments," d-"The Five Heartbeats."

7. Who was billed as the World Wrestling Federation's "Eighth Wonder of the World"? a-Hulk Hogan, b-The Rock, c-Andre the Giant, d-Rowdy Roddy Piper.

8. What baseball team, nicknamed the "Hitless Wonders," was the surprise winner of the 1906 World Series over the Chicago Cubs? a-St. Louis Browns, b-Boston Americans, c-Washington Senators, d-Chicago White Sox.

9. According to their old advertisements, what toothpaste made you "wonder where the yellow went"? a-Pepsodent, b-Colgate, c-Ipana, d-Crest.

10. "Makes Me Wonder" was the first #1 song on the Billboard Hot 100 chart for what band? a-Maroon 5, b-Gnarls Barkley, c-Goo Goo Dolls, d-Foo Fighters.

- 1-b, Kevin  
2-c, John Mayer  
3-c, Clarence  
4-d, Red  
5-d, 12  
6-b, "That Thing You Do!"  
7-c, Andre the Giant  
8-d, Chicago White Sox  
9-a, Pepsodent  
10-a, Maroon 5

Answers to "Wonders never cease"

## Practicing mindfulness: For health and success, be in the present, not somewhere else

How many times have you found yourself driving or doing something routine and realized you had no idea what just happened?

Autopilot can make some routine tasks easier but it's not always a good thing. Sometimes automatic functioning can harm relationships and even make you anxious and depressed.

Practicing being present in the moment can often help people with chronic conditions see themselves as whole people.

The Mayo Clinic developed Stress Management and Resilience Training to enhance resilience and the ability to thrive in spite of adversity.

You don't have to go through formal training to begin your mindfulness practice. These steps can get you started:

\* **Paying attention.** Learn to place yourself fully in the present moment. Use your senses. What do you see? What do you hear? Practice it everywhere. Note what you see and feel: At bedtime, the cool, soft sheets, the blue light of night out of the window, the quiet.

\* **Removing judgment.** Observe the world, your tasks, other people and yourself without criticism. Try not to attach strong feelings to a task: I hate this.

\* **Breathing.** Forget everything else for a moment and feel each breath. You can observe your breath from your nostrils, chest or belly. Feel the sensations that accompany your breath and breathe with rhythm.

\* **Meditating.** Set aside a time and place for doing nothing. Once you have assumed your favorite posture, focus on your breathing. It's like exercising your mind, honing its focus and concentration.

The more you learn to be mindful, the more you can appreciate the fullness of life.

## Operation Santa Paws, December 1-21

During the holiday season extra help is needed for abused and abandoned animals in local animal shelters.

One grassroots organization, Operation Santa Paws, is helping by spreading the word about a canine-feline toy or treat drive to benefit less-fortunate pets this season.

Animal lovers are encouraged to purchase a new dog toy, cat toy, food or food treats that will be delivered in time for Christmas to a local shelter and rescue organization.

Think about a sad puppy who knows nobody loves him, a beautiful cat that has lost her family for some reason, or a mature dog that had a loving family until they had to move and could no longer care for him.

On Christmas, a toy or a food treat will make them joyful for the day, and you will feel joyful for making it possible.

### *In 2014, mandatory tips will be gone*

For many years, restaurants have tacked a mandatory tip on the bill of any large party, usually 15 percent. Some restaurants add the tip to every bill.

But a recent IRS ruling will probably end mandatory tipping.

The ruling that takes effect in 2014 classifies automatic tips as wages rather than tips, so the restaurant would have to pay payroll taxes on a mandatory gratuity. The ruling pretty much guarantees that most restaurants will stop mandatory tipping.

This ruling makes it more risky for waiters, who will be gambling that a table of 10 likes the service -- and is willing to tip for it, according to Kiplinger's Personal Finance.

Diners are likely to see suggested tips on menus and bills of 15 to 20 percent.

Cruise ship tipping is still a question but it might apply to ships registered in the U.S. Cruise ships apply a daily gratuity to travelers' accounts.



*Every good gift and every perfect gift is from above, coming down from the Father of lights with whom there is no variation or shadow due to change.*

*-James 1:17*

## *Stay healthy A Christmas gift for yourself*

Don't wear yourself out in December over-preparing for family, friends, and fancy dinners.

Here are some tips to give yourself a Merry Christmas:

\* Decorate for yourself. If you love your Christmas village, then why not do it early, even before Thanksgiving, so you can play with it and enjoy it longer?

If you don't care a thing about a big tree with fancy decoration, deck the halls with something you do like and skip the tree.

The main idea is to do the decorating that means the most and skip the stuff that just drains your energy.

\* Get some rest. Your family and friends want to see you happy, not frazzled and worn. Plan ahead to have some fun yourself.

\* Keep dinner simple. Even for formal dining, keep your menu to five items. Make those items special. Forget the rest.

\* Simple shopping. Studies show that, overwhelmingly, the gifts people like most are gift certificates or money. These don't work for kids, but they're a convenient and appreciated gift for adults like your mother, your best friend, your sister, aunt or your uncle.

### *Heart Association tells roof-roof health benefits*

The latest evidence that pets are good for your health comes from the American Heart Association.

\* People with cardiovascular disease who own a dog live longer.

\* Pets relieve stress. Even in offices, a dog increases morale and cooperation. Pets enhance emotional and psychological well being. They don't replace relationships with humans, but they complement them.

\* Pets add structure to your life because you have to care for them.

\* Pets are good for kids. They learn responsibility and get companionship. Children raised with dogs and on farms are less likely to develop ear infections, allergies and asthma.

\* People with dementia show less agitation when a dog is present.

### **Take the Trivia Challenge!**

**Customary tipping for wait staff is . . .**

- A – 5-10%    B – 10-15%  
C – 15-20%    D – 20-25%

HINT: The answer is hidden somewhere in this newsletter.