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Better Home Living

The Newsletter That's Both Informative and Fun!

Time to grill up for spring

If you will be shopping for a new outdoor grill this year, here are a few points to consider.

What will power it? Charcoal is classic and imparts a distinctive flavor, but it takes time to get it started and clean up afterward. Natural gas is the most convenient, but it takes a licensed or certified gas fitter to install it. That leaves propane, which is the most popular choice.

While there's no denying the snob appeal of a stainless steel grill, classic black will serve you well if you aren't installing an outdoor kitchen. Stainless steel has one big advantage though. It won't rust if left outside all year.

The cooking surface is an important choice, according to authorities featured on CBS News.

- * Chrome cooking grills are harder to clean and will rust.
- * Porcelain-coated grills resist rusting and are easy to clean.
- * Cast iron holds the heat well and evenly, but must be seasoned with cooking oil to avoid rusting.
- * Porcelain-coated cast iron has the benefits of iron and is easy to clean. Use a soft brass brush to avoid scratches.
- * Stainless steel grills last a long time, but don't hold the heat as well or sear as well as cast iron.

If you are buying a two-burner gas grill, pick one with the burners in an H shape rather than an I shape for more even heating.

You will notice a BTU rating (British Thermal Units) on most grills. They range from 35,000 BTU to 45,000 or more. This is the total heat the grill will generate with all burners on. A 35,000 BTU unit will use 2 pounds of propane per hour.

Other features to consider include a stainless steel warming rack which will increase cooking area for baking or warming; a sturdy handle, a side shelf for extra space, rotisserie burners and side burners.



We hope you enjoy this month's newsletter!

Mari & Staff

How do you observe Memorial Day?

Americans have honored their war dead since the late 1800s, but the official national holiday, which occurs the last Monday of May (May 25, 2015), wasn't designated by an act of Congress until 1971. Many families, especially those with ties to the military, attend ceremonies and visit cemeteries on this day.

Most of us, however, use the long weekend for a family reunion. We might catch a glimpse of our President placing a wreath at the Tomb on the Unknown Soldier at Arlington Cemetery, which inspires our own love of country.

For a special group of Americans, the meaning behind Memorial Day is observed in a totally different manner. Sunday, May 24, will mark the 25th Anniversary of the Rolling Thunder "Ride for Freedom" motorcycle parade in Washington, D.C. It moves from the Pentagon to the Vietnam War Memorial Wall, a tribute that started in 1988 with just an idea for a one-time rally in remembrance of all Prisoners of War (POW) and those Missing in Action (MIA).

An increasing number of war veterans, who were Harley riders and from all walks of life, learned of the rally and wanted to join. The original 2,500-participant demonstration has increased to 900,000 this year, the world's largest single-day motorcycle ride and the most attended Memorial Day event in the nation.

The low rumble of Harley engines reminds many attendees of the sound created in the 1965 bombing campaign against North Vietnam named Operation Rolling Thunder.

Rolling Thunder has over 100 chapters throughout Canada, Australia, Europe and the United States. Members actively promote legislation regarding POW/MIA issues from all wars. They also spend many hours collecting and providing food, clothing and other essentials for veterans and their families, and support for veterans' groups and women's crisis centers.



Identity thieves target the deceased

It sounds like an unusual crime, but it's more common than ever.

Each year thieves steal the identities of nearly 2.5 million deceased Americans. They open credit card accounts, apply for loans, or get cell phone or other services, according to ID Analytics.

It's called "ghosting."

It can take up to six months for financial institutions, credit-reporting bureaus and the Social Security Administration to register death records. Crooks have plenty of time to make charges on the accounts.

Most often, the crime begins with thieves trolling through obituaries to find a name, address and birth date. With that information, they can fraudulently purchase a Social Security number on the Internet for as little as \$10.

Sid Kirchheimer, author of *Scam-Proof Your Life*, tells the AARP Bulletin that these steps can save heirs a lot of trouble.

- * In the obituary, don't include a birth date, mother's maiden name or the person's address.
- * Use certified mail with "return receipt" to send copies of the death certificate to the credit-reporting services, asking them to place a "deceased alert" on accounts. Send copies of the death certificate to the banks, insurers, brokerages, and the mortgage and credit card companies involved.
- * Report the death to Social Security by calling 800-772-1213.
- * Contact the Department of Motor Vehicles to cancel the deceased's driver's license to prevent duplicates from being issued to fraudsters.
- * A few weeks later, check the person's credit report at annualcreditreport.com to see if there has been any suspicious activity.

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 love Mari's cleaning services! I love getting emails the day before my cleaning to remind me and being able to see if I have any special request and if I do then I make sure it gets done. I can say I love not worrying about my house cleaning and the way Mari and the gals run things is outstanding, hands down best in town.

-Karen
Glendale

Outdoor activities energize kids and adults

For Children:

Shellie Pfohl, Executive Director of the President's Council on Fitness, Sports and Nutrition, says children need 60 minutes or more of physical activity each day, where they can live, learn, and play. In addition to physical health benefits, regular activity provides cognitive health benefits. When children are physically active, they achieve higher grades in school, record better attendance and behavior improves.

For You:

Think about it. What will you do to be physically active in the next six months? Make a checklist so you can decide. It could include swimming, tennis, golf, or basketball.

If you've been too busy to develop specific sports skills, there's still a lot you can do to take advantage of summer and fall. In addition to hiking and biking, consider walks in the woods or around your neighborhood. Walk your dog. Join friends walking.



"Cash? Gee, I'm new here and I haven't been trained in making change. Would you like to open a store charge?"

Saved by the Beacon! For boating and wilderness rescue

For summer boating fun and safety, take along the most important device you'll never need: Your PLB. Or at least you hope you'll never need the Personal Locator Beacon.

In 2014, about 240 people did need one and, because they had one, they were saved. Imagine a lovely afternoon sailing a catamaran off the Florida coast when the sky starts to darken.



Just about then the wind kicks up, now you can't see land. The wind and waves blast the boat and your mast snaps. With a PLB device, you could be rescued.

The PLB is not just for boating either. You could plan a lovely hike on a lonely trail in the wilderness. If you fall into a ravine and break your leg, only the PLB can give you that last-hope chance of rescue.

Personal Locator Beacons are high-powered devices that send emergency distress signals. They transmit a distress signal at 406 mhz, which is monitored by the National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration and the Air Force Rescue Coordination Center.

Once a signal is received, satellites fix the location and relay the coordinates to rescuers.

The best PLBs are equipped with GPS, according to rei.com. With GPS, rescuers can fix on your location within a 100 meters. Look for a PLB with some kind of signal device built in, such as an LED light.

Each PLB device should be registered with NOAA. That way, if an emergency ever occurs, your medical information is available as well as your identity.

There are many kinds of PLBs, designed for use in water and hiking, and they range in cost from \$150 up to \$500 and more. That might seem little salty for a device designed to be activated once -- if at all. But if you need help, this is technology that, for the first time in the history of mankind, can bring help in the wilderness.

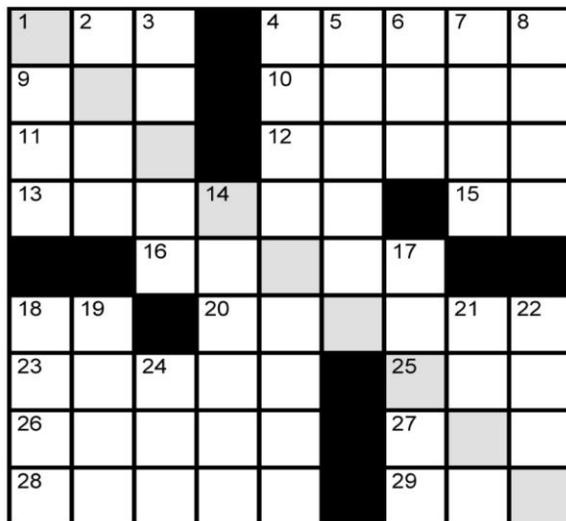
Whitsunday or Shavuoth

Across

1. Third degree?
4. Arbor Day month
9. "Seinfeld" uncle
10. Indian yogurt dish
11. Ashes holder
12. Pottery pot
13. Estuaries
15. Atomic number 2
16. Kilmer classic
18. The Bay St.
20. Athenian magistrate
23. Boredom
25. It needs refinement
26. Japanese cartoon art
27. ___ Today
28. Gulf state
29. "Sesame Street" watcher

Down

1. Pudding fruit
2. Deli offering
3. Coffee break snack
4. Sports with bows and arrows (Fr.)
5. 3.26 light-years
6. "Flying Down to ___"
7. Allergic reaction
8. Cottage site
14. Kind of center
17. Holler
18. Cold cuts, e.g.
19. "Green Gables" girl
21. Approximately
22. "Cool!"
24. Eighty-six



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



Trivia Teaser – Crock Pot

1. What is the real first name of movie character "Crocodile" Dundee? a-Alan, b-David, c-Mick, d-Neil.
2. What singer had his first number one hit in 1972 with "Crocodile Rock"? a-Neil Diamond, b-Ricky Nelson, c-Billy Joel, d-Elton John.
3. What tennis player is the creator of a tennis shirt that bears his trademark crocodile on the front? a-Andre Agassi, b-Rene Lacoste, c-Jimmy Connors, d-Ilie Nastase.
4. What is the name of the late host of "The Crocodile Hunter" TV adventure series? a-Steve Irwin, b-Paul Bedard, c-Jimmy Riffle, d-Billy Bretherton.
5. Who starred as a moonshine runner named Gator McCluskey in the 1970s movies "Gator" and "White Lightning"? a-Burt Reynolds, b-Peter Fonda, c-Robert Mitchum, d-David Carradine.
6. What fruit is nicknamed the alligator pear? a-Tomato, b-Avocado, c-Eggplant, d-Tamarind.
7. What was the name of the alligator in the comic strip "Pogo"? a-Jason, b-Roy, c-Albert, d-Artie.
8. What group had a top ten hit in 1956 with "See You Later, Alligator"? a- Bill Haley & His Comets, b-The Tornados, c-The Champs, d-The Tremeloes.
9. What college football head coach lost his job in 1978 after punching Clemson linebacker Charlie Bauman during the Gator Bowl? a-Woody Hayes, b-Bob Knight, c-Ara Parseghian, d-Dan Devine.
10. Also called the Crocodile River, which river did Rudyard Kipling describe as being "grey and greasy"? a-Kabul, b-Ganges, c-Limpopo, d-Mississippi.

Answers to 'Crock Pot'
1-c, Mick
2-d, Elton John
3-b, Rene Lacoste
4-a, Steve Irwin
5-a, Burt Reynolds
6-b, Avocado
7-c, Albert
8-a, Bill Haley & His Comets
9-a, Woody Hayes
10-c, Limpopo



Study: Salt relates to headaches

Researchers are finding that reducing high quantities of salt in patients' diets may help people avoid headaches. Some studies also show that chocolate, cheese and alcohol appear to trigger migraine and cluster headaches.

The current clinical trial, which included 390 people, compared the effects of two dietary approaches on high blood pressure (hypertension). One is the DASH diet, which is low in sodium. The second was the standard diet. Sodium in both groups ranged from 1,150 mg of salt a day to a high of 3,450 mg a day.

Although there is already evidence that hypertension is tied to frequent headaches, the researchers concluded that reducing high-sodium intake in the study was also associated with headache frequency.

Though they couldn't establish a direct link, they saw that reducing salt in the diet was independently associated with headache frequency. It especially helped people avoid tension-type headaches.

Hate shopping? Or do you just love unusual food?

Either way, you can get food by subscription, delivered to your door.

Hellofresh.com delivers a box of food suitable to make an assortment of recipes they provide. Their chicken & artichoke cassoulet requires ingredients you may not have or may not have fresh — panko, a bit of thyme, and cannellini beans — but no sweat. They deliver all the ingredients sorted into the right amounts including a colorful recipe card with instructions. You don't have to buy a bottle of thyme for a pinch you need in one recipe.

If you love cooking and love trying new dishes, check out trytheworld.com. The company promises food made by artisans in far-flung locales, a different box from a different place each month. You can subscribe to the themed boxes by subscription or buy products individually. Choices seem exotic: Moroccan Argan oil and raisin and onion sauce, French chestnut creme, pacoquita snacks from Brazil, and, of course, pricey Italian fresh truffles.

What about the meat and potatoes guy? Suppose you want to send that guy a gift. Try mantry.com — they claim to be the modern man's pantry. You can order a box of manly goodies made by American artisans. You can get barbecue sauce from Alabama, Vermont summer sausage, hot sauce from New York, bread from Nashville, steak rub from California and bacon from Kentucky.

You can find food companies online offering all sorts of delicacies from entrees to desserts and liquor.

Peace I leave with you; my peace I give to you. Not as the world gives do I give to you. Let not your hearts be troubled, neither let them be afraid.

John 14:47

Slow-Cooked Reuben Brats



Ingredients

- 10 uncooked bratwurst links
- 3 bottles (12 ounces *each*) **light beer** or nonalcoholic beer
- 1 large sweet onion, sliced
- 1 can (14 ounces) sauerkraut, rinsed and well drained
- 3/4 cup mayonnaise
- 1/4 cup chili sauce
- 2 tablespoons ketchup
- 1 tablespoon finely chopped onion
- 2 teaspoons sweet pickle relish
- 1 garlic clove, minced
- 1/8 teaspoon pepper
- 10 hoagie buns, split
- 10 slices Swiss cheese

Directions

1. In a large skillet, brown bratwurst in batches; drain. In a 5-qt. slow cooker, combine beer, sliced onion and sauerkraut; add bratwurst. Cook, covered, on low 7-9 hours or until sausages are cooked through.
2. Preheat oven to 350°. In a small bowl, mix mayonnaise, chili sauce, ketchup, chopped onion, relish, garlic and pepper until blended. Spread over cut sides of buns; top with cheese, bratwurst and sauerkraut mixture. Place on an ungreased baking sheet. Bake 8-10 minutes or until cheese is melted. **Yield:** 10 servings.