

# Better Homes Living

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



## Ready to "Think Pink"?

For those who are involved with the cancer community, October doesn't mean football, Halloween, or the changing colors of the fall leaves. It means Breast Cancer Awareness. Are you, or do you know someone fighting *the fight* with cancer?

Cleaning for a Reason is a nonprofit organization that *Mari's Cleaning* has proudly served since 2010. Their focus is on your home, so you can focus on your health. Why *PINKTOBER*? It gets more women to the doctor for a mammogram. It creates a community offering hope for those with a diagnosis of breast cancer. It raises support for those making a difference in the face of cancer. Help us share the difference we're making through the gift of a clean house for women battling cancer!

Here at *Mari's Cleaning Services* we provide (4) women with Monthly cleanings during their treatment. We want these women to focus on having visitors on those days they are not feeling well and let us take on the task of the house cleaning.

Don't fight *the fight* alone, let us help!

<http://cleaningforareason.org/>



## Flagship smartphones are getting more expensive

The most cutting-edge flagship phones from manufacturers such as Apple, Samsung, and Google have been increasing in price over the years with no signs of slowing down, according to The Verge. Apple's iPhone X, released with an incredible \$999 price tag, was a full 30 percent higher than the starting price of the iPhone 7 Plus of the previous year. Samsung, meanwhile, boosted the cost from the Note 7 to the Note 8 by 10 percent from \$849 to \$930. To make matters worse, most phone updates these days bring only incremental upgrades to the technology and are now mainly focused on screen improvements and new, sometimes novelty, features.

*Free Cleaning Tips and Specials at [www.MyWebsite.com](http://www.MyWebsite.com)*

## October

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

*Mari & Staff*

## Exotic history of what makes up "pumpkin spice"

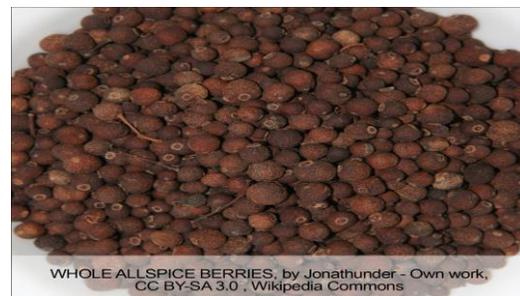
The spices that make up the famed pumpkin spice or pumpkin pie spice have nothing to do with pumpkins, but they have a lot to do with history.

The ingredients -- more or less -- for pumpkin spice include: Nutmeg, cinnamon, allspice, cloves, and ginger.

In the 15th century, these spices were worth more than gold to Europeans. Middle Eastern and North African sailing cultures had a monopoly on these spices (except for allspice). They kept their spice sources top secret, weaving tales of exotic locations guarded by terrifying snakes, and they became fabulously wealthy.

But, the economics of the spice monopoly failed as the price of buying spices soared 32,000 percent. That made hunting for the secret islands financially viable. So, Europeans set out to find the spices.

In 1492, when Columbus sailed the ocean blue, he was looking for spices, not gold. Famously, Columbus didn't find the spice of the Indies, but others did. By the 16th century, the Dutch and English monopolized spice markets.



WHOLE ALLSPICE BERRIES, by Jonathunder - Own work, CC BY-SA 3.0, Wikipedia Commons

## **Four-on-the-floor: Once cool, now antique**

Back in the day, a car with four-on-the-floor was the preferred cool of every young man cruising the main drag.

The manual transmission parked at the right of the driver was a fun way to take your Mustang GT out on a winding road.

But, the constant clutch and shift is no good for heavy traffic. Maybe that is one of the reasons why the clutch and stick have largely disappeared from the urban landscape.

Only diehard enthusiasts go for the old gearbox. In 2016, only 27 percent of new models in the U.S. were offered with both automatic and manual transmissions, which is down from 37 percent in 2011 and 47 percent in 2006. Among actual purchases, less than three percent of sales in 2016 went for manual gearboxes which is in stark contrast to the 80 percent sold in some Asian and European countries today.

At one time, the manual transmission lowered the price of the car, was more durable, and even improved fuel economy. Advancements in technology have changed that. Car manufacturers have improved automatic transmissions, and the best now outperform their manual counterparts in all of the areas that once made them great, according to the Los Angeles Times.

Electric cars, devoid of a transmission altogether, are also entering the mainstream and could ultimately replace all gasoline cars and make the question of clutches entirely obsolete. Even sports cars, once dominated by the stick shift that driving enthusiasts traditionally love to use, are being forced to change their roots due to slack in orders.



### **Directions**

- Make the banana bread: Preheat the oven to 350 degrees F. Lightly butter one 9-by-5-inch loaf pan or three 6-by-3-inch mini loaf pans.
- Whisk the flour, granulated sugar, baking powder, salt, baking soda, cinnamon and nutmeg in a large bowl. Add the chocolate chips.
- Whisk the eggs, melted butter, yogurt, vanilla and orange zest (if using) in a medium bowl. Stir in the mashed banana. Fold the banana mixture into the flour mixture until just combined.
- Spread the batter in the prepared pan(s). Bake until a toothpick inserted into the center comes out clean, about 55 minutes for a standard loaf or 35 to 40 minutes for mini loaves. Cool 30 minutes in the pan(s) on a rack, then turn out onto the rack to cool completely.
- Make the glaze: Whisk the confectioners' sugar, cocoa powder, milk, vanilla and salt in a bowl. Pour over the cooled banana bread and let set, 15 to 20 minutes.

### **For the Bread:**

- 1 stick unsalted butter, melted and cooled (or 1/2 cup vegetable oil), plus more for the pan
- 1 1/4 cups all-purpose flour
- 3/4 cup granulated sugar
- 1 teaspoon baking powder
- 1 teaspoon salt
- 1/2 teaspoon baking soda
- 1/2 teaspoon ground cinnamon
- 1/2 teaspoon grated nutmeg
- 1 cup semisweet chocolate chips
- 2 large eggs
- 1/2 cup plain yogurt or sour cream
- 1 teaspoon vanilla extract
- 1 teaspoon grated orange zest (optional)
- 1 cup mashed banana

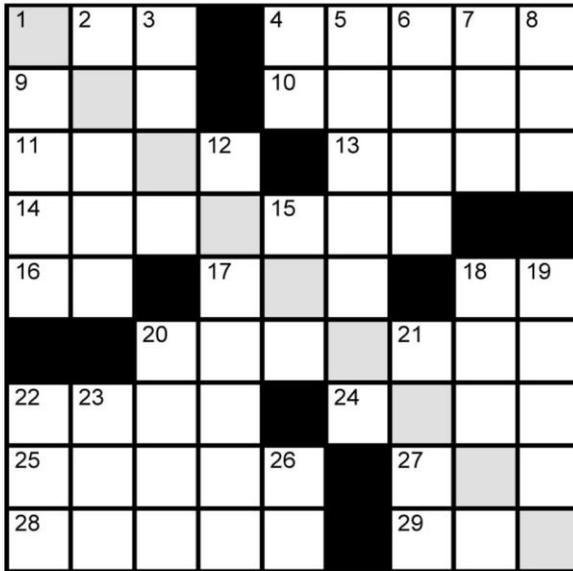
### **For the Glaze:**

- 1 cup confectioners' sugar
- 2 tablespoons unsweetened cocoa powder
- 2 tablespoons milk
- 1/4 teaspoon vanilla extract
- Pinch of salt

## Columbus landfall

### Across

1. Western omelet ingredient
4. Unexpected sports outcome
9. Sundial number
10. Baby grand, e.g.
11. Fling
13. Essence
14. Hoofed it?
16. Hello
17. Indochinese language
18. Exist
20. Like some cattle
22. After-dinner drink
24. One and only
25. Hemp fiber
27. Dutch tree
28. Easy to lift
29. Shade of green



### Down

1. Thumb a ride
2. Garlicky mayonnaise
3. Soybean paste
4. "\_\_\_ on the rooftop..."
5. Urban flock
6. Aforementioned
7. Lt.'s inferior, in the Navy
8. "Sesame Street"

12. Stain
15. Duffer's goal
18. "Beauty and the Beast" beauty
19. Swelling
20. Rugged rock
21. Adversaries
22. Buddy
23. \_\_\_-Wan Kenobi
26. @



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

## Some hotels still prefer actual keys for their rooms

Although plastic key cards are now everywhere, some hotels are sticking with the old-fashioned key.

Plastic cards have a security advantage over keys, since the card code can be changed for every new guest. Locks, on the other hand, just aren't changed for every booking. Magnetized cards do discourage the low-tech evil key thief from vandalizing rooms.

But plastic has its drawbacks. They can become demagnetized, which you don't find out until you are standing in front of the door with six suitcases.

They are also still a security risk, since the cards are connected and coded online. Hackers have been able to take over entire hotels, holding them for ransom.

Metal keys, attached to creative and sometimes bulky key fobs can offer more peace of mind as well as a bit of charming flair to add to the hotel experience.

## Trivia Teaser – Come sail away

1. Which sailor appears in the Arabian Nights stories? a-Ali Baba, b-Prince Ahmed, c-Sindbad, d-Aladdin.

2. Who wrote a novella about the young sailor Billy Budd? a-Herman Melville, b-Joseph Conrad, c-Seamus Heaney, d-Mark Twain.

3. According to myth, a siren known as the Lorelei lured sailors to their deaths on which European river? a-Danube, b-Vistula, c-Seine, d-Rhine.

4. In which Italian city was the explorer Christopher Columbus born? a-Milan, b-Turin, c-Genoa, d-Florence.

5. "Come Sail Away" was a 1977 hit song for which band? a-Electric Light Orchestra, b-Styx, c-Cheap Trick, d-The Eagles.

6. Which fictional sailor was introduced in the 1937 novel "The Happy Return" and made his final appearance in the 1967 novel "The Last Encounter"?

a-Robinson Crusoe, b-Captain Nemo, c-Captain Hook, d-Horatio Hornblower.

7. Poopdeck Pappy was the father of which fictional sailor? a-Popeye, b-Jack Sparrow, c-The Flying Dutchman, d-Captain Ahab.

8. In the Bible, who hoped to flee from the presence of the Lord by sailing to Tarshish? a-Jonah, b-Noah, c-Lot, d-Daniel.

9. The second part of which novel begins aboard the Tsimtsum, a Japanese freighter transporting zoo animals? a-"Doctor Dolittle's Caravan," b-"1Q84," c-"The Kite Runner," d-"Life of Pi."

10. Which British pirate sailed aboard the Queen Anne's Revenge? a-Calico Jack, b-Blackbeard, c-Long John Silver, d-Captain Kidd.

- 1-c, Sindbad  
2-a, Herman Melville  
3-d, Rhine  
4-c, Genoa  
5-b, Styx  
6-d, Horatio Hornblower  
7-a, Popeye  
8-a, Jonah  
9-d, "Life of Pi"  
10-b, Blackbeard

Answers to 'Come sail away'

## Home fixes that cost money to delay

In a home, small problems can quickly become big expensive ones, according to Home and Garden Television.

Mold, for example, is a typical problem in wet places like the bathroom or kitchen but when it surfaces on bedroom walls or inside closets, it's time to call a professional.

Floors that slope, sag, or seem otherwise unstable could have one or more of a variety of reasons for the issue, according to Home Advisor. In older homes, there could be deterioration of the wooden structures themselves due to conditions like rot. In other cases, the flooring joists, sills, sub-floor, or even foundation could be installed incorrectly from the beginning which could require extensive repairs. In any case, a contractor or a structural engineer can diagnose the problem as early as possible to reduce potential costs.

It's easy to forget about window maintenance but it's also easy to prevent problems.

In new windows, weep holes at the bottom edge of storm windows allow water to drain out, according to Family Handyman. But these small holes can become clogged if not cleaned regularly. Plugged weep holes will eventually force moisture into the home or even cause damage to the window itself with enough water buildup.

In water heaters, remember that sediment can build up inside over time. Partially emptying the tank once a year can dramatically increase its lifespan.

Refrigeration units should have their coils dusted and vacuumed regularly.

Garage door springs should be lubricated at least once a year to help prevent loud or broken springs.

### Take the Trivia Challenge

**What percent of sales in 2016 went for manual gearboxes in cars?**

**A:3 B:27 C:37 D:47**

HINT: The answer is hidden somewhere in this newsletter.

## How to handle an aging dog

Just like humans, dogs require different kinds of care at each stage of life, and it is essential that pet owners be aware of the changes ahead so that they can plan for prevention, according to PetMD.

Unlike humans, there are many different breeds and sizes of dogs that can bring their unique challenges. In general, bigger dogs age faster so giants like Great Danes will be considered senior age at around 5-6 years old while a small dog like a Chihuahua might be closer to 10-11. The most common issues to watch out for are degenerative issues such as arthritis, dental disease, and obesity.

Dogs suffering from arthritis can't tell their owners that they are hurting but might provide clues if they seem to tire more easily, have trouble moving up and down stairs, or not be able to sleep comfortably. Dental care is something that should be addressed at all times for a dog, but a lack of attention can cause severe problems with lost teeth and pain that can lead to weight loss and other health problems due to lack of nutrition. On the other hand, dogs with healthy mouths could still overeat, a common problem among older dogs, as they become less active and spend more time sleeping.

With any dog, putting more effort into their health and wellbeing as they age will likely allow them to experience fewer issues and a better quality of life as they age. While most dogs should visit the veterinarian at least once per year, consider upping it to two visits and ask for a body condition check each time to check things like weight. They might also suggest changing the dog's food to one that has extra dietary support for seniors or to help treat specific conditions like heart or kidney disease. While they might not be as active as they once were, senior dogs benefit significantly from regular exercise and entertainment as long as they aren't pushed past their limits.

## The snooze button makes you sleeper

Just 10 more minutes of sleep seems perfect. Hit the snooze button and drop into dreamland.

Problem is that your body restarts the sleep cycle, sending you into deeper stages of sleep. Ten minutes later you probably won't feel refreshed. Instead, you'll feel groggy, according to circadia.com.

Best to set your alarm at the time you really want to get up and always get up at that time. Your body will slowly prepare itself to wake before the alarm. You'll feel more rested and alert.

*“As a bird that wandereth from her nest, so is a man that wandereth from his place.” – Proverbs 27:8 KJV*