



AROUND THE HOUSE

DECEMBER 2016

NEWS FROM OUR FAMILY TO YOURS



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Inside This Issue:

- Creative Ideas for Holiday Fun at Work
- Tips on Steering Clear of Holiday Cyber Scams
- Which Virtual Assistant Will Best Serve Your Needs?

Plus much, much more!!!

There's No Place Like (Your) Home for the Holidays

It's that time of year; as if you didn't have enough wrapping, cooking, and holiday-card writing to do, guests will soon be descending upon your home, too. To make their stay as pleasant as possible and keep your sanity, keep this quick to-do list ready. It'll help you knock out the preparations in just a few hours.

1. Keep things toasty. To keep your guests comfortable on cold nights, make sure they have ample blankets and an extra quilt on the bed.

2. Provide ample reading light. You don't necessarily need to install new sconces like these beauties, but if the guest room is currently stuck with leftover dim lamps or just one depressing overhead light, borrow a task lamp or two from your office and set them up on the nightstands. If you're lacking nightstands, floor lamps next to the bed will do.

3. Set out a bouquet of fresh flowers. Even a single stem on the nightstand, dresser, or bathroom vanity will do. In the winter, clip a branch from an evergreen for holiday cheer. Extra touches like this will make your guests feel special.

4. Give them know the time of day (or night). Hosts often overlook the need for an alarm clock for guests because they haven't slept in the room themselves. Another item in this room that's a nice touch is a bottle of water. If you want to be super-hostess, leave them the latest copy of *People* mag so that they can keep up with the Kardashinigans.

5. Provide a comfy spot for reading and lounging. If your guests have a nice spot to retreat to in their rooms, they'll be more tempted to hang out there a bit and stay out of your hair when you need a little me time.

6. Give them somewhere to store their things. Living out of a suitcase on the floor is a drag. Empty a drawer for their unmentionables.

7. Make sure they have a few hangers for their clothes. No room in the overstuffed guest closet? Buy some over-the-door hooks and place 5-10 hangers on the hooks. Pull out your best fabric-covered or wooden hangers for your guests.

8. Create a cozy guest room in another space. Many of us do not have the luxury of an extra room just for guests. In that case, clear out the clutter from the home office or other space that will be temporarily housing your loved ones. Pull out the convertible, daybed or futon and make it up for them before they arrive.

9. Supply bathroom products. Toothpaste, an extra razor, a fresh bar of soap at the sink and in the shower, shampoo and conditioner are the basics. Make sure it's not a bunch of yucky, half-used, 10-year-old bottles you swiped from a roadside motel.

10. Don't be stingy with the towels. Leave each guest two towels and a washcloth. A niche like this is a perfect spot to keep them handy. You may want to add a freestanding towel rack if you don't have enough towel bars in the bathroom for all of your guests. You can also mount a towel bar on the back of the guest room door.

Holiday Fun at the Workplace

Gift swaps in the workplace can be a fun way to bond with coworkers. Here are five themes for Christmas gift swaps at work:

1. The ever-popular Secret Santa swap: This exchange pairs employees anonymously and usually has a monetary limit. To make this a little more fun, employees can leave hints as to who they are to encourage the recipients to try and figure out who their Secret Santa was.
2. Holiday Trivia: With a holiday trivia-themed swap, coworkers get to pick a gift from a pile for answering a trivia question correctly. Choosing a gift takes them out of the competition. The moderator chooses last, either taking the last gift from the pile, or by stealing another employee's treasure and replacing it with the final wrapped gift.
3. Gift Guess: In this type of exchange, everyone wraps a random gift in a way that disguises the source and, of course, what the gift is. Each employee holds up their gift as others guess what it is. The coworker who guesses what that mystery gift is gets the gift.
4. Gift Auction: As in many of these themes, competition can bring a little more energy and fun to a gift swap. Each employee brings a gift to display in the office, and every participating employee has a certain amount of points to bid. At auction time, as each gift is presented, coworkers bid on the items, and the top bids take home the prize. When all prizes are claimed and all employees are out of points, the auction is over.
5. Musical Gifts: This is an adult version of musical chairs, with gifts. You can do this with a few gifts at a time, to lengthen the game. Every participating employee brings in a wrapped gift and when it's time to exchange, everyone sits in a circle and passes gifts to the left. When the music stops, the person holding a gift gets it, then leaves the circle and it begins again, with another round of gifts and the remaining employees. This continues until all gifts have been distributed.

Just for Fun



"If you want more presents, tell Santa he looks thinner in person."



"Yes, healthy snacks between meals is a good thing, but..."

1. Hair - A Brain - An Ocean
2. A Bride & Groom - A Boat & Trailer
- A Horse & Buggy
3. A Scale - A Tire - A Checkbook
4. An Aquarium - An Army - A Car
5. A Sports Page - A Movie - A Broadway Musical
6. A Cook - A Toilet - College Football
7. A Doughnut - A Cavity - A Prescription
8. A Coal Miner - A Dentist - A Guitar Player
9. A Male Goat - A Dollar - A Male Rabbit
10. A Doctor - A Mailman - Domino's

COMMONYMS

What's a commonym you ask?

A commonym is group of words that have a common trait in the three words/items listed. For example: A car - A tree - An elephant ... they all have trunks. These will make you think!

Answers on page 8

Where do mistletoe go to become famous?

Answer on page 8

December Is:

- **AIDS Awareness Month**
- **National Drunk and Drugged Driving Prevention Month**
- **National Human Rights Month**
- **National Tie Month**
- **Safe Toys and Gifts Month**
- **Tomato Month**
- **Write a Friend Month**

Holiday Safety

The Holidays are a time to celebrate, spend time with family and friends, and to relax. But, it's also a time when safety should be on your mind because the holiday season brings a unique combination of hazards into the home.

Light Safety

1. Make sure the holiday lights are meant for outdoor use. Lights made for outdoor use are designed to withstand cold and wet conditions. The tag near the plug will specify whether lights are made for indoor or outdoor use.
2. Make sure all cords and lights are intact. Frayed cords and cracked light bulbs are more likely to cause a fire.
3. Never leave lights on overnight. Be sure to turn off the lights before retiring for the night.

Tree Safety

1. If using a real tree, water often. A tree that dries out causes a fire hazard. The National Fire Protection Association (NFPA) reports that one of every 31 reported home fires in the holidays is caused by a Christmas tree fire and results in death.
2. Keep the tree away from heat. Trees, unlike humans and animals, don't need to be kept warm during the winter months. This only dries the tree out and increases the risk of fire. Keep it away from the fireplace, space heaters, even living room lamps.
3. Use lights specifically created for indoor use. Although indoor and outdoor lights can look similar, they are very different. It may be tempting to use them interchangeably, but that is a bad idea.

Candle Safety

1. Use battery operated window or tree candles.
2. If traditional candles are a must, be very careful about placement. Place them on sturdy, non-flammable surfaces, away from decorations, curtains, the Christmas tree and anything else that could catch fire.
3. Do not allow candles to burn when no one is in the room.

Cyber Scams: Bah Humbug

Cyber scams are everywhere, and they only seem to intensify around the holiday season.

Four online holiday scams to watch out for:

1. Fake e-cards and gift cards: Email greeting cards are increasingly popular with the public -- and the bad guys. A fake greeting can carry evil things like identity theft tools, spyware, and adware. Or it can just be obscene. Click on cards from people you know. Never click on attachments. Remember a legitimate e-card won't have spelling errors.

2. Fake charities requesting funds: People feel charitable during the holidays and scammers know it. Make sure a charity solicitation is legitimate by visiting CharityNavigator.org and do a little research before opening up your wallet.

3. Puppy Scams: Not only are they cute and cuddly, but puppies are a great way for scammers to separate consumers from their money. This scam comes in the form of an advertisement, typically from an online message board, and perpetrators often send photographs of dogs, agree on a price, and then begin asking for extra money for shipping, veterinarian fees and other fees. When the buyer goes to the airport to pick up the dog, there's no dog and they're out their money. If you're going to buy a puppy for Christmas, go to a local shelter or local breeder.

4. Fake package delivery failure notices: This is another popular scam that ramps up every holiday season. You get an email that says the Postal Service or a delivery company like FedEx could not make the delivery. The email contains a link that you are supposed to click on to sort the matter out. Don't click on the link.

A variation is a phone call that advises you there is a delivery fee for a package. Not true. Don't give any information.

A study by Trulia.com shows that, in 100 of the largest metropolitan areas, buying a home is cheaper than renting. Averaging all areas, buying a home is nearly 35 percent cheaper than renting.

In some areas, there is a dramatic difference. In New Orleans, buying is 52 percent cheaper than renting.

The study took into consideration down payment, taxes, insurance, and utilities. It assumed that the buyer would live in the home for seven years.

	4		8			5	7	
8	7		1					
		6		7				9
					6		9	4
		7				2		
6	8		9					
1				3		4		
					2		6	5
	6	4			1		3	

To solve a sudoku, you only need logic and patience. No math is required.
Simply make sure that each 3x3 square region has a number 1 through 9 with only one occurrence of each number.

Each column and row of the large grid must have only one instance of the numbers 1 through 9.

The difficulty rating on this puzzle is easy.

WE WELCOME THIS MONTH'S NEW CLIENTS TO THE "PRECISION ROOF CRAFTERS" FAMILY

Here are some of our new clients that became members of the "Precision Roof Crafters' Family" this past month. I'd like to welcome you and wish you all the best!

Tracy S., Houston * Deborah D., Houston * Greg T., Houston * Teresa W., Houston

We are giving recognition to our new clients and our superb friends who are kind enough to refer their neighbors and relatives to us.

Longer Lives Require Better Planning

With Americans living longer than in the past, planning for long-term care has become a priority.

In March, the results of a Nationwide Retirement Insurance survey revealed that many women over the age of 50 are hiding a big retirement worry from those they love: the fear of burdening family if long-term care is needed. But, it doesn't have to be such a worry, or such a secret. With planning ahead of time, people can feel secure in their futures.

Some of the issues families must consider:

1. Housing: Will Dad sell the house and move to a long-term care facility if he can no longer live alone? Does he agree? Has he chosen some places he likes? If he does not agree, what are the options for the family?
2. Health care: If mom stays healthy and active, she may avoid the move to long-term care. It could be helpful now, while she is strong, healthy and of sound mind, to create a living will or health care directive that lays out exactly what they want to happen in the event that they get sick and need long-term care. Getting that information on paper and signed can help to protect her and ensure that wishes will be followed if they cannot make those decisions on their own.
3. Legal decisions and planning: There are several documents that are helpful and important in situations where long-term care is a possibility. The first of these is a living will or health care directive, as outlined above. The second is a health care power of attorney. This designates a specific person to make medical decisions if a person cannot make them.
4. Financial planning: Long-term care can get expensive. To reduce this expense and stress, it is important to consider purchasing a long-term care policy that will pay for costs when that help is needed. Having long-term care insurance can lessen the financial impact.

Choosing a Virtual Home Assistant

The fight to bring music and a virtual assistant to every home intensified in November with the release of the Google Home system; the direct competitor from Amazon, known as the Echo, has been on the market since 2014.

The two systems both try to make your life safer, easier and more entertaining and they do it in different measures. You could say that Echo works harder, but Google Home knows you personally.

Right now, with a two-year head start, Echo can simply do more things with 3,000 installable apps that can order an Uber or a pizza. Google Home meanwhile can access your Android smartphone, Gmail account, calendar and with one command ("Good Morning") can tell you the weather, what you have planned for the day and what's in your email.

Both systems are voice activated and offer music streaming, including their own systems, Spotify, Pandora, and the like. Both systems are compatible with smart home systems, although the Echo works with more programs. For example, Google Home works with Nest; it works with "If This, Then That" (or IFTTT); SmartThings, and Phillips Hue; Amazon Echo works with all of those as well as Ecobee, Wink, Belken WeMo, Insteon, and others.

According to CNET, Google Home offers multi-room audio capability, which Echo currently cannot match. The Google Home system uses the search engine's power to answer questions and decipher context to answer future questions, as part of its voice capabilities.

The Google Home system notifies owners of significant developments with a beep; the Amazon Echo does not do this natively but can provide notifications after integration with other applications, like IFTTT. Owners of the new Google Home system can also customize the color of their system, while Amazon Echo owners cannot.

Forbes notes that the Amazon Echo has seven speakers, while Google Home has two.

Amazon Echo has been on the market since 2014, and as such, has more devices, applications and programs that it works with. Owners can even add items to their Amazon Wish lists and listen to audio books if they desire.

Holiday Brunch Casserole

Ingredients

- 1 pound bacon
- 2 onions, chopped
- 2 cups sliced fresh mushrooms
- 1 tablespoon butter
- 4 cups frozen hash brown potatoes, thawed
- 1 teaspoon salt
- ¼ teaspoon garlic salt
- ½ teaspoon ground black pepper
- 4 eggs
- 1 ½ cups milk
- 1 pinch dried parsley
- 1 cup shredded Cheddar cheese



Directions

1. Place bacon in a large skillet. Cook over medium-high heat until evenly brown. Drain and set aside. Add the mushrooms and onion to the skillet; cook and stir until the onion has softened and turned translucent and the mushrooms are tender, about 5 minutes.
2. Grease a 9x13-inch casserole dish with the tablespoon of butter. Place potatoes in bottom of prepared dish. Sprinkle with salt, garlic salt, and pepper. Top with crumbled bacon, then add the onions and mushrooms.
3. In a mixing bowl, beat the eggs with the milk and parsley. Pour the beaten eggs over the casserole and top with grated cheese. Cover and refrigerate overnight.
4. Preheat oven to 400 degrees F (200 degrees C).
5. Bake in preheated oven for 1 hour or until set.

Source: Allrecipes.com



Peanut Butter-Pretzel Bonbons

- 2 egg whites
- 1/8 teaspoon salt
- 1/8 teaspoon cream of tartar
- ½ cup white sugar
- 2 peppermint candy canes, crushed

1. Preheat oven to 225 degrees F (110 degrees C). Line 2 cookie sheets with foil.
2. In a large glass or metal mixing bowl, beat egg whites, salt, and cream of tartar to soft peaks. Gradually add sugar, continuing to beat until whites form stiff peaks. Drop by spoonfuls 1 inch apart on the prepared cookie sheets. Sprinkle crushed peppermint candy over the cookies.
3. Bake for 1 1/2 hours in preheated oven. Meringues should be completely dry on the inside. Do not allow them to brown. Turn off oven. Keep oven door ajar, and let meringues sit in the oven until completely cool.

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Client of the Month!

Every month we choose a Precision Roof Crafters' Client Of The Month. It's just our way of saying thanks and giving a little recognition to our good friends and clients who help support us!

This month's client of the month is **Sylvia O.**! Congratulations and thank you! **Sylvia O. wins a \$50 Gift Card.**

You can be the client of the month too! Watch for your name here in an upcoming month! You can be the client of the month too!

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For every referral you send our way that becomes a client, you will receive a gift from our company:

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Yes! Feel free to use my name as a reference when you contact the referrals!

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9	4	1	8	6	3	5	7	2
8	7	5	1	2	9	6	4	3
3	2	6	5	7	4	8	1	9
5	1	3	2	8	6	7	9	4
4	9	7	3	1	5	2	8	6
6	8	2	9	4	7	3	5	1
1	5	9	6	3	8	4	2	7
7	3	8	4	9	2	1	6	5
2	6	4	7	5	1	9	3	8

Commonym Answers:

1. they have waves
2. they are hitched
3. they are balanced
4. they have tanks
5. they have scores
6. they have bowls
7. they are filled
8. they have picks
9. they are bucks
10. they deliver

Riddle Answer:

“Holly”wood!

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