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AROUND THE HOUSE

MARCH 2014

NEWS FROM OUR FAMILY TO YOURS

Looking Over Your Four Leaf Clover



Our Services Include

- Windows
- Siding
- Kitchens
- Roof
- Bathrooms
- Entry Doors
- Gutters
- Repairs

Inside This Issue:

- Home Improvement Projects Perfect for Spring
- How to Avoid an Audit
- Are You Eating Your Frozen Vegetables?

Plus much, much more!!!

Is Your Shamrock Real or Bogus?

According to St. Patrick's Day lore, Patrick used the three leaves of a shamrock to explain the Christian holy trinity: the Father, the Son, and the Holy Spirit.

Today, St. Patrick's Day revelers wear a shamrock. *Trifolium dubium*, the wild-growing, three-leaf clover that some botanists consider the official shamrock, is an annual plant that germinates in the spring.

Other three-leaf clovers, such as the perennials *Trifolium repens* and *Medicago lupulina*, are "bogus shamrocks," according to the *Irish Times*.

John Parnell, a botanist at Trinity College Dublin, said that *Trifolium dubium* is the most commonly used shamrock today, which lends credence to the claims of authenticity.

However, he added, the custom of wearing a shamrock dates back to the 17th and 18th centuries, and "I know of no evidence to say what people then used. I think the argument on authenticity is purely academic—basically I'd guess they used anything cloverlike then."

What's more, botanists say there's nothing uniquely Irish about shamrocks. Most clover species can be found throughout Europe.



Fun Facts about Clovers

According to the Guinness Book of World Records, the highest number of leaves found on a clover is 14.

One estimate suggests that there are about 10,000 regular three-leaf clovers for every lucky four-leaf clover.

Legend says that each leaf of the clover means something: the first is for hope, the second for faith, the third for love and the fourth for luck.

Spring Is the Season to Add Comfort, Beauty and Value to Your Home

Whether you're aiming to fill a need, add comfort or just make your home more beautiful, consider one of these projects.

* Create a home office space from an unused bedroom or by partitioning off a room to make a private nook. You can divide it with acrylic block. It's great for you or to use as homework space.

* Add beauty to a living room ceiling. Consider a lightweight urethane medallion around the ceiling light or fan. According to e-How.com, two-piece medallions snap into place in less than five minutes.

* Invest in the lawn. A beautiful lawn creates a great impression both for your pleasure and that of any prospective home buyer.

* Replacing old windows is neither easy nor inexpensive, but can make the whole house look better and reduce heating and cooling costs.

* Expand your living space with a deck or sunroom. A porch can be turned into a sunroom and a deck can be improved with an awning.

* Put new exterior trim on windows and doors. If there is old, rotted wood, you'll enjoy the look of low-maintenance, all-weather PVC millwork. It resists insects, termites and rot.

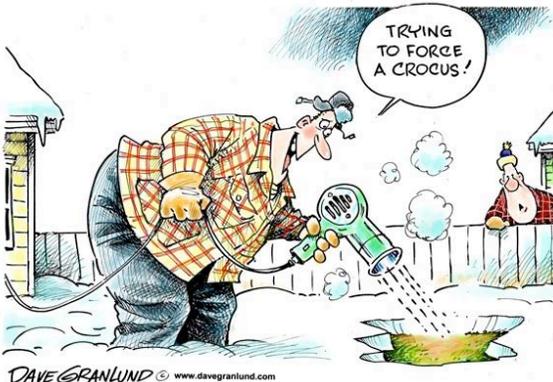
* Upgrade the master bedroom bath with a tub window. Acrylic-block windows provide privacy, light and a focal point for the room.

* Clean mildew from your home's exterior using a garden sprayer and mildewcide. Keep it from coming back with mildew-proof paint.

* Change a bay window to a bow window. It will add extra living space and instant interior and exterior appeal to your home.

It makes the perfect spot for a Christmas tree.

Just for Fun



1. Story - Fortune - Bank
2. Rough - Curtain - Fringe
3. Cows - Goats - Coconuts
4. Charities - Golfers - Computers
5. Flood - Pilot - Flash
6. Grass - Clay - Hard
7. Cross - Head - Tail
8. Taxes - Heat - Dough
9. Finger - House - War
10. Tooth - Ice - Guitar

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!

Answer page 8

A cat had three kittens: January, March and May. What was the mother's name?

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March Is:

- Irish American Month
- National Women's History Month
- National Frozen Food Month
- National Nutrition Month
- National Peanut Month
- Red Cross Month
- National Craft Month

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- *Siding*
- *Windows*
- *Gutters*
- *Roofing*

What's In a Review?

Anyone can post a review about a company's products or services. They don't have to say whether they are a customer of the company.

And reviews count.

According to a survey by Cone Communications, up to 80 percent of buyers say they change their minds based on reviews.

It's no wonder that some businesses have their own people post glowing reviews about products and services. And it's not unusual to have a competitor or a troublemaker blast a company or product with negativity.

But it can be painful when a small business with a small customer base finds a bad review on its website.

Bad reviews do affect sales. But, surprisingly, not always negatively.

According to the Harvard Business Review, good reviews increase business across the board from 32 percent to 52 percent. Bad reviews cause an average drop of 15 percent.

Sometimes.

For unknown or little known businesses or sellers of obscure products, there is some evidence that a bad review is still good enough to let more people know about the company. Sometimes it even helps sales. An example, from the Harvard study by Jonah Berger, is a wine that one reviewer said smelled like stinky socks. Sales spiked.

If you think a review is hurting your company, you can do a few things:

You can contact the reviewer, solve the problem, if necessary, in exchange for a refund.

You can often reply to a reviewer (don't get personal) and state your case.

According to Hongkiat.com, it is actually good to have some negative comments, especially if the negative comments reflect a buyer's personal taste. They didn't like the fabric, for example. Well, others might.

Reviews can be faked, remember.

According to experts at Bottom Line Personal, you can generally trust a product or service review if there are about 50 reviews on the site.

Reviews that constantly give high praise but few details are probably fake. Others that repeat the same phrases are probably fake.

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

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

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Dejesus – Kitchen (Somerville)
Morgante – Widows/Patio Door (Jackson)
Jaeger – Windows (East Millstone)

Bottone – Siding/Gutters (Flemington)
Walls – Windows/Patio Door (Bedminster)
Bansal – Windows (Hillsborough)
Walker – Windows/Patio Doors (Hillsborough)
Brown – Windows (Bridgewater)

Tax Audit? No Thank You! (How to Reduce Your Risk)

The idea of having an Internal Revenue agent spending days at your place examining your books can strike fear into the hearts of most people. Even if the agent finds nothing (and they usually find something to argue about) it's a scary experience.

Tax advisor Frank Degen, writing in Kiplinger's Personal Finance, says, generally, auditors are looking for something on your tax return that's out of the ordinary, such as a big deduction you haven't claimed before.

If you have a business and report a large loss, particularly one that offsets other income. That's one reason the auditor has come. Additionally, they want to see if your business is a hobby in disguise.

Large charitable contributions could be a red flag. Auditors ask if you have a receipt for every contribution. Today you must remember that a receipt is now required for every contribution.

Unreimbursed business expenses are another item that gets flagged. Be sure you convince your tax preparer that they're legitimate before you have to convince the IRS.

You've got to be kidding ...

According to a study by the National Credit Reporting Agency and the Consumer Federal of America, about 29 percent of people have errors on their credit report that are so significant they translate into a 50-point hit on the credit score.

National Poison Prevention Week (March 16 – 22)

More than 2 million poisonings are reported each year to the 61 Poison Control Centers across the country. About 90 percent of poisonings occur in the home. Most non-fatal poisonings occur in children younger than age six, but poisonings are one of the leading causes of death among adults.

If you think someone has been poisoned from a medicine or household chemical, call 1-800-222-1222 for your Poison Control Center. This toll-free number works from anyplace in the United States 24-hours-a-day, 7-days-a-week. Keep the number by your phone. The centers maintain information for the doctor or the public on recommended treatment for the ingestion of household products and medicines. They are familiar with the toxicity of most substances found in the home.

Adult Tips

Poisonings can happen to anyone, so learn how to prevent poisoning, how to recognize and store poisons around your home, and what to do in a poison emergency. Remember, if you suspect someone has been poisoned, call the Poison Control Center right away.

Pay attention to these products:

* Painkillers, sedatives (drugs used to reduce anxiety), hypnotics (sleeping pills), and antipsychotics (drugs used to treat mental illness)

* Household cleaning products, never mix household cleaners or chemical products together.

Be aware of common poisons to avoid. And keep all of your medicines out of sight.

Children

The best poison prevention plan is: First, keep medicines, vitamins and chemicals away from small children.

Second, keep an eye on small kids. The fact is, they are likely to put almost anything that fits into their mouths.

Children act fast. So do poisons.

Irish Style Lamb Stew

Ingredients

- 1 pound cubed lamb meat
- 1 large onion, halved and sliced
- 1 pound baking potatoes, peeled and sliced
- 1 carrot, peeled and sliced
- 1 large stalk celery, sliced
- 2 tablespoons chopped fresh parsley
- 2 cups beef stock
- Salt and pepper to taste
- 1 tablespoon chopped fresh parsley for garnish



Directions

- Preheat the oven to 325 degrees F (165 degrees C).
- Layer the lamb meat, onion, potatoes, carrot and celery in an oven proof pot or casserole dish. Season each layer with parsley, salt and pepper as you go. Pour in the beef stock and cover tightly.
- Bake for 1 1/2 to 2 hours in the preheated oven, until vegetables and meat are very tender. Divide into bowls and garnish with additional parsley.

Recipe Source: Allrecipes.com

Peanut Medley

- 1 cup white chocolate chips
- 1 cup candy-coated peanut butter pieces (such as Reeses Pieces)
- 2 cups crispy rice cereal
- 2 cups salted peanuts

- Line a baking sheet with waxed paper.
- Place white chocolate chips and candy-coated peanut butter pieces in a microwave-safe bowl; heat in microwave, stirring after each 30 second interval until completely melted, 1 to 2 minutes. Stir in rice cereal and peanuts. Pour mixture onto prepared baking sheet. Cool completely until hardened; break into pieces.

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

Commonym Answer:

1. tellers
2. parts of a golf course
3. they produce milk
4. they have drives
5. lights
6. tennis court surfaces
7. winds
8. they all rise
9. paints
10. picks

Riddle Answer:

What. "What" was the mother's name.

Tips and savings for your home inside. This newsletter is brought to you by James Markey, owner of Markey Home Remodeling for over 30 years.
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*How about a refrigerator with
a TV and DVD player built
into the door? It's available.*