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Home News of the Triangle

News To Help You Save Time And Money

Winter 2018

10 Minute Projects to Declutter Your Home

- **Entryway Drop Spot:** Put pocket change in a cup or other decorative container, recycle junk mail, hang up coats, and put away any items that have migrated here from other areas of the house. If there are library books or other items waiting to be returned, take a moment to carry them out to the car so that they're ready and waiting—and not cluttering up your entryway!
- **Food Storage Containers:** Open up that messy Tupperware drawer and pull everything out. Match up the containers with their lids and recycle mate-less pieces. Stack everything neatly and return it to the drawer or cabinet. Give away or recycle any containers that won't comfortably fit in the space available.
- **Sock Drawer:** Open up that dreaded sock drawer and pull out all the socks and tights. Match up pairs and inspect each set for holes or worn areas. Fold the sets that have mates and are in good condition, and return them to the drawer. Bring the mate-less socks to the laundry area and check for mates before giving up on them for good. When you're done, collect all mate-less socks, as well as any with holes, in a bag, and bring them to your local clothing recycling donation bin. Search "textile recycling drop-off" and your city to find a bin near you.
- **Pen Cup:** First, scoop up all the pens and pencils that are not actually in the pen cup, but instead are strewn about the kitchen counter, dining table, and any other flat surface in the area. Once you've gathered them all in one place, grab a scratch sheet of paper and start testing. Toss out pens that are out of ink and put your favorites back in the cup. If you still have more pens than you know what to do with, set them aside to donate. Many school districts and some nonprofit organizations are happy to receive donations of office supplies in good condition.



Win a Prize!

Check out the Quiz Question on Page 2

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You've got to get up every morning with determination if you're going to go to bed with satisfaction. —George Lorimer

Easy Breakfast that Makes Everyone Happy

Want to make your family Oh-So-Happy in the morning? Make them pancakes! Don't worry, you don't have to stand there flipping flapjacks while watching the clock. Instead you can make pancakes into muffins.

They're a perfect breakfast food...they taste like pancakes, but are done all at the same time, they're portable, and no waiting, flipping, or pouring!

- There's just one secret: You take your favorite usual pancake mix and add an extra egg or two, depending on how fluffy you want them. That's it!
- Spray a muffin pan with nonstick spray, or use liners. Fill 2/3 to the top. Just before putting them in the oven, add extras: chocolate chips, dried fruit, chopped nuts, cinnamon and sugar, or fresh fruit mixed into the batter (you'll want to test this).
- Pop them in the oven at 350 and they're ready in 15 minutes. Test them with a toothpick. Serve as-is, or with butter and syrup.

Winter Quiz Question

Question: *How many sides does every snowflake have?*

The first person to call in with the right answer will win a prize!

Call Amy at 919-469-6539 with your quiz answer.

NOTE: It usually takes 2 days for the winning answer—don't hesitate to try!

Congrats to our fall quiz winner, LA May!

Password Tips That Work Today

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Dan Campbell
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In 2003 Bill Burr, a manager at the US National Institute of Standards and Technology (NIST), wrote an 8-page password guide that advised people to invent awkward words full of characters, capitals and numbers—and to change them often.

That became the go-to guide for agencies, universities and large companies around the world looking for password-setting rules to follow.

The problem is, according to Mr. Burr, now 72, the advice of the past decade and a half is incorrect.

In June this year, NIST Special Publication 800-63 was re-written with new password guidelines. Drop the

password expiration advice and the requirement for special characters. Use long, easy-to-remember phrases over crazy characters, and change passwords only if there is a sign of compromise.

Academics who have studied passwords say using a series of four words can be harder for hackers to crack than a shorter mix of strange characters—since having a large number of letters makes things harder than a smaller number of letters, characters, and numbers.

In a popular piece, cartoonist Randall Munroe calculated it would take 550 years to crack the password “correct horse battery staple,” all written as one word. The password Tr0ub4dor&3— a typical example of password using Mr. Burr’s old rules—could be cracked in three days, according to Munroe’s calculations, which have been verified by computer specialists.

Has all this cold weather caused your heating system to struggle?

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919-796-3684**

~ Adapted from *The Wall Street Journal*

Fun Facts About Groundhog Day

Every year since 1886, crowds as large as 40,000 have gathered in Punxsuawney, Pennsylvania on the morning of February 2nd to watch Phil the groundhog emerge from a burrow on Gobbler’s Knob. According to folklore, if he sees his shadow, then winter will endure for six more weeks. If it is cloudy, then spring will come early that year. Here are some fun facts you may not have known about Groundhog Day:

- Punxsuawney Phil, the legendary groundhog who makes the prediction, has reportedly been operating for over 130 years, with this year’s upcoming Groundhog Day marking his supposed 131st appearance. This is despite the lifespan of a groundhog usually being less than six years.
- Phil offers his prediction in ‘groundhogese,’ a language only understood by the current president of the Groundhog Club’s Inner Circle, who helpfully translates the proclamation.



- The Stormfax Weather Almanac website claims that Phil’s forecasts have only been correct about 39% of the time, contradicting the figure stated on the Groundhog Club website, which is 100%.
- Groundhogs are also referred to as ‘woodchucks,’ making them the stars of the tongue twister “how much wood would a woodchuck chuck if a woodchuck could chuck wood?”
- Groundhog Day is celebrated beyond Pennsylvania. In Alaska, the festival is observed as ‘Marmot Day,’ due to the state’s unfortunate lack of groundhogs.

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Welcome 2018!

- Spring is expected to see a boom of the real estate market where desirable listings are likely to receive multiple offers and sell fast!
- With new developments in the Triangle continuing to grow, buyers of new construction need a buyer's agent now more than ever.

**Whether you're buying or selling —
call AMY for your SHAIR of the market!**



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919-469-6539

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