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December • 2025

Issue 10
49th Year

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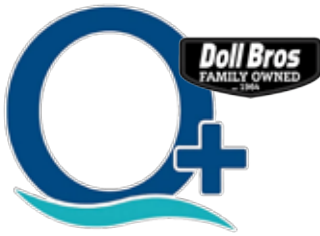
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SCAM



ALERT

www.usa.gov/scams-and-fraud

Identity Theft

Warning signs of identity theft

- Bills for items you did not buy
- Debt collection calls for accounts you did not open
- Information on your credit report for accounts you did not open
- Denials of loan applications
- Mail stops coming to, or is missing from, your mailbox

How to report identity theft

- To report identity theft, contact:
 - The **Federal Trade Commission (FTC)** online at IdentityTheft.gov or call 1-877-438-4338
 - The three **major credit reporting agencies**. Ask them to place fraud alerts and a credit freeze on your accounts.
 - The **fraud department at your credit card issuers**, bank, and other places where you have accounts

How to protect yourself from identity theft

- **Do not answer phone calls**, texts, social media messages, or email from numbers or **people you do not know**.
- Do not share personal information like your bank account number, Social Security number, or date of birth.
- **Collect your mail every day** and place a hold on your mail when you will be on vacation or away from your home.
- Review credit card and bank account statements. Watch for and report unauthorized or suspicious transactions.
- **Understand how ATM skimming works** and how to protect yourself
 - Learn when it is safe to use a public Wi-Fi network
 - Store personal information, including your Social Security card, in a safe place. **Do not carry it in your wallet.**

Imposter Scam

The top types of imposter scams:

An imposter scammer may call, text, or email to convince you they are **someone in authority**. They may even use caller ID to make it look like they are calling from an official government or business' number. To commit identity theft, they try to get you to send money or a gift card or share personal information.

- **Government** imposter scams - Unless you contact them first, government agencies typically initiate communication with you by letter. Unexpected contact or demands through any other method may be a scam.
- **IRS** imposter scams - scammers pretend you owe the IRS money for taxes and may threaten legal action
- **Social Security** imposter scams - scammers claim there is a problem with your Social Security account or promise to increase your benefits
- **Charity** scams - scammers pretend to be from a real or fake charity and try to get you to contribute
- **Grandparent** scams - scammers pretend to be a grandchild or other relative who needs emergency financial help
- **Tech support** scams - scammers tell you your computer's security is at risk and try to remotely access your device and steal personal information or ask for payment
- Scammers may also pretend to be from your **bank or a company you do business with**. You might be told you owe money or there is a problem with your account.

ReportFraud.ftc.gov

Report Imposter Scams Online to the Federal Trade Commission





Court Whist October 2025

	Winners	Points	Place
10/4/2025	Carole Wallet	199	1st
	Janice Holtsberry	193	2nd
10/11/2025	Deb Slack	219	1st
	Mary Jo Ward	199	2nd
10/18/2025	Carole Wallet	201	1st
	Deb Slack	195	2nd
10/25/2025	Lori Kohls	193	1st
	Janice Holtsberry	192	2nd
	Deb Slack	190	3rd

Court Whist plays Saturday in the clubhouse at 6:00 PM. Cost to play \$1.00.

Wednesday Cribbage

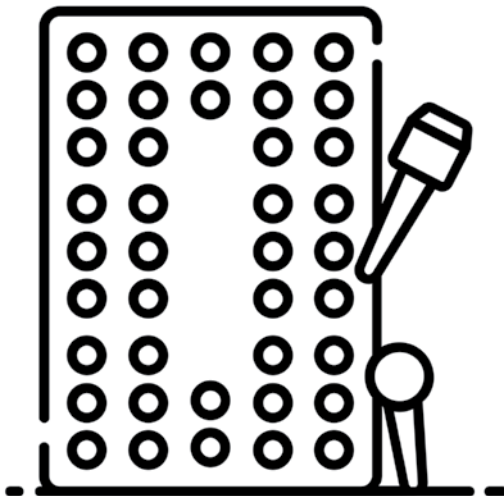
10/1/2025
Lois Bruzek 6 215
Bill Westerman 6 206
Jim Jewell 4 405

10/8/2025
Jim Jewell 5 348
Lois Bruzek 5 297
Deb Slack 4 439

10/15/2025
Marie Pelletier 5 317
Deb Slack 5 314
Jim Jewell 5 286

10/22/2025
Simone Dawson 6 216
Joe Dawson 5 316
Deb Slack 5 268

10/29/2025
Lois Bruzek 5 322
Joe Dawson 5 310
Glenn Gifford 5 308



Fee to Play \$5.00
Starts at 5:30 PM @ CH



December Birthdays

1 Denise Foster	14 Lois Bruzek
2 Patricia Distasio	14 Susan Delorme
2 Deborah Ziegler	14 John May
4 Chuck Halker	15 Irene Krystallidis
4 Sam Souliere	16 Noella Gallant
5 Charlie Mason	16 Jane Jensen
5 Garrett Murray	18 Scott Small
6 Jake Bubelis	18 Lou Vedrode
6 David Proulx	19 Patricia Fleck
6 Alice Summers	19 Fred Large
7 Brenda Gorseth	19 Gerald Stone
7 Michael Surano	19 Jim Waterman
7 Norma Surano	20 Billy Malbasa
8 David Costello	20 Thersa Stephens
8 Lou Lowery	21 Howard Chesley
8 Bryan Marshman	21 Ann Perry
9 Dorraine Beleno	23 Roberta Forseen
9 Linda Hirst	24 Joan Yarro
9 Cheryl Kuhn	25 Carol Szumita
11 Stephen Groh	26 Ron Gurney
11 Mike Jariz	26 Karen Sullivan
11 Darcia Lange	27 Bob Kohls
11 Ed Muck	27 Rosemary Papadopoulos
12 David Ellis	28 Arlene MacPhee
12 Sue Berton Malenka	30 Theresa Price
13 John Cushing	31 Laura McKenna
13 Roger Quandt	31 Bill Mueller
14 Ron Bennett	



December Anniversaries

	Brien & Carol Swartout	1969	28 Shawn & Alrene MacPhee	2015
1	Roger & Annette Thibault	1962	28 Wayne & Debbie Stott	
3	Slugger & Angela Labbe	1994	31 Bruce & Tammy Ferriero	2021
7	Harold & Mary Parr	1973	31 Nick & Sandra Maniskas	
9	Gary & Ruth Sproule	1977	31 Mike & Lois Wilson	1977
11	John & Tina Provost	2010		
18	John & Sherry London	2004		
20	Bob & Linda Franklin	1988		
20	David & Linda Hirst			
27	Murray & Arlene MacNeill	1980		
27	Barrie & Kelly Menser	1978		



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The Mysterious Gift Under the Tree

One Christmas Eve, a family gathered around the tree, finishing up the last of the cocoa and carols. As the children were sent off to bed, the parents noticed a small, unmarked gift tucked deep behind the tree. Neither of them had placed it there. Curious, they opened it to find a handmade ornament with the words: “Believe in the magic.” Inside was a note from their late grandmother, written years before she passed, thanking them for keeping the family traditions alive. She had hidden the gift during her last Christmas with them, hoping it would be found when they needed it most. That year, the family had been struggling with grief, and the unexpected message brought comfort and tears—reminding them that love endures, even after loss.



The Christmas Truce of 1914

During World War I, on Christmas Eve 1914, something extraordinary happened. British and German soldiers, entrenched in bitter combat, spontaneously ceased fire. Soldiers from both sides emerged from their trenches, met in no man's land, and exchanged greetings, food, and even played a game of football. They sang carols together and buried their dead with dignity. Though brief, the truce was a powerful reminder of shared humanity—even in the darkest of times. It remains one of the most poignant examples of peace breaking through conflict, if only for a day.



The Turkey That Got Away

One Christmas, a family decided to go all out and buy a fresh turkey from a local farm instead of the usual frozen one. The dad was in charge of picking it up, and he proudly brought home a massive bird. But when it came time to cook it, the oven door wouldn't close—it was too big.



So, they tried trimming it. Still too big. Then they tried rotating it. Still no luck. Eventually, they gave up and decided to cook it on the grill outside. But halfway through, it started raining—hard. The dad, determined not to let Christmas dinner be ruined, stood outside with an umbrella, flipping the turkey like a warrior defending his feast.

Hours later, they finally brought it in, only to discover... it was still raw in the middle. They ended up eating side dishes and pie for dinner, and the turkey became the next day's project. The family now jokes that the turkey was so big it needed its own zip code—and they've gone back to frozen ever since.

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Writer's block? Vanquish it with these tips

Writers of all kinds sometimes fall prey to blocks. Whether you're writing a novel, a poem, or a business article, these tips can help you get past those blocks and get back on track:

- **Start early.** You have more willpower and energy in the morning, so use it to your advantage. You'll also have fewer interruptions and distractions while other people are just pouring their first cup of coffee, and you'll be able to put off less-important tasks for when you have the time to devote to them.
- **Select a goal.** Challenge yourself to write 5,000 words, work for two hours straight, finish a chapter, or write half your article before you move on. This gives you something concrete to strive for.
- **Warm up.** Spend a few minutes describing something around you, recreating a conversation from yesterday, writing down a dream, or just recording random thought as they come into your head. The practice of writing something—anything—will help get your mind in gear.
- **Leave it unfinished.** Some writers make a habit of stopping in the middle of a sentence so they have a natural starting point the next morning. If that doesn't work for you, try leaving what you're working on incomplete once you've reached your daily goal. You'll find it easier to continue when you have a natural jumping-off point.
- **Don't push yourself.** Sometimes the only thing to do is step away from the keyboard for a while. Let your mind wander without getting lost in another subject. After a few minutes (or hours) you'll be able to return with a fresh perspective.



Quotes

To invent, you need a good imagination and a pile of junk.
—Thomas Edison

Our imagination is stretched to the utmost, not, as in fiction, to imagine things which are not really there, but just to comprehend those things which are there.

—Richard Feynman

Do not be embarrassed by your failures. Learn from them, and start again.

—Richard Branson

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

—George Lorimer



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Ask the right questions

Asking questions is the key to creative thinking, but you've got to ask the right kinds of questions. Here are some ideas for generating questions that get results:



- Write variations of the same question. Without overthinking it or second-guessing yourself, quickly write at least 10 variations of the question you're exploring. "How can we reduce expenses?" could become, "How can I persuade people to reduce expenses?" and "Where can we easily cut expenses?" and so forth. Each iteration will produce a new and different idea.
- Analyze everything. Don't go through life on autopilot. Take a hard look at little annoyances, for example, and try to find ways to eliminate them—"How can I stop getting interrupted for nonessential problems?" for example. Examine the tools that help you every day and look for ways to maximize them: "How can I get more out of all the applications on my computer?"
- Question your first solution. Maybe you've got an answer to your question, but don't stop there. Reinterpret it. For example, look for ways your solution could be improved, misused, or used to solve other problems. This helps you look past your assumptions and consider new perspectives.

Marvin Gaye's serendipitous accidents

One of singer/songwriter Marvin Gaye's most successful albums was *What's Going On*. Gaye worked hard on the album, but some of its most original moments came from mistakes. As an article of the LifeHacker website relates:

"Interestingly, two of the most singular aspects of *What's Going On* that were extended to the album began as errors. The opening alto-sax solo by Eli Fontaine actually was a warm-up phrase for an overdub that Gaye decided to keep. And Gaye's harmonized duets with himself occurred when Ken Sands, the engineer, accidentally played back two of his vocal versions on one mono tape."

Accidents can sometime produce surprising results.





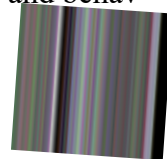
MONTHLY

Bingo's Birthday Month. With origins that date back to a 1530s Italian lottery game, different versions of Bingo were played in Germany and France for hundreds of years before it reached North America in 1929. The game has been popular in the United States since then, used by churches to raise funds and by casinos that promise huge jackpots to a lucky few.

Root Vegetables Month. Looking for something healthy to offset the sugary treats of the holiday season? Consider a carrot soup seasoned with turmeric and ginger; add shaved beets and radishes to a salad; or try a side of mashed parsnips or baked sweet potatoes with your next meal.

National Eggnog Month. Spike it with bourbon, whiskey, or rum; add a splash to your coffee; or enjoy a glass with a sprinkle of cinnamon on top. For those who love the rich, creamy beverage known as eggnog, this is the month to indulge.

Seasonal Affective Disorder Month. About 20 percent of the population suffers from a mild form of depression during the cold-weather months. Most experience fatigue, irritability, a lack of concentration and other symptoms in the winter months. Check in with your health care provider if you or someone you know experiences changes in moods and behaviors this winter.



WEEKLY

Clerc-Gallaudet Week, Dec. 3-9. Laurent Clerc (1785–1869) and Thomas Hopkins Gallaudet (1787–1851) worked to establish the foundation for American Sign Language, as well as the first school for the deaf in this country. Clerc-Gallaudet Week was established by the D.C. Public Library in 1974 to honor the December birthdays of these men and to raise awareness of issues in the deaf and library communities.

Christmas Bird Count, Dec. 14–Jan. 5. For more than 100 years, the Audubon Society has relied on volunteers birders throughout the Western Hemisphere to conduct an avian census. Go to <http://www.audubon.org/join-christmas-bird-count> to find out the details about CBC activities in your area.

National Gluten-Free Baking Week, Dec. 17-23. The treats and feasts of the season can be especially challenging for those with digestive issues or an intolerance for the complex protein found in barley, wheat, and rye. Consider adding a few gluten-free alternatives to your holiday spread this year.

Hanukkah, evening of Dec. 12–evening of Dec. 20. This eight day “Festival of Lights” is commemorated by the nightly lighting of a menorah, the recitation of special prayers, and feasting in the Jewish community.

SCAM



ALERT



Family Scams

Scammers are good at **pretending to be someone that they're not**. They try to trick you into thinking **a loved one is in trouble**.

Once the scammer makes you think they're your grandson and in trouble, they pressure you to quickly send them money. **But it's all a scam.** Your family member was never in trouble.

- The scammer will say it's **urgent** and that you're the only one who can help.
- The scammer might tell you it's **important to keep it secret**. They don't want you talking to other family members and friends and realizing it's a scam.
- The scammers will **play with your emotions**. They're counting on you to act quickly to help your family or friend. And they're counting on you to pay without stopping to check out whether there's really an emergency. If you get a call like this, you can be sure this is a scam.

Slow down. Verify.



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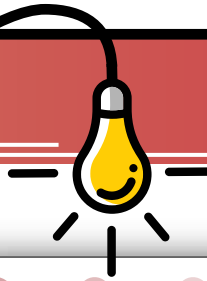
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Sunday	Monday	Tuesday
	<div>1</div> 9:30a Bowling 12:30p Shanghai 4:30p Men's Poker 5:30p Samba 6:30p Pepper	10:00a Live 1:00p Live 6:00p Run 6:00p Gar
<div>7</div> 10:30a Reach Church Service 6:30p Bid Euchre 6:30p Open Door Church Pearl Harbor Remembrance Day	<div>8</div> 9:30a Bowling 12:30p Shanghai 4:30p Men's Poker 5:00p Golden Agers 5:30p Samba 6:30p Pepper	9:00a Dance 10:00a Live 1:00p Live 6:00p Run 7:00p Ho
<div>14</div> 10:30a Reach Church Service 6:30p Bid Euchre 6:30p Open Door Church	<div>15</div> 8:00a Pancake Bf 8:00a Dance Pre 9:30a Bowling 12:30p Shanghai 4:30p Men's Poker 5:30p Samba 6:30p Pepper	10:00a Live 1:00p Live 6:00p Run
<div>21</div> 10:30a Reach Church Service 6:30p Bid Euchre 6:30p Open Door Church First Day of Winter	<div>22</div> 9:30a Bowling 12:30p Shanghai 4:30p Men's Poker 5:30p Samba 6:30p Pepper	10:00a Live 1:00p Live 6:00p Run
<div>28</div> 10:30a Reach Church Service 6:30p Bid Euchre 6:30p Open Door Church	<div>29</div> 9:30a Bowling 12:30p Shanghai 4:30p Men's Poker 5:30p Samba 6:30p Pepper	10:00a Live 1:00p Live 6:00p Run

Ranch Mobile

Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday	Saturday
2 ne Dancing e Music mmikub me Night	3 8:00a Koffee Klatch 10:00a Ukulele 11:30a Nickel Bingo 5:30p Cribbage 6:00p Euchre	4 9:00a Hobby Club 10:00a Golf 10:00a Bible Study 12:30p Dominos 3:00p Happy Hour 4:30p Men's Poker 6:00p I Got It!	5 3:00p Corn Hole	6 8:00a Park Yard Sale 9:00a Miniputt 7:00p Court Whist
9 nce Club Mtg ne Dancing e Music mmikub oliday Dance	10 8:00a Koffee Klatch 10:00a Golf Mtg 10:00a Ukulele 11:30a Nickel Bingo 5:30p Cribbage 6:00p Euchre	11 9:00a Hobby Club 10:00a Golf 10:00a Bible Study 12:30p Dominos 3:00p Happy Hour 4:30p Men's Poker 6:00p I Got It!	12 3:00p Corn Hole	13 9:00a Miniputt 6:00p Court Whist
16 ne Dancing e Music mmikub	17 8:00a Koffee Klatch 10:00a Annual Mtg & Elec 10:00a Ukulele 11:30a Nickel Bingo 5:30p Cribbage 6:00p Euchre	18 9:00a Hobby Club 10:00a Golf 10:00a Bible Study 12:30p Dominos 3:00p Happy Hour 4:30p Men's Poker 6:00p I Got It!	19 1:00p Good Neighbor Food Give Away 3:00p Corn Hole	20 9:00a Miniputt 7:00p Court Whist
23 ne Dancing e Music mmikub	24 8:00a Koffee Klatch 10:00a Ukulele 11:30a Nickel Bingo 5:30p Cribbage 6:00p Euchre Christmas Eve	25 Office Closed 9:00a Hobby Club 10:00a Golf 10:00a Bible Study 12:30p Dominos 1:00p Park Dinner 3:00p Happy Hour 4:30p Men's Poker 6:00p I Got it! Christmas	26 3:00p Corn Hole	27 9:00a Miniputt 6:00p Court Whist
30 ne Dancing e Music mmikub	31 8:00a Koffee Klatch 10:00a Ukulele 11:30a Nickel Bingo 5:30p Cribbage 6:00p Euchre New Year's Eve	9:00a Walkercise Monday - Friday		

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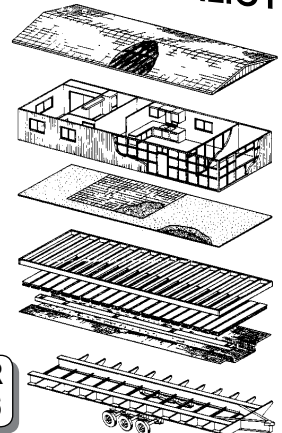
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Major Global Holidays

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St. Nicholas Day – Dec 6 (Europe)
Bodhi Day – Dec 8 (Buddhist communities)
Human Rights Day – Dec 10
Feast Day of Our Lady of Guadalupe – Dec 12 (Mexico)
Santa Lucia Day – Dec 13 (Scandinavia)
Winter Solstice / Yule – Dec 21
Hanukkah – Dec 22–30 (Jewish communities)
Christmas Eve – Dec 24
Christmas Day – Dec 25
Boxing Day – Dec 26 (UK, Canada, Australia)
Kwanzaa – Dec 26–Jan 1 (African-American heritage)
New Year's Eve – Dec 31. [jocalendars.com]



U.S. Observances & Fun Days

Giving Tuesday – Dec 2
National Cookie Day – Dec 4
Day of the Ninja – Dec 5
National Brownie Day – Dec 8
National Cocoa Day – Dec 13
National Ugly Sweater Day – Dec 20
Festivus – Dec 23 (pop culture holiday from Seinfeld). [today.com]



Week-Long & Month-Long Observances

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National Giving Month
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Seasonal celebrations like gingerbread, peppermint bark, and fruitcake days are scattered throughout the month.





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Raising Strong Grandkids

Help your grandchildren to become more resilient by focusing on these three areas:

1. Negative thoughts. If you were ever the last one picked for a team in P.E. or someone whose accomplishments were compared against those of an older sibling or a prodigy neighbor kid, then you'll know firsthand the doubt, dread and lack of confidence that can overtake a young mind. Don't allow your children to fall victim to a spirit of defeat.
2. Encourage them to share their thoughts. Then help them improve their outlook by exploring strategies and solutions that will empower their thinking and inspire a willingness to strive for more.
3. Feelings. Sometimes as parents we're too quick to step in and say, "Don't worry. Everything will work out." Yet this approach doesn't allow your children to recognize and process how they are feeling, nor understand how their feelings can influence behavior.
5. Give youngsters a judgment-free forum for exploring their emotions, and offer insight and constructive feedback for dealing with those emotions.
6. Fears. Confronting adversity helps to develop problem-solving skills and gives us the confidence to make better choices.
7. Don't allow children to give up when times are tough. Encourage kids to face their fears with positive actions and perseverance. They may not always come out on top, but they will be able to hold their heads up knowing they did their best.



Quotes

When trouble comes, it's your family that supports you.
—Guy Lafleur

Family means no one gets left behind or forgotten.
—David Ogden Stiers





Don't make these retirement saving mistakes

Too many people wait too long to start thinking about how much money they will need to finance their retirement. Retirement seems far away when you're in your 20s and 30s, and it's easy to think you'll have plenty of time to worry about saving later. That's one mistake. Here are three more, offered by Chris Heerlein, partner at REAP Financial and author of *Money Won't Buy Happiness—But Time to Find It*:

- **Not participating in a 401(k).** Many employers don't offer a 401(k) or similar retirement plan, but if yours does, you should participate. This savings opportunity that can reap great rewards, especially if you start when you're in your 20s and faithfully contribute for decades.
- **Saving only in a 401(k).** Although contributing to a 401(k) is great, that shouldn't be your only vehicle for saving. If you are a younger saver, you are putting all your money into a bucket you can't touch for 20 or 30 years. When you do withdraw it in retirement, you'll pay taxes because the taxes were deferred. Put some balance in your portfolio with a Roth IRA, a Roth 401(k) or a health savings account. Withdrawing from those Roth funds in retirement won't result in taxes because the taxes were already paid when the money went in the account. HSA money isn't taxed if you withdraw it for qualified medical expenses. After you turn 65, you can withdraw it for any purpose, though you will pay taxes on that withdrawal if not used for a qualified expense.
- **Failing to embrace risk.** When the 2008 financial crisis hit, plenty of investors lost a substantial portion of their savings. The memory of what happened to them—or to their parents—is still having repercussions. Some people younger than 50 are too conservative with their investments, so their money doesn't grow as it could if they took more risks. If you're between the ages of 20 and 50, though, don't panic. Time is on your side. If you suffer a loss, you more than likely have plenty of years to recover before you retire.



Stretch your bonus dollars

Even a small year-end bonus can go a long way in helping you manage debt. Here are some ways you can make good use of an extra \$50:

- **Cut your credit card debt.** If you put \$50 toward a \$2,000 credit card balance, you'll cut your payback time by four months if you usually pay a minimum of \$40 month. Using the \$50 toward the debt can save you \$103 in interest (at 16 percent).
- **Buy financial management software.** Use the \$50 to help you manage your money better by buying financial management software like Quicken. It'll help you keep better control of your checking account. The programs also help you to identify other areas where you can save money.
- **Pump up your relationships.** Buy something nice for your spouse, partner, friends, family or co-workers. Invest in something by thinking that there's more to life than money.



13 ★ 9

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When to treat burns at home, and when to head to the ER

Burns can be painful, but you don't necessarily have to go to a hospital to treat them. From the NBC News website, use this checklist to determine whether you (and how) you can treat a burn at home:

When to treat at home:

- You feel pain from the burn.
- The skin turns white when you press it, then turns red again when you stop.
- The burn isn't on your hands, joints, or face.

How to treat at home:

- Remove any hot or burning material from the affected area.
- Wash the area with soap and water.
- Apply an antibiotic ointment to the burn site.
- Wrap the burn site with gauze and secure it with adhesive tape



When to go the hospital:

- You feel little or no pain.
- The burn is deep and your skin is peeling.
- The burn covers your hand, joints, or face.

Check with your doctor when:

- The pain increases or gets more frequent.
- You see signs of infection on the burn site.
- You have any other symptoms.

Rehab after heart attack is often ignored

Approximately 790,000 adults in the United States suffer heart attacks every year, and about 210,000 of them are repeat attacks.

Cardiac rehabilitation is crucial to preventing a second heart attack, but the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention report that only one in three survivors opt to participate in it.

Cardiac rehab includes exercise counseling, lifestyle advice for a healthy heart, and stress-reduction tips, all of which can reduce those chances of a second (or third or fourth) attack. Cardiac rehab also means extended medical supervision after discharge from the hospital, according to the WebMD website.

If you or someone you know has suffered and survived a heart attack, keep in mind that rehab might prolong life and prevent a new crisis.



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The Great Eggnog Explosion

At an office Christmas party, one enthusiastic employee decided to make homemade eggnog to impress everyone. He brought in a giant glass punch bowl filled to the brim, complete with nutmeg sprinkles and cinnamon sticks. It looked amazing.



But what he didn't realize was that the bowl was sitting directly under the heat vent.

As the party went on, the eggnog slowly warmed up... and fermented. By the time people started ladling it into cups, it had developed a surprisingly fizzy texture. One brave soul took a sip and immediately spat it out, yelling, "It's ALIVE!"

Moments later, the bowl cracked from the heat, sending a tidal wave of eggnog across the table, soaking cookies, gifts, and one unfortunate intern's laptop. The smell lingered for days, and the punch bowl was never seen again.

The moral? Never mix dairy, heat, and ambition.

The Cat vs. The Christmas Tree

One family had a beautiful, towering Christmas tree decorated with delicate glass ornaments, shimmering tinsel, and twinkling lights. It was their pride and joy—until their cat, Mittens, decided it was her personal jungle gym.



On the first night, they heard a crash and found Mittens halfway up the tree, dangling from a branch like a furry ornament. She had knocked off several baubles and was batting at the star like it owed her money.

They tried everything: citrus spray, aluminum foil around the base, even a motion-activated air puffer. Nothing worked. Every night, Mittens launched a stealth attack. One morning, they woke up to find the entire tree tipped over, ornaments scattered like confetti, and Mittens sitting triumphantly on top of the fallen pine like she'd conquered Everest.

From then on, they decorated only the top half of the tree and left the bottom bare—except for a sign that read: "Mittens' Zone – Enter at Your Own Risk."

*"Santa Claus has the right idea. Visit people once a year."
— Victor Borge*



Fire ants escape Houston flood with their own 'rafts'

The flooding of Houston in the wake of Hurricane Harvey had many people scrambling to escape in boats, canoes, and makeshift rafts. Humans weren't the only one searching for dry land, though. Hordes of fire ants made their way to safety on rafts composed of their own bodies.

As described on the Live Science website, fire ants rise from the ground when faced with flooding and hook themselves together, using their ability to trap air pockets in the bodies to float away. The air inside their bodies also provides oxygen for those on the bottom.



Clumps of up to 8,000 fire ants could be seen floating in the water. Rescuers were advised to avoid touching the rafts with their oars or paddles to prevent the ants from climbing up into their craft. Spraying them with soapy water is the best defense.

Early humans didn't intermix as previously thought

Anthropologists have long speculated that Neanderthals and early modern humans mingled together some 32,000 years ago, with Vindija Cave in Croatia a prime spot for mating. Now, according to the American Association for the Advancement of Science's website, they're not so sure.

Earlier carbon dating procedures seem to show that Neanderthals and modern human co-existed in an around the cave. Recently, however, a more detailed form of dating suggests that Neanderthals lived in the area and used the cave more than 40,000 years ago—8,000 years before early modern humans began living in the region.

Scientists developing energy-producing clothes

Someday soon you may be able to charge your smartphone or Fitbit with a simple walk around the block, according to the NBC News website. Scientists at the University of Texas at Dallas are working to develop fabrics using carbon nanotubes, which are hollow and 10,000 times thinner than a human hair. When twisted into coils and stretched, they can produce a minuscule electrical current. One recent test of a tight shirt using the special yarn produced 16 millivolts every time the person wearing it inhaled—not enough to charge a smartphone, but enough, perhaps, to send health information to another location.

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FURNITURE, good clean, pre-owned. Top dollar paid. Charles, 727-657-7021	CRAFT SHOW, BAKE SALE, and RAFFLE. Saturday December 6, 9-1. Southwind MHC, 795 County Road 1, Palm Harbor. 440.227.5906	<p><i>Jan & Feb Events</i> </p> <p>Biggest Church Wide Garage Sale In The Area! Northwood Presbyterian Church, 2875 FL-580, Clearwater, 33761. January 15th, 16th, 17th, 2026, from 8am-2pm. Call Susan: 727-709-8237 with questions or to donate.</p>
OTHER	Lake Seminole Resort Christmas Craft Show and Flea Market. On Saturday, December 6th, 9:00am - 1:00pm. Located at 10245 110th Ave. N. Largo, Florida	
Sell Rickey's Jerky! Join our team—locally or see the country. Full time or part time. Have fun while you cover your expenses or make some money! We're hiring now through the end of the year! Contact Ryan: Info@RickeysJerky.com or 503-475-5613 https://rickeysjerky.com/pages/opportunities has more info.	Ranch Mobile Park, Park-Wide Yard Sale , Saturday, December 6, 2025, 8:00am -2:00pm at: 6800 - 150th Ave. N., Clearwater, (Largo).	VENTRILOQUIST MARK MINOR SHOW, January 17th, 7PM. Paradise Island Clubhouse, 1001 Starkey Road, Largo. Tickets only \$10, Contact Ken 386-450-0360
BRING THE JOY OF PIANO TO YOUR HOME! Learn piano at your home or online with a patient, experienced instructor. No experience needed-just curiosity and your keyboard. Holiday Gift Certificates available! Call 727-424-8137 jundanber@yahoo.com	CRAFT FAIR Saturday December 6th 8:00 am - 2:00 pm. East Bay Oaks Clubhouse 601 Starkey Road, Largo	Rummage and Bake Sale at Golden Crest MHP clubhouse, 800 Main Street, Dunedin, January 18, 8-12. Quilt Raffle, glassware, jewelry, home decor, and more.
ARTICLES FOR SALE	Annual Carport & Craft sale, Lincolnshire Estates: 1071 Donegan Rd., Largo FL 33771. Saturday December 6th 8AM to 1PM. Over 50 homes: housewares, arts & crafts, clothes, furniture, tools, and lots more. Maps available at entrances.	Lincolnshire Estates Annual Bazaar will be held Saturday Feb 7th, 8AM-1PM. 1071 Donegan Rd, Largo. Furniture, tools, jewelry, housewares, bake sale, nick-nacks, linens. Small appliances, silent auction, breakfast, and lunch for purchase.
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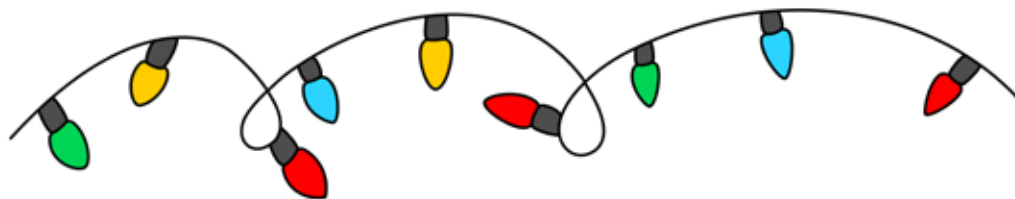
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