

Chit Chat

News for Home and Living

MARCH 2007

Not Just The Luck Of The Irish

Although Saint Patrick's Day isn't an official holiday in the United States, people still celebrate it with much enthusiasm. The day, which falls on March 17th, commemorates Saint Patrick, who introduced Christianity into Ireland in the fifth century. Here are some facts about Irish-Americans:

- The number of Americans who claim Irish ancestry: 34.3 million.
- In Massachusetts, 24% of its population claim Irish ancestry – that's about twice the national average.
- Thirty percent of Irish Americans over the age of 25 have a bachelor's degree or higher, and their median annual household income is \$48,900.

– Adapted from the U.S. Census Bureau website



An Irish Blessing

May you always have walls for the winds,
 A roof for the rain,
 Tea beside the fire, Laughter to cheer you,
 Those you love near you,
 And all your heart might desire.

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Irish God and Goddess of Love

Oengus is the Irish God of love, beauty and youth. According to the old folklore, his kisses became birds. It is also said that he dreamed of a beautiful maiden, named Caer, for whom he searched all over Ireland.

Eventually, he chained to 150 destined to be the time of end has it that formed himself was united with of Knockaine Goddess of



found her other maidens, come swans at Samhain. Leg-Oengus trans-into a swan and his love. Aine is the Irish love. She is also known as the Fairy Queen of Munster and as a goddess of fertility because she has control and command over crops and animals, especially cattle. Another name by which she is known is Aillen.

What Is The Finest Gift?

The finest gift you can give anyone is encouragement. Yet, almost no one gets the encouragement they need to grow to their full potential. If everyone received the encouragement they need to grow, the genius in most everyone would blossom and the world would produce abundance beyond the wildest dreams. We would have more than one Einstein, Edison, Schweitzer, Mother Theresa, Dr. Salk and other great minds in a century.

– Sidney Madwed

How To Inspire Your Child's Imagination

Want to have a little fun with your child that's imaginative and inexpensive? Try this. Buy a colorful children's play rug for your child and play "Magic Carpet." Pretend your child can go anywhere and see anything. You'll be impressed with your child's imagination, and you'll exercise their mind – without them even knowing. If your child needs a little encouragement, don't hesitate to help in suggesting places to visit.

Why Headphones Cause Hearing Loss

According to *InformationWeek*, earbud-style headphones can cause serious hearing loss. Northwestern University professor and audiologist Dean Garstecki said that earbuds could raise the signal by six to nine decibels – the difference between the sound of a vacuum cleaner and a motorcycle.

Earbuds are the type of headphones that rest inside the ear and are usually packaged with personal electronic devices, often for listening to music. Garstecki says that just one hour of high-volume listening with these devices can cause permanent damage.

What should people who use these devices do to reduce their chances of hearing loss? Garstecki recommends limiting listening time to no more than one hour per day, switching to over-the-ear headphones, and turning the volume down – way down.

Lifesaving Information

One question every person should ask themselves annually is, "Have I replaced the batteries in the smoke alarm/detector this year?" If you haven't, write yourself a note right now so it doesn't slip your mind. Buy the batteries and replace them immediately. Don't put the batteries aside to "do it later." As soon as you get home from the store, put the batteries into your smoke alarm. Those batteries, small as they are, could save your life and those of your loved ones.



Many people find it easy to remember their annual battery-changing day by scheduling it on their birthday, wedding anniversary, when Daylight Saving Time begins (or ends), or Super Bowl Sunday. Whatever day you choose, please make this a "lifesaving" habit!!

Kids Say the Darnedest Things

For weeks, a six-year-old boy kept telling his first-grade teacher about the baby brother or sister that was expected at his house. One day the mother allowed the little boy to feel the movement of the unborn child. The six-year-old was obviously impressed, but made no comment. Furthermore, he stopped telling his teacher about the impending event.

The teacher finally sat the boy on her lap and said, "Tommy, whatever has become of that baby brother or sister you were expecting at home?" Tommy burst into tears and confessed, "I think Mommy ate it!"

How Much To Tip?

“TIP” is an acronym: *To Insure Promptness*. Tipping is not mandatory, with the exception of restaurants that add a tip to the bill for larger groups (generally eight or more people), and hotels that include a tip in your room service bill (so it’s a good idea to check the bill before signing it). Tipping is at your discretion and should be regarded as a reward for good or superlative service.

Here are some basic guidelines for tipping appropriately in various situations; you should feel free to adjust your tip based on level of service.

Server at a full-service restaurant – 15% to 20% of your pre-tax bill. If you’ve used a discount or received any free items, tip on the amount that your bill would have come to if you’d paid full price. If your party is large or placing many special requests, you should increase your tip appropriately.

Sommelier – 15% to 20% of your total wine expenditures.

Delivery person for individual home food delivery – 5% to 10% of the total bill.

Take Out – If the restaurant features carryout meals, 10%. If the restaurant is typically only a sit-down location, tip at least 15% for the effort.

Valet Parking – \$1 to \$2 per car.

Taxi – 10% to 15% of the total fare.

Limos – 15% to 20% of the total bill.

At the airport – skycaps, \$1 to \$2 per bag. Long-term parking shuttle driver – \$1 to \$2 per bag if the driver assists you with your bags. If you’re traveling with crutches or a wheelchair or you need special assistance from airport staff, a few dollars to the employee is appropriate.

At the salon or spa – stylist and colorist, 15% to 20% of the total bill each. Shampoo tech, \$1 to \$2. Nail tech, 15% to 20% of the total bill. Massage therapist, 10% to 20% per massage. Aesthetician – 10% to 20% per service.

At the hotel – room service, 10% to 15% of the bill, unless the tip has already been included. Bellman, \$1 to \$2 for delivering bags to your room and again if he or she assists you when you check out. Maid, for stays of more than one night, \$1 to \$10 per night, depending on how expensive the room is and how messy you are. Leave the maid’s tip in the hotel room in a marked envelope.



Do Women Really Talk More?

A husband, wanting to prove to his wife that women talk more than men do, provided her with a study that indicated men use on average only 15,000 words a day, while women use 30,000 words a day.



She thought about this for awhile, then told her husband that women use twice as many words as men because they have to repeat everything they say.

Looking stunned, he said, “What?”

Welcome New Clients!

Here are some past clients, and new clients who became members of our "Real Estate Family" recently. We'd like to welcome you and wish you all the best!

Kevin and Paula Long

Victor Torres

Manuel Gonzalez

Tom and Marcie Griffin (past and treasured clients)

We love giving recognition to our new friends and our wonderful existing clients who are kind enough to refer their friends and relatives to us.

March Quiz Question

What is Europe's largest active volcano?

Everyone responding by calling or e-mailing us with the correct answer will be entered into a drawing for:

A \$30 gift certificate for a store of your choice!

Drawing to be held on 3/31/07



Jan/Feb Quiz Answer

Question: What is the largest flying bird in North America?

Answer: The California Condor

source: http://www.npca.org/wildlife_protection/wildlife_facts/condor.html

(Turn to page 5 to read more about the endangered California Condor)

**Congratulations to
Arlene Romero**

Your name was selected at random from all of the correct quiz entries and you'll receive a \$30 gift certificate for a store of your choice!

See An Interesting Home?

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We'll fax, mail or e-mail you the information on that listing within 24 hours.

The Pet Page

California Condor (*Gymnogyps californianus*)

Condors, the largest flying birds in North America, are monogamous and pair for life. These magnificent creatures are endangered due to loss of habitat, shootings, pesticide residue, lead poisoning, and collisions with power lines. Condors are capable of reaching up to 60 years of age in the wild.

Normally, condors breed once every two years, producing only one egg. If the egg is lost, they might be able to lay another. The male and female take turns incubating the egg and, once it hatches, feeding the offspring until it learns to find its own food, which could take a year. Playful and inquisitive, condors roost in large groups and communicate with a combination of hisses, growls, and grunts as well as a system of body language.



Instead of flapping their wings, which can span more than nine feet from tip to tip, condors soar on wind currents. Like vultures, which are in the same family, they are scavengers, but instead of relying on their sense of smell they watch for other scavengers feeding on carrion.



IMPORTANT NOTICE

“The Sister Team” is willing to donate money to help those who would like to adopt a needy (and doomed) pet from any animal shelter!

And **remember**....spaying and neutering is the most important thing we can do to help dogs and cats!

We are willing and able to *confidentially* help those who are unable or unwilling to spay or neuter their companion (or stray) animals.

Please contact us and we will donate our time and money to this most-important cause!

Together, forever and always
..... for the animals!

--Tara and April

Adult condors are almost entirely black. Except for a few feathers, their heads and necks are mostly bare, and include shades of pink, red, orange, yellow and light blue, becoming more intensely pink when they are excited. It's impossible to distinguish the males from the females just by looking at them.

Ten thousand years ago, California condors lived on both coasts of North America, from British Columbia to Baja California in the West, and New York to Florida in the East. By about 1900, the condor population plummeted and was limited to southern California, due to many factors including loss of habitat, a low reproductive rate, poisoning, and shooting.

How many California condors once lived is not known. In 1982, there were fewer than 25 left in the wild. Today, their numbers have increased to approximately 200 due to refuges and captive breeding programs designed to protect and restore the species.

California condors can be found in or near Los Padres National Forest, California; Grand Canyon National Park, Arizona; Glen Canyon National Recreation Area, Arizona/Utah; and Kaibab National Forest, Arizona.

—adapted from www.npca.org

Cranberry Cure?

Researchers are finally starting to understand how cranberry juice can fight a host of human illnesses, many of which are caused by E. coli bacteria, including urinary tract infections. Scientists have found that compounds (tannins) in cranberry juice can render E. coli bacteria incapable of initiating an infection. Researchers at Worcester Polytechnic Institute, for example, say that the cranberry may offer an alternative to antibiotic treatment to combat E. coli in the future.

Annually, about eight million people are affected by urinary tract infections. Researchers have suspected that something in cranberry juice stops bacteria from adhering to the lining of the urinary tract, and now they're able to see how this interference to adhesion takes place.

On the molecular level, the tannins in cranberry juice cause the shape of the bacteria to change from rods to spheres. The tannins also alter the bacteria cell membranes, and that makes it difficult for the bacteria to make contact with the cells, or from latching on if they do make contact. The higher the concentration of cranberry juice, the stronger the effects were on the bacteria, indicating that whole cranberry products would have better results than diluted products. The use of cranberries as powerful antibacterial agents is great news since there is much concern about the overuse of antibiotics.



Juicy, plump cranberries have been native to North America for many years, and are grown naturally in bogs from Nova Scotia to North Carolina, in New Jersey, Michigan, and on the west coasts of Washington and Oregon. Growing cranberries is a fragile art, needing four years to produce the first crop. Making it even more difficult, the timing of the harvest is inconsistent from year to year, depending on the climatic environment. Cranberries are one of the few crops that can survive in acidic peat soil, and they need plenty of water. Once a vine is planted it will continue to produce for many years. Some vines between 75 and 100 years old are still producing a crop!

Cranberries are very high in vitamin C and fiber. Commercial cranberry drinks usually contain a lot of sugar, so you can make your own cranberry juice at home very easily with your own juicer and fresh cranberries. If you find the juice to be too sour, you can sweeten it with apple juice. When choosing your cranberries, look for ones that are bright red in color, hard, and plump.

What Did You Mean?

The English language is full of challenges, even if you have been speaking the language since infancy. Take, for example, homonyms, heteronyms, synonyms and antonyms. The sentences below are an example of heteronyms: two words that have identical spellings but different meanings and pronunciations.

- The bandage was **wound** around the **wound**.
- The farm was accustomed to **produce produce**.
- The dump was so full that they had to **refuse** more **refuse**.
- The solder decided to **desert** in the **desert**.
- A **bass** was painted on the **bass** drum.
- When shot at, the **dove dove** into the bushes.
- I did not **object** to the **object**.
- A buck **does** funny things when **does** are present.
- A seamstress and a **sewer** fell down into a **sewer**.
- I had to **subject** the **subject** to a series of tests.



Chit Chat

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\$344,900 Cute "Wood Streets" cottage with 2 beds/2 baths, fireplace, central air and heat, remodeled kitchen, large yard, white picket fence, and 2-car garage!



\$349,995 "Wood Streets" cottage with 2 beds/1 bath, remodeled kitchen, central air and heat, formal dining room with 2 hutches, indoor laundry, and large yard!

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we **KNOW** the neighborhood...
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Happy
St. Patrick's
Day!



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Chit Chat

Referral Reward Program ...

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If you refer your friends and relatives to us, everyone benefits. We can serve you better. We send you a nice gift. And we assure you that we'll take the very best care of anyone you refer to us.

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It is our desire to build a business based on strong and lasting relationships.