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# NewzBreak<sup>TM</sup>

*The Workplace Newsletter That's Both Informative and Fun!*



*I hope you enjoy this month's newsletter!*

*Fred Tighe  
Evolving Service*

## Christmas bird counters help birds, scientists

For 100 years or more, Christmas was the scene of Christmas hunts in which hunters competed in teams to kill as many birds and animals as possible.

But by the 1900s, conservationists noticed the populations of birds were declining. That's when ornithologist Frank M Chapman, an early organizer of the Audubon Society, proposed a new kind of hunt -- a count.

The Christmas Bird Count has since spread around the world, with thousands of counters heading out between November and December to tally up the number and kinds of birds they see in their neighborhoods.

In 2005, birders counted the largest number of species ever reported in a single U.S. location, finding 250 separate species around Matagorda and Palacios, Texas.

The world record is 529 species observed Dec. 21, 2013 on the eastern shores of the Andes in Ecuador.

Bird counting is free and open to all. Counts are conducted in a count circle of 15 miles with at least 10 volunteers and a compiler.

While the counts are not an exact census, they do offer valuable insight to scientists on the health of bird populations.

Learn more and join the count at [audubon.org](http://audubon.org).



## Opportunities for disabled workers at small businesses

Two tax credits make it more affordable to accommodate disabled workers in small business.

According to Small Business Trends, The Disabled Access Credit guarantees a credit of up to \$5,000 on expenditures of up to \$10,250 for modifying equipment, hiring sign language interpreters, providing Braille documents and more.

The Architectural Barrier Removal Tax Deduction allows for a tax deduction of up to \$15,000 for building new ramps, curb cuts, parking spaces, and other accessibility options at their place of business to accommodate those with special needs.

Generally, the disabled population has a harder time securing full-time employment and statistics show that the unemployment rate among this group was around 8 percent in 2017 compared to 4.1 percent of the non-disabled population. Employers may avoid hiring disabled workers because they feel as though it would be difficult to fire them for poor performance or they don't understand or don't want to deal with accommodating someone with special needs.

## How morning routines can improve productivity

There is no magic bullet for creating maximum productivity, but studies and interviews with high achievers have shown that a well-executed morning routine can produce powerful results, according to The Ladders.

Most morning routines boil down to a few basic principles such as waking up before most people, outlining three specific big things to accomplish, and managing procrastination that can be oriented to fit within anyone's schedule.

Waking up before other people isn't just to prove that you have better willpower but, rather, it allows you to have a chance to plan the day and be proactive rather than reactive. If there are already emails, phone calls, and important meetings occurring right when the alarm clock goes off then anxiety can set in and you will simply be reacting to the day until you are too tired to continue, and the most important goals will be pushed to the back burner. Instead, take the first two hours of each day to have breakfast, exercise, meditate, read, and otherwise prepare your mind and body for the day ahead. Next, identify the three specific things that, if accomplished during the day, will move the needle on your long, medium, and short-term goals.

Once the day's agenda has been prepared, designate the body's natural period of peak performance, about 2.5 to 4 hours after waking up, as protected time used for the most important tasks. Avoid procrastination by creating a starting ritual, such as a cup of coffee or sitting down at a specific desk to send a signal to the brain that it is time to start working. During those times in which the most important task just can't be tackled for whatever reason, however, use 'positive procrastination' by intentionally avoiding it as long as you follow the rule that you have to work on the second-most important task rather than goofing off.

## Do You Know...

... someone that could use our services? Perhaps a colleague, friend, family member, or networking buddy?

When a new client signs up for regular cleaning services at your recommendation, and stays 4 months you will receive \$300!

If you would think of 3 or 4 people that could use our services, then don't hesitate to call them and give them our name and phone number. Be sure to have them mention your name when they call so we can send your \$300 Bonus for each recommendation.

Thanks in advance for your help and we look forward to sending cash your way!

## Thanks a Bunch!

*"Evolving Service has been our cleaning contractor for over 20 years. We are owners of several multi-tenant buildings and were looking for a service that could keep our clients happy and save us from complaints. They have more than kept us satisfied and allowed us to avoid the frequent search for a new cleaning company. I am more than happy to recommend their services." Property Manager, President, Waltham, MA*

## Tax moves to make before year-end

As April's tax deadline looms, there are some things you can do before Dec. 31 to cut your tax bill.

First, use any extra money to make a final contribution to an IRA or 401k. This makes a tidy deduction in taxable income. In 2018, those limits are \$5,500 and \$18,500, respectively.

Don't forget that unused money in a flexible medical spending account will be lost at the end of the year so use the balance to stock up on eligible household items like bandages, vitamins, and sunscreens.

Homeowners that plan to itemize their deductions should think about squeezing in an extra mortgage payment at the end of the year, something that adds to a deduction and pays your house off sooner.

One significant change in the 2018 tax code caps the deduction for state and local taxes (SALT) at \$10,000 for any combination of property, income, or sales-related taxes. For those with expensive homes in high property-tax states, this can be a hit. For example, New York's average deduction last year was \$21,000. The deduction cap won't affect the average homeowner outside coastal and metro areas.

According to Quicken, the end of the year is also an excellent time to make energy-efficient improvements such as insulations, roofs, or doors that can qualify for up to \$500 through the Residential Energy Tax Credit.

Many people can gain a small advantage in their taxes by selling investments that lost money during the year and using the losses to offset capital gains on a dollar-per-dollar basis, up to \$3,000, on the ones that did well. Extra losses can also be carried over to future tax years, meaning one particularly lousy year can spread out over time.



## Cranberry orange baked French toast casserole

Cranberries and oranges have long been a part of many family Christmas traditions and they are still a fun way to inject a little history into the celebration.

According to The Kitchen, for instance, oranges have been used as special treats for centuries. Great-grandparents today might be able to tell stories of the Great Depression and the incredible gift of sweet oranges on Christmas Day.

According to Colonial Williamsburg, meanwhile, cranberries were often used during the holidays because their bright red

color was the perfect addition to decorations. It was common to see them strung alongside popcorn on Christmas trees. Slow to spoil, cranberries keep well throughout the winter season and will likely be available for many holiday treats.

Here is a recipe, courtesy of the Taste and Tell blog, that incorporates both oranges and cranberries into a delicious breakfast casserole that is perfect to make ahead. Pop it in the oven on Christmas morning to avoid the hassle of extra prep on a day already full of festivities and activity.

### Ingredients

1/4 cup butter, melted	1 tablespoon orange zest
1 cup light brown sugar	1 teaspoon vanilla extract
1 cup fresh cranberries, divided	1/2 teaspoon cinnamon
1, 1-lb loaf white bread, cut into 1-inch cubes	1/2 teaspoon orange extract
2 cups milk	powdered sugar, for serving
6 eggs, lightly beaten	

### Directions

1. Pour the melted butter evenly into the bottom of a 9x13-inch baking dish. Sprinkle the brown sugar evenly over the top. Sprinkle 1/2 cup of the cranberries over the top of the brown sugar. Add the cubed bread to the baking dish. Sprinkle the remaining cranberries over the top.

2. In a large bowl, combine the milk, eggs, orange zest, vanilla extract, cinnamon, and orange extract (if using), and beat lightly to combine. Pour the mixture evenly over the top of the bread in the baking dish. Press the bread down into the liquid mixture if needed to make sure all of the bread is soaked. Cover the dish with foil and refrigerate overnight, at least 8 hours.

3. Bring the dish out of the refrigerator 30 minutes before baking. Preheat the oven to 375 degrees F. Bake the casserole, still covered, for 30 minutes. Remove the foil and continue baking until the top is browned and a tester inserted in the center comes out clean, another 15-20 minutes.

4. Let the casserole sit for 10 minutes before serving. Serve topped with powdered sugar.



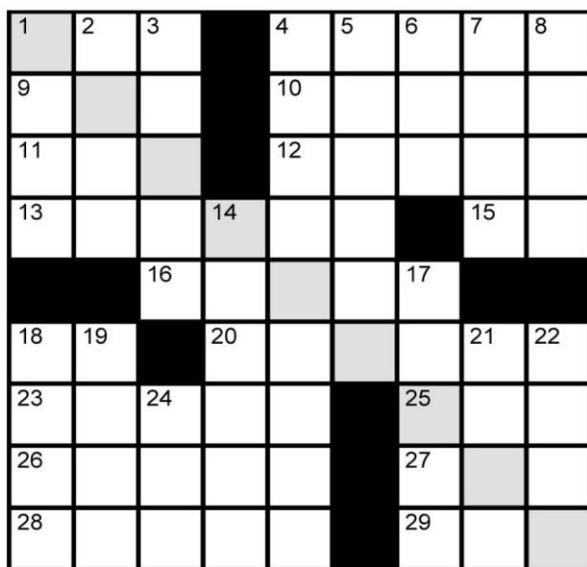
## Christmas Dessert

### Across

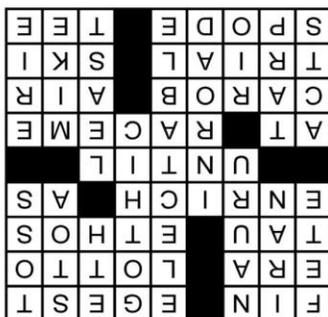
1. Shark feature
4. Discharge
9. Victorian, for one
10. Kind of ticket
11. Ancient cross
12. Community character
13. Improve, in a way
15. Symbol for arsenic
16. Sammy Kaye's "\_\_\_ Tomorrow"
18. In attendance
20. Flower cluster
23. Chocolate substitute
25. Make public
26. Courtroom event
27. Schuss, e.g.
28. Some porcelain
29. In Phil's bag

### Down

1. Big bash
2. Persia, now
3. South Pacific island nation
4. Likely to attract votes
5. "Wuthering Heights" genre



6. Old verb ending
7. Greek portico
8. Throw out
14. Bit of progress
17. Minimal
18. "Hamlet" has five
19. Ball field covering
21. Emcee's need
22. Cleveland's lake
24. Carnival site



The headline is a clue to the answer in the diagonal.

## Trivia Teaser – Christmas at the Movies

1. What was the name of Ralphie's little brother in "A Christmas Story"? a-Raymond, b-Randy, c-Rudy, d-Ricky.

2. The 2004 movie "Christmas With the Kranks" was based on a novel by which writer? a-John Grisham, b-Stephen King, c-Bram Stoker, d-Dan Brown.

3. Which actor played the part of Ebenezer Scrooge in "The Muppet Christmas Carol"? a-Tim Curry, b-Alan Rachins, c-Michael Caine, d-Bill Murray.

4. In which movie did Judy Garland introduce the holiday song "Have Yourself a Merry Little Christmas"? a-"The Harvey Girls," b-"Babes in Arms," c-"Babes on Broadway," d-"Meet Me in St. Louis."

5. What does the district attorney's little boy, Tommy, want for Christmas in the original "Miracle on 34th Street"? a-Football helmet, b-Ice skates, c-Fire engine, d-Typewriter.

6. From which movie are the lines "You smell like beef and cheese! You don't smell like Santa"? a-"A Christmas Story," b-"Elf," c-"The Santa Clause," d-"The Polar Express."

7. In "The Breakfast Club," what did Bender say he got for Christmas? a-Game of Darts, b-Black eye, c-Empty picture frame, d-Carton of cigarettes.

8. Who is the narrator of the 2000 film version of "Dr. Seuss' How the Grinch Stole Christmas"? a-Matthew Broderick, b-Anthony Hopkins, c-Alec Guinness, d-Chuck Jones.

9. Who played Jonathan Taylor Thomas's girlfriend in the movie "I'll Be Home for Christmas"? a-Hilary Duff, b-Katie Holmes, c-Melissa Joan Hart, d-Jessica Biel.

10. Matthew Broderick and Danny DeVito compete to see who can put up the most Christmas decorations in which movie? a-"Jingle All the Way," b-"The Night Before," c-"Deck the Halls," d-"The Christmas Candle"

- 1-b, Randy
- 2-a, John Grisham
- 3-c, Michael Caine
- 4-d, "Meet Me in St. Louis"
- 5-a, Football helmet
- 6-b, "Elf"
- 7-d, Carton of cigarettes
- 8-b, Anthony Hopkins
- 9-d, Jessica Biel
- 10-c, "Deck the Halls"

## Book in shoulder season for best prices, access

Everyone knows the difference between peak season and off season, but there is another season for traveling: Shoulder season.

According to Travel and Leisure Magazine, shoulder season exists between the busiest time of the year and the slowest time. It is a lesser known sweet spot of traveling when there are fewer tourists and, therefore, better access to attractions. While the weather might not yet be ideal, it also isn't the worst it can be.

Depending on the location, shoulder season can occur either before or after the peak time during the year.

One example is a ski resort in Whistler, British Columbia. Crowds disappear by April, but the skiing conditions are still good, and rooms are \$189 less than in February.

In Mexico's northeastern Yucatan Peninsula, The Riviera Maya has hurricane season from August to October. But by mid-November, the coast is clear, and rates are half the price of peak travel in December.

For adults, shoulder season can be the best season. It often falls in time frames unsuitable for families with school-age kids.



# EVOLVING SERVICE

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## About Our Company

**Evolving Service is a full service commercial cleaning company that operates in the suburban Boston area. Services include: general cleaning, carpet cleaning, upholstery cleaning, all types of hard floor care, and window washing.**

**Our professional quality standards top the competition and the secret lies in our hiring process. Because of it, we confidently assure you outstanding customer satisfaction day-in, day-out, ongoing. That's why our customers stick with us at levels far higher than industry standards**

**An excellent rate of client retention, year after year, means we don't front-load your proposal with extra profit in the first year. Many companies do.**

## Holiday Greetings, my friends

Instead of making New Year resolutions, maybe we should Holiday resolutions. Resolve not to have that confused look when you see the present from Auntie. Promise yourself that you'll let that political comment pass. Take at least one scoop of your cousin's famous casserole.

Weird gifts, strange food, and offbeat conversation - all part of family life and holiday gatherings.

Here's hoping everyone's holidays are filled with laughter, fun, and love for each other. Hold your family close and have a Joyful holiday!

. We provide service to the following types of buildings:

- Commercial Office Buildings
- Bio Tech Facilities
- Banks
- Schools & Day Care Facilities
- Manufacturing Plants

*Family is not an important thing. It's everything.*  
-Michael J. Fox

## Money saving tips during holiday shopping

Avoid impulsive shopping during the holidays by making your plan and sticking to it.

One method to avoid the madness, according to Real Simple, is to work out a complete gift plan, then set aside one day for shopping.

Before the big day, shop sales for specific items and download any necessary retailer coupons and price scanning comparison tools onto a smartphone for real-time help.

On the big day, get up early, eat a healthy breakfast, dress for business, leave the credit cards at home and plan on using cash only.

By some estimates, spending cash only will save you up to 23 percent on your shopping trip.

While at the store, shop solo, avoiding salespeople, unless you really need help.

Buy cheaper items first. If you buy the big-ticket items first, tossing around \$20 or \$50 here and there seems easy. So start small.

Break up the day with a coffee or soft drink to stay in a good mood and make better choices.

Get in and out of stores more quickly by checking out in less crowded areas of major department stores and steering clear of sales pitches.

During lunch and dinner breaks, cash in credit card rewards on discounted gift cards and exclusive special offers to round out the list.

An extra sneaky tip is to load up an online cart but cancel it right before finalizing. Often, they will send an email offer with a discount code but if not, there is no harm in asking the live chat representative.

## Free Carpet Spotting for One Month!

**Schedule your carpet cleaning by January 30th and we'll take care of any spots that occur for the month following the cleaning.**

Schedule A Quote from Fred

We take a personal approach to our business and do each quote Individually In person created specifically for your business.

Evolving Service is your experienced source of commercial cleaning from Natick to Wilmington and from Maynard to Somerville