



**Landscape Aesthetics, Inc.**

# *Around The House*

DECEMBER, 2010

NEWS THAT HELPS THE FAMILY.



## **Not Your Traditional New Year's Eve**

December 31 can make us think of toasting the new year, Guy Lombardo music, and New York's Times Square with its plunging ball marking the start of the new calendar. Add confetti, fireworks É and, oh yes, more toasting.

During the past several years, alternatives have been put forth to this business as usual. They eliminate the traditional New Year's Day hangover.

In the mid-1980s, three teen boys decided that an all-night Monopoly party would be a great way to bring in the new year. They and others continued the games into their adult and married lives.

First Night Pittsburgh 2010 is a community family-based celebration of the arts. It features music, mime, magic, story telling and theater. The stages are the city's historic theaters, churches, building lobbies and the streets in between. First Nights are now celebrated in cities and towns across the world.

### **Other suggestions for New Year's Eve are:**

- ◆ Murder mystery games set round a table with role-playing and prizes.
- ◆ Sleepovers for kids and adults, even entire families.
- ◆ Outdoor sports events like cross-country skiing or bonfire-lit ice skating on ponds where the right conditions exist.
- ◆ Themed costume balls with music, dancing and theater.
- ◆ Lavish all-night dinner parties for gourmands.
- ◆ For those who like drinking, a new synthetic alcohol creates the buzz without the hangover.

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## **Inside This Issue:**

- **Consider Holiday Tips**
- **Around the House – Tip of the Month**
- **Learn About Scottish New Year!**

***Plus much, much more!!!***



"I wrote assembly instructions for Children's toys. What did you do?"

## What To Consider When Giving A Holiday Tip

If you have many people on your tip list, you may be considering how much to give this year.

Though the economy is recovering, many people are still cutting back on tips, but here are the recommendations from etiquette authorities.

If you see them more, tip them more. That includes the salon, where the price of one visit (or more) is advised. The waitress at your favorite restaurant should receive more than the mail carrier or the trash

man who you rarely see.

People who work in your home more than two days a week, such as nannies and housekeepers, should get one week's extra pay, more if you can afford it and want to give it.

Be careful not to practice one-upmanship with teachers. Gift cards are a nice thought. Personalize them to a teacher's tastes if you are familiar with them.

Day care workers can be gifted, the value depending upon how much time each

spends with your child, \$25 and up.

Money isn't everything, however. If you can't give much this year, a thank-you note or homemade dessert is fine, especially for people you have tipped during the year. Or send a note of praise to a worker's supervisor. In time, that could help them get a promotion, which is the best gift of all.

### Get Out Of Town For Less

If you decide you want to fly away right now, you're going to pay a big price for your last-minute ticket.

There's still a chance that you could get a bargain seat at Web sites that specialize in immediate ticket sales.

Click on Last Second Deals for a package that includes a hotel and car rental. Or visit [airfarewatchdog.com](http://airfarewatchdog.com) for airline fire sale prices.

## Protecting Customers From Harm Should Be A Retail Store's First Priority.

Customers don't get the safety training that employees do, so more attention must be paid to their needs. A number of safety policies can be put in place to ensure that customers are kept safe.

For example:

\* Keep the parking area well lit and the walkways to the entrance clear and accessible. Customer safety begins before entering the store.

\* Be courteous and patient when approaching a customer. Quick steps toward customers may prompt them to back up or move out of your way and possibly cause an accident.

\* Place easily visible signs in appropriate areas. For example, retail stores that

have sliding entry and exit doors should have signs mentioning to customers that the doors are automatic. Service repair shops should have signs indicating that customers are not permitted to enter the service area because machinery could be in motion.

\* Fix damages quickly so people aren't injured while shopping or waiting for service. Damages could include water leaks, electrical problems, broken shelves or loose flooring. Employees should describe the damage in writing and notify a manager.

\* Avoid slips and falls. When a spill has occurred, place yellow or orange caution cones in the center

of the spill until it can be mopped up.

\* Ladders should never be left open and unattended. They may tempt a shopper or a child to climb them.

\* Eliminate tripping hazards. Keep walkways clear of low-profile furniture, or anything that could cause tripping.

\* Assist customers with large or heavy items. Employees should keep an eye on customers who are examining heavy merchandise. Offer assistance before customers attempt to do the lifting themselves.

***Landscape Aesthetics, Inc.***

***Around The House Tip Of The Month:  
“Make A Fan Cleaning Tool With Items You  
Already Have”***

Cleaning ceiling fans is an aggravating job. You can get the blades clean, but the dust falls below onto the kitchen table or the living room floor. And you probably have to tackle fans in more rooms than one or two.

**Cleaning ceiling fans**

You can solve these problems by taking a few minutes to make your own cleaning tool. All you need is a new paint roller, an extension pole for the paint roller frame, a couple of dryer sheets, and two rubber bands.

Put the sheets around the roller, overlapping them, and wrap with a rubber band at each end.

Slide the roller onto the frame and attach the frame to the extension pole. Now you're ready to clean.

Carefully roll your tool over the top sides of the blades. Keep rolling over the blades from the center outward. The roller sheet will collect the dust without allowing it to fall.

**Getting rid of cobwebs**

When you're finished with the fans, change the dryer sheets. Then you can use your tool to get rid of cobwebs on the ceiling and in hard-to-reach places like around ceiling mounted lights and where the ceiling meets the wall.

**Cleaning wooden blinds**

Here's a tip for cleaning 2-inch wooden blinds or shutters at the windows. Advisor Shelly Miller Leer, writing in the Indianapolis Star recommends using wet Magic Eraser cloths from Mr. Clean.

The cloths need to be rinsed often, but they will pick up all the dirt, dust and nicotine that may have accumulated on the slats over several months.

*How to solve sudoku puzzles*

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 on this puzzle is easy.

*Seasonal cipher sudoku*

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

**Answer Key on Page 8**

**Save Money On Gifts!**

Set a budget. Budgeting may not seem like fun, but it can be a creative challenge. Often the carefully thought-out gifts are more meaningful than the more expensive choices.

Have a gift exchange. Instead of buying for everyone in the extended family or the office, draw names so you buy just one gift. A price limit can be established and an interesting theme put forward. Some families set a limit on price (\$20) or even the color of a gift (purple).

Make a Christmas list and take it with you when you shop so you don't buy just anything that looks attractive, regardless of the price.

Buy one or two generic gifts to give unexpected guests. Consider gift cards, gas cards, wine, a fancy food or candy. If not needed, use them yourself.

## Speaking Of Safety: Safety In Parking Lots And Trailer Drop Yards

### Handy Tip Of The Month: “Good Uses For Dryer Sheets”

**TV screen:** Wipe your TV screen with a used sheet to keep the dust from resettling

**Suitcases:** Place a sheet in your suitcases to keep them from smelling musty.

**Wastebaskets:** Toss a sheet in the bottom of your trashcan to help eliminate odors.

**Cat or dog hair:** The sheets will magnetically collect dog and cat hair on floors and furniture.

**Shoes:** Stick a sheet in each shoe overnight and they will smell great in the morning!

Semi drivers are a competent lot who keep safety in mind, but sometimes their vision in a drop yard is obstructed. They might not be able to see someone who is walking nearby.

Anyone who is on foot in their area is primarily responsible for their own safety as the big trucks are moving in or out of their slots.

In employee or customer parking areas, the same is true, possibly more so because cars that appear to be parked can back out with no previous warning.

The U.S. Department of Transportation reminds us that both pedestrians and drivers are vulnerable. In one recent year, almost 300,000 accidents were attributed to vehicle maneuvers in parking lots.

About 27,000 occurred while entering a parking space; 198,000 were caused while backing up and 65,000 were caused as a vehicle was leaving a parking space.

Put winter into the mix of hazards and it becomes a whole different world. Snow is the main factor. While lots are regularly cleared, sometimes it has to be done while cars are moving in and out. Everyone in the lot has to make allowance for snow removal equipment.

Whether it's snow or ice, walking to or from a parked car becomes more challenging. Snow might be cleared away, but hard-to-navigate slippery spots can form where there is a lot of foot traffic.

Everyone should watch for upcoming icy spots. When one is identified, the walker should take flat-footed baby steps to cross it.

### Live Well In A Small Space

Recommendations by Sarah Susanka, author of The Not So Big House:

- \* If you have two small rooms, create space by removing the shared wall.
- \* Bring in the light. One of the best ways to increase the feeling of size is to bring more daylight. Open drapes or install a large mirror to reflect a window.
- \* Vary the floor materials. Instead of having the same flooring throughout the house, make it different in each room.
- \* Connect with the outdoors. If you are building, position windows and doors so the outdoors can be seen from inside.
- \* Create visual vitality. Accent one wall with a saturated paint color. Or use a spotlight to highlight a piece of art.

## The Scottish New Year!

As 2011 rolls in, Auld Lang Syne will fill the air at many a gathering. This traditional tune, from a poem written by Scottish poet Robert Burns, bids the old year farewell and welcomes in the new. Auld Lang Syne links Scotland to much of the world on New Year's Eve. But Scotland has many other traditions that make Scottish festivities unique.

Hogmanay is the name that Scots give to the last day of the year and their celebration of the New Year. In cities, towns and villages, there are torch processions and the setting off of fireworks.

In rural areas, bonfires, that are said to burn up the old

year, take the place of fireworks. In some places, barrels of tar are rolled through the streets and set on fire to destroy the old year.

In many homes "first footing" is still observed. The Scots believe it to be good luck for the first foot over the threshold, as the New Year begins, to be that of a dark-haired man bearing a gift such as shortcake, coal or whiskey. Such visits are often arranged.

Foods popular during this time of celebration include cheese, bread, steak pie, shortbread, currant loaf, oatcakes and scones, all to be accompanied by wine, cordials and other spirits.

Local areas of Scotland have developed their own Hogmanay rituals. An example is the Stonehaven Fireball Festival.

Thousands flock to this North Sea fishing port, where on New Year's Eve approximately 60 participants in kilts whirl five- to 15-pound flaming balls around their heads.

They march to the harbor, accompanied by drummers and pipers, where they fling the flaming balls into the sea. Historically, this was done to drive out evil spirits and bring good luck to the fishing fleet. Now it also welcomes the new year.

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## Placebo May Perk Up The Body's Healing Powers

The placebo, which is an inactive treatment commonly called a sugar pill, is a tool usually used in the testing of new drugs. Test subjects receiving the new drug should show a big improvement over those taking the fake.

It's called the "placebo effect." It refers to real or imagined improvement people experience taking a placebo or fake drug.

While the effect is most pronounced in cases of pain relief or depression, where some 35 percent of those

taking the fake pill feel better, there is evidence that it can do other things, such as lower cholesterol levels, and decrease asthma attacks by about 10 percent.

Sometimes people believe so strongly in the medicine's healing power that their expectations trigger the release of body chemicals that help them heal. A strong belief in their doctor's skill in prescribing medications also has a positive effect.

Doctors at Johns Hopkins Medicine in Baltimore say it would be wrong to think that the placebo effect is just imagined. Observable healing is common among placebo takers.

The doctors say it could be possible that psychological factors do initiate true healing in ways they cannot yet fully explain. One thing this could mean to all patients: Believing a medicine will work might actually improve its performance.

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City, State, Zip \_\_\_\_\_

Home Phone \_\_\_\_\_

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Book a new installation project this month for \$10,000 or more and receive a slip for three large trees installed on your property from our beautiful in-house tree growing nursery. Please call (908)766-7200 for more details.

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Valid thru December, 2010

Landscape Aesthetics, Inc. has been creating beautiful outdoor living spaces for over 20 years. Our creativity and expertise in developing unique, breathtaking designs are unsurpassed in originality and craftsmanship. We provide full service New Jersey Landscaping and design including finely crafted stone walls, patios and walks, fabulous outdoor fireplaces and kitchens, picturesque plantings, stunning pools and waterfalls, poolscape renovations, masonry, landscape management services as well as a tree growing nursery.

Our clients have found an added richness of fine outdoor living with our designs. Instead of a vacation, how about having us create a stress-free 'staycation' in your own backyard with an exciting new poolscape. Consider replacing your existing wood deck with the timeless beauty of a finely-crafted raised stone patio which is maintenance free. How about also equipping that patio with an outdoor kitchen. You can also extend your outdoor living season by adding the elegance and warmth of a crackling fire in one of our exquisite outdoor fireplaces.

By incorporating various outdoor elements such as space, plantings, water, landform and ornament into our designs, we create unique living spaces that create enjoyable memories to last a lifetime.

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

**ANSWER KEY**