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Generations



Heloise helps housewives with helpful hints

By Peg DeMarco - Special to The News Herald

I'm a faithful reader of Hints from Heloise. Not that I'm trying to imitate June Cleaver as far as cleaning, cooking and taking care of The Beaver and the rest of the crew, but once in a while I do drag out the vacuum and dust cloth or turn on the oven to preheat for a meal other than the twice a year turkey or an old faithful tray of lasagna.

I particularly loved her suggestion in using essential oils, such as cinnamon, orange, lavender, peppermint or eucalyptus to make every room smell wonderful. In a household filled with dogs, especially when they are wet, this may help to alleviate the "doggy" stink. She suggests putting several drops on cotton balls, placing them in margarine containers or small jars, poking holes in the lids, and putting them behind furniture or in not so obvious places. Easy - I can do that.

Another tip was to dab a bit of oil of clove, peppermint or eucalyptus on a cool lightbulb. When you turn on the light, the scent will drift throughout the room. I like this because my husband hates when I burn candles and complains about the smoke smell (this is from a man who smoked cigarettes for over 50 years).

For those who don't have the time to bake all day, it's easy to create an inviting smell by putting a few drops of cinnamon, anise, orange or peppermint oil on a cotton ball and putting it on the inside of the cardboard tube of a paper towel roll. Easy - I can do that, too.

To get rid of candle wax from a tablecloth or item of clothing (just in case I ever get the chance to perform a covert operation and burn a candle in the far end of the house), Heloise suggests letting the wax harden by placing the object in the freezer, wait a bit, scrape the wax off with a dull knife, placing paper towels on both sides of the wax stain, setting an iron on warm and ironing over the stained area. I'll have to invent a good excuse for why the tablecloth is in the freezer in case my husband reaches for ice cream, but once I put my car keys in the fridge, so I might be able to talk my way out of this by using short term memory lapse.

I wondered how Heloise got so smart and did a little research on her. She was born Eloise (with a twin sister Louise) Bowles in Ft. Worth, Texas, on May 4, 1919. When her newspaper column was syndicated, she added the H because she thought it made more alliterative sense -- Hints from Heloise. She graduated from business college in 1939, traveled to China with her husband, and settled in Texas. Her daughter, the current Heloise, was born in 1953.

Heloise decided that she wanted to write a column in a newspaper to help housewives and, in 1959, she even offered to write it for free for 30 days. It was such a success that by 1961, Time magazine did an article on her. By 1964, her column was running in 593 newspapers in America and abroad.

Heloise II took over the column when her mother died on December 28, 1977. She shared that her mother's tombstone reads, "Heloise, Every Housewife's Friend."

Some products that we use daily are often effective for other household uses, but marketers have been mum because of a potential backlash in product integrity. For instance, according to an article by Joey Green in the November 2016 edition of Reader's Digest, if Coca-Cola revealed that its product is able to clean toilets, fizz away corrosion from car battery terminals and remove oil stains from driveways, consumers may ask themselves: "What's it doing to my stomach?" The truth is that the gastric acid in your stomach is stronger than the phosphoric acid in Coke.

Also, according to Green, people pen letters to companies all the time to share alternative uses for their products, but the companies rarely advertise the information. Kraft Foods won't tell you that Jell-O doubles as hair gel, Proctor and Gamble doesn't advertise that Bounce dryer sheets repels mosquitoes, and Nestle's Nestea iced-tea mix doubles as an air freshener, tenderizes meat, cools a bad sunburn, and removes corns.

Frankly, green Jell-O in my gray hair wouldn't work, but I'm willing to try Nestea on my corns.

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