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these garden pests, giving them an electro-neural signal (like an electric shock), which deters them.

Assemble furniture

Some furniture companies include a penny rather than an Allen wrench with their assembly instructions. By pressing the penny's edge into the screw's grooves at a 15- to 20-degree angle, you can get enough torque to rotate the screw and tighten or undo it.

Steady furniture

If you are at a wobbly restaurant table, take some pennies and place them under the shortest table leg, and you will have a stable tabletop. This suggestion also applies to shaky home furniture. Attaching pennies to the bottom of a table or chair leg with super glue will steady your furnishings.

Win the coin spin

Believe it or not, a clean penny spun on its edge will land tails-up 80% of the time. Apparently, this is due to the extra mass of the head side, which brings the head side down first the majority of the time. However, if the penny is flipped, there is only a 51% chance that it will land on the side it started on.⁸

“Make money your god, and it will plague you like the devil.”

HENRY FIELDING

So why write about the lowly penny?

From now on, when you pick up a penny, remind yourself of the importance of the little things that make up life's bigger occurrences. Former Congressman Bruce Barton stated this concept well when he said: “Sometimes when I consider what tremendous consequences come from little things—a chance word, a tap on the shoulder, or a penny dropped on a newsstand—I am tempted to think—there are no little things.”⁹

Remember, pennies saved can be used in a multitude of ways to bless your family and others. One man told me that he puts all his pennies and other small coins from his pockets in a bottle, and they pay for the gas in his car every month. Another great idea is to keep a jar of pennies and every thirteenth Sabbath give the contents to missions. Over time the money will save lives for the Kingdom. So please “keep the pennies dropping,” as the tiny tots Sabbath School song goes, and you will be amazed by the importance and worth there is in just one simple penny.

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The STEWPOT

A POTPOURRI OF PRACTICAL IDEAS to help you become a better steward

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LOVE Those Pennies

BY GORDON BOTTING, DRPH, CHES, CFC

A small business owner in Pittsburgh paved the floor of her coffee shop and tattoo gallery with 250,000 pennies. According to the owner, Mel Angst, those pennies added up to \$2,500, or about \$3 per square foot. “Amazingly enough,” said Mel, “it’s a lot cheaper to glue money to your floor than actually buy tile.”¹

For Jason West, there were no lucky pennies. Police charged him with disorderly conduct for attempting to pay a disputed medical bill entirely in pennies. Even though Jason did not believe he owed the

local medical clinic \$25, he came in to make a payment—and a point—by paying the bill with 2,500 pennies. The clinic called the police, and since an officer decided that Jason’s protest payment served “no legitimate purpose,” he was arrested. Apparently the fine for this

“Penny wise is often pound foolish.”

FRENCH PROVERB



STEWARDSHIP is a total lifestyle. It involves our health, time, talents, environment, relationships, spirituality, and finances.

“Electricity can be dangerous. My nephew tried to stick a penny into a plug. Whoever said a penny doesn’t go far didn’t see him shoot across that floor. I told him he was grounded.”

TIM ALLEN

offence can be as high as \$140. No word on how Jason paid the fine. A similar incident happened a few years ago when a New Jersey school district gave two-day detentions to 29 students for the prank of paying their \$2 school lunches in pennies. However, the students were pardoned after their parents complained.²

Today, the common penny is regarded by most individuals as worthless. I’m sure a lot of folks in the government and business would like to get rid of it. According to Jeff Gore, an MIT scientist and founder of Citizens for Retiring the Penny, the average American wastes 2.4 hours handling pennies each year.³ On the other hand, there are thousands of small charities that depend on penny drives to bring in much-needed revenue. Individuals think nothing of pouring out their old penny jars to support these drives, but they wouldn’t part with nickels so easily if pennies were no longer in use.

Many foreign countries have

already dropped their penny coins with almost no impact on consumer confidence. The beautiful country of New Zealand got rid of its penny and two-penny coins without incident back in the late 1980s, and followed that up in 1991 by replacing their two lowest paper denominations (\$1 and \$2) with coins. About 15 years later, New Zealand eliminated the five-cent coin, and while they were at it, they significantly shrunk down the rest of the coins, making them smaller and lighter.⁴ Canada and Australia also eliminated their minor denominations with no impact on their commerce.

Interestingly, the United States also removed its smallest coin in the past. In 1857, the half-cent coin was eliminated, partly because the cost of making it had exceeded its face value, and partly because it was considered to be so insignificant—approximately 10 cents in today’s values. By the way, it currently costs the government two cents for each penny that it makes and ships to banks.⁵

Most public polls still show people’s opposition to getting rid of the lowly penny, yet people continue to demonstrate that they don’t really value it by leaving pennies on shop counters or dropping them in the streets. According to Robert M. Whaples, an economics professor at Wake Forest

University: “The vast majority want to keep a penny, regardless of all the good arguments against it,” he said. “It’s a sentimental attachment.”⁶

If we could see into most homes, we would probably notice a variety of containers—such as piggy banks, plastic bottles, and tin cans—full of pennies, which have occupied the same place in the house for decades. And don’t forget the pennies and other coins just waiting to be found under sofa cushions, as well as in bedroom drawers, ornamental containers, and vehicle ashtrays. By the way, one of those pennies may pay off your house mortgage. Take the 1944 Steel Wheat penny, now worth an average of \$77,234, or the 1943 Copper Wheat penny, valued at \$85,732 in mint condition. Certain pennies from early in the twentieth century will give you a great night out; they can be worth hundreds of dollars!⁷

Household Workman

Before we assign the everyday penny to the cash heap, it may surprise you to learn that there are practical



Many of us probably have jars of pennies that have been around for years.

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and unusual ways in which you can use the common penny. Brandon Specktor, in his article “9 Brilliant Uses for Your Spare Pennies,” gives a number of useful suggestions. Here are some of them:

Check your tires

Place a penny with Abraham Lincoln’s head upside-down between the ribs of your vehicle’s tire. If you see all of his head, then your tire needs replacing. If his forehead disappears, your tire is still sound.

Repel garden pests

Bury a ring of pennies around your plants to keep slugs and snails at bay. Copper reacts with the slime that covers

“MONEY WILL NOT PURCHASE CHARACTER OR A GOOD GOVERNMENT.”

HENRY FIELDING



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