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## Im in ur account, fixin ur passw0rdz

DAILY QUIRK JAMES LILEKS



You know, it was all fun and exciting and cyber-modern the first 10,000 times we had to "log in" to a computer

— Ooh! Just like Sandra Bullock in "The Net" — but now it's a banal chore. Every time Child™ discovers a new fun website, for example, we have to pick a username and a password. Since every kid in the Western Hemisphere wants SPONGEBOB as their username, the site always suggests charming, intuitive alternatives like "SpngBB88932a97." Even worse, when I try to make an account, I frequently find my name has been taken. There are about 20 Lilekses in the nation. Factor out my uncles, few of which are probably uploading to YouTube, and you have some creepy identity-thieving I can't do anything about. But at least I know which password to choose, and that's today's How-To Hint.

But I have a password, you say. (And once again, I must thank you for saying the things that help me advance the ideas I wish to present. You're the best.) Well, your password is either PASSWODR, or the name of your dog. My dog is named "password," so that's out. If you use one password for everything, you run the risk of having all your accounts exposed if someone nabs your secret word. But if you have different passwords, you can't remember them. What's a mother to do?

Simple: Pick a formula. Take the name of the site and change it — write the first five letters backwards, for example. Then insert a numerical string you'll always remember, such as the month/day of your birth or marriage, or the day Sanjaya was finally voted off "Idol." Then add your initials, or someone else's, or the initials of your employer. I'm kidding, right? No: it works, or my name's not Lil843098b.

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More daily at [lileks.com](http://lileks.com).

# Crazy contraptions

RANDY A. SALAS



Recent online buzz about a ridiculously clever hamster-powered contraption reminds us that Plato was partly right when he wrote that necessity is the mother of invention. After reading about it and other fanciful devices chronicled on the Web, maybe the axiom should be restated, "Absurdity is the mother of invention."

**www.tomballhatchet.com**

The Hamster Shredder is not an actual device but a clever concept by British designer and artist Tom Ballhatchet. The idea is simple: Put a sheet of paper in a slot atop a hamster cage. The little rodent spins his exercise wheel. That powers a shredder housed in the cage top. The cut-up paper drops into the cage to provide bedding for the little fella. Brilliant! Or, as the Core77 Design Blog ([www.core77.com/blog](http://www.core77.com/blog)) said, it's "a sparkling beacon of analog promise." For all the hubbub that the Hamster Shredder has created online, there are few details, just two photos at Ballhatchet's site and a note by Core77 that a model of it was exhibited last week at a prestigious international design show in Milan, Italy.

**www.halfbakery.com**

Halfbakery celebrates the "birth of a notion," as one of the site's many funny sayings goes. Users post their crazy concepts for everyday devices, and the rest of the community weighs in with votes of yea or nay. Sure, the idea for a hamster-powered paper shredder has already been taken, but there are loads of other off-the-wall inventions just waiting to be built, based on recent Halfbakery suggestions. Take the floor-cleaning Doggy Lick Meat Spray Mop, for example. "Simply spray our special meat-based aerosol over your entire vinyl, wood or tile floor, and then sit back with a beer as your dog carefully licks all the meaty yumminess off every



TOM BALLHATCHET

Tom Ballhatchet's Hamster Shredder.

square inch of your floor," its creator says. But wait — there's more: Doggy Lick is the perfect complement to the Cat's Tongue upholstery cleaner.

**www.wallaceandgromit.com**

No man and canine know more about crazy inventions — or, in their parlance, cracking contraptions — than Wallace and Gromit, the animated duo popularized by England's Aardman studio. Click on "Films" and then "Cracking Contraptions" at their official site, and you'll find a picture gallery of 10 of their absurd creations, such as the Soccematic rapid-fire soccer-ball shooter and the Snowmanotron automated snowman-builder. I like the burglar-detering Bullyproof Vest. A video clip of only Soccematic was available on a recent visit, but Google

Video ([www.startribune.com/a2650](http://www.startribune.com/a2650)) has a 24-minute compilation of all of the Cracking Contraptions in action.

**www.rube-goldberg.com**

Of course, the legendary Rube Goldberg inspired all of this hamster-powered, half-baked crackery. The cartoonist, who died in 1970, became famous for his drawings of elaborately kooky devices to carry out simple tasks. The Artwork Gallery at his official site offers examples, such as the 19-step Simplified Pencil Sharpener, which involves the use of a kite, an iron and a potted tree with squirrel. Annual academic competitions keep the spirit of Goldberg alive by having students build complex working devices to execute simple tasks. Videos of contest entries as well as other real-world Goldbergian contraptions can be viewed online at Rube Is Cool ([www.mousetrapcontraptions.com/links-10](http://www.mousetrapcontraptions.com/links-10)) and YouTube ([www.youtube.com/results?search\\_query=rube+goldberg](http://www.youtube.com/results?search_query=rube+goldberg)).



Rube Goldberg

**www.startribune.com/a2649**

Use your computer to build your own crazy contraptions through the long-running "Incredible Machine" games. The link above will take you to Download.com's page for "Return of the Incredible Machine: Contraptions," where you can download a free working demo of that program. But many sites offer free downloads of early games in the largely defunct, but popular, series. Just do a Google search for "incredible machine" *abandonware*. No hamster required.

Do you have a favorite website or a question about how to find something on the Internet? Send an e-mail, with your name and city for publication, to [websearch@startribune.com](mailto:websearch@startribune.com). Randy A. Salas is at 612-673-4542.

# It's time to go sale-ing

By JOHN EWOLDT • [jewoldt@startribune.com](mailto:jewoldt@startribune.com)

It's time to sale away with this year's garage sale calendar, continuing in two parts. Sales in June through October will be published May 29. The lists include neighborhood sales with more than 50 separate residences participating or church/school sales with contributions from more than 250 families.

## APRIL

### APRIL 26-28

**EXCELSIOR UNITED METHODIST CHURCH:** 5-8 p.m. Thu. (\$3 admission); 9 a.m.-2 p.m. Fri.; 9 a.m.-noon Sat. (bag day), 840 Hwy. 7, Excelsior. 952-474-5471.

**GLEN CARY LUTHERAN CHURCH:** 9 a.m.-7 p.m. Thu.-Fri.; 9 a.m.-noon Sat. (bag day), 15531 Central Av. NE., Ham Lake. 763-434-5695.

**HOLY NAME CATHOLIC CHURCH:** 4-8 p.m. Thu.; 9 a.m.-5 p.m. Fri.; 9 a.m.-noon Sat. 3637 11th Av. S., Mpls. 612-724-5456.

**PEACE LUTHERAN CHURCH:** 8 a.m.-6 p.m. Thu.-Fri.; 8 a.m.-noon Sat. 3695 County Rd. 101, Plymouth. 763-478-9406.

### APRIL 27-28

**BETHEL LUTHERAN CHURCH:** 7 a.m.-6 p.m. Fri., 8 a.m.-noon Sat., 1321 North Av., Northfield, Minn. 1-507-786-6674

**LUTHERAN CHURCH OF THE CROSS:** 7:30 a.m.-5 p.m. Fri.; 8 a.m.-noon Sat. 5064 County Rd. 13, Nisswa, Minn. 1-218-963-2564.

**WORD OF PEACE LUTHERAN CHURCH:** 9 a.m.-3 p.m. Fri.; 9 a.m.-noon Sat., 21705 129th Av. N., Rogers. 763-496-2400.

## APRIL 28

**DIAMOND PATH NEIGHBORHOOD:** 8 a.m.-4 p.m., north of County Rd. 42 between Diamond Path and Pilot Knob Rd., Apple Valley. Maps available at most sites. 651-683-8089.

**LAC LAVON NEIGHBORHOOD:** 8 a.m.-3 p.m., on Garden View Dr. south of County Rd. 42 and north of County Rd. 46, Apple Valley. Maps available. 952-432-5389.

**JONATHAN NEIGHBORHOOD:** 8 a.m.-3 p.m. Maps available at 112090 W. Hundertmark Rd., Chaska. 952-448-6358.

**RANDOLPH HEIGHTS SCHOOL:** 9 a.m.-2 p.m., 348 S. Hamline Av., St. Paul. 651-293-8780.

**ROSEMOUNT HIGH SCHOOL BAND:** 7 a.m.-4 p.m., Rosemount High School, 3335 W. 142nd St., Rosemount. 651-322-4527.

**TIMBERCREEK NEIGHBORHOOD:** 8 a.m.-4 p.m., off Bavaria Rd., west of Hwy. 41 and north of Pioneer Trail, Chaska. 952-448-5803.

## MAY

### MAY 2-3

**ST. BONAVENTURE CHURCH:** 9 a.m.-7 p.m. May 2; 9 a.m.-4 p.m. May 3 (bag day), 901 E. 90th St., Bloomington. 952-854-4733.

### MAY 2-4

**EDEN PRAIRIE UNITED METHODIST CHURCH:** 5-8:30 p.m. May 2 (\$3 admission); 8:30 a.m.-8 p.m. May 3; 8:30 a.m.-noon May 4 (bag day). 15050 Scenic Heights Rd., Eden Prairie. 952-937-8781.

**OAK KNOLL LUTHERAN CHURCH:** 6-9 p.m. May 2 (\$3 admission); 8 a.m.-8 p.m. May 3; 8 a.m.-4 p.m. May 4. 600 County Rd. 73 (Hopkins Cross Rd.), Minnetonka. 952-546-5433.

### MAY 3-5

**MOUNT CALVARY FAMILY RESOURCE CENTER:** 7 a.m.-4 p.m. May 3-5, 3910 Rahn Rd., Eagan. 651-688-3189.

**ST. AUSTIN CATHOLIC CHURCH:** 9 a.m.-7 p.m. May 3; 9 a.m.-5 p.m. May 4; 8 a.m.-noon May 5, 4051 Thomas Av. N., Mpls. 612-529-2067.

**ST. JOSEPH'S CHURCH:** 9:30 a.m.-8 p.m. May 3; 9:30 a.m.-5 p.m. May 4; 9:30 a.m.-12:30 p.m. May 5, 1310 Mainstreet, Hopkins. 952-935-0111.

**SUMMIT SHORES TOWNHOMES:** 8 a.m.-5 p.m. May 3-5, on County Rd. 5, two blocks south of County Rd. 42. 952-435-2134.

**UNITED METHODIST CHURCH OF ANOKA:** 9 a.m.-6 p.m. May 3-4, 9 a.m.-noon May 5, 850 South St., Anoka. 763-421-2378.

### MAY 4-5

**FAITH LUTHERAN CHURCH:** 9 a.m.-5 p.m. May 4; 9 a.m.-noon May 5. 886 North Shore Dr., Forest Lake. 651-464-3323.

**ST. JOHN THE BAPTIST SCHOOL:** 9 a.m.-4 p.m. May 4; 9 a.m.-3 p.m. May 5. 111 W. Main St., Vermillion. 651-437-2644.

**ST. JOHN IN THE WILDERNESS EPISCOPAL CHURCH:** 9 a.m.-3 p.m. May 4, 9 a.m.-noon May 5, 2175 1st St., White Bear Lake. 651-429-5351.

**SOUTHBRIDGE COMMUNITY:** 9 a.m.-3 p.m. May 4-5. Southwest corner of Hwy. 169 and County Rd. 18, Shakopee. Maps available at each site. 612-910-4445.

**WEST LUTHERAN HIGH SCHOOL:** 4-8 p.m. May 4. \$2. 8-4 p.m. May 5. 3350 Harbor Lane N., Plymouth. 763-509-9378.

### MAY 4-6

**100 MILE:** 7 a.m.-5 p.m. all days. Red Wing to Winona and Bay City to Alma, Wis. 1-888-999-2619. [www.mississippi-river.org/garage.html](http://www.mississippi-river.org/garage.html).

### MAY 5

**BLOOMINGTON JEFFERSON HIGH SCHOOL BAND BOOSTERS:** 9 a.m.-4 p.m. \$2 admission. 4001 W. 102nd St., Bloomington. 952-943-8040.

**CEDAR GROVE NEIGHBORHOOD:** 8 a.m.-

4 p.m., north and south of Diffley Rd. between Nichols and Rahn Rds., Eagan. 651-452-5527.

**JORDAN CITYWIDE:** 8 a.m.-4 p.m. Maps available. Ten miles south of Shakopee on Hwy. 169. 952-292-0515.

**LUTHERAN CHURCH OF THE REDEMPTION:** 8 a.m.-3 p.m. 927 E. Old Shakopee Rd., Bloomington. 952-881-0035.

**MONTICELLO CITY COMMUNITY:** 8 a.m.-4 p.m. I-94 & Hwy. 25. 763-295-2711.

**PRESERVE ASSOCIATION NEIGHBORHOOD:** 8:30 a.m.-4 p.m. Maps available starting April 30 at the Preserve Center, 11221 Anderson Lakes Pkwy., Eden Prairie. 952-941-8400.

**ST. CLEMENT'S EPISCOPAL CHURCH:** 7:30 a.m.-2:30 p.m., 901 S. Portland Av., St. Paul. 651-698-0832.

**SUMMIT HILL NEIGHBORHOOD:** 9 a.m.-5 p.m., south of Summit Av. between Ayd Mill Rd. and Dale St., St. Paul. Maps available at each site. 651-222-1222.

**WEAVER LAKE NEIGHBORHOOD:** 8 a.m.-5 p.m. Three miles west of I-94 on Weaver Lake Rd. 763-420-5925.

### MAY 5-6

**BYRN MAWR:** 8 a.m.-4 p.m. both days. Maps available. I-394 and Penn Av. S., Mpls. [www.bma.org](http://www.bma.org).

### MAY 9-10

**MOUNT OLIVET LUTHERAN CHURCH:** 5-9 p.m. May 9 (\$3 admission); 9 a.m.-2 p.m. May 10, 5025 Knox Av. S., Mpls. 612-926-7651.

### MAY 10-12

**ST. PATRICK'S CHURCH:** 9 a.m.-5 p.m. May 10-11; 9 a.m.-noon May 12. 19921 NW. Nightingale St., Oak Grove. 763-753-2011.

### MAY 12

**HARRISON HILLS AND THE PONDS:** 8 a.m.-5 p.m., County Rd. 9 (Rockford Rd.) or County Rd. 10 (Bass Lake Rd.) to Zachary Lane N., Plymouth. 763-559-7258.

**JOHNSONVILLE NEIGHBORHOOD:** 8 a.m.-5 p.m. Maps available at [www.blainegarage.com](http://www.blainegarage.com). Northwest corner of Hwys. 65 and 242, Blaine. 763-755-0981.

### MAY 17-18

**CHURCH OF ST. TIMOTHY:** 9 a.m.-7 p.m. May 17; 9 a.m.-4 p.m. May 18. 707 89th Av. NE., Blaine. 763-784-1196.

**SACRED HEART CHURCH:** 8:30 a.m.-6 p.m. May 17; 8:30 a.m.-noon May 18 (bag day), 4087 W. Broadway, Robbinsdale. 763-537-4561.

### MAY 17-19

**RICHFIELD CITYWIDE:** 8 a.m.-5 p.m. May 17-19. Maps available for \$2 at Richfield Community Center, 7000 Nicollet Av. S., Richfield. 612-861-9363.

### MAY 18-19

**ANOKA COVENANT CHURCH:** 9 a.m.-4 p.m. both days, 752 N. Grant St., Anoka. 763-421-5194.

**GETHSEMANE UNITED METHODIST CHURCH:** 8 a.m.-6 p.m. both days. 7330 Lake Dr., Lino Lakes. 651-783-8662.

**SEWARD NEIGHBORHOOD:** 8 a.m.-5 p.m. both days, south of I-94 between Hiawatha Av. S. and West River Pkwy., Mpls. 612-338-6205.

### MAY 19

**CALHOUN AREA RESIDENTS ACTION GROUP (CARAG) NEIGHBORHOOD:** 8 a.m.-4 p.m. west of Lyndale Av. S. between Lake and 36th Sts., Mpls. Maps available. 612-281-7456.

**COMO NEIGHBORHOOD:** 9 a.m.-4 p.m. Maps available at 799 W. Wheelock Pkwy., St. Paul, or [www.comopark.org](http://www.comopark.org). 651-644-3889.

**DEER RUN NEIGHBORHOOD:** 8 a.m.-2 p.m., Deer Run Golf Course, on County Rd. 11, 1 mile south of Hwy. 5, Victoria. 952-443-4636.

**RUSH CITY CITYWIDE:** Starts at 8 a.m. Maps available at the Holiday Station Store, at I-35 and Hwy. 361, 50 miles north of the Twin Cities, exit 159, 1-320-358-3880.

**SPIRIT OF HOPE UNITED METHODIST CHURCH:** 9 a.m.-2 p.m. 7600 Harold Av., Golden Valley. 763-545-0239.

### THE WILDS NEIGHBORHOOD:

8 a.m.-2 p.m. Maps available. Cty. Rd. 83 (Canterbury Rd.) and Wilds Pkwy. Prior Lake. 952-447-6971.

**WINTERGREEN NEIGHBORHOOD:** 8 a.m.-3 p.m., Hwy. 5 to Victoria Dr. to County Rd. 18, Victoria. 952-443-1839.

### MAY 19-20

**SOUTH CEDAR TRAILS:** 9 a.m.-5 p.m. both days. 4401 to 4561 S. Cedar Lake Rd. (All townhomes on south side of Cedar Lake Rd.) 952-377-7708.

### MAY 26

**KENNY NEIGHBORHOOD:** 9 a.m.-3 p.m. North of Hwy. 62 to 54th St. between Logan and Lyndale Avs. S., Mpls. Maps available at each site. 612-392-4477.

### MAY 31-JUNE 2

**ASPEN CREST NEIGHBORHOOD:** 8 a.m.-5 p.m. all days. South of Egret Blvd. between Woodcrest Dr. and Tamarack, Coon Rapids. 763-767-6324.

**BLOOMINGTON CITYWIDE:** 8 a.m.-5 p.m. May 31-June 2. Maps and lists for \$2 available at Edward Jones Office, 3920 W. Old Shakopee Rd., or for a free list of participating homes go to [www.ci.bloomington.mn.us](http://www.ci.bloomington.mn.us). 952-831-3798.

**CLUB WEST AND DEACON'S WALK NEIGHBORHOODS:** 8 a.m.-5 p.m. May 31-June 2, Hwy. 65 to 109th Av. NE., then east, Blaine. 763-792-9073.

John Ewoldt • 612-673-7633 or [jewoldt@startribune.com](mailto:jewoldt@startribune.com). Melissa Boyd contributed to this report.

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