

# Life & Times

JULY-AUGUST 2017

## HOW TREES BENEFIT HOME VALUES

The U.S. Forest Service Pacific Northwest Research Station says that planting a tree in front of a house increases the home's sale price by an average of \$7,130. So, in essence, money can grow on trees.



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Planting a tree on the west side of a home can reduce a home's energy bills 3 percent within five years and 12 percent within 15 years. Specifically, west-side trees can bring summertime electric bills down by an average of \$25 a year and reduce air conditioning use by 30 percent, according to the Forest Service.

Trees and other landscaping can also lower the impact of damaging winds on a home, potentially reducing 35 mph winds to 10 mph, according to the Arbor Day Foundation. This also lessens the load on the furnace working to heat the home on those cold, windy days, which can bring energy bills down by 30 percent.

Additionally, a Clemson University study found that landscaping has the potential to increase the value of homes by about 6 percent. Some of the most desired landscape trends among consumers include: rainwater harvesting, native plants and drought-resistant plants, permeable paving, and fire pits, according to the 2016 Residential Landscape Architecture Trends Survey conducted by the American Society of Landscape Architects.

Source: Daily Real Estate News

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## YOUR PET FIRST AID KIT

Nothing is more terrifying for pet parents than experiencing an emergency with their beloved pet. In fact, during emergency situations with my own pets, I need to gain my composure, calm down, and go back to my training. Emergencies are scary and stressful for everyone, even the most trained and prepared people. I am a firm believer in preparing for pet emergencies before they happen, which can help pet parents avoid the immediate panic that sets in. After reading this article, you should be able to put together your own "Pet's First Aid Kid," and you will have more confidence and comfort if you ever experience an emergency with your pet at home. Let's get started!

The first thing that I always stress to pet parents is to contact your veterinarian immediately with any pet emergency. First-aid is not a substitute for veterinary care; however, it may save your pet's life until you can reach your veterinarian. Any first aid administered to your pet should be followed by immediate veterinary care.

### Your pet first aid kit

#### Your Pet First Aid Kit should include:

- Absorbent gauze pads
- Adhesive tape
- Blanket
- Cotton balls or swabs
- Flashlight
- Gauze rolls
- Ice pack
- Leash
- Muzzle (don't use this if your pet is vomiting, choking, or in respiratory distress)
- Non-latex disposable gloves
- Plastic eyedropper or syringe
- Petroleum jelly
- Pet carrier
- Rectal thermometer (your pet's temperature should not rise above 103°F or fall below 100°F)
- Scissors
- Self-cling bandage
- Sterile non-stick gauze pads for bandages
- Sterile saline solution
- Splints and tongue depressors
- Tweezers
- Towels

### Pet emergency contact list

It is important to have any necessary contact information at your fingertips for dealing with a pet emergency. Even if you have memorized these numbers, in times of distress much of what we know is difficult to remember. Your list should include:

- Contact information for your pet's veterinarian.
- Contact info and directions for the nearest 24-hour emergency veterinary hospital.
- Contact info for the poison control center or hotline.
- An emergency contact. Either a loved one or friend who may be able to help during an emergency.

### Pet emergency paperwork

It is always helpful to know your pet's latest vaccination status, and keep appropriate medical records. Many times, in a state of emergency, it is hard to remember everything you need. If your pet's paperwork is easily accessible in your Pet First Aid Kit, this will be helpful for your veterinarian for immediate treatment in an emergency. **The records should include:**

- Vaccination status
- Medical history of past illnesses
- Current illnesses
- A photo I/D of your pet

### Pet emergency medications

Keeping some medications in your Pet's First Aid Kit can be helpful in emergency situations, but it is important to consult with your veterinarian regarding the appropriate dosing and whether **these medications** are safe or indicated for



your pet:

- Benadryl (Diphenhydramine)- your veterinarian must tell you the correct dose before administering this medication
- Glucose paste or corn syrup (for diabetic dogs or small breed puppies with low blood sugar)- speak with your veterinarian before administering glucose paste or corn syrup to your pet
- Non-prescription antibiotic ointment
- Antiseptic wipes, lotion, powder or spray
- Valium (for pets that have seizures)- your veterinarian must tell you the correct dose before administering this medication
- Hydrogen peroxide (3%) (helpful to induce vomiting)- please speak with your veterinarian or local poison control center before inducing vomiting or treating an animal for poison or a swallowed object

I hope this helps everyone be a little more prepared and less panicked in case of a pet emergency. Having the essentials to deal with an emergency will help you feel more secure and ready to care for your beloved pet. Please update your Pet First Aid Kit every 6 months to make sure you have everything you need, and medications are not expired. And remember to keep the kit out of the reach of children. Keeping our pets safe and healthy is always my top priority.

.Source: Dr. Alison Birken, DVM

### 3 TIPS FOR SELLING A SMALL HOME

You just landed a smaller-than-average listing. Now you have to figure out how to capitalize on the square footage to help the house stand out in your marketing. Desare Kohn-Laski, broker-owner of Skye Louis Realty in Coconut Creek, Fla., offers these three ideas that both agents and brokers can use to make a small home a hot sell.

**Identify the target market.** There is a segment of buyers who are attracted to smaller homes. With millennials entering the market for the first time and baby boomers downsizing in retirement, smaller homes are becoming more appealing. These buyers are looking for homes that fit not only their budget but also their lifestyle, says Kohn-Laski. Consumers you may want to target with these properties include single professionals, retirees who can't manage big houses, or even couples without kids, she says. But of course, you must always adhere to fair housing guidelines.

**Take advantage of home staging tricks.** "No matter how small the square footage of your house is, it can look bigger through proper home staging," Kohn-Laski says. Rearrange furniture or use size-appropriate furnishing to create more open space. Let natural light in through the windows, opt for lighter paint colors with cooler tones, and don't forget to have sellers thoroughly clean and declutter.

**Highlight particular selling points.** Sure, bigger houses offer more space, but sometimes it's the amenities nearby or character of a listing that makes it a coveted commodity. Is it close to a shopping district or urban center? Is there nearby access to public transportation? Because of its smaller size, utility bills such as heating and air conditioning will most likely come in lower, says Kohn-Laski. It also means less square footage to maintain and possibly a smaller yard to care for.

*Source—Erica Christoffer, REALTOR® Magazine*



### TRUMP SETS 2018 MILITARY PAY RAISE AT 2.1%

President Donald Trump on Thursday set the military pay raise at 2.1 percent and the civilian pay raise at 1.9 percent for 2018. The change to monthly basic pay is scheduled to take effect Jan. 1, 2018.

The levels are consistent with the president's federal budget request for the fiscal year beginning Oct. 1, though they're less than troops and federal employees were expecting based on the formula called for under federal statute.

By law, military pay hikes are supposed to track wage growth in the private sector as measured by the government's Employment Cost Index (ECI).

In a release from April, the Labor Department's Bureau of Labor Statistics noted, "Compensation costs for civilian workers increased 2.4 percent for the 12-month period ending in March 2017."



In his letter to House Speaker Rep. Paul Ryan, a Republican from Wisconsin, Trump noted his "alternative plan" for the pay raises. "I am transmitting an alternative plan for monthly basic pay increases for members of the uniformed services for 2018," he wrote.

"I strongly support our men and women in uniform, who are the greatest fighting force in the world and the guardians of American freedom," the president added. "As our country continues to recover from serious economic conditions affecting the general welfare, we must work to rebuild our military's readiness and capabilities."

Trump said, "Accordingly, I have determined it is appropriate to exercise my authority under section 1009(e) of Title 37, United States Code, to set the 2018 monthly basic pay increase at 2.1 percent. This decision is consistent with my fiscal year 2018 Budget and it will not materially affect the Federal Government's ability to attract and retain well-qualified members for the uniformed services."

Congress can still override the levels for troop pay, which is set to match the current year's raise. However, lawmakers have struggled to come to an agreement on many aspects of the federal budget, so whether they will do so isn't clear.

House Republican leaders have proposed giving service members a 2.4 percent pay raise in the next calendar year, while some Democrats have pushed for a 2.9 percent boost.

*Source: Military.com, Brendan McGarry*



**DITCHING DIGITAL DISTRACTIONS**

Making these seven simple changes to your daily phone habits will help you work more efficiently and feel less anchored to your mobile devices.

As the fast-paced real estate business becomes more mobile, your smartphone and other devices can be your best friends—but they can also fill your day with interruptions. You can be bombarded with emails, text messages, phone calls, and social media notifications. Digital distractions can get in the way of being effective at your job and living your life to its fullest.

“Technology is making us connect more often within shorter amounts of time,” says Larry Rosen, professor emeritus and research consultant at California State University, Dominguez Hills, and co-author of *The Distracted Mind: Ancient Brains in a High-Tech World* (The MIT Press, 2016). Technology has set an expectation for an immediate response, says Rosen, a situation that can become unrealistic and unhealthy.

If constant communication is making you feel overwhelmed or disorganized, here are seven tips for avoiding digital distractions without sacrificing your sales or your reputation.

**Schedule time to check emails and texts.** If you feel anxious when you can’t check messages on your phone or computer, allow yourself five minutes every hour to catch up on email, texts, and social media messages. Communicate this schedule to your clients or team so they know how often to expect to hear from you.

**Curb cell phone compulsion.** You eat with it, sleep with it, and bring it to the bathroom. A smartphone provides constant stimulation, says Dr. David Greenfield, founder of The Center for Internet and Technology Addiction and assistant clinical professor of psychiatry at the University of Connecticut School of Medicine. The whole process has the same effect on the mind as a slot machine, he says. You never know what you will get or how good it will be, plus you don’t know when that stimulation will come. He says people look at their phone 300 times a day on average. Taking small steps to alleviate the compulsion can go a long way to relaxing your mind. Try eating a meal without your phone or taking a walk and leaving

your phone at home.

**Don’t use a smartphone as an alarm clock.** Do not sleep with your phone under your pillow or next to you on the nightstand. “We create the illusion that we have to have it right next to us all the time. Buy an alarm clock and leave the phone in another room,” says Greenfield.

**Don’t keep your phone near you in the car.** In 2015, 3,477 people were killed due to distracted driving, according to the National Highway Traffic Safety Administration. That accounts for 10 percent of all fatal crashes and marks an increase from 3,179 deaths in 2014. Put your phone in the back seat or leave it in your purse, Greenfield says. Turn it off, and never reach for it while driving. Don’t rely on Bluetooth technology as an alternative: 75 percent of users end up operating other features on their phone while driving, he adds. State laws vary on whether you can hold your phone to talk while driving, but Greenfield conducted a study with AT&T that found people do everything on their phone while driving, including texting, emailing, searching on Google, and taking videos and photos.

**Turn notifications off.** “Notifications are what stimulates that anticipatory response, which causes the stress hormone to elevate,” Greenfield says. As long as the notifications are on, you will be anchored to the phone or your computer. Go into your computer, phone, or application settings to make notification adjustments.

**Remove or restrict distracting apps.** Do you really need all those apps on your phone? Remove certain apps that are distracting you. If you don’t want to take them off your phone, try moving them to the second or third page of your app screen so they aren’t as noticeable, Rosen suggests. It makes you have to work harder to get to them.

**End the rudeness at social gatherings.** If you’re having dinner with clients, family, or fiends, don’t put your phone on the table in front of you; it becomes priority over the person you’re engaging with. Limit yourself to two minutes in the middle of the evening to check your phone. Aside from that, don’t let it disturb your night, Rosen says.

Source: Lee Nelson



### Immune Boosting Food: GARLIC

#### How They Help

It contains sulfur-based compounds that may keep your body free of infection by boosting your immune system.



#### Simple Way to Savor:

Dice a peeled clove or two and stir into your mashed potatoes.

Source: LiveHealthy Magazine

*Quote to Inspire*  
 "People can alter their lives by altering their attitudes"  
 --William James

### Cheeseburger Soup

#### **INGREDIENTS:**

- 1/2 lb. hamburger
- 3/4 c. onion, chopped
- 3/4 c. carrots, shredded
- 3/4 c. celery, diced
- 1 tsp. dried basil
- 1 tsp. dried parsley flakes
- 4 Tbsp. butter, divided
- 3 c. chicken broth
- 4 c. peeled potatoes, diced
- 1/4 c. all-purpose flour
- 8 oz. processed American cheese, cubed
- 1 1/2 c. milk
- 3/4 tsp. salt
- 1/4 - 1/2 tsp. pepper
- 1/4 c. sour cream



#### **DIRECTIONS:**

1. Brown beef in a 3-qt. saucepan; drain and set aside.
2. In the same saucepan, sauté onion, carrots, celery, basil and parsley in 1 tablespoon. butter until veggies are tender; about 10 minutes. Add broth and potatoes and beef; bring to a boil. Reduce heat; cover and simmer for 10-12 minutes or until potatoes are tender.
3. Meanwhile, in a small skillet, melt the remaining butter. Add flour; cook and stir for 3-5 minutes or until bubbly. Add to soup; bring to boil. Cook and stir for 2 minutes. Reduce heat to low.
4. Add cheese, milk, salt and pepper; cook and stir until cheese melts.
5. Remove from heat; blend in sour cream.

Source: Pat M., Through The Country Door

## Today's Laugh



**THIS IS WHAT HAPPENS**

When you fart in a Smart Car

## Popcorn Drop

#### **NEEDED**

- Plastic Cups
- Rubber Bands
- Popcorn
- Empty Boxes

#### **INSTRUCTIONS**

1. First, you'll need to make two pairs of shoe cups. Use a pushpin to poke holes in the bottom of plastic cups. Push a wide rubber band through the holes, and secure it inside the cup with a paper clip.
2. To play, split into two teams. The first player straps cups on their shoes and fills them with popcorn from a bag at the starting line. Then hustles to a box on the other end of the lawn and dumps out the popcorn in the box, then races back. The next player follows suit.
3. The race is over when one of the bags of popcorn is empty. Measure the



Source: Better Homes & Gardens



ROSEVILLE, CA

CONGRATULATIONS

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ON THE SALE OF YOUR HOME!  
AND FOR GETTING \$5,442.50 FROM  
Gretchen Bradley @ Giving Back 4 Homes



That's NOT a typo.  
\$5,442.50 from  
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KEVIN & SHANNON E.

ON THE PURCHASE OF YOUR HOME!  
AND FOR GETTING \$4,055.00 FROM  
Gretchen Bradley @ Giving Back 4 Homes



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CONGRATULATIONS

SETH D.

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AND FOR GETTING \$4,810.00 FROM  
Gretchen Bradley @ Giving Back 4 Homes



SACRAMENTO, CA

CONGRATULATIONS

VJ G.

ON THE SALE OF YOUR HOME!  
AND FOR GETTING \$2,755.00 FROM  
Gretchen Bradley @ Giving Back 4 Homes



# CALIFORNIA HOME SALES FACTS: JULY 2017

State/Region/County	July 2017	June 2017	MTM% Chg
Calif. State Average	\$549,460	\$555,410	-1.1%
Calif. Condo Average	\$443,160	\$451,450	-1.8%
Sacramento	\$353,000	\$347,000	+1.7%
Placer	\$453,000	\$472,000	-4.0%
El Dorado	\$480,500	\$499,000	-3.7%
Contra-Costa	\$633,250	\$660,000	-4.1%
San Francisco	\$1,428,000	\$1,469,000	-2.8%
Santa Clara	\$1,165,000	\$1,182,500	-1.5%
Solano	\$420,000	\$420,000	+0.0%

State/Region/County	July 2017	June 2017	MTM% Chg
Los Angeles	\$566,240	\$548,220	+3.3%
Orange County	\$785,000	\$795,000	-1.3%
Riverside	\$385,000	\$385,000	+0.0%
San Diego	\$613,000	\$612,750	+0.0%
Yolo	\$426,750	\$445,000	-4.1%
Fresno	\$258,000	\$260,000	-0.8%
San Joaquin	\$350,000	\$340,000	+2.9%
Stanislaus	\$297,000	\$289,000	+2.8%
Butte	\$299,900	\$306,500	-2.2%
Yuba	\$266,890	\$275,470	-3.1%

For Complete Report & All California Counties:  
<http://www.givingback4homes.com/newsletter.html>

## HAPPY ANNIVERSARY TO MY AMAZING HUSBAND



10 Years ago I was fortunate enough to marry my best friend. He is a man I am proud to say "he's mine". A man that is honorable, loyal, loving, smart, successful and a wonderful father to our daughter. These 10 years have flown by, but time flies when you are having fun. Thank you for being such an amazing partner and for reminding me each day how lucky and blessed my life is. I love you completely and forever!

All My Love,  
 Gretchen



## JULY

WISHING A HAPPY BIRTHDAY & HAPPY ANNIVERSARY TO THE FOLLOWING:



MIKE S.  
 LINDSEY C.  
 RONNIE C.  
 LUIS A.  
 ROD R.

ABBY & GORDON S.  
 JASON & OLIVIA T.  
 CLAYTON & MONICA N.  
 BECKY & JOE H.  
 RICK & MELANIE M.

KATHY S.  
 MATT A.  
 DEBI E.  
 ZACK P.  
 KIP S.



## AUGUST

WISHING A HAPPY BIRTHDAY & HAPPY ANNIVERSARY TO THE FOLLOWING:



GLENN B.  
 ZAC D.  
 CHINH N.  
 GARY T.  
 MELVIN G.  
 KASSI M.

DARYL & LIZA L.  
 MELVIN & WELLA G.  
 CHARLES & MARISSA T.  
 ZANE & SALLY M.  
 KIP & MOLLY S.

MOLLY S.  
 THELMA B.  
 JAMIE S.  
 GORDON S.  
 JOANNA L.  
 KRYSTAL B.



# MONTHLY DRAWING

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**SEPTEMBER PRIZES**

- 1st Prize** \$50 Gap/Old Navy Gift Card
- 2nd Prize** \$25 Fandango Gift Card
- 3rd Prize** \$10 Lowe's Gift Card

**AUGUST WINNERS**

- 1st Prize** \$50 PF Changs Gift Card-Shannon E.
- 2nd Prize** \$25 HomeGoods Gift Card-Natalia S.
- 3rd Prize** \$10 Coldstone Gift Card-Bella C.

Drawing Disclaimer Available Online.



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