

# Life & Times

MAY 2018

## WHAT IS KITTEN SEASON?

Here we are, smack dab in the midst of the feline phenomenon referred to as “kitten season.” Have you heard of it yet? If not, this is the time of year when every unsprayed, queen (female cat) is likely to have a belly full of babies, or a litter of youngsters by her side. It is during kitten season when humane societies and animal shelters are teeming with youngsters of all shapes, sizes and colors. It’s a great time to

adopt from a shelter!

### Why do kittens arrive seasonally?

Kitten season occurs seasonally because the queen has evolved into a “seasonally polyestrous” creature, meaning she comes into heat only during a particular time of year—during this time she is capable of having multiple pregnancies. In the Northern Hemisphere, the feline breeding season begins in very early spring and may persist throughout the summer months. Peak seasons are February-March and May-June. Throughout the rest of the year, the reproductive cycle goes into a state of dormancy referred to as “anestrus.”



### Why are cats so prolific?

The domestic cat has long been recognized for her fertility. In fact, the feline was worshipped as a symbol of fertility in ancient Egypt. Bastet, the Egyptian goddess of fertility, was portrayed as a cat.

Unsprayed kitties typically experience their first heat cycle (estrus) sometime between five and nine months of age. A queen who is in heat is exceptionally likely to become pregnant for the following reasons:

- A female cat repeatedly comes into heat, approximately every two weeks, through the entire breeding season.

- A queen who is in heat is quite the

precocious creature. She will do whatever it takes to find herself a tomcat, and she will breed with multiple males.

- The domestic cat is an induced ovulator— her eggs lie in waiting until 30 to 50 hours following copulation, at which time they are released from her ovaries. This timing ensures that the eggs & sperm encounter one another.

- During the breeding season, queens quickly come back into heat after giving birth, even before their kittens are weaned.

All of these factors greatly enhance the likelihood of producing a litter, or two, or three during a breeding season. Allowed to breed naturally, a queen might easily produce in the range of 50 to 150 kittens over the course of ten years. Unfortunately, many of these kittens will end up in shelters or euthanized.

### How to help control kitten season?

All of this information makes a strong case for spaying your female kitty before she ever comes into heat. If you’re thinking you’ll simply keep her inside, away from any tomcats, you may be in for a bit of a life disturbance. Cats in heat have been known to drive their humans crazy by vocalizing 24 hours a day, constantly being under foot, rolling around on the ground, and, for all practical purposes, shouting out to the world, “I am in heat!!” This will go on for weeks at a time. During kitten season, it’s not uncommon for sleep-deprived cat lovers to arrive at the veterinary hospital in a state of desperation pleading, “Please, spay her right now!”

Source: Dr. Nancy Kay, DVM, DACVIM

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## KID ID THEFT A GROWING PROBLEM

Children are not supposed to have a credit report in their name, but new studies have found that the number of those who do is growing considerably, which can pose major problems for affected kids.

People under the age of 18 who have a credit report in their name are almost certainly the victims of identity theft, and this is a large and growing problem nationwide, according to a report from the Columbus Dispatch. Some studies have found that large numbers of kids have been affected by identity theft, in which the crooks open large amounts of credit in their name and steal tens of thousands of dollars or more, and leave their young victims to carry the blame.

Often, this type of crime is carried out when a thief gains access to a kid's Social Security number, the report said. Sometimes this can happen as a result of data breaches at hospitals or schools, and other times, their relatives may steal their identity. These youngsters are usually targeted because they will have no credit history and, since parents wouldn't normally even think to make sure their son or daughter has a credit report in their name, the crime is unlikely to be discovered for a long time.



"These kids' Social Security numbers are particularly valuable to thieves because they can go years without detection," Bo Holland, chief executive of AllClearID, told the newspaper. "Because of privacy restrictions, the credit bureaus can't share with parents what they find in their [child's] files. So they don't know who is using the Social number or what accounts were opened."

Source: Credit.com

## 7 EASY WAYS TO USE LESS WATER

Less than 2% of the Earth's water supply is fresh water, and only 1% is available for drinking. Yet the average American uses 140–170 gallons of water per day! Here's how to cut your water consumption—easily:

**1. Shower instead of bathe.** Bathing and showering account for 27% of daily water use. A typical bath takes 37 gallons of water. A 5-minute shower? 15–25 gallons. So...enjoy your shower!

**2. Cut toilet flushes.** You can flush just as often, but use less water by putting a closed container full of water in the tank. Or replace your toilet with one that uses less water. Toilet flushing accounts for the largest amount of water used daily.

**3. Don't leave the water running when brushing your teeth.** You'll save 5 gallons!

**4. Get an energy-saving washing machine.** New designs can save about 20 gallons per load. If you pay for your water, this machine can quickly pay for itself.

**5. Use a car wash.** The EPA says washing a car yourself can use up to 500 gallons of water. An efficient car wash uses only 32 gallons—and recycles the water!

**6. Let your grass grow a little longer.** It'll hold water better and need less watering.

**7. Fix leaks.** Check for leaking faucets and running toilets, as well as outside spigots and hoses. Stopping these leaks can have a huge impact.



## SUMMER HOME IMPROVEMENT

As you gear up for some fun in the sun, you should also think about how you can "summer-ize" your home. Keep your house cool and energy-efficient all summer long with these expert tips:

- Make sure windows and exterior doors are tightly sealed. If you can slip a dollar bill through a window or door gap, seal with caulking or weather-stripping.
- Check your AC filter every month and clean or replace it as needed.
- Install a programmable thermostat so you don't have to remember to dial down the AC every night.
- Open windows at night to cool the house and close them in the morning to keep the cool air inside.
- Whenever possible, use ceiling fans instead of AC. Set all your fans to turn counter-clockwise to create a refreshing down draft.
- Run Washer and Dryer in the evening when the house is cooling down.



## MILITARY: ARMY GUARD SHORT-NOTICE DEPLOYMENTS, MORE TRAINING

The director of the Army National Guard outlined a new strategy Wednesday that will mean more training days and an increased possibility of short-notice deployments for Guard soldiers.

As part of National Guard 4.0, the Guard has begun a transformation aimed at better meeting the needs of the operational Army, Lt. Gen. Timothy Kadavy told an audience at an Association of the United States Army Institute of Land Warfare Breakfast.

The new strategy will mean Guard soldiers may not always be notified about upcoming mobilizations months or even years in advance, Kadavy said.

"Maybe you are not going to get a notification of sourcing two years ahead of time," he said, describing the process of how the Guard notifies soldiers that their unit might be needed for a deployment.

"If you are at contingency plans, that notification of sourcing might be you are mobilized tomorrow, move to your home station; four days later, we want you at the mob station," he continued. "It's a very short deployment timeline, and you've got to meet a combatant commander's timeline."

This is the fourth transformation of the National Guard since the adoption of the all-volunteer force in the early 1970s, Kadavy said. With guidance from Army Chief of Staff Gen. Mark Milley, this effort is designed to bring the Guard up to a higher level of readiness so it can be more responsive to contingencies in the future.

"As part of the Army's operational force, we are decreasing mobilization times in order to meet the needs of the time ... as well as potential contingencies," he said. "With a smaller Army, our country needs a more prompt response from our citizen soldiers."

The National Guard makes up about 39 percent of the Army combat force. That's eight of the Army's 18 divisions or 27 of the Army's 58 brigade combat teams, Kadavy said.

Currently, about 20,200 Guard soldiers are mobilized for missions around the world.

"We project approximately 25,000 mobilizations in fiscal year 2018 alone," Kadavy said.

He added, "We are mobilizing large contingents of Army National Guard soldiers for United States Army missions around the world."

Later this year, Tennessee's 278th Armored Brigade Combat Team will deploy a battalion task force to Poland to participate in NATO's enhanced forward posture mission, Kadavy said. Nine months later, another battalion task force from the 278th will take its place.

To prepare units for the increased operational tempo, "some of our soldiers are being asked to train more than the traditional 39 days per year," Kadavy said.

This is not the first time Guard members have exceeded the traditional number of training days, he said.

In fiscal 2000, the average was 49 training days. In 2008, Guard soldiers trained an average of 85 days per year, per soldier, Kadavy said. And between 2011 and 2015, the average was nearly 67 training days per year, he said.

Kadavy did not say whether the Guard has decided on a specific number of increased training days, but said combat training center rotations have been doubled this year.

The Guard will have two rotations this year at the National Training Center at Fort Irwin, California, and two rotations at the Joint Readiness Training Center at Fort Polk, Louisiana, which will mean high-intensity combat training for nearly 30,000 Guard soldiers, he said.

In addition, "we have also placed our armored brigade combat teams and Stryker brigade combat teams on four-year training and readiness cycles to provide the Army the capacity and capability that it needs," Kadavy said. "Our soldiers need to be healthy, physically and mentally fit, qualified on their weapons and prepared to deploy on short notice."

He did acknowledge that there are risks to placing too many demands on the part-time force, which has employment and family obligations to maintain.

"We have to be aware of all these challenges that our soldiers face," Kadavy said. "We have to keep asking our troops how they are doing."

Leaders, Kadavy said, have to be mindful that troops face a breaking point related to the number of days they commit to the Guard "when not mobilized and deployed."

"We do not want to strain those relationships that they have with their families and with their employers," he said.

Source: Military.com, Matthew Cox

# CAMPING PACKING CHECKLIST

Use this cheat sheet to remind yourself of what you need to bring along when camping. Adjust the list according to the season, your needs and your destination.

## EQUIPMENT & GEAR

Alarm clock  
Batteries for small electronics and cameras  
Camera (and film, if needed)  
Cell phone (to use in case of emergency)  
Collapsible water container  
Compression sack (for stuffing bulky sleeping bags into backpacks)  
Extra nylon stuff sacks  
Lantern Matches/lighter  
Rainfly to cover your tent in case of inclement weather  
Sleeping bag in a waterproof stuff sack  
Sit pads or sleeping pads to place underneath sleeping bags  
Stove and fuel stakes  
Video camera

## CLOTHING

Fleece or wool gloves or mittens  
Fleece jacket or wool sweater  
Fleece or wool vest  
Hiking socks  
Long-sleeved shirts  
Quick-drying pants and/or shorts  
Quick-drying swimsuit  
Rainwear (tops and bottoms)  
Regular underwear  
Short-sleeved shirts  
Warm hat (fleece or wool)  
Warm pants (fleece or wool)  
Wicking liner socks  
Wicking long underwear

## FOOD & COOKING TOOLS

Cooking/eating utensils  
Cookset and dishes  
Drinking cups  
Food Funnel  
Plastic garbage bags  
Pot grabber  
Pot scrubber and dish towel  
Resealable plastic bags  
Reusable water bottles  
Water filter/purifier  
Water-purification tablets

## ACCESSORIES

Backpack  
Bandanna  
Day pack for shorter hikes/Pack Cover  
Glasses and/or contact lenses, if needed (plus an extra pair)  
Hiking boots  
Sunglasses  
Tent & Tent pegs  
Waterproof gloves  
Wide-brimmed rain or sun hat

## MISCELLANEOUS

Healthy snacks (chewy granola bars, dried fruit, mini bagels, nuts, and pretzels)  
Maps and directions  
Money (cash, ATM cards, traveler's checks)  
Printouts of campsite reservations (if necessary)  
Travel journal

## HEALTH & BEAUTY ITEMS

Antibacterial wipes  
Biodegradable soap  
Body lotion  
Comb and brush  
Contact lens solution (if needed)  
Deodorant  
Face cleanser  
First aid kit, including gas relief tablets, antacid, antidiarrheal medicine, antihistamine for allergies, bandages, candied ginger for motion sickness, mild laxative, nonaspirin pain reliever, thermometer in a hard case  
Floss  
Insect repellent  
Lip balm (choose one with SPF 15)  
Personal-hygiene items  
Prescriptions  
Razors  
Shampoo and conditioner  
Shaving gel  
Sunscreen (at least one all-purpose sunscreen with SPF 15)  
Toothbrush  
Toothpaste



## FIRE EXTINGUISHER—A,B,C's

- A-Rated extinguishers for wood, paper, trash and plastic fires.
- B-Rated extinguishers for gasoline, oil and grease fires.
- C-Rated extinguishers for electrical fires.
- Special A-B-C extinguishers are available for home use, simplifying choices

Source: Home Safe & Sound

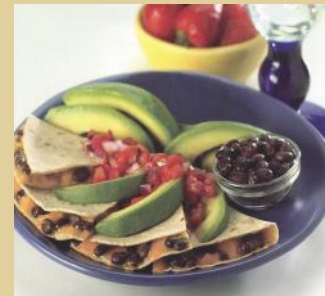


**Did You Know?**

- It takes your food seven seconds to get from your mouth to your stomach.
- Human thighbones are stronger than concrete.
- A woman's heart beats faster than a man's.
- There are about one trillion bacteria on each of your feet.
- Women blink twice as often as men.
- The average person's skin weighs twice as much as the brain.
- If saliva cannot dissolve something, you cannot taste it.

**Today's Laugh****Black Bean Quesadilla****INGREDIENTS:**

- 1 whole wheat tortilla
- ½ cup black beans
- 2 ounces low-fat or soy cheese, grated
- 1 tablespoon onion, chopped
- 1 tomato, chopped
- ½ avocado, sliced
- ¼ cup salsa (optional, instead of tomato & onion)

**DIRECTIONS:**

1. Chop tomato & onion, slice the avocado and grate the cheese.
2. Place the whole wheat tortilla in a nonstick pan.
3. Spread the black beans and onion on half of the tortilla and top with cheese. Fold over.
4. Cook on one side and then turn over to cook until cheese melts.
5. Move to plate and top with tomatoes and avocado.

Source: Greer Childers Body Flex

**Funny Face Switch Plate****NEEDED**

- |                      |                            |
|----------------------|----------------------------|
| • Marker             | • Switch Plate             |
| • Sandpaper          | • Hot Glue                 |
| • Self-Adhesive Felt | • Googly eyes              |
| • Scissors           | • Glitter-Sticker Earrings |

**INSTRUCTIONS**

1. Draw parts for a boy or girl onto stiff self-adhesive felt, cut them out, remove the backing, and press them onto the switch plate (where felt extends beyond the plate, leave the backing on).
2. Hot-glue on googly eyes and accessories, such as glitter-sticker earrings.



Source: Disney Family Fun

## DE-SCUFF YOUR HARDWOOD FLOORS

Hardwood floors are a beautiful feature in homes of any style. But if yours are showing their age and the wear and tear of scratches, sun-fading, and countless kid and dog miles, refinishing is the ideal way to breathe new life into them. Refinishing your floors will also blend in any repaired areas, and is the best way to make transitions between old and new rooms come together seamlessly.

Refinishing hardwood floors is a two-step process, with an optional third one depending on your preference. The floors first have to be sanded, then they're coated with a new finish material. The optional step, done in between, is staining, which is done if you wish to add any type of color beyond that of the natural wood.

### Getting ready

First of all, you have to determine if you have "real" hardwood floors that can be sanded and refinished. Laminate floors, of course, are not designed to be refinished. But more confusing are some of the engineered wood floors. These are strips of plywood or other substrate materials covered with a thin top layer of hardwood. Some engineered floors have a layer that's thick enough to allow for one sanding.

If you've removed carpet from the area, be sure all the pad staples and tack strip nails are out. Fill any holes and repaired areas with putty. If you'll be staining the floor, use a stainable putty, or a precolored putty that's the color of the finished floor. Finally, remove the baseboards, and number them in order so you can easily reinstall them.

Sanding creates lots of dust! So, next you want to get the area ready. Tape plastic sheeting over doorways and over any cabinets. Remove anything hanging on the walls. Remove or cover light fixtures. Consider opening a window and placing a fan in front of it to draw dust outside. If your return air grill is located in the room where you're sanding, cover it, and shut the power to the furnace so that dust isn't circulated throughout the house.

### Sanding

You can rent the upright drum sander used for sanding hardwood floors at any rental yard, and they'll supply you with the necessary sandpaper as well. These sanders are heavy beasts, and they can be a little tricky to use. Tip the sander back, start the drum in motion, then lower it into contact with the floor. Keep a firm grip on the handles, since the sander will want to pull you forward.

Don't start the sander with the drum in contact with the floor, because it will create deep gouges that are hard to get out.

As you approach the wall, stop

before you hit it. Sand with the direction of the grain, and don't let the sander sit on the floor in one spot for long, or you'll gouge it.

If the floor is badly scratched or warped, start with 24- to 36-grit paper. Then, switch to 50- to 60-grit paper and go over it again. For a floor that's not too badly damaged, you can start with the 50-grit.

After doing the main part of the floor, finish off the edges using an edge sander, which can also be rented. This is like a big disk sander with casters, and is guided along the edge of the wall. Use a left-to-right sanding motion to feather in the sanding marks left by the drum sander. Corners and other hard to reach areas can be done with a pad sander. Final sanding is done to 100- to 120-grit using a sanding screen, which is similar to a floor buffer. This can also be rented.

Remember to wear a dust mask and hearing protection for all of the sanding steps. Finally, vacuum the floor to remove all remaining dust. Don't use a damp rag to clean it, as that can raise the wood's grain.

### Stain and finish

If you choose to stain the wood, that's the next step. Liquid, oil-based stains are typically used for hardwood floors, since they're easy to apply and don't raise the grain. Apply some stain in an inconspicuous spot or on a scrap of the same type of wood to be sure you like the color. Make sure you have plenty of ventilation, and work from one corner toward an exit.

Apply the stain with a rag, brush, pad or roller, according to the manufacturer's instructions. If the stain needs to be wiped off, you may find it easier to work with a second person -- one applying the stain and the other wiping off the excess as needed. Allow the stain to dry according to the manufacturer's instructions -- usually at least 24 hours -- before applying a top coat.

Polyurethane is a common top-finish material. It dries clear, wears well, and is easy to apply. Both oil-base and water-base versions are available.

The oil-base materials have long been the preferred choice, but water-base materials have been greatly improved in recent years, and offer a number of distinct advantages. They dry

faster, clean up easier and, perhaps most important, put out a lot less odor. However, they're generally thinner and usually require a buildup of at least three coats to get a good protective finish.

Talk to an experienced paint store for their recommendations, and follow the manufacturer's instructions carefully for application and safety precautions.

Source: Paul Bianchina, Inman News



# CALIFORNIA HOME SALES FACTS: MARCH 2018

State/Region/County	March 2018	Feb. 2018	MTM% Chg
Calif. State Average	\$564,831	\$522,440	+8.1%
Calif. Condo Average	\$460,500	\$454,500	+1.3%
Sacramento	\$365,000	\$350,000	+4.3%
Placer	\$475,500	\$472,370	+0.7%
El Dorado	\$510,000	\$468,000	+9.0%
Contra-Costa	\$655,000	\$610,000	+7.4%
San Francisco	\$1,680,000	\$1,730,000	-2.9%
Santa Clara	\$1,454,500	\$1,383,500	+5.1%
Solano	\$445,000	\$430,000	+3.5%

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

State/Region/County	March 2018	Feb. 2018	MTM% Chg
Los Angeles	\$528,980	\$527,280	+0.3%
Orange County	\$824,450	\$805,380	+2.4%
Riverside	\$398,000	\$396,250	+0.4%
San Diego	\$625,400	\$605,000	+3.4%
Yolo	\$422,500	\$397,500	+6.3%
Fresno	\$264,950	\$266,440	-0.6%
San Joaquin	\$370,000	\$365,000	+1.4%
Stanislaus	\$308,000	\$300,000	+2.7%
Butte	\$315,000	\$297,000	+6.1%
Yuba	\$277,900	\$269,000	+3.3%



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**WISHING A HAPPY BIRTHDAY & HAPPY ANNIVERSARY TO THE FOLLOWING:**



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LIZ H.  
KRISTY & PATRICK N.

NICOLE B.  
ANGELA D.  
MONSSE V.

MICHELLE N.  
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RONNIE & LINDSEY C.





## MONTHLY DRAWING

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**2nd Prize** \$25 Hard Rock Gift Card  
**3rd Prize** \$10 Amazon Gift Card

**APRIL  
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**1st Prize** \$60 Black Angus Gift Card-Sean K.  
**2nd Prize** \$25 Macy's Gift Card-Melanie W.  
**3rd Prize** \$15 Amazon Gift Card-Moira C.

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