

Life & Times

JUNE 2021

VACATION SAFETY TIPS

Remember to prep your home's safety and security before going on vacation this summer.

11 Ways to Protect Your Home While on Vacation:

1. Lock All Doors and Windows

32% of break-ins occur due to a door or window left unlocked.

Tip: Ensure that all entry doors of your home have a deadbolt. This makes it much harder for an intruder to get through

2. Install a Doorbell Camera

Tip: Make sure the batteries of your doorbell camera are working and charged.

3. CCTV System (with phone linking)

You can easily see what's happening in your home using your phone.

Tip: Put up security signs that state a CCTV protects your property.



4. Install Smart Door Locks

Smart door locks are unlike traditional locks that thieves can pick.

5. Scare Burglars with Your Smart Devices

Since smart devices can be remotely accessed using your phone, you can make them believe that you're in the house.

6. Lawn Maintenance

An unmaintained front yard is a sign for burglars indicating that your home is empty. If possible, contact a trusted person to cut the grass every week.

7. Examine Exterior

From the street, look at your house and try to find any valuables, appliances, or equipment you can see through the window or lying around outdoors.

8. Secure Sliding Glass Doors

Tip: Cut a 2x4 to the right length and stick it in the door track. This will stop the door from being slid open if a criminal does pick the lock.

9. Use Light Timers or Smart Plugs

Tip: Set up a timer to flip your lights on at 2:30 a.m. for 15 minutes. Any criminal who is casing your home will think someone must be home because it's such an odd time for lights to come on.

10. Get Help from a Trusted Neighbor or Friend

Let them know that you're going on a vacation and ask for their help to make it look like someone is home.

11. Keep a Low Profile

If you're sharing your travel plans – especially on social media – you're inviting burglars to target your house.

Tip: Upload all your travel photos after the trip, not during.

Source: City of Roseville, Police Dept.

In This Issue

Pandemic Boosts Homes with Pools	2
Yard Plants That Repel Bugs	2
Appliance Maintenance: Water Heater	3
Military: Expanded Tenant Bill of Rights	3
How to Protect Your Kids Online	4
Low Cost Kitchen "Redo"-Hardware	4
Harmony in the Home and Office	5
Recipe-Dilly Ranch Fried Pasta	5
Today's Laugh	5
Kids Corner- Paper Plate Tennis	5
5 Reasons to Love your Real Estate Pro	6
California Home Sales Facts-May 2021	7
Congrats Josh & Alex S.	7
Congrats Elona, John, Matt & Shelby	7
June Birthday's & Anniversaries	7
Monthly Drawing	8
FREE Home Value Report	8
Giving Back 4 Homes Program	8
Giving Back 4 Homes Contact	8

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PANDEMIC BOOSTED VALUE OF HOMES WITH SWIMMING POOLS

Before the pandemic, a casual afternoon dip was something we took for granted. But when our own backyards became our oases during the nationwide shutdowns, we came to appreciate pools more than ever. So much so, they've nearly doubled in value. According to a recent survey conducted by HomeLight that polled 1,300 real-estate agents across the U.S., prior to COVID, a house with a pool sold for an estimated \$16,137 more than a comparable place without one. (As recently as 2018, reports noted having one can actually make your home harder to sell, as some people view it as a literal money pit.) **Now a home with a pool can sell for an estimated \$27,199 more on average.**

While pools have long been an attractive feature for potential buyers in warm climates (we're looking at you, Arizona), the survey suggests that even areas that experience all four seasons are currently seeing some of the highest increases in pool value and building demand. In the Northeast alone, the value of a pool has increased 113

percent, which translates to a spike of \$14,968 to \$31,847.

While 68 percent of the agents polled said they expect to see another surge in pool additions in the coming months, there are still other factors to consider before you make the leap. According to Home Advisor, the national average cost to build an in-ground one is between \$40,000 and \$50,000 (that number can fluctuate depending on if it's made out of vinyl, fiberglass, or pricey gunite). So even in 2021, you'll only recoup a portion of your original investment. Do all your neighbors have swimming pools? That's a solid indicator that adding one to

your own backyard will increase your home's marketability down the road.

If you don't want to spend this summer as you did last—splashing around in a kiddie pool with a margarita in hand—now is the time to make a permanent change. This news is the definition of good vibes.

Source: Lydia Geisel



YARD PLANTS THAT REPEL BUGS



basil
rosemary



rosemary



marigold | mint
basil | catnip
lemongrass

mint
chrysanthemums



catnip
chrysanthemums



mint
chrysanthemums



APPLIANCE MAINTENANCE: WATER HEATERS

Here's a list of maintenance tips to keep your water heater running efficiently and reliably:

- Always adjust the thermostat to 120 degrees to avoid the risk of scalding.
- Always maintain 2 feet of clearance around the appliance unless the manual specifically states otherwise.
- Annually, flush the heater to remove the sediment and debris in the bottom of the tank. Hook up a garden hose to the drain valve and run until the water is clear. This also makes the unit operate more quietly.
- Annually, test the temperature-pressure relief valve by quickly discharging it two or three times. Following the testing, keep an eye out for small leaks from the valve.
- Every three to five years, examine the sacrificial anode rod by loosening the hex head screw and removing it. If more than six inches of the core steel wire is exposed, replace the rod for about \$20.
- Insulate older units with a fiberglass jacket to improve efficiency, being careful to avoid contact with the flue. Newer units already are optimized for peak energy efficiency.
- When leaving town, adjust the thermostat on gas heaters to "Vacation" setting, which maintains the pilot light without heating the water.

Source; Douglas Trattner



MILITARY: EXPANDED TENANT BILL OF RIGHTS

Residents who live in military housing will be covered by even more provisions in the Defense Department's tenant bill of rights beginning June 1, military leaders told Congress. The remaining four provisions of an 18-point tenant bill of rights -- those that will provide military families more negotiating power with the private companies that manage nearly all on-base housing -- have been finalized, according to Todd Schafer, acting assistant secretary of the Navy for Environment, Installations and Energy. "We have agreements with our partners already to implement those, the remaining four," Schafer told the House Appropriations subcommittee for Veterans Affairs, Military Construction and Related Agencies on Thursday. "We're now working through state agreements state by state because there has to be an addendum, because of the different laws and regulations in each state, but we're making very good progress with that."

The provisions include a process for resolving disputes between landlords and tenants; the ability for tenants to withhold their Basic Allowance for Housing payments during dispute resolution; tenant access to the maintenance history of homes; and a standard lease document across all base housing.

Schafer said the standard lease has been approved and will be in use for new tenants beginning June 1. The new provisions will be applied retroactively to those living in housing who are not moving this year. "That's very good to hear," subcommittee chairwoman Rep. Debbie Wasserman Schultz, D-Fla., told Navy and Marine Corps civilian and military leaders during a hearing on quality-of-life issues.

While the provisions were part of the broader tenant bill of rights drafted last year, they weren't implemented because they required extensive negotiations with the private companies that manage 95% of all military housing.

The bill of rights grew out of a scandal that erupted in 2018 over the condition of military housing. Systemic issues came to light in

a series of reports by Reuters on the presence of mold, lead-based paint, dangerous wiring, and extensive damage in military homes managed by the companies, which have 50-year contracts to maintain military housing.

Military spouses testified about their poor housing conditions, saying the companies often ignored maintenance requests or made shoddy repairs to their homes. They argued that they had no recourse for withholding their rent if the landlord ignored issues and asked for a way to have disputes mediated.

Under the new provisions, commanders who are the rank of colonel in the Air Force, Army and Marine Corps, or captain in the Navy, can make decisions in an informal dispute. If it can't be resolved at that level, the dispute will be kicked up the chain of command, where it will be logged as a formal matter and decided by a flag or general officer. The services have worked to improve military housing, as well as their personnel's responsiveness to tenants.

The Marine Corps has hired 114 new privatized housing personnel to interface with tenants and the companies. Their role is "quality assurance for that command installation," Sergeant Major of the Marine Corps Troy Black said Thursday.

Master Chief Petty Officer of the Navy Russell Smith said his service has hired 183 people for those positions on Navy bases and increased engagement with families. As a result, he said, satisfaction scores have risen across 11 locations, averaging 91.3% and above. The Army announced a major initiative last year to improve its family housing, with the private companies contributing \$2.8 billion to build 3,800 new homes and renovate 18,000 existing houses.

During a Senate Armed Services personnel subcommittee hearing, the personnel chiefs of the Army and Air Force also said they were on track to roll out the remaining provisions of the tenant bill of rights by June. Source: Patricia Kime, Military.com

HOW TO PROTECT YOUR KIDS ONLINE

Do you know what your kids are doing online? That question may seem like it has a simple yes or no answer, but that's hardly the case. With so many streaming platforms, social media outlets and new gaming options popping up every day, it's nearly impossible to fully protect your kids from what they can encounter online.

The FTC has several suggestions for protecting your kids online. Here are some of its recommendations.

- **Overcommunicate.** How successful you will be with your child's online safety hinges on communication. Ask them about the newest apps and online trends. Be open about the dangers of the internet and teach them to be skeptical about every website and app. Encourage them to bring concerning items they find to you to have a discussion. The goal is to make your child as concerned about their online well-being as you are.
- **Limit where and how they use their devices.** Most phones, tablets and computers have parental control options that allow you to set age, time and content restrictions. Spend some time to understand what's available to parents and how it works. It can be hard to know where to draw boundaries for your children, but don't let that discourage you. A good practice is to start by over-restricting and then becoming more lenient over time. In addition to what your kids can access, set rules about where they can use their devices.
- **Stress the safe-guarding of personal info.** Most kids know not to openly share addresses, phone numbers or personal information online, but there are a few places where it happens inadvertently. One of those is in your profile you set up for a website or app. In some cases,

your profile is made public to other users. Another place it can happen is in-app chatting. Most apps and games have a forum that allow users to interact with one another. Frequently ask your kids about who they are interacting with online and follow up on any suspicious online relationships. Never allow photos of your home or address to be shared or posted.

Observe attitude and behavior. Monitor your child's activity and let them know you are doing so. If your child is struggling with something they came across online, or have found themselves in a dangerous situation, they may show signs through their behavior. If you notice them withdrawing emotionally, looking to access devices in private, or showing signs of anxiety or depression, your kids may need your help.

Discussing the dangers of the online world with your child can be uncomfortable and awkward, but in today's interconnected world, it's imperative in order to keep them mentally healthy and physically safe.

Source: J.K. Services, Inc.



LOW COST KITCHEN "REDO" - HARDWARE



The kitchen is the focal point in many homes and it's one of the features buyers compare most closely when shopping for a home. Replacing cabinet hardware, such as handles, knobs and hinges, is a quick DIY way to enhance kitchen space. According to HouseLogic.com, an average kitchen is 200-300 sq ft with 30-40 linear feet of cabinetry. This equates to about 40-60 handles and knobs. This low cost and easy kitchen upgrade can add a lot of value.

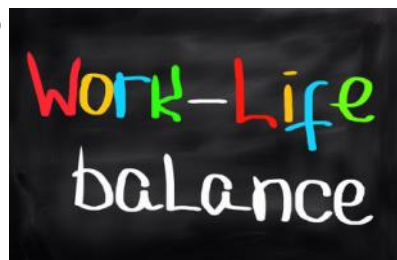
Source: Realtor Mag

Harmony in the Home and Office

Today, an increasing number of parents work part-time, full-time or also from home. No matter if you're in a home office or at an off-site office, you must find a balance between family and work that agrees with you. These suggestions may help. This is a 4 part series with a new TIP each month:

TIP #1: Leave work at work

This is appropriate whether you have an off-site office or a home office. Once you arrive home or close up your laptop for the day, leave it be. Focus on your family while everyone is still awake. If you have to check email or a project status, wait until your child has gone to bed. This goes for the chores, too!



Today's Laugh

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Dilly Ranch Fried Pasta

INGREDIENTS:

- 1 Lb pasta

INGREDIENTS SEASONING:

- 1 pkg. dry ranch dressing mix
- 1/4 c. oil
- 1 tsp. lemon and dill seasoning blend
- 1 tsp. garlic powder

DIRECTIONS:

1. Cook 1 LB pasta until just done. Rinse well with cold water. Dry on paper towels or a lint free towel.
2. Heat oil in a large, heavy bottom pan. Test 1 piece of pasta. When it starts to fry add roughly 1 cup of pasta at a time. Fry pasta until it feels hard and is golden...approx 10-12 minute dry on paper towels.
3. Combine seasoning and oil in a large bowl. Add fried, dried pasta and toss gently. Use paper towel to blot any excess oil before serving.



Source: Cynthia M.S., Lebanon, PA –Countrydoor

Paper Plate Tennis

NEEDED

- Paper Plates
- Sticky Tape or Glue
- Balloons
- Jumbo popsicle craft sticks
- Pens or crayons to decorate

INSTRUCTIONS

1. Decorate your paper plate with pens or crayons. You can draw on both sides of the paper plate.
2. Stick a jumbo popsicle craft stick onto the back with sticky tape or glue.
3. Blow up a balloon
4. Ready to play! Hold the paper plate rackets by the popsicle stick handles and use them to hit the balloon into the air. Try passing the balloon backwards and forwards between two players, solo keepy-uppys or piggy in the middle.



Source: Mykidcraft.com



5 Reasons to *Love* Using a Real Estate Professional



Paperwork

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They are well educated in and experienced with the entire sales process.



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They act as a "buffer" in negotiations with all parties throughout the entire transaction.



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They help you understand today's real estate values when setting the price of a listing or an offer to purchase.



Understanding of Current Market Conditions

They simply & effectively explain today's real estate headlines & decipher what they mean to you.

CALIFORNIA HOME SALES FACTS: MAY 2021

State/Region/County	May 2021	April 2021	MTM% Chg
Calif. State Average	\$818,260	\$814,010	+0.5%
Calif. Condo Average	\$592,000	\$570,000	+3.9%
Sacramento	\$500,000	\$490,000	+2.0%
Placer	\$663,450	\$625,000	+6.2%
El Dorado	\$688,000	\$654,750	+5.1%
Yolo	\$617,500	\$566,000	+9.1%
Stanislaus	\$440,000	\$419,000	+5.0%
San Joaquin	\$500,000	\$490,000	+2.0%
Nevada	\$563,250	\$555,000	+1.5%

For Complete Report & All California Counties:

<http://www.givingback4homes.com/newsletter.html>

State/Region/County	May 2021	April 2021	MTM% Chg
Solano	\$579,000	\$555,000	+4.3%
Contra-Costa	\$1,015,000	\$990,000	+2.5%
San Francisco	\$1,900,000	\$1,800,000	+5.6%
Fresno	\$361,500	\$355,000	+1.8%
Santa Clara	\$1,675,000	\$1,650,000	+1.5%
Orange County	\$1,100,000	\$1,100,000	+0.0%
Los Angeles	\$725,680	\$718,440	+1.0%
San Diego	\$851,000	\$825,120	+3.1%
Butte	\$449,000	\$438,500	+2.4%
Yuba	\$400,000	\$384,700	+4.0%



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JOSH & ALEX S.

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JUNE



WISHING A HAPPY BIRTHDAY & HAPPY ANNIVERSARY TO THE FOLLOWING:

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JEREMY D.
TRAVIS & LACEY Y.

KRISTIN W.
BRILYNN L.
AMY P.
MAT & NATALIA S.
MATT & JENNY A.

OLIVIA T.
LIZ P.
STEVE H.
SHANNON & KEVIN E.
DEANNA & BOBBY B.

SUZIE Z.
SETH D.
VALENTINA A.
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PRIZES**

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3rd Prize \$10 Coldstone Gift Card

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2nd Prize \$25 Baja Fresh Gift Card-Becky H.
3rd Prize \$10 Barnes & Noble Gift Card-Mat S.

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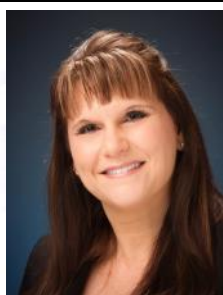
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