

Life & Times

AUG.—SEPT. 2023

YOUR HOME IS A BUNDLE OF TAX BENEFITS

There are many tax benefits built into home ownership. Here is a review of the most common.

- **The home gain exclusion.** When

you sell an asset for a profit, it creates a taxable event. If the asset, though, is your primary residence, you can exclude up to \$250,000 (\$500,000 if married filing jointly) of these gains. Special rules do apply, but this is a major tax benefit of home ownership.

How to take advantage: You must live in your house for at least 2 of the previous 5 years to qualify for the home gain exclusion. Start planning now if you think you'll be selling your house in the near future so you can qualify for this tax break.



- **Itemized deductions.** Mortgage interest and property taxes are two deductions you can claim as a homeowner. The interest is deductible on the first \$750,000 associated with loans secured by your primary and secondary residences (\$1 million for mortgages underwritten prior to 2018), while up to \$10,000 of property taxes may be deducted. You may also deduct points paid as an itemized deduction over the life of your mortgage.

How to take advantage: You need to itemize your deductions to take advantage of these tax breaks. Consider bunching your mortgage interest and property taxes with other itemized deductions such as charitable contributions, taxes and excess medical expenses to try and exceed the standard deduction for

your filing status.

- **Free rental income.** You can rent out your home for up to two weeks and not claim the income. While you cannot deduct expenses in this scenario, this is a great tax break if your home is located next to a popular landmark or a major event. **How to take advantage:** Keep track of how many days you rent out your home so you don't go over the 14-day limit. If you rent your house for just 15 days over a given year instead of 14, you'll owe taxes on all rental income for that year, including the first 14 days.

- **Home office deduction.** If you use a portion of your house exclusively as a home office, you may be able to deduct certain expenses such as mortgage interest, insurance, utilities, & repairs.

How to take advantage: To qualify for the deduction, you generally must use this portion of your house exclusively for business purposes on a regular basis. So be sure to understand the limitations of this deduction.

Your house is a great place to control the amount of tax you owe, but only if you know the rules and can apply these rules to your situation. Use this information as a starting point to see if there are ways to leverage your home's tax benefits.

Source: J.K. Services, Inc.

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BENEFITS OF MULTIGENERATIONAL HOUSEHOLDS

If you're thinking of buying a home and living with siblings, parents, or grandparents, then multigenerational living may be for you. The *Pew Research Center* defines a multigenerational household as a home with two or more adult generations. And the number of individuals choosing multigenerational living has increased over the past 50 years.

As you consider this option for your own home search, know it could help you on your homeownership journey and provide you with other incredible benefits along the way.

Living with Loved Ones Could Help You Achieve Your Homeownership Goals

There are several reasons people choose to live in a multigenerational household, and for many, the arrangement is a personal one. But according to the *Pew Research Center*, the top reason people choose to live together today is financial.

A recent study from *Freddie Mac* also finds more people are choosing to buy a home together so they can save money in the homebuying process. As the study says:

“. . . an increasing percentage of young adult first-time homebuyers are relying on support from older generations, including their parents, to buy a home together.”

For these individuals, combining their resources can help

them achieve their dream of buying and owning a home. By pooling their incomes together to make that purchase, they may be able to afford a home they couldn't on their own.

Other Key Benefits of Multigenerational Living

Not to mention, living in a home with loved ones can have other benefits too, like giving you more quality time to spend together. Darla Mercado, Certified Financial Planner and Markets Editor for *CNBC.com*, explains how this living arrangement can help on a personal and financial level:

“Residing with relatives can offer advantages . . . you can pool multiple streams of income, for instance. And in households with young children, grandparents can pitch in with child care.”

If this sounds like a great option for you, it's important to work with a trusted real estate professional to discuss your needs. They can help you navigate the process to find the right home for you and your loved ones.

Bottom Line

More people are discovering the benefits of multigenerational living today. For the best information and help deciding what's right for your personal situation, connect to a local real estate advisor and start the conversation today.

Source: Keeping Current Matters

DON'T FEAR THE RETURN OF ADJUSTABLE-RATE MORTGAGES

If you remember the housing crash back in 2008, you may recall just how popular adjustable-rate mortgages (ARMs) were back then. And after years of being virtually nonexistent, more people are once again using ARMs when buying a home. Let's break down why that's happening and why this isn't cause for concern.

Why ARMs Have Gained Popularity More Recently

Last year is when mortgage rates climbed dramatically. With higher borrowing costs, some homeowners decided to take out this type of loan because traditional borrowing costs were high, and an ARM gave them a lower rate.

Why Today's ARMs Aren't Like the Ones in 2008

To put things into perspective, let's remember these aren't like the ARMs that became popular leading up to 2008. Part of what caused the housing crash was loose lending standards. Back then, when a buyer got an ARM, banks and lenders didn't require proof of their employment, assets, income, etc. Basically, people were getting loans that they shouldn't have been awarded. This set many homeowners up for trouble because they couldn't pay back the loans that they never had to qualify for in the first place.

This time around, lending standards are different. Banks and lenders learned from the crash, and now they verify income, assets, employment, and more. This means today's buyers actually have to qualify for their loans and show they'll be able to repay them.

Archana Pradhan, Economist at *CoreLogic*, explains the difference between then and now: *“Around 60% of Adjustable-Rate Mortgages (ARM) that were originated in 2007 were low- or no-documentation loans . . . Similarly, in 2005, 29% of ARM borrowers had credit scores below 640 . . . Currently, almost all conventional loans, including both ARMs and Fixed-Rate Mortgages, require full documentation, are amortized, and are made to borrowers with credit scores above 640.”*

In simple terms, Laurie Goodman at *Urban Institute* helps drive this point home by saying: *“Today's Adjustable-Rate Mortgages are no riskier than other mortgage products and their lower monthly payments could increase access to homeownership for more potential buyers.”*

Bottom Line

If you're worried today's adjustable-rate mortgages are like the ones from the housing crash, rest assured, things are different this time.

Source: Keeping Current Matters



CLEANING PET STAINS & ODORS

Problem:

How do you clean pet stains and odors out of the carpet? Our cat decided to use one room in the house to urinate in. This is new, and now I can't get her to stop. I've tried different products on the carpet; however, since the smell is still there, she continues this habit. Do you have any ideas how I might reclaim the carpet in this room?
-Tim K.; Elk Grove, CA



Answer:

Fill a spray bottle halfway with Heinz White Vinegar and fill up the rest of the bottle with water. Shake well and spray the area of the carpeting that the cat has turned into a litter box substitute. Or, if the stain reeks, use the vinegar full strength. The spot will smell like vinegar and urine for about three days, but once it dries, the vinegar will absorb the odor and prevent the cat from returning to that spot.

SOURCE: Joey Green, The Guru of Alternative Uses

MILITARY: SPECIAL PACT ACT ENROLLMENT ENDS SEPT. 30

Post-9/11 combat veterans who served between 2001 and 2013 have until Sept. 30 to enroll in Department of Veterans Affairs health care. The date will conclude a one-year "special enrollment period" provided by the PACT Act.

This provision of the PACT Act took effect in 2022. The act's full name is the Sergeant First Class Heath Robinson Honoring Our Promise to Address Comprehensive Toxics. It gave the potential to receive compensation to millions of veterans or their survivors who were exposed to radiation and toxic chemicals while in uniform, going back to the 1960s.

The VA enrollment period for post-9/11 combat vets is meant to get those veterans deemed to have been exposed to toxins based on their deployments onto the VA's rolls and into care in which the providers are cognizant of toxic exposures, said Cory Titus, an Army infantry veteran and director with the Military Officers Association of America who led the association's PACT Act advocacy.

The bill automatically assumes troops who served in certain locations were exposed. Once enrolled, veterans' individual circumstances will dictate how much care they'll actually be eligible to receive.

"Part of the challenge with toxic exposures is, there's such a delayed onset with all these different conditions. So, the reason for expanding the health care in the way we did is, we wanted to make sure that they were in the VA system and then had access to the different health-care resources," Titus explained.

"So, if something came up, on top of

being ill, they weren't necessarily trying to deal with their private health-care insurance," he said. "Most health-care providers in America aren't thinking about, 'Oh, and you were around burning trash, and that might be something that's contributing.' So getting them in the VA system and really just relying on the expertise there was an important part of this."

To qualify, veterans who have never before enrolled in VA health care must have served on active duty "in a theater of combat operations during a period of war after the Persian Gulf War," according to the VA, and they must have been "discharged or released" between Sept. 11, 2001, and Oct. 1, 2013. Veterans who served "in combat against a hostile force during a period of hostilities" after Nov. 11, 1998, may also enroll during the special period.

In passing the PACT Act, Congress also expanded the enrollment window for post-9/11 combat veterans who exited service on or after Oct. 1, 2013. Instead of the one-year special period, however, they'll have up to 10 years after their military separation date.

How to Apply for VA Health Care.

Veterans may apply for VA health care:

- Online at <https://www.va.gov/health-care/apply/application/introduction>.
- By calling 877-222-8387.
- By mail. Send VA Form 10-10EZ to Health Eligibility Center, 2957 Clairmont Road, Suite 200, Atlanta, GA 30329.
- In person at a VA medical center or clinic.

Source: Amanda Miller, Military.com



MOVIE PREVIEWS...INTERESTING FACTS

Movie previews are called “trailers” because they were originally shown after the movie.

In the early days of moviegoing, you didn’t just buy a ticket for one feature-length film and leave once the credits started rolling. You were instead treated to a mix of shorts, newsreels, cartoons, and, eventually, trailers — which, per their name, played after the movie rather than before — with people coming and going throughout the day. The idea for trailers came from Nils Granlund, who in addition to being a business manager for movie theaters worked as a producer on Broadway, which explains why the first trailer was actually for a play: 1913’s *The Pleasure Seekers*.

Many theater owners think trailers are too long. FACT? FIB? IT'S A FACT

If you’d prefer not to spend 20 minutes before every movie watching trailers, you aren’t alone. The National Association of Theater Owners has tried to impose a two-minute limit on previews, which is about 30 seconds shorter than their average individual runtime.

Chicago producer William Selig took the idea further that same year by ending each installment of his serialized action-adventure short films with a tantalizing preview of the next chapter — a precursor to ending movies and TV shows on a cliffhanger. Today there are production houses that exclusively make trailers and are handsomely rewarded for their efforts, sometimes to the tune of millions of dollars.



Source: Interesting Facts

BEER CAN HELP YOU LOOK YOUNGER?

Did you know *beer* can help you look younger?

No, I’m not talking about DRINKING beer... in fact, all that does is cause dryness and inflammation in your skin.

But applying it directly to your skin can actually make it look **softer, smoother, and more supple**.

How?

Turns out, beer is rich in vitamins such as Riboflavin, Pantothenic Acid, Biotin, B12, B1, and B3...

Plus, loads of minerals like magnesium, potassium, and phosphorus.

Together, these nutrients restore a younger look by:

- Brightening
- Smoothing
- Tightening
- Exfoliating

Cindy Jones, PhD, a cosmetic biochemist, tells Healthline Magazine:

“Malt found in beer exfoliates, stabilizes collagen and elastin, improves microcirculation, and prevents premature aging skin. The yeast found in beer is rich in B vitamins, which help moisturize the skin.”



So, if you’ve got any beer lying around, and have some spare time, I really recommend giving this a try...

Victoria’s Beer Face Mask Ingredients:

- 1 tablespoon plain yogurt
- 1 tablespoon olive oil
- 1 tablespoon beer (any type works!)
- 1 egg white

How to:

1. Combine all ingredients in a bowl until fully mixed.
2. Thoroughly cleanse your face and pat dry.
3. Apply a thin layer of beer mask to your face and leave on for 15-20 minutes.
4. Wash off with warm water and pat dry.
5. Apply your moisturizer of choice.

You can whip together this mask pretty quickly, but the benefits last for days.

The egg white will help your skin feel a little tighter and firmer... and the yogurt boosts hydration for a supple, youthful feel.

I really hope you give this one a try, because I think we could all use a little brightening boost!

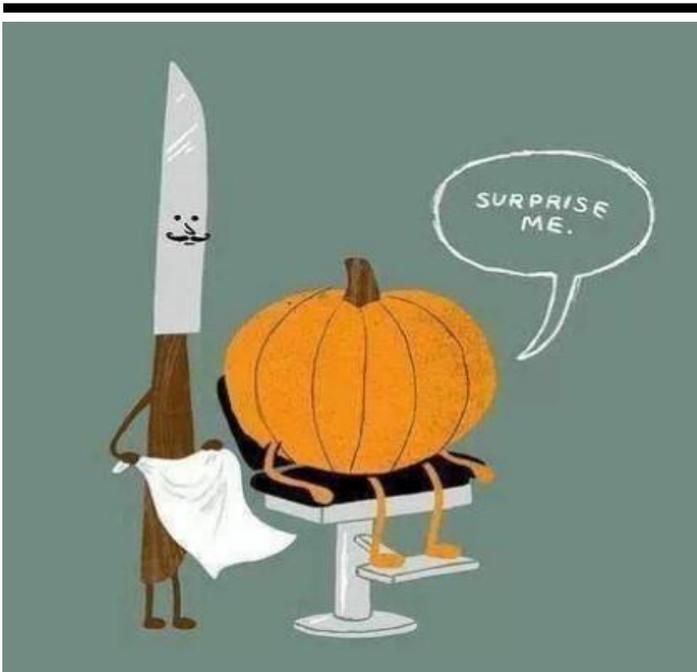
Source: Victoria Renee , City Beauty

Tailgate Tips

- **Make a List :** Write down all the things you'll need, including your game tickets. And don't forget chairs and water. Typical rookie blunders.
- **Cool Packing 101 :** Put each food item in its own airtight bag or container and keep everything in the fridge until you're ready to start packing. Line the bottom of the cooler with ice packs and put colder food in first.
- **Safety First :** Keep food covered. Keep hot dishes hot and cold dishes cold. Throw away any food that's been sitting out for more than 3 hours.



Today's Laugh



Kerry's Cranberry Chicken

INGREDIENTS:

- 4 chicken breasts
- 1 small bottle of Catalina dressing
- 1 can whole-berry cranberry sauce
- 1 envelope dry onion soup mix
- 1/4 c. white wine

DIRECTIONS:

1. Place chicken in a lightly greased 9" x 13" pan.
2. Mix remaining ingredients together and pour over chicken.
3. Bake at 350° F for about 1 hour.
4. Cool for 5-10 minutes and serve.
5. Enjoy!



Source: Kerry G., Gilbert AZ

Cheerio Bird Feeder

NEEDED

- Cheerios
- Pipe Cleaners
- Thick Twine

INSTRUCTIONS

1. String Cheerios along 3/4 of pipe cleaner.
2. Join ends of pipe cleaner and twist together to make a solid shape.
3. Bend pipe cleaner to heart shape.
4. Interlock the shapes when twisting closed as seen in picture to make a birdfeeder that will feed the entire bird family.
5. String thick twine through the top heart to attach to a nail or branch.
6. Fun idea as pictured; add as many hearts as there are members in your family





SACRAMENTO, CA

CONGRATULATIONS

LUCY & ANTOINE L.

ON THE PURCHASE OF YOUR HOME!

AND FOR RECEIVING \$2,103.00 FROM

Gretchen Bradley @



SACRAMENTO, CA

CONGRATULATIONS

ANDRE C. & ASHLEY G.

ON THE PURCHASE OF YOUR HOME!

AND FOR RECEIVING \$3,235.00 FROM

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That's NOT a typo.
\$3,235 from
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ROCKLIN, CA

CONGRATULATIONS

TOM & LINDA B.

ON THE PURCHASE OF YOUR HOME!

AND FOR RECEIVING \$3,690.00 FROM

Gretchen Bradley @



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\$3,690 from
Gretchen @ GB4H!

HAPPY ANNIVERSARY TO MY AMAZING HUSBAND



Wow, it has been 16 fantastic years! I am fortunate enough to be married to my best friend. A man that is honorable, loyal, loving, smart, successful and a wonderful father to our daughter. This time has flown by. 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



CALIFORNIA HOME SALES FACTS: JUNE 2023

State/Region/County	June 2023	May 2023	MTM% Chg	State/Region/County	June 2023	May 2023	MTM% Chg
Calif. State Average	\$838,260	\$836,110	+0.3%	Solano	\$590,000	\$600,000	-1.7%
Calif. Condo Average	\$650,000	\$635,000	+2.4%	Contra-Costa	\$930,000	\$888,000	+4.7%
Sacramento	\$530,000	\$535,000	-0.9%	San Francisco	\$1,595,000	\$1,654,000	-3.6%
Placer	\$667,500	\$682,500	-2.2%	Fresno	\$429,390	\$420,000	+2.2%
El Dorado	\$700,000	\$660,000	+6.1%	Santa Clara	\$1,825,000	\$1,788,000	+2.1%
Yolo	\$617,000	\$646,730	-4.6%	Orange County	\$1,260,000	\$1,256,500	+0.3%
Stanislaus	\$460,000	\$463,500	-0.8%	Los Angeles	\$832,310	\$744,770	+11.8%
San Joaquin	\$530,000	\$531,950	-0.3%	San Diego	\$958,250	\$935,000	+2.5%
Nevada	\$573,860	\$552,500	+3.9%	Butte	\$413,500	\$436,950	-5.4%
				Yuba	\$445,000	\$440,990	+0.9%

For Complete Report & All California Counties:

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

*revised

CALIFORNIA HOME SALES FACTS: JULY 2023

State/Region/County	July 2023	June 2023	MTM% Chg	State/Region/County	July 2023	June 2023	MTM% Chg
Calif. State Average	\$832,340	\$838,260	-0.7%	Solano	\$600,560	\$590,000	+1.8%
Calif. Condo Average	\$645,000	\$650,000	-0.8%	Contra-Costa	\$900,000	\$930,000	-3.2%
Sacramento	\$547,000	\$530,000	+3.2%	San Francisco	\$1,460,000	\$1,595,000	-8.5%
Placer	\$660,000	\$667,500	-1.1%	Fresno	\$417,500	\$429,390	-2.8%
El Dorado	\$650,000	\$700,000	-7.1%	Santa Clara	\$1,800,000	\$1,825,000	-1.4%
Yolo	\$625,000	\$617,000	+1.3%	Orange County	\$1,300,000	\$1,260,000	+3.2%
Stanislaus	\$465,000	\$460,000	+1.1%	Los Angeles	\$851,540	\$832,310	+2.3%
San Joaquin	\$545,000	\$530,400*	+2.8%	San Diego	\$969,020	\$958,250	+1.1%
Nevada	\$579,900	\$573,860	+1.1%	Butte	\$429,000	\$413,500	+3.7%
				Yuba	\$415,000	\$445,000	-6.7%

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AUGUST



WISHING A HAPPY BIRTHDAY & HAPPY ANNIVERSARY TO THE FOLLOWING:

GLENN B.

LIZ E.

ZAC D.

MICHAEL N.

MELVIN G.

PAM E.

KASSI M.

ALEX S.

DARYL & LIZA L.

MELVIN & WELLA G.

ZANE & SALLY M.

KEVIN & SUSAN J.



SEPTEMBER



WISHING A HAPPY BIRTHDAY & HAPPY ANNIVERSARY TO THE FOLLOWING:

BECKY H.

ZANE M.

SABRINA R.

SANDRA S.

RIALYN J.

DANIELLE O.

YASSY W.

TAMMY G.

BRYNNE C.

KATIE P.

LUCY L.

SHELBY G.

LISA C.

SCOTT T.

KARINA F.

LULU G.

DANIELLE O. & MATT F.

PAUL & HEATHER M.

LORI & DAVID B.

KATE & RYAN S.

OCTAVIO & SABRINA R.

JOSH & ALEX S.

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3rd Prize \$10 Panera Bread Gift Card

AUGUST WINNERS

1st Prize \$50 Lands End Gift Card-Kevin G.
2nd Prize \$25 Door Dash Gift Card-Cecilia W.
3rd Prize \$10 Chipotle Gift Card-Jason C.

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Phone (916) 769-0184
Email Gretchen@GB4Homes.com
Email GB4Homes@Gmail.com
Web www.GivingBack4Homes.com
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