

# The McJunkin Messenger

News To Help You Save Time And Money

August 2011

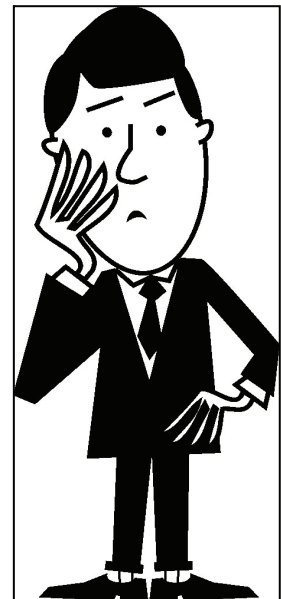
## Four Steps for Beating Post-Vacation Blues

If your vacation should have relaxed and recharged you why can going back to work be so hard? It takes two days to come back up to speed after a two-week vacation, according to researchers.

Here are a few ideas to minimize that deer-in-the-headlights feeling when you go back to work:

**Let others know your plans.** Let clients and co-workers know when you'll be away and give them alternative contacts. You'll reduce the number of messages waiting for you at the office when you return.

**Don't set your alarm clock on vacation!** Don't try to cram so many activities into every minute of your trip that you don't leave time to actually relax. You don't want to return to work wound up.



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**Ease back into it.** If you can possibly arrange it, make your first day back a half-day. You can take care of the most pressing issues before diving back in.

Most importantly, it makes sense to plan your return from vacation so that you leave yourself time back home to unpack and unwind from traveling before you go back to work.

*Keith*

## **August Word Scramble**

*Unscramble all four words, then assemble words into the correct order to create a phrase*

msigi sasle ear oemh

Everyone who faxes, emails or calls in the correct answer by the last day of this month will be entered into a drawing for a Lowe's \$30 gift card

Call 281.597.7300 and leave a message or email me at [keith@mcjunkinhomes.com](mailto:keith@mcjunkinhomes.com)

## **Is it Gauche To Celebrate Left-Handers On August 13th?**

Even though the French word "gauche" literally means "left," it is also a term used to describe something tasteless. Stand up for the left-handers in your life and celebrate with Left-Handers International, of Topeka, Kansas on August 13<sup>th</sup>.

Ten percent of the population is left-handed, but since it's a right-handed world, only a few people are genuinely totally left-handed. Southpaws are forced to use their right hands at least

a little to use certain tools, but most also use their right hands to do things like throw or golf, or their right foot to kick.

People who are ambidextrous are fortunate to be able to use both hands equally. This is a distinct advantage, such as for a woman who can put makeup on her left eye with her left hand and on her right eye with her right hand, or if one hand were to become injured. Many left-handers find it is surprisingly easy to write backward, or 'mirror writing.'" A left-handed Leonardo da Vinci famously wrote his notebooks this way.

Stone Age tools show that people were once evenly divided between right- and left-handers. One theory about why the right hand became dominant is that because the heart is on the left, warriors had to hold their shields with their left hands to protect their hearts, so they held weapons in their right hands. World religions distinctly favor right-handedness. The Bible contains more than 100 favorable references to the right hand and 25 unfavorable references to the left. Wedding rings worn on the left hand come from the Greeks and Romans, who did so to fend off the evil associated with the left hand.

Besides da Vinci, famous left-handers include Julius Caesar, Michelangelo, Babe Ruth, Marilyn Monroe, Oprah Winfrey, Prince William of England, Barack Obama, Bart Simpson and Kermit the Frog.

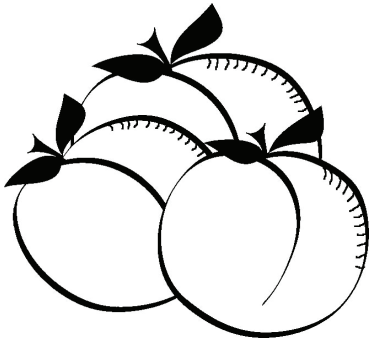
# Don't Cut Back on These Necessities

You can't be too careful with your money these days, but no matter how tough things get, there are a few areas where the term "pennywise and pound foolish" may come into play." You'll save money in the long run by continuing to allocate your funds to these items:

**Medical fees.** It's cheaper to see your doctor and dentist regularly so you can take care of problems before they become serious health issues. These days, more health care providers are sensitive to their patients' financial needs, too, and are working to keep their costs down.

**Insurance.** The premiums are expensive, but a car accident or a hospital stay will cost many times that amount. It's not worth the risk.

**Home and car maintenance.** Invest in the upkeep of your house and your car to avoid bigger expenses should something go wrong. Just maintaining proper tire pressure can save you money on gas, and an oil change is so much cheaper than an engine!



**Good food.** Prepackaged food and fast food may seem less expensive, but if they're bad for you, you aren't getting a bargain. Invest in nutrition, not just salt and fat. If you buy fresh food, you will be investing in your health, not just quieting hunger pangs.

## ***Paralyzed Patient's Thoughts Control a Computer via a Brain Implant***

A brain implant that enables a paralyzed woman—identified in medical journals only as S3—to control a computer cursor has passed a big test: it's still functioning after 1,000 days in the patient's head.

The implant is a silicon electrode array that is about the size of an aspirin. It senses electrical signals given off by neurons in the part of her brain that plans her body's movement.

If she thinks about moving a computer cursor with her hand, the implant actually follows her thoughts (by following the electrical trail through her brain) and moves her hand in that direction.

This technology is being developed to help patients communicate who are unable to manipulate a computer mouse with their hands. Scientists say that the durability of the implant is a crucial component, especially since it would require brain surgery to access it if any problem were to occur.

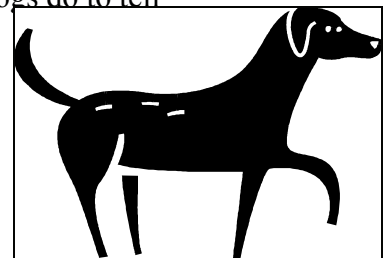
## Quick Pick-Me-Ups

Heat got you down? Is your elevator not going all the way to the top? If you have a few moments, these simple things might help snap you out of it:

- Spritz your favorite scent in your living space. If you save your best fragrance for special occasions, smelling it can take you back to a fun time and put a smile on your face. Why let it sit in the bottle?
- Pop a multi-vitamin. If you have been dragging lately, you might not have been eating properly for a while. A multi-vitamin can give you a burst of energy from the B-complex vitamins, potassium, and trace minerals you may be depleted in.
- Straighten up a little. Seeing smooth, unbroken surfaces like a made bed or a de-cluttered desk can give you a feeling of calm.
- If you have a pet, give them some quality time. They can get you moving and give your self-esteem a boost. They think you're the most wonderful thing since sliced bread!

## *Dogs Need a Break from the Sun, Too*

When the temperature gets up there and you're wearing shorts and a tank top, remember: your best friend has a fur coat on. Besides panting, do you know what dogs do to tell you when they've had too much fun in the sun?



### **July Word Scramble Answer**

**Question:** dignur iecittsvai  
ncnuesers awre rdotouo

**Answer:**  
Wear sunscreen during outdoor activities

**Congratulations** to Andra Lahr. Your name was selected at random from all of the correct quiz entries and you'll receive Lowe's \$30 gift card.

It's important to act immediately if a dog has any of the above symptoms.

- Heavy panting
- His tongue and mucous membranes are bright red.
- His saliva is thick and sticky.

First, move your dog out of the sun (or heat) to an area where there is cool air circulating, such as into an air-conditioned room or at least in the shade where there is a breeze. Cool air will help your dog to reduce his temperature. Give him water, but don't let him drink too much. Cool him off with cool water by immersing him in a bath, gently hosing him off, or applying cool towels to his body. Importantly, *do not leave wet towels on your dog and do not use very cold water.* These things will keep your dog's body from being able to cool off and recover.

Advanced signs of heat distress include vomiting, unsteadiness on his feet, and if the dog's lips and mucous membranes turn gray, it is going into shock. Life-saving measures must be undertaken immediately. Follow the guidelines above to bring down the dog's temperature as quickly as possible while summoning help to get the dog to the nearest animal hospital.

Don't forget that when the ground is too hot for your bare feet, it's also too hot for your dog's feet.

#### QUOTES—

*Take pride in how far you have come. Have faith in how far you can go.*

*You cannot prevent the birds of sadness from passing over your head, but you can prevent them from nesting in your hair. - Swedish proverb*

#### ***Thank You!***

*Bob Aubrecht and  
Lori Aubrecht*

*Lee and Donna Clark*

*Who are already part of our Real Estate Family. I appreciate your continued business. We love giving recognition to our new friends and our wonderful existing clients who are kind enough to introduce their friends and relatives to us.*

# Midsummer Garden Care

By this time of year, your plants could be looking tired and awful. Although the heat may make working in the garden a daunting prospect, whether you have a few acres or a few potted plants, a little love this month will keep your plants looking nice until the Fall, when the days start getting shorter and the garden slows down.

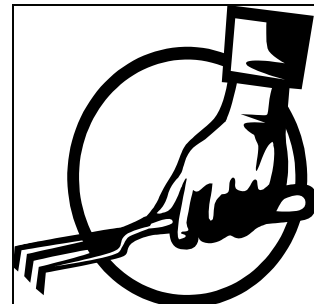
**Deadhead:** Cutting off the spent blooms on your plants will tell them to make new ones. If you have roses and it's late in the month, you can give them a mid-season pick-me-up by snipping back about a quarter of the summer's growth. Remove all of the dead or diseased foliage to stop problems from spreading.

**Come on, you know you have to:** Pick up all of the leaf litter around your plants and pull any weeds out by the roots. Put the debris into containers and clean up the area to keep weed seeds, pests and diseases from going back into the ground and into your plants. Make sure you put rose cuttings in a hard-sided trash can, not a plastic bag.

**Manage diseases and pests:** Spraying the foliage regularly with a strong blast of water and keeping your plants well hydrated is your easiest and cheapest approach to disease and pest management. When the weather gets hot, spider mites often show up. Check for tiny spider webs and small dark spots. Pesticides are not recommended for treating spider mites and can make them worse. Consider buying beneficial insects like ladybugs, preying mantis or green lacewings to control common garden pests.

**Fertilize:** As long as the day's high temperature is under 85°F (29°C), you can continue the regular feeding of your plants. Use according to the manufacturer's directions for the usual N-P-K mix, and don't forget to give your plants iron, too. Feed the foliage as well as the roots by pouring the fertilizer over the whole plant. You can overfeed plants nitrogen, though, so if you notice odd or burnt-looking foliage or flowers, water thoroughly and skip a couple of cycles of the fertilizing program.

**Mulch:** The last step is to till a layer of fresh mulch into the clean, fertilized soil. Deposit some mulch and, using a claw-type tool, break up the surface of the soil and mix it in with the mulch, keeping it away from the main stems of the plants. Top off with more mulch, to bring the total coverage to 3" (8 cm). This will feed the soil, keep the roots of your plants cooler, hold moisture longer, it will keep the weeds down, and it looks nice.



# Thought of the Month



## MARKET UPDATE

Houston home sales rose for the second time this year in June, with the average price reaching an all-time high and the median price achieving the highest level in nearly two years. The sales increase reflects the slowdown in home purchases that set in a year ago following expiration of the home buyer tax credit. The credit triggered a surge in home buying during the spring of 2010 that resulted in slower sales volume during the remainder of that year.

According to the latest monthly data compiled by the Houston Association of Realtors (HAR), June sales of single-family homes edged up 0.6 percent versus one year earlier. That represents the first increase since January when sales volume rose 8.4 percent. The under-\$80,000 segment of the market as well as homes priced from \$250,000 and above experienced increased sales while the popular middle range, consisting of homes priced between \$80,000 and \$250,000, saw declines. Compared to June of 2009, a year with no unusual market factors such as Hurricane Ike in 2008 and the 2010 tax credit, single-family home sales were up 2.7 percent.

The average price of a single-family home rose 3.7 percent from June 2010 to a record high of \$228,650. The June single-family home median price—the figure at which half of the homes sold for more and half sold for less—increased 2.2 percent year-over-year to \$161,000. That is the highest median price since July 2009. Foreclosure property sales reported in the Multiple Listing Service (MLS) decreased 3.2 percent in June compared to one year earlier.

June sales of all property types in Houston totaled 6,520, down 0.2 percent compared to June 2010. Total dollar volume for properties sold during the month increased 3.3 percent to \$1.43 billion versus \$1.38 billion one year earlier.

Source: Houston Association of Realtors

*Keith*

As always, please consider referring my construction and real estate brokerage services if you have a family member, friend or business associate that is planning on purchasing, building, or selling a home.

# The McJunkin Messenger

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