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Welcome to this month's issue of **The Singhal Report** – our monthly real estate newsletter courtesy of The Singhal Group. We bring you this newsletter in hopes that you find it informative and useful. If you're thinking of making a move or have a general real estate related question, please don't hesitate to contact us. We're here to help in any way we can and we would love to hear from you. Be sure to visit our website regularly for up-to-date information on our current listings and to download an electronic copy of this newsletter.

Best Regards,

Niraj Singhal



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BUILDING A NEST TOGETHER

It's wedding season, and love is in the air! Whether you're planning a wedding, or are currently married or in a live-in relationship, you no doubt recognize that shared expenses are an integral part of living together.

A major step towards purchasing a home together, while not at all romantic, is to be brutally honest with each other about your finances before even considering signing on adjacent dotted lines.

The first hurdle you need to jump comes when your potential lender reviews both of your credit scores. If either your or your partner's credit score is subpar, you could find yourselves, as a couple, having trouble securing a mortgage at a good rate.

Next up is a discussion on who pays for what, and what the best way to budget is, in order to cover your common mortgage and household expenses. One survey reported that 82 percent of people who are married or living with a partner share a joint bank account for household expenses like rent or mortgage,

utilities, groceries and savings, while 42 percent say they also maintain their own individual accounts for independence, personal spending, convenience and emergencies. *

Buying a home together is most likely your largest monetary commitment as a couple. Take the first step to financial harmony by calling today to discuss your housing requirements, budget and options when it comes time to purchasing your next home together.



* TD Bank Survey. "TD Bank Checking Experience Index." Conducted by Angus Reid Public Opinion, N.p. February 2014. N.d. April 2014.

CNSFH

Terminology Tip

MEAN VS. MEDIAN

Resale housing prices are often summarized using one average figure. But that price can vary substantially depending on if it is presented as a "mean" or a "median" number.

The "mean" is a mathematical average that results from adding up the total sales prices and dividing that figure by the total number of homes it includes. A "median" price simply takes the middle number in a list of prices arranged in numeric order. The mean is the average price, while the median is the mid-point price.



A TIDY RESOLUTION



It's now been half a year since you made your 2018 New Year's resolutions, and it's half a year until you make your new 2019 New Year's resolutions, so why not just do the one thing that's on almost everyone's list right now? That thing is to tidy and declutter your home!

It's always motivating to see instant results, so have a look at this starter list and tackle the easiest one for you first.

■ **School stuff.** If the backpacks, papers and school projects brought home on the last day of school are still cluttering your hallway bench, take care of those right now. Dump out the backpacks and toss them in the wash. Sort through all the contents and file them into a "keep" pile (perhaps a couple of special pieces of your child's artwork) and a "toss" pile (most likely the bulk of the contents, including crumpled schoolwork, dried out markers and a whole lot of crumbs at the bottom of the bag). Hang the clean schoolbag in the child's closet for easy access come the start of the new school year.

■ **Seasonal stuff.** It's officially summer this month, so lighten up your closets by depositing your cool-weather clothing into storage containers, (finally) taking your winter and spring jackets to the dry cleaners, and rearranging the linen closet by tucking flannel sheets and seasonal decorative tablecloths into the back of the closet.

■ **Linen closet.** Speaking of linen closets, why not take a few minutes to get yours organized now? It can be a fairly easy and entirely satisfying task that really doesn't take too long. First, empty the contents of the closet and lay it on the floor, separating everything into categories — towels, bed linens, table linens, etc. Weed out the worn-out towels and decide if they can be repurposed into cleaning rags or even donated to the local pet shelter. Fold or roll remaining towels into equal-sized stacks. Keep only linens in good condition that you actually use; donate little-used sheets and tablecloths for someone else to

enjoy. Stash sheet sets into their matching pillowcase for a neat and convenient way to quickly access full bedding sets. Add more shelving as necessary to help categorize linens, and utilize the back of the door to hang baskets, hooks, towel bars or even the ironing board! Now wipe down the shelves and return everything to the closet, arranging it seasonally (heavy blankets to the back, beach towels to the front) and by placing everyday items within easy reach.

■ **Kitchen stuff.** We all have random small appliances and kitchen gadgets that we have used a maximum of once. Set these things free by selling them online or donating them to a good cause.

■ **Bathroom stuff.** Get rid of old and expired makeup and personal care products, and keep only things you will actually use. Reorganize the space under your sink with baskets and shelving — you can even find specially-designed, slide-out, two-tier shelving that glides past plumbing. Utilize the insides of the cabinet doors by installing hooks to hang a multitude of things, sticking acrylic makeup holders on the door to hold lipsticks and eyeliners, or even installing a towel bar to hang cleaning products.

Today's market presents clever storage solutions for every room in your home, but first, make a resolution to purge the clutter before deciding how to organize the remaining items. Start by tackling one room every week or two, and by the time the end of the year rolls around, you may find it's the first year you can finally scratch "organize the household" off your New Year's resolution list!

HOUSEHOLD TIP: MAKE MOSQUITOES BUZZ OFF!



You may be interested to hear that one small brown bat can catch 600 mosquitoes per hour, but if you're not into building a bat house at home to attract bats for that purpose, consider some of these other, natural mosquito deterrents.

- **Wear light colored clothing** — mosquitoes are attracted to dark colors.
- **Eat garlic, lots of it.** It will seep out of your pores to create a mosquito barrier. Of course, it may also create a human barrier too, so keep this in mind.
- **Blow them off.** Set up a fan in your sitting area to blow mosquitoes away.
- **Clear standing water.** Mosquitoes breed in standing water, so drain everything from clogged gutters to birdbaths to outdoor pet bowls and children's toys. Don't forget to tip out standing water from planter saucers too.
- **Make a herbal spray repellent.** Chop up and fill a jar with herbs such as lemon grass, rosemary, lavender and catnip. Fill jar with rubbing alcohol or witch hazel, seal with a lid and let sit for a couple of weeks, shaking once in a while. Strain and transfer liquid to a spray bottle for a chemical-free mosquito repellent.

A HELPING HAND

You've no doubt read about the propensity of young homebuyers relying on their parents for help with their down payments. In fact, more than one-third of Millennials looking to purchase their first home are reportedly relying on financial help from a relative to help cover at least part of their down payment. Is it a good idea to contribute to your own child's down payment, either as a gift or as a loan?

Yes if you have extra money just sitting in a low-interest bank account, and you lend it to your child instead of just giving it to them. You can lend it at a cheaper rate than they would be able to borrow elsewhere, yet receive higher interest from them than what you might currently be getting in a fixed-income portfolio.

No if you're nearing retirement and the only way you can help your child is to either dip into your retirement savings, or stop contributing to your retirement plans in order to redirect it to your child.

Whether you decide to gift the down payment, or loan your child the money to put down on a property, there are obviously many considerations to ponder when making a decision that incorporates both finances and family, from tax ramifications to family feuds. Talk to both a financial professional and a lawyer, and if you feel confident that your child is ready and that their finances are secure enough to support home ownership, be sure to put your final financial arrangement clearly in writing on a legal document, to protect all parties involved and avoid any misunderstandings.



RESPONSIBLE RELOCATING

Time to move? Get going ... responsibly!

~ Monthly Musing ~
“Instead of wondering when your next vacation is, you ought to set up a life you don't need to escape from.”

~ Seth Godin

1. As soon as you set your moving date, start with the first rule of a smooth move — reduce the amount you have to move! The fewer things you have to move, the less packing materials you will need and the less fuel you will use. Purge the eco-friendly way: offer items that won't be moving with you to friends and family, have a garage sale, or put them online for a price or for free.
2. Avoid buying environmentally unfriendly bubble wrap and styrofoam peanuts. Instead, protect delicate items by using old newspapers, packing materials you have saved from home deliveries, and towels, bedding and kitchen cloths that you will be taking with you. If you do have to purchase foam, bubble wrap or sturdy cardboard boxes, consider listing them online for other families to reuse for their own move once you're finished with them.

3. Consider renting sturdy, stackable, reusable plastic boxes that can be refilled many times, instead of one or two-use cardboard boxes. Not only will you save time in hunting down boxes from grocery stores and then taking the time to tape them up properly, by utilizing reusable plastic boxes you'll feel good about having zero waste after your move (no tape to dispose of, no boxes to crush and recycle later), while enjoying a higher level of protection for your possessions.

Whether you're moving across the country or just across town, you can, with a little bit of pre-planning, make your move an easier, more environmentally-friendly one!



Strawberry Rhubarb Galette

INGREDIENTS: GALETTE CRUST

- 1½ c. all-purpose flour
- ½ c. cornmeal
- 2 Tbsp. caster sugar
- ¼ tsp. salt
- ½ c. butter, diced
- 4 Tbsp. ice water
- ½ c. ground almonds
- 2 Tbsp. granulated sugar
- 1 egg, beaten
- 1 Tbsp. sugar

INGREDIENTS: STRAWBERRY RHUBARB FILLING

- 2 c. strawberries, sliced
- 2 c. rhubarb, chopped
- 1 Tbsp. cornstarch
- ¼ c. granulated sugar

INSTRUCTIONS: GALETTE CRUST

1. Combine flour, cornmeal, caster sugar, and salt in a food processor.
2. Add cold butter to food processor, pulsing until mixture resembles coarse meal.
3. Add water, one tablespoon at a time, until the dough can be gathered into a ball. Form the ball into a disc, wrap in plastic, and chill in fridge for one hour.
4. Place the cold disc between two layers of parchment paper and roll to a circle 1/8" thick, 14" in diameter. Transfer to a large baking sheet. Chill 15 minutes.
5. Remove top parchment paper. Mix together ground almonds and 2 tablespoons of sugar and sprinkle over crust.



INSTRUCTIONS: FILLING & BAKING

1. Preheat oven to 375°F.
2. Toss rhubarb, strawberries, cornstarch and sugar together.
3. Spread filling in the center of the dough, leaving a 2" rim. Carefully fold the outside pastry up around the filling, overlapping where necessary, leaving a large gap in the middle.
4. Brush crust with beaten egg, and sprinkle with 1 tablespoon of sugar.
5. Bake for 50 minutes, or until crust is deep gold brown and juices are bubbling. Serve warm, with vanilla ice cream if desired, or at room temperature.

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Notes:
