



News on The Move

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Can a Homeowner Claim 2 Principal Residence Exemptions in Michigan at the Same Time?

The answer to this question is YES. In 2008 Governor Granholm signed legislation allowing Michigan property homeowners to keep 2 principal resident exemptions for property still on the market after the seller has moved elsewhere in the state. The signing of this legislation is a huge step in aiding struggling sellers who have had homes on the market for over a year and have lost their principal residence status on that property.

Prior to this legislation, if a homeowner still owned two homes and May 1 rolled around, the homeowner would lose their homestead credit and property taxes would go up nearly 1 1/2 times what it was as their principal residence. Now homeowners in Michigan can keep two properties homesteaded at the same time, getting a tax break on both properties.

House Bill 4215, now Public Act 96 of 2008 sponsored by Representative Ed Gaffney enacts that the seller can retain an additional exemption for up to three years on property previously exempt as the owner's principal residence if the following circumstances are met:

1. **The property is not occupied**
2. **The property is for sale**
3. **The property is not leased or available for lease**
4. **The property is not used for any business or commercial purposes**

Retention of an existing homestead credit for an unoccupied home that is currently for sale would offer relief to sellers who have had to relocate for whatever reason.

Electronic Picture Frames Revealed

Perhaps you have seen them in the stores or even received one as a gift this past holiday season; after all, electronic picture frames are all the rage.

Join the ranks of those able to proudly display their favorite photos of family, friends or even business projects with the assistance of an electronic picture frame.

Although there are many brands, sizes and features to be found when shopping for an electronic picture frame, essentially each provides a method of showcasing photos stored in a digital format.

Most use an LCD display and include specialized features such image correction, slide show styles, clock, and calendar modes plus other enhancements.

Photographs can be changed by updating the memory card, although more expensive models can easily hold up to 10,000 photos and may require few updates.

It's the perfect solution for small apartments, offices or other areas where bulky photo albums just won't fit.

Easy Ways to Make Spring Cleaning Painless

If spring cleaning isn't your idea of family fun, don't distress: these fast fixes will have your home looking its best with plenty of time to spare.

Recycle

Every home has those little corners or cupboards filled with unwanted gifts, outgrown clothing or worn-out toys that take up space. Collect everything that hasn't been used in the past year and then either donate it or advertise it on a local recycling group for pickup. It's a great way to make someone's day brighter while clearing the clutter.

Maintenance

Now is the time to perform those small repairs and other routine maintenance tasks before they become major annoyances. Replace bulbs and batteries in hard-to-reach fixtures and fire alarms, repair leaking faucets and replace filters for the furnace, then tackle the yard. Hire a handyman for anything outside your ordinary skill set. You will be surprised to find how much better your home feels to you without the minor annoyances.

Clean

After clearing the clutter and making needed repairs, it's time to get down and dirty by scouring the house from top to bottom. Either hire a company or rent a machine to clean the carpets, upholstery, air ducts, windows and other surfaces. Use an environmentally friendly enzymatic cleaning formula to disinfect and deodorize at the same time. Once everything is clean and disinfected, consider purchasing a HEPA air filtration system to help improve air quality for the whole year long.

How to Sell Your House... Even in Today's Market

Falling home prices, slow housing starts, rising unemployment...with so much bad economic news it might seem futile to place your home on the market.

Don't despair. Despite the current financial crisis, there is good news for sellers: buyers are still interested in homes that are priced right.

Learn how to sell your home even in a bad economy with these quick tips:

Prioritize

During tough economic times buyers seek shelter, safety and security above luxury.

Make sure the marketing materials relate the same information.

Price It Right

Without exception one of the most im-

portant aspects of selling a home is to price it right but pricing is only part of the equation.

Consider holding a note, accepting a partial trade as down payment or using other creative methods to make the deal work.

Add Bling to Bring in the Bucks

It doesn't cost a lot to make your home look its best.

Consider painting in the new colors for 2009, clearing away the clutter and investing in some strategically placed landscaping to refresh the look of your home and attract attention both online and in person.

Remember, first impressions matter the most when trying to sell a home in a bad economy.

Wake up Feeling Cranky? How to Start the Day right

Admit it. You sometimes wake feeling a bit cranky or out of sorts. Maybe you didn't have a good night sleep or you feel hassled and hurried about the day ahead. Whatever the reason you can learn to fix it with these quick tips:

Face It: The first step to dealing with any problem is to face it head-on. Procrastination, denial and rationalization only create more anxiety – not less. Instead, simply acknowledge the source of the problem then plan to address it.

Sing or Smile: Did you know that smiling creates powerful bio-chemical changes in the body? Researchers have found people who smile actually lower blood pressure and decrease anxiety levels.

Dress for Success: Create the response you need to succeed by looking your best. Take a few minutes to wear something a little special. It is a sure-fire way to attract positive attention your direction throughout the day.

Eat Right & Exercise: Avoid refined sugars, excess caffeine or other "comfort foods" that can actually make your mood worst in the long run. A rapid increase or decrease in blood sugar levels is often associated with crankiness; instead, eat some fresh fruit and other healthy alternatives. It's also a good idea to make time for a brisk walk or trip to the gym; it is an excellent way to clear the mind and restore even the worst mood.

Do Something for Someone: There is a great deal of wisdom in the old adage "it is better to give than to receive". This is especially true when it comes to improving your own mood.



Worth Quoting

Some quotes from the writings of Douglas Adams, author of *The Hitchhiker's Guide to the Galaxy*, who was born in March 1952:

"Nothing travels faster than the speed of light, with the possible exception of bad news, which obeys its own special laws."

"I'd take the awe of understanding over the awe of ignorance any day."

"You live and learn. At any rate, you live."

"A common mistake that people make when trying to design something completely foolproof is to underestimate the ingenuity of complete fools."

"Time is an illusion, lunchtime doubly so."

"In the beginning the Universe was created. This has made a lot of people very angry and has been widely regarded as a bad move."

"Human beings, who are almost unique in having the ability to learn from the experience of others, are also remarkable for their apparent disinclination to do so."

"Anyone who is capable of getting themselves made President should on no account be allowed to do the job."

"It is no coincidence that in no known language does the phrase 'As pretty as an Airport' appear."

"I love deadlines. I like the whooshing sound they make as they fly by."

"Humans are not proud of their ancestors, and rarely invite them round to dinner."

"Flying is learning how to throw yourself at the ground and miss."

"So long, and thanks for all the fish."

How to Avoid Foreclosure Purchase Pitfalls

One way to save big when buying real estate is to find a foreclosed property in your target area. Unfortunately, when it comes to foreclosures, what you don't know could potentially hurt your pocketbook.

Learn how to save money and find the best foreclosure deals by avoiding these common pitfalls.

Hidden Defects

Most foreclosures are sold on an "as-is" basis, so it is important to have a comprehensive inspection performed. Although the lender is obligated to notify prospective buyers of known defects, it isn't unusual to encounter unknown problems after closing. Protect yourself by having a thorough inspec-

tion performed on all major systems including the electrical, plumbing, pest, water quality and HVAC, as well as the structural integrity.

Code and Zoning Violations

Verify that all work performed on a foreclosed property had proper permits in place; not only will it reduce the risk of expensive repairs or building code modifications, but it ensure that the home meets minimum safety standards.

Taxes and Insurance

Don't assume that you will automatically save a bundle on property taxes when purchasing a foreclosed home; remember, property taxes are typically based upon prior sales data, so they lag

behind what is taking place in the market as a whole. Also, buyers are typically required to petition for homestead exemption and a variance or adjustment which can take time. It's also wise to obtain at least three insurance quotes prior to placing an offer for a foreclosed property; prior claims that show up on the C.L.U.E. report may increase insurance rates for years to come.

Purchase Title Insurance

Sloppy lending standards and improper paperwork have resulted in a wide variety of irregularities in recording and transfers. Remember, there are two types of title insurance available; purchase both to stay on the safe side and avoid unpleasant surprises in the future.

Simple Lentil Soup with Lemon

Ingredients:

2 tablespoons olive oil	1 large yellow onion, finely chopped
2 garlic cloves, minced	2 tablespoons tomato paste
1 teaspoon ground cumin	1/4 teaspoon pepper
Pinch chili powder	6 cups chicken stock
1 cup lentils	1 large carrot, peeled and diced
Juice of half a lemon	3 tablespoons chopped cilantro
Salt to taste	Sour cream for serving (optional)

Heat oil in soup pot and sauté onion and garlic until soft and fragrant. Stir in tomato paste, cumin, pepper and chili powder. Add stock, lentils and carrots and simmer partially covered until lentils are tender, about 30 minutes. Blend half the soup in a blender and return to pot, or use an immersion blender. Add salt to taste and right before serving stir in lemon juice and cilantro.

Serves 6-8

Fascinating Facts About March

- The Hoover Dam was completed on March 1, 1936.
- The Academy Awards were first broadcast on TV on March 2, 1953.
- The first transatlantic telephone call was made from New York City to London on March 7, 1926.
- The Barbie doll debuted on March 9, 1959.
- Self-rising flour was invented by a British baker on March 11, 1845.
- The first Internet domain name was registered on March 15, 1985.
- The rubber band was patented on March 17, 1845.
- American Express was founded on March 18, 1850.
- Alcatraz prison closed on March 21, 1963.
- The Concorde made its first supersonic flight on March 27, 1970.
- Alaska was bought by the United States for \$7.2 million on March 30, 1867.

Appealing Property Tax Assessments

Earlier this month I posted an informational article about appealing your property tax assessments on my website, www.LindaHillerNovak.com. It contains valuable information about this process as well as man helpful links. Many of you may have already set up appointments to appeal your assessment. I would urge you to spend some time reviewing this material prior to making an appeal.

Please feel free to call me at 248-408-7811 if I can provide further information.

Piper & Tucker's Pawspace



**HAPPY ST.
PATRICK'S DAY
FROM PIPER &
TUCKER!**



Amanda's Baby Pug



Gizmo, a Pekingese from
Bloomfield Hills

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