BAY AREA REAL ESTATE GAZETTE

Brought to you by Lee Ginsburg- Lee Sells More

LEE GINSBURG
CA DRE#: 01391378
Realtor®, CRS,SFR,SRES, CREN

650-888-5662
www.LeeSellsMore.com
Lee@leesellsmore.com

INTERO REAL ESTATE SERVICES
CA DRE#: 01354442

"Don't Compare Your Life To Others, There is No Comparison Between the Moon and the Sun. They SHINE When it is Their Time."

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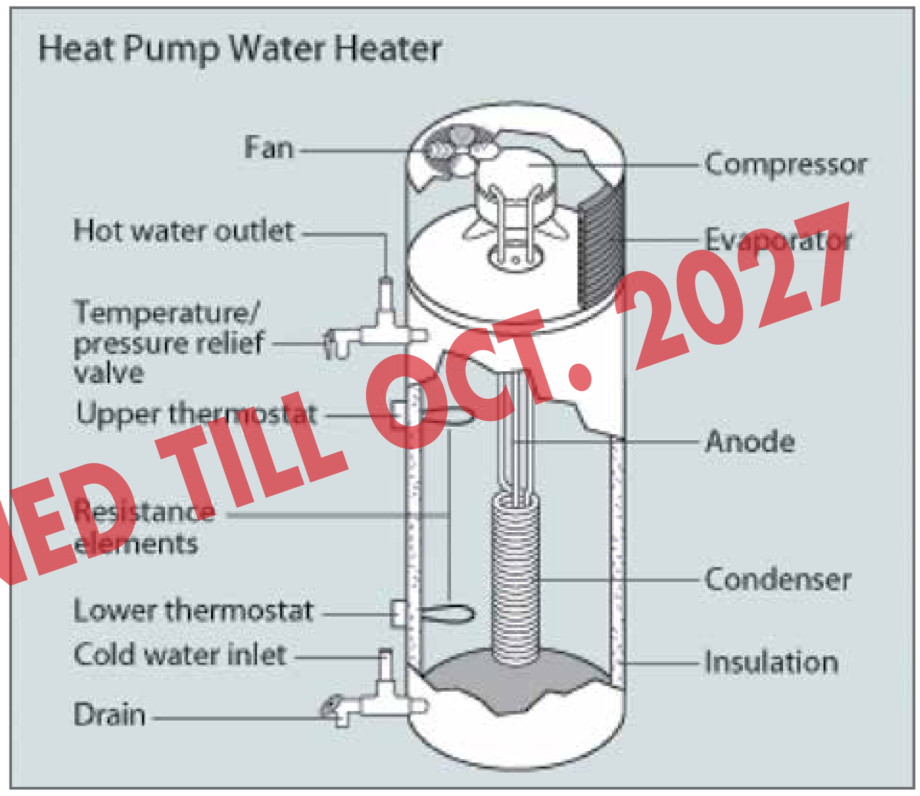
NEW WATER HEATER LAW

by Lee Ginsburg

POSTPONED TILL OCT. 2027

As of this writing beginning January 2027, we will have to replace our gas water heater with electric. There is talk of pushing the date back or easing up on the requirement. Multi-Units have additional time. At first glance one may think that is not a problem. Well think again if you have an older home, with an older electric panel. I say older 40+ years. To replace gas with electric, very often you need to upgrade your electric service, and that's not cheap.

Here are the realistic replacement paths Bay Area homeowners are considering with the main tradeoffs.



1. Heat Pump Water Heater (HPWH)

Rheem, A. O. Smith, and Bradford White are some of the manufacturers. This may be the most cost-effective in the long run.

How it works: A heat pump extracts heat from surrounding air instead of generating heat directly like resistance electric or gas.

Pros

- ✓ Very energy efficient (typically 2–4x more efficient than standard electric resistance)
- ✓ No combustion gases, no carbon monoxide or venting required and Can lower greenhouse gas emissions
- ✓ Eligible for rebates/tax incentives in many cases

Cons

- ✓ Higher upfront cost. Studies estimate roughly **$3,500 more** than replacing with a conventional gas unit, assuming no major electrical upgrades are necessary.

May require:

- ✓ New 240V circuit, Electrical panel upgrades • Larger installation space, physically taller and bulkier than many gas tanks
- ✓ Makes fan/compressor noise • Slower recovery in "heat pump only" mode
- ✓ Performance can be less ideal in cold garages or tight closets
- ✓ Bay Area electricity prices can reduce operating-cost savings versus natural gas

Best fit

- ✓ Homes with decent electrical capacity • Garage installations • People planning long-term electrification or solar

2. Electric Resistance Tank Water Heater

Traditional electric tank heater with resistance elements *(older electric technology).*

Cons

- ✓ Much higher electricity usage & cost than heat pumps
- ✓ Still may require new 240V circuit/panel work
- ✓ Less environmentally efficient than HPWH
- ✓ Usually not the preferred long-term solution

Pros

- ✓ Fully compliant with zero-NOx rules • Simpler technology than heat pumps Lower equipment cost than HPWH • Quieter than heat pump systems
- ✓ Easier to install in some tight spaces

Best fit

- ✓ Smaller households • Tight spaces where HPWH won't fit • Situations where upfront budget matters more than operating cost

3. Gas Tankless Water Heater (Possible but Complicated)

This is currently a gray-area workaround many plumbers are discussing because many gas tankless systems exceed the 75,000 BTU/hr threshold covered by the first phase of the rule. Some are around 150k–199k BTU/hr.

Examples include systems from Navien, Rinnai, and Noritz.

Important caveat

This area is evolving. Future implementation details or state rules could narrow this path further. Verify with your city permitting department and licensed installer before assuming tankless gas will remain allowed.

Pros

- ✓ Smaller footprint • Endless hot water • Usually lower upfront conversion cost than heat pump retrofit
- ✓ Typically avoids major electrical upgrades • Good for homes with limited electrical capacity

Cons

May require:

- ✓ New venting • Larger gas line
- ✓ More complex installation than

WATER HEATER
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SUMMER RESET

WHERE TO CLEAN, WHAT TO SKIP, AND HOW TO DO IT RIGHT

THE POWER WASH EDIT

Power washing is one of the fastest ways to improve your home's exterior, but it is also one of the easiest ways to cause damage if done incorrectly. The difference comes down to knowing where to use pressure, where to avoid it, and what actually needs cleaning this time of year.

Start with the highest-impact surfaces first.

Concrete driveways, walkways, and patios can typically handle 2,500–3,000 PSI, which is strong enough to remove embedded dirt, mildew, and tire marks. Use a wide-angle nozzle (25° or 40°) to avoid striping, and keep the wand moving. Holding pressure in one spot can leave permanent lines.

For siding, adjust your approach.

Vinyl siding should be cleaned closer to 1,200–1,500 PSI, and even then, distance matters more than pressure. Stay at least 2–3 feet back and spray at a slight downward angle to prevent water from getting behind panels. If you see green or black streaking, that is likely algae or mildew, which often requires a cleaning solution rather than more pressure.

Decks require a lighter touch than most people expect.

Wood decking should be cleaned around 500–800 PSI max, using a fan tip and consistent motion. Too much pressure will raise the grain and leave the surface rough. After washing, allow at least 48 hours of dry time before sealing or staining. Composite decking can handle slightly more pressure, but still requires care to avoid surface damage.

Pay attention to drainage and grading.

Power washing often reveals where water actually flows around your home. If you notice pooling near the foundation, clogged drains, or runoff heading toward the house instead of away from it, that is something to address. Summer storms will only amplify those issues.

Do the prep work most people skip.

Before you start, cover exterior outlets, close all windows, and move anything within spray range. Pre-soak nearby plants with water to protect them from cleaning solutions, and rinse them again after you are done. This small step prevents damage to landscaping.

Know when to bring in a professional.

Multi-story homes, delicate materials, or heavy staining often require commercial-grade equipment and experience. In those cases, hiring it out is less about convenience and more about avoiding costly mistakes.

A proper power wash is not just cosmetic. It extends the life of exterior materials, improves safety on walking surfaces, and resets your home's appearance heading into the season when it gets used the most.

Done right, it is one of the highest-impact maintenance projects you can tackle in a single day.

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POWER WASH SETTINGS AT A GLANCE

- ✓ Concrete (driveways, patios): 2,500–3,000 PSI
- ✓ Vinyl siding: 1,200–1,500 PSI (spray downward, from 2–3 ft away)
- ✓ Wood decks: 500–800 PSI max (higher can damage the grain)
- ✓ Composite decking: <1,500 PSI (follow manufacturer guidelines)
- ✓ Stucco, painted surfaces: Soft wash only (low pressure + cleaning solution)
- ✓ Roofs (asphalt shingles): Do not power wash

General ranges. Always test first and adjust as needed.

WATER HEATER CONTINUED FROM FRONT PAGE

simple tank swap • Can struggle with simultaneous high-demand usage in large homes

- ✓ May not meet the requirements. Still in discussion

Best fit

- ✓ Homes with constrained electrical panels • Small-to-medium homes • Owners wanting to avoid major electrical upgrades

4. Install a New Gas Tank Heater Before 2027

Some homeowners are proactively replacing aging units before the deadline to reset the clock on a conventional gas tank.

Pros

- ✓ Lowest near-term disruption • Familiar technology • Usually cheapest installation today
- ✓ No electrical upgrade needed • Can buy another 8–15 years before replacement

Cons

- ✓ Must be installed before the effective deadline • Does not future-proof the house
- ✓ Future replacement may still require electrification • Potential resale/ permitting uncertainty later
- ✓ Misses available electrification incentives

Best fit

- ✓ Older homes with weak electrical service • Homeowners not ready for panel upgrades • People planning remodels later

5. Whole-Home Electrification Approach

Instead of treating the water heater separately, some homeowners bundle:

- ✓ Heat pump HVAC • Electrical panel upgrade • Solar
- ✓ Battery backup • Heat pump water heater

Pros

- ✓ Better long-term energy planning • Can stack rebates and tax credits
- ✓ Works well with solar/battery systems • Will increase home value

Cons

- ✓ Highest upfront cost • Requires planning and contractor coordination • Longer project timeline

Best fit

- ✓ Major remodels • Long-term homeowners • Solar/battery

My Personal Recommendation

If your current gas heater is:

- ✓ **0–5 years old:** probably wait and monitor rule changes
- ✓ **6–10 years old:** start planning now
- ✓ **10+ years old:** get quotes for both heat pump and tankless options before an emergency failure

Last minute replacements are usually the most expensive and leave the fewest choices.

Here are some helpful websites:

- ✓ www.pge.com/assets/pge/docs/account/rate-plans/guide-to-home-electrification.pdf
- ✓ www.baaqmd.gov/en/community-health/building-appliances-rule-implementation?sc_lang=en&utm_source=chatgpt.com
- ✓ www.switchison.org/
- ✓ www.peninsulacleanenergy.com/residential/home-upgrade-services/full-service-home-electrification/qualifications/

FAMILY AND REAL ESTATE

PARENTS HELPING CHILDREN BUY A HOME

by Lee Ginsburg

One trend I've seen a lot this year is parents helping their children purchase a home. In the first quarter alone, I've been involved in four transactions where parents played a key role in helping make the purchase possible—and this is becoming increasingly common.

According to the California Association of Realtors, a significant percentage of first-time buyers receive financial help from their parents. Statewide, about **34% of buyers received assistance in 2023,** and **27% in 2024**. However, many mortgage and real estate professionals say that in the Bay Area, the number is closer to **one out of every two buyer**s. The children can make the payments but have trouble saving for the down payment.

For parents who want to help, the tax rules are often more favorable than people realize. The Internal Revenue Service allows individuals to give a certain amount of money each year to others without any gift-tax consequences. This is known as the annual gift tax exclusion. This increases slightly most years. In 2026, the limit is **$19,000 per person**.

This means a married couple could give:

- ✓ $38,000 to their child
- ✓ $38,000 to their child's spouse

for a total of **$76,000 in one year**, completely free of gift tax. Over two years, that amount could exceed **$150,000**, still without triggering gift tax.

If a gift exceeds the annual limit, a gift-tax return must be filed for the excess amount. However, taxes are usually not owed immediately. Instead, the amount is applied to the **lifetime gift and estate tax exemption**, which in 2026 is **$13.99 million per person**.

It's also important to know that **the person receiving the gift does not pay income tax or gift tax on the money.**

Ways Parents Can Help Their Children Buy a Home

There are several options parents use to help make homeownership possible:

1. Provide funds for the down payment as a gift.
2. Lend the down payment and forgive part of the loan each year
3. Lend the full purchase price
4. Co-sign the mortgage
5. Purchase a home for the children to live in
6. Buy a property together with the child (the parents' portion may be treated as an investment)
7. Sell a home they already own to their child

With home prices remaining high in many markets, family support is playing an increasingly important role in helping younger buyers enter the housing market.

If you're considering helping a child purchase a home—or if your family is exploring ways to make homeownership possible—I'd be happy to share what I'm seeing in the market and how other families are structuring these purchases. Every situation is different, and having the right guidance early in the process can make things much smoother. Feel free to reach out anytime if you'd like to talk through the possibilities. Very important to speak with your tax advisor.

THINKING OF MOVING OUT OF THE AREA?

My company Intero Real Estate Services is part of Home Services of America. We are owned by Warren Bufett and Berkshire Hathaway.

We are one of the largest Real Estate Companies in the country or the world for that matter. We have more than 2,200 offices and over 82,000 agents. WOW!!! WE ARE THE BIG BOYS. So if you or anyone you know is relocating anywhere I can recommend a good agent. You can trust that I will refer you to someone who is both honest and experienced. Before recommending an agent I will interview several and give you my recommendation and their contact info. Give me a call or email me and let me know the destination.

FEES AND FACTS

HOA DUES ARE SKYROCKETING

by Lee Ginsburg

Homeowners' association dues continue to rise, and a recent study by *LendingTree* highlights just how significant these costs have become. In the 100 largest metro areas, 31.8% of homeowners are paying HOA or condo association fees as of 2024. According to Matt Schulz, chief consumer finance analyst at LendingTree, "Some people are paying $500-plus a month for an HOA fee. That's a really significant amount of money."

What many buyers do not realize is that a $500 monthly HOA fee can reduce purchasing power by approximately $80,000 when qualifying for a loan. Lenders include HOA dues as part of a borrower's monthly obligations, which directly impacts how much home a buyer can afford.

While I understand why lenders consider these dues, I also think the situation deserves a closer look. HOA fees are not simply "extra expenses." They help maintain and improve the property by covering landscaping, roofs, exterior maintenance, pools, insurance, and other shared amenities. Owners of single-family homes have many of these same expenses, but because they are paid separately, they generally do not affect loan qualifications in the same way.

Insurance has become one of the largest contributors to rising HOA dues. In recent years, insurance costs have increased dramatically for all types of properties throughout California and especially here in the Bay Area.

In my opinion, another major factor behind rising dues and special assessments is poor long-term financial planning by some associations. For example, if a roof replacement will cost $150,000 and has a 30-year lifespan, the association should set aside approximately $5,000 per year in reserves for that future expense. However, many HOA Board of Directors and Members chose to keep dues artificially low by saving only a portion of what was truly needed. When the roof eventually requires replacement, the association suddenly faces a major shortfall.

As buildings age, these issues are becoming more common. In January 2026, California's SB326 balcony inspection law became fully effective, requiring inspections and repairs for many condominium buildings with elevated exterior elements. I am surprised that some associations failed to adequately reserve funds for these predictable maintenance requirements.

To address these financial gaps, many HOAs are now imposing substantial dues increases, special assessments, or even one-time fees due at closing. Personally, I believe there is an argument that long-term owners should bear a larger share of certain special assessments because they benefited from years of lower dues. Whether that idea would ever gain traction is another story, but it is an interesting discussion about fairness.

That said, I still believe that over the long run, the cost of owning a condominium versus a single-family home is often more similar than many people think. In some cases, large associations may even achieve lower overall maintenance costs because of their collective buying power.

My advice to current HOA members is simple: get involved and ask questions. Attend board meetings, review budgets carefully, and understand how reserve funds are being managed. For buyers considering a condo or townhouse purchase, always review the HOA budget and, most importantly, the state-required Reserve Study before making an offer.

Old-Fashioned Strawberry Shortcake

- 2 cups all-purpose flour
- 2 teaspoons baking powder
- ½ teaspoon salt
- 2 tablespoons sugar
- 4 tablespoons cold butter
- ¾ cup milk
- 1 quart fresh strawberries
- 3 to 4 tablespoons sugar
- Lightly sweetened whipped cream
- Standard baking sheet (approximately 9x13 inches), lightly buttered or 8-inch round cake pan, buttered (for one large shortcake to split and layer)

DIRECTIONS:

1. Preheat oven to 425°F.
2. Sift together flour, baking powder, salt, and sugar.
3. Cut in the butter until the mixture resembles coarse crumbs.
4. Add milk gradually, mixing to form a soft dough.
5. Turn onto a lightly floured surface and pat gently to about ½-inch thickness.

For individual shortcakes: Cut into 2½- to 3-inch rounds. Place on a buttered baking sheet, about 1 inch apart.
For one large shortcake: Press dough evenly into a buttered 8-inch round cake pan. Bake 12 to 15 minutes, or until lightly golden brown.

Meanwhile, hull and slice the strawberries. Sprinkle with sugar and allow them to stand until juicy.

Split warm shortcakes. Spoon strawberries between the layers and over the top. Finish generously with whipped cream.

This biscuit-style shortcake is the original American version: tender, lightly sweet, and perfect for showcasing fresh spring strawberries.

PROPERTY TAX ASSESSMENTS

by Lee Ginsburg

In California, property taxes are generally based on the purchase price. Thanks to Proposition 13, assessed property values can only increase 2% each year and the tax is just 1%. We should be very happy because in other states homes are reassessed annually to their current market value. In fact, we have one of the lowest, if not the lowest, property tax rates in the country.

Texas property tax is 1.7% as compared to California's 1%. For the upcoming 2026/2027 tax year, the assessor's office is in the process of reviewing the value of many properties. The tax year runs from July 1 through the following June 30. Thousands of properties were reassessed downward last year. Shortly the assessor will be mailing out their valuation of your home. Please review and if you think your market value as of January 1, 2026 is less, you can file for a "Decline in Value" reassessment with the tax assessor's department.

I personally have filed twice and both times the assessed taxable value was decreased. More information about the appeal process can be found at your county's assessor's office. Most single-family homes are not affected; some multi-unit properties may have gone down in value. However, if you purchased a condo between 2018-2024 there is a good chance your home's current assessed value may be above the current market value. If you are not sure of your value, please contact me and I will help.

FUN REAL ESTATE FACTS FOR THE REAL ESTATE NERD

1. 48% of Nationwide residential homes are owned by 70+ year olds. In the Bay Area it is approximately 25%-35%.
2. 12% is owned by 40-year old or younger residents. In the Bay Area it is closer to 25%.
3. 71% of boomers say they do not plan on selling. They prefer to age in place.
4. 30% of boomers can't afford to move.
5. 54% of Boomer owners nationwide don't have a mortgage. In the Bay Area it is about 65%.
6. 7% of all nationwide transfer of ownership is from inheritance. It is 18% in the Bay Area.
7. 65% of the U.S. population owned a home. The Bay Area is bit less at 56%.
8. The average length of U.S. home ownership in 2024 is 11.9 years. In 2006 it was 6.5 years.
9. Since 1957, the S&P 500 has delivered an average annual return of 10.56%
10. Typical home values in the Bay Area went up by 70% in inflation-adjusted dollars between 2000 and 2025.
11. At 31%, California has the nation's largest share of adjustable-rate mortgages in 2025.
12. I have been told today's Real Estate Market is like a moody teenager – up and down. (Being a parent and a Realtor I especially like that one.)
13. Homes are like children each is different so difficult to compare. (This is also a favorite of mine. Lol!)
14. Statistics you read in the paper are generally 60-90 days late. The statistics may not be relative to your local area and are using data from properties that went into contract about 30-60 days ago. It is Best to ask your professional Realtor active (ME) in the market daily to find out about the pending sales to give you true current perspective.
15. We Can Do It!!! Many localities are trying to institute tighter rent control restrictions than the state requires. In 2024 Half Moon Bay city council voted in favor of limiting rent increases to 3% rather than the state law of 5% + the cost-of-living increases. Two years later, in March 2026 Half Moon Bay repealed their stringent 3% limit. YAY!!! Hope other localities take note.

TOP WARM-WEATHER ESCAPES IN THE MEXICAN CARIBBEAN

While it's known for its crystal-clear water and white sand beaches, the Mexican Caribbean is far more than just a slice of paradise. Whether you're dreaming of barefoot luxury, jungle adventures or simply want to hang in a hammock under a palm tree, these Mexican Caribbean destinations offer memorable ways to escape winter and discover the region's most enchanting experiences.

Cancun

Renowned for iconic beaches, immersive entertainment, a variety of accommodations and more, Cancun is the ultimate day-to-night destination. Spend your day relaxing on the golf course or by the water. When the sun sets, step inside a legendary bar or club for a captivating evening.

Costa Mujeres

Where serenity meets sophistication, Costa Mujeres is just north of Cancun and home to sleek resorts and beautiful beaches. Here, relaxation lasts all day as spa days stretch into sunset dinners - and you can do it all again the next day!

Puerto Morelos

If you're more into exploring along the shoreline, Puerto Morelos offers the chance to discover crystalline cenotes just minutes from downtown where you can swim, snorkel, dive, zip-line and even venture into caves.

Playa del Carmen

Beach meets boutique in this bustling destination. Stroll the famous Fifth Avenue (La Quinta Avenida) to explore restaurants, shops and entertainment among a mix of locals and tourists.

Isla Mujeres

Just a short ferry ride from Cancun, this island is known for its relaxed atmosphere and stunning landscape. Top activities include snorkeling coral reefs and the Underwater Museum of Art (MUSA), swimming with whale sharks and relaxing on serene beaches.

Holbox

If going off grid is your thing, the island of Holbox features no paved roads or large buildings, and the main mode of transportation is via golf cart or bicycles. The top adventure here is taking a nighttime boat tour to witness glowing bioluminescent waters.

Cozumel

For the perfect blend of adventure and relaxation, Cozumel offers a rich marine landscape and deep cultural roots. Diving at Palancar Reef, part of the second-largest reef system in the world, and lounging by pools and beach clubs are two of the most unforgettable experiences here.

Mahahual

A laidback waterfront destination ideal for water adventurers, this area is home to several snorkeling and dive shops that guide visitors through underwater explorations. Mahahual also features a malecon - a stone waterfront promenade - lined with shops and cafes.

Bacalar

Known as the "Lagoon of Seven Colors," Bacalar's vibrant turquoise hues and peaceful atmosphere make it the perfect place for disconnecting while sailing, kayaking or paddle boarding in tranquil waters or birdwatching among rich biodiversity. Experience a soulful escape that combines nature and beauty with sustainability.

SMART UPGRADES

A SIMPLE DIY SHADE UPGRADE THAT CHANGES EVERYTHING

THE SMARTER HOME

For homeowners looking to refresh their home without taking on a major renovation, affordable do-it-yourself (DIY) upgrades can be the best way to achieve a significant transformation.

While often overlooked, today's advanced **smart window treatments** can be a quick and easy way to enhance **comfort, convenience, energy efficiency and style** in a single afternoon. **DIY motorized shades** that are controlled either by remote, voice or an app are becoming an increasingly popular choice for homeowners and renters.

A trusted brand that has been welcomed into American homes for more than a century is turning the heads of designers, home builders and consumers with a new smart shade that is revolutionizing the way we think about shades available at retail. GE smart shades are premium, reliable, game-changing products that deliver the sleek and modern look and feel of custom shades but can be installed by nearly anyone **in five minutes or less.**

One standout feature of GE smart shades is the clean design of its hardware. During installation, mounting hardware that can be secured into a wall with only three screws is tucked neatly out of sight, giving the shades a smooth, tailored finish that instantly elevates a room. Today, DIYers can choose from crisp white or modern gray fabric - available in **blackout for bedrooms or translucent for soft filtered light** - paired with durable aluminum trim for a premium, built-in feel.

Unlike manual shades, today's smart shades deliver value beyond the hardware by providing software-driven control. As interior design trends veer toward more responsive, efficient and automated experiences in the home, smart control has quickly risen to the top of the priority list. **GE smart shades can be controlled with simple voice commands** or scheduled routines. Users can automate shade movements to enhance privacy, regulate indoor temperatures or manage natural light on a custom schedule. And for households that still enjoy a tactile option, a pre-paired remote allows for instant, no-app-required control.

GE smart shades also appeal strongly to DIY enthusiasts thanks to the quiet, rechargeable motor. **Smooth, low-noise operation makes them ideal for bedrooms, nurseries and media rooms - spaces where serenity matters most.** Many smart shades on the market now emphasize quiet, reliable motors as a key performance metric, reinforcing this feature as a meaningful advantage for everyday living. With long-lasting battery performance and simple USB-C charging in place, upkeep stays minimal.

Lastly, craftsmanship and peace of mind are major GE smart shade selling points. Assembled by hand in Charleston, South Carolina, and rigorously tested to ensure smooth and flawless operation, GE smart shades are backed by a two-year limited warranty. This commitment to quality for which GE-branded products are known is appreciated by DIYers investing their own money, time and energy into home improvements.

GE smart shades are available now at Amazon.com and Shop.GELighting.com in sizes that are pre-cut for today's most common window sizes. With prices starting at $299.99, the shades are within reach for homeowners and renters seeking to boost both function and style without calling in a contractor.

Whether refreshing a single room or giving the whole home a modern edge, shades are quickly emerging as one of the most rewarding - and surprisingly simple - **DIY upgrades.** All signs point toward **smart motorized shades** as the future of window treatments for homeowners and renters looking to get more from their shades.

AI & EVERYDAY LIFE

WHAT HOMEOWNERS SHOULD KNOW AS AI EXPANDS

THE ENERGY NEEDED TO POWER THE AI REVOLUTION

On the night of March 2, 2026, millions of workers around the world opened their laptops and found Claude, one of the world's most widely used AI assistants, was down. The outage lasted hours. It was a small but pointed reminder of how dependent modern work has become on AI, and how fragile the infrastructure behind it can be. The grid that powers that infrastructure is under more strain than most people realize, and the vulnerabilities don't stop at the data center door. They come home with us.

Today, the world is spending hundreds of billions of dollars building the energy infrastructure needed to power AI, including data centers, grid upgrades and new power plants. That scale is just beginning. Fast forward to 2030, when the International Energy Agency (IEA) projects global data center electricity consumption will nearly double.

Here's why: A single AI hyperscaler (like Google Cloud, Microsoft Azure or AWS) consumes as much electricity as 100,000 households, driving an estimated $720 billion in grid spending through the end of the decade.

The world recognizes that AI requires massive energy infrastructure. But what do homes need in this era of AI-powered functionality?

The AI Revolution Comes Home

While data centers power the AI infrastructure, the AI revolution is rapidly moving into homes, and with it, each home needs what data centers need: reliable, always-on power.

But that power is far from guaranteed. The tension between AI's energy demands and the fragility of the grid is not a future concern. It is already playing out. A single AI workload consumes roughly 1,000 times more electricity than a traditional web search, while geopolitical instability, supply chain disruptions and an already strained electrical grid are exposing just how vulnerable that infrastructure is.

Homes are no exception.

How fast is this happening? The average U.S. home has 21 connected devices today, and that number continues to grow. The AI smart home market is expanding rapidly, with adoption expected to reach most households globally within the next decade.

The grid powering all of this is already under pressure. According to NERC's 2025 Summer Reliability Assessment, several major U.S. regions, including Texas, the Midwest and the Southwest, face a real risk of supply shortfalls during peak demand periods. Most people cannot control what happens at the grid level, but they can begin to think about energy resilience at home.

Home Power Solutions for the Future

As energy demand increases, the conversation is shifting toward how homes can better manage power. Instead of relying entirely on centralized systems, there is growing interest in solutions that allow homeowners more control over how energy is stored and used.

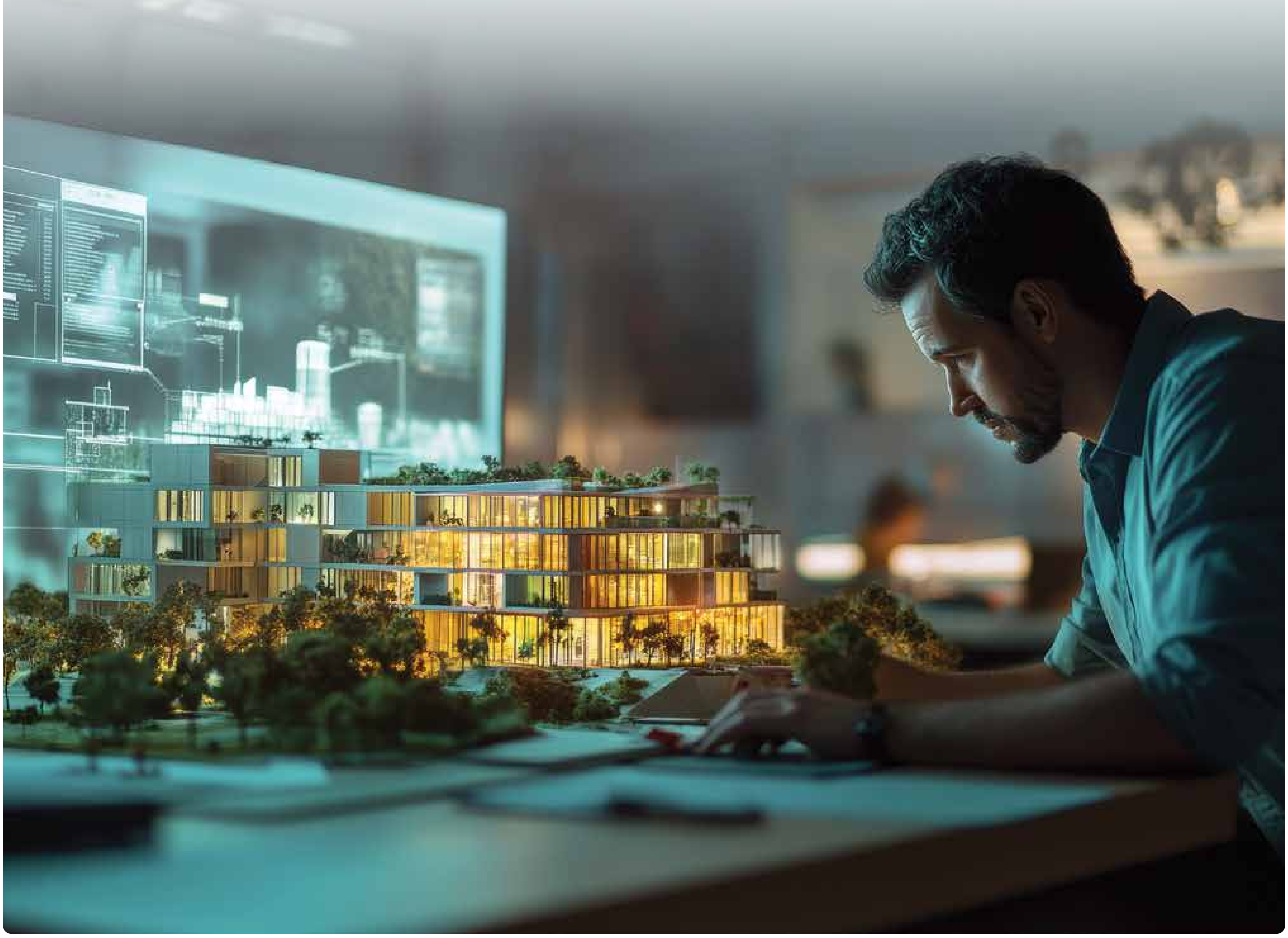
Reliable power is becoming less of a luxury and more of a necessity. Today's connected homes rely on consistent energy for communication, security, climate control and everyday convenience. As more devices depend on AI and real-time data, even short disruptions can have a greater impact.

At the same time, broader trends such as rising energy demand and aging infrastructure continue to put pressure on the grid. That combination is pushing more attention toward long-term energy resilience at home.

HOMES OF TOMORROW

Building on today's technology, the home of tomorrow is expected to generate its own clean energy and operate with greater independence from the grid. **The goal is a home that stays powered, connected and functional even when external systems are under strain.**

"As energy needs continue to evolve, the focus is shifting toward smarter, more self-sufficient homes," said Steven Wang, VP of Jackery's Americas Business Department. "Looking ahead, the vision is to create systems that are cleaner, more efficient and better equipped to support the way people live and work today."



MORTGAGE RATES

WHY HOMEOWNERS ARE STARTING TO MOVE FORWARD AGAIN

MOVING BEYOND THE 3% TRAP

If you've thought about moving but keep coming back to your current mortgage rate, you're not alone. Many homeowners locked in rates around 3% over the past few years, and giving that up can feel like a step in the wrong direction.

But focusing only on the rate you're leaving behind can lead to a different kind of cost, one that's easier to overlook.

Why So Many Homeowners Felt Stuck

That low rate has real value. It keeps your monthly payment lower and makes staying put feel like the safest option.

The challenge is that it can also keep homeowners in place longer than they want to be. Life doesn't always line up with interest rate cycles. Growing families, downsizing plans, job changes, and lifestyle shifts are still happening every day in our area.

When the decision to move gets delayed purely because of rate comparisons, it's worth stepping back and looking at the bigger picture.

What Waiting Can Actually Cost

Waiting for rates to drop may seem like the logical move, but it comes with tradeoffs.

If rates decline, buyer demand typically increases quickly. More buyers entering the market can mean more competition, stronger offers, and less flexibility in negotiations.

That often includes fewer opportunities to ask for concessions that help reduce upfront or monthly costs. In other words, the savings you're waiting for on the rate side can sometimes be offset elsewhere.

Buyers Are Focused on Payments

Today's buyers are still active, but they're more focused on monthly payments than ever.

This shift has changed how deals are getting done. Instead of simply negotiating price, many transactions are being structured to make payments more manageable.

One of the most common tools right now is a temporary rate buydown, where the buyer's interest rate is reduced for the first one to three years. In many cases, that cost is covered by a seller credit.

For sellers, this can be a powerful way to attract buyers without making a large price reduction. For buyers, it creates breathing room during the early years of the loan.

It's Not Just About the Rate

If you're considering a move, the better question is not "What rate am I giving up?" but "What does my full financial picture look like after the move?"

Many homeowners have built meaningful equity over the past several years. That equity can be used toward your next purchase, reducing the loan amount and helping offset today's higher rates.

There are also ways to improve the rate you receive, including strengthening your credit profile, adjusting your down payment, or exploring different loan options with a lender.

Trying to time the market perfectly is difficult. Rates, inventory, and buyer demand are all moving targets.

What This Means For You

Higher rates don't necessarily mean putting your plans on hold. With the right strategy, many homeowners are still making successful moves. The key is evaluating your options and making a decision that aligns with your goals, timeline, and finances.

If you're considering a move, reach out to your local real estate expert to talk through your options.

HOW BUYERS ARE LOWERING RATES

- ✓ Seller credits to offset closing costs or reduce rate
- ✓ Larger down payments to lower loan amount
- ✓ Adjustable-rate options for shorter-term plans
- ✓ Temporary rate buydowns (lower payments for the first 1–3 years)

Right now, we're seeing a more balanced environment. Buyers have options, and sellers have more flexibility to structure deals creatively. That combination can create opportunities that don't exist in more competitive markets.

DOES YOUR HOME STILL FIT YOUR LIFE?

WHY MORE BAY AREA HOMEOWNERS ARE CHOOSING TO RIGHT-SIZE

by Lee Ginsburg

For or many longtime homeowners, the idea of moving once meant "downsizing." Today, more Bay Area homeowners are embracing a different approach entirely: *right-sizing*.

Right-sizing is not simply about moving into a smaller home. It is about finding a property that better supports your current lifestyle, future goals, and day-to-day needs. Across Bay Area communities, many homeowners are beginning to ask an important question: Does my home still fit the way I want to live?

For some, the answer is yes. For others, changing priorities, maintenance demands, lifestyle shifts, or untapped home equity are opening the door to new possibilities.

What Right-Sizing Looks Like Today

Right-sizing can mean different things depending on a homeowner's stage of life and personal goals.

Some homeowners are looking for less maintenance after years of caring for a larger property. Others want a single-level home, more functional space, proximity to family, easier commuting, or access to walkable neighborhoods and local amenities.

Throughout the Bay Area, many longtime homeowners are also sitting on substantial equity after years of appreciation. For some, right-sizing creates an opportunity to free up equity, reduce monthly expenses, or improve long-term financial flexibility.

Importantly, right-sizing does not always mean going smaller. Some homeowners move into homes with better layouts, updated features, guest space for visiting family, or locations that better support retirement, remote work, or travel plans.

Why Many Homeowners Are Making Moves Now

Even with higher interest rates than buyers saw a few years ago, many Bay Area homeowners continue to explore moves because lifestyle needs often outweigh perfect timing.

Many owners who purchased years ago now find themselves in homes with more upkeep, stairs, yard work, or unused rooms than they truly need. Others are realizing that staying put may delay plans they have been considering for years.

At the same time, well-maintained homes continue to attract strong buyer interest, particularly from buyers seeking established neighborhoods, commuter access, and proximity to both San Francisco and Silicon Valley.

Navigating Buying and Selling at the Same Time

One of the biggest concerns homeowners have is managing both transactions at once. The good news is that there are more options and strategies available today than many people realize.

Some homeowners choose to sell first and lease back temporarily while searching for their next home. Others use bridge financing or carefully coordinate timelines to reduce stress and disruption. In competitive local markets, preparation and planning can make the process significantly smoother.

Working with a local real estate professional early in the process can help homeowners understand current market conditions, evaluate timing, and explore realistic options before making major decisions.

Small Changes Can Lead to Big Benefits

For many homeowners, right-sizing ultimately comes down to quality of life. Less maintenance can mean more freedom to travel, spend time with family, pursue hobbies, or simply enjoy daily life with less stress.

Others find that moving into a home better suited to their current needs allows them to simplify responsibilities while planning more comfortably for the future.

There is no universal "right" time to make a move. But for many Bay Area homeowners, the conversation is no longer just about square footage. It is about lifestyle, flexibility, comfort, and making the most of the next chapter.

If you have been wondering whether your current home still fits your needs, now may be a good time to explore your options and understand what is possible in today's market.

Thinking about right-sizing or curious what your home might be worth in today's Bay Area market? Call Lee Ginsburg at 650-888-5662 for trusted local real estate guidance tailored to your goals.

SUMMER HOME MAINTENANCE CHECKLIST

PRACTICAL SEASONAL STEPS FOR BAY AREA HOMEOWNERS

by Lee Ginsburg

Summer is one of the best times of year to enjoy life in the Bay Area. Longer days and warmer weather make it easier to tackle home projects and prepare your property before fall fog and winter rain return.

Homes in our area face a unique mix of coastal moisture, salt air, wind exposure, and shifting temperatures throughout the year. A little preventive maintenance now can help avoid larger repairs later while protecting curb appeal and long-term value.

Check Your Roof And Gutters

Even after winter storms have passed, Bay Area roofs can take a beating from moisture, wind, and debris buildup. Summer is the perfect time to inspect for loose shingles, cracked flashing, clogged gutters, or signs of leaks around skylights and vents.

Regular fog and moisture can also contribute to moss and mildew growth if left untreated. Cleaning gutters and ensuring proper drainage now can help prevent water damage later.

Wash Away Salt, Dust, And Pollen

Homes near the coast are constantly exposed to salt air, which can wear down paint, metal fixtures, and outdoor surfaces over time. A simple power wash of siding, patios, decks, fences, and walkways can freshen up your property while helping preserve materials.

Summer is also a good time to touch up peeling paint, reseal wood surfaces, and inspect exterior caulking around windows and doors.

Prepare Outdoor Living Spaces

Outdoor entertaining is a major part of summer living across the Bay Area. Whether you have a patio, deck, or backyard gathering space, now is the time to refresh it.

Inspect decks for loose boards or railings, clean outdoor furniture, replace worn cushions, and trim overgrown landscaping. If you have irrigation systems, check for leaks or inefficient sprinkler heads as water conservation remains important throughout California.

Service Your Hvac System

Many Bay Area homes do not rely heavily on air conditioning year-round, which means HVAC systems can go long periods without attention. Before late-summer heat waves arrive, replace air filters, clear debris around exterior units, and schedule servicing if needed. Even homes without central AC should check ceiling fans, attic ventilation, and window seals to improve airflow and energy efficiency.

Inspect Windows And Doors

Foggy mornings and sunny afternoons can gradually wear down seals around windows and doors. Small drafts may not seem significant during summer, but they can increase heating costs during cooler months.

Check for cracked caulking, worn weather stripping, or condensation between window panes. Addressing small issues now is usually far less expensive than replacing damaged materials later.

Test Safety Systems

Summer is a smart time to test smoke detectors, carbon monoxide detectors, outdoor lighting, and security systems. Homeowners should also review emergency preparedness supplies during wildfire season.

Even though San Mateo and San Francisco Counties are generally not considered a high wildfire-risk area compared to inland communities, maintaining defensible space and emergency readiness is always a good idea.

Don't Forget Curb Appeal

Fresh mulch, seasonal flowers, updated lighting, clean walkways, and a freshly painted front door can instantly improve appearance without major expense.

For homeowners considering selling within the next year or two, these simple updates can also help maintain buyer appeal and property value.

Regular maintenance is one of the best ways to protect your investment and enjoy your home more comfortably year-round.

Thinking about making a move this summer or curious about your home's current market value? Call Lee Ginsburg at 650-888-5662 for local real estate insight tailored to the Bay Area market.

just for fun

PUZZLE 1

CROSSWORD

Fill the grid using the clues

1	2	3	4	5	6	■	7	8	9	■	10	11	12	13
14						■	15			■	16			
17						■	18			■	19			
■	■	■	20			21				22				
23	24	25			■	26			■	27				
28				■	29			■	30			■	■	■
31				32			■	33			■	34	35	36
37			■	38			■	39			■	40		
41			■	42			■	43			44			
■	■	■	45			■	46			■	47			
48	49	50			■	51			■	52				
53					54				55			■	■	■
56				■	57			■	58			59	60	61
62				■	63			■	64					
65				■	66			■	67					

ACROSS

1- Cottonwoods
7- kwon do
10- Conked out
14- Go over again
15- Egyptian cobra
16- The King
17- Theater district
18- Go downhill fast?
19- Cornfield cacophony
20- Aviation mechanic
23- Belle or Bart
26- Boy
27- Unfolds
28- Amos or Spelling
29- Like some ears
30- Cat (winter vehicle)
31- Imperial dynasty of Russia
33- Injection amts.
34- Sprechen___Deutsch?
37- Mineral suffix
38- "Lord, is?": Matthew
39- That's gotta hurt!
40- Tolkien ogre
41- Third degree?
42- Legume
43- Uncommon
45- Belief system
46- Get older
47- Annapolis sch.
48- Hippodrome, e.g.
51- Menu words
52- Distinguishing characteristic
53- Made to resist breaking
56- Pigeon coop
57- Cinco de Mayo, e.g.
58- Scoffs
62- Polecat's defense
63- Common Market abbr.
64- People of courage
65- Neutral shades
66- D.C. advisory grp.
67- Size up

DOWN

1- Sheet music abbr.
2- Wreath of flowers
3- I've got it!
4- Swampfever
5- Blender maker
6- Restaurateur Toots
7- Dutch navigator
8- Inquired
9- Larger-than-life
10- Repeated from the beginning
11- Mindlessly stupid
12- Newsman Newman
13- Flat circular plates
21- Singer Newton-John
22- Island in central Japan
23- Piece of bacon
24- Fang, e.g.
25- Equipped
29- Tribal emblem
30- Teatime treat
32- Tries to bite
33- Puma
34- March man
35- Afghan's neighbor
36- Brilliance
44- Wave riders
45- Buries
46- Llama relative
48- Cravat
49- Role for Valerie
50- Stationery brand
51- Sign of spring
52- Shades
54- First place
55- Dept. of Labor division
59- Fair-hiring abbr.
60- Hi-___ graphics
61- Conscription org.

PUZZLE 2

CONNECTIONS

Four groups of four

Sort the 16 words into four hidden categories. Write each category name on the dotted line beside its colour.

MUSTARD	LINCOLN	APPLE	KETCHUP
KENNEDY	MONOPOLY	SCRABBLE	PECAN
RELISH	REAGAN	CLUE	PUMPKIN
CARTER	CHERRY	MAYO	BATTLESHIP

PUZZLE 3

SCRAMBLE

Theme: Ice creams

Rearrange each set of letters to reveal the words.

ANILLVA _ _ _ _ _ _ _
HETCACOOL _ _ _ _ _ _ _ _ _
SRRBAWTEYR _ _ _ _ _ _ _ _ _ _
OATOEHCCL ICPH _ _ _ _ _ _ _ _ _   _ _ _ _
BERUTT CAPEN _ _ _ _ _ _   _ _ _ _ _
RYKOC DAOR _ _ _ _ _   _ _ _ _

PUZZLE ANSWERS

Scramble:
Vanilla · Chocolate · Strawberry
Chocolate Chip
Butter Pecan · Rocky Road

Connections:
Gold: Condiments — Mustard, Ketchup, Relish, Mayo
Green: US Presidents — Lincoln, Kennedy, Reagan, Carter
Blue: Board games — Monopoly, Scrabble, Clue, Battleship
Purple: Pie flavors — Apple, Pecan, Pumpkin, Cherry

RISING STARS

TWO FUTURE FOOTBALL LEGENDS

Every spring the NFL draft brings the best, most talented college players out of the woodwork, and 2026 has been no exception. Here are just two of many stand-out new recruits destined to become hall-of-famers.

Jeremiyah Love

He grew up in a tough neighborhood but his retired police officer parents kept him on a tight leash. His strict upbringing cultivated discipline from a young age, helping him harness and maximize his unbelievable talent. Recruiters competed for him out of high school, and he didn't disappoint; his explosive energy brought him over 2,800 rushing yards and 42 touchdowns his first three seasons. He's fast, agile, and focused, one of the most exciting young offensive weapons to watch!

Fernando Mendoza

He has an equally inspiring backstory, one of the most intriguing new players. Despite crushing it as a high school quarterback he was overlooked by recruiters, only to redshirt his first year at Berkeley and earn the top spot sophomore year. He quickly made a name for himself with his composure, mobility, and ability to make plays under pressure. After transferring to Indiana, he led the Hoosiers to a 13-0 regular season and won the 2025 Heisman Trophy. A legend in the making!

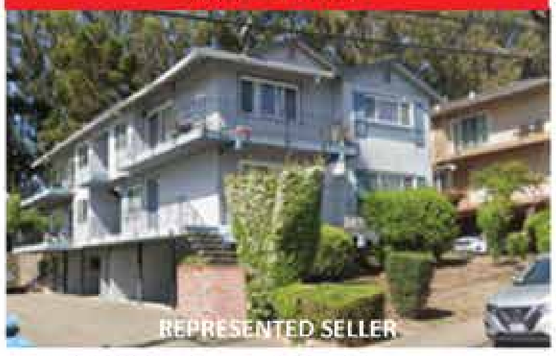
LEE IS KEEPING BUSY!

IF YOU HAVE QUESTIONS, GIVE ME A CALL AT 650-888-5662

FOR SALE!

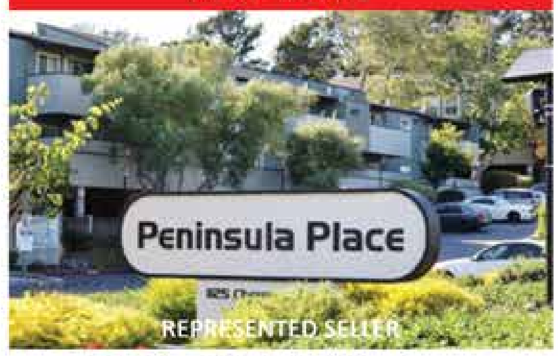
331 San Carlos Ave, El Granada
3 Bedrooms, 1 Bath, Close to the Beach
Listed for $999,000

JUST SOLD!



3630 Crestmoor Drive, San Bruno
4-Unit Building
Sold for $1,700,000

JUST SOLD!



143 Piccadilly, Unit F, San Bruno
1 Bedroom, 1 Bath - Condo
Sold for $459,000

JUST SOLD!

461 Zamora Drive, South San Francisco
3 Bedrooms, 1 Bathroom, 1,050 Sq. Ft.
Sold for: $1,268,000

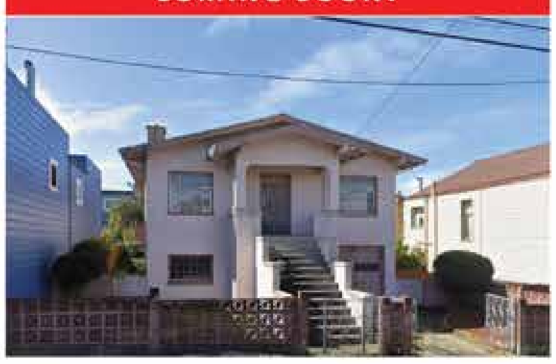
JUST SOLD!

1102 Everglades Drive, Pacifica
4 Bedrooms, 3 Bathrooms, 1,900 Sq. Ft.
Sold for: $1,295,000

COMING SOON!

2171 Rosewood Drive, San Bruno
3 Bedrooms, 2 Bathrooms, 1,660 Sq. Ft.
Call for Details

COMING SOON!

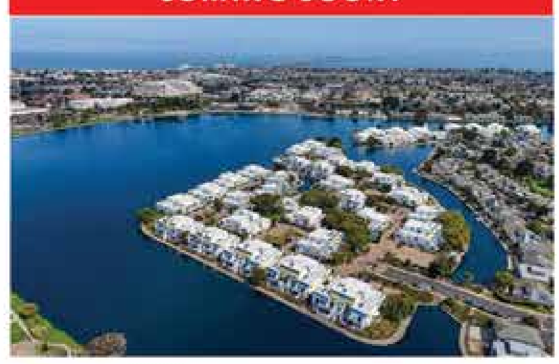


61 Farragut Avenue, San Francisco
2 Bedrooms, 1 Bath + 1/1 In-Law
Call for Details

COMING SOON!

1119 Sunnyside Drive, South San Francisco
3 Bedrooms, 1 Bathroom
Call for Details

COMING SOON!



636 Portofino Lane, Foster City
2 Bedroom, 2 Bath | Waterfront Condo
Call for Details

THE HIDDEN "COST OF WAITING" FOR HOME SELLERS

by Lee Ginsburg

As we navigate the current real estate landscape, I often hear homeowners say, "I think I'll wait a few months to see where the market goes." While patience is usually a virtue, in real estate, it can sometimes be an expensive gamble. Thinking about waiting for the "perfect" moment to sell? It's a common strategy, but in a shifting market, hesitation often comes with a hidden price tag.

Here are the three primary factors that make up the "Cost of Waiting" in today's market:

1. The Impact of Shifting Interest Rates

Even if you aren't the one taking out a mortgage, your buyers are. As interest rates fluctuate, a buyer's purchasing power changes significantly. A small increase in rates can push a segment of potential buyers out of your price bracket, reducing the pool of offers and potentially lowering your final sale price. Rates are not forecasted to move up or down much this year due to the many uncertainties in the financial climate. For a 1/4% interest rate change payment $300 for every million dollars borrowed or will lower buying power by $50,000.

2. Inventory and Competition

Right now, we are seeing a specific window of opportunity. While some sellers are choosing to lower their list prices to move inventory, the Bay Area remains a resilient market. However, as more "wait and see" sellers eventually decide to list their homes simultaneously, you may find yourself facing much steeper competition, which can dilute the "wow factor" of your property. Currently, inventory is about the same as last year but 20% greater than just 2 years ago.

3. Property Maintenance and Compliance

Waiting doesn't just involve market risk; it involves physical risk. Most of the homes in our area are 50, 60,70 years or older and as time goes on **roofs, furnaces, and water heaters** can break down. Delaying a sale could mean a cost of thousands of dollars.

4. Potential Buying Another Home

If your home increases in value the home you want to buy most likely will also. Therefore, no big savings.

5. Potential Investment

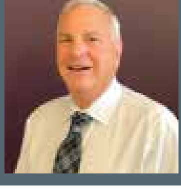
If you sell your home now and invest $1M of the proceeds, even in a bank CD at 4%, you will earn $40,000 a year. If your home increases in value by $40,000 you are not really gaining anything. In fact, you are losing as you had to incur property tax, insurance premiums, and possibly your mortgage, and, of course, potential repair costs.

6. Potential Tax Consequences

If you are married and have a gain of greater than $500,000 or single and gain over $250,000, you will have state and federal tax to deal with. The tax is approximately 35%. So, if you are holding out for an additional $100,000, our favorite Uncle Sam is your silent partner getting 35% of your profit. Holding out is an even greater risk.

The Bottom Line

Market timing is rarely about finding the absolute "peak"—it's about avoiding the "slide." If your goal is to maximize your home's value and transition smoothly to your next chapter, the strategic move is often to act when you are mentally prepared to say good bye.



LEE GINSBURG
Realtor
CA DRE#: 01391378

www.LeeSellsMore.com
650-888-5662 | Lee@leesellsmore.com

INTERO
REAL ESTATE SERVICES
CA DRE#: 01354442