



From the Broker's Desk

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Modern technology has impacted all facets of our lives and real estate is no exception. Realtors have had to adapt or be pushed aside as technology has advanced through the years. When I was licensed thirty-five years ago, there were no cell phones, fax machines or internet and Realtors were thrilled when we received two Multiple Listing books a month instead of one. Now with all the real estate listing websites, consumers have access to much of the same information as the Realtors. For years Realtor.com was the most active site used by buyers in their housing searches but now sites like Zillow and Trulia have emerged with a large following. The National Association of Realtors, NAR, spent millions on a forerunner of Realtor.com known as RIN or Realtor Information Network in 1995-1996 but that endeavor wasn't completely successful. To recoup their investment, NAR, sold a segment of RIN to a company known as MOVE but NAR continued to maintain control over many of the

aspects of Realtor.com. News Corp recently purchased MOVE so we will have to wait and see in what direction Realtor.com moves. The Trulia site was launched in September, 2005 in California and by the next year was available throughout the United States. Trulia provides price trend information by using listing and public data to research the changing value of a specific property in comparison with other similar properties within the same zip code and city. Trulia gives the consumer access to information on area crime, local schools, commuter maps and amenities. Zillow now has more traffic than Realtor.com as they have acquired nine real estate listing websites since 2011 which include Postlets, Hotpads, StreetEasy and Trulia. Zillow's "Zestimate" has become known to most consumers but its accuracy is a source of contention. Zillow determines a house value using a formula based on public data like property tax appraisal or last sale price. This data will not show recent improvements or additions, changes to the neighborhood or a trend in the market area. Like Trulia, the Zillow site offers consumers information on a range of subjects. Many Realtors now offer the consumer a direct link to their local MLS through an IDX (Internet

Data Exchange) or RETS (Real Estate Transaction Standard) link which provides the most current listing data available. Some sites require the consumer to register but at WILLOW Realty, information is readily available at www.willowrealty.com. For the bargain hunters, there are numerous websites listing foreclosed properties held by HUD, Fannie Mae, VA and other government agencies. Often these sites require that offers be generated through one of their approved agents. Now we have Hubzu.com, auction.com and bid4assets.com among others that allow you to bid online. Be sure to read all the details as these usually have a buyer's premium and technology fee added and require non-refundable earnest money so be sure that you can meet the purchase requirements before bidding. While the consumer may no longer totally rely on the Realtor to locate suitable housing, the consumer can appreciate the knowledge that the Realtor provides as to the subject's neighborhood, comparable house values, financing knowledge and negotiating skills. Let one of the experienced Agents of WILLOW Realty assist with your next real estate transaction.

10 Simple Gardening Tips and Tricks excerpts © hgtv.com/ Paul James

1. To remove the salt deposits that form on clay pots, combine equal parts white vinegar, rubbing alcohol and water in a spray bottle. Apply the mixture to the pot and scrub with a plastic brush. Let the pot dry before you plant anything in it.
2. To prevent accumulating dirt under your fingernails while you work in the garden, draw your fingernails across a bar of soap and you'll effectively seal the undersides of your nails so dirt can't collect beneath them. Then, after you've finished in the garden, use a nailbrush to remove the soap and your nails will be sparkling clean.
3. To prevent the line on your string trimmer from jamming or breaking, treat with a spray vegetable oil before installing it in the trimmer.
4. Turn a long-handled tool into a measuring stick! Lay a long-handled garden tool on the ground, and next to it place a tape measure. Using a permanent

marker, write inch and foot marks on the handle. When you need to space plants a certain distance apart (from just an inch to several feet) you'll already have a measuring device in your hand.

5. To have garden twine handy when you need it, just stick a ball of twine in a small clay pot, pull the end of the twine through the drainage hole, and set the pot upside down in the garden. Do that, and you'll never go looking for twine again.



6. To turn a clay pot into a hose guide, just stab a roughly one-foot length of steel reinforcing bar into the ground at the corner of a bed and slip two clay pots over it: one facing down, the other facing up. The guides will prevent damage to your plants as you drag the hose along the bed.

7. The next time you boil or steam vegetables, don't pour the water down the drain, use it to water potted patio plants, and you'll be amazed at how the plants respond to the "vegetable soup."

8. Use leftover tea and coffee grounds to acidify the soil of acid-loving plants such as azaleas, rhododendrons, camellias, gardenias and even blueberries. A light sprinkling of about one-quarter of an inch applied once a month will keep the pH of the soil on the acidic side.



9. Use chamomile tea to control damping-off fungus, which often attacks young seedlings quite suddenly. Just add a spot of tea to the soil around the base of seedlings once a week or use it as a foliar spray.

10. The quickest way in the world to dry herbs: just lay a sheet of newspaper on the seat of your car, arrange the herbs in a single layer, then roll up the windows and close the doors. Your herbs will be quickly dried to perfection. What's more, your car will smell great.

Caribbean Grilled Ribeyes

© TasteofHome.com

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| 1/2 c Dr Pepper | 1/2 tsp salt |
| 3 tbs honey | 1/2 tsp pepper |
| 1/4 c Caribbean jerk seasoning | 4 beef ribeye steaks (3/4 lb each) |
| 1-1/2 tsp chopped seeded habanero pepper | |



Place the first six ingredients in a blender; cover and process until blended. Pour into a large resealable plastic bag. Add steaks; seal bag and turn to coat. Refrigerate at least 2 hours. Drain and discard marinade. Grill steaks, covered, over medium heat or broil 3-4 in. from heat for 4-6 minutes on each side or until meat reaches desired doneness (for medium-rare, a meat thermometer should read 145°; medium, 160°; well-done, 170°). **Yield:** 4 servings

When a father gives to his son, both laugh; when a son gives to his father, both cry. ~William Shakespeare



Father's Day
June 21st