



# FRONT PORCH NEWS

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I'm wishing you a wonderful season of holiday traditions. I hope you and your loved ones can share time together, which is the most precious gift of all. I'll see you in the New Year, if not before!  
~Tim Lord



## Puzzle books speed up mental processing...

Recent studies have shown that puzzle activity books for adults have a measurable effect on the brain, but not in the way you might expect.

In these studies, results show that doing puzzles like crosswords, word search, and sudoku don't do much to improve memory, but they do a lot to improve processing speed. It seems that as we become more familiar with the strategies involved in solving puzzles, we become faster thinkers.

It's as good a reason as any to give the gift of an inexpensive puzzle book this season. See [BarefootBrains.com](http://BarefootBrains.com) or search Amazon for a selection of casual puzzle books.



## This May Be the Perfect Gift You Weren't Looking for

While giving the perfect gift is ideal, sometimes a good joke gift is a perfect gift. What makes something a good joke gift? "It's not like a white elephant gift," says consumer shopping analyst Gerry Border.

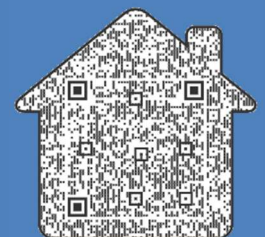
"Those are generic. A good joke gift is funny because it's specific to the person it's for." If you want to give a laugh this season, here are some ideas collected from posts across the netverse.

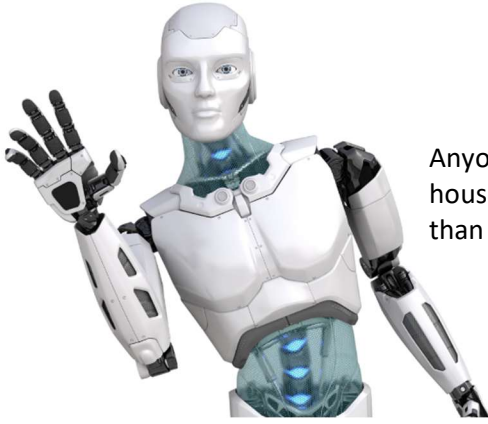
- "My neighbor has a strange lemon tree that grows giant grapefruit-sized lemons. I picked the biggest one I could find and sent it to my brother for Christmas. He's a chef."
- "My brother is always pranking me, so I thought I'd embarrass him and his new wife this Christmas eve. I replaced the interior content of a Playboy magazine with the content of one about actual rabbits."
- "I gave my daughter a pair of earrings that she wanted. But I packed them into ten different boxes, each wrapped and placed inside the next larger box."
- "Just for fun one year, we left the tags off of all the gifts. Everyone opened a gift and then had to figure out who it was really for."
- "Gave my daughter a single shoe, a sneaker that everyone at school had and she wanted desperately. I told her she had to hunt for the other one. I put it on her shoe rack. It took her 20 minutes to find it!"
- "My Dad fell off the roof while making a repair this summer. He wasn't seriously injured. I got him a bungee cord and said it'll help him bounce back from his next roof repair."

Hope this inspires you to give the gift of a good laugh this holiday!

## Should you sell first or buy first?

There are trade-offs to doing one before the other. Here's a walk-through of your options to help you make plans for selling your home in the coming months. Scan or text for a copy 317-319-9012





## Do we need human-shaped house robots?

Anyone who's familiar with The Jetsons cartoon knows that Rosie was the housemaid robot. She had a somewhat human shape. She was vertical, rather than horizontal. She had a head with eyes and mechanical arms in the right place.

I wonder if Elon Musk grew up on the Jetsons, and if that feeds into his fascination with creating a human-like house robot. As most of us know, Musk's Space Karen, unveiled at Tesla's 2024 AI Day event, wasn't a real robot. It was a shell that was controlled by humans.

Which makes me wonder why it's so important to create this humanoid robot shape? After all, we have a disk that cleans our floors, a box that washes our dishes, a refrigerator that can tell me when it's time to replace the milk, and automatic feeders for the cats. I don't feel the need for any of them to be human shaped.

If it could clean my bathroom top to bottom, chop the vegetables for my stir fry, and fold my laundry, I don't think I'd care if my house robot was a square box with protruding appendages. Musk, however, is tuned into the marketing notion that we would like our household help to look like a person as we boss it around.

But Musk faces an uphill battle to overcome what's called the "uncanny valley." The "uncanny valley" is a concept in robotics and AI that describes the eerie or uncomfortable feeling people get when they encounter robots, animations, or other representations of humans that look almost, but not quite, human. The term was first coined by Japanese roboticist Masahiro Mori in the 1970s.

Why am I musing about house robots at Christmas time? Because thinking about gifts has me heading down the rabbit hole of new tech gadgets. If anyone wants to get me a house robot, I'm game.

## December Quiz Question

*Four cars came to a four-way stop, each coming from a different direction. They couldn't decide who got there first, so they all went forward at the same time, all passing easily through the intersection without crashing into one another. How is this possible?*

## Slow snacks might add less to your waistline

If you're a snack hog, shoving handfuls of chips or candy into your mouth when you're bored, here are 6 snacks that force you to take longer to eat, tricking your mouth and mind into a sense that you've been eating a lot more than you have.

1. Steam Edamame in the pod and enjoy popping each bean out.
2. Frozen grapes take longer to eat, and the cold can trick your mouth into feeling full. :)
3. Pomegranate Seeds are so small, but each has a juicy burst of flavor that excites the taste buds!
4. Cracking Pistachio nuts out of their shells is a naturally slow process with a tasty reward.
5. Need chocolate? How about chocolate-covered sunflower seeds. There's not much chocolate on each tiny seed, so not much weight gain. You almost use as many calories eating them as you gain!
6. Peeling each leaf from a steamed artichoke, dipping it in thin lemon-butter dipping sauce, and scraping it off with your teeth is an almost meditatively slow snack.

Can you think of any other slow snacks?



## I appreciate you!

I'm grateful to all of you that you have been part of my business

## Quiz Contest - Win a FREE Coffee Card

Email me the answer to the question on **page 2**. Put the word **QUIZ** in the subject line. [tim@lordrealestategroup.com](mailto:tim@lordrealestategroup.com)

- **Last month's Q&A:** *There is a woman in a boat on a lake wearing a coat. If you want to know her name, it's in the clue I just wrote. Can you tell me her name? There.*

Congratulations to last month's winner!



## Watch out for this Quit Claim scam that can literally steal your house!

Most of us will never experience a housing scam. But it's my job to get the word out just in case your circumstances make you a target for scammers. In this case, the scam is **quit claim deeding**. This scam usually occurs with vacant homes—even temporarily vacant, such as homes whose owners are on an extended holiday, rentals that are

between tenants, homes under construction, vacation or second homes, homes for sale, and homes that are awaiting family actions after the death of an owner.

A quitclaim deed is a legal document used to quickly transfer ownership of a property from one person to another without a sale — for example, when a parent gives a home to their adult child. These deeds require minimal documentation, which makes them appealing to scammer who forge signatures and file the deeds, effectively stealing the home by transferring ownership without consent. This tactic allows the scammer to secure loans or even sell to unsuspecting buyers. Unfortunately, there are few restrictions in place to block such transfers, and if you don't notice it's happened, it can take years to unwind the problems.

To protect yourself stay vigilant. Find out if your property's local registration office has a fraud alert system that will text or email you when a change is made to your deed. If you get such an alert, contact the office immediately. Also, it's a good idea to place cameras around your property, even if it's under construction.

## This Christmas, some kid somewhere will get LEGOs.



**They're everywhere, but where did they come from?** The LEGO story started in Denmark, 1932, when a carpenter began making wooden toys...little ducks and trains. When his toy business took off in 1936, he wanted a name that focused on the concept of Playing Well, or in Danish, Leg Godt. He abbreviated the words to LEGO. His wooden toys sold well until 1946. To see what happened next, see this kid-friendly YouTube animation.



## Embracing Men Who Shed

There's a movement to combat loneliness using garden sheds. Except they're not really garden sheds. Think of them as garages or workshops, but ultimately what they are is a gathering place for men. Not alpha men who want to lift weights and one-up each other, but senior men often in their 70s and 80s who want to enjoy the companionship of other men who don't bug them about getting under foot in the kitchen. Men who might be feeling lonely. Men whose wives have passed on, or men who have lost their friends and don't have anyone to relate to.

Across the UK, US and Canada, men can join a local "shed," where they can work on projects together, have a beer, gripe about getting old, whatever. Google "Men's Shed" in your area to see what's available for you, your dad or Granddad.



# FRONT PORCH NEWS

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## Can I paint my side of a fence that's on my neighbor's property?

When a fence sits directly on the property line, both neighbors are free to paint their side of the fence. However, if the fence was built all or part on your neighbor's property, you're in a tricky spot. In most cases, a fence on your neighbor's property requires their permission to paint, even if they never see the side that you see. Check with local laws to be certain, but usually, painting any part of the fence on your neighbor's property without their permission can be considered encroachment or an unauthorized use of their property.

Open communication with your neighbor is the key. Go into the conversation being aware that what seems perfectly reasonable to you might not to them. Be prepared to explain that you'll pay for the painting, and it will help the fence last longer. But also, be prepared for them to simply say no. In that case, you can put up a separate fence on your side or use some other form of sight-line blockage, like a lattice wall or hedge.

Even if the fence between your houses is entirely on your property and you don't need to ask their permission, consider that your neighbor must look at their side of your fence.

While they could put up their own fence, it would be more neighborly if you could communicate with them and perhaps get them to help pay for painting their side.

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