

Manhattan Beach Sun

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There is More to Explore from the Shore



A lovely view on a cloudy day. Photo by Peter Thornton.

Rooftop Solar Touches Off Power Struggle

By Rob McCarthy

If solar work trucks seem to be everywhere on the road and in South Bay neighborhoods, it's not your imagination. California is ground zero for the rooftop-solar revolution. Half of the nation's homes that produce some or all of their electricity from the sun's rays are in the state.

California has the sunshine, the abundant population, and an environmentally friendly Gov. Jerry Brown. Sacramento favors clean energy, and state officials want 1 million solar rooftops by 2018. The federal government offers a home-solar tax credit, which it extended to the delight of the installation companies that feared losing a tax break that homeowners find attractive.

Residential solar's future isn't crystal clear because of opposition from public-owned utilities.

Southern California Edison and their investors stand to lose if California electric customers offset their lower monthly bills using solar power. Households that generate electricity and swap it for bill credit receive preferential treatment, the state's big utilities argue. They asked the Public Utilities Commission to rewrite the rules so that solar-powered outliers pay more to Edison.

The two-year deliberation ended last month in a 3-2 vote, which exposed the friction building between the old guard utilities and the new kid-on-the-block solar. The commissioners in a Solomonian decision gave each side something it wanted, but denied anyone a clear victory.

"Our course is not for the rooftop solar industry or for the utilities," Commission President Michael Picker said after the Jan. 28 meeting.

The public utilities asked for and were granted a \$75-\$150 hookup fee from solar-conversion homes in the future, plus additional monthly costs - known as non-bypassable charges - that assist low-income households and fund development programs.

The home-solar industry conceded that the

additional fees imposed on new and existing home-solar customers were fair. The average power bill for a solar household is expected to jump by \$9 per month, up from \$82.

"We agree that all customers should pay the Public Purpose Program Charges (which fund low-income and clean energy programs), nuclear decommissioning and DWR bond charges," wrote Sean Gallagher, vice president of state affairs for the Solar Energy Institutes Association, in the days leading up to the Public Utilities Commission vote in San Francisco.

The Public Utilities Commission explained that being users of the grid made it only right that home-solar customers pay charges borne by other customers. The commission decided to levy new costs, but not to charge solar customers for the upkeep of transmission lines. The solar industry cheered that change, even as it prompted two commissioners to vote against a decision they said they otherwise would have supported.

The non-bypassable charges were small potatoes compared to net-metering. The fears were so great that California might end net-metering in 2016 that 130,000 petitions were delivered in wheelbarrows to the commission's San Francisco offices in favor of continuing net-metering.

By the narrowest of margins, the Public Utilities Commission extended net-metering until 2019, when it will reconsider the contentious payment system consumers favor and utilities dislike.

The Jan. 28 decision required Southern California Edison and other utilities to keep paying solar-powered homes and businesses the retail rate that Edison charges its customers.

Net-energy is important to home-solar companies because it defrays the costs of buying or leasing a rooftop system. Net-metering households use the electric utility grid like a bank account. They can deposit electricity they don't use immediately withdraw the same amount later (such as at night) at no net cost. It's a year-round system,

which allows households to build energy credit in summer when days are longer to compensate for shorter, winter days.

The three-year reprieve saved Californians who've installed rooftop solar panels \$4.8 billion and kept the renewable-energy option affordable, according to the Solar Energy Institutes Association. The industry lobbied California utility regulators to retain net-metering, as Colorado, New Mexico, New York and New Jersey have done, to keep rooftop systems affordable.

The number of solar homes in the United States is fast approaching 1 million, with 65 percent of residential solar being installed in communities with median incomes below \$70,000, according to industry figures. California leads the nation with 479,000 solar homes, and is nearly halfway to the goal of 1 million solar rooftops by 2018.

The utilities lobbied equally hard to sway the commission and its President Michael Picker, even introducing an 11th-hour proposal that critics said would jeopardize the federal tax credit for home solar conversions. The solar industry, which faced an uphill battle with Big Utilities despite strong political support from the governor, criticized the late changes and Big Utility's tactics.

Picker said it had been a "very difficult task" for the agency to keep solar affordable without burdening most Californians with significantly higher costs. He characterized the net-metering program as "a big step forward toward giving California consumers more choice, more control and more responsibility over their energy choices." Nobody got everything they wanted. Call it a draw.

The January net-metering decision won't end the utilities-vs.-solar struggle. It pushes it down the road to 2019, when the Public Utilities Commission will reconsider net metering once changes to residential electricity rates and grid modernization proceedings take full effect.

Even the members of the Public Utilities
See Solar, page 2

Weekend Forecast

Friday,
March 4

Partly Cloudy
65°/57°



Saturday,
March 5

Partly Cloudy
65°/56°



Sunday,
March 6

Showers
62°/50°



Community Briefs

El Camino College Art Gallery to Present "Culture Clash"

The El Camino College Art Gallery will present a mid-career retrospective of the highly energized ceramic works of Keiko Fukazawa. "Culture Clash" spans a period of approximately 30 years and seeks to represent a broad view of this fascinating artist who moves from culture to culture, assimilating ideas and techniques.

"Culture Clash" runs from Feb. 29-March 31 in the ECC Art Gallery. A reception is scheduled for 7-9 p.m. March 3, with a gallery walk-through with Fukazawa at 1 p.m. March 8.

Keiko Fukazawa was born and raised in Japan where she studied art at the Musashino



Art University in Tokyo. Here she was stifled by the viewpoint at the time that women were not to be taken seriously as contemporary artists. Fukazawa's mother, who was a non-traditional person herself, had wanted to be a painter. As this was unaccepted by her generation, she became an excellent and creative cook, while supporting the viewpoint of her unconventional daughter.

The El Camino College Art Gallery is open from 9 a.m. to 4 p.m. Mondays and Tuesdays and from noon to 8 p.m. Wednesdays and Thursdays. For more information, call 310-660-3010. Admission to the El Camino College Art Gallery and gallery events is free. On-campus parking is \$3. •

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Local Doctor's Commitment to Treating Pain Leads to New Goal in Life

By Cristian Vasquez

For 20 years Dr. Harold Kraft used his medical abilities in the operating room as an anesthesiologist; there he was able to treat pain patients with epidural steroids during a time when that was the only treatment available in the field. Eventually, Dr. Kraft would leave the East Coast to California in search of different opportunities and would discover the effectiveness laser treatment to help pain patients; it's a concept he now wants to push farther by funding a clinical trial that would focus on the efficiency of laser treatment on people with posttraumatic stress disorder [PTSD].

Dr. Kraft was a skeptic at first with regards to using lasers to treat pain patients. However, an old patient of his shared her personal success with laser treatment and the doctor looked further into the technology.

"The results that she got were jaw dropping. After studying the biology of lasers, I believe that it is by far the best thing for treating skeletal and muscular pain," Dr. Kraft said. "The results have been fantastic. I am seeing up to ninety percent of patients get some relief: the average relief is in the area of seventy percent. A seventy percent for pain relief is phenomenal."

Dr. Kraft opened his practice in August of 2015 in the City of Manhattan Beach, where he treats patients afflicted by different types of treat pains with lasers. He does not prescribe drugs or narcotics, nor does he use shots or needles, which he describes as exciting, given that conventional non-laser treatment has historically relied on these.

"Most of my patients have failed trial drugs and other therapies, and this laser can make them better," Dr. Kraft said. "There is almost nothing as satisfying as taking a patient that is in severe pain and taking them out of pain without a drug. It has been very exciting. You are able to treat a lot more pain than we were able to treat before."

However, Dr. Kraft came across a way to make his work in the field of pain relief not only more exciting but significantly more beneficial to the public, as a whole, while treating a local Vietnam War Veteran, who suffered from PTSD.

"He introduced me to the fact that PTSD was a bad disease, which had negatively affected his life, so I started researching it," Dr. Kraft said. "Within a month of when I started the research, a paper come out of Denver of a chiropractor and a psychiatrist using a laser similar to mine right into the head. Trans-cranial Laser to treat PTSD and TBI [traumatic brain injury]."

Dr. Kraft describes the results published as breathtaking and phenomenal. Despite only being a 10-patient study, the results surpassed the average effectiveness of PTSD treatment, which is only helpful in 50 percent of patients. That 50 percent standard is considered the gold standard, but the new study gave Dr. Kraft hope that with laser treatment a higher standard could be met.

"That was another fortuitous circumstance that made me realize that PTSD is a horrible disease and that I may have, via the Denver group, discovered what could be a breakthrough treatment, which is laser to the

head," Dr. Kraft said. "Only recently, in the past two years, the neurobiology completely supports that using lasers in the front of the head would treat PTSD."

Laser treatment is applied through a massage-like roller ball with the laser coming out of a quartz marble. The laser feels warm on the patient as it penetrates to the muscle or nerve or bone, it is absorbed by the mitochondria, which activates ATP [adenosine triphosphate]. The ATP energizes the cell and additional chemicals are created which accelerate healing and decrease pain.

"Every cell in our body uses ATP; it is essentially a carrier of energy," Dr. Kraft explained. "Every cell in our body uses ATP to carry energy from mitochondria to other parts of the body that need it. So the laser accelerates the body's process for treating pain and for healing."

Using the pain-treatment laser technology on the brain, the Denver study revealed that applying the laser to the front of the head can help the prefrontal cortex grow back to its normal size. The amygdala, which is where emotions such as fear are generated, is constantly hyperactive in PTSD patients. The prefrontal cortex, which is responsible for a person's ability to act rationally, process information and control the emotions produced by the amygdala, is physically shrunken in people afflicted with PTSD.

"The timing was great and by happenstance another paper came out indicating that the absorption of lasers was much higher in the skull and in the brain; much higher than anyone expected," Dr. Kraft said. "That meant that if you run the numbers, you discover that the study that had been done in Denver with the Trans-cranial Laser Therapy was at the very, very, very lowest amount that would theoretically be able to have an effect. So I thought what if we did the high-end? So they had phenomenal room to grow."

In a presentation made by Dr. Kraft, he states that the Pentagon spends \$3.3 billion a year on PTSD treatments, which are described as modestly effective. The most common types of PTSD treatments are psychotherapy and antidepressants; however, psychotherapy requires 10-20 weeks of therapy, has a high dropout rate, and is not scalable due to the need for trained providers, according to Dr. Kraft's presentation. Currently there are 1.1 million veterans diagnosed with PTSD, with an estimated 700,000 being afflicted since the Vietnam War and another 400,000 post 9-11. In the general population, it is estimated that 7 million civilians live with PTSD.

Dr. Kraft's clinical trial would work with 40 Wounded Warriors afflicted with PTSD in order to further investigate the effectiveness of this technology on this condition, which causes recurring nightmares, sleep deprivation, hyper vigilance and irritability, emotional distress and depression, as well as 22 veteran suicides per day.

"I will tell you that in my dream world, some company in El Segundo, in particular Boeing, Raytheon and Northrop Grumman, could fund this in a heartbeat with a donation," Dr. Kraft said. "The study needs \$400-\$500K to get rolling. Those three companies should be ashamed of themselves if they don't fund this study." •

Solar

from front page

Commission who supported the net-metering program admit that more charges are coming in 2019, which will affect the affordability of home solar.

One of the changes the commission approved will result in solar homes paying higher rates for power during peak-use times and lower rates during off-times.

The switch to time-of-use rates instead of a flat rate creates uncertainty about the actual costs and savings for a homeowner who switches to net metering, said Gallagher of the Solar Energy Institutes Association, a nationwide alliance of 1,000 companies in

the solar-energy business.

The goal of time-varying rates, as explained by a news report in USA Today, is "giving people a financial incentive to cut back in the evenings, on hot summer days and during other periods when demand traditionally peaks."

All homes will be switched to time-varying rates in 2019, under a separate decision by the Public Utilities Commission.

Home-solar professionals didn't view the new costs as a deal breaker. They were confident the industry will be able to reduce prices to offset the utility charges on home-conversions in the future. •

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Seniors

Unlocking the Heart-Healthy Secret of Mushrooms

(BPT) - Whether it's being stuck in traffic, missing a deadline or having trouble getting the kids out of bed, the stress we experience comes in many different forms. Often, people think of stress as something you're immediately aware of: your thoughts become crowded, your breath shortens or you can't sleep.

But there is a kind of stress most everyone experiences, and because there are no outward symptoms, few are aware of how it could be harming their health. It's called oxidative stress, and it's caused primarily by the lifestyles we lead. By not sleeping enough, not consuming enough antioxidants in your diet or just being around daily pollutants such as car exhaust, candles or cleaning products, you can be subject to oxidative stress.

What makes oxidative stress especially dangerous is both a lack of awareness and the fact that research has found it leads to an increased risk of heart disease. How? Oxidative stress can affect LDL-cholesterol (commonly known as "bad cholesterol") by transforming it into an even more damaging form: oxidized LDL.

Essentially, what happens is oxidized stress "rusts" the LDL cholesterol that circulates in the blood. Just as rust can damage machinery, this rust can damage your heart. With someone suffering a heart attack or a stroke every 40 seconds in the United States, the need to educate people on how to defend

against the damage caused by oxidized LDL is more important than ever.

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Looking Up

Antarctic Fungi Survive Martian Conditions On International Space Station

By Bob Eklund

The McMurdo Dry Valleys, located in the Antarctic Victoria Land, are considered to be the most similar earthly equivalent to Mars. They make up one of the driest and most hostile environments on our planet, where strong winds scour away even snow and ice. Only so-called cryptoendolithic microorganisms—capable of surviving in cracks in rocks—and certain lichens can withstand such harsh conditions.

A few years ago a team of European researchers traveled to these remote valleys to collect samples of two species of cryptoendolithic fungi: *Cryomyces antarcticus* and *Cryomyces minteri*. The aim was to send them to the International Space Station (ISS) for them to be subjected to Martian conditions and space to observe their responses.

The tiny fungi were placed in cells (1.4 centimeters in diameter) on a platform for experiments known as EXPOSE-E, developed by the European Space Agency to withstand extreme environments. The platform was sent in the Space Shuttle Atlantis to the ISS.

For 18 months half of the Antarctic fungi were exposed to Mars-like conditions. More specifically, they were placed in an atmosphere with 95% CO₂, 1.6% argon, 0.15% oxygen, 2.7% nitrogen and 370 parts per million of H₂O; and a pressure of 1,000 pascals.



Through optical filters, some of the samples were subjected to ultraviolet radiation as if on Mars (higher than 200 nanometers) and others to lower radiation, including separate control samples.

“The most relevant outcome was that more than 60% of the cells of the endolithic communities studied remained intact after ‘exposure to Mars,’ or rather, the stability of their cellular DNA was still high,” says Rosa de la Torre Noetzel from Spain’s National

Institute of Aerospace Technology (INTA), co-researcher on the project.

The scientist explains that this work, published in the journal *Astrobiology*, forms part of an experiment known as the Lichens and Fungi Experiment (LIFE), “with which we have studied the fate or destiny of various communities of lithic organisms during a long-term voyage into space on the EXPOSE-E platform.”

“The results help to assess the survival ability

and long-term stability of microorganisms and bioindicators on the surface of Mars, information which becomes fundamental and relevant for future experiments centered around the search for life on the red planet,” says De la Torre.

Researchers from the LIFE experiment, coordinated from Italy by Professor Silvano Onofri from the University of Tuscany, have also studied two species of lichens (*Rhizocarpon geographicum* and *Xanthoria elegans*) which can withstand extreme high-mountain environments. These were gathered from the Sierra de Gredos (Avila, Spain) and the Alps (Austria), with half of the specimens also being exposed to Martian conditions.

Another group of samples (both lichens and fungi) was subjected to an extreme space environment (with temperature fluctuations of between -21.5 and +59.6 °C, galactic-cosmic radiation of up to 190 megagrays, and a vacuum of between 10⁻⁷ to 10⁻⁴ pascals). The effect of the impact of ultraviolet extraterrestrial radiation on half of the samples was also examined.

After the year-and-a-half-long voyage, the two species of lichens exposed to Martian conditions showed double the metabolic activity of those that had been subjected to space conditions, even reaching 80% more in the case of the species *Xanthoria elegans*. •

Film Review

Gene Cernan Tells His Story of Being *The Last Man on the Moon*

By Morgan Rojas for www.CIN-EMACY.com

On Wednesday, February 24th, scientists detected the origin point of a space radio signal 6 billion light-years away and managed to find the universe’s missing matter as a result. This incredible discovery is a strong reminder of how far we’ve come since 1969, the moment when Apollo 11 astronaut Neil Armstrong declared the first successful mission to the Moon as *One small step for man, one giant leap for mankind*. Since Armstrong, twelve men in total have walked on the moon during the Apollo missions from 1969-1972. Of these 12, Eugene “Gene” Cernan was the last, and the documentary *The Last Man on the Moon* is his story.

Cernan’s story is a unique one; a former Navy captain, his journey towards becoming a NASA astronaut started with a simple phone call. In 1961, President John F. Kennedy set the bar high for U.S. space exploration, putting pressure on the space program to be the first country to land on the moon. This public assignment given to NASA resulted in an increased demand

for anyone willing to participate in the program, which led to more opportunities for people like Gene to join. Getting his foot in the door was the easy part, he realizes in hindsight. The intense training that each of the aspiring young men endured, including desert survival, water survival, and jungle survival just to name a few, was the hard part. The best thing to come from that experience, Gene remarks, was the strong bonds he made with the other men.

His close friendships with his co-workers also made the tough times almost unbearable. Two deadly events, the unexpected crash of Gemini 9 which claimed the lives of the two pilots in his crew as well as the emotional Apollo 1 fire of 1967, when his neighbor and good friend Roger Chaffee and two other men died as a result of a flash cabin fire in the shuttle, shook up Cernan’s world. At the time, he was married with a young daughter and the thought of never seeing his family again was extremely hard on him. However, when he was selected to be a part of the Apollo 17 crew, NASA’s last mission to the moon, Cernan couldn’t say no.

Cernan spent three days on the moon. Right before he was about to leave, and knowing that man may not be back on the moon again for years, he left his footprints and wrote his daughter’s initials in the lunar dust. He describes this moment with such intimacy and detail that it’s truly humbling to listen to him.

It does not feel like a traditional “documentary-style” film, thanks to the stylized approach from director Mark Craig as he strikes the perfect balance between the portrayal of Gene’s personal and work life. He cuts between Gene in the present day with archival footage of his time at NASA, which, photographically, feels like a subtle effort to relive his experience. The B-roll of



Gene Cernan aboard the lunar module after his final EVA. Photo: Jack Schmitt / NASA

various space missions really does make *The Last Man on the Moon* feel like a comedy. *The Last Man on the Moon* is a top notch documentary that feels like a perfect fit on the HBO or Showtime roster. It is humbling, poignant, hard-hitting, and emotionally charged, on top of being aesthetically rich and visually beautiful. Without giving too much away, I can say that the last shot will take your breath away as it did mine.

The Last Man on the Moon is not all happy endings. This is a deeply personal film for Cernan which is why it took until now, 40 years since his return to earth, to share his story. Now living on a ranch in

Texas, Gene still works to this day, as his friends and family admit that “retirement” is not in his vocabulary. This film and its message is so important and will leave the viewer feeling inspired from both Gene’s words and actions. Lightheartedly joking that he can’t live forever, he wants to share his knowledge and experience now because he feels an obligation to inform the younger generations about man’s potential and inspire hope for the future. “I walked on the moon,” he says at the end of the film, “What can’t you do?”

The Last Man on the Moon is playing at Laemmle’s Monica Fourplex. •

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Buttercup is a precious, charismatic Siamese girl who bats her eyelashes and everyone melts. She loves attention, but also entertains herself. Buttercup adores other nice kitties and brings out the best in everyone with her sweet charm. She is soft, affectionate, nuzzles, loves nose kisses and cuddles. Named after the princess in "The Princess Bride", she bonded to a shy boy named Westley, who has been through a lot of hardship in his young life. She brought out his happiness and confidence with love. To see him light up when they are together, inspires the people who rescued them both.

Wesley is a cool cat. He has swag and wants to hang out with his friends, sit and watch TV next to you, and play with his cat friends. He keeps his distance when there is a ruckus. His fur is soft and fluffy and he loves pets and chin scratches. Wesley looks at you with his piercing green eyes and his mane is full like a proud king. Buttercup's outgoing personality brought out his playfulness with unconditional love. These two would bring so much joy to any home!

Mango is a young "creamsicle" male kitty who loves to play and follow you around. He also loves relaxing on his cat tree perch. He is strikingly handsome and would be a great addition to your family! Mango has short, soft bright white fur with cute orange tabby patches and very pretty, smiling and expressive golden eyes. His tabby patches are arranged on his face like a Turkish Van although he is more of an oriental Shorthair. He is ready to move in to be your sweet Mango boy! Mango gets along very nicely with everyone (although he might prefer a home without very small



Mango
children). If you already have another cat, Mango could be a great choice, but he'd probably be happiest getting full attention as a single cat.

Julian is a sweet and mellow boy. He is short-haired Russian Blue mix who is extremely affectionate with people. He gets along with other cats of all ages. Julian is looking for a safe and loving home. He could be adopted as an only cat, but would probably do best in a home with at least one other kitty.

Audrey is sweet and reserved, a little shy with new people at first, but a real sweetheart once she trusts you. She doesn't mind being held, and will cuddle into your neck for comfort once she gets to know you. She loves playing with her sister, Amanda, and



Julian



Audrey
hopes to get adopted with her. **Amanda** is a spitfire, very playful, always on the move, and also cute and funny. But she's also very affectionate. If you put your face close to hers, she'll bump noses with you! Amanda definitely needs a playmate to be happy. Of course, she'd love to be adopted with her sister, Audrey. They promise to keep you entertained.

Anita will be two years old this April. She is a very sweet little girl who loves to play and run. Her favorite toys are laser lights and tiny crumpled balls of paper or tinfoil; she'll chase them around the house and even carry them in her mouth. She can be a little shy with new people, and a bit skittish if she feels she's being chased or yelled at, but with a bit of gentle lovingness, she'll warm

right up and really does love attention and affection. Anita would love another female kitty friend to play with, and she does get along with most dogs (provided they won't chase her!). She would fit right into a home with another cat or dog friend, but no young children please. (She was severely traumatized by young children at her first home.)

These cats and kittens are available for adoption through Kitten Rescue, one of the largest cat rescue groups in Southern California. All of our kitties are spayed/neutered, microchipped, tested for FeLV and FIV, dewormed and current on their vaccinations. For additional information and to see our other kitties, please check our website www.kittenrescue.org or email us at mail@kittenrescue.org. Your tax deductible donations for the rescue and care of our cats and kittens can be made through our website or by sending a check payable to Kitten Rescue, 914 Westwood Blvd. #583, Los Angeles, CA 90024.

On Saturdays, we have adoptions from noon to 3:30 p.m. in Westchester at 8655 Lincoln Blvd. just south of Manchester Ave. and also in Mar Vista at 3860 Centinela Ave, just south of Venice Boulevard. Our website lists additional adoption sites and directions to each location. •

Saving one animal won't change the world, but the world will surely change for that animal.



Amanda



Anita



Wesley

THE YELLOW DOG PROJECT.com

If you see a dog with a **YELLOW RIBBON** or something yellow on the leash, **this is a dog who needs some space.** Please do not approach this dog with your dog. Please maintain distance or give this dog and his/her person time to move out of your way.






There are many reasons why a dog may need space:

- HEALTH ISSUES
- IN TRAINING
- BEING REHABILITATED
- SCARED OR REACTIVE AROUND OTHER DOGS

THANK YOU!
Those of us who own these dogs appreciate your help and respect!
Illustrated by Lili Chin www.doggiedrawings.net

Cajun Salmon Burger with Lime Mayonnaise



Prep time: 20 minutes | Cook time: 10 minutes
Servings: 4

Ingredients

LIME MAYONNAISE

- 1/4 cup reduced fat mayonnaise
- 1/2 teaspoon grated lime peel
- 1/2 teaspoon lime juice

CAJUN SALMON BURGERS

- 3 pouches (5 ounces each) boneless skinless salmon, drained
- 1 egg, beaten
- 1/3 cup panko bread crumbs
- 1/4 cup reduced fat mayonnaise
- 1/4 cup finely chopped green onion
- 1/4 cup finely chopped red bell pepper
- 2 teaspoons Cajun Seasoning
- 1 tablespoon oil
- 4 hamburger rolls

Preparation

1. For the mayonnaise, mix all ingredients in small bowl until well blended. Cover. Refrigerate until ready to serve.
2. For the burgers, mix salmon, egg, panko, mayonnaise, green onions, bell pepper and seasoning in large bowl until well blended. Shape into 4 patties.
3. Heat oil in large nonstick stick skillet on medium heat. Add salmon patties; cook 5 minutes per side or until lightly browned and cooked through.
4. Serve salmon burgers on rolls with Lime Mayonnaise and desired toppings.

Seafood Swaps for Lent Fish Fridays

Switching to seafood on Fridays during Lent? You can still make casual Friday favorites by swapping meat for seafood in easy meals like burgers.

Seafood is perfect for a quick Friday night dinner because fish filets and shrimp don't take much time to cook. However, it's easy to run out of ideas during the long Lenten season. Try this salmon burger recipe - the patties take just 10 minutes to cook in a skillet and are full of flavor from Cajun seasoning.

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Real Estate

Selling Your Home? Let The Bidding Wars Begin

(BPT) - No wonder you're thinking of selling your home - it's a "seller's market" right now. The housing supply has dwindled, creating more demand for fewer homes.

At the same time, according to Realtor Tammy Reinke, buyers' expectations are higher than ever. They've become accustomed to model-perfect homes.

What's the upshot? "Sellers have a choice," says Reinke. "You can win the price war - or win the beauty contest." By winning the beauty contest, you'll gain pricing leverage. And if your home shows well, it can even spark a bidding war - generating offers that exceed your asking price.

Here are three top "beauty" tips to set your home apart from other contestants, and set yourself up for a fatter settlement check.

1. DIRT'S A DEAL-BREAKER

Make a clean sweep

"Buyers want to see a clean home," says Reinke. "And the first thing to deal with is stained carpets and ceilings."

Stained carpets should be cleaned or replaced. Stained ceilings deserve your attention, too. They can scare off prospective buyers who fear that ceiling imperfections might be a sign of bigger problems.

"If you've got a stained popcorn ceiling, don't bother trying to spot paint over it, it doesn't work," Reinke says. Even professionals find it difficult to match the original finish and color. In addition, flocked or heavily textured ceilings are best replaced because they look so outdated.

Instead, consider installing ceiling tiles or panels directly over the offending ceiling, using a simple DIY track-and-clip system. To weigh all your ceiling replacement options,

pop some real popcorn and settle back with the Armstrong Ceiling video guide to ceilings for lots of ideas and inspiration.

2. DECLUTTER DE HOUSE

Buyers can't picture themselves in your home if they can't see past your piles of stuff. "There's a difference between clutter and an intentional collection," says Tiffany Little, a senior interior design at Albion Associates.

Pull together different items - like pottery or framed photography - using a common design element like color, similar patterns, texture or materials. "It's OK to leave some surfaces empty, and to create a display of personal mementos in a stylish, organized manner in other areas," says Little. "This makes the personal items even more special."

3. SPARK DESIGN INTEREST

So you've cleaned and decluttered, but now your rooms seem blah and uninviting. Nothing enlivens a space like a splash of color. Toss some bright new pillows on the sofa or add tasteful artwork or accessories to complement your color scheme.

Paint adds personality, too, but choose your colors carefully so your wall palette flows naturally from room to room. "I like using a neutral color palette for larger rooms - from ivory tones to values of grey," says Little. She adds mid-tone colors to smaller rooms, while selectively using vivid or deeper colors as accents with accessories and artwork throughout the home.

Finally, don't forget to add texture, whether with a woven area rug or sculptural wire baskets. "Texture adds great dimension and depth to a room," says Little.

"I especially love the look of Armstrong Ceilings decorative metal ceiling panels in



textured tin or copper as accents above a kitchen island. This turns the ordinary, smooth sheetrock ceiling into a wow factor. By adding this textured ceiling color in with a few of the dishes, or countertop items, it unifies

the room's palette," she added.

With a bit of primping, your home can win the ultimate beauty contest and attract a buyer who's willing to meet your price, or even pay a premium to call it their own. •

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720 W. Sycamore	4	4.5	3500	\$2,020,000	PENDING
1437 E. Palm	3	1.5	1497	\$979,000	PENDING
533 W. Mariposa	4	2.5	2800	\$1,106,324	SOLD

● ● INCOME PROPERTIES

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● ● CONDO/TOWNHOUSE

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208 Sheldon	3	3	1510	\$839,000	PENDING
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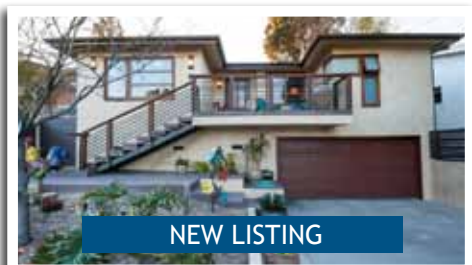
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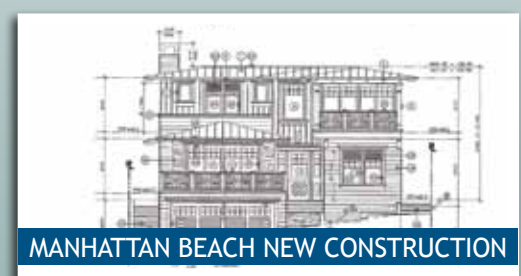
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