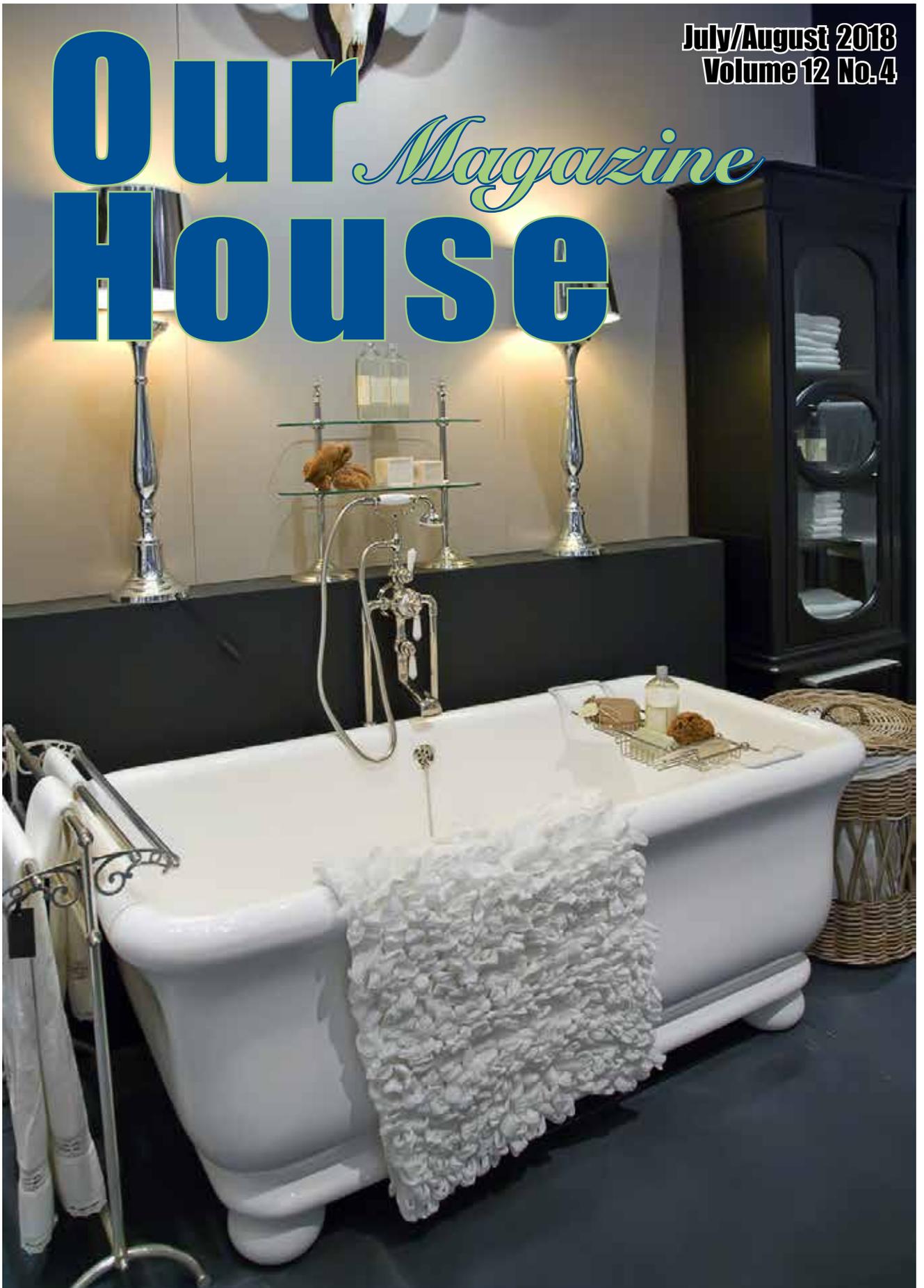


July/August 2018
Volume 12 No.4

Our *Magazine* House



Ann Arbor Area Board of REALTORS® Update:

Sales Prices Continue to Rise with Lack of Inventory

The number of new listings and total residential sales continued to trend downward during the second quarter of the year, but average sales prices are still on the rise. Year-to-date, total new residential listings have fallen 2.3%. The number of new residential listings for June 2018 has dropped 6.7%, with 551 new listings, compared to 591 new listings in June 2017. Total residential sales year-to-date are down slightly, with 6.4% fewer sales in 2018 versus 2017. Comparing June 2018 to June 2017, the number of total new residential listings are down 6.7% and residential sales are down by 2.4%.

The strain on inventory continues to drive listing and sales prices up. Average residential sales prices are up 2.6% for June 2018, with an average list price of \$339,197 compared to \$330,400 in June 2017. Average year-to-date list prices are also up by 4.6% from 2017. Sales prices have risen 2.5% from June 2017 to an average of \$336,448, and year-to-date the average residential sales price has increased by 5%. Year-to-date, 38% of single family homes have sold for above listing price, and 19% have sold at listing price.



	Year-to-Date 2017	Year-to-Date 2018	% Change From Year to Year
New Residential Listings	2,631	2,570	 2.3%
Total Residential Sales	1,784	1,669	 6.4%
Average Residential List Price	\$311,258	\$325,721	 4.6%
Average Residential Sales Price	\$307,897	\$323,317	 5%

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www.ourhousemagazine.net
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Ideas For An On-Trend Bathroom

Bringing an outdated bathroom into the now is a sure way to infuse value and personal enjoyment into your home.

Whether you're tearing down and starting fresh or simply looking to infuse some new life with a few key elements, these ideas, paired with an option such as Wellborn cabinetry, can give you the inspiration you need to transform a tired toilet into a modern marvel.

Make a singular statement

For a bolder look, the best approach may actually be quite simple. Use a single material throughout the room for big impact. For example, run the same tile you select for the floor up the walls, across the vanity, around the shower and up to the ceiling. It's a dramatic approach, but with the right color and pattern, it can work, especially with a pale or neutral tone. The same concept applies to other materials, such as plaster or concrete, which can create a uniform look that makes a statement.

Try a timeless tub

Freestanding tubs were once associated with older, outdated homes, but like many things in design, these stand-alone vessels are once more back in vogue. Today's freestanding tubs offer tons of style to fit nearly any design motif. If the claw-foot style of yesteryear is your thing, there are plenty of contemporary takes on the look for an updated,



traditional bathroom. There are also a wide range of sleek styles that look nothing like the classic version for a completely fresh, sophisticated bath. Give your tub extra star power by setting

it against a backdrop of tile or reclaimed wood, and punch up the style with standout fixtures to make your tub a truly unique feature of the bathroom.

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Float your vanity

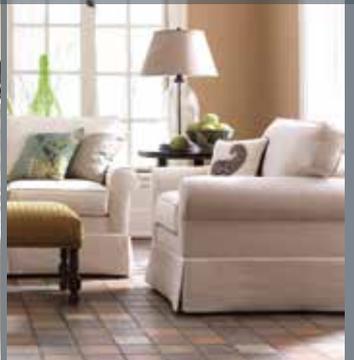
Take a look at today's trending bathroom designs and you'll see floating vanities cover the pages of most design magazines and articles. Floating vanities, also known as wall-mounted vanities, mount directly to the wall, providing more floor space and creating a streamlined look.

By mounting the vanity to a wall, the space is broadened, naturally making the bathroom look and feel larger. Additionally, the wall mount allows homeowners to customize the space in terms of countertop height and comfort.

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Although the aesthetic benefits often come at the cost of limited under-sink storage space, this potential pitfall can be overcome with a customizable U-shaped drawer option, such as those offered by Wellborn Cabinet, that allows functional drawers to be placed within the wall-mounted cabinetry. The storage-enhancing drawer option complements the Wall Mounted Vanity program available in the Aspire Cabinetry line, which offers mounted vanities in more than 40 door profiles, featuring door style selections of wood, decorative laminate veneer, textured melamine, smooth

melamine, solid high gloss, matte and designer colors. For more information, visit wellborn.com.

Infuse unexpected color

If you think of bathroom fixtures as purely functional, think again. Not only can they add a stylish focal point to your tub (and shower and sink, for that matter), the ultra-practical fixtures can actually be a source of color. Bold brass and gold tones are in style, or for something completely different, explore a new look like solid black fixtures that pop against several different textures and surfaces.

Introduce ample lighting

Sub-optimal lighting can hamper the ambiance of smaller spaces like bathrooms. If the space has a window, ditch any coverings that restrict the natural light and instead rely on textured glass windows that provide privacy while allowing light to shine freely. Another option is a skylight, which is surprisingly easy to add. If access to the roofline is an issue, consider one (or even a couple) tunnel skylights. Also give care to selecting the right fixtures

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for the space. Not only should they coordinate well with the overall decor, they should provide plenty of task and ambient lighting to make the room both useful and inviting.

Trick Your Way to a Bigger Bathroom

When knocking down walls to create more space isn't an option, there are still plenty of ways you can maximize a small bathroom space to make it look and feel larger than it really is.

Opt for monochromatic cabinetry. Whether you buy new or paint existing cabinets, make them blend in monochromatically in the lightest shade possible. White and light colors reflect light, making the room seem brighter and more spacious. To maximize the illusion, extend the monochromatic scheme throughout the space, including floor tiles, wall paint, ceilings and even the decorations.

Place cabinets strategically. Think of the spaces in your bathroom that you don't usually use, such as the area above the doorway. Especially if you have high ceilings, you can install decorative storage shelves to house items you don't need in everyday reach like bathtub salts, scrubs and more. You can also use the shelves for storing extra toilet paper and cleaners to free up valuable storage space below the sink.

Maximize vertical space. Consider extending cabinetry up to the ceiling. Adding color at a vertical height can cause the eye to go up and therefore enlarge the

bathroom space and feel. It is also a wise use of unused space rather than borrowing from limited floor space, which can make the space feel cramped.

Consider open storage. Open storage shelves trick the mind because the airy openness can give the illusion of taking less space than enclosed storage. However, be mindful of over-filling shelves, which can create a cluttered look. Instead use the open space as an opportunity to feature artwork or other accents that add life to the room.

From Family Features. ■

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archived issues.

Each new issue is posted
to the website
during the middle
of the month.

Your Tree Could Be a Champion

Nominations Accepted Through July 31

The City of Ann Arbor is pleased to announce the opening of nominations for the Champion Tree program this summer. The Champion Tree program identifies and catalogs the largest tree of each species within the city and then publishes the results within a searchable online map. If you believe your tree to be one of the biggest and best of its species, please visit a2gov.org/champtrees to fill out a nomination form.

Forestry staff will then evaluate tree nominations and will notify residents if their tree is selected. Both public and private trees may be nominated. Nominations will be accepted through July 31, 2018. Nominations received after July 31 will be evaluated for inclusion in the 2019 Champion Tree list. ■



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New Product: Fiberglass Gutter System Has Launched

FiberGutter brand fiberglass gutter offers the full aesthetic appeal of wood with strength and durability of fiberglass. FiberGutter is easy to install, with no special tools required. With no painting, no oiling, no worrying, the FiberGutter system is maintenance-free.

Made of pultruded, polyester resin based fiberglass and tested by an independent lab, FiberGutter is competitive in price to copper, wood and high end aluminum. Gutters are available in up to 40 foot lengths, with a single fastener and no brackets for easy cleaning. System includes gutter, endcaps, outlets, fasteners and GutterGlue for an easy installation.



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For more information about FiberGutter and their products/services, please visit <https://fiberglassgutter.com/>

FiberGutter specializes in manufacturing, distribution and installation of fiberglass gutter for residential, municipal and commercial projects. Our focus is to provide a rain gutter



that last longer, functions better and contains an overall sustainability versus any other related products in the gutter market. FiberGutter is a result of almost a century of combined experience in both the marine and construction trades.

In 2015 we launched FiberGutter as a more cost effective alternative to the traditional handmade fiberglass

gutter. The results are a product that is more durable and more consistent than our previous counterpart. While we cannot predict the future we are sure of one thing, if it carries the FiberGutter name, expect a product with unsurpassed quality, cutting-edge innovation, and superior performance. ■



Shopping For Yard Equipment: Things To Know

Summer is here, and you are ready to get outside and make your yard both beautiful and functional. Maybe you're aiming to have the best yard on the block, want to install an outdoor family room, or want to expand your space for entertaining. Perhaps your kids or pets could use a better space for play. Regardless of need, now is the time to get "backyard ready." What tools do you need?

"Completing big outdoor jobs is always easier with help from outdoor power equipment," said Kris Kiser, President and CEO of the Outdoor Power Equipment Institute (OPEI). "The right outdoor power equipment can help you get the work done faster, and can help you safely maintain your yard." Here are some tips from Kiser to help you select the machinery you need to get the job done.

Plan your needs. Draw a sketch of your yard. Include any major features like trees, bushes, an herb or vegetable garden, flower beds, lawn furniture, play or sports equipment, an outdoor patio, or bird bath. Note where maintenance may be required. Will bushes need to be trimmed back from your

home or garage? Do you want to put in some flowering bushes or a tree? Are you planning to install a fence and more grass because for your pet? Now list the tools and equipment needed to take care of your yard, and what will make the job easier.

Consider equipment needed. Visit your garage or shed and find those forgotten lawn and garden tools. Wheel out your mower and get out other equipment. Look it over and make a list of what is needed or could be upgraded. Repair anything that needs attention or identify where a newer or other machine is required. If you have a large vegetable garden, you need a cultivator or tiller. If you have a large lawn, an upgrade to a riding lawn mower might make mowing easier. A string trimmer might make caring for bushes or trimming grass near a fence line easier. A pole pruner can help trim back limbs that are too high to reach safely with a saw, and a leaf blower can clear leaves faster than a rake.

Research equipment online before you buy. Think about efficiencies of scale. The right equipment can mean more time for other activities, and

make doing yard work more enjoyable, too. Doing online research in advance will help you pick the right equipment for the job. Outdoor power equipment can be gas, electric or battery powered, and technology is rapidly impacting product design. There are even robotic lawn mowers available today. Equipment may be sized to handle a smaller job or a massive one. Ultimately, your decision should be based on your needs.

Ask questions. Talk with the staff at the store or ask online about the equipment. In the store, ask to pick up and hold equipment to determine its "fit" for you. Discuss safety features and ask about manufacturer fueling and care instructions. Find out how often equipment may need to be serviced.

Make a plan for storage and maintenance. Store your equipment in a cool and dry place. It also should typically be serviced at the end of the fall and the beginning of the spring. Put service dates on your calendar with a reminder.

For safety information and to find out which manufacturers make various outdoor power equipment products, go to www.opei.org. ■

Home Improvement With High ROI



If the ultimate goal of your home improvement project is aesthetic, the greatest benefit may come from your personal enjoyment of the new space. However, if you're looking to add true value to your home, it's important to consider which projects are likely to bring the greatest return on your investment.

Flooring

Much like hands reveal a person's true age, flooring speaks volumes about a home. Replacing and updating worn floors can instantly

add value. A timeless selection like wood flooring, particularly in heavy traffic areas, is durable enough to withstand wear and complements a wide range of interior designs. If you already have wood floors that are in reasonably good condition, whether in use or under carpet, go ahead and refinish them for a budget-friendly alternative to installing new flooring. Another option that holds or even increases the value of your investment is tile, particularly in spaces like kitchens, bathrooms and laundry areas.

Roofing

Re-roofing a home gives it an instant value boost, but it's a job that needs to be repeated periodically. One longer-term and on-trend alternative to traditional roofing is metal. Performance is the big selling point for metal roofs, but not only does the roof itself increase the home's value, the safety benefits and peace of mind that come with knowing strong, fire-resistant metal roofs can last forever only add to the benefits.

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With a variety of styles available, you can find a metal roof to match nearly any home style. For example, CertainTeed Metal Roofing offers profiles crafted to simulate Spanish barrel tile, slate and wood shake. Made from high-performance, deep-drawn steel, these roofing systems offer a lifetime-limited warranty and are engineered with a special multi-layered paint process that resists the elements while offering realistic color details and gradations. Find inspiration and explore a design gallery at CertainTeed.com.

Landscaping

Curb appeal often counts for a lot, whether it's for your own enjoyment or a potential future buyer. Enhancing your home's exterior can pay off handsomely when you add vegetation and hardscaping that improve the

overall aesthetic. Keep in mind that more unconventional styles are better reserved for private spaces like the backyard; for the street view, stick to a motif with broad appeal to garner the strongest return on your investment.

Entryway

An outdated entry point isn't just an eyesore; it can pose a security risk and even be the source of significant energy loss for your home. Replacing front doors and even garage doors can both bring a return on your investment and potentially start saving you money right away on heating and cooling costs. A new, properly installed entry door is likely to fit more snugly and allow for fewer air leaks. In addition, a heavier door and frame is more likely to stand up against forced entry.

Insulation

It may not be glamorous, or even anything that you'll see on a regular basis, but many experts agree that upgrading your insulation is a sound investment. In addition to adding value in terms of comfort and reduced energy costs, it's an attractive selling point should you choose to list your home.

If you're still uncertain about the right investments for your home, it may be wise to consult a local real estate expert who can provide insight on the features that bring the most value in your market.

From Family Features. ■



Getting Outside Is Good For You: Five Benefits

Summer is here and families will spend more time outside dining, playing, relaxing, and gardening as the weather improves. And while they may enjoy being outside, they may not know that getting outside is also good for their health. The Outdoor Power Equipment Institute (OPEI) outlines five health benefits of getting outside:



Reason #1: Your lawn can make you happier! Our stress levels fall within minutes of seeing green spaces. Knowing and experiencing nature makes us generally happier, healthier people.

Reason #2: Getting dirty is good for you! *Mycobacterium vaccae* in soil mirrors the effect on neurons that Prozac provides. Give your kids a pair of gardening gloves and have them work with you in your green spaces for a hefty dose of Vitamin N(ature) and G(reen). People who spend time gardening and have direct contact with soil feel more relaxed and happier.

Reason #3: Exposure to natural settings may be widely effective in reducing attention deficit/hyperac-

tivity disorder (ADHD) symptoms in children. Children gain attention and working memory benefits when they are exposed to greenery.

Reason #4: Living landscapes help people and pets be healthier. Playing outdoors increases fitness levels and builds healthy, active bodies. Research also shows that children reap numerous health, social and personal benefits from spending time outside playing.

Reason #5: Your lawn produces lots of oxygen and cleans the air too. Fifty square feet of grass generates enough oxygen each day for a family of four, and reduces the “code red” effect since grass removes pollutants from the air we breathe.

“Our living landscapes not only provide beauty, but are a stress-reliever, a recreational space, a wildlife habitat, and an outdoor living area,” said Kris Kiser, president and CEO, OPEI. “Studies show that our green spaces contribute to our health, happiness and intellect.”

Our outdoor living spaces offer great health benefits to us. Trees, shrubs, grass and flowering plants are integral to human health. They provide a place for children and pets to play and directly contribute to our mental and physical well-being.

For more information please visit www.savelivinglandscapes.com.