



# Pratt Connection

~ News to Help You Save Time and Money ~  
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Proudly Serving Cuyahoga, Lorain, Medina and Summit Counties

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## A Big Reward

This is a story of a young man named Ping and of a childless King who needed a successor. The King devised a way to find a successor who would be courageous and honest. He sent out a tiny seed to each young man in the country. This seed was to be planted and nourished to the best of each young man's ability.

When Ping received his seed he obtained a beautiful pot, fertile soil, and planted his seed. He watered it and nurtured it and watched it, but nothing happened. He moved his plant to another area with more sun, thinking it needed different light, and still, nothing happened. He asked his father what to do. His father suggested putting it into another container and continuing to nurture it. Still nothing!

The day finally arrived for all the young men to present their results to the King. Everyone else had beautiful plants, and Ping was so embarrassed that he sat in the back of the room with his pot so he wouldn't be noticed.

The King walked around the room looking at the plants - and frowning. The longer he walked, the more he frowned. Then he came to the back of the room and saw Ping and his pot. He led Ping up to his throne and announced to all present that Ping would be the next King. "How can this be?" all the young men cried.

The King said, "Before I sent the seeds, I ordered them boiled so they wouldn't grow. Only one man in my kingdom was courageous and honest today - and only that man deserves to be your next King." Ping's failure was really his success!

## VISIT MY WEBSITE!

You can read this and past issues of the "Pratt Connection" on my website at [www.Cleveland-Home-Finder.com](http://www.Cleveland-Home-Finder.com). Share these newsletters with friends, family and co-workers. If you know of someone who would like to receive my newsletter by mail, forward their address to me at [hpratt@remax.net](mailto:hpratt@remax.net) or call me at 440-925-6774.

## Money Matters

Here are some suggestions from the Academy of Matrimonial Attorneys to keep your finances - and your relationship - on track:

- No matter who makes the most money, divide the household responsibilities fairly.
- Set short- and long-term goals together, and stick to them unless you both agree to change them.
- Each partner should have access to money they can spend any way they want. No one should ever have to ask his or her spouse for money.
- Set a budget and stick to it for at least a year. If necessary, consult a financial counselor to help keep your finances in order.

## Why Practice?

A class of high school basketball players with similar skills was divided into three groups to conduct an experiment.

Group one was told not to practice shooting free throws for one month. Group two was told to practice shooting free throws an hour a day for a month. Group three was told to practice shooting free throws an hour a day for a month - but only in their imaginations.

At the end of the month, all three groups were tested. The group that didn't practice slipped slightly in its percentage of free throw successes. The group that practiced an hour a day also slipped slightly. But the third group, which practiced only in their minds, increased its success rate by two percentage points.

How could actual practice, such as that done by the second group, fail to improve performances as much as practicing in the mind? The explanation is that in your mind, you never miss a shot. What are you practicing in your mind?

# Holly's Household Corner

*"How To Save Energy and Money"*



Somewhere around 90% of the energy used to do laundry is used for heating water, according to [www.EnergySavers.gov](http://www.EnergySavers.gov). To save energy while you're washing clothes you can use cold water or less water. And unless you're dealing with oily stains, the warm or cold setting on your washing machine will clean your clothes just fine. Just switching your energy setting from hot to warm can save a lot - it cuts the energy used for a load of laundry by 50%. Here are some additional energy-saving tips from EnergySavers.gov:

- Wash your clothes in cold water and use cold-water detergents whenever possible.
- Wash and dry full loads. If you do wash a smaller load, change the water-level setting.
- Dry towels and heavier cottons separately from lighter clothes.
- Don't overdry. Use the moisture sensor on your machine, if you have one.
- Use the cool-down cycle to allow clothes to finish drying with residual heat in the dryer.
- Consider drying clothes on a clothesline or drying rack.
- Check the dryer vent periodically to make sure it's not blocked.
- Clean the lint filter in your dryer after every load.

And pay special attention to that last tip. Dryer lint may seem insignificant, but it's a leading cause of home fires, causing millions of dollars in property damage annually.

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## Gardens and Greenhouses

*"How to Grow a Great Garden"*



This year, get a head start on the season with some tips to help save time and avoid disappointment. And don't forget to involve the kids - this is one of the few times you can give them permission to play in the dirt!

- If your only winter crop was couch potatoes, be careful. Don't strain those underworked winter muscles. Bend at the knees and lift with your legs, not your back.
- Check your garden chemicals and dispose of last season's leftovers appropriately. Don't buy more chemicals than you can use in a season - the smaller the bottle, the better.
- Avoid using insecticides by planting marigolds, basil, mint, chives, onions, and chrysanthemums near or in your garden. Secretions from these and many other plants act as a natural insect repellent.

## Try Turning it Off

Technology is a wonderful thing. It can help us do our jobs more quickly and efficiently. It can put us in touch with friends across the globe, allowing us to interact with far-flung folks from Bangalore to Paris to Louisville. But there are some not-so-positive effects of technology that we all need to beware of. Is technology operating as an isolating factor in your world? Do you use it so you don't have to talk to people? Do you use it to avoid personal interaction at all costs?

Charles Handy, author of *Waiting For the Mountain to Move: And Other Reflections on Life*, postulates that technology can isolate us - and it started with, of all things, the technology of the chimney. Before chimneys, Handy says, we all had to huddle together around the fire in one room. Everyone had to keep warm, so the cowherd and the master shared the same space in order to survive. With the advent of the chimney, however, social stratification was born and we withdrew into separate quarters. Central heat allowed the process to continue, and today's technology has increased the trend toward isolation.

Handy says with the Internet and email, days can go by where we barely have the opportunity to speak to each other in person. How about you? Are you speaking to other humans face-to-face at all these days?

- If cleaning out the fireplace is on your schedule, great! Save the ashes - your flower beds love them.
- Starting seedlings in vermiculite to get a jump on the season? Be sure to transplant them as soon as the second pair of true leaves form, or they'll starve.
- Your soil is ready for planting when you grab a handful and it crumbles. If it forms a ball, it's still too wet to start gardening.
- Mulches can keep the soil from warming up, so wait to apply mulches until plants are three to four inches tall and the soil is warm.
- Use leaves, grass clippings, coffee grounds, and tea bags to form a compost pile, and use it to enrich your soil. For best results, chop elements into small pieces before adding them to the pile.
- Many of last year's plants will multiply. If you're going to thin them out, pack up a few as gifts for your neighbors (this is a great job for kids).

## Congratulations!

Welcome...

Zahira Lehri, Kathy & Wayne Paulus, Ron Germano,  
Thao & Taun Pham, and Jim & Stacey Louk

Happy Homeowners...

Jack & Treva Novotny, Souheil Sarrough  
Kimberly MacKay (renting), and  
Cristina & Daniel Hornick

Successfully Sold...

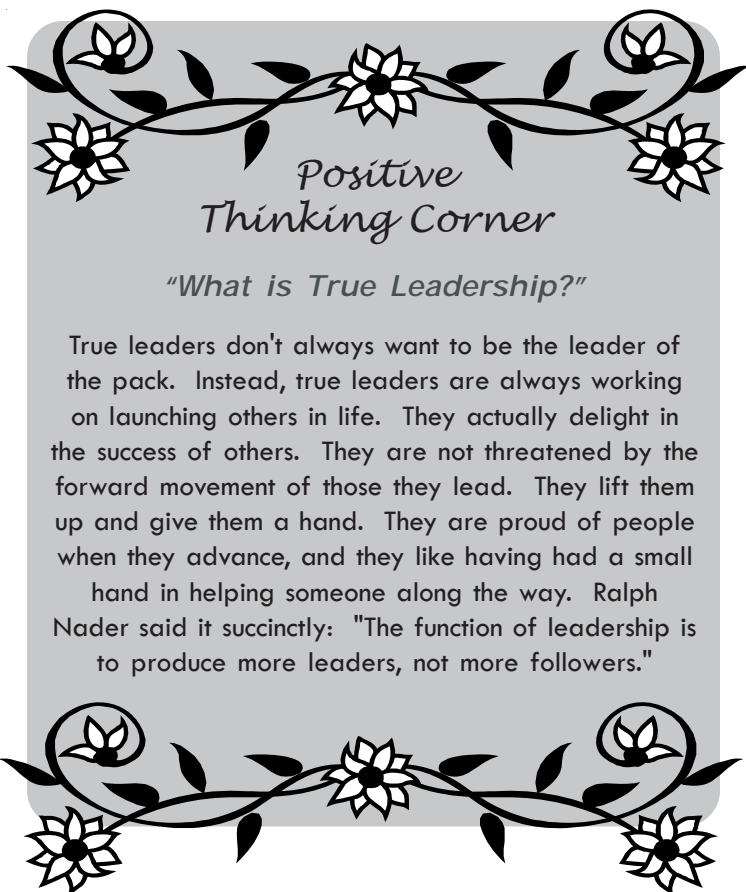
Rob & Judy Scarmuzzi, John Grove,  
Diane & Dennis Goetze, and Ken Whetsell

Thanks for Your Referrals...

Diane Czinger, John Beutow, Kelly Rito,  
Dave Restifo, and Fred Koury

I have time right now for 2 sellers and 2 buyers.  
Who do you know that could benefit from my services?

*Referrals are the ♥ of my business!*



### Positive Thinking Corner

*"What is True Leadership?"*

True leaders don't always want to be the leader of the pack. Instead, true leaders are always working on launching others in life. They actually delight in the success of others. They are not threatened by the forward movement of those they lead. They lift them up and give them a hand. They are proud of people when they advance, and they like having had a small hand in helping someone along the way. Ralph Nader said it succinctly: "The function of leadership is to produce more leaders, not more followers."

## Buy Low, Sell High

Just like the stock market, take advantage of the buyer's market. See photos of these listings on my website; [www.Cleveland-Home-Finder.com](http://www.Cleveland-Home-Finder.com).

**Strongsville** - 4 bdrm colonial in Pine Lakes, \$249,900

**Brunswick** - 4 bdrm colonial in Benjamin Farms, \$259,900

**Garfield Hts** - Adorable, cozy starter, \$64,900

**Brookpark** - 3-5 bdrm bungalow, \$96,000  
(pending - 1 day on market!)



**Middleburg Hts.** - Immaculate 2 bdrm townhouse, \$89,900

**N. Royalton** - 4 bdrm colonial, corner lot, \$215,000 (rented)

**Olmsted Falls** - 4 bdrm, cape cod w/fenced yard, \$149,900

**New London** - Charming Victorian in small town, \$165,900

**Parma Hts** - 1800 sf ranch needs TLC \$89,900 (sold)

**N. Royalton** - 4 bdrm colonial on 1 acre, \$359,900 (sold)

**Cleveland** - 2 houses/one lot; Investors wanted, \$59,999

**Cleveland** - 3 bdrm colonial being remodeled, \$69,900

**Brookpark** - 4 bdrm bungalow, \$119,900

**West Park** - 3 bdrm colonial on Metropark, \$219,900

**New London** - 4-5 bdrm colonial, \$179,900 (sold)

**Olmsted Falls** - 5 acres, free house, \$179,900

## Saying "I'm Sorry" the Right Way

Apologies are an important and necessary way for humans to maintain long-term relationships. If you've received an apology that wasn't done well, then you know how much it matters to apologize the right way. Here are three recommendations on how to deliver a winning apology:

- Take responsibility. Tell the person you're apologizing to exactly what you're sorry for: "I'm sorry I lost control of my temper the other night." Stay away from excuses such as, "I've been fighting with my husband a lot and I just lost it." Stick with what happened and don't blame your shortcoming on anything or anyone else.
- Acknowledge that you've hurt the other person. Say, "I know I hurt you." Avoid saying, "You seemed offended from what I said."
- Let the other person know that you have good intentions for the future. Be specific. Say, "I will remember how much I've hurt you. I will also remember that you don't like to be criticized publicly." This is better than just saying you'll try not to do it in the future.