

# Hello Spring!

From The Staff

Place  
Refrigerator  
Magnet  
HERE

at Shires Housing

## IMPORTANT PHONE NUMBERS

Shires Housing Office: 802-442-8139 ext. 0

MAINTENANCE - 1-844-256-4706

Please be as specific as possible when relaying your maintenance request to the call center.

## Mark your calendars!

Don't forget, rent is due the first of each month.

**Refer a  
Friend**  
to Shires Housing  
and get  
**\$100.00  
OFF**  
Your Next Month's  
Rent!\*

## Keep It Simple.

Our mission is simple. We provide top-quality apartments at prices that fit the budgets of regular working folks. Anything we can do as a community to improve the quiet enjoyment of your home, to keep costs low, and to improve our environment to be safe and welcoming for everyone is what we want to hear from you.

## We Want Your Thoughts & Feedback!

### Stop by, call, write, or e-mail us!

Our Shires Housing office is located at 302A South Street.  
Mail: Shires Housing, P.O. Box 1247 • Bennington, VT 05201  
Phone: 802-442-8139 • Fax 802-442-5125  
www.shireshousing.org • info@shireshousing.org



# Newsletter

  
Vol. 5, No. 1  
Spring 2018

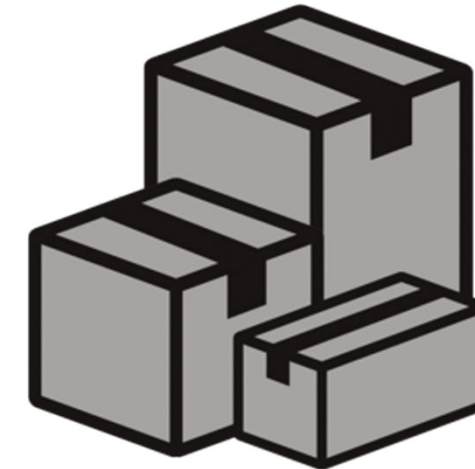
## Spring Cleaning: The Cost Of Clutter

Is it frugal or foolish to hold on to old and worn out items? When we treat ourselves to an upgrade or are gifted something new there is a tendency to keep the previous item. New clothes, furniture or appliances all mean that an older version is no longer being used. But if it's still in working order, then there's no reason to throw it away or sell it, it can be saved for when it is needed again. But there are hidden costs that need to be considered.

### Loss of living space

Empty space invites us to fill it, and as we fill it over time that empty space becomes less until we feel like we're being squeezed out of our homes. Perhaps it's time to upgrade to a larger home as well? But housing is most people's largest expense, so if the increased square footage is being used for storage and not for living, then your money is going towards your things and not to yourself.

Professional organizers use a little bit of simple math to let you know if your using too much space for storage and not enough for living. For example, a family that bought a 2,000-square-foot home for \$300,000 typically spends nearly \$15 per year for each square foot. Lets say that square foot is being used by an unused item, that's \$15 per year dedicated to said item. Once you start to multiply the number of old things and the space they take up that price will go up quickly. Measure how much space is being taken up by excess clothing, shoes, frames, unused storage containers and organizers (the best of intentions gone wrong). Are there any toys your kids don't play with any more? Are you holding on to a piece of used furniture for the "future"?



### Time and maintenance

Keeping so many items cuts into your time as well. Looking for a specific box of seasonal decorations? Then lets say you first spend upwards of an hour of your time sifting through other boxes with things that will never be taken out of their box to find what you need. Now lets imagine that was time you could have been getting paid for, an hours wage lost to things that don't give any value back to you.

In another situation, lets say your looking for a specific tool you need. After a certain amount of time it becomes easier to simply go buy a new one. Now, somewhere in your home, you have a duplicate that you didn't need to spend money on. That's the start of being forced to go through your things sometime down the line (maybe it's time to move) and discovering that you've got five hammers in storage.

### Monthly storage fees

According to research, Americans pay over \$37.5 billion for storage in a year. An

average unit at \$90 a month is 10 feet by 10 feet, the equivalent of two to four rooms worth of furniture, boxes, and other things. The sooner decisions are made about the stuff, the sooner that cost goes away.

### Clean-out costs

A professional organizer could help you make some of the tough decisions. What do you need? What are you sentimentally attached to? What could benefit others? But, these services will come with an average price tag of \$40 an hour.

Eventually, no matter how attached we become to heirlooms, memorabilia, or a place there will come a time when we have to move on. Then it comes down to someone spending the time sorting through all the attics, basements, storage facilities and shelves in order to get them into the moving van. It costs roughly \$1 per pound to move something, which may be fine to move the really important things, but it adds up for everything else.

Your best strategy is to never let the things take over your home. If you think that any more than 10-20% of your space is being use for storage, that's too much. Spring cleaning is the perfect opportunity to evaluate what is still being used and valuable to you. Haven't worn those shoes since Cousin Tom's wedding two years ago? Maybe try to sell or donate them. Did you pick up a box of on-sale picture frames one day, planning to decorate your walls with family photos? Time to take those frames out of the box and hang them up (and don't forget to get rid of the box afterwards as well). And just like that, you've saved yourself some money.

**INSIDE: Boxelder Bugs • Save Your Deposit**

## Boxelder Bugs



It's that time of the year again! These bugs are about 1/2 inch long, brownish/black with red markings. These bugs are more of a nuisance, are not harmful and do not carry/transmit anything harmful.

One bit of advice, though: **Don't crush them!** Their alternate name is "Stink Bug". Here's an easy home remedy to try and reduce them from invading your space:

Mix 1/2 cup of dish detergent in one gallon of water. Using a spray bottle, give the bugs a bath! You'll see them disappear in no time!!

How many ants does it take to rent a property?

Ten ants!!



## WANTED

**E-mail address.** If you have an e-mail address, please contact our office so we can put it in your file. Sometimes an e-mail gets a quicker response – and that works both ways!! Please, help us to update both our database and efforts to "Go Green"!!

## Maintenance

When placing a maintenance call, remember there will be a "call-back" within 30 minutes, for details and/or permission to enter your unit. Caller ID will likely show the number as "unknown", ... PLEASE ANSWER!!!

## THE SNOW MELTED, HOORAY!

Time for some spring cleaning. Please get busy and remove cigarette butts and animal feces TODAY!

It was easy during the winter, snow covered the ground. But, now the snow has melted and it's unbelievable what is revealed. Please help our lawn maintenance

## Container Plant Care



Shires Housing only allows container gardening. In addition, any containers must remain on your patio or deck, so the landscapers can maintain your yard. Here are some tips on container gardening, from the Old Farmer's Almanac:

Choose your container! Clay pots may look more attractive, but plastic retains moisture better and won't dry out. And remember that a black pot will absorb heat when left in the sun. Hanging baskets save space, and bring herbs and cherry tomatoes to eye level.

Many plants in pots will need to be watered up to twice a day. To keep your plants cool in summer place a smaller pot inside a larger pot and fill the gap with moss or crumpled newspaper. When watering soak the filler as well. Add an inch of coarse gravel to the bottom of containers to improve drainage.

Containers need maximum sunlight and good ventilation. And watch out for pests.

## Hello? Sorry ... wrong number.

If you change your phone number, please make sure to let our office know. We need to have current contact information on file for you at all times. Same goes for e-mail addresses or if you change your mailing address (P.O. Box to regular delivery and vice versa). In addition, if you have voicemail, PLEASE set them up! If we have to contact you regarding an important matter and you cannot answer, we need to be able to leave a message instead.

workers and clean up your yard of this unsightly debris. You don't like looking at it ... neither does your neighbor! Please, it's your community and your responsibility. Set an example.

Try to have the prettiest lawn in your community ... WE DARE YOU!!!

## Summer Fruit Bruschetta

- 1 Loaf of French bread, sliced thin
- 10 strawberries, diced into small pieces
- 3 peaches, diced into small pieces
- 2 tablespoons raspberry white balsamic vinegar (or regular balsamic vinegar)
- 1 cup fresh chopped basil leaves,
- 1 log cranberry goat cheese (or regular cream cheese, mix in some cranberries/cran-raisins, if desired).

1. Preheat oven to 350 degrees. Place French bread on a baking sheet and bake for 8-10 minutes until fully toasted.

2. In a medium sized bowl, combine strawberries, peaches and balsamic. Spread cranberry goat cheese (or regular cream cheese) onto each slice of French bread.

3. With a slotted spoon, place fruit mixture on each piece of French bread.

ENJOY!!



## Getting WIFI?

Save some time and call our maintenance line first! Please do not call Comcast (or any other internet provider you choose) and schedule them to install IF THEY NEED BASEMENT ACCESS. You should use the maintenance process and notify us first. Calling your internet provider first and having their tech wait, on-site, for us to give them basement access, will just delay your installation. We all have schedules, so please call the maintenance line to be added to ours.



## Save your deposit: No Smoking!

You paid your deposit - great! But, remember, there is one easy way to lose that deposit, smoking in your apartment (or letting a guest smoke inside). When you signed your lease you agreed to the Shires Housing No-Smoking policy, one of the many ways we ensure the best possible housing at affordable prices. And it doesn't take any special equipment or tests to know if someone has been smoking in the building. But it DOES take a lot of special equipment, labor, and expense to remove all the smells and damage caused by smoking.



## Mystery check? Cool Treat!

You sent in your rent payment, great!!! But geez, there's no name, no property address on your payment! Please help us to record your payment accordingly - kindly note your name and property address on your money orders or bank checks. This way, your rent will be posted on time and to YOUR account.

Here's an easy kid friendly, mom-approved treat: **Frozen watermelon pops!**

All you need is a thick slice of watermelon, popsicle stick inserted and freeze! Voila!! A healthy, satisfying treat, ..... and not just for kids!!



## Rain, snow, sleet or hail your payment needs to reach us, without fail!

Many of our tenants are successfully signed up and using Rent Track. This is an on-line service that will automatically pay your monthly rent for you, from your bank account! Information has previously been given to every tenant on this rent payment system. It prevents you from having to come to our office to deliver your payment, saves on a stamp for mail-

ing your envelope and can be set up to automatically deduct your payment on a certain day each month. Don't let the weather or your hectic schedule cause you to be charged with a late fee, ..... sign up for Rent Track TODAY! If you need more information, please visit [www.RentTrack.com](http://www.RentTrack.com)

## The Bulletin Board

### Time to open the windows!

Now that spring has arrived, you can fling open those windows and enjoy the fresh air!

First, turn your thermostat all the way down. Then, make sure to place your storm windows UP, and put the screens DOWN. That way you can enjoy the fresh air without the bugs. Speaking of screens, as things heat up later in the summer, be sure to REMOVE screens before installing any AC units.

### Let the Grilling Begin!

One of the most anticipated parts of summer life is eating fresh food grilled over an open flame!

Just remember that all BBQ's and/or grills must be in the back yard. Also, the Fire Marshal requires that your BBQ/Grill must be at least 10' away from the building. Good common sense; we don't want your grilled burger to set the neighborhood on fire!

### Free Landscaping - Watch for the Mower Muncher!

Your free landscaping services will begin again very soon. Remember to make sure all toys, chairs, and other items are safely stowed away each night. Otherwise they may end up being munched by the mower!

### Save the Grass!

This might seem obvious, but just in case, we want to remind everyone to park only in designated areas, and help keep our grass beautiful.

### Clotheslines & Tag Sales

Just a friendly reminder that due to zoning ordinances, we are not allowed to use clotheslines. We also are not allowed to have Tag Sales. Good thing there is eBay!

