

News You Can Use

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Easy Fixes for Your Home

Paint

If you've got cracked or peeling paint, you'll certainly want to repaint before you put your house on the market. If you have imperfections in your walls, choose a paint with a flat finish, as this will conceal them. Make sure you use washable paints in bathrooms and kitchens - an interior flat enamel is good for this.

Focal Points

Having a focal point is critical if you want to create a room that feels comfortable and useable. Some rooms have natural focal points, such as a fireplace, architectural details or a picture window with a view.

But if your room has none of these, you could try placing a large piece of furniture such as an armoire or a tall bookcase along one wall, using an ornate mirror or large painting, or adding a table with your favorite ornaments or mementoes arranged on it.

Kitchen

Damaged or dirty cabinet doors are easy to fix. Most cabinetry can be re-painted after cleaning it and applying a coat of primer. Just check that the materials can take paint or whether you need to give any special preparation to the doors first. Alternatively, you can just replace the doors. There are companies that provide doors to fit existing kitchen cabinets.

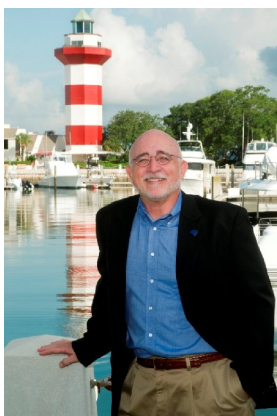
Another way to fix up cabinets is to replace the hardware, perhaps changing out-of-date fixtures for sleek, modern ones.

Bathroom

The caulking between tiles gets very dirty. Clean it - and you'll immediately make your bathroom fresher.

A big turn-off for many house-buyers is carpet in the bathroom. If you replace it with a more washable surface, you'll have a much cleaner-looking room.

Putting Your House Up For Sale? Get These Essential Tips



If you want to get the best price for your house, it's essential to prepare it for sale. Homes that have been "staged" go for a lot more money...and sell much more quickly too.

To give yourself a head start, get my free guide, "50 Essential Tips to Prepare Your Home for a Speedy, Top-Price Sale."

Just call me at 843-368-1510 and I'll send it right out to you.

Easy Ways to Make Spring Cleaning Painless

If spring cleaning isn't your idea of family fun, don't distress: these fast fixes will have your home looking its best with plenty of time to spare.

Recycle

Every home has those little corners or cupboards filled with unwanted gifts, outgrown clothing or worn-out toys that take up space. Collect everything that hasn't been used in the past year and then either donate it or advertise it on a local recycling group for pickup. It's a great way to make someone's day brighter while clearing the clutter.

Maintenance

Now is the time to perform those small repairs and other routine maintenance tasks before they become major annoyances. Replace bulbs and batteries in hard-to-reach fixtures and fire alarms, repair leaking faucets and replace filters for the furnace, then tackle the yard. Hire a handyman for anything outside your ordinary skill set. You will be surprised to find how much better your home feels to you without the minor annoyances.

Clean

After clearing the clutter and making needed repairs, it's time to get down and dirty by scouring the house from top to bottom. Either hire a company or rent a machine to clean the carpets, upholstery, air ducts, windows and other surfaces. Use an environmentally friendly enzymatic cleaning formula to disinfect and deodorize at the same time. Once everything is clean and disinfected, consider purchasing a HEPA air filtration system to help improve air quality for the whole year long.

How to Sell Your House... Even in Today's Market

Falling home prices, slow housing starts, rising unemployment... with so much bad economic news it might seem futile to place your home on the market.

Don't despair. Despite the current financial crisis, there is good news for sellers: buyers are still interested in homes that are priced right.

Learn how to sell your home even in a bad economy with these quick tips:

Prioritize

During tough economic times buyers seek shelter, safety and security above luxury.

Make sure the marketing materials relate the same information.

Price It Right

Without exception one of the most

important aspects of selling a home is to price it right but pricing is only part of the equation.

Consider holding a note, accepting a partial trade as down payment or using other creative methods to make the deal work.

Add Bling to Bring in the Bucks

It doesn't cost a lot to make your home look its best.

Consider painting in the new colors for 2009, clearing away the clutter and investing in some strategically placed landscaping to refresh the look of your home and attract attention both online and in person.

Remember, first impressions matter the most when trying to sell a home in a bad economy.

Verizon Heritage Golf

OK it's the March Newsletter and the tournament isn't until April 13-19th, but now is the time to plan and get your tickets. This is the 41st event and more than \$18 million has been distributed to those in need throughout South Carolina and Georgia since 1987. In 2008, \$1.7 million was distributed to charitable organizations, medical institutions and for college scholarships.
<http://www.verizonheritage.com>

Thanks for All Your Referrals!

I succeed when people like you refer me to their friends, neighbors and loved ones. It's the best kind of feedback I can receive.

So thanks for continuing to pass this newsletter around to people you care about.

Wondering How Much Your Home Is Worth?

Has your home gone up in value? How much are other homes in your neighborhood selling for?

If you're wondering what's happening to prices in your area, or you're thinking about selling your house, I'll be able to help.

Just give my office a call for a no-fuss, professional evaluation.

I won't try to push you into listing with me or waste your time.

I'll just give you the honest facts about your home and its value.

And maybe I'll also give you the "inside scoop" on what's happening in the housing market near where you live!

Just give me a call at 843-368-1510 to arrange an appointment.

Alternatively, stop by at the office. The address is on the back page of this newsletter.

Worth Quoting

Some quotes from the writings of Douglas Adams, author of *The Hitchhiker's Guide to the Galaxy*, who was born in March 1952:

"Nothing travels faster than the speed of light, with the possible exception of bad news, which obeys its own special laws."

"I'd take the awe of understanding over the awe of ignorance any day."

"You live and learn. At any rate, you live."

"A common mistake that people make when trying to design something completely foolproof is to underestimate the ingenuity of complete fools."

"Time is an illusion, lunchtime doubly so."

"In the beginning the Universe was created. This has made a lot of people very angry and has been widely regarded as a bad move."

"Human beings, who are almost unique in having the ability to learn from the experience of others, are also remarkable for their apparent disinclination to do so."

"Anyone who is capable of getting themselves made President should on no account be allowed to do the job."

"It is no coincidence that in no known language does the phrase 'As pretty as an Airport' appear."

"I love deadlines. I like the whooshing sound they make as they fly by."

"Humans are not proud of their ancestors, and rarely invite them round to dinner."

"Flying is learning how to throw yourself at the ground and miss."

"So long, and thanks for all the fish."

How to Avoid Foreclosure Purchase Pitfalls

One way to save big when buying real estate is to find a foreclosed property in your target area. Unfortunately, when it comes to foreclosures, what you don't know could potentially hurt your pocketbook.

Learn how to save money and find the best foreclosure deals by avoiding these common pitfalls.

Hidden Defects

Most foreclosures are sold on an "as-is" basis, so it is important to have a comprehensive inspection performed. Although the lender is obligated to notify prospective buyers of known defects, it isn't unusual to encounter unknown problems after closing. Protect yourself by having a thorough

inspection performed on all major systems including the electrical, plumbing, pest, water quality and HVAC, as well as the structural integrity.

Code and Zoning Violations

Verify that all work performed on a foreclosed property had proper permits in place; not only will it reduce the risk of expensive repairs or building code modifications, but it ensure that the home meets minimum safety standards.

Taxes and Insurance

Don't assume that you will automatically save a bundle on property taxes when purchasing a foreclosed home; remember, property taxes are typically based upon prior sales data, so

they lag behind what is taking place in the market as a whole. Also, buyers are typically required to petition for homestead exemption and a variance or adjustment which can take time. It's also wise to obtain at least three insurance quotes prior to placing an offer for a foreclosed property; prior claims that show up on the C.L.U.E. report may increase insurance rates for years to come.

Purchase Title Insurance

Sloppy lending standards and improper paperwork have resulted in a wide variety of irregularities in recording and transfers. Remember, there are two types of title insurance available; purchase both to stay on the safe side and avoid unpleasant surprises in the future.

Electronic Picture Frames Revealed

Perhaps you have seen them in the stores or even received one as a gift this past holiday season; after all, electronic picture frames are all the rage.

Join the ranks of those able to proudly display their favorite photos of family, friends or even business projects with the assistance of an electronic picture frame.

Although there are many brands, sizes and features to be found when shopping for an electronic picture frame, essentially each provides a method of showcasing photos stored in a digital format.

Most use an LCD display and include specialized features such image correction, slide show styles, clock, and calendar modes plus other enhancements.

Photographs can be changed by updating the memory card, although more expensive models can easily hold up to 10,000 photos and may require few updates.

It's the perfect solution for small apartments, offices or other areas where bulky photo albums just won't fit.

Fascinating Facts about March

- The Hoover Dam was completed on March 1, 1936.
- The Academy Awards were first broadcast on TV on March 2, 1953.
- The first transatlantic telephone call was made from New York City to London on March 7, 1926.
- The Barbie doll debuted on March 9, 1959.
- Self-rising flour was invented by a British baker on March 11, 1845.
- The first Internet domain name was registered on March 15, 1985.
- The rubber band was patented on March 17, 1845.
- American Express was founded on March 18, 1850.
- Alcatraz prison closed on March 21, 1963.
- The Concorde made its first supersonic flight on March 27, 1970.
- Alaska was bought by the United States for \$7.2 million on March 30, 1867.

Birthdays to Remember This Month

John Wesley Powell, who led the first passage on the Colorado River through the Grand Canyon, was born on March 24, 1834. He later became the director of the Bureau of Ethnology at the Smithsonian Institution, where he led the classification of North American Indian languages.

The man who designed the George Washington Bridge in New York was born on March 26, 1879. Othmar

Ammann also designed the Bayonne Bridge and directed the planning and construction of the Lincoln Tunnel.

Marc Davis, the man who drew Thumper from the Disney movie *Bambi*, was born on March 30, 1913. His pen was also behind *Cinderella*, *Alice* (in *Alice in Wonderland*), *Tinker Bell* (in *Peter Pan*) and *Cruella De Vil* (in *101 Dalmatians*).

NEWS YOU CAN USE

Dick Berger,
Full Service - Full Time

Spring



April
Birds
Butterfly
Daffodil
Easter
Eggs
Flowers
Foliage
Greenery
Lambs

Leaves
Lilac
Nests
Primrose
Season
Shoots
Showers
Sunshine
Thaw
Tulip

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Recipe: Simple Lentil Soup with Lemon

Ingredients

- 2 tablespoons olive oil
- 1 large yellow onion, finely chopped
- 2 garlic cloves, minced
- 2 tablespoons tomato paste
- 1 teaspoon ground cumin
- 1/4 teaspoon pepper
- Pinch chili powder
- 6 cups chicken stock
- 1 cup lentils
- 1 large carrot, peeled and diced
- Juice of half a lemon
- 3 tablespoons chopped cilantro
- Salt to taste
- Sour cream for serving (optional)

Heat oil in soup pot and sauté onion and garlic until soft and fragrant. Stir in tomato paste, cumin, pepper and chili powder. Add stock, lentils and carrots and simmer partially covered until lentils are tender, about 30 minutes. Blend half the soup in a blender and return to pot, or use an immersion blender. Add salt to taste and right before serving stir in lemon juice and cilantro. At the table, serve with a dollop of sour cream.

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Thanks for reading! If you'd like to tell me what you think about this newsletter, or if you're thinking of buying or selling real estate, please get in touch.



NAR's sustainable property designation