

NEWS FROM YOUR REAL ESTATE CONSULTANT FOR LIFE

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May 2024

New Beginnings

Dear Friend,

This latest newsletter is a collection of thoughts, tips and stories gathered with care to inspire and uplift.

But beyond tips and tales, this newsletter is a reminder of the beauty in connection and the simple joys that each day holds. It's an invitation to pause, breathe and take a moment for yourself amid the hustle and bustle of everyday life.

And if this season stirs you with thoughts of change, particularly if you're considering buying or selling a home, then know that I'm here — not with all the answers, but with an open ear, a steady hand and a heart ready to support you in any way I can.

Here's to a spring filled with growth, gratitude and the gentle unfolding of new beginnings.

Jim Urban

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Unexpected Freedom

Note: I ran across this old story recently, and reading it again instantly made me feel sry. I hope you enjoy it.

I am now, probably for the first time in my life, most like the person I have always wanted to be. Sure, sometimes I despair over the wrinkles, the baggy eyes and the sagging chin. In fact, often I am taken aback by noticing that old person in my mirror, but I don't agonize over it.

I have a wonderful life and would never trade my amazing friends or loving family for less gray hair or a flatter belly. I've become kinder to myself. I've become my own friend. I don't chide myself for eating that extra cookie, for not making my bed or for buying that silly cement gecko that I didn't need, but looks so avant-garde on my patio. I am entitled to overeat, to be messy, to be extravagant. I can say "no" and mean it. I can also say "yes" and mean it.

Great freedom comes with aging. Whose business is it if I choose to read or play on the computer until 4AM or sleep until noon? I will walk the beach in a swimsuit that is stretched over a bulging body and dive into the waves with abandon if I choose to, despite the pitying glances from the bikini set. They, too, will get old!

As I become older, it is easier to be positive. I care less about what other people think. I don't question myself anymore. I've even earned the right to be wrong. I like being old because it has set me free. I genuinely like the person I have become. I won't live forever, but while I am still here, I will waste no time lamenting what could have been or worrying about what will be. Today, I wish you a day of ordinary miracles and the unexpected freedom of aging with joy.

Transitioning From Winter To Spring With Ease

As we bid farewell to winter and welcome spring, many of us anticipate the rejuvenation that this season promises. Yet, for some people, Seasonal Affective Disorder (SAD), a type of depression that occurs at specific times of the year, can make this transition challenging.

Understanding the nuances of SAD during this transition is crucial, because it's a time when we're encouraged to gradually increase our exposure to natural light, engage in regular physical activity outdoors and establish a stable routine to help our bodies adjust. Mindfulness practices, such as meditation and journaling, can also serve as powerful tools to navigate this change, process our feelings and embrace the new season with open arms.

Support systems can play a vital role when someone is experiencing SAD. Whether reaching out to friends, joining a support group or seeking professional help, connecting with others can provide comfort and guidance. As the days lengthen and nature awakens, let's remind ourselves that it's OK to seek help and take time to adjust to the brighter days ahead.

**Need to get Straight Advice on
How to Sell a Home in This
Market? or Want to Know How
Jim Can Negotiate for You Like
a "Pit-Bull" When You Find
Your Dream Home?**

Just go to:

MyHomeValueNow.com

Then click on one of the two
buttons: "I'm looking For My Next
Home" or "What is My Current
Home Worth?"

May Roundup

May 1, International Workers' Day: Also known as Labor Day in some countries, this day is a celebration of laborers and the working classes.

May 5, Cinco de Mayo: This day commemorates the Mexican Army's victory over the French Empire at the Battle of Puebla in 1862. It's widely celebrated in the United States to honor Mexican culture and heritage.

May 12, Mother's Day: Celebrated on the second Sunday in May, it's a day to honor and celebrate mothers and mother figures.

May 27, Memorial Day: This US holiday honors military personnel who have died in the performance of their military duties. It is also the unofficial start of summer.

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Springtime In A Jar

As spring heralds the arrival of a bounty of fruits and vegetables, it offers the perfect opportunity to capture the essence of the season in a jar through homemade preserves. From the tangy sweetness of strawberry jam to the savory depth of pickled asparagus, preserves allow us to savor the flavors of spring long after the season has passed.



Starting with strawberries, rhubarb and early cherries, spring provides a plethora of options for jams, jellies and marmalades. Embracing the art of preserving doesn't just yield delicious results; it also encourages us to connect with our food sources, understand the rhythm of seasons and reduce food waste.

If you are new to preserving, then such simple recipes as strawberry jam or quick pickles can be a great start. Remember, the key to great preserves is fresh, quality produce, so take advantage of your local farmers' market.

Whether you're a seasoned canner or a curious novice, the process of preserving can be a rewarding way to engage with the abundance of spring.

Immune-Boosting Vegetable Soup

This vibrant spring vegetable soup is a feast for the eyes and a boon for your immune system. Packed with a variety of vegetables, herbs and spices known for their health benefits, it's gluten-free, vegan and absolutely delicious.

Ingredients:

2 tablespoons olive oil
1 large onion, diced
3 cloves garlic, minced
2 medium carrots, diced
2 stalks celery, diced
1 small zucchini, diced
1 cup chopped asparagus
1 cup chopped kale or spinach
1 cup of canned chickpeas, rinsed and drained
1 teaspoon turmeric
1 teaspoon ginger, grated
6 cups vegetable broth (gluten-free)
1 teaspoon lemon zest
2 tablespoons lemon juice
Salt and pepper, to taste
Fresh parsley or cilantro, for garnish

Instructions:

Sauté veggies: In a large pot, heat the olive oil over medium heat. Add the onion, garlic, carrots and celery. Sauté until the vegetables are slightly softened, for about 5 minutes.

Add more veggies and spices: Stir in the zucchini, asparagus, kale (or spinach), chickpeas, turmeric and ginger.

Cook for another 2–3 minutes until the spices are fragrant.

Simmer: Pour in the vegetable broth and bring the mixture to a boil. Once boiling, reduce the heat to low, cover and let it simmer for about 20 minutes or until the vegetables are tender.

Final touches: Stir in the lemon zest and lemon juice. Season with salt and pepper to taste. Let the soup simmer for an additional 5 minutes. ENJOY!

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Eco-Friendly Garden Hacks

With the arrival of spring, our gardens beckon us to immerse our hands in the soil and nurture life from the ground up. During this season, let's embrace eco-friendly gardening practices that not only benefit our green spaces, but also the planet. Sustainable gardening involves using resources in a way that doesn't deplete them, from harvesting rainwater for irrigation to choosing native plants that thrive in your region without excessive water or chemical fertilizers.

Composting, another cornerstone of eco-friendly gardening, transforms kitchen scraps and yard waste into nutrient-rich soil that can help reduce or eliminate the need for chemical fertilizers. Moreover, adopting integrated pest management (IPM) strategies can minimize the need for pesticides, focusing instead on natural pest-control methods and promoting biodiversity in your garden.

Creating a pollinator-friendly garden by planting a variety of flowers that bloom at different times of the year can support local bees, butterflies and other pollinators. By adopting these sustainable practices, we can cultivate our gardens in harmony with nature and foster a healthier environment for future generations.



Balance Your Dishes, Perfectly

Contrast Flavors: Combine contrasting flavors, such as sweet and sour or salty and bitter, to create depth.

Mind the Texture: Mix various textures, such as crunchy with creamy, to enhance the eating experience.

Season Smartly: Use salt, acid, fat and heat judiciously to elevate the main ingredients without overpowering them.

Add Freshness: Incorporate fresh herbs or a squeeze of citrus to brighten rich or heavy dishes.

Taste as You Go: Continually taste and adjust seasonings to ensure a harmonious balance in every bite.

Instant Mood Boosters

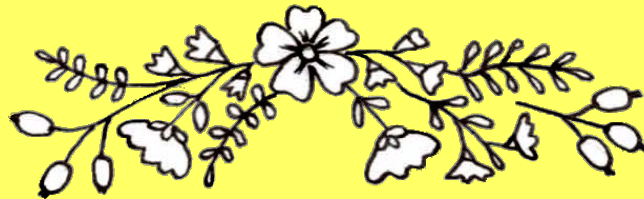
Feeling down or just in need of a quick pick-me-up? Boosting your mood doesn't always require a grand gesture or a significant life change.

Step into the sunlight. Exposure to natural sunlight increases serotonin, a brain chemical linked to mood elevation. Just a few minutes outside can brighten your spirits.

Listen to upbeat music. Music has a powerful effect on mood. Play your favorite upbeat tunes to lift your spirits and get a burst of happiness.

Laugh. Watch a funny video, read a comic strip or talk with someone who makes you laugh. Laughter triggers the release of endorphins, the body's natural feel-good chemicals.

Move your body. A quick walk, a few stretches or a mini dance session can release endorphins, improve circulation and shift your mood positively.



The Power Of Gratitude

Embracing gratitude isn't just about saying "thank you"; it's a lifestyle change that can significantly enhance your mental and emotional well-being.

Studies show that people who regularly practice gratitude by acknowledging the good in their lives are happier, less stressed and more resilient in the face of challenges.

Starting a gratitude journal, where you jot down a few things you're thankful for each day, can shift your focus from what's lacking to the abundance around you. This simple act fosters a positive mindset, improves sleep and strengthens relationships.

In a world that often emphasizes what we're missing, choosing gratitude helps us appreciate what we have, making for a fuller, more-satisfying life.



Smart Advice for You and the People You Care About

When You Have a Thought about Living in a New Home



The 5 Biggest
Mistakes
Home Sellers
Make



Making the
Move Easy on
Kids



How to Stop
Wasting
Money on Rent



How Home
Sellers Price
Their Homes



How to Sell
Your Home for
the Most
Money



The 5 Biggest
Mistakes
Home Buyers
Make

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people you care about.

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