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Bright Ideas for a Better Spring

Dear Friend,

I've gathered a mix of stories, tips and insights to help you make the most of the season, whether it's improving your home, enhancing your well-being or simply finding some inspiration.

I always love putting this newsletter together because it's my way of sharing helpful information that can make life easier and more enjoyable for you.

As always, I appreciate you being a part of this community. If you ever have questions, need advice or just want to catch up or chat about the next step in buying or selling a home, then I'd love to hear from you.

Wishing you a fantastic April!

All the best,
Jim Urban

The Unyielding Mountain

The restless wind surged across the earth, tearing through valleys, bending trees to its will and lifting dust into swirling skies. It reveled in its might and took pride in the way the world submitted to its force.

But then there was the mountain.

No matter how fiercely the wind howled or how violently it struck, the mountain stood firm. It did not bend, break or waver. It simply stood — immovable and vast — as though the wind was no more than a fleeting breath.

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The wind grew enraged and summoned its full power. It screamed through crags, summoned storms to batter the rock and lashed icy gales against the towering peaks. Yet the mountain endured — calm, steady and unbothered. Finally, exhausted and defeated, the wind roared, "Why do you not fall? Everything else bows before me."

The mountain rumbled with quiet laughter. "I do not fall because I do not resist," it said. "I do not fight you, nor do I run. I simply am. And so, I endure."

The wind paused, its fury ebbing into thought. Throughout its life, it was determined to assert its strength. Yet here was the mountain — powerful without struggle, strong without force.

Humbled, the wind softened and moved on, but gentler than before. And the mountain remained — unshaken, unyielding and utterly at peace.

True strength lies not in resistance or force but in calm endurance and steadfast presence.

The Secret Life Of April Showers

April showers do more than bring May flowers; they tell a fascinating story. Each raindrop begins as a tiny water particle clinging to dust in the atmosphere and then growing until it falls to refresh our soil and fuel our life.

Fun fact: The smell of rain, called petrichor, comes from oils released by plants and soil. It's nature's way of saying, "Let's grow!"

This month, take a moment to appreciate the beauty and purpose of every drop.

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:

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



Spring Lemon Herb Chicken

A one-pan dish bursts with fresh spring flavors by combining juicy chicken, roasted potatoes and tender asparagus for a hearty yet light dinner.

Ingredients (Serves 4)

4 bone-in, skin-on chicken thighs

1 lb baby potatoes, halved

1 bunch asparagus, trimmed

4 cloves garlic, minced

1 lemon, sliced

2 tbsp olive oil + 2 tbsp melted butter

1 tsp Dijon mustard

1 tbsp honey (optional)

1 tsp salt, ½ tsp black pepper, ½ tsp paprika, 1 tbsp fresh rosemary +

1 tbsp fresh thyme ½ cup chicken broth

Instructions: Preheat oven to 400°F (200°C).

Toss potatoes with oil, salt and pepper and roast for 15 minutes.

Coat the chicken with a marinade containing the oil, butter, Dijon, honey, garlic and spices.

Toss the lemon with the coated chicken. Nestle this into the pan with potatoes. Pour the chicken broth over everything and roast for 20 minutes.

Add the asparagus and roast an additional 10-12 more minutes. Switch to broil for 2-3 minutes to add extra crispiness and then serve with pan juices.

Why You'll Love This:

- One-Pan Simplicity – fewer dishes and easy cleanup.
- Fresh, Seasonal Ingredients – bright lemon, fresh herbs, asparagus, and tender potatoes bring spring flavors to life.
- Hearty Yet Light – perfect for a satisfying meal without feeling heavy.
- Great for Meal Prep – leftovers reheat beautifully for lunch.



FREE REPORTS!

Free Information!

- How Sellers Price Their Homes Free Information!
- The 5 Biggest Mistakes Home Buyers Make
- How to Sell Your Home For the Most Money

FREE NEWSLETTER SUBSCRIPTION!

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PANTRY PERFECTION



Designing an efficient and accessible pantry is essential for every household. Here's how to optimize your space:

1. **Opt for Shallow Shelving** – Use shelves no deeper than 18 inches to keep items visible and within reach. Adjustable shelves add flexibility.
2. **Maximize Floor Space** – Reserve about two feet of floor space for bulky items, such as paper towels or bottled water, to prevent clutter.
3. **Incorporate Pull-Out Shelves and Bins** – These features allow for easy access to items at the back, perfect for storing root vegetables, grains or snacks.
4. **Utilize Over-the-Door Storage** – An over-the-door organizer frees up shelf space by storing spices, condiments, and small items within easy reach.
5. **Consider Portable Pantry Solutions** – A portable pantry cart is ideal for kitchens without built-in pantry space, offering flexible and movable storage.
6. **Implement Vertical Storage** – Use tall shelving units or stackable storage containers to maximize space without taking up extra floor area.
7. **Use Clear Containers and Labels** – Store pantry staples in clear, airtight containers for freshness and easy visibility. Labeling enhances organization.

By applying these strategies, you can create a functional and efficient pantry, which makes daily tasks easier and more enjoyable.

How To Improve Sleep And Boost Your Health

Sleep is essential for physical health, emotional well-being and mental clarity, yet many people struggle to get quality rest. Understanding sleep science and adopting healthy habits can improve sleep significantly.

Consistency is the key. Going to bed and awakening at the same time daily helps regulate your body's clock and makes sleep more restorative. A relaxing bedtime routine — such as reading, stretching or enjoying a warm bath — signals your body to unwind. Avoid screens before bed because blue light disrupts melatonin production.

Optimize your sleep environment. Keep your bedroom cool, dark and quiet. A quality mattress and pillows enhance comfort, and blackout curtains or white-noise machines help minimize disruptions.

Mind your diet. Avoid large meals, caffeine and alcohol before bedtime because they interfere with sleep. A light snack, such as a banana or nuts, can promote relaxation.

Stay active. Although regular exercise improves sleep quality, avoid vigorous workouts close to bedtime to prevent overstimulation.



DRONES: A GAME-CHANGER IN FINDING LOST PETS

It's every pet owner's nightmare: Your dog runs away and disappears. You call, search and ask neighbors for help, but with a dog capable of traveling five miles in an hour, the search can feel hopeless. Fortunately, thermal drones offer a high-tech solution.

Because thermal drones detect heat signatures, finding lost pets is easier, even in dense vegetation or low light. They provide a major advantage during recovery efforts because they can cover large areas quickly.

During 2022 in Michigan, Lost Pet Drone Recovery reunited 22 dogs with their owners within its first month of operation. Similarly, during 2023, a drone operator in Connecticut located 40 missing pets.

Challenges and Considerations

Although thermal drones are effective, they're not infallible. Environmental factors, such as the pet's coloring and surroundings, can impact visibility. For instance, a white dog in a green field is easier to spot than one in snow. Even when a drone locates a pet, retrieving a shy or frightened animal requires a gentle and strategic approach.



Combining Drones With Traditional Methods

Thermal drones are most effective when used in conjunction with traditional search strategies, such as posting in Facebook groups, distributing flyers and seeking help from the community. This combined effort improves the chances greatly of a happy reunion.

For worried pet owners, thermal drones provide a much-needed edge in finding their lost companions by turning technology into a beacon of hope.

"Pets are not our whole life, but they make our lives whole."

- Roger Caras





ALLERGY-PROOF YOUR HOME

Spring's bloom brings seasonal allergies, with pollen, dust and pet dander triggering sneezing and congestion. Here are the most effective, expert-backed ways to reduce allergens in your home.

Close windows during peak pollen hours. Pollen counts are highest in the morning and early evening. The American College of Allergy, Asthma, and Immunology (ACAAI) recommends keeping windows shut and using air conditioning with HEPA filters to reduce exposure.

Upgrade air filters and use an air purifier. HEPA filters can remove 99.97% of airborne allergens. The Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) advises changing HVAC filters every three months and using a HEPA air purifier to improve indoor air quality.

Wash bedding and fabrics weekly. Dust mites thrive in bedding. The Mayo Clinic suggests washing sheets, pillowcases and blankets in hot water (130°F/54°C) weekly to eliminate allergens.

Use a HEPA-filtered vacuum. Regular vacuuming reduces dust mites and pollen buildup. According to the Asthma and Allergy Foundation of America (AAFA), a HEPA-filtered vacuum traps allergens more effectively than standard models do.

Shower and change clothes after outdoor exposure. Pollen clings to skin and clothing. The Center for Disease Control (CDC) recommends rinsing off and changing clothes after spending time outside to prevent allergens from spreading indoors.

Maintain indoor humidity below 50 percent. High humidity encourages dust mites and mold growth. The EPA advises using a dehumidifier to maintain 30 to 50 percent humidity for optimal indoor air quality.

By following these research-backed strategies, you can significantly reduce allergens in your home and enjoy a healthier, sneeze-free spring!

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[Denver5StarReferralCenter.com](https://denver5starreferralcenter.com)

Then enter the type of business you need in the search engine.





SMART ADVICE FOR YOU AND THE PEOPLE YOU CARE ABOUT

When You Have a Thought about Living in a New Home

5 Big Mistakes Buyers Make And How to Avoid Them

- 1. Mistake**
Not knowing how much they can afford before they make an offer.
The easiest way to avoid this mistake is to get pre-approved for a mortgage by a Lender so you know in advance exactly how much you can afford. Most pre-approvals are free and will give you a basis to make a more informed purchasing decision when you find the house you like.
- 2. Mistake**
Not reading the fine print on the real estate contract before they sign it.
Most people think that the agent they're working with is working for them. But unless they're working as your buyer representative, they represent the seller. There are different types of agency relationships you can have with a Realtor, so make sure you're clear on your options.
- 3. Mistake**
Not disclosing hidden defects before they buy a home.
One of the most expensive mistakes is also one of the easiest to avoid, by having a professional pre-purchase home inspection. Don't get stuck with a money pit. The cost of a professional home inspection is usually a few hundred dollars, but the peace of mind it can give you and the expense you can avoid are worth thousands of dollars.
- 4. Mistake**
Not knowing how much their credit can affect their ability to buy or refinance a home.
Before you buy a home, many of the details on your credit history can be cleaned up or even eliminated. Your mortgage professional can help you review and prepare your credit file in advance.

This report courtesy of:

5 Big Mistakes Sellers Make And How to Avoid Them

- 1. Mistake**
Using a Real Estate Agent Instead of a Client-Centered Real Estate Consultant.
When you're looking for help buying or selling property, it's important to remember that the terms "real estate agent" and "Client-Centered Real Estate Consultant" are not synonymous. Being client-centered means always placing the client's needs first. A client-centered consultant will ask profound and thoughtful questions. They are the type of questions the typical agent might not ask. Outside the house, you should ask probing, intelligent questions because discovering what is truly important to the buyer/seller and consultant to appropriately offer the problem and offer solutions to the essential objects from the least relevant concerns. Only then can the team work together to craft a very specific strategic process to make the transactions move forward based solely on the needs of the client.
- 2. Mistake**
Failing to Maximize the "Curb Appeal" of Your Home.
When you're preparing your house for sale, remember the importance of first impressions. A buyer's first impression can determine whether they'll choose to look inside. It's estimated that more than 90 percent of buyers decide to purchase a home even before they get out of their car. With that in mind, be sure to stand outside your home and take a realistic "tree look." Then ask yourself: "If my Agent, who you can't see, is to describe the curb appeal, it would make a significant difference in your final sales price, as well as the speed of your sale."
- 3. Mistake**
Not Appreciating the Buyer's Point of View.
Unreasonable though it may be, a prospective buyer would like to see a perfect home from top to bottom and inside and out. To improve the likelihood of an easy, fast and profitable home sale, we suggest that you attend to the following items:
On the outside:
 1. Sweep the front walkway.
 2. Remove newspapers, bins and toys.
 3. Park vehicles away from the property.
 4. Trim back the shrubs.
 5. Apply fresh, clean paint on your home, wooden fence and landscaping.
 6. Clean windows and window coverings.
 7. Maintain sprinkler systems.
 8. Maintain awnings around windows and doors.
 9. Make sure roof and gutters are clean and in good condition.
 10. Mow the lawn frequently and plant flowers.
 11. Keep gutters clean.
 12. Take down out-of-season decorations.

How Sellers Price Their Homes

How Much Should I Offer?
Clients often ask, "How much under the listing price should we offer?"
The best way to understand market value is through comparative research. Professional real estate consultants review and study at least 40 to 60 listings, visit 10 to 20, and inspect 5 to 10 properties to develop a sense of relative worth for properties in a given area.
Additionally, a professional appraisal factors into determining the fair market value of the home. An appraisal protects you because lenders want to make sure that you don't borrow for a home if the home value does not meet the sale price in the eyes of the appraiser, they'll let you know. At that time, the realtor can renegotiate the sale price or void the agreement and refund your earnest money deposit.
There are four basic factors that influence how sellers price their homes.
1. Sellers Get Poor Advice
Some real estate agents inflate the value of the seller's home in an effort to obtain the listing. There's a natural tendency on the part of sellers to list with the real estate agent who gives them the promise of the highest selling price.
When homes are overpriced, they

- Stay on the market longer
- May not sell

2. Sellers Set an Unrealistic Price for Emotional Reasons
These sellers believe their home is worth every penny of their asking price for personal reasons. Sometimes they lose their objectivity and focus on features that seem more valuable to them (rather than the buyer). For example, the suede wall-covering in the master bedroom may not appeal to potential buyers.
Additionally, some sellers, anticipating resistance to buy, feel it's a good idea to leave a little "negotiating" room in the asking price.

How to Sell Your House for the Most Money In the Shortest Amount of Time

- Your imagination is the most powerful tool you have to improve the value of your property – and it's free. Here's how: Step out of your own shoes and step into your potential buyer's shoes. Then take a good, realistic look at your house and property, and consider: Is it appealing? Can you imagine yourself living there comfortably? Or do you imagine yourself putting in a lot of work to make the house and property acceptable?
- 1. Most buyers are interested in three things about a property they're considering:**
 - Visual appeal (landscaping, spaciousness, cleanliness, color, lack of clutter)
 - Maintenance (everything in working order, nothing to repair or paint)
 - Safety (locks and deadbolts, burglar/fire alarm systems, business of the neighborhood)
 - If a potential buyer can form a good mental picture of living in your house – no sale! With this in mind, you want to give your property a good, hard look from the outside in. You want to create a fabulous first impression so everyone will want to come inside.
 - 2. What to Look For On the Outside:**
 - **Roof and gutters:** When buyers look at your house from their car, about 30% of what they see is your roof. Be certain it's in good repair.
 - **Landscaping:** A well-maintained yard and a smooth, even driveway reassure potential buyers that you care about your property. A yard free of mud and weeds suggests a good sprinkler system and low maintenance.
 - **Paint and siding:** Neutral colors and a clean appearance are important. Consider repainting or green washing both your house and roof.
 - **Porch or covered patio:** Make sure it's clean and undamaged.
 - **Fence:** Fencing should be in good repair.

Making the Move Easy On the Kids

Most often, a move represents an important step forward for the adults in the family because of a new job, promotion, transfer to a different office, or financial success has allowed them to buy a more comfortable house in a different neighborhood.
Moving from one house to another is seldom easy and enjoyable for adults (who chose to move), and can be especially troubling for children (who prefer to stay where they are). But if parents are mindful of their children's concerns and needs, they can minimize distress and discomfort.
A Move Affects Children and Adults Differently
People typically live in a house for about five years and then move on as their jobs and incomes allow. Five years is a small percentage of an adult's life, but it's half the lifetime of a 10-year-old. It includes almost all the years he or she can remember. It may be the only home the child's ever knows, and the place she feels most safe and comfortable.
A house is much more than a place to live to children. It's the center of their world, associated with familiar activities, sights, and sounds. A move threatens a child's security and leaves something unknown in its place. Their friends and the familiar streets, shops, trees and parks are gone. The new neighborhood is someone else's world.
The impact of a move on a child starts about the time he or she first hears about it, and often continues until the new house becomes home. It's not necessary to tell young children about the big change immediately, although they must hear about it from their parents before someone else tells them.
Expect that your children may be even more distressed after the move. The new house will not be comfortable or beautiful the night the moving van leaves, or for months after. The furniture won't fit the rooms, and the floor will be covered with half-packed boxes. The children won't know anyone at school and, if you move during the summer, they may have little opportunity to meet others their age. They'll need your help. Plan ahead to support and comfort them and ease the stress of the move.

How to Stop Wasting Money on Rent and Own a Home Instead

If you've always rented a place to live, buying a home can seem like a monumental undertaking. This report breaks down this home buying process into clear steps.
Seven Steps to Transition from Renter to Homeowner
1. Identify Your Needs and Wants
Begin your search by considering the kind of home you need and want. Write down your specific requirements, such as the number of bedrooms, size of yard, floor plan, location, schools, etc.
2. Determine How Much You Can Realistically Afford
Consider your budget and financial obligations. Decide what monthly house payment you can really afford. Most mortgage consultants advise limiting your payment to no more than one-third of your net monthly income. If you're unsure, contact your mortgage consultant to assist with the calculations.
3. Get Pre-Approved by a Mortgage Consultant
When you know in advance the amount of loan you can obtain, you can focus on searching for houses in your targeted price range. This can save you time when you find that perfect home, because select loan buyers who are pre-approved.
Experienced mortgage consultants can let you know what specific loan programs are best for you. By taking a look at your financial situation and credit history, a mortgage consultant will tell you if you can qualify for the home you want and will find a loan that best suits your needs.
For the approval process, you and your mortgage consultant will complete the required documentation and submit it to an underwriter. A pre-approval is an actual loan commitment from a mortgage consultant to lending institution. This means that you definitely qualify for a loan. Talk to your mortgage consultant about the costs and time involved to secure pre-approval.

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