



Cynthia Hash, Realtor/SRES
 300 Preston Ave., Ste. 500
 Charlottesville, VA. 22902
 Tel: (434) 220-2200
 Cell: (434) 531-5351
 eMail: hash@kw.com

News ON THE HOUSE

March



Be sure to talk to your real estate professional on how you can protect your home & budget with First American



Visit me at: www.FindHomesInCharlottesville.com



Small Ideas, Big Results!

I hope you enjoy this month's newsletter that is full of tips and ideas for you as a homeowner. Our time as real estate professionals, enlightens us with keen insights into our clients' needs and challenges, and we want to let you know that our experience is at your disposal. Please feel free to talk to us about any of your real estate needs.

To ensure that you live without worries about your home or appliances, we would like to leave you with a warm note to talk to us about your homebuyer protection plans.

Four Tips to Sell Your House For Top Dollar



Selling a home can be difficult. But, by employing the right tactics, you can find a buyer who's willing to pay the price you want. Here are four tips to help you sell your home for top dollar:

- Create competition for the property. Create an environment where multiple buyers are competing to buy. Stack appointments to show the house in a narrow window so that several buyers are at the property at the same time. This strategy taps into a buyer's fear of loss, the single greatest spark to get a buyer to buy now.
- List it with the very best agent in the area. Choose one with a record of selling homes for a high percentage of the listing price. Ask for referrals; get in writing what the agent will do to market the house. Be clear that if the agent doesn't

live up to his or her promises, you want the option of canceling the listing.

- Set the right scene in your house. Make sure the house is bright, clean and open. Get the temperature right, and make sure the house smells nice. The three most important views of the house are the view from the front curb at the front of the house, the view at the front door, and the view at the front entranceway when someone first walks into the house. This combination gives the prospective buyer his or her first impression of the house. To improve the front view, use flowers with color and ensure the front porch looks tidy. The door should be either freshly painted or brand new. The kitchen and master bedroom deserve special attention. Simple things like new hand towels in the bathroom or fresh flowers in the kitchen go a long way.

- Spend money for the upgrades that buyers want most. Before you rush off to make repairs in the property or pay for expensive upgrades, tour five or more homes of similar value that are selling in your area. See what final touches are popular with actual buyers. For example, a Jacuzzi tub can be an important feature on homes in certain price ranges but can be a waste of money in others. The key is to ensure upgrades generate at least twice their cost in the home's final selling price.

DID YOU KNOW...

Having **the right home protection plan** helps ensure that **your home & your budget is protected.**

Call your Real Estate Professional today to find out how you can **save time and money** on home repairs.



Trade-Offs in Building Materials May Put Homes at Risk

If you have a burning hunch that the builders of your home may have skimped on certain construction materials, your intuition may be correct. By law, fire containment strategies must be considered as integral parts of the design and construction of all types of buildings, including residential structures. However, in recent years, building codes have allowed for trade-offs through which automatic sprinkler systems are used in favor of noncombustible building materials. Some builders cite cost as a reason for taking advantage of these trade-offs.



“Cost has always been an issue, and promotion of sprinkler systems over reliable passive fire-resistant materials has made the choice of concrete masonry seem cost prohibitive,” said the residential markets manager at the NCMA. “Consequently, the choice of fire-resistant materials has been eroded with the ever-increasing application of sprinkler systems.” But, results from the Fire Safe Construction Cost Comparison Study prepared by Haas Architects Engineers in State College, PA, demonstrate that cost differences are most often not prohibitive - they were between 3% and 5%, and in one instance, the cost for noncombustible concrete masonry construction was less than combustible construction. This is good news for builders and occupants of multi-residential structures, such as town houses, dormitories and assisted-living facilities, where protection for many people is available at a single cost.



Tired of Salsa? Take a Dip on the Green Side

When the gang gets together to tailgate or when you have everyone over to watch the big game on television, you need a great snack. Coming up with a quick and easy snack idea, is a challenge. So, how about a dip made with avocados? That's right, a creamy dip that's easy to whip up, tastes great with chips or veggies and made ahead of time. For additional flavor, opt for Mexican avocados which are creamier. Firm, dark avocados ripen in just a day or two at room temperature, but if you are not ready to use them, put them in the refrigerator, where they will last for several days. You will know your avocados are ripe when the pebbly skin turns almost black and yields to light pressure.

Revive Your Home With Inexpensive Fixes, No Hammer Required



Few things are more disruptive and frustrating than unexpected home repairs, which can turn into budget-busters. From water heaters to air conditioners to dishwashers, homeowners spend hundreds of dollars annually to maintain and repair systems and appliances. When major systems fail, expenses can average more than \$1,000 in repairs, according to experts.

The good news is, there's a practical and affordable solution to the surprise costs and hassles when home systems and appliances break: a home warranty. Home warranties cover these major breakdowns, and often for less than \$500 per year. But, cost isn't the only factor driving their popularity; questionable contractors are playing a role too. Finding qualified technicians quickly is no easy task. Poor quality of work and disreputable contractors who do not comply with local codes are growing concerns among homeowners. Fortunately, home warranties can ensure help from a qualified technician in a timely manner. Contractors with the highest survey rankings receive more work, while those with poor performances are removed from the network.



**First American
Home Buyers Protection
Corporation**

The following recipe for avocado dip is sure to satisfy any kind of crowd:

Spicy Avocado Dip

- 1 fully ripe Mexican Avocado (about 8 ounces)
- 1 cup sour cream
- 1 package (3 ounces) cream cheese, room temperature
- 1/4 cup sliced pickled jalapeño chilies from a jar, drained
- 2 tablespoons pickled jalapeño liquid from jar
- 2 tablespoons sliced olives, optional

Cut avocado lengthwise around the pit, and twist halves to separate. Strike pit with a knife blade, and pull to remove. Scoop out flesh with a spoon, and place in a blender. Add sour cream, cream cheese, chilies and chili liquid, and blend until smooth, adding a little more liquid if mixture seems too thick. Transfer to a serving bowl, and garnish with sliced olives if desired. Cover and refrigerate until serving time. Serve with tortilla chips, crackers or raw vegetables. Yields two cups.