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at Home



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Happy Spring!

I hope you enjoy this month's copy of my *At Home* newsletter. It's filled with helpful information for you as a homeowner.

My time as a Real Estate Professional enlightens me with keen insights to my client's needs and challenges, and I want you to know that my experience is always at your disposal.

Feel free to call me anytime!

262-770-6475

Design for Function and Comfort by Teresa Updycke



Know Your Space - Before designing or decorating a room, you must know the space. The size of the space determines the scale of furniture, accessories, and even the shade of paint you choose. Imagine a small living room with a grand piano sitting in the center; no room would be left for seating, tables, or much of anything.

Get Organized - Organization sits at the top of the list. No matter how perfect your wall colors or how dramatic your furniture placement, if a home looks cluttered and unorganized all else is lost. Take the time to organize every room in the house so that putting everything in place is easy because everything has a place to go.

Think Comfort - Home and comfort are synonymous. You go home to refresh yourself before beginning another day of work and play. Think about comfort as a primary goal when decorating a room. You may want one stunning museum-like room, but make a space for kicking off your shoes, putting up your feet and watching TV, reading, listening to your favorite music, and relaxing. It's hard to unwind in a stiff, fussy, or stuffy room.

Form Follows Function - Interior design is all about making livable spaces beautiful. Before you begin turning a room into a showcase, you must understand the function of the room. Think about how many people live in your home, if you have pets, or you like to entertain. The more questions you answer in regard to the function of the room the better you'll like the end result.

Remember Elements of Design - Using the elements of design makes decorating projects come out right. Scale and proportion, balance, line, and color are each elements to be considered when decorating a room. A large overstuffed sofa next to a tiny stand will look even larger. Keep in mind the size of the room to all aspects of the decorating scheme. One small portrait on a huge wall is lost. Instead, create a wall grouping with small photographs or portraits to create drama. Using all the elements of design is what makes a room outstanding.

Top 10 Tips for a Faster Sale

- Paint as necessary inside and out
- Clean carpets, replace worn carpet
- Avoid clutter, store or remove excess items from rooms, closets, and garage
- Clean windows, replace broken or cracked windows
- Make sure your yard is mowed, trimmed and weeded (add flowers for color)
- Clean or replace missing, cracked or stained grout in kitchens and bathrooms
- Repair/replace nonfunctioning systems and appliances
- Repair and/or reseal cement/blacktop, including cracks in walkways and sidewalks
- Clean blinds, drapes and other window coverings; replace if necessary
- Deep clean entire home

Reviewing the Comparables by Katrina McKay

Your real estate agent has access to what are known as 'comparables.' These are listings of houses similar to yours in your neighborhood that have been sold recently, including descriptions, photos, the listing price and the price the seller accepted. Whether you're buying a house or selling the one you own, you absolutely need to be going over the comparables.

What is, "going over the comparables"?

Well, this means casting a critical eye on the characteristics and attributes that are causing the houses in your neighborhood

to sell and comparing these to your house. These include location, curb appeal, renovations and features. With each listing, review the value of each of the above-listed items to determine how well each house rates. If it makes it easier for you, create a chart and give each house a score out of ten for each characteristic. When your chart is finished, you'll be able to look for patterns.

An example of a typical pattern to look for is whether or not access to public transit seems to be a concern for the type of buyer that buys in your area. This is indicated by higher pricing for

those houses on a transit line as compared to those that are not within walking distance of public transit. You can also see if certain features interest buyers by looking for high resale value on houses with special features like cedar roofs, or a swimming pool.

Why are the comparables important?

The insight that you gain from careful study of comparables can help you price your house more realistically when you put it on the market. They can also help you know which aspects of your house you should highlight or

de-emphasize in your listing, where your money is best spent if you're doing renovations, and give you an idea of what your longed-for features are going to cost you if you're looking at buying.

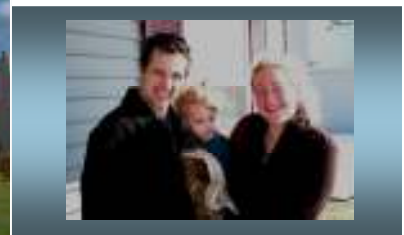
Buyer, seller or renovator – no matter what your role in the game, one fact remains the same – it pays to review the comparables.



▶ Prudential Southeast Realty News



Congratulations Ackley Family!



Jason, Elizabeth, Allison & Boomer
Wishing you good times, good friends and good luck at your new home in Cibolo, TEXAS!

Featured Property of the Month

Multi-Family Investment or Owner-Occupied:

- spacious 3 bedroom lower unit
- full bath/shower over tub
- newer carpet
- separate utilities
- some appliance inclusions
- a few short blocks from North Beach
- 3 bedroom upper unit
- new full bath/tub only
- fresh paint throughout
- newer roof and mechanicals
- private drive/fenced yard
- near public transportation and conveniences



**1819 Erie Street
 Racine, WI 53402**

This Two-Family home is currently occupied with a good tenant base, \$700/lower unit and \$600/upper unit rents. Perfect turn-key investment or owner occupied opportunity.

\$129,900.00

The Green House Effect by Heather Lee



What's good for the Earth is good for your health. How to get an eco-friendly abode—fast



YOU RECYCLE REGULARLY, use compact fluorescent lightbulbs, and try to buy organic. But we're betting there's a lot more you can do to turn your home into a healthier, safer, and greener haven. Do you know how to boost the Earth-friendly quotient of your fridge? What's the simplest way to keep the new-rug smell and new-rug toxins out of your lungs? Each month we'll feature a question from the eco-home quiz and where you can find the answers. If you don't score in the green zone, consider the easy and smart switches that will make a big impact on the planet—and your health.

This Month's Eco-Home Question:

Staying indoors protects you from pollution. (T/F)

ANSWER: False. Shockingly, pollutant levels in your house can be 2 to 5 times higher—and even as much as 100 times higher!—than those outside, according to studies by the EPA. Paint, carpet, flooring, and furniture emit volatile organic compounds (VOCs), which can cause a variety of ills. Formaldehyde, the most common VOC, can trigger headaches, coughing, nausea, and breathing problems. Plus, there's less ventilation indoors to remove, cigarette smoke, pet allergens, mold, and other pollutants, says William Fisk, head of the indoor environment department at Lawrence Berkeley National Laboratory in Berkeley, CA.

GREEN FIX: When you buy a new carpet, ask the showroom to unroll it for 2 weeks before delivery to air it out. Look for low-or no-VOC paints carrying the Green Seal (greenseal.org) and carpets with the Carpet and Rug Institute tag; these labels guarantee few emissions.

Air fresheners are another common indoor source of VOCs says Fisk. Skip the artificial versions and make your own: Add several drops of essential oil to a spray bottle of water and spritz.

Health Bonus: Reducing your exposure to VOCs will cut your risk of asthma and headaches, studies show.

THANK YOU! to all my friends at Caribou Coffee...

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*Providing Value in
Your Community!*



There are many qualities and skills that go into being an excellent real estate professional; integrity, in-depth community and market knowledge, marketing savvy, effective negotiation skills, technological know-how and a high-quality professional network, all of which are hallmarks of how I work.

That said, in my experience as a Real Estate Professional, I've found that providing the very best service is essentially about **putting my clients first**. This means keeping myself accessible, being a good listener as well as a good communicator, and responding quickly to your needs. This "client first" philosophy has always been my approach and it requires me to continually improve my skills and ways of doing business.

Recipe of the Month

Chicken-Pineapple Fajitas

Ingredients

- 8 6-inch flour tortillas
- 4 1-inch slices peeled fresh pineapple (use about half for first part of recipe)
- 1 lb. skinless, boneless chicken breast halves
- 2 small red or orange sweet peppers seeded, cut in strips
- 2 tsp. Jamaican jerk seasoning
- 1/8 tsp. ground black pepper
- 1 Tbsp. cooking oil
- Fresh cilantro and lime wedges

Directions

1. Preheat oven to 350 degrees F.

Wrap tortillas in foil and heat in oven. Meanwhile, coat a 12-inch nonstick skillet with cooking spray; heat over medium-high. Add pineapple slices; cook 4 to 6 minutes, until browned, turning once. Remove.

2. Cut chicken in strips; toss with sweet peppers; jerk seasoning, and pepper. Heat oil in skillet; add chicken and peppers. Cook and stir over medium-high 4 to 6 minutes, until chicken is no longer pink. Core and chop remaining pineapple. Serve with chicken, tortillas, cilantro, and lime.

Makes 4 servings.

Variation:

Add red onion with peppers for extra flavor.



Visit www.bhg.com for more Quick & Easy Spring Dinners



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**Call 262-770-6475 for all
your Real Estate Needs!**

I'm on the Web!
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