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at Home



August 2008 Volume 7

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Hello!

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

Tips for Organizing Your Kitchen by ARA /Julie Morgenstern



If you find yourself on bended knee with a flashlight, or perched on a rickety chair to locate a favorite pie pan or a certain spice, it may be time to get organized. Thankfully, with a few tricks up your sleeve, you can have everything within reach and sight without worrying about keeling over on the kitchen floor. Here are Julie Morgenstern's top 10 tips for organizing your kitchen:

1. Have a plan of attack. Begin with a strategy based on how you want to function in your kitchen. Prioritize by identifying the frequently used "must have" items and the things you use only occasionally.

2. Declutter in chunks. If it seems overwhelming, start with the most visible items first, such as what's on the countertops. You'll get a feeling of instant change and gain motivation to do the next chunk.

3. Seek treasures instead of trash. Focus on searching for hidden treasure versus ditching the unwanted. This transforms organizing into a positive experience.

4. Banish flimsy dividers. Pitch pitiful plastic trays and replace them with sturdy wooden drawer organizers that create a happy home for spoons, whisks and what-nots.

5. Lay out a landing strip. Designate an official "drop zone" for car keys, cell phones, etc. For example, Diamond Cabinets' Mini Message Center has hooks, shelves and a write-in message board, all concealed behind a door, creating a perfect solution for on-the-go organization. It can be found on the Diamond Cabinet Web site at www.diamondcabinets.com.

6. Cubbies aren't just for kids. Containerization is the name of the game, so create your own kitchen "cubbies" wherever you can. Stash wire baskets or transparent storage boxes on shelves so you can see and grab things quickly.

7. Create eye-level storage. Make items easier to see by adding eye-level shelves or a tall pantry unit to put small jars of spices or tall bottles of oils and dressings within easy reach.

8. Let there be light. Proper lighting ensures a comfortable environment for a variety of activities, so consider installing dimmers. The Diva dimmer from Lutron allows you to set light levels to full brightness for meal prep and art projects, for example—and to lower levels for others, like mealtime and late-night tea. Visit www.lutron.com for more information.

9. Divvy it up in drawers. Kitchen drawers need not be junk drawers. Use them to store items that can be folded or stored flat, such as cloth napkins or candles. Some drawers even come with wooden pegs to hold stacked dishes in place.

10. Make organization part of your life. Schedule a time for organizing into your daily routine, such as after the kids get home from school. Even a daily 10-minute dose of it can keep your kitchen in check.



...email me @ kabeck@wi.rr.com if you'd like to receive your monthly newsletter electronically!

Easy Home Improvement Projects by ARA

Here are some ideas from the experts at Lighting Showplace on how to dress up your home, starting at the front door.

- 1.) If your front door is dark, consider updating your lighting. A well-lit front entrance says 'welcome,' while at the same time enabling you to greet guests and identify visitors.
- 2.) Don't spend a small fortune on new dining room furniture? Simply paint those plain white walls and switch out the chandelier hanging over the table to make a dramatic difference.
- 3.) If your bathroom still looks like it's circa 1970, choose a lighter paint color and swap out the fixtures for a bold new look.

Log on to www.lightingshowplace.com to access an online catalog with hundreds of fixtures to choose from. You can shop by brand, collection of style and easily pair up matching pieces to get a look you like



Prudential Southeast Realty News



Featured Home of the Month

This open concept loft home features:

- vaulted ceilings/natural fireplace
- 3 bedrooms/2 full baths
- master suite on loft level w/balcony
- beautiful oak trim & cabinetry throughout
- room to grow in spacious basement
- 2 car garage/plenty of storage
- private wooded lot
- breakfast bar w/dinette
- range/dishwasher/washer/dryer included
- large entertaining patio/garden storage
- tasteful landscaping/water fountain
- pleasant neighborhood



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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:

Since mold and mildew quickly accumulate on shower curtains, it's better to use a disposable vinyl version. [T/F]

ANSWER: False. Vinyl curtains, made of polyvinyl chloride (PVC), are cheap but release VOCs for a month or more.

GREEN FIX: A glass door is safest. (Wipe it daily to prevent mold and mildew). If you don't want the expense of installing one, choose a curtain made of nylon or natural material. Hemp cloth won't leak through, so no liner is needed. Just close the curtain to let it air-dry, and wash every few weeks.

Health Bonus: Hemp curtains (\$84; www.greenearthmarket.com) are resistant to bacteria and allergy-aggravating mold.

Central States Mortgage



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Central States Mortgage is Wisconsin's leading locally-owned mortgage banker offering a full suite of loans for all of our customers. With the Midwest's best selection of mortgage programs*, Central States has loans to fit all needs and lifestyles.

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Central States MORTGAGE

* Not all programs available in all areas. WISCONSIN ENVIRONMENTAL MORTGAGE LENDER




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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

Steak & Potato Kabob

Ingredients

- **1** boneless beef sirloin steak, cut 1 inch thick
- **1/4** cup bottled red wine vinegar and oil salad dressing
- **2** tablespoons snipped fresh thyme or 2 teaspoons dried thyme, crushed
- **2** tablespoons Worcestershire sauce
- **1/4** teaspoon garlic powder
- **2** medium green and/or yellow sweet peppers, cut into 1-inch pieces
- **1** medium red onion, cut into wedges
- **1/2** of a 20-ounce package refrigerated potato wedges (about 32 wedges)

Directions

- 1.** Trim fat from steak. Cut steak into 1-inch cubes. Place steak cubes in a re-sealable plastic bag set in a shallow dish. For marinade, in a bowl combine salad dressing, thyme, Worcestershire sauce, and garlic powder.

Pour over steak; seal bag. Marinate in the refrigerator for 4 to 6 hours, turning bag occasionally.

- 2.** Drain steak, reserving marinade. On eight 10-inch metal skewers, alternately thread steak, sweet pepper, onion, and potato wedges, leaving a 1/4-inch space between pieces.

- 3.** For a charcoal grill, grill kabobs on the rack of an uncovered grill directly over medium coals until meat is desired doneness, turning once and brushing occasionally with reserved marinade up to the last 5 minutes of grilling. Allow 12 to 14 minutes for medium doneness (160 degrees F). (For a gas grill, preheat grill. Reduce heat to medium. Place kabobs on grill rack over heat. Cover and grill as above.) Discard any remaining marinade.

Makes 8 kabobs,
4 servings



Visit www.bhg.com for more Kabob recipes.



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

I'm on the Web!
www.kristinebeck.com

