



Spring
2019

N AMY Shair's TRIANGLE NEWSLETTER

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Spring Exterior Maintenance Checklist

Winter weather can take sometimes take a toll on the exterior of your home. As the weather begins to warm up, plan to focus some energy on general upkeep such as the following items:

- Gutters**—pull leaves and debris out of the gutters; run a hose on the roof & check if there are any leaks that need to be fixed.
- Siding**—power wash vinyl siding to remove any mildew that may have formed. If you have wood siding, check to see if any areas need a paint touch-up.
- Window & Door Screens**—check screens for holes & replace them if necessary.
- Roof**—inspect the roof for any missing, loose, or damaged shingles in need of repair.
- Deck or Porch**—check the deck or porch to see if they need to be weather treated or re-stained. Check railings for sturdiness & adjust them if needed.
- Sprinkler System**—replace or fix any valves that are leaking or not working.
- Landscaping**—whether you do it yourself or call in a pro, make sure to trim any overgrown plants and remove weeds. Now is a great time to plant flowers for a seasonal pop of color!
- Foundation**—check floors, concrete, & walls for any cracking or deterioration. If needed, call a foundation professional who can help!

If you need a recommendation for a vendor to help with these or any other home maintenance projects, give me a call! —Amy



The History of Easter Egg Hunting

You won't find them in the Bible, but many cherished Easter traditions have been around for centuries. The most prominent secular symbol of the Christian holiday, the Easter bunny, reportedly began in Germany with an egg-laying hare.

The decoration of eggs is believed to date back to at least the 13th century, while the rite of the Easter parade has even older roots.

But the novelty of hunting for Easter eggs was first referenced in writing in England. During A. E. Housman's inaugural lecture as Professor of Latin at University College, London in 1892, he said, "In Germany at Easter time, they hide coloured eggs about the house and garden that the children may amuse themselves in discovering them."

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Call Chris Thurow
919-267-4188

Green Ideas to Save Money & Help the Environment

Reducing your carbon footprint doesn't just save the environment—it can actually help you save money at the same time. Here are a few tips for conserving your hard-earned cash while helping out Mother Earth:

- **Fix your leaky faucet:** That irritating drip-drip-drip doesn't just drive you crazy; it can add up to a lot of money over the course of a year. Keep faucets in good condition, and look for ways to cut down on water use in general: shut off the tap while soaping up dirty dishes, collect rainwater in barrels for uses other than drinking (like washing your car), and limit shower time.
- **Shop secondhand outlets:** You can often find practical and stylish clothes in secondhand shops. You'll save money and also help reduce the amount of wastewater produced by the textile industry. As an added bonus, the proceeds from secondhand shops often benefit charity.
- **Heat and cool your home more efficiently:** Make sure hot and cold air isn't seeping out through ducts and doors that don't close firmly. Check your light switches for drafts around the edges, and seal them up. Install ceiling fans to circulate warm air downward during the winter months and keep air conditioning costs more reasonable in the summer.



MARKET WATCH

Spring tends to be the time of year in which the real estate market heats up. Though interest rates are on the rise, they are still low enough to entice buyers. There is a shortage of inventory in the under \$250,000 price range, so when homes in this range do come on the market, there is often very heavy competition. Home values in the Triangle continue to be on the rise. In an analysis of homes sold in 2018, it was found that home values are increasing between 4 and 8 percent per year, with Wake County homes averaging a 6% increase.



Invest Your Tax Return on Sensible Home Upgrades

According to new data released by the IRS, the average North Carolinian can expect a tax refund of \$2,835 in 2019. Tax refunds are often thought of as 'extra money' that can be used toward larger goals. If you are thinking about selling your home in the next few years, or you just want to make your existing space more functional for day to day living, why not invest that tax return money in some simple home upgrades that will add value?

- **Add a covered entry:** Many homes, especially older ones, don't have a covered front door. Adding a cover will not only greatly increase the curb appeal of your home, but it will also improve the functionality of your home. No more fumbling for your keys in the rain. Plus, your guests will have a warmer welcome.
- **Upgrade to natural stone countertops:** Whether you are thinking about selling or planning to stay in your home for another 20 years, you can't go wrong with natural stone countertops. Granite, quartz, and marble come in a wide variety of colors and styles and are among some of the most durable countertop options on the market. How far your tax dollars will stretch depends on the size of your kitchen and your choice of materials, but you can bet that new countertops will surely pack a stylish punch.
- **Refinish your cabinets:** Replacing kitchen cabinets can cost upwards of \$20,000, but if your kitchen layout is already functional, you can save thousands by having your existing cabinets refinished or refaced. According to HomeAdvisor, the average cost to refinish is \$2,500.
- **Update your fixtures:** plumbing and lighting fixtures are often overlooked when you're living in a home, but future buyers will definitely take notice your fixtures. Updating your lighting, facets, drawer pulls, or even your door knobs and hinges can give you great bang for the buck!



Win a Prize!

The quarterly quiz question now has a new home on Facebook! Visit the Amy Shair Facebook page starting Friday, April 12th to participate in a contest for your chance to win a prize!

facebook.com/
AmyShairRealEstate

Bugs, ants, spiders? Get local, affordable pest control that you can count on!



Call Mike Manning

919-762-3285

Why Pet-Friendly Homes are in High Demand

One of the many benefits to owning a home is the freedom to have a pet. In fact, 1/3 of millennial home buyers have cited their dog as their reasoning for wanting to purchase a home. 68% of American households own pets, so if you're planning to sell, it is important to appeal to that majority demographic. A recent study by the *National Association of Realtors* found that 89% of American pet owners say they would not give up their pet due to a housing restriction, 81% said that their pets play a role in their housing situation, and 31% stated they have refused to put an offer in on a home because it wasn't a good fit for their animals.

New home builders have started taking notice of the pet population boom: some are offering special pet features like retractable pet gates that tuck away into door jambs. Installing a feature like that in your existing home isn't super realistic, but what other features are pet parents seeking out when shopping for a home? 91% of pet owners ranked a fully fenced backyard as their number one feature when looking for a home that will accommodate their pet. Similarly, proximity to dog parks, walking trails, and other pet-friendly attractions was of high importance when considering a particular home or neighborhood.