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N AMY Shair's TRIANGLE NEWSLETTER

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Fall Home Maintenance Checklist

Even as the weather begins to cool with the coming of fall, winter is probably the last thing on your mind. However, spending some time winterizing your home will keep you save and warm throughout the winter while also saving you fuel and money! Here are some areas to focus on while preparing your home for the season to come:

- Gutters**—clean gutters & downspouts in mid-fall & double check them before winter.
- Siding**—inspect the exterior of your home for cracked, broken, or loose siding; repair & replace as necessary to keep out pests and moisture.
- Heating System**—hire an HVAC professional to perform a seasonal inspection on your heating system. Replace your furnace filter & give your system a test run so you know it will work properly when you need it.
- Fireplace**—have a professional chimney sweep inspect, clean, & repair any fireplaces. Add chimney or flue caps to keep out birds & pests. Ensure all dampers are functional.
- Landscaping**—inspect to ensure that tree limbs do not overhang or are too close to the house, or are overhanging power lines. Trim or have a professional trim any that may be a problem in ice or other winter storms.
- Foundation**—inspect your foundation and seal off any pipe or other openings with foam sealant. Install covers over crawlspace ventilation openings.

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



Fall on the Blue Ridge Parkway

North Carolina's Blue Ridge Parkway has long been one of the most visited National Parks Service sites in the country, but folks flock to this scenic mountain road in droves come fall—close to 2 million visitors are projected to visit the BRP in October this year! If you, too, are in search of stunning views of fall foliage, a little planning will maximize your time on the Parkway.

There is no simple formula to predicting fall color. Mid to late October is usually when the leaves are in their peak, but it also depends on elevation. Many visitors have been frustrated trying to go to one spot on one day in October, hoping to find the leaves in full color. A far better plan is to drive some distance along the Parkway, changing elevations and north-south orientation. Any one who does this around mid to late October will likely catch at least some sections at or very near their peak color.

No Guest Room, No Problem!

Whether you have out-of-town guests on the way or an unexpected guest who needs to crash for the night, don't panic if you don't have an official guest room—you can quickly outfit just about any area into cozy sleeping quarters with a few simple tricks:

- If you don't have a dedicated guest bed, a comfortable sofa will do the trick if you make it as bed-like as possible. Remove the back cushions for more space and make it up with a set of twin sheets, pillows, and a comforter.
- Consider sectioning off an area of your living room with a decorative screen to give your guest a sense of privacy.
- Making guests feel at home is often about the small touches. Provide your them with a few hangers, shelves, or drawers in which to place their clothes. A small table and lamp that can serve as a nightstand will add to the homey feel. Make sure there is an outlet nearby for easy charging of devices!
- Pamper your guests with some bed-and-breakfast-like accoutrements such as a stack of fluffy towels, a spare set of slippers, and a basket of toiletries.

Remember, feeling at home is not about how much space a guest has, but how welcome they feel within that space.



MARKET WATCH

iBuyer companies such as Opendoor and Offerpad are beginning to gain a foothold in the Triangle market. These companies entice sellers with the prospect of a quick sale, but there is more than meets the eye when it comes to working with an iBuyer. A recent investigation conducted by MarketWatch.com found that iBuyer offers net homeowners an average of 11% less than selling on the open market. To learn more about iBuyers and what they could mean for your bottom line, check out my blog: amyshair.com/blog

It's time for your fall heating & air checkup!



919-500-0087



3 Gadgets to Help Showcase Your Family Photos

Do you have boxes of photos buried in the back of your closet? Or photo albums collecting dust on a bookshelf? Or maybe it's thousands of digital images hidden away on your hard drive or smart phone where no one can see them? Well the good news is, thanks to some specialized tech, there are a number of easy and convenient ways to start getting these precious memories out of the shadows and into the limelight where they can be enjoyed by family and friends.

Preserve family legacies: You can uncover old family photos from boxes and albums with the help of a photo scanner, which will allow you to not only scan, but restore and organize photos, postcards and Polaroids. Certain models will scan both the front and back of the image to preserve dates and handwritten notes as well, then automatically upload them for sharing with family members online.

Create lasting memories: With the help of a photo printer that has a built-in memory card slot and wireless printing features, you can edit and easily print photos directly from tablets and smartphones without having to connect and download your photos to a computer. Certain models will even allow you to create custom collages and even stationary.

Share moments together: Go old school and gather family and friends for a modern-day version of a slide show. You can share larger-than-life photos and videos, indoors or out, with a wireless projector that displays images in HD. These portable devices allow you to take the show anywhere that's most convenient for the crowd to gather.

Whichever method you choose, these ideas will breathe new life into your photo collection, putting them on display for all to enjoy.



WIN A PRIZE!

Visit the Amy Shair Facebook page starting Monday, September 9th to participate in a giveaway for your chance to win a prize!

facebook.com/
AmyShairRealEstate

Looking to purchase a new home or refinance your current home?

Call Sabrina Schell

NMLS ID# 98721

919-571-2502



First-time Buyers Feeling the Price Pinch

Mortgage rates have fallen to multiyear lows, but first-time home buyers are still feeling the pinch of housing prices that have been steadily increasing for years. Among prospective homebuyers, 58% were first-timers this year, a drop compared to 63% last year. First-time buyers usually have less wiggle room in their budgets, and home prices are rising fast on the lower end of the market. In the Triangle, there is still a shortage of inventory of homes priced under \$250,000. There is often stiff competition for 'starter homes,' with bidding wars causing some first-time buyers to lose out on affordable homes. Additionally, first-timers have to compete with real estate investors, who often make cash offers that appeal more to sellers.

Late last year, market analysts began to observe a shift in new construction toward smaller, more affordable homes. Homebuilders seem to finally be responding to homebuyer demand amid an affordability crisis and softening market, but smaller homes means less profit for builders. Meanwhile, construction costs continue to rise thanks to increased tariffs and a labor shortage, so builders are faced with taking more hits to their bottom line or passing the cost on to buyers. These factors may continue to keep new construction out of first-time buyers' reach.