



fall
2020

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 safe 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 Hikes in the Triangle

This summer has been a hot one but soon, cooler temperatures and low humidity will coax us out of our homes and back into nature. The Triangle is home to numerous parks and trails, making it easy to enjoy the autumn air and colorful leaves this fall.

Raleigh's William B. Umstead State Park has long been a local favorite for hiking. With trails ranging from half a mile to over 7 miles, you're sure to find a route to enjoy.

Durham's Eno River State Park features a wide variety of trails that meander along the scenic Eno River. With over 28 miles of trails, this park has plenty of space to explore!

In Southwest Wake County, Harris Lake County Park is an excellent hiking destination. The Peninsula Trail features a number of short loops for the family, or take on the full 5 mile trail along the lake!

Are you in need of a fall flooring refresh?

**Call Mack Downs
919-819-7281**



3 Tips to Improve Your Listening Skills

Are you having trouble communicating with your partner, friends or colleagues? Do you forget what your friend just told you only minutes after the conversation ended? In a world geared toward multitasking, it can be hard to drop fully into a conversation and just listen. Below are three tips to help you be more present in your conversations.

Ask questions. Don't just smile and nod. Make your conversation partner feel more heard by asking questions that are relative to what they're saying. Ask for more details to dig deeper and listen fully.

Repeat what you heard. Every few minutes, repeat what you heard so you know you're retaining important information. This will also help you avoid accidental miscommunications.

Wait to offer a solution. When we're listening to a friend with a problem, our go-to response is often to fill silence with a solution, but sometimes, we just need to feel heard and understood. You can even ask your friend if they're looking for a solution or just space to vent.



MARKET WATCH

2020's real estate market saw stagnation at the start of the shutdown in March followed by an explosion of activity in late spring. While that "belated" spring market has begun to taper off, the market is still strong. The biggest concern right now is the lack of inventory: the number of homes on the market is 30% less than this time last year. With fewer available listings, buyers must be even more competitive. We're still seeing a lot of multiple offer situations and homes selling within the first few days of being listed.



Is Your Home Office Zoom-Ready?

Working from home has become the new normal for many people amidst the Covid-19 pandemic, and many folks may continue to work from home in some capacity even as companies begin reopening offices. One of the most ubiquitous parts of the 2020 work from home experience is the video call. Whether you're using Zoom, Microsoft Teams, or some other platform, chances are, if you're working from home, you've had to take some video calls. Perhaps seeing your home office through the screen of your Zoom call has made you realize that your space could use a refresh. Here are some tips to spruce up your home office and make it shine on your next video call.

- If your desk is currently facing a wall, try turning it to face out into the room. This will make your work space feel more open, but the Zoom view will feel more cozy and intimate with less of the room in view.
- Decorate the wall behind the desk with interesting art. Consider adding texture with three-dimensional pieces or textile wall hangings.
- Take advantage of natural light. Placing your desk facing a window will ensure that you are well-lit during video calls.
- Add sound-dampening elements such as draperies and an area rug to help minimize echo during your calls.
- Incorporate some house plants. Greenery breathes life into the space and improves indoor air quality!
- Declutter your space. Remove extraneous objects from bookshelves, create organizational systems for your paper clutter, and keep knickknacks to a tasteful minimum. Decluttering will not only make your office look better on camera, but it will also help you feel more relaxed in your work environment—that's a win-win!



QUIZ QUESTION

The more red in a leaf, the more _____ it is storing.

Be the first person to call in and provide the correct answer and you'll win a prize!

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Is your home ready for winter? For roofing, siding, and windows:

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And Construction

Homebuyer Traffic is on the Rise

One of the biggest surprises of 2020 is the resilience of the residential real estate market. Lawrence Yun, Chief Economist of the *National Association of Realtors*, is now forecasting that more homes will sell this year than last year. He's also predicting home sales to increase by 8-12% next year. ShowingTime, a leading showing software and market stat service provider for the residential real estate industry, just reported on their latest *ShowingTime Showing Index*: **"Home buyer traffic jumped again in July, recording a 60.7 percent year-over-year increase in nationwide showing activity."**

That means that there are 60% more buyers setting appointments to see homes than there were at this same time last year. The number of potential purchasers was also up dramatically in every region of the country: 76.6% in the Northeast, 56.7% in the West, 52.1% in the Midwest, and 46.7% in the South. ShowingTime also indicates that the real estate market has already come back from the downturn earlier this year that was caused by shelter-in-place orders. In the words of Frank Martell, President and CEO of *CoreLogic*: **"On an aggregated level, the housing economy remains rock solid despite the shock and awe of the pandemic."**