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Between FRIENDS

"Coaching first-time Texas Home Buyers and Sellers"

Mobile: (210) 378-5987, www.Val-A-Homes.com



You've weathered the winter months and summer is just around the bend. Call me today and find out why **NOW** is a perfect time to buy or sell a home!

As a real estate professional, I know the stress that a home system or appliance breakdown can create for a home seller during the listing period or for the buyer after close of sale. Fortunately, you can prevent that stress with a home warranty that provides coverage for both the seller and the buyer!

A Home Warranty Plan is a service contract that protects your home's major systems and appliances for a specified period of time. Should a failure occur during the term of the Plan, a qualified contractor is dispatched to repair or replace the covered item for a nominal service call fee. Help is only a phone call away, 24/7, 365 days a year!

For complete peace of mind, I recommend an **Old Republic Home Protection** Plan for all of my clients. Call me today for more information on how a home warranty can benefit you.

Do you have a friend in need? I live and breathe real estate, so let me lend my expertise to guide your family, friends, and colleagues through their next transaction.



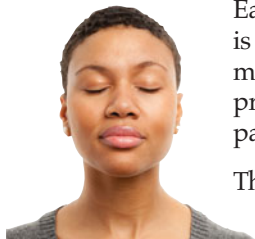
If you are working with another Real Estate Professional, please disregard this notice.

Health & Safety

Meditation Made Easy

The idea of meditation may conjure up images of bearded mystics tucked away in the Himalayas, but you don't have to go to such extremes to benefit from a little mindfulness training. Researchers at Harvard Medical School found that just five minutes of daily meditation can result in a stronger immune system, enhanced cognitive function, and lower blood-pressure.

If the word itself sounds intimidating, forget twisting yourself up like a pretzel in the perfect lotus position! Just find a quiet space, sit with your back straight and your eyes closed, and breathe. While there is nothing magical about breathing, it can be a useful focal point for your attention, because it's something we do all the time. Focusing on your breath takes you out of your head and into your body, and that's what meditation is all about — remaining alert and thinking about absolutely nothing.



Easier said than done in today's fast-paced world, but perfection is not the goal. In fact, perfection is impossible, because the mind always wanders. When it does, gently bring it back to the present, the way you would a meandering child who veers off-path from time to time.

The result? A smarter, healthier, more efficient, and happier you!

Helpful Hints

Family Vacations That Won't Break the Bank

We'd all love to see the wonders of the world, but Stonehenge has lasted more than 4,000 years and the Great Pyramids can wait until the economy rebounds (or the kids have finished college!). For now, take advantage of these tips to see how far you can stretch your vacation budget.

Travel to the hubs: Do a quick Google search for major airline hubs in the US. They make excellent vacation spots and tend to offer great deals on airfare.

Child discounts: Always ask — whether you're visiting amusement parks, dining at restaurants, or looking for lodging. Most kids don't need a fancy bed, so take advantage of free cots in hotels so you won't have to spring for an extra room.

Membership Discounts: AAA discounts abound, but don't forget about discounts for any professional organizations or clubs to which you may belong.

Camping: Kids love the outdoors! And for the price of firewood, roasted marshmallows, hot cocoa, and a nominal camping fee, you'll create memories that will last a lifetime.



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Savor the Flavor

Brown Sugar Meatloaf

1/2	cup	brown sugar	1/4	tsp.	ground black pepper
1/2	cup	ketchup	1	small	onion, chopped
1 1/2	lb.	lean ground beef	1/4	tsp.	ground ginger
3/4	cup	milk	3/4	cup	finely crushed saltine cracker crumbs
2		eggs			
1 1/2	tsp.	salt			

1. Preheat oven to 350° F. Lightly grease a 5"x9" inch loaf pan.
2. Press brown sugar at the bottom of pan and spread ketchup over sugar.
3. Gently mix remaining ingredients and shape into a loaf. Place on top of ketchup.
4. Bake for 1 hour or until juices run clear.

Household Tips

Homemade Laundry Detergent

Simple, clean, and green — making your own laundry detergent is not only great for the planet, but it can save you a bundle! *The Learning Channel* suggests the following “recipes” for dry and liquid detergent. Dry detergent is simpler, with just a few easy steps and no cooking required. On the other hand, you can have fun experimenting with liquid detergent by adding a few drops of any essential oil to each batch, giving your clothes a signature scent that you could never buy in a store.

Dry Laundry Detergent

- 2 cups finely grated soap (unscented or lightly scented)
- 1 cup washing soda (sodium carbonate)
- 1 cup borax

Mix thoroughly.
Use 2 tablespoons per load.



Liquid Laundry Detergent

- 2 cups grated bar soap
- 2 cups borax
- 2 cups washing soda
- 1 qt. water

Mix finely grated soap into boiling water and stir until soap is melted. Pour soap mixture into a large pail. Add borax and washing soda. Add 2 gallons of water, stir until fully mixed. Add 5 to 7 drops of your favorite essential oil per gallon. Be sure to stir detergent each time you use it, otherwise it will begin to gel. Use ¼ cup per load.

Brain Teasers



Greek Mythology

1. Zeus founded the Olympics to commemorate his wrestling triumph over his father, whose name was:
 - a. Pan
 - b. Apollo
 - c. Kronos
2. Aries was the god of:
 - a. Love
 - b. War
 - c. Wealth
3. Apollo granted Cassandra the gift of prophecy, but his love was unrequited, so he cursed her by:
 - a. Turning her into an oak tree
 - b. Causing a horn to sprout from her forehead
 - c. Making it such that nobody would ever believe her predictions
4. Prometheus was punished severely for stealing _____ from the gods:
 - a. Fire
 - b. Gold
 - c. Baklava

ANSWERS: 1-c; 2-b; 3-c; 4-a