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March 2014

Dear Friend,

March is that month when we're aching for spring. We sense it's just around the corner, but Mother Nature teases us...gives a little warmth, then takes it away again in a wet cold wind. Soon, however, the flowers will start to bloom again. The daffodils will poke their heads above ground and the crocuses will bud. In honor of the spring to come, in this month's newsletter I've answered a burning question many people have: How do flowers know when to bloom?

Other fun and useful reading this month includes information on how to prolong the life of your laptop, how to foster a brainstorming session at work, and why in the world we all celebrate St. Patrick's Day.

The curious facts this month include an explanation for the term "white elephant" gift, as well as an interesting method for finding out if someone is at risk for Alzheimer's.

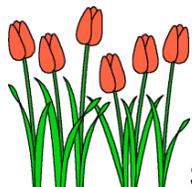
And as always, I've included a few funnies to make you laugh, and a warm-hearted story to make you smile.

Stay warm and keep your eye out for spring! Don't forget to refer me to your friends and family for getting their home sold. Thanks!

Kind regards,

Lisa

Lisa Flashenburg
Your Real Estate Consultant For Life



Spring's coming... hiking and biking kicks into gear!

Lisa's Local Ledger

News To Help You Save Time And Money

March 2014

Director's Cut

French novelist Georges Simenon wrote close to 200 novels. Many of them featured the detective Inspector Maigret, but he also produced numerous other stand-alone works among his 150 novels, 50 novellas, and scores of articles. The secret of Simenon's success was his intense concentration and speed—he wrote many of his novels in just 11 days, often writing 60 to 80 pages a day.

Before beginning one of his marathon writing sessions, Simenon would go for a physical to make sure he was up for the task. Then he'd tackle the project with a fierce single-mindedness. He refused to take phone calls, spoke to no one, lived "like a monk."



Legend has it that Alfred Hitchcock telephoned Simenon with a project proposal. When the novelist's wife answered, she informed the famed director that her husband was writing and couldn't be disturbed.

Hitchcock replied, "Let him finish his book. I'll hang on."

I wonder how much I could accomplish with such fanatical focus!

Lisa

A Wise Motto

A queen called her advisors together and asked them to come up with a motto for the nation that would help her people in times of distress.

"It must be short enough to be engraved on a ring. It must be as useful in prosperity as in adversity. It must be wise and true and endlessly enduring, words by which men and women could be guided all their lives."

The motto they chose: "This, too, shall pass."

Confused about new mortgage guidelines?- ask me to explain

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Ask me to do a Should I Stay or Should I go home seminar at your office

Why St. Patrick's Day?

Monday, March 17 is St. Patrick's Day. So what? Why do we bother to celebrate St. Patrick's Day around the world? Obviously, you might say, the day is to honor Ireland's patron saint, who introduced Catholicism to the Irish and rid their land of snakes.

But that's not really what we're celebrating, is it? We're really using it as an excuse to wear green and throw a big party. Everyone knows the Irish love a good party. Our methods of celebrating might differ around the world, but the idea is the same. When you think about it, St. Patrick's Day is just smart marketing.



Irish bars exist in every major city, Gaelic football and hurling teams are now all over the world. There are Irish people in every nook and cranny on this planet. When it comes to St. Patrick's Day they are all ready-made brand ambassadors. They will celebrate wherever they are, highlighting just how much fun the Irish are and make more people aware of St. Patrick's Day.

Of course, not all Irish people can be bothered to celebrate St. Patrick's Day. Even so, to some extent all Irish people everywhere enjoy the fruits of the holiday, which bring a positive spin to all things Irish.

Make Rainy Day Fund Top Priority

Experts advise people to set aside enough cash to cover three to six months of living expenses in case something bad happens. Here's how to get your "rainy-day fund" going:

- Save a little every week, even if up to your eyeballs in bills.
- Pay your rainy-day fund before paying into your retirement.
- Pay the minimums on your credit card for a few months and put the remainder into your fund until you've built it up.
- Go on a spending diet until your fund is built up.
- Sell things you don't need to bolster your fund.



March Quiz Question

Q: *How far do most continents move each year?*

Everyone who texts, emails or calls in the correct answer by the last day of this month will be entered into a drawing for a \$25 gift certificate to

Legal Sea Foods.

February Quiz Question

Q: *I am the beginning of the end, and the end of time and space. I am essential to creation, and I surround every place. What am I?*

A: *The Letter 'E.'*

Congratulations to:

Megan Stewart

Prevent Lap Top Death

Heat is the “cause of death” for most laptops. The heat not only causes all components to expand and contract a little (as you turn it on and off), but will also reach dangerously high levels and make your laptop crash or shut down if the fan(s) and the heatsink(s) are clogged with dust.

All computers work a little bit like vacuum cleaners – sucking air from one side and blowing it out from the other. Unfortunately they don’t come with filter bags to catch all the dust and debris. After just a few months the fans and heatsinks are well coated with dust. If not cleaned, their effectiveness quickly drops and eventually goes down to zero when the heatsinks get fully clogged. Here are a few of the unintended consequences:

- An overheated processor slows down and operates less efficiently.
- The efficiency and output of electrical current through hot copper wires gets reduced.
- Increased heat causes increased chemical reaction in batteries that reduces the battery life and amount of time they stay charged. With prolonged exposure to high heat, the battery may even become unusable.

To clean your laptop regularly, get a can of compressed air and blow the dust off the fan and heatsink. This has to be done every couple of months. The compressed air is quite handy for the keyboard too, blowing away all the debris from between the keys.

However if the heatsink has already been clogged, this won’t help. The compressed air will not be enough to unclog it. If you have never cleaned the heatsink and you had used your laptop for over a year, chances are that both the fan and the heatsink are clogged with dust and debris. The solution in this case is to remove the heatsink, clean it and install it back. This is best done in a laptop repair shop, as it takes quite a lot of experience and dexterity. One slip of the screwdriver may kill the laptop.

Defeat Might Lead To Junk Food

Researchers studying fans of U.S. football and French soccer found that many sports addicts turn to junk food to curb their disappointment when their favorite teams lose. The scientists looked at data from a nutrition study and found that the day after their teams lost, fans consumed 10 percent more calories and 16 percent more saturated fat than usual. But when their teams triumphed, they ate somewhat less junk food than normal. And study participants who lived in communities without pro teams didn’t report any fluctuations in their eating habits the day after most football games are played. You may want to stock up on fruits and vegetables for the day after. Just in case.

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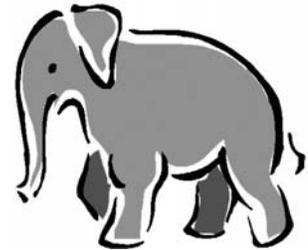
Free Newsletter Subscription!

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Why Do We Say “White Elephant” Gift?

A "white elephant" is a possession that you want to get rid of but can't, usually in the context of Christmas and a sweater from your aunt. But why do we call that an elephant?

It's one of those terms that makes so little sense that you'd have to assume it comes from a story or a fable, like maybe somebody got a huge white porcelain elephant as a gift that was useless but impossible to give away, and maybe it turned out it granted wishes or something. The point is, when used to refer to a gift item, a white elephant clearly refers to an item that is somewhat useless, though possibly cute or charming.



According to Oxford Dictionaries, the term comes from actual white elephants that the kings of Siam (now Thailand) would gift to annoying people in order to make life difficult for them. Since white elephants were sacred in Siam, they couldn't be regifted or put to work. But, they were still expensive to maintain, meaning that the owners usually ended up being “elephantened” to ruin.

Peanut Butter & Alzheimer's

The sense of smell may be an important clue in a diagnosis of Alzheimer's disease. Researchers at the University of Florida ran an experiment designed to test the ability of Alzheimer's patients to detect odors, based on the fact that impaired smell is often one of the first effects of cognitive decline. The main ingredient in the test: peanut butter.

The scientists capped subjects' nostrils one at a time and observed the distance at which each participant could smell a teaspoon of peanut butter, which was used because its odor doesn't include any secondary effects like stinging or burning (as other smells generally do). They found that in patients who had been previously diagnosed with Alzheimer's, the left



nostril's sense of smell was significantly more impaired than the right. Control subjects who either didn't suffer from cognitive decline, or who had different kinds of cognitive disability, didn't exhibit the same discrepancy. The finding could serve as a

vital early warning of Alzheimer's, a disease that's difficult to detect in its early stages.

WELCOME NEW CLIENTS

Here are some of the new clients who became members of our “Real Estate Family” this past month. I'd like to welcome you!

Angela & William Black [their 2nd home sale with us]

Walter Parrish- investor

We love recognizing our wonderful new friends and existing clients who are kind enough to introduce their friends, family and neighbors to us.

Realism Vs. Art

According to a story, the artist Pablo Picasso was traveling by train one day when a fellow passenger struck up a conversation with him. As they chatted, the passenger told Picasso that his paintings would be better if he concentrated on realistic images instead of abstract art.



When Picasso asked for an example, the traveler took out his wallet and showed him a snapshot of his wife. "See? That's exactly what she looks like."

Picasso held the photo in one hand. "She's very small."

"Lisa's Legends"

Send me an interesting story, a short blurb about your & your business, something interesting that has happened recently to be featured here!

Bark for Life- American Cancer Soc. Fundraiser
Sat., Apr. 5, 2014, 12-5
Zero New Washington St.
Somerville

\$10 entry fee. Bring your dogs.
781-314-2630

Jaime.volpe@cancer.org

Organized by Tamara Cleary

Flowers Know When To Bloom

Scientists have known since the 1930s that plants sense the length of the days and, somehow, use that information to decide when to flower. Russian scientists back then speculated that a mysterious substance must be transported from leaves to shoot tips, stimulating the formation of flower buds. They called the mystery chemical "florigen."

In 2005, a trio of new studies revealed how it works, including why flowers spring forth in certain spots on a plant. The findings were reported by the journal *Science*.

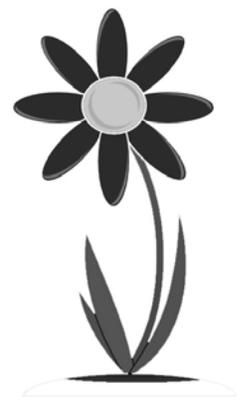
"We have now shown that a gene called FT, which is active in the leaf and whose activity is regulated by day length, produces a messenger molecule that is transported to the shoot tip," said Ove Nilsson at the Umea Plant Science Center at the Swedish University of Agricultural Sciences.

Separate research revealed how the messenger molecule works to activate the "gene programs" that lead to the formation of floral buds. In short, proteins are formed and they talk to other proteins that exist only at the future locations of buds, and flowers are born at just the right time in a preprogrammed location.

And why does all this matter to scientists?

Daffodils bloom in spring as the days get longer. Roses wait until summer. Rice, on the other hand, flowers in the fall as the days shorten. Nature does fine, of course, but humans sometimes want to fool her.

"It is interesting to speculate that this finding could be used to make early flowering rice," Nilsson said. "Since many of the high yielding varieties are late flowering this could in certain parts of the world allow the production of more than one harvest per year."



How To Foster A Brainstorm

Brainstorming sessions are common when teams are looking for new ideas. And although they're frequently useful, they can also actually inhibit creative thought unless leaders and participants manage them carefully. Before you call that meeting, be ready to guard against these common brainstorming pitfalls:

- **Fear of criticism.** Even though brainstorming meetings aren't supposed to reject ideas no matter how far-fetched they are, participants may censor themselves, knowingly or unconsciously, for fear of embarrassment or criticism—especially if there's a boss in the room. Address this up front and encourage everyone to speak as freely as possible. Maybe keep managers out of the session, at least in the beginning, to promote a free flow of ideas.
- **Extroverts taking over.** People who are more assertive and talkative may dominate the session with their ideas, even if they don't mean to. Introverts may feel intimidated, or they may simply need more time to present their ideas. Make an effort to get everyone involved. Go around the room one by one, for example, instead of letting everyone shout out their thoughts wildly.
- **Distrust of novelty.** Despite our best efforts, our minds generally drift toward the tried and true. People may unintentionally shut down their imaginations in search of "practical" ideas, or ignore off-the-wall concepts because of the risk involved. Ask some questions that take the problem out of the realm of the concrete—what color would a solution look like, for example? Or, what kind of animal does this situation resemble?
- **Inadequate incubation.** Great ideas don't always arrive in an instant. Springing a problem on a team and expecting instant brilliance may lead to stale ideas in new packaging. Give people time to consider the issue: Tell them ahead of time what you'll be discussing instead of making it a surprise, or hold a follow-up session to generate more ideas that people didn't think of the first time.



What Are The Odds?



There's a story about a Russian professor of statistics who lived in Moscow in WWII. During the many German air raids, he never took refuge in the local shelters.

When asked why he remained home, risking his life, his reply was always, "There are 7 million people in Moscow. Why should I expect the Germans to hit me?"

One night, though, he joined his neighbors in the shelter as the air raid sirens blared. Surprised to see him, a friend asked what had changed his mind.

The professor replied, "There are 7 million people in Moscow and one elephant. Last night the Germans hit the elephant."

LISA'S LOCAL LEDGER

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_____.
- Please let me know the selling price of the home at the following address:
_____.
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There is no greater agony than bearing an untold story inside you. ~Maya Angelou

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The Road To Success

A man walking down a narrow, twisting road spotted a guru meditating on the grass.

"Excuse me, master," he called. "Is this the road to success?"

The old man nodded silently and pointed a finger in the direction the traveler was headed. He thanked the guru and hurried on his way.

An hour later the man returned, bleeding and exhausted.

"Hey!" he shouted to the guru.

"You told me that was the road to success! I walked that way, and right away I fell into a ditch so deep it took me almost an hour to climb out! What's the matter with you?"

The guru stared at him, and then after 10 long seconds opened his lips to speak: "That is the road to success. It lies just beyond the ditch."

