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Between FRIENDS

Summer's here and the real estate market is hot! If you're considering buying or selling a home, give me a call today.



Don't let a home system or appliance breakdown get you down! Eliminate stress before, during, and after the sale with a Home Warranty Plan that provides coverage for both the home seller and the home buyer.

A Home Warranty Plan is a service contract that protects your 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 reasonable service call fee. Help is only a phone call away, 24/7, 365 days a year!

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Know anyone buying or selling a home? Send them my way. A qualified real estate professional offers unparalleled value with tips for home staging, aid with financing, and more!



Health & Safety

Change Your Body with Pilates

Pilates is a series of movements and exercises designed to lengthen and tone the body's stabilizing muscles. Pilates is performed either on a mat on the ground or using a raised machine called a reformer. Mat-based Pilates relies more on the strength of your body to guide you through the movements, while reformer-based Pilates allows you to customize your intensity by adjusting the resistance of the machine.

Pilates isn't just good for toning muscles and building strength. Regular Pilates practice, emphasizing proper technique, can improve your body's posture, flexibility, and overall alignment. And the results are long-lasting! A study published in the *Journal of Orthopaedic & Sports Physical Therapy*® demonstrated that a four-week Pilates program helped relieve lower back pain over a 12-month period.

Pilates can also serve to relieve stress because it focuses on mindfulness, concentration, and deep breathing. And lowering stress can lower cortisol, the hormone associated with belly fat.

No matter your level of strength, flexibility, or coordination, there's likely a Pilates routine that's right for you! Check out your local wellness/fitness centers for classes near you.



Real Estate Today

Hiring the Right Contractor

Fixing up an older home can reawaken the pride you once felt about your humble abode, but when outsourcing any home improvement task, you should always try to avoid shady contractors. The following tips can help you make a wise decision.

Shop Around – Get several quotes from various contractors. In fact, it's the best way to find a reasonable rate for quality work. Family and friends are also excellent resources for finding a good contractor.

Check References and Licensing – Contact references before hiring. Any reputable contractor has references and shouldn't be offended when you ask for them. You can also check to make sure his or her license is up to date. If a company hasn't been in business very long, they may not be your best bet.

Don't Pay Upfront – Many contractors ask for a deposit, which is perfectly acceptable. However, be skeptical of anyone who asks you for full payment up front. Don't prepay over \$1,000 or 10% of the total.



4 large egg whites

2 tsp cornstarch

1 cup and 1 Tbsp granulated sugar, separated

1 tsp distilled white vinegar

1 ½ tsp vanilla extract, separated

Kosher salt

1 cup whipped cream

1-2 cups fresh cut fruit

Preheat oven to 250°F. Whisk egg whites in a stand mixer. Combine cornstarch and sugar in a bowl. Mix vinegar and vanilla in a separate bowl. Slowly add dry ingredients to eggs while gradually increasing mixer speed. Beat until stiff peaks form. Stop mixer and pour vinegar and vanilla over meringue. Beat to combine, about 10-20 seconds.

Line a large baking sheet with parchment paper. Working from the center out, spread meringue across parchment paper to form a large circle.

Position oven rack in the lower third of the oven. Bake pavlova for 60-75 minutes. A perfectly cooked pavlova should look pale and dry, while the inside remains sticky with a marshmallow-like consistency.

Remove from oven and cool to room temperature. Serve within 1-1.5 hours.

To serve, top with whipped cream and fruit. Do not refrigerate.



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Household Tips

Raw Food Safety

Raw meat and poultry can contain harmful bacteria, such as listeria, E. coli, salmonella, and parasites. Use the following tips to prevent bacteria growth, spoilage, and foodborne illnesses.

Proper storage: Store raw meat and poultry on the bottom shelf of the refrigerator. If any juices drip, they won't contaminate anything else in the fridge. Raw meat and poultry should be stored at temperatures between 34°F and 40°F.

Handling: Always separate raw meat from other food items when cooking, particularly when using cutting boards or utensils. Never place cooked meat on a surface that previously held raw meat unless it's been thoroughly cleaned with hot, soapy water.

Cooking guidelines: Washing meat before cooking does not kill or remove bacteria. Only thorough cooking eliminates these contaminants. Cook or freeze fresh meat/poultry within 3 to 5 days. Fresh steaks/roasts/chops (beef, lamb, veal) and fresh pork/ham should be cooked to an internal temperature of 145°F, while fresh poultry of any kind is safe to eat above 165°F. Cook ground meat (beef, pork, lamb, veal) until it reaches 160°F.

