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"Maureen...Opening the Doors to Complete your Dream"

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Spring has sprung!
If you are planning on selling or buying a home, I promise to "spring" into action to make this your most successful real estate transaction ever!



Are you in the market to purchase a home? The time is right to make the move – home prices are beginning to stabilize and interest rates are attractive. And the pride that comes with home ownership... well, that's priceless!

Get peace of mind with your home purchase by including an Old Republic Home Warranty Plan. A home warranty will help protect your budget from unexpected repair or replacement costs caused by breakdowns of your home's heating, plumbing and electrical systems, and most built-in appliances. Optional coverage choices are available to custom-fit the warranty to the unique needs of your new home.

Call me today to learn how you can get added peace of mind with an Old Republic Home Warranty Plan, or visit www.orhp.com for more information.

Do you have colleagues or friends in your network who need help with a real estate transaction? Please refer them to me, and I'll put all of my skills and experience to work on their behalf.



Health & Safety

Tiny Batteries are a Threat to Tots

It's a given that curious babies put everything they touch in their mouths. And today, there's a growing threat to your little ones from small, round button-cell (lithium) batteries found in common household items. These batteries power remote controls and musical greeting cards, and are also found in children's products such as vibrating teethers and books with sound effects.



Although these small batteries are a choking hazard, they present a much greater danger if ingested. The batteries produce a chemical reaction with the moist lining of the child's gastrointestinal tract, and can result in serious burns and injuries, or even death.

Child safety groups are working to make parents and caregivers aware of this threat, emphasizing the importance of keeping batteries out of the reach of children. Consumer protection groups are petitioning manufacturers to make battery compartments more secure, and to put warning labels on product packaging.

At home, store these batteries in a secure place and do not to dispose of them in a trash can where a curious child could retrieve them. Seek immediate medical treatment for a child if you know (or even suspect) that a battery has been swallowed – lasting damage can occur within a few short hours.

Helpful Hints

Need a Job? Network!

There are three easy steps to getting noticed in today's digitally dominated job market—network, network, network. Here's how:

Use Social Networks. If you aren't already on business-focused social media sites like LinkedIn, set up a profile.

Make an impact by using video. Capture a potential employer's attention by recording a short, introductory video of yourself, upload it to YouTube, and include the link on your resume.



Be prepared to pitch yourself in 15 seconds.

When you are networking, resist the urge to give a ten-minute introduction about yourself. Instead, prepare a fifteen-second "elevator pitch" that focuses on your career high points and important skills.

Be a mover and a shaker. Force yourself to get outside your comfort zone. Introduce yourself to new people and find out as much as you can about them. The more you move around from group to group, the more connections you will be able to make.

Courtesy of RISMedia, publisher of Real Estate Magazine.



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Savor the Flavor

Vegan Black Soybean Tabbouleh

Ingredients:

- 1 15-oz. can black soybeans, rinsed and drained
- 2 large plum tomatoes, seeded and chopped
- 1 medium-size green bell pepper, seeded and chopped
- 1 packed cup chopped Italian parsley leaves
- Juice of 1 lemon
- 1 tsp. salt
- 1/8 tsp. cayenne pepper, or to taste
- 1 Tbs. extra virgin olive oil
- 1 packed cup mint leaves, cut into thin strips

Directions:

Combine soybeans, tomatoes, bell pepper and parsley in mixing bowl. In small bowl, whisk lemon juice with salt and cayenne. Mix in oil. Pour over bean mixture; toss well. Mix in mint. Let sit 20 minutes so flavors meld. Will keep (tightly covered) in refrigerator for 24 hours.

Household Tips

Turn Clutter into Cash

Do you have too much stuff? If your closets are stuffed to the gills, and you haven't been able to park your car in the garage for three years now, it's safe to say you do. If you're tired of the constant clutter, why not sell your junk and fatten your wallet! Here's how:

Yard sale. Community yard sales pull in more shoppers than an individual sale. Clean everything before the sale, and set prices reasonably low. Engage in a conversation with shoppers to increase the possibility that they'll buy something.

Sell it online. Try listing an item on eBay.com if it's a collectible or a brand name and easy to ship. eBay charges a transaction fee, but it's an easy way to unload items you no longer need. Another online option is Craigslist.org, which doesn't charge a fee.

Consign it. A consignment shop will sell your stuff for a portion of the profits, usually 50 percent or so. However, they will only accept items they deem saleable.

Give it away. Donating your stuff to a charity creates cash in the form of a tax write-off, and you can feel good about helping your fellow man in the process.



Real Estate Today

Tips for First-Time Home Buyers



Buyers who are planning the purchase of their first home continue to have a wealth of opportunities in today's marketplace. Here are a few smart steps to save you time and money:

- **Start by shoring up your credit** – make sure your credit history is as clean as possible. A few months before you start house hunting, get copies of your credit report and fix any problems you discover.
- **Get professional help** – look for an experienced real estate professional who will have your interests at heart and can help you with strategies during the search and throughout the transaction process.
- **Hire a home inspector** – armed with a home inspection report, you'll be able to move into your new home with confidence – or back out of the deal if the house has major, unexpected problems.
- **Bonus Tip: Be patient** – buying a home is one of the largest purchases most people will make in their lifetime. The key to avoiding buyer's remorse is to be completely comfortable before signing on the dotted line.

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