

Bruce's Neighborhood Greetings



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Lions, Tigers, and Bears Oh My!

We have become accustomed to having guests stop by the "Blumberg Wildlife Preserve". After all, we have had gophers and opossums. We even had the upper class "beach" rats try to make it their home. Deb and I are unsure which animal has deserved the title of worst pest. The gopher sure gave it a gallant try! Of course there are the everyday matter of fact squirrels that play hide and seek both on our roof and in the backyard. As most of you know one of the worst trespassers over the last few years is the raccoon. Though singularly written here, there have been many masked invaders of our yard, leaving behind a path of destruction in our grassy areas and turning over divot-like pieces of our lawn hoping to find "grub". Didn't seem to matter that we treated the lawn to eliminate grub living in our yard. The raccoons keep coming and turning over the lawn area hoping their other senses were wrong and there really is "grub" beneath its paw. Deb and I grew up in the city of Los Angeles, so mixing it up with animals is quite foreign to us. Not to mention the stress created by the disgust of what they were all doing to our beloved yard areas. They must be all on vacation of late. They seem to be off and doing their deeds elsewhere for a change! A few years ago we had a new visitor. A large female duck had landed on our back wall and was quacking away. Deb and I could hear the sounds and then located her in the yard, her five ducklings in tow. I think they were chirping for food and shelter. Only a guess though since I don't speak Duck!

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Not Exactly.....But

Neighborhood Forum

This is the section dedicated to the readers of this newsletter. I want to take this opportunity to highlight some precautions you should be taking to protect your home, family and belongings from theft! Summer has arrived and with it comes very hot weather. While it may keep your home cooler to leave windows open all day while you are not home, it becomes an opportunity to burglars! Unfortunately you should also keep your windows and doors locked while you sleep! The use of portable fans and ceiling fans will help to circulate the air while you sleep. This should become standard practice and rule number one to protect your valuables! A relatively new

method of theft is happening to those that are having their homes tented for fumigation. Just because the termite company doing the work is bonded and insured doesn't mean they cover you for loss from theft. Reading the crime reports posted in NextDoor I have noticed an upswing in this type of crime activity and it is happening all over. The termite company is insured to protect against damage done by their workers which is different than theft. I highly recommend that you consider hiring a guard service to watch your property while the tent is on and you are away. The cost of coverage may be the same cost of your insurance deductible if you are broken into, but without the loss of items that can't be replaced. To contribute to future editions of our neighborhood newsletter e-mail your thoughts and ideas to the information below.

Bang for Your Buck: Affordable Ways to Increase Your Home's Value

When it's time to sell your home, you want to get the highest possible return on your investment, but homeowners often have a tight budget for home improvement projects. Here are some affordable ways you can boost your property value:

- **Plant native perennials.** Select attractive perennials native to your growing zone to cut costs and add curb appeal. Native perennials typically require less maintenance and return every year.
- **Paint the front door.** Paint is often the cheapest, quickest way to upgrade any space. Makeover your front door with an eye-catching hue to boost curb appeal.
- **Power-wash the siding.** Rent a small power washer to clean the siding, fencing, and concrete walkways. A thorough cleaning helps highlight your home's structural integrity and reveals its potential to prospective buyers.
- Walk your home with Buyer's eyes rather than homeowner eyes. Identify minor cosmetic flaws (such as marks on baseboards or lack of general cleanliness throughout) and give them the attention they so richly deserve. Your elbow grease will return real dollars to your bottom line!



If you are working with another Real Estate Professional, please disregard this notice. Copyright 2026



Health & Safety Back-To-School Health Habits for Busy Households

Back-to-school season can be a hectic time for many households, as they juggle different schedules and various after-school activities. However, a busy schedule doesn't have to mean sacrificing healthy meals or relaxation. Try integrating some healthy habits that promote good physical and emotional well-being on busy weeknights.

Establish routines. Consistency is essential for children's mental and emotional wellness. While day-to-day after-school activities can vary, try to establish consistent routines for mornings, homework, and bedtimes.

Prioritize nutrition. On busy school nights, it can be tempting to rely on processed foods and drive-throughs. Instead, aim for simple, nutritious meals that include protein and vegetables.

Schedule downtime. When faced with a hectic schedule, it's easy to jump from one activity to the next without a transition. Make time for decompression before homework or after dinner to give everyone's nervous system time to relax.



Negotiation Tips To Help You Get The Best Deal

In a competitive housing market, strong negotiation skills can make the difference between a good deal and a great one. Here are some simple tips to keep in mind as you strengthen your position and secure the best real estate deal possible.

Do your research. Knowledge is power, especially when it's time to negotiate. Analyze recent sales in the neighborhood to determine a realistic market value. Research the difference between a buyer's and seller's market to help dictate how aggressive or flexible your strategy should be.

See it in person. While modern technology makes virtual tours feel realistic, nothing can help you determine if a home is suitable for your needs quite like being there in person.

Ask for a home warranty. Ask the seller to include a home warranty that covers systems and appliances, especially in older homes. Home warranty plans can save time and money down the road on covered repairs and replacements.

Lastly, be sure to have me as your Broker!



Household Tips: Late Summer Lawn Care Tips

When summer winds down, the lawn may need a little extra attention to stay healthy and vibrant. Late summer lawn care can help repair heat stress, strengthen roots, and prepare the grass for cooler months ahead. With a few simple maintenance tips, you can keep your lawn looking its best well into the fall.

Sharpen your blades. After several months of the growing season, mower blades become dull, leaving the grass jagged and vulnerable to disease. Give the lawn mower blades a tune-up to keep the lawn healthy.

Aerate the lawn. Throughout most of the U.S., August is a good time to aerate the lawn. This improves the grass' water absorption and promotes better oxygen flow to the roots before the growth slows down in the fall.

Establish a watering schedule. Due to late summer's heat, most lawns need between one to two inches of water per week. Try watering in the morning when temperatures are lower to help keep the moisture from drying out too quickly.



Contact Information:

E-mail:

dolphinrealtysouth@sbcglobal.net

V. M.: (310) 532-1201

Ratatouille

Ingredients:

4 Tbsp. olive oil

1 chopped zucchini

1 chopped eggplant

1 chopped green pepper

1 chopped red bell pepper

1 chopped red onion

1 c. chopped tomatoes

½ tsp. dried oregano

½ tsp. dried thyme

½ tsp. fennel seeds

2 tsp. salt

½ tsp. black pepper

1 Tbsp. Champagne vinegar

½ c. chopped basil leaves

Heat the olive oil in a large skillet over medium-high heat. Next, add the zucchini, eggplant, green pepper, red bell pepper, and red onion. Once the vegetables are fork-tender, stir in the tomatoes, oregano, thyme, fennel seeds, salt, and pepper. Cook the vegetables and spices for 5 minutes, then add the Champagne vinegar. Remove the skillet from the heat and then stir in the chopped basil. Add salt and pepper to taste.



Rates are not Go- ing Lower Anytime Soon!

Our recent Home Buying Seminar resulted in pre-approved home buyers. I have been conducting these for over twenty five years. There are favorably priced loans to consider that are a 10 year adjustable. Fixed for the first 10 years, this represents a decent way to become a home buyer in today's era of higher interest rates. While it helps Buyer's overall affordability and qualifying for their home purchase it also means we are in a time with fewer sellers in the market. If you have thought about selling your home and uplegging or downsizing, this is a great time to do so. I can make the process an easy one for you. Or if you know of anyone who might be thinking of selling I would appreciate you forwarding my name and information to them so I can set up a no obligation consultation. The question that I hear often from future Buyers is "When is it a good time to buy?" Unless a Buyer is paying cash for the home, the interest rate and monthly payment are the most important criteria. In my opinion we won't see prices go lower anytime soon. The annual appreciation rate will be lower, but still increase from a year ago! There are fewer houses coming to market through foreclosure and short sale. Supply and demand already have helped prices shoot through the roof so to speak. Real Estate used to be a series of cycles; those are a thing of the past. The best time to buy Real Estate is when it is soonest financially and emotionally possible to do so! It costs nothing for you or your buyer/seller referral to learn what I can do for you and them!

Garage Door Safety

A garage door is perhaps the largest, heaviest moving object in your home, and it's likely used every day. The following tips will help ensure that your garage door is properly maintained and operated at all times. A safe garage door begins with maintenance— clean and oil the hinges, rollers, and tracks every six months. Conduct a visual inspection monthly for signs of damage or wear, and call a trained repair technician to diagnose any issues. For automatic opener systems, the Consumer Product Safety Commission (CPSC) recommends testing the reversing mechanism once a month by placing a roll of paper towels in the path of the door. If the door touches the roll and does not reverse, call a technician. If your opener system is more than 10 years old, consider a replacement that includes standard safety features like auto-reverse. Some today also offer a “smart system” which can be operated from your smart phone and connected to your home wifi network. Others have a battery backup for power outage issues that may pop up without notice. The CPSC and the National Safety Council also have guidelines for families with young children. Warn children that garage doors can be dangerous and do not let them play around or under doors. Adults should keep remote and wall controls out of the reach of children. Consult the owner's manual for instructions on how to use the emergency release feature in case of an emergency.



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It was interesting to watch this play out. While the ducklings were cute, the mother was getting increasingly frustrated. The ducklings were pacing back and forth on the ground not knowing how to respond to their mother's orders. Our backyard has a block wall perimeter, making it almost impossible for these animals to leave— too young to fly and unable to walk up any of the walls or trees. Not sure how they ended up in our yard. Not knowing any different I wondered if they had fallen out of their nest high up in the trees. I have since been told by many who have listened to this story that ducks don't build nests in trees. Of course there was a fleeting thought that if I acted quick enough we could be having duck a l'orange that night for dinner....just kidding. I thought I would check to see if you were still reading this! At the same time mother duck was having trouble staying on top of the block wall she was perched on viewing her ducklings below. She would fall down to the ground on my neighbor's side. Then she would work her way up the wall, flapping her wings as if to pull herself up to the top again. This went on for about ten minutes. Finally she figured that if she was on the ground and waddled in front of the ducklings they would waddle behind her. That worked until she got them all to the side gate. Trapped again. We could hear them chirping outside our side door. It went on long enough that I decided to take a chance with

my safety and go outside. I went from the outside and opened the gate to let them all out of my yard. Sure enough the mother duck did not attack me. She knew I was helping her and her ducklings rather than gathering them up for that night's dinner! Off they went, orderly down the block as if they knew exactly where they were going. If any of you know who the duck belongs to please let us know. We are curious how they got in our yard.



It started many years ago!



Not playing possum (dead)!



Masked bandit in our yard !