

## A Special Message

I am pleased to present you with the latest issue of Life@Home. Delivered to home buyers, sellers and owners on a monthly basis, this electronic newsletter is designed to give you the real estate information that is important to you. In each issue, you will find practical tips and articles related to buying, selling or owning a home, as well as the latest news on real estate trends. I hope that you enjoy this issue of Life@Home. If I can be of any assistance, please do not hesitate to contact me.



**John Elwell** jelwell1@tampabay.rr.com  
CENTURY 21 Bill Nye Realty, Inc. 34619 State Road 54 Zephyrhills, FL 33541  
Phone: 813.715.6810 <http://www.jelwell.century21bnr.com>

## Getting Your House in Tip-Top Shape to Sell



With the spring/summer selling season now here, what can sellers do to maximize the chances of selling their home in a challenging market?

Hiring a qualified real estate agent and setting the right listing price are the first steps to selling your home quickly. But there are other things you can do to help differentiate your home from the competition and attract potential buyers.

**Curb appeal.** You don't get a second chance to make a first impression, says the old saying. That's why it's essential to "wow" potential buyers from the moment they first lay eyes on your home. It doesn't take much to get curb appeal. Make sure the lawn is tidy and shrubs are trimmed, your front door and porch are clean, the beds are mulched, some flowers are planted for color and the house is freshly painted. According to a 2007 survey by the Virginia Cooperative Extension, good landscaping can increase a home's value by 10 to 12 percent.

**Update, but within reason.** Some buyers know that they are going to renovate when they purchase a home; others look for a "turnkey" property that is move-in ready. If your house needs updating, consider doing some improvements. Cosmetic improvements, such as paint and wallpaper, help a house show better and are often inexpensive. Repair all appliances to make sure they are in working order. And consider low-priced facelifts to kitchen and baths such as repainting cabinets and replacing lighting fixtures and faucets.

**Staging.** Staging can help a home sell faster. Move—or remove—furniture to make rooms look bigger. Eliminate clutter and knick-knacks. Warm up rooms by bringing in pillows and fabrics. And don't overlook outdoor living spaces when staging your home.

If you're considering selling your home, give our office a call, and a CENTURY 21 Sales Professional will help you get it in top-notch shape to attract buyers.

## 12 Tips to Slash Your Energy Bill



According to the U.S. Department of Energy ([http://www1.eere.energy.gov/consumer/tips/save\\_energy.html](http://www1.eere.energy.gov/consumer/tips/save_energy.html)), a typical American family spends about \$1,900 a year on home utility bills. But you can save energy—and money—with these tips to make your home more energy-efficient.

- Get a home energy survey from your local utility. Many will do a free analysis of your home and provide specific ways to save money on your utility bill.
- Replace old furnaces and air conditioners with newer ones that are more energy efficient.
- Install programmable thermostats.
- Swap light bulbs for compact fluorescent bulbs bearing the Energy Star label.
- Air dry dishes.
- Turn off lights and ceiling fans when you leave a room.
- Turn off computers and TVs when they are not being used.
- Plug home electronic devices into power strips, and turn them off when the equipment is not being used. These devices often have a “standby” mode that uses power even when they are off.
- Lower the thermostat on your hot water heater to 120° F.
- Install a low-flow head on your shower. Opt for showers, not baths.
- Only run the washer or dishwasher with full loads.
- Purchase appliances that have the Energy Star label.

These tips can help you lower your energy use up to 25 percent, according to the DOE. That will not only save you money now, but reduced utility bills could also help you command a higher price for your home when you sell.

## What is the Best City for Recent College Graduates?



Based on the availability of entry-level jobs, the number of young adults, and the most affordable rents, Indianapolis is the best city for recent college graduates, according to a study released in May 2009 by Apartments.com and CareerBuilder. Philadelphia and Baltimore rounded out the top 3.

## Featured Listings



### Zephyr Ridge Drive Zephyrhills, FL 33542

MLS ID: t2343482

PRICE REDUCED! The Zephyr Ridge mobile home subdivision is located within the city limits of Zephyrhills, Florida. This lot is 65 feet by 100 feet. City water and sewer are available. This could be a perfect site for you to place your double-wide mobile home under the Florida sunshine. Its location makes supermarkets, restaurants, medical facilities, parks, supercenters, and the City of Tampa easily accessible. The owner has now reduced its price to just \$17,900!



### 34935 Zephyr Shores Zephyrhills, FL 33541

MLS ID: t2284333

PRICE REDUCED! Enjoy our great Florida weather in this furnished 2 bedroom, 2 bath double wide mobile home that is located in popular Zephyr Shores subdivision. It has a bright and sunny Florida room and a 2 car carport with utility shed. Park amenities include recreation building, pool, shuffleboard courts and a large pond. Yet annual HOA fee is currently just \$300. Now at just \$57,900, This home is worth a tour!