

Better Austin Living

News You Can Use from Your Friend in the Real Estate Business

The Power of Dreams

She was born in 1940 to a poor family in Tennessee, the 20th of 22 children. She was premature weighing just 4½ pounds at birth, and went on to suffer a series of illnesses: scarlet fever, pneumonia, and then polio, which left her in leg braces.



The little girl's mother told her that despite the braces, she could do whatever she wanted to do with her life. As a grown woman she'd recall, "My doctors told me I would never walk again. My mother told me I would. I believed my mother." At age nine the little girl took off the leg braces, and with great effort, by age 12 was walking normally. She became a basketball star in high school, and began sprinting with

a team from Tennessee State University. She won a spot on the USA relay team in the 1956 Olympic Games in Melbourne, Australia, and earned a bronze medal.

Four years later at the 1960 Olympic Games in Rome, Wilma Rudolph earned three gold medals, for the woman's 100- and 200-meter races, and anchoring the 4 x 100 relay team. She was the first female runner to win three gold medals at one Olympic Games.

Wilma Rudolph's triumphs at the 1960 Olympics brought her the James E. Sullivan Award as top amateur athlete; later induction into the Black Athletes Hall of Fame; and in 1974 inclusion in the National Track and Field Hall of Fame. Later in life the little girl whom doctors told would never walk said, "Never underestimate the power of dreams and the influence of the human spirit. We are all the same in this notion. The potential for greatness lives within each of us."

Wilma also said, "Believe me, the reward is not so great without the struggle." What an inspiration!



Welcome to the Newest edition of the Better Austin Living Newsletter. As you can see I have made some formatting changes to the newsletter to provide even more relevant and valuable information for you on a regular basis. Don't worry, it's the same great content with just a little bit different make up. Happy New Year. I trust that you are already in the full swing of 2011. Personally, I cannot remember a year where I have been more optimistic, energetic and ready to tackle whatever comes my way. I have a strong belief that 2011 is going to be our most fulfilling year yet and I hope you share that same outlook with me. Cheers!

Join my
Networks



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5 Simple Ways to Introduce Me to Friends & Family



Give me a Call or send me a Text message **512.773.3493**



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Who's the one person you know who could most use my help? ***I sincerely thank you for your referrals!***

Before You Hit The Wall

Ever feel like you're about to "hit the wall"? Here are some suggestions for putting on the brakes:

Take a moment. Pause to regroup, calm down and focus your mind.

Breathe. It's as simple as slowly inhaling and exhaling. Your brain not only gets a shot of oxygen, but you get a moment to regain your physical balance.

Learn to say "No." Saying "Sorry, but I'm busy," is never a lie – because you always have something to do. Practice saying it and then do it.

Make "quiet time." Such moments can help you revive your spirit on a daily basis. Practice some form of daily meditation or yoga – or do something even as simple as taking a bath or driving without the radio on.

Exercise. Walk, run, dance, jump your way from negative energy to positive by releasing feel-good endorphins.

Get enough sleep and eat properly. Rest and healthful food allow your body to function at its best and increase your ability to cope with stress.

What A Difference A Millennium Makes!

A thousand years ago, most of the Anglo-Saxon world didn't have knowledge of geography beyond nearby villages and the nearest market town. That world also had quite a wait for things we take for granted today:

Sugar: This staple wouldn't make it to the British Isles for several hundred more years. Although they had honey, it was so precious, it was used to pay taxes.

Potatoes and tomatoes: These weren't available until exploration of the Americas in the 16th century.

Forks: People didn't use forks until the 17th century. And you brought your own knife to a feast.

Buttons: Clothing was fastened with clasps and thongs. Widespread use of functional buttons and buttonholes waited for the 13th century.

Last names: The same names were often passed down inside families, but there was no need for last names.

Zeroes: People still worked with Roman numerals. In fact, one scholar at the time said that 9,000 was the limit beyond which figuring was impossible.

Don't Let Social Networking Cost You Your Job

A survey of companies with 1,000+ employees by Internet security firm Proofpoint found that 8 percent have fired an employee for misbehavior related to social networks like Facebook, Twitter or LinkedIn. How can you avoid joining them? Steer clear of these obvious online mistakes:



- Complaining about your boss or company.
- Posting that you're looking for a new job.
- Sharing confidential or proprietary information about your organization.
- Criticizing your coworkers or clients online.
- Posting inappropriate photos of yourself or others.
- Sharing workplace rumors & gossip online.
- Spending too much time on social networking sites or reading/writing blogs when you should be working.
- Posting updates about what you are doing elsewhere when you should be in the office.
- Bugging or annoying co-workers on your friend list.
- Leaving your computer on and social profiles open when you step out of your office.
- Posting updates or sending messages while in meetings or on conference calls. Especially if co-workers can see what and when you posted.

Didya Know?

When asked to name a fairy tale, three out of four people will name Cinderella.

Of the players in the NFL between 1960 and 2000, 99.1 percent were born in the continental US.

The 1,000,000th U.S. patent was filed in 1912 for an alarm clock that dumped water on the owner if they did not disarm it within five minutes.

More shoes are sold on Fifth avenue between fifty-ninth and eightieth street in New York City than anywhere else in the world.

A recent study found PowerPoint presentations to be the greatest source of office place annoyance.

In California, there are a larger percentage of 16-year-olds with tattoos than 30-year-olds with tattoos

Varicose veins are the second leading cause of skin cancer behind solar radiation.

One in 2222 corrective lens wearers have identical prescriptions for each eye.

Franklin D. Roosevelt, Dwight D. Eisenhower, Ronald Reagan, and George W. Bush were all cheerleaders in high school.

In their lifetime, the average person will commit five crimes punishable by jail time.

Productivity Nugget:

If you feel like you never seem to get things done at work, chances are you suffer from lack of priorities. Before the day starts, ask yourself, "if I only got one thing done today, what would it be." Repeat the process twice more and vow to focus on accomplishing those 3 things for the day.

Know Thy Trivia

1. How many flowers must a honeybee tap in order to make one pound of honey?
2. What percentage of Americans drink coffee?
3. A "fortnight" is a contraction of how many nights?
4. How wide is a typical lightning bolt?
5. How many bottles of Coca Cola were sold in its first year of existence?
6. True or False: Michael Jackson's "Billie Jean" video was the first to air on MTV by a black artist?

Answers are on the back page of this newsletter

Eggs-actly!

Hard boiled, scrambled or baked into a soufflé, eggs are a regular part of our meals. Here's some egg trivia for you to digest:

- Hens require 24 to 26 hours to produce an egg. After 30 minutes, the process starts again.
- An egg shell has as many as 17,000 pores over its surface.
- Eggs age more in one day at room temperature than they do in a refrigerator in a week.
- To tell whether an egg is hard cooked or raw, spin it on a flat surface. If it spins with no problems, then it's hard cooked. If it wobbles,



it's raw.

- Yolk color depends on the diet of the hen. Marigold petals as food additives for hens can make the yolks darker yellow.
- Occasionally, a hen will produce double-yolked eggs throughout her egg-laying career.

When To Start Helping

Taking care of your parents or relatives when their health starts to decline is a big responsibility. And deciding when to offer help isn't always easy. As we age, many of us don't want to admit that we can't take care of ourselves adequately. Here are some signs to watch for when deciding whether an elderly relative or acquaintance is having problems that need to be addressed:

Weight loss. If the relative isn't actively trying to lose weight, unexplained weight loss could indicate difficulty cooking (holding utensils, reading recipes), loss of smell or taste, or underlying problems like malnutrition or dementia.



Overall appearance. Take a good look at your aged relatives' daily hygiene. Are their clothes clean? Do they bathe regularly, brush their teeth, groom themselves? If not, they could be suffering from depression, dementia, or other health problems.

Mobility. Muscle weakness and joint problems that grow more pronounced with age can limit an elderly person's mobility and

endanger his or her safety. Do they have trouble walking moderate distances, or seem unsteady on their feet? A fall can be serious, but a cane or a walker can minimize the danger.

Lifestyle. Pay attention to any loss of interest in activities they used to enjoy. Do they still participate in hobbies, listen to music, exercise, and socialize with friends? Physical and mental limitations can be compounded if the person becomes isolated at home.

Emotional balance. Pay attention to moods. Increased anxiety, sudden mood swings, or lack of interest in activities can be signs of depression or other health concerns.

Ten Tips for Speeding Up Your Success in 2011

- 1.** Jump into important projects as soon as possible and with both feet.
- 2.** Act quickly on opportunities. If you see what you want, go get it before you lose out.
- 3.** Multi-tasking = switch tasking. Stop doing it and focus on one thing at a time.
- 4.** Keep up your speed with good habits; sufficient sleep, a good diet and exercise.
- 5.** Reduce or eliminate people or things that delay or distract you from productivity.
- 6.** Ask yourself, "Who do I know that can help me accomplish this goal?"
- 7.** Ask yourself, "Is this the most important thing I could be doing with my time?"
- 8.** Set tough deadlines for completing tasks and hit them.
- 9.** Batch similar tasks/activities/errands to get more done at one time.
- 10.** Spend time each Sunday or Monday mapping out your week so you don't lose focus.

See An Interesting House?

Did you recently drive by an interesting house but can't find the price? Did a sign go up down the street and you want to know what the neighbors are asking for their house? No problem, send me a quick email with the address of the property and let me do the leg work for you. I'll send you exactly what you are looking for.

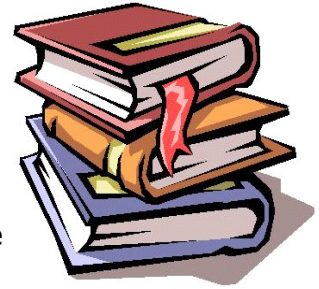
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Thinking about Selling?

Do you have the itch to sell but not quite sure what you could realistically expect to sell your house for in today's market? That is a question I get quite a bit. I'd be happy to provide a Comparable Market Analysis for you. No obligation. Just give me a call or send me an email. You also should check out the great resources at:

www.BetterAustinLiving.com

From My Nightstand



As we turn the page to 2011, my book reading philosophy is going to change a little bit. As you know, my main goal (or personal challenge) in 2010 was to read as many books as possible. I read some tremendous books this past year and I read some duds. One down side of the volume approach is that you finish reading one book and immediately turn your attention to another with less focus on implementation. I've heard it said that information without application is simply entertainment. With that in mind, this year I'm going to be more selective in what I read. I will focus more on application and implementation rather than sheer volume. My plan is to choose one book a month that I really want to dive deeply into and use the knowledge gained to make some changes, additions, subtractions (whatever you want to call it) to my daily routine and overall philosophy. Each one of these columns will discuss that particular book of choice and it's relevance to what I am trying to accomplish.

My twin primary focuses for 2011 are **Priority & Simplicity**. I am resolved to simplify all areas of my life so that I can focus on what is truly important. This is going to be a year of immense change, growth, and joy with the arrival of our daughter Madeline. I know that my routine is going to be turned on its head and therefore I have spent the past few months "simplifying," so that I can give Madeline, Kristin and my other priorities the attention that they deserve.

So, with that in mind, the first book that I have chosen for the year is *4 Hour Work Week* by Timothy Ferriss. I am sure that some of you have heard of this book but I would venture to guess that many of you have never read it. Because of the title, its an easy one to disregard or scoff at. I readily admit that I don't have any fantasies of working only 4 hours a week this year, that's not so much the focus of the book.

Rather, the book is about removing distraction, clutter, superficialities and trimming the "fat" in an effort to free the mind, body and soul to focus on what is important to you. The steps involved in this cycle are **Definition** (awareness of what you would do, be, or have if you did achieved this freedom), **Elimination** (removal of clutter, distractions and unimportant tasks), **Automation** (learning how to delegate and/or automate for maximum effectiveness) and **Liberation** (realization of freedom grounded in priority and mobility).

The term that Ferriss coins in the book is "The New Rich," or in other words a group of people not so much interested in short term sacrifices for delayed gratification. Rather, the currency of the "New Rich" is time and mobility and they focus on maximum productivity in the minimum amount of time possible in order to free themselves up to focus on what they are passionate about, now.

I read this book 2 years ago and gave it very little credence. I only picked it up again in December after hearing no less than 5-6 people whom I respect and hope to emulate mention the impact that it has had on their lives (both personally and professionally).

That is my plan for the next 30-60 days and beyond; eliminate and simplify so that I can give my daughter and my family the support and undivided attention that they deserve at this point. I do plan to share and chronicle my quest for simplicity in a blog with the same name. So keep an eye out and Ill let you know how to access it in the coming months. I'm excited about it.

The Right Way To Take A Pill

A simple technique can prevent a painful, potentially dangerous condition called *drug-induced esophagitis*. This occurs when a pill dissolves in your esophagus rather than in your stomach, which can cause pain, bleeding, infection, and even perforation of the esophagus lining. Medical experts advise against taking medication when lying down. Instead, remain upright – sitting or standing – for 15 to 30 minutes after swallowing a pill. And be sure to wash it down with plenty of liquid – at least four to six ounces.

A Look Ahead to February ...

Heart Month: To increase public knowledge of cardiovascular diseases, raise funds for research, and prevent heart disease by encouraging heart-healthy habits. Learn more at americanheart.org and www.heartandstroke.ca.

Black History Month: To celebrate and honor the achievements and contributions of African Americans and African Canadians. Learn more at blackhistorycanada.ca and www.biography.com/blackhistory.



February 2 – Groundhog Day: To observe whether Punxsutawney Phil and his groundhog pals emerge from their burrows and see their shadows, signaling six more weeks of winter. Get your groundhog questions answered at groundhog-day.123holiday.net.

February 14 – Valentine's Day: To celebrate and appreciate all the loves in your life. Find some fun ideas at www.theholidayspot.com/valentine.

February 14-20 – Random Acts Of Kindness Week: To inspire people to practice kindness, "pass it on" to others, and discover how acts of kindness make you feel good. Get started at www.actsofkindness.org.

And One to Grown On ...

Each newsletter this year I'm going to leave you with a quote or an excerpt that I find both entertaining and inspirational. This month's wisdom comes from Steve Jobs, Founder and CEO of a small fruit company that has almost taken over the world.

Follow Your Heart - "Your time is limited, so don't waste it living someone else's life. Don't be trapped by dogma – which is living with the results of other people's thinking. Don't let the noise of other opinions drown out your own inner voice. And most important, have the courage to follow your heart and intuition. They somehow already know what you truly want to become. Everything else is secondary."



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Recycle this Newsletter

When you are done reading your newsletter this month, do me a favor. Instead of throwing it away or putting it in a pile on your desk, pass it along to a friend, neighbor or co-worker so that they can enjoy reading it too. It's a simple and pressure-free way to introduce me to other people.

Thanks for Not keeping me a Secret!

Trivia Answers (page 4) 1. 1 million 2. 52% 3. 14 (2 weeks) 4. 2-4 inches 5. 25 6. True

P.S. Who's the next person you know who's renting and could benefit from this free report? Be sure to give me a call and I'll send it to you right away

**Ryan France, Your Personal Real Estate Consultant
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If you know someone who rents an apartment, then you know someone who probably dreams of becoming a first-time homeowner – but thinks that dream only comes true for other people. Well, here's how you and I can help them onto the path of making their dreams come true.

I've created a free report, *How to Stop Spending Money on Rent and Own a Home Instead*, that lays out a seven-step process for going from renter to owner. It includes valuable suggestions about getting pre-approved for a mortgage, tips for successful house hunting, and some little-known information about saving money on both the down payment and monthly payments. To get a copy of my report just take out your cell phone, look up my number, call me immediately, and I'll send the report to you. Then you can pass it along, and feel good about helping a friend or family member stop dreaming...and start moving.

Here's a quick note to let you know how you and I can help anyone you feel comfortable introducing me to.

Lets Help Make Their Dreams Come True