

Chit Chat

News for Home and Living

DECEMBER 2005

Which Twin Are You?

There once was a mother and father who had twin boys. The boys looked exactly alike, but in all other aspects they were total opposites. When one boy wanted to go somewhere, the other wanted to stay home. When one boy wanted to dress up, the other wanted to dress down. One was a pessimist; the other always carried happy thoughts and had an optimistic attitude.

The father had noticed this about his boys, so when the holidays arrived, he decided to see if he could change the pessimist's perspective. After the boys had fallen asleep, the father packed the living room with boxes full of wonderful gifts for the pessimistic twin. The other twin received only one box filled with rusty old horseshoes.

After the boys opened their gifts in the morning, the pessimist went to his room and sulked. But the father observed the optimistic twin walking around the house smiling.



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The father brought the boys together and asked his pessimistic son what was wrong. The boy replied that now he would have no friends because they would be jealous of his toys, he would have to spend a lot of money on batteries, and eventually all of his toys would break.

Then the father turned to his optimistic son and asked him why he was so happy. The boy answered that since he had received a box of horseshoes, he figured there must be a pony for him somewhere.

*This holiday season, remember that happiness
doesn't come from the size
or price of the gift — happiness comes
from how you look at it.*

Happy Holidays!

Tara and April

The Greatest Gift You Can Give A Child

Reading is a skill essential in all areas of achievement, and encouraging children to become – and remain – avid readers is the single most important thing parents and families can do to help their children succeed in school and in life. Here are some ideas to get started:



Read to your children. Start reading to your children when they're babies and keep reading as they grow. As you read, encourage your child to ask questions and talk about the story. Ask them to predict what will happen next.

Encourage your children to read on their own. Children who spend at least 30 minutes a day reading for fun develop the skills to be better readers at school.

Set aside quiet time for family reading. Some families also enjoy reading aloud, with each family member choosing a book, story, poem or article.

Visit the library often. Begin making weekly trips to the library when your child is very young. See that your child gets his or her own library card as soon as possible.



Buy a children's dictionary and start a "let's look it up" habit.

Ask family members and friends to consider giving your children books and magazine subscriptions as gifts for birthdays or other special occasions. Set aside a special place for your children to keep their own library of books.

Get help for your children if they have a reading problem. If you think your children need extra help, ask their teachers about special services such as after-school or summer reading programs. Also ask your local librarian for names of community organizations and local literacy volunteer groups that offer tutoring services.

– Adapted from the U.S. Department of Education website

How To Get The Kids To Visit

An elderly man living in Phoenix calls his son in New York and says, "I hate to ruin your day, but I have to tell you that your Mother and I are divorcing. Forty-five years of misery is enough."

The son gets all excited and responds, "Pop, what are you talking about? You can't divorce Mom after all these years — that's crazy."

"It may be crazy," says the old man, "but I am going to tell her on Christmas Day. It will be the last one we spend together!"

Frantically, the son calls his sister in Chicago and she explodes. "Like heck they're getting a divorce! We're both going to fly to Phoenix tomorrow and talk some sense into Dad! I don't care if it is the holidays!"

Then she calls her father and shouts at him over the phone. "Do you hear me? Don't you dare do a thing until brother and I get there tomorrow." Then she hangs up the phone.

The old man hangs up the phone and turns to his wife. "OK," he says with a smile, "they're coming for Christmas.....and paying their own way!"

How To Survive The Holidays

Many of us approach the winter holidays with dread, exhaustion, anxiety and isolation. We're victims of the Christmas blahs, the Chanukah malaise, the Kwanzaa ennui, and, for the pagans among us, the Solstice slump. But, while science has not yet found a cure for the holiday blues, there are definitive coping strategies:

Shop for the most important people first. We always want to get our loved ones something unique and special, then there we are at the quickie mart at 3:00 a.m. on Christmas Eve, trying to put together a "gift basket" of Twinkies, Crazy Glue and car air fresheners.

Don't load up on fats and sweets. There's nothing worse than being bloated and wired at the same time. If you eat sensibly, you'll be in a better frame of mind. But if you insist on overdoing it, get a pair of those pants with the elastic waistband — at the very least, you'll avoid the mid-meal unbuttoning, which is always a humiliating experience.

Get up from the table and get some exercise. It is a proven stress reducer. Take a hike.

Before you start up a conversation, make a mental list of topics to avoid. If you're feeling at all blue, you'll probably want to rule out discussion on your career, personal life, health, religion, politics, the past, the future and, most often, the present. Topics that are almost always safe are the weather, sports and gardening. And don't lie about your career. Mom knows you're not an astronaut.

Relax. Take a deep breath. Take time out to rejoice at the little things: The smell of bread baking, the sound of fire crackling, the sight of a little piece of broccoli wedged between your stuck-up cousin's teeth.

Don't make resolutions now. There's too much pressure this time of year. Wait until you're in a better frame of mind, like in February, which is the Chinese New Year. And if you happen to be Chinese, you should wait until the Jewish New Year, which is in September.

Snuggle Up To A Fragrant Fire

Winter is the perfect time to light up the fireplace with a cozy blaze. If you want to add a little fragrance to your hearth, try these types of wood to sweeten your fire:

Apple: It not only sweetens the smell, but it produces colorful flames.

Cherry: Although not as sweet as apple wood, cherry wood adds a little sugar in the mix.

Hickory: Known to many great barbecue cooks, hickory brings in a nice nutty aroma and is a great heat producer.

Black birch: Don't like your fires so sweet? Black birch adds just enough spice with its cinnamon scent.



— Adapted from *Traditional Home*

Did you know...

...that oak trees do not produce acorns until they are 50 years of age or older.

...Worcestershire Sauce is basically an Anchovy ketchup.

...Every workday, 6.7 million people commute to Manhattan!

...Only 2 in 1,000 diamonds are considered truly colorless.

...It takes six months to build a Rolls Royce — and 13 hours to build a Toyota.

...The lifespan of the common goldfish is over 20 years!

Welcome New Clients!

Here are some past clients, and new clients who became members of our "Real Estate Family" recently. We'd like to welcome you and wish you all the best!

Lou and Barbara Costello

John Denilofs

Joseph Miller

John and Sarah Pate (past and treasured clients)

Robert St.Genis (past and treasured client)

We love giving recognition to our new friends and our wonderful existing clients who are kind enough to refer their friends and relatives to us.

December Quiz Question

Which two breeds of dogs are the only dogs with black tongues?

Everyone responding by calling or e-mailing us with the correct answer will be entered into a drawing for:

A \$30 gift certificate for a store of your choice!

Drawing to be held on 01/05/06



October Quiz Answer

Question: What is the lowest point of elevation in North America?

Answer: Death Valley, California

Turn to page 6 for detailed article.

Congratulations to Evelyn King

Your name was selected at random from all of the correct quiz entries and you'll receive a \$30 gift certificate for a store of your choice!

See An Interesting Home?

No need to wonder about the price. No need to call a high-pressure sales agent who will just make you feel obligated. Our computers can send you the information quickly and easily, for any house, listed or sold, anywhere.

Just ask "The Sister Team"!

**It's all part of our
Free, No-obligation
Home Finder Service.**

Call Tara or April any time:
(951) 205-4428 or (951) 205-4429

We'll fax, mail or e-mail you the information on that listing within 24 hours.

The Pet Page

Pet-Safe Holiday Trees

Millions of homes sport either real or faux Christmas trees — glittering towers of beauty that can pose a threat to your pets. Please take a few moments to go over some safety precautions.

- 1. Choose the Right Spot.** Pick an area where the tree can be enjoyed by the family without becoming a “climbing toy” for your pet. The tree should be secured to the wall or ceiling, away from furniture that can serve as a springboard for your pet.
- 2. Prepare the Area.** Lay down plastic sheeting or buy a “tree bag.” This is an extra large trash bag used for live trees. Center the tree on the bag. When the season is over and you have removed the tree ornaments, pull the bag over the tree. This will catch the pine needles as they fall from the tree – and prevent them from being chewed or swallowed by your pet.
- 3. Secure the Tree.** Cats – kittens especially - love to climb trees. Many a tree has been sent swaying with a happy kitten on top. Kittens can be injured if the trees or ornaments fall and break. Dogs can knock over a tree by rubbing against or playing under it. You can place the tree in a corner and secure it from two sides to small hooks in the walls. Another trick is to place a small hook in the ceiling above the tree and use clear fishing line from the top of the tree to the hook. Apply gentle tension and tie. The clear line is invisible.
- 4. Hide the Cords.** Try to place the tree near an outlet so you don't have to run electrical cords long distances. Electrical cords are a grave danger to pets – especially puppies and kittens that chew on anything. Cords can cause electrocution and serious injury or even death. Secure the cords by positioning them higher than the pet can reach or hiding them with special covers.



**Don't
buy,
while
shelter
animals
die.**

**Give
a homeless
shelter
animal
a forever
home!**



IMPORTANT NOTICE

“The Sister Team” is willing to donate money to help those who would like to adopt a needy (and doomed) pet from any animal shelter!

And **remember**....spaying and neutering is the most important thing we can do to help dogs and cats!

We are willing and able to *confidentially* help those who are unable or unwilling to spay or neuter their companion (or stray) animals.

Please contact us and we will donate our time and money to this most-important cause!

Together, forever and always for the animals!

--Tara and April

The Lowest Point and Hottest Place in America

Nearly 550 square miles of Death Valley National Park contains the lowest point in the western hemisphere, which is 282 feet below sea level. Death valley is also one of the hottest places on earth, attaining the second-highest temperature ever recorded — 134 degrees F. in 1913, second only to the 136 degrees F. registered in Libya in 1936. Death Valley National Park is located in southeastern California and also parts of it are in southwestern Nevada. The closest major airport is Las Vegas International Airport which is 120 miles Southwest of the park.

Death Valley National Park was proclaimed a national monument by President Hoover on February 11, 1933. With the passage of the Desert Protection Act of October 31, 1994, Death Valley grew by 1,200,000 acres and was designated a national park. Today, the park is comprised of 3,336,000 acres and contains more than 3,000,000 acres of wilderness. Although the name Death Valley is foreboding and gloomy, its surrounding mountains provide spectacular wildflower displays, snow-covered peaks, beautiful sand dunes, and abandoned mines and industrial structures.

Death Valley, the name is foreboding and gloomy. Yet here in this valley, much of it below sea level, or in its surrounding mountains you can find spectacular wildflower displays, snow covered peaks, beautiful sand dunes, abandoned mines and industrial structures, and wildlife. Animals that live in the desert are mainly nocturnal, and larger animals, such as the desert bighorn, live in the cooler higher elevations. Included within the Mojave and Colorado Deserts Biosphere Reserve, Death Valley is an active world of contrasts and extremes. It is much more than its name.



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local businesses that give
outstanding customer service?***

*Request a **free** copy of our
service directory, including
PAINTERS,
PLUMBERS,
CONTRACTORS,
TUTORS, etc.*

*All of the businesses listed
have a proven track record
for providing the outstanding
customer service you deserve!*

Do You Think Outside the Box?

This is a moral/ethical dilemma that was once actually used as part of a job application.

You are driving along in your car on a wild, stormy night. You pass by a bus stop, and you see three people waiting for the bus:

1. An elderly lady who looks very ill
2. An old friend who once saved your life
3. The perfect man or woman you've been dreaming about

Which one would you choose to offer a ride to, knowing that there could only be one passenger in your car? You could pick up the elderly lady, because she is very ill, and thus you should help her first. Or you could take the old friend because he once saved your life, and this would be the perfect chance to pay him back. However, you may never be able to find your perfect dream lover again.

The candidate who was hired (out of 200 applicants) had this answer: "I would give the car keys to my old friend, and let him take the sick lady to the hospital. I would stay behind and wait for the bus with the woman of my dreams."

Now, that's thinking outside the box!

REAL ESTATE ACTIVITY REPORT

Listed and Sold by "The Sister Team"

SOLD (Sep thru Dec 2005)

4291	5th Street	\$485,000	4 bed, 1.5 bath	1830 sq ft	2-car garage
2466	Antelope	\$475,000	3 bed, 2 bath	1562 sq ft	2-car garage
3969	Bandini	\$381,000	2 bed, 2 bath	1064 sq ft	Guest house
4061	Bandini	\$375,000	3 bed, 1.75 bath	1728 sq ft	2-car gar & guest
4116	Beechwood	\$429,900	3 bed, 1.75 bath	1532 sq ft	2-car garage
5914	Birch	\$599,000	6 bed, 3 bath	3254 sq ft	2-car/pool/guest
1275	Blazewood	\$542,000	4 bed, 2.75 bath	2145 sq ft	2-car garage
5272	Greenbrier	\$426,900	3 bed, 1.75 bath	1600 sq ft	2-car garage & spa
4427	Larchwood	\$380,000	2/1 and 1/1	950 & 450	(2 on a lot)& 2-car
4475	Larchwood	\$360,000	3 bed, 1.5 bath	1320 sq ft	2-car garage
3460	Mono	\$370,000	3 bed, 1 bath	1400 sq ft	2-car garage
2972	Quebec	\$430,000	4 bed, 1.5 bath	1967 sq ft	2-car garage
3760	Rosewood	\$427,000	3 bed, 1 bath	1400 sq ft	2-car garage

IN ESCROW

3469	Bandini	Sold prices posted in next "Activity Report"	3 bed, 1.75 bath	1300 sq ft	2-car garage
3975	Beechwood		3 bed, 1.75 bath	1640 sq ft	2-car gar & pool
4193	Beechwood		3 bed, 1.75 bath	1728 sq ft	2-car garage
5157	Magnolia		3 bed, 2 bath	1560 sq ft	2-car garage
4218	Sunnyside		3 bed, 1 bath	1088 sq ft	1-car garage & spa

AVAILABLE

3559	Beechwood	\$450,000	3 bed, 1 bath	1626 sq ft	4-car garage
4674	Edgewood	\$499,900	4 bed, 2.75 bath	2004 sq ft	4-car garage
3933	Elmwood Court	\$379,900	2 bed, 1 bath	1145 sq ft	1-car garage
3920	Elmwood Court	\$368,000	2 bed, 1 bath	1530 sq ft	2-car garage
4326	Elmwood Court	\$394,900	3 bed, 1.75 bath	1328 sq ft	2-car garage
4040	Garden Home	\$419,900	3 bed, 1.5 bath	1738 sq ft	2-car garage
3249	Ronald	\$349,900	3 bed, 1.5 bath	1032 sq ft	1-car garage & spa

All of the properties above were listed and/or sold by "The Sister Team."

If you would like information on any other property in your neighborhood, please contact us at (951) 205-4429.



Happy Holidays!



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Chit Chat

Referral Reward Program ...

We want to thank those of you who have participated in our Client Referral program! Marketing for new clients costs us tons of time, money and energy. Like any company, we need new clients to stay in business. Over the years we've found that looking for new clients takes away from the time we would rather be spending focusing on your goals, explaining your options, and providing the excellent service you expect.....*and deserve!*

If you refer your friends and relatives to us, everyone benefits. We can serve you better. We send you a nice gift. And we assure you that we'll take the very best care of anyone you refer to us.

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