

February



Chocolate Covered Strawberries:

Ingredients

- 16 ounces milk chocolate chips
- 2 tablespoons shortening
- 1 pound fresh strawberries with leaves



Directions

1. Insert toothpicks into the tops of the strawberries.
2. In a double boiler, melt the chocolate and shortening, stirring occasionally until smooth. Holding them by the toothpicks, dip the strawberries into the chocolate mixture.
3. Turn the strawberries upside down and insert the toothpick into Styrofoam for the chocolate to cool.

Source: <http://allrecipes.com/Recipe/chocolate-covered-strawberries/Detail.aspx>

As always, we LOVE your referrals. If anyone you know is in the market to buy, sell or invest in a home please send them my way! We'll make sure we find the right 'match' for them.

Tips to make your Super Bowl Sunday a touchdown!



Whether your guests are the ultimate fans, fair-weathered commercial watchers, or just want to kick back with friends and family, use these ideas to make your Sunday a fun day!

For starters

Whether you're rooting for one or both teams, make sure you have the right party decorations and necessities. Some examples include: streamers, themed cups, plates and napkins, silverware, ice, sodas, water or adult beverages if desired.

Food

Hearty, salty, feel-good food is the name of the game on Super Bowl Sunday. Chili, chips, mixes and dips are all good starters.

Other must-have munchies: wings, burgers, hot dogs and even international dishes will always get high-fives from your fans. For a fun football-themed dish try a seven-layer football field: Use refried beans as the bottom layer, ground turkey as the next layer, then salsa. Add guacamole and cheese to make the field, canned olives for the sidelines and add sour cream to make the yard lines and end zones.



Fun

Halftime doesn't have to be all about eating more. Try taking the fun outdoors to play a quick game of football, or set up an obstacle course for the kids. You could also set up oldie-but-goodie games such as washers or horseshoe. Regardless of what you play, make sure you have prizes for the MVPs. Good suggestions: t-shirts, drink cups, ribbons, or gift certificates.



February

Curb appeal remains king

Did you know? As part of the *2010 – 2011 Remodeling Cost vs. Value Report*, members of the National Association of REALTORS® rated exterior replacement projects among the most cost-effective home improvement projects.

In fact, out of the ten most cost-effective projects rated nationally in terms of value recouped, nine were exterior replacement properties. As the saying goes, “It’s the *first impression* that will either open the door or close it” and in this case, giving your home’s exterior a fresh look means lasting money in your pocket if you’re planning to resell your home.

The steel entry door replacement remained the project that returned the most money, with an estimated 102.1% cost recouped upon sale. Second to the entry door, was the midrange garage door replacement; which is expected to recoup 83.9% of cost. Both projects are estimated to cost less than \$1,200 each.

Other ways to improve your home’s exterior:

- Stain your driveway. For about \$30 a gallon you can give your concrete a whole new look. If your driveway is in worse condition, try fixing cracks or leveling any uneven areas.
- Trim your trees. Don’t hide your home behind long branches. Give your lawn a lift and a fresh look (even in wintertime) by trimming your trees and bushes to *frame* your humble abode.
- Prepare for spring. If you’re in an area where your lawn isn’t covered in frost, try planting a few substantial annuals to give your yard some color when the warm months roll around.
- Light it up. During colder months, the sun goes down earlier. For buyers who look a little later, make sure your home is lit up with additional low voltage (12 volts) lighting.

Happy Valentine’s Day!



Each year, many of us celebrate February 14th by sending out cards, chocolates and flowers to our loved ones. But who is St. Valentine and where did this holiday originate? Here’s an interesting tale to share with your sweetie on this special day..

Legend has it that Valentine was a priest in Rome under the reign of Emperor Claudius II. Because Claudius believed that wives and families served as distractions to his Roman soldiers, he ordered them NOT to become engaged or married.

Valentine defied the decree and performed marriage rituals for young couples. When Claudius discovered his defiance he ordered Valentine to be arrested, imprisoned and eventually put to death.

While in prison in Rome, Valentine supposedly wrote a letter to his sweetheart, signing it “From your Valentine,” an expression still used to this day.