

In Step with Alice Steppe

Vol. 3 Issue 2



Out and about in Indianapolis is a fun adventure of discovery, recollection and delight.. I love finding new places or going to an area after reading about it. Not huge destinations, but fun and easy ways to get to know our city better, encourage local merchants and learn the nooks and crannies of who we are and what we do as Hoosiers who reside in our state capitol and surrounding areas.

In February, I wanted to do something fun with my daughter who lives in the city. We went to The Irvington Iris Tea Room. It was delightful to sit at a table for six, meet new people and have wonderful treats. Florist, Miranda Marsico, has opened the tea shop to accompany her blooming business; Bloomz by Miranda. She also has wares from local artists, vintage house wares and other interesting things to purchase.

Later this spring, I attended the open house of the new home of Indiana Landmarks, formerly The Old Centrum, a hundred some year old church that had been mothballed. Thank you to Indiana philanthropist Bill Cook, for his investment and contribution to the restoration; may he rest in peace! Now both our state historic preservation society has a new home and Indianapolis has a new venue for cultural and social events. I loved the fireplaces, one each in the bride's and groom's rooms and about the rest of the building. The Bill Cook Auditorium is lovely, reminding me of the interior of a ship with wooden, narrow bead boarding. It was also fun to see different people from my church, my oldest daughter's Girl Scout leader from years ago, and a few clients. It was a really spectacular day!

Memorial Day is very focused in our city on the Indianapolis 500 and it is interesting and fun to read about all the celebrations and celebrities around for the race and the month of May. While it isn't my favorite thing, I too put checkered flags in flower pots, love to see "Welcome Race Fans" banners hanging about the neighborhood yards

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Introducing "The Irvington Iris Tea Room"



 **THE IRVINGTON IRIS TEA ROOM**
STROLL IN. SIT A SPELL AND SAVOR
ORGANIC & FLOWERING TEAS
DELECTABLE PETIT FOURS
SERVED TUESDAY - FRIDAY 1:00 PM - 5:00 PM
130 S. AUDUBON ROAD
INDIANAPOLIS, IN 46219
317-356-4400
2ND SATURDAY SPECIAL-TEAS - RESERVATIONS ONLY
TEA TALK, TEA SANDWICHES, PETIT FOURS, CONFECTIONS
PRIVATE RENTAL AVAILABLE

 **Bloomz by Miranda**
Celebrating Nature's Majesty
www.BloomzByMiranda.com
& Irvington Iris Tea Room
130 S. Audubon Road
Indianapolis, Indiana 46219
317-356-4400
Specializing in weddings and events
Miranda M. Marsico
Owner and Floral Designer
indybloomz@yahoo.com

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In Step with Alice Steppe

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and love the parade! But I always take peonies to the cemetery on the Southside to decorate family graves, pull weeds, and clean their stones. It is a thoughtful occasion to remember our loved ones and also the memory of those who died protecting us and our country.

Now...real estate!!! How is business? How are you doing? The market is flat, right? The market is getting better, right? These are questions and comments that I receive daily. Just as I spoke of our city in the earlier paragraph, and its neighborhoods, nooks and crannies, so is real estate both local and location driven. The old adage, "location, location, location" is the strongest factor. Everything is selling. I have had a strong year so far, but that strength happens with two factors to qualify it. Condition of property and realistic sellers are the two greatest factors with the most impact on the selling of real estate at the present time. The market is very sensitive to everything from Wall Street to the individual buyer. Short sales, bank owned and HUD owned properties press on the average homeowner. But these 'distressed' properties have improved in quality and price over time, making them greater competition to the average seller.

So what can I say...except I'm still working hard to bring buyers and sellers together each day. I still work open houses, communicate with my buyers and sellers, list homes and work with buyers to make things happen. It is what I do for a living. Showings, offers to purchase, negotiations, closings are everyday occurrences. So business is good. My job is to help you meet your goals. I'm happy to interview with you, to earn your trust and business.

Finding Ways to Help Those in Need

There are so many ways in which we can assist those who are less fortunate. Here's a small list to give you some ideas of ways you can help.

1. **Cash Donations:** Gifts in any amount to a charity are most welcome.
2. **Wish List:** Shop an online Wish List to help address the immediate needs of many charitable foundations.
3. **Food Pantry:** Organize a drive at work or in your neighborhood to collect nonperishable food items.
4. **Cell Phone Drive:** Organize a drive to collect old cell phones to be recycled for emergency "911" use.
5. **Volunteer:** Lend your time and talents and plug into countless opportunities to help others.
6. **Adopt-a-Need:** Choose to fund a need for a week, month, or year for someone in crisis.
7. **Clothing:** Donate your gently used clothing, shoes, household goods, and furniture to one of the numerous assistance centers.
8. **Vehicle Donation:** Donate your used vehicle to places that will make sure it goes to someone in great need of transportation.

Downtown Indianapolis



Stop by and say "Hi" to your Neighbors!

You may be able to help them or they may be able to help you someday

In Step with Alice Steppe

Last October I introduced you to the **7 Key Steps to Merchandising Your Home**. I'd like to recap those steps plus give you a little further information. The **7** steps are as follows: **Unclutter, Clean, Repair, Make Neutral, Freshen, Keep Trimmed, and Keep Ready for Showings**

Here are just a few of the ways that you can make your home 'show ready'

Outside:

- Pick up and put away bikes, toys, lawn ornaments, etc.
- Keep grass cut, trees & shrubs trimmed, flower bed free of weeds.
- Clean out gutters, in winter keep snow shoveled

Closets:

- Pack up and remove out of season clothing and footwear
- Keep floor clear and shelf and rack space as open as possible to show buyers the storage space

Dining Room:

- Set the table with your best dinnerware; add a flower or fruit bowl centerpiece
- Open the drapes and let the light in

Kitchen:

- No dirty dishes visible anywhere
- Remove anything from countertops that is not used daily i.e. small appliances. You want to maximize the space available.
- Thoroughly clean and declutter all appliances. You love your magnets, but it makes the refrigerator look small and could deter a buyer from seeing it's true beauty.
- Avoid cooking things that leave a strong odor such as fish, garlic, curry or cabbage. The scent of cinnamon, fresh baked pie and/or cookies makes your house feel like home to prospective buyers.

Bedrooms:

- Clean out closets as indicated above.
- Keep beds made, clothes picked up & toys organized and off the floor.
- Remove valuables (jewelry, watches) and place in a secure location.
- Remove attention getting posters & excessive wall décor. A fresh coat of neutral paint is always the best way to go.
- Open blinds & drapes and keep the lights on.

Pets:

- Out of site...out of mind. Keep pets and evidence of pets out of site.
- Pet odors are a big deterrent to prospective buyers—keep the litter box clean and move it out to the garage.

Bathrooms:

- Clean, clean, clean...buyers want to see a clutter free and clean bathroom. Remove everything from the counters and place a small decorative deodorizer on it instead.
- Remove all medications and place them in a secure location
- Make all necessary repairs to the plumbing, caulk, grout.
- Leave the bathroom "show ready" as if it is not used.

Basement:

- Correct & repair any moisture sources & damage.
- Run a dehumidifier to help control dampness & musty smells
- Organize storage areas away from the walls so buyers don't think you're trying to hide something i.e. water damage, mold. If preparing to move; label boxes as such.
- Make sure that furnace, water heater, water softener, washer & dryer are clean & well maintained.

Garage:

- Thoroughly clean walls, floor, shelving & storage.
- Organize tools, ladders, toys, bikes & lawn equipment.
- Plug in an air freshener.
- A fresh coat of paint will help.

Doors, Doorknobs, Windows, Shutters & Light Bulbs

- Repair damages, replace if necessary
- Have broken seals repaired
- Tighten loose doorknobs throughout the house
- Oil squeaky hinges, sticking windows & sliding doors
- Replace all burned out light bulbs

Back Porch or Deck

- Leave window coverings open so prospective buyers can view
- Clean or cover grills
- Sweep off or hose off
- Brighten up with a large planter with colorful flowers
- Keep furniture to a minimum so that the size of the porch or deck are pleasing

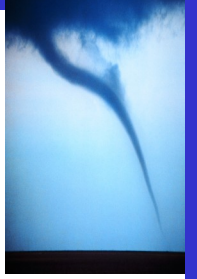
Cut out and use this coupon to receive a free thorough Analysis of Your Home.

Alice Steppe—cell 828-4020

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In Step with Alice Steppe

Keeping You Informed and Safe



Tornado Precautions

Tornados can occur without warning. That's why it's important to be alert to changing weather, and use both broadcast information and your own senses and experience to know when to take cover.

Tornado Watch

A tornado watch simply means that conditions are favorable for tornadoes to develop. In this case, you should be alert to changes in the weather and take precautions to protect you and your property.

During a Tornado Watch:

- Move cars inside a garage or carport. Keep your car keys and house keys with you.
- Move lawn furniture and yard equipment such as lawnmowers inside *if time permits*.
- Account for family members at home
- Have your emergency kit ready.
- Keep your radio or TV tuned into the weather reported

Tornado Warning

Tornado Warning means that a tornado has actually been sighted. Tornadoes can be deadly and devastating storms with winds up to 260 miles per hour. **If a Tornado Warning is issued for your area, seek shelter immediately!**

Tornado Preparedness:

- Learn the warning signals used in your community. If a siren sounds, that means stay inside and take cover.
- Consider setting up a neighborhood information program through a club, church group or community group. Hold briefings on safety procedures as tornado season approaches. Set up a system to make sure senior citizens and shut-ins are alerted if there is a tornado warning.
- Put together an emergency storm kit including a transistor radio, flashlight, batteries, and simple first-aid items in a waterproof container.
- Make a complete inventory of your possessions for insurance purposes.
- Conduct drills with your family in the home; make sure each member knows the correct procedures if they are at work or school when a tornado hits.

During the Tornado

The safest place to be during a tornado is underground, preferably under something sturdy like a workbench. If there is no basement or cellar in your home, a small room in the middle of the house..like a bathroom or a closet is best. The more walls between you and the outside, the better.

If you are driving during a tornado—Tornados can toss cars and large trucks around like toys. Never try to outrun a tornado. If you see a funnel cloud or hear a tornado warning issued on the radio or by siren, get out of your vehicle and seek a safe structure or lie down in a low area with your hands covering the back of your head and neck; keep alert for flash floods.

Office Buildings/Schools—Learn emergency shelter plans in office buildings and schools you and your family frequent. If a specific shelter area does not exist, move into interior hallways or small rooms on the building's lowest level. Avoid areas with glass and wide free-span roofs. If you can't get into a basement or designated shelter, move to the center of the lowest level of the building away from windows and lie flat.

If you are in a store or shopping mall—Go to a designated shelter area or to the center of the building on a low level. Stay away from large open rooms and windows. Never seek shelter in cars in the parking lot.