

"Recently, I staged a house that had been on the market for over a year. The owner painted, we staged the home, and he raised his asking price by 10K. It sold for only 200 dollars under the new asking price in four weeks!"

—Kathy Nielsen

Inside this issue:

Local Spotlight: Butler Tire **2**

Summer Camp Enrollment Dates **2**

'Tis the season... for Termites! **3**

Alpharetta Events Calendar **3**

The World: According to Jeff **4**

Sales Trends: January 2007 **4**

Featured Alpharetta Photo **4**

First Impressions: Setting the Stage for a Smooth Sale

What is "Staging" a home?

Staging is the process of "depersonalizing" a home, and "re-decorating" it to retain the feel of a warm, welcoming place to live. Staged homes show better, photograph better, and ultimately sell quicker, usually for a higher price.

Decorating vs. Redecorating

Decorators capture and express the individuality and personality of a space's occupants. Whether it's an office or a home, the decorator strives to convey the essence of the owner. Staging or "re-decorating" removes this personalization, without removing the warmth of the home.

Why Depersonalize?

In an era when "personalization" is a buzzword, the advice to depersonalize may be unexpected. Depersonalizing, will offer a potential buyer a way to see the house in terms of their own life, their own "stuff" and their own family.

A home that resonates the personal style and presence of the current resident leaves little room for a buyer to imagine it as their own.

Six Expert Staging Tips

Even if you don't hire a staging specialist, you may want a few tips. Kathy recommends you:

1. Concentrate on the "hot spots" first: the kitchen, bathrooms, living room, dining room, and master bedroom.
2. If the home is occupied, clear all clutter. If the house is vacant, rent furniture to stage it.
3. It can't be too clean. People assume that clean homes have been properly maintained.
4. Pack your collections. You don't want the potential buyer paying more attention to your cool "stuff" than to the home you are selling.
5. Open up your space by rearranging your existing furniture and removing any unnecessary pieces. You want your space to appear large and well-organized, this is especially true in closets and storage areas.
6. Get a pet sitter. Although you love your four-legged friend, your potential buyer may not. Move the pet for showings — as well as all toys, beds and food dishes.

Selecting a Staging Specialist

- If you are working with a real estate professional, ask for recommendations.
- Ask any potential stager for past and current client references and be sure to call the references before hiring.
- Staging specialists should offer you a free in-home evaluation.
- Be sure, when you select a staging specialist, that you have a contract that spells out everything that will be involved in the staging services.



Kathy Nielsen, of Georgia Interior Solutions, LLC successfully "re-designs" homes for sale in and around the Alpharetta, Georgia area. She is an experienced home staging specialist, trained and accredited by Home Staging founder, Barb Schwarz. You may visit her on the web at www.HomeStagingAtlanta.com, to learn more.



"People of all ages want to be a part of something bigger and more important than themselves... this is the value that camp teaches kids. It offers them a sense of perspective and provides them with a headstart on the road to becoming truly human."

—Michael Eisner,
Disney CEO



Local Spotlight: Butler Tire High-Performance Tires and Wheels



Jeff's Experience...

I take my own vehicle here and I couldn't be more pleased with the results. Last time, my service rep recommended a product to improve the performance of my vehicle and I tried it. The high-performance product was a bit more expensive than my previous tires, but it actually did cost me less over the "long haul" by extending the life of my tires.

Butler Tire, in Alpharetta, is dedicated to helping you have a high-performance, personalized ride. Their combination of exceptional service, cleanliness, quality and convenience keeps customers coming back.

"Our number one goal is to ensure that people feel good

about their purchase with us.

Buying tires, brakes and necessary services is usually a grudge purchase." said Manager Craig Dobrin, "We want to help every customer make the best, most logical and cost effective decisions for their needs."

Something as simple as using

At a glance...

Butler Tire

(www.ButlerTire.com)

11750 Jones Bridge Road
Alpharetta, GA 30022

679-893-0502

HOURS:

Monday –Friday:
7:30 am – 5:30 pm

Saturday:
7:30 am – 1 pm

Closed Sunday

nitrogen, rather than mere compressed air, in tires means less fluctuation in tire pressure due to weather and driving conditions. Thus any

vehicle's tires will wear more uniformly and last longer.

Leaving with a vehicle that has a one-of-a-kind look is a nice bonus, too. High quality products and a friendly staff that takes the time to get to know you and what you need makes all the difference in your experience.

Give Butler Tire a test drive!

Alpharetta Parks and Recreation Camps

Wills Park Summer Day Camp

Register beginning March 17

(8 a.m.—12 p.m.)

Full payment required at registration

Application available at the center.

Registration for individuals living outside Alpharetta begins on April 14, from 8 a.m. — 12 p.m., pending space.

Wills on Wheels

(Formerly Extreme Summer Camp)

Register beginning March 19

(8 a.m.—12 p.m.)

Full payment required at registration

Application available at the center.

Registration for individuals living outside Alpharetta begins on April 2, at 8 a.m., pending space.

Register now:

- Summer Art Camp
- Summer Drama Camp
- Camp Happy Hearts
- Dance Camp
- Rock 'n' Roll Gymnastics
- Cheerleading
- SporTykes
- Magic Camp
- Next Level Sports Camps

Facts About Bugs:**Termites Become Active in Georgia in the Spring****The Bad News:**

Termites become airborne and reproduce during the spring. This is when you will see outside swarms of breeders and when termites may appear in the living quarters of your home.

Georgia is home to eastern subterranean termites, the most destructive of all species in the United States.

The Good News:

You can control the tiny beasts, with a little help.

Identification

First, be sure you actually have termites. Call in an expert to differentiate termites from flying ants. (Unlike flying ants, termites have elbowed antennae with forewings that are larger than rear wings, and a body with a constricted waist.)



Look for swarms (in the spring), mud tunnels (usually hidden inside crawl spaces or interior basement walls) and interior indications (like veins running under your painted wood trim).

Treatments

Consider using barrier, baiting systems or a combination of the two.

Barrier Treatments involve injecting chemicals into the ground around the perimeter of your home to kill or repel termites.

Baiting Systems involve the use of bait stations which are monitored for termite activity. When activity is noted, chemicals are used to eliminate the attacking colony.

If you are buying a new home, be sure you review the Termite Clearance Letter to avoid buying a property with an active infestation.

Want to learn more about termites or home ownership? Want to prepare your house for sale? Have more questions about owning, buying or selling a home in Alpharetta, Georgia?

Visit AlphaHomes.com to use our library of online information and Real Estate eGuides.



"The best lightning rod for your protection is your own spine."

—Ralph Waldo Emerson

**Upcoming Events in Alpharetta**

- **North Fulton Business Expo — March 9, 2007**

This first annual business expo will bring together thousands of North Fulton's executives to hear seminars on critical business practices. Over 70 exhibitors will be represented on the sold-out show floor. Seminars will include topics on startups, legal considerations for running a business and funding considerations for on-going business ventures. For more information, visit www.gnfcc.com or call 770-993-8806.

- **Play "The Butler Did It" — March 2-3, 9-10, 16-17, 23-24, 2007**

A parody of English mystery plays, Miss Maple hosts a group of detective writers to impersonate their fictional characters. The hostess arranges a number of amusing incidents and hilarity ensues. The play can be seen at the Act 1 Theatre at 180 Academy Street in Alpharetta, beginning at 7:30 p.m. Tickets are \$12-15. For more information visit www.act1theatre.com or call 770-663-8989.

- **Easter Egg Hunt— March 31, 2007**

This annual event, hosted by Alpharetta Recreation and Parks and co-sponsored by the Alpharetta Golden Age Club, will be held at North Park Softball Fields 1-4. The hunt, for ages 10 and younger, will begin at 11:30 a.m. Thousands of eggs and candy will be hidden. Prizes will be offered for each age category. There will be photo opportunities with the Easter Bunny. Games and exhibitors will begin at 10:30 a.m. The event is free. For more information, call 678-297-6140.

- **2007 Alpharetta Arts Streetfest — April 21-22, 2007**

Fine arts from Southeastern artists will fill downtown Alpharetta. There will be children's activities, performances and musical entertainment and a juried art show. The event will begin at 10:00 a.m. and will continue until 6:00 p.m. each day. To learn more about this free event, call 678-297-6078 or visit www.alpharetta.ga.us.

Want to see your event here? Email news@alphahomes.com with details.



Jeff Aughey, REALTOR®

100 Parkerwood Way
Alpharetta, GA 30022

Phone: 770-329-4495

E-mail: JA@AlphaHomes.com

Pilgrimage Project: Brave, bold new project for an Alpharetta Realtor

Rather than simply telling people how to prepare their home for sale, I've decided to undertake a project to SHOW the steps required to plan and prepare, fix and repair, market and sell a home.

I'm using my own property — one I plan to sell this summer — as an example for this multi-media project which will be showcased on AlphaHomes.com. It will begin as a series of blog entries — documenting each step as it happens — and later will be “polished up” into a “How-To” guide for selling a home online.

The tools to generate the guide will include audio, video, still photography and text. It will be a no-holds barred look at the good and the bad of the entire process. The project will offer a balanced and transparent view of both sides — the view of the homeowner and the role of the real estate agent.

I welcome questions and comments before, during and after the project is completed. I plan to enlist the help of local professionals and service providers and will create a resources list for my visitors once everything is complete.

It's going to be an enjoyable, challenging, and educational multimedia adventure!

If you would like to receive notification when new newsletters are available, or if you have an event or story you would like to see appear here, send an email to: news@alphahomes.com. Whether you are planning to keep your home, sell your house, or buy a new home — AlphaHomes.com will offer the information you need.

Alpharetta Sales Trends

What a way to start the year! I'm happy to report that my recent optimism has proven well-founded. Sales were up strongly in this first month of 2007:

- Homes under \$275,000 went up 28.7% over December's figures
- Homes in the \$275,000-\$600,000 were up by 55.9%
- Alpharetta home sellers listing homes over \$800,000, enjoyed a market jump as sales soared 200% over the previous month

Overall, sales were strong compared to December 2006. The only slow spot in the market, comparatively speaking, was the price range from \$600,000 to \$800,000, where sales were off 71.4%.

Long-term comparisons between

January 2006 and January 2007 show an overall trend of improved sales:

- Under \$275,000, up by 1.9%
- \$275,000-\$600,000 up 33.3%
- Over 600,000 is down 10%

Commercial construction is picking up and absorption of existing space in the Alpharetta area is improving. Our market continues to be well-priced compared to large cities and did not need the correction that was necessary in some markets.

Adding all this up, I expect a good, solid year for Alpharetta real estate.

For continuously updated market information, visit the Alpharetta Real Estate Blog:

AlphaHomes.com/alphablog

“Jumping for Joy” In Alpharetta



Chattahoochee varsity cheerleaders lead the audience during a basketball pep rally.

*View more Alpharetta photos on the Alpharetta PhotoBlog:
AlphaHomes.com/photos*