In Touch With BOB

March, 2007 | Homes *ARE* My Business | Volume 1 Issue 7

Bob Evridge, Your Friendly Neighborhood Real Estate Agent

Kristopher & Co. Real Estate 865-584-5599

Bob@BobEvridge.com www.BobEvridge.com **865-660-0198**

Welcome Spring!

Have you noticed the television real estate trend? Turn to any third channel on cable television and you will see a show about buying and selling homes. They fix up fixer uppers. They make fancy homes fancier. They put a dab of paint here and a new window treatment there and make $50,000 overnight. Then you open your newspaper and you read that the real estate market is slow. So I'm never surprised when people want to chat about real estate and the question on their minds is: Can I still make any money in real estate? My answer might surprise you. Read it on page 2 and then email me. I'll send you a free report about why real estate is still a great investment and how you can still make money in it.

Bob

Boomers not ready for the rocking chair yet!

If you are aged 50+, you're probably joining 78 million Baby Boomers who are asking "What house now?"

The wisdom of the past has been that, after the kids leave, aging Americans downsize, choosing adult retirement communities, condos or apartments. But recent surveys suggest that the Baby Boomers may not follow conventional wisdom, and seemingly conflicting survey results suggest that the final report on Boomer housing plans hasn't been written yet.

Baby Boomers (born from 1946 to 1964) have longer life expectancies, more money, more varied work interests, and smaller families than generations before them. They are making choices that reflect these realities.

Some surveys say the Boomers aren't ready to downsize just yet.

One 2006 online survey of Boomers showed that most Boomers were satisfied with the size of their homes but, of the ones who wanted to trade, more wanted a larger home (25 percent). Only 11 percent thought their home was too big.

On the other hand, other surveys say that, of Boomers who are asked to consider their plans for retirement, about half say they will downsize (Pulte Homes 2005) when they retire. Of course, according AARPs landmark 2004 survey of Boomers, the majority say they will never retire.

So there you go. The Boomers are writing a whole new book about what people do when they retire. That is, assuming they ever retire.

But, if you really are one of the Boomers who will downsize, it's a good time to do it. With interest rates for mortgages still at a 40-year low, it is a great time to buy. Financial planners say giving up a large house is always a profitable decision in a financial sense. Living in a house that is too big ties up capital in higher maintenance costs and extra taxes.

Will Boomers downsize their homes, or make a large home more useful?

Daniel Kadlec, author of *The Power Years: A User's Guide to the Rest of Your Life* (Wiley), says the most important question you need to answer is this: Are you truly ready to downsize?

Some questions you must answer:

* Are you ready to give up your family house?

* Do you want dirt? If you have to garden to be happy, a small single family home might be what you want. If you hate yard work, look to a condo or even an active adult community.

* Smaller or more useful? If you want a home office, but not a second floor, maybe you should be looking for a three-bedroom ranch.

Is there money in real estate today? See page 2

Natural Laws

Repairs: After your hands get coated with grease, your nose will itch.

Probability: The probability of being watched is directly proportional to the stupidity of your act.

Telephone: When you dial a wrong number, you never get a busy signal.

Logical argument: Anything is possible if you don't know what you're talking about.

Traffic: As soon as you change lanes, the other lane will go faster.

Shopping: When you find a product you really like, they stop making it.

Results: When you try to prove a machine doesn't work, it will.

Bob@BobEvridge.com www.BobEvridge.com 865-660-0198

Ask the Expert:

There is still money in real estate investing

Is there any money to be made in real estate today? How can I get started as an investor?

There still is money to be made. Yes, indeed. One way is to carefully buy and manage rental properties. This can bring income down the road. Getting started takes a little money, but not as much as you might think. Here's an example of how one investor did it.

He wanted to start with a duplex, but the prices all seemed high. His real estate agent called him about properties she thought he would be interested in, and one day the agent told him about a property that seemed promising.

The property, though nice inside, had a very plain-looking exterior, but he made an offer anyway. He offered less than the asking price, wanted a very low down payment, and asked the seller to carry a low-interest, five-year contract for deed. "That's the end of that," he thought.

But the seller accepted. Over time, the property paid for itself except for major improvements. Now, the mortgage is paid off and the duplex produces a very nice income.

Even in today's market, novice real-estate investors can make money, especially in smaller properties that are easy to acquire and manage.

Here's an idea for those who find a larger house for a good price. The same advisors recommend turning part of a larger house into a so-called in-law unit. You won't get rich from the proceeds, but renting it increases income from the property.

Can small investments add up to big income?

Email me and I'll send you my free report:
Small steps make a big difference!
Bob@BobEvridge.com

5		9	6		1		2	
1								3
			9		3	5		
		2				4	3	
3								6
	9	6				7		
		7	1		2			
9								2
	2		3		8	9		4

Three Times Lucky Sudoku

Only logic and patience are required to solve this puzzle. No math is involved. Simply make sure that each 3x3 square region has a number 1 through 9 and that the number only occurs once. Each column and row of the large grid must have only one instance of the numbers 1 through 9.

Here's a tip for playing. We'll call the 3x3 squares "regions." With a highlighter, color in all the rows in the large grid and all the columns in the larger grid that have a 3 in them. We chose 3 because there are several of them in the puzzle. Finished?

Now observe. In the top left region and the middle region, what is the only

5	3	9	6	4	1	8	2	7
1	7	4	8	2	5	6	9	3
2	6	8	9	7	3	5	4	1
7	1	2	5	8	6	4	3	9
3	4	5	7	1	9	2	8	6
8	9	6	2	3	4	7	1	5
4	5	7	1	9	2	3	6	8
9	8	3	4	6	7	1	5	2
6	2	1	3	5	8	9	7	4

Laundry rooms move up in the world

What is in your laundry room? If this were 1970, you may have answered a washer, dryer, and ironing board. But in the year 2007, that answer may also include a desk, craft supplies, or computer.

Yes, the laundry room is moving up, closer to the bedroom than the basement, and looking more like a home office than a mudroom.

In a 2004 National Association of Home Builders survey, the laundry room was top-rated among 90 amenities as desirable in new homes. In fact, they are so popular that they are showing up multiple times in some upscale homes. One is set near the kitchen for linen laundering and another is set near the bedrooms for .

In addition to moving laundries closer to living areas, homeowners are using laundry rooms as relief storage areas for overstuffed kitchens. Some laundry rooms come with full-sized closets, ideal for storing pots or bulk canned goods. There may even be space for a freezer or refrigerator.

Homeowners also want more counter space for folding laundry, crafts or wrapping gifts.

Front-loading washers, which can be stored under a countertop, are more popular than ever. And no laundry room is complete without a deep farmhouse sink.

Other homeowners have installed flat panel TVs and computer desks.

Still, the most important things to have -- no matter how you accessorize them -- are a good washer and dryer.

Simple techniques prevent chaos In your decor

Interior decorators give these tips for keeping a balanced look in your home.

Framed art should always be at eye level where it can connect with people. In a grouping or collection especially, the largest picture must be at eye level. The others can be grouped around it.

In the living room, art should be only about six inches above the sofa.

Create nooks

Instead of backing furniture up to the walls, create nooks within the room that reflect how the space should be used. Find a focal point and build around it. Even angling pieces is better than having large open space in the middle of the room.

Decorate with a plan

Because home decorating happens in steps, create a master plan to prevent individual projects from becoming a hodgepodge of style.

Don't over match

Avoid room groups where upholstery, paint, drapes and pillows are too similar. Things can go together well without being the same.

Organize the clutter

Decorating and real-estate experts agree that everything should have a place. If you have lots of stuff, devise special shelving or curio cabinets for it, or allow a full room for a collection.

How to get an early start for your garden

While snow still may be swirling in many locations, it's time to be thinking about the blooms of spring, the veggies of summer, and the harvest of fall.

March is the perfect time for starting seedlings in window planters, small greenhouses, or even under plant lights in the basement or garage. By now, seed packets are on the shelves of your local discount stores, lumberyards, and hardware stores. Or they can be ordered from companies that sell by catalog or on the Internet.

It usually takes about six weeks to two months for seeds to become strong enough plants to be set outside in pots or a garden. Novice gardeners should consult a plant-growing guide from a local library or visit thegardenhelper.com.

It is also important to know what plants will grow in your vegetable garden soil. Some plants require alkaline soil while others require acidic soil.

The seeds may be started in prepared starter pots made of compressed peat and filled with a proper soil mixture, or they can be planted in small plastic pots left over from last year's commercially-purchased bedding plants.

Those planted outside in miniature plastic greenhouses should not be started until most daily lows are above the freezing point. When planting indoors under plant lights, follow the directions on the packaging of the plant lights or in growing guides.

The Internet provides an abundance of advice on vegetables and flowers. Two good places to start on line are www.pallensmith.com or www.plantea.com/seedstart.htm.

All in all, you can enjoy the fruits of your labors when you start the process from scratch, not to mention the significant amount of money you save by not buying commercially grown bedding plants.

If you can't quit, at least exercise

Smoking is a bad idea, no question about it. But if you haven't yet quit, you should know that exercise can reduce your risk of lung cancer.

In a study of older women, researchers found that smokers who were physically active, had a 35 percent lower risk of lung cancer than sedentary smokers.

The study of 42,000 women began in 1986. By the end of 2002, there were 36,410 participants and 777 cases of lung cancer. Of those, 125 were nonsmokers, 177 were former smokers, and 475 were current smokers.

Among the 475 current smokers, 324 currently smoked and were not very physically active. Among the physically active smokers, there were 151 cases of lung cancer.

Most experts think the reduction is trivial because smoking is so risky in so many ways. At the University of Pennsylvania's Center for Clinical Epidemiology and Biostatistics, they say the most important thing smokers can do is quit. Those who quit are 10 to 11 times less likely to develop lung cancer.

Bob@BobEvridge.com www.BobEvridge.com 865-660-0198

Quotes

If your actions inspire others to dream more, learn more, do more, and become more, you are a leader.
John Quicy Adams

Forget about the consequences of failure. Failure is only a temporary change in direction to set you straight for your next success.
Denis Waitley

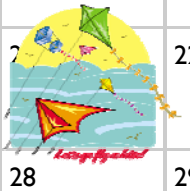
Something in human nature causes us to start slacking off at our moment of greatest accomplishment. As you become successful, you will need a great deal of self-discipline not to lose your sense of balance, humility, and commitment.
H. Ross Perot

Never mistake knowledge for wisdom. One helps you make a living, the other helps you make a life.
Sandra Carey

Count your blessings. Once you realize how valuable you are and how much you have going for you, the smiles will return. The sun will break out, the music will play, and you will finally be able to move forward with the life that God intended for you, with grace strength, courage, and confidence.
Og Mandino.

Forgiveness is the economy of the heart. It saves the expense of anger, the cost of hatred, and the waste of spirits.
Hannah More

March 2007

Sun	Mon	Tue	Wed	Thu	Fri	Sat
				1 Irish-American heritage month	2 World Day of Prayer	3 Lunar eclipse
4	5	6 Peace Corps Day	7	8 Louisiana Sportsmen's Show	9 Rio Grande Valley livestock show	10 Daytona 500
11 Daylight saving time	12	13 Organize your home office day	14	15	16	17 St. Patrick's Day
18	19	20 Spring begins	21 	22 New Year India	23	24
25	26	27	28	29 Dominion of Canada established in 1867.	30	31 NCAA Final Four

To prevent identity theft, you might be able to freeze your credit files

Whether you can arrange it so no one can view your credit reports depends on what state you live in.

Consumer advocates in the U.S. have long pushed for laws to allow individuals to freeze their credit files with the big three reporting agencies (Equifax Inc., Experian Group Ltd., and TransUnion LLC). Now many states are making that possible.

When a credit report is frozen, no new creditor that checks before doing business with you can view your files unless you first approve. At least six states have approved credit freezes, and 25 others have passed right-to-freeze laws. For a list, visit prig.org/consumer.

Freezes can't prevent all identity theft, but with a freeze in place, it's much more difficult for thieves to open an account in your name. According to The Wall Street Journal, to freeze your credit files, visit: Equifax.com. Click "Customer Service" then "How do I place a Security Freeze ..."

Go to www.experian.com/consumer/security-freeze.html.
TransUnion.com, click "personal," then "Fraud and Identity Theft," then "Preventing."

The freeze must be in place at all three credit reporting agencies.
Some say the problem with freezes is a lack of instant credit access. An almost immediate "thaw," however, solves the problem. Experian lets you do it on the Web. Equifax and TransUnion require a call. While the official policy says it may take 72 hours to unfreeze, it happens within minutes.

You could call from your car dealer and request unfreezing, that is, if you have your PIN with you. If you are buying a car or applying for a mortgage, it's best to call first and unfreeze.

A freeze won't prevent a crook from using a stolen credit card number for purchases or cash advances.