

# In Touch With BOB



July, 2007

Making Friends One Home at a Time

Volume 1 Issue 11

[Bob Evridge, Your Friendly Neighborhood Real Estate Expert](#)

Kristopher & Co. Real Estate 865-584-5599

[Bob@BobEvridge.com](mailto:Bob@BobEvridge.com)

[www.BobEvridge.com](http://www.BobEvridge.com)

865-660-0198

Live like the (third) richest man in the world!

Warren Buffett, the investment guru whose personal fortune is worth more than \$52 billion, bought a home in Omaha, Nebraska, in 1958. He paid \$31,000 for it and he still lives in it. Talk about a satisfying home purchase! Although Buffett is notoriously frugal with his enormous fortune, he was perhaps fortunate to find exactly what he wanted the first time. I can't promise you'll forever love the home we find for you, but I can promise if you tell me what it is you need and want, I will not give up until we find that special place that "sings" to you.

*Bob*

Vacation home sales set record: Who is buying?, Page 3

## That's Cool!

### Sun and Shade Set Off Your Home in Summer

In the heat of July, few things are as attractive to a home buyer as the interplay of cool shade and cheerful sun on a pretty summer day.

For home sellers, the first, obvious, consideration to selling a home in July is making sure air conditioning is in good working order. Buyers will want to walk into a clean and cool home, not a stuffy and hot house.

The cool outside the home is just as important as the cool inside as sun and shade take the stage.

To show your property to its best advantage, create the shady spots buyers will love.

Elegant oaks and maples or stately palms in the south or the islands add both grandeur and relief from the sun. If your property is mature enough to have them, emphasize trees with a pretty lounge or patio chairs. In some cases, sellers will want to stage the setting with flowers and frosty lemonade. On wooded lots, you can draw the eye to large trees in the background with a small cement bench.

However, large trees are not always assets. Real estate experts advise home sellers to take their ego and emotions out of their property. An enormous pine that is too close to a house will decrease a property's value.

The same is true for untended trees that you can't walk under or shaggy shrubs that look neglected.

Only time can put lovely trees on a property, but if your home doesn't have them you can still find ways to create both shady and sunny spots in your yard.

Water features -- even directly in the sun -- count as cool spots, but not shady spots. If no natural shade exists, experiment with creating shady spots with umbrellas positioned within

view of fountains and pools.

One option for homes without mature trees is to install an awning over the back patio door. Awnings are not only attractive, but they create a pleasant transition from the cool of the house to a shaded patio. A less permanent solution is an inexpensive screen house. Make sure it is properly installed and spotless.



### Digital Picture Frame Connects To Your Computer Wirelessly

Digital picture frames fit nicely on your mantel but like a curiosity from a science fiction movie, their contents can change. A new crop of digital pictures can wirelessly communicate with your computer, giving one single frame the ability to show your entire collection of photographs. Kodak's new wireless frame retails for about \$230. It is especially easy to use in connection with Kodak's Easy Share Web site.



### Ask The Expert

## Q. What is mortgage insurance?

A. Mortgage insurance protects lenders from losses if the borrower defaults on the home loan. It is required for borrowers who make less than a 20 percent down payment, but the insurance is canceled when there is enough equity built up in the home.

Mortgage insurance can be expensive for borrowers, often requiring a hefty chunk of money up front, or payments added to the house note every month. Some home buyers get around the requirement by taking out two loans. Usually the second loan is a home-equity line of credit which enables them to make the larger down payment. Home-equity lines of credit, however, usually have higher interest rates than the primary mortgage and the interest rate can rise even more because the rate is adjustable.

The fixed rate on mortgage insurance plus a new tax break are encouraging more

Have you ever wondered what happened to the 56 men who signed the Declaration of Independence?

Five signers were captured by the British as traitors, and tortured before they died. Twelve had their homes ransacked and

burned. Two lost their sons serving in the Revolutionary Army; another had two sons captured. Nine of the 56 fought and died from wounds or hardships of the Revolutionary War. They signed and they pledged their lives, their fortunes, and their sacred honor.

What kind of men were they?

Twenty-four were lawyers and jurists. Eleven were merchants, nine were farmers and large plantation owners; men of means, well educated. But they signed the Declaration of Independence knowing full well that the penalty would be death if they were captured. Carter Braxton of Virginia, a wealthy planter and trader, saw his ships swept from the seas by the British Navy. He sold his home and properties to pay his debts, and died in rags.

Thomas McKean was so hounded by the British that he was forced to move his family almost constantly. He served in the Congress without pay, and his family was kept in hiding. His possessions were taken from him, and poverty was his reward.

Vandals or soldiers looted the properties of Dilley, Hall, Clymer, Walton, Gwinnett, Heyward, Rutledge, and Middleton. At the battle of Yorktown, Thomas Nelson Jr, noted that the British



## The Signers

General Cornwallis had taken over the Nelson home for his headquarters. He quietly urged General George Washington to open fire. The home was destroyed, and Nelson died bankrupt.

Francis Lewis had his home and properties destroyed. The enemy jailed his wife, and she died within a few months.

John Hart was driven from his wife's bedside as she was dying. Their 13 children fled for their lives. His fields and his gristmill were laid to waste. For more than a year he lived in forests and caves, returning home to find his wife dead and his children vanished. A few weeks later he died from exhaustion and a broken heart. Norris and Livingston suffered similar fates.

Such were the stories and sacrifices of the American Revolution. These were not wild-eyed, rabble-rousing ruffians. They were soft-spoken men of means and education. They had security, but they valued liberty more. Standing tall, straight, and unwavering, they pledged: "For the support of this declaration, with firm reliance on the protection of the divine providence, we mutually pledge to each other, our lives, our fortunes, and our sacred honor."

They gave you and me a free and independent America. The history books never told you a lot about what happened in the Revolutionary War. We didn't fight just the British. We were British subjects at that time and we fought our own government!

Some of us take these liberties so much for granted, but we shouldn't.

*So, take a few minutes while enjoying your 4th of July holiday and silently thank these patri-*

buyers with low down payments to use it. The percentage of mortgages that included this feature rose by 8.5 percent from the previous month in February of 2007, according to the Mortgage Insurance Companies of America.

The simplicity of having just one mortgage payment makes mortgage insurance more attractive to many buyers.

A new tax break is also encouraging buyers to use mortgage insurance. Certain people who take out a mortgage or refinance in 2007 are eligible to write off all or a portion of their mortgage-insurance

premiums for the year.

For some buyers, the two loan option (called a piggyback loan) makes sense, say experts at the Mortgage Bankers Association. But everyone needs to weigh the options in light of their own situation.



## What's a tooth under the pillow worth in 2007?

According to Securian Dental, a health plan provider, the inflation-adjusted rate for your average molar under the pillow was \$1.71.

## A Blueprint for Buying

Are you still renting? It's hard to rent when home decorating and renovation are top topics on television and in the news.

It's even harder to know you are getting no return on rent while you wait for the right time to move forward.

Now may be your best time to buy.

Several conditions are in your favor:

\* Rents are rising everywhere. With a fixed-rate mortgage, however, your housing costs never rise.

\* Pricing is favorable. You have successfully skipped over the time when home prices were the highest in years.

\* Interest rates are low. It's possible to get a 20- or 30-year mortgage at 6 percent interest or less. And you will find that you don't need a high down payment.

\* The selection of available homes has never been better.

\* Remember the tax breaks. The mortgage-interest deduction is one of the biggest tax breaks most homeowners have, according to the U. S. Office of Management and Budget.

Many home sellers are interested in making their move before school starts in fall. On an annual basis, the timing has never been better.



Another factor that could influence your selection: People with homes that were financed with variable interest rates often want to sell when their interest rates rise or before they rise again.

## Family Room Evolves

Family rooms are changing from fun rooms to learning rooms.

The new education rooms have features such as desks and laptop ports for every member of the family. Included is special lighting for computer work, homework, and reading. There can be bookshelves, storage areas, and work stations for each person.

One builder quoted in *The Wall Street Journal* offers a bright yellow "education room" with chairs and desks that adjust to adult and kid heights. In the family home office, mom, dad, and the kids bond over work instead of television.

Some moms and dads, however, say they need a separate home office. They don't want to be interrupted and wouldn't have a business meeting in the kids' place.



## Vacation Home Sales Set Record: Who is buying?

Vacation home sales rose 4.7 percent in 2006, with 1.07 million sold, according to the National Association of Realtors.

The typical buyer of one of the 1.07 million vacation homes sold in 2006 was 44 years old with a median household income of \$102,000.

That typical buyer was purchasing a home for a family

COOL IDEA!

**Make a scrapbook to show your home's out-of-season features.**

## Tend To Trees and Hedges

Summer is a good time to walk through your property and check for trees that are dead or dying.

In the late fall or winter, when trees have no leaves, it can be difficult to identify a dead tree. You can tag trees now with spray paint so you'll know which have to be removed later by a professional tree service.

Healthy trees can be a plus when your home is on the market. Consider inviting an arborist to identify major trees. Then offer a list to prospective buyers.

With flowering trees, collect a set of pictures or an album of photos that show your trees in bloom. Prospects will be able to see how beautiful the trees are.

Hedges are a major landscape feature that can add to the value of a home or detract from it. A hedge row across the front of the house looks great if it is in proportion to the house and if it is sufficiently far away from the house. Most hedges look nice when they are planted, but years later, the hedges outgrow their location, obscuring the home. Overgrown hedges block light from inside, and they can trap moisture against the house as well.

Sometimes trimming a hedge is not sufficient since trimming a mature hedge can take off all the leaves, rendering the plant woody and bare. The best solution for seriously overgrown hedges is removal. Plant low growing shrubs in their place.

retreat (79 percent) in the country (29 percent). Vacation home purchases were overwhelmingly single-family detached homes (67 percent), located a median of about 215 miles from the primary residence.

Investment home sales were down in 2006, according to the survey.

Patience, persistence, and perspiration make an unbeatable combination for success.

*Napoleon Hill*

There are no extra pieces in the universe. Everyone is here because he or she has a place to fill, and every piece must fit itself into the big jigsaw puzzle.

*Deepak Chopra*

Flaming enthusiasm, backed by horse sense and persistence, is the quality that most frequently makes for success.

*Dale Carnegie*

We have a choice: to plow new ground or let the weeds grow.

*Jonathan Westover*

# JULY 2007

| Sun  | Mon  | Tue                                      | Wed  | Thu  | Fri                                      | Sat   |
|--|--|--|--|--|--|---|
| 1<br><br>CANADA DAY<br>July 1, 2007 | 2<br>Halfway point of 2007                       | 3<br>Red, White, and Boom, Columbus Ohio | 4<br><br>Happy Birthday to the USA<br>07.04.07   | 5<br>Jumping championships, Yukon          | 6<br>Cisco Ottawa Bluesfest, Canada      | 7<br>Pepsi 400 Nascar, Daytona Beach, FL  |
| 8<br>Running of the bulls, Spain   | 9<br>Tour de France, 6 to 29                     | 10                                       | 11<br>Wyandotte Street Art Fair, Michigan  | 12<br>Orangemen's Day, Ireland             | 13<br>Vancouver Folk Music Festival      | 14<br>Pori Jazz Festival, Finland   |
| 15<br>National Ice Cream Day   | 16<br>Three Rivers Festival, Fort Wayne, Indiana | 17<br>Ann Arbor summer art fair          | 18<br>Delaware State Fair  | 19<br>Jamboree in the Hills, West Virginia | 20<br>Yarmouth Clam Festival, Maine      | 21<br>American Indian Festival, Virginia  |
| 22<br>Parents' Day   | 23<br>Air adventure, Oshkosh, WI                 | 24<br>Winnipeg Fringe Theatre Festival   | 25<br><br>First man on the Moon<br>Neil A. Armstrong became the first man to walk on the Moon, July 20, 1969. | 26<br>Calgary Folk Music Festival          | 27<br>Gilroy Garlic Festival, California | 28<br>Montana State   |
| 29<br>Belle Chere Festival, Asheville, NC  | 30   | 31                                       |  |  |  | <br>FINANCIAL FREEDOM DAY<br>JULY 1, 2007 |

**Staying hydrated**

Thirst is the body's way of indicating it needs more fluids. Sometimes, you're not thirsty even as dehydration begins. Even if you don't feel thirsty, these situations increase the need for fluids:

- \* During exercise. For an hour of light exercise, 2 to 3 cups of fluids are recommended.
- \* When it's hot. You naturally lose more fluid and require higher intake.

- \* If you are constipated. Fluid helps eliminate waste.
  - \* Adding more fluids to your diet may prevent urinary tract infections and stone formation.
  - \* Fever, vomiting, and diarrhea can cause rapid dehydration.
- If you don't often feel thirsty, check the color of your urine. If it's darker than usual, you need more fluids.
- Researchers at Tufts University say people over age 50 need eight 6 ounce servings of liquid per day rather than 8 ounces.

**July is National Grilling Month**

The National Fire Protection Agency reports that about 1,000 structure fires and 3,400 outdoor fires were caused by barbecue grills in one recent year.

It's important to realize that safe grilling begins before the cooking starts.

With gas grills, check the connection between the propane tank and the fuel line to be sure it is working properly and not leaking. If you suspect a leak, put soapy water on the area and watch for bubbles to discover where it is. Never use a match to check for a gas leak, and never light the grill until the leak is fixed.

Position any grill on a level surface that is at least three feet away from other objects, including the house and shrubs or bushes. Keep children and pets away from the cooking area.

When you are ready to barbecue, protect yourself with a heavy apron and oven mitts that fit well over your forearm.

When the party is over, store the grill outside and away from the house. Make sure the valves are turned off.

For charcoal grills, use only starter fluids designed for that purpose. Never use gasoline. If the fire is slow, add dry kindling. Don't add more liquid starter or you could cause a flash fire.

Remember to soak the coals with water before you put them in the trash.

Never use a barbecue grill indoors or in an unventilated space. It's a fire hazard and could cause carbon monoxide poisoning.