

# In Touch With BOB

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Making Friends One Home at a Time

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As I am always looking for ways to help my friends, customers and clients, I thought you could benefit from a membership in My Home Management Club. Therefore, I have obtained a membership in the Club, at no cost to you, for your household.

I am keenly aware of the privacy needs of my newsletter readers. Access to your information will never be sold, rented or bartered. There are no Club sponsored ads on the

Club pages. I hope you enjoy the membership enough to drop me a note and tell me how you like it.

As always I am here to help you with any aspect of your real estate needs. Hopefully the Club will help you with the rest!



[Click Here To Join The Club](#)

## Will these bells and whistles really ring your chimes?

Amenities sell, that's for sure. But some folks say they don't actually get much use from the bells and whistles they really searched for in their new home.

If you are a buyer, consider that some frills that raise a home's price, actually may not be very useful, especially when you can buy something simpler for a song.

One recent survey of home buyers found a plethora of criticisms about the perks buyers seem to love these days.

One quote: "The spa bathroom with a huge whirlpool tub. It looks nice and I really wanted one, but I have only used it once. It takes so much time and money to fill and heat it. I actually prefer to get a soak at my gym. I wish I had a fancy shower instead."

Others disagreed: "I adore my spa!" said one homeowner.

Other bells and whistles that can play a sour note: The kitchen breakfast bar was criticized by an

Atlanta couple: "Okay, you can put a buffet on it. But is anyone ever going to actually sit at it or will they prefer a table? My family prefers the table every time. The kids can spread out their homework. You can read the paper. Or chat. No one can sit directly to the side of someone and carry on a conversation."

Other unfriendly amenities:

Fireplaces: "One might be nice, but do you need any more? Let's face it, they don't heat up a room plus they usually end up being expensive, boring gas burners."

Kitchen islands: "You constantly have to go around them. They take up a lot of space. If you have a stove in the island,

you are constantly preparing food on the counter, then carrying it across the floor to the island stove for cooking. Why does this make sense?"

Stainless steel appliances: "Great items if you're going to have a crime scene investigation. CSI won't even have to use dust to lift the fingerprints off them!"



## More young people own their homes

Nearly 26 percent of people under 25 own their homes, up from less than 20 percent in 1982. During the same period, ownership in the 25-to-29 age group grew from 39 percent to 41 percent.

Because home prices have tripled since 1982, it takes more planning for a young person to buy. Some steps:

Meet with a credit counselor to determine how much you can afford to pay

for a house.

Get a free copy of your credit report online. If your credit score is 620 or higher, you should be able to get a mortgage. If it's lower, consider paying off some debt.

Get pre-approved for a mortgage of a certain amount so sellers will take your bid seriously.

Finally, call me to negotiate for you. There's no substitute for our knowledge of the market.

AIR sells homes! - See page 3



ORDER A FREE HOME MAINTENANCE SCHEDULE, SEE PAGE 2

## Ask the Expert



*Q. I just bought a home and I'm wondering if you have any tips on maintaining it?*

A well-maintained home grows in value, so maintenance protects your investment.

Here are two inexpensive chores you can do in May that will help avoid costly repairs:

1. Gutters: Clean them in spring and fall or more often if you have trees. Cleaning them yourself is free and if you keep them that way they can last 30 years.

2. Bathroom caulking: Watch for cracks or pieces of grout that have chipped out between the tiles and at the corners. Cracks and chips allow into the walls, eventually rotting them out. Caulk costs about \$3, but retiling costs thousands.

[Email me for your free home maintenance schedule and protect your home investment!](#)

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## Ups and Downs of Home-pricing Web sites

Are you tempted to Zillow?

Fortune magazine says the Zillow Web site is the equivalent of real estate yuppie porn. One real estate analyst claims its houses are vastly overpriced or under priced. Still another says Zillow has started a real estate revolution!

Actually, sites like Zillow's can be a starting point for people who want to buy a house or building. If they realize that pricing is a generalization, they can still get an idea of what houses might cost in certain locations.

The developers of Zillow have it right when they say the hunger for information about real estate is infinite. Everyone is curious about the value of their own home, and homes of people they know, and the possible value of homes they would be interested in buying.

Richard Barton, co-founder of Zillow, however, says that the best information about real estate is locked up in people's heads. The best way to root out the true value of a property is to tap into community knowledge.

Mark Lesswing, a senior vice president of the National Association of Realtors, says real estate agents don't fear Zillow. They use it as a way to show how their services are more valuable than something people can get free on the web.

Consumers can count on the fact that their agent is familiar with the property and knows what it is worth based on community pricing and other factors, rather than a computer estimate.

Fortune also notes that hiring a real estate agent is like hiring an attorney. You might have every bit of legal information that the lawyer does, but would you want to represent yourself?

The same is true with buying or selling real estate. You might have a lot of information about a home or building, but representing yourself in a real estate transaction could be pretty risky too.

*In today's real estate market, whether you are buying or selling property, timely information is critical. When you are fully informed, you'll make better decisions about one of the most important choices of your lifetime. As a Realtor®, I can provide the information, guidance, and counsel needed to support your decisions. The information is free so give me a call.*

### *New antennas pick up high-definition TV for free*

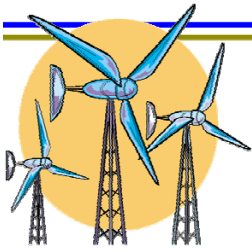
High-definition television channels can be picked out of the air by antennas just like regular broadcast signals. No cable or satellite dish is needed. There's no need to wait for the cable guy.

Antennas costing between \$18 and \$150 (SolidSignal.com and others) may offer a better picture than cable or dish services. The downside is that they can only pick up broadcast networks, not cable channels like ESPN or HBO.

Antenna makers like Terrestrial Digital of St. Louis and Winegard of Burlington, Iowa are seeing sales soar. Consumers are convinced that antennas provide the best high-def pictures.

Because high-definition signals are far more plump than standard television signals, they hog the capacity of their pipelines. Cable- and satellite-TV operators "compress" the signals. There is a wide belief that the compression degrades the picture quality.

The other downside to receiving high-definition television with an antenna is caused by nature. If you live in a hilly area, the straight-line signal may not reach you.



## Power air Energy picked out of the wind

An old proverb warns "An ill wind blows no good." But, a frequent wind might save you money and offer a secondary energy source.

Residential wind turbines are becoming popular, especially for remote areas off the electrical grid, but they can work for properties with at least an acre of unobstructed land. Residential towers are 80- to 120-feet tall, according to the American Wind Energy Association, and cost from about \$10,000 to \$20,000 to install. Once installed, local utilities must, by federal law, purchase excess power the windmill generates. However, most residential windmills will not supply all power to a home.

Wind power is also a large component of today's public effort to use renewal energy sources. One of the newest windmill farms is in Iowa where Warren Buffett's Mid American Energy has 257 wind turbines, generating 489 megawatts of energy. The huge project, involving 222-foot turbines with 100-foot rotors, generates 9 percent of Iowa's energy needs.

Although hailed as a promising energy alternative, wind projects are not always greeted favorably. In Massachusetts, the Kennedy families fought wind farms, which would disrupt yachting and fishing routes. In New Jersey, wind power remains controversial since the enormous turbines will disrupt coastal views.

Other objections to wind farms are environmental. In Altamont, Calif., one of the oldest wind farms of 4,000 turbines spans 50 square miles, across a migratory bird route. The annual bird kill is put, conservatively, at 5,000, according to *USA Today*. Wind proponents say newer, taller turbines will kill fewer birds and that all tall man-made structures cause bird kills. They argue wind turbine bird kills are not nearly as big a problem as cell tower kills.



## Pure air Air quality can be your secret to a faster sale

If you are looking for the edge in selling your home, think air. Pure air.

In-furnace air purifiers are a big new selling point for high end homes. The best brands claim to remove 50 percent of household odors - a great asset if you have animals and you want to sell your house.

The air purifiers also claim to attack dust, dirt, pollen, and allergens, removing up to 98 percent of the big particles. People with breathing conditions such as asthma will appreciate this feature, but it is also valued by environmentally conscious home buyers.

While these systems can be pricey, you can still boost air quality easily and inexpensively.

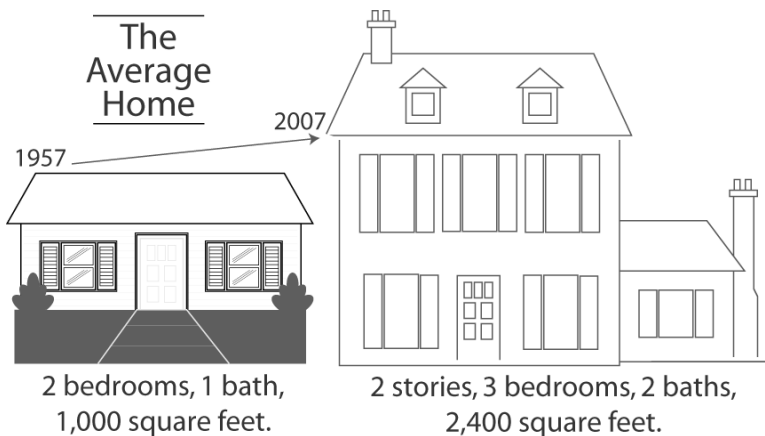
Here's how to do it:

Start with a thorough general cleaning, dusting, and sweeping. Then move onto the often-missed places such as ceiling fans, baseboards, and moldings.

Next, clean the duct work of your heating and air-conditioning system. Though a professional can do a thorough job, just placing the vacuum cleaner hose into various ducts can draw out a great deal of dust. Replace duct covers if needed.

Check your furnace vents. Make sure your furnace vents have clean filters in place.

## How our homes have changed



Source: National Association of Home Builders

## Getting There is Half the Fun!

Try This...

1. go to <http://www.google.com>
2. click on "maps" (above google search bar)
3. click on "get directions"
4. type "New York" in the first box (the "from" box)
5. type "London" in the second box (the "to" box)
6. scroll down to step #23

# FREE! Your annual home maintenance schedule. See page 2

## Quotes

Confidence is preparation. Everything else is beyond your control.

*Richard Kline*

The way you treat yourself sets the standard for others.

*Sonya Friedman*

Good humor is a tonic for mind and body. It is the best antidote for anxiety and depression. It is a business asset. It attracts and keeps friends. It lightens human burdens. It is a direct route to serenity and contentment.

*Grenville Kleiser*

Know well what leads you forward and what holds you back, and choose the path that leads to wisdom.

*Buddha*

You have to expect great things of yourself before you can do them.

*Michael Jordan*

# May 2007 *For More Knoxville Events Click here.*

Sun	Mon	Tue	Wed	Thu	Fri	Sat
May is Clean Air Month		1 Law Day	2	3 National Day of Prayer	4 NSRA Street Rod Nationals <i>Rossini Festival</i>	 Cinco de Mayo! May 5, 2007
6	7 Nurses Week	8 	9 Pet week	10	11	
 Remember Mom on this Mother's Day! May 13, 2007	14	15	16	17 F-100 Super Nationals	18 Truck Show	19
20 Safe Boating Week	21	22 Immigrant's Day, Canada	23	24	25	26  Victoria Day May 21, 2007
27 Indy 500	28  A time to honor those who served so bravely. MEMORIAL DAY May 28, 2007	29	30	31		

## What Role Does Pleasure Play In Your Life?

When you think pleasure in your life, you will find that going to a restaurant or visiting will probably rank high. Many activities are a pleasure, but realize that their effect on us is purely temporary. When you finish eating, for example, the pleasure is over. Don't confuse pleasure with happiness.

Happiness can't be found by pursuing it, but that's an idea that can be difficult to understand. It's not an end product or even an experience. It is a by-product of how you live.

The happiness-producing life is rooted in doing the right thing every day. Sometimes choices are difficult and you have to choose between two or more. Though you will make mistakes, looking for the right ultimately takes you toward happiness.

Experts say your future will be better if you have the wisdom and discipline to choose well more often.

Check your life goals before making decisions.

## What is Memorial Day?

Other than being a reason for a 3 day weekend or running of the Indianapolis 500 where did Memorial Day originate and what does it mean?

Memorial Day was officially proclaimed on 5 May 1868 by General John Logan, national commander of the Grand Army of the Republic, in his General Order No. 11, and was first observed on 30 May 1868, when flowers were placed on the graves of Union and Confederate soldiers at Arlington National Cemetery.

The first state to officially recognize the holiday was New York in 1873. By 1890 it was recognized by all of the northern states. The South refused to acknowledge the day, honoring their dead on separate days until after World War I (when the holiday changed from honoring just those who died fighting in the Civil War to honoring Americans who died fighting in any war). It is now celebrated in almost every State on the last Monday in May (passed by Congress with the National Holiday Act of 1971 (P.L. 90 - 363) to ensure a three day weekend for Federal holidays), though several southern states have an additional separate day for honoring the Confederate war dead: January 19 in Texas, April 26 in Alabama, Florida, Georgia, and Mississippi; May 10 in South Carolina; and June 3 (Jefferson Davis' birthday) in Louisiana and Tennessee.