

In Touch With BOB

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Homes ARE My Business

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Bob Evridge, Your Friendly Neighborhood Real Estate Expert

Kristopher & Co. Real Estate 865-584-5599

Bob@BobEvridge.com

www.BobEvridge.com

865-660-0198

March 20 marked the beginning of another Spring. Passover on April 2 and Easter, April 8 add to the significance of the season. Just in time warmer weather is making the dogwoods and redbuds explode with color. The daffodils have been sneaking in for weeks. The sounds of lawnmowers in the neighborhood announce the annual competition of keeping your yard neat. Nature is reminding us that winter doesn't last and life continually renews. Hooray for Spring!

People are supposed to make their lists of resolutions in January, but sometimes Spring brings us more inspiration to make changes than the winter months. Perhaps that is why so many home sales take place in the spring. As you become inspired to make changes in your life if any of them involve real estate I'm never too busy to answer your questions and help you with any dreams you might consider.

Bob

MAKE IT YOURS!

There are many ways to finance a dream

Finance all of it, part of it, or none of it. Whichever you chose, you've got plenty of company.

A 2006 survey by the National Association of Realtors found that 92 percent of home buyers financed their home and the typical buyer finances 91 percent of his home. Age and experience were big factors in how buyers financed their homes.

As you might expect, first time buyers were most likely to finance. Usually younger buyers, first-time buyers don't have cash from the sale of another home to put toward their purchase. They tend to have lower down payments and the average first-time buyer finances 98 percent of their home. Nationwide, 40 percent of first-time buyers finance the entire amount.

Buyers age 45 and older are less likely to finance a home purchase, and the number of buyers who finance decreases significantly after age 65.

These buyers are often repeat buyers or people



who are downsizing.

Of the people who do make a down payment, money from savings is the chief source of down payment funds for home buyers overall and that was also true for 73 percent of first-time buyers who had a down payment. About 40 percent of repeat buyers drew on savings for a down payment, while 62 percent of repeat buyers used the proceeds from the sale of a primary residence for a down payment.

The second most popular source of down payment funds for first-time buyers was a gift from relatives or friends (22 percent).

Once they decided to finance a home, about 71 percent of recent home buyers chose a fixed rate loan. About 8 percent had an adjustable rate loan. First-time buyers were more likely than repeat buyers to start with a fixed rate loan that eventually had rates adjusted.

Surprisingly, 3 percent of home buyers don't know what type of mortgage they have.

Easter by the numbers: Bunnies, beans and Peeps

About 76 percent of North Americans celebrate Easter. Those who do spend an average \$96.51 on food, clothing, gifts and decorations, according to the National Retail Federation.

Today, marshmallow Peeps outsell jelly beans

as the favorite Easter candy, although with 16 billion jelly beans sold for Easter, the tiny treats still makes a big appearance. About 90 million chocolate bunnies are made for the season.



Warm atmosphere can make buyers linger, page 2

Ask the expert

Q. I'm thinking of buying a home, but will renting cost less both now and in the future?

A. Be sure you are comparing apples to apples. That is, there will always be an inexpensive house or apartment you could rent, but it probably would not be as compatible to you and your family as a home of your own.

In terms of money, the National Association of Realtors notes that during the past 10 years, the cost of rental housing has increased an average of 3 percent per year.

That means the home or apartment you would rent for \$750 a month right now will cost \$978 a month 10 years from now. A fixed-rate mortgage, on the other hand, would cost the same amount per month over the next 20 or 30 years.

Once you get a mortgage, your house payment is set.

If you have other questions, be sure to call me at 865-660-0198.

Bob@BobEvridge.com

www.BobEvridge.com

865-660-0198

Three's a Crowd Sudoku

Sudoku is gaining popularity all across Europe. Only logic and patience are required. 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 right region and the top left region, what is the only possible location for the 3?

This technique is called "scanning" and you usually do it with your eyes and not a marker.

The difficulty rating on this puzzle is medium.

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

Warm atmosphere makes buyers linger

Sometimes it's not that hard to get prospective buyers to come to your home. What's more difficult is getting them to stay long enough to appreciate its features.

When taking a walk through a home, many people feel like intruders, as if they are impinging on your privacy. Sometimes they won't even go into the bedrooms.

But there are ways to make strangers feel more at home in your place. First, look it over and think of ways to give it a more homey look without creating clutter. A few well-chosen pillows can help as can live plants and flowers.

Step outside for a few breaths of fresh air, then

step back inside to check the aroma. People strongly associate a home with its particular smell. They might later refer to it as the house with the smell of cookies, or of flowers (or cats).

A few plug-in air fresheners can make a big difference.

A fresh flower arrangement on the dining room table is always a plus. Even if you buy a fresh bouquet every few days, it's worth the effort. Buyers often associate flowers with people who have really cared for their homes.

Of course, the homeowner or his family should never be present at a showing. People will not ask questions about the place if the owner is present.



Time to check your procrastination level?

Don't be offended now, but research shows that 95 percent of us dilly-dally to some degree.

The authority behind this statement is Dr. Piers Steel, the world's foremost expert on putting off until tomorrow what should be done today.

Steel, a human resources professor at the University of Calgary's Haskayne School of Business, says perfectionism is not at the root of procrastination. Perfectionists actually procrastinate less but worry about it more.

Better predictors are task aversiveness (not liking the task), impulsiveness (doing something else you just thought of), distractibility (not concentrating), and how much you are motivated to achieve.

To qualify as a procrastinator, a person must believe it would be better to start working on a given task immediately, but still not start.

The costs of procrastinating go well beyond missing deadlines, especially for those who delay filing their taxes or planning for retirement.

Motivational failure such as sticking to diet and exercise programs are related to impulsiveness. Temptations that are close at hand are hard to resist. The dieter may fill up on rolls before dinner at a restaurant just because they are there. In an office, a person may check email 10 times a day instead of getting on with a job.

The saying, "Whether you believe you can or believe you can't, you're probably right," is correct, says Steel. As you get better self control, your expectancy of whether you can resist impulsive temptations will go up.

Rita Emmett, a self proclaimed "Recovering Procrastinator", has written about procrastination. She offers not only sure-fire tips and techniques, but she also offers hope that procrastinators can convert. She is adamant that procrastination is NOT a personality flaw or a character trait, it is simply a habit.

Emmett, who holds a Master's Degree, is a Professional Speaker, Consultant, and the author of three books including *The Procrastinator's Handbook: Mastering The Art Of Doing It Now*. You can learn more about her and the products she offers at www.RitaEmmett.com.

Reverse mortgages can bring income from home equity

The product that has been an instrument of last resort for homeowners is becoming a more realistic option.

A reverse mortgage could help you pay for retirement. On the other hand, it could cost you a lot of money, though not as much as in the past.

The big rise in home values during the last several years has brought about record growth in these products, 77 percent more over the previous year. They give homeowners an income stream or a lump sum that they don't have to repay until they sell their home or die.

Projecting big growth opportunities in the future, firms such as IndyMac, Seattle Mortgage, and Bancorp have been cutting costs on reverse mortgages and offering special deals. Bank of America and Countrywide Financial expect to roll out such programs later this year. The competition is expected to additionally bring down costs.

The Department of Housing and Urban Development, which insures most reverse mortgages, wants to lower origination costs and mortgage-insurance premiums homeowners pay.

Ginnie Mae, a federal housing-finance agency, has

begun packaging reverse mortgages for sale on Wall Street. The move is expected to lower interest rates that consumers pay, since the agency's guarantee in the mortgage market generally lowers rates by between .5 percent and .8 percent.

The AARP Education Project reports that many forces are in play to bring costs down for consumers. It recommends that people wait for a time if they are thinking about a reverse.



To qualify for a reverse mortgage, a homeowner has to be at least 62.

Sudoku Answer

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



April 2007

Sun	Mon	Tue	Wed	Thu	Fri	Sat
1 Palm Sunday	2 Passover begins	3	4	5	6	7
8 Easter Sunday	9 Boston Marathon	10	11 D.A.R.E. Day	12	13 Dogwood Arts Festival On Market Square	14 Dogwood Arts Festival On Market Square
15 Dogwood Arts Festival On Market Square	16  April 16, 2007! *Avoid paying penalties by filing on time!*	17	18	19	20	21
22 Earth Day	23	24	25	26	27	28
29	30	National Wildlife Week			 April 27, 2007	

Words of wisdom

Next time you are feeling stressed and short of time, remember what business advisor Denis Waitley says: "We spend too much energy worrying about the things we want to do but can't, instead of concentrating on doing the things we can do but don't."

Waitley claims that regret for something done or not done yesterday, plus fear of what we might not be able to get done tomorrow is a huge energy drain.

The Lighter side

The highway patrolman noticed a car going just 22 miles an hour. He pulled the car over and noticed that there were five old ladies inside, eyes wide and white as ghosts.

The officer explained that driving too slow can be dangerous.

"But officer," said the driver proudly. "I was doing the speed limit exactly, twenty-two miles an hour!"

The officer explained that "22" was the route number, not the speed limit and asked if they were all OK.

"Oh, they'll be alright in a minute officer," the driver said. "We just got off Route 119."

An older gentleman in Florida just bought a new Ford Mustang and decided to take it out to see how it handled.

He got up to 85 MPH and was enjoying the ride, when he looked up in the mirror and seen that a Florida Highway Patrolman was behind him and was trying to pull him over.

The old man floored the car and when he looked down to see how fast he was going, it read 110 MPH. He decided that this was just too much so he pulled over.

When the Patrolman walked up to the vehicle, he said, "It's 3:00 on Friday afternoon and my shift is about to end. If you can give me reason why you were driving so fast that I've never heard before I'll let you off with a warning."

The old man thought for a minute and then told the Patrolman the following: "Well officer, 10 years ago, my wife ran off with a Florida Highway Patrolman and I thought it was him bringing her back to me."

The patrolman said, "Drive carefully and have a nice day sir." He then walked back to his car.