

*Susan and Gabe's*

# HOUSECALLS



## 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. We can't promise you'll forever love the home we find you, but we can promise to show you some choices that will meet your needs today and in the future. YOUR NAME & NUMBER

## 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.



## 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

## On the endless sidewalk

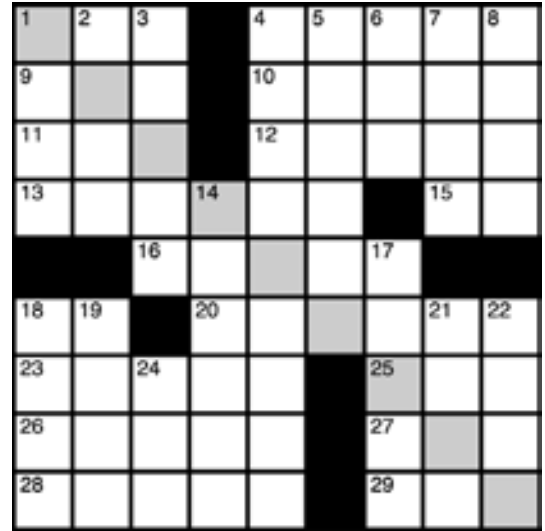
### Across

1. Fancy marble
4. Give a speech
9. Hockey great
10. Genuine
11. Type of dessert
12. Maternally related
13. Driver's license, for one
15. Part of a ft.
16. Praises
18. Form of 'to be'
20. Cheerleader need
23. Assumed name
25. UN agency
26. Flick
27. Building wing
28. Lagers

29. Actor Mineo

### Down

1. African antelope
2. Dry
3. Destroy
4. Takes too many drugs
5. Haphazard
6. Southern st.
7. S. American monkey
8. Adam's residence
14. Mother's helper
17. Observes secretly
18. Metrical foot
19. \_\_\_ gin fizz
21. Earthen cooking pot
22. Gangster's mistress
24. \_\_\_ got a secret



The headline is a clue to the answer in the diagonal.

## Trivia Teaser: Roads Scholar

1. Daniel Boone helped blaze the Wilderness Road as a principal route for settlers to travel to Boonesborough in what U.S. state? a-Kentucky, b-Pennsylvania, c-Florida, d-Illinois.

2. In the late 13th century, which noted explorer became one of the first Europeans to travel the Silk Road to China? a-Christopher Columbus, b-Juan Ponce de Leon, c-Marco Polo, d-Vasco da Gama.

3. What popular movie ends with actor Christopher Lloyd saying "Roads? Where

we're going we don't need roads"? a-Cocoon, b-Flight of the Navigator, c-Back to the Future, d-Mad Max.

4. The 1932 Erskine Caldwell novel Tobacco Road was about sharecroppers in which state? a-Mississippi, b-Louisiana, c-Alabama, d-Georgia.

5. What actress hit "The Road" 7 times, often wearing a sarong, in a series of movies with Bob Hope and Bing Crosby? a-Carole Lombard, b-Dorothy Lamour, c-Linda Darnell, c-Gene Tierney.

### Answers to 'Roads Scholar'

- 1-a, Kentucky
- 2-c, Marco Polo
- 3-c, Back to the Future
- 4-d, Georgia
- 5-b, Dorothy Lamour



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.

What you may not realize is that now is probably 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.





# July HOUSECALLS

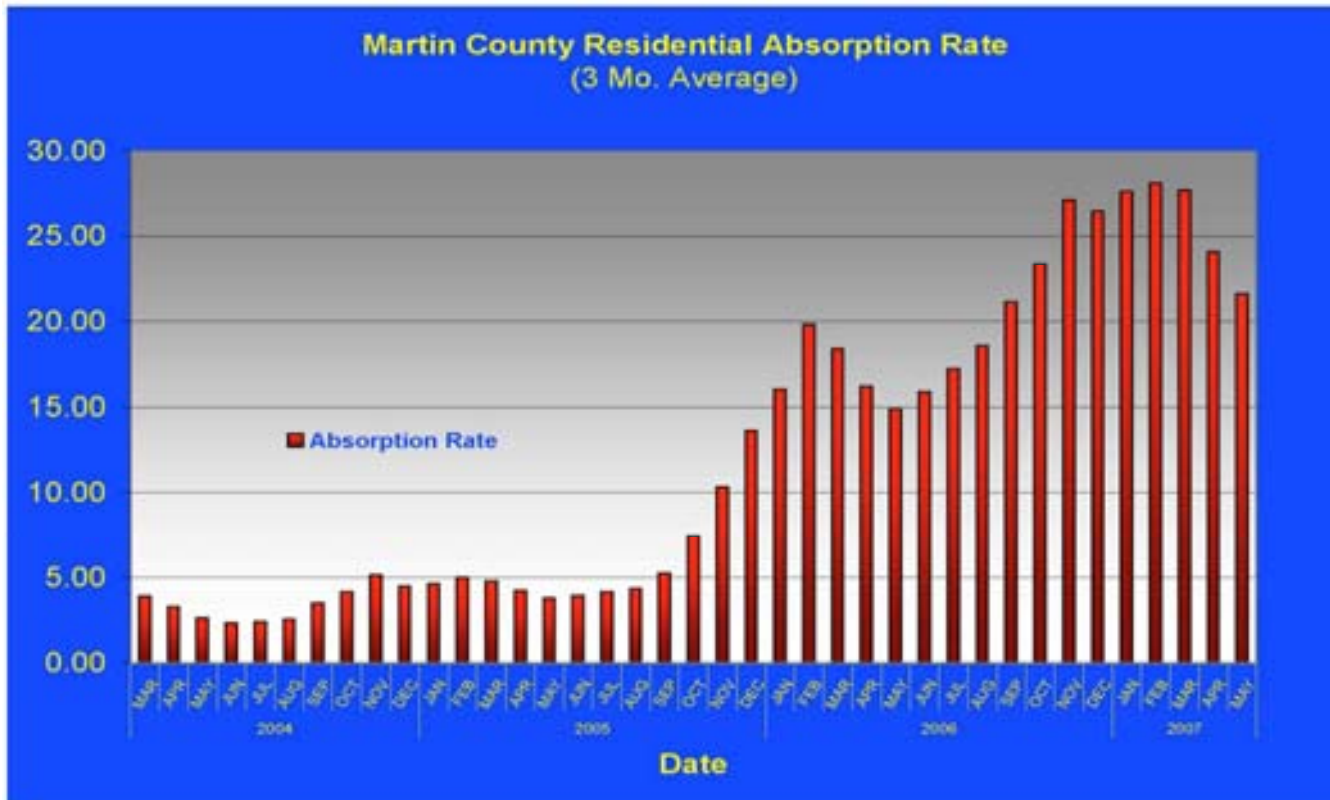
Sun	Mon	Tue	Wed	Thu	Fri	Sat
1 	2 Halfway point of 2007	3 Red, White, and Boom, Columbus Ohio	4 	5 Jumping championships, Yukon	6 Cisco Ottawa Bluesfest, Canada	7 Pepsi 400 Nascar, Daytona Beach, FL
8 Running of the bulls, Spain	9 Tour de France, 6 to 29	10	11 Wyandotte Street Art Fair, Michigan	12 Orangemen's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

## Trivia Contest for 'Roads Scholars'

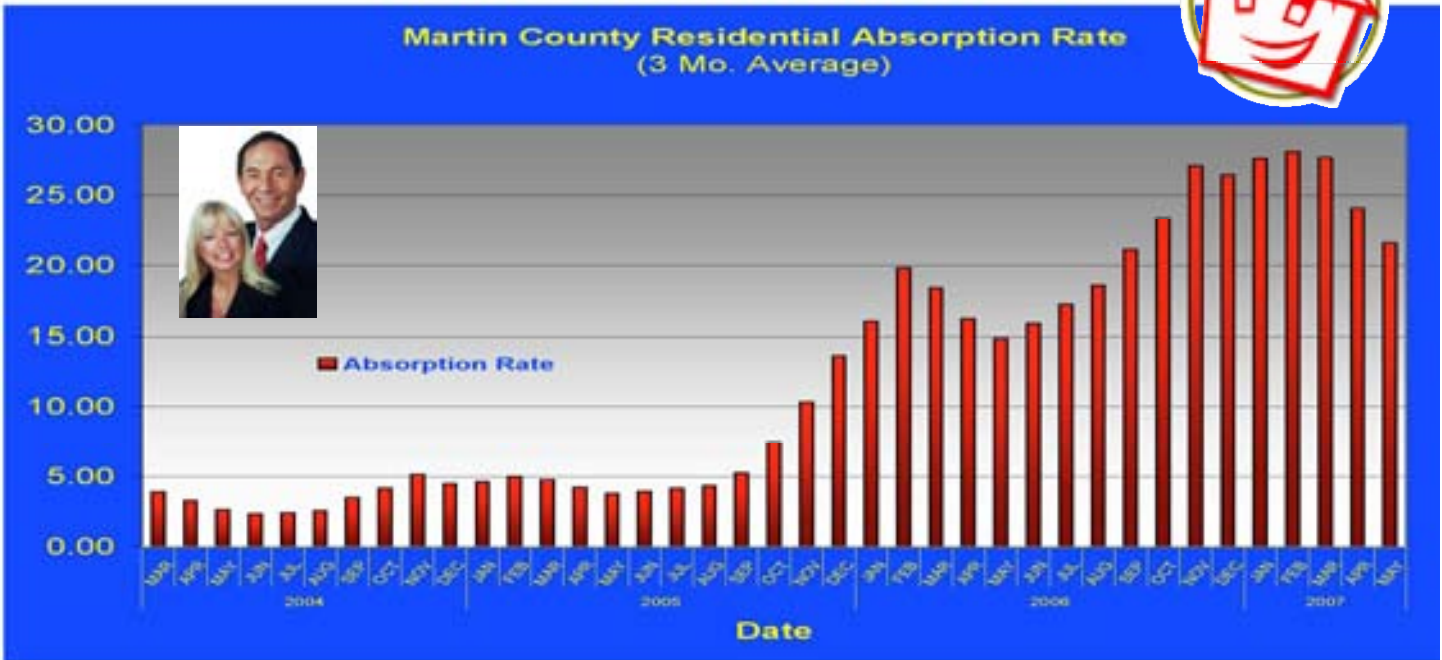
Answer the following question and email the answer to me. The first correct answer will win a gift certificate.

What poet began his Mountain Interval poetry collection in 1920 with the poem, "The Road Not Taken"? A.-Robert Frost, B-Carl Sandburg, C-Ezra Pound, D-T.S. Elliot.  
Email me at: [Gabe@GabeSanders.com](mailto:Gabe@GabeSanders.com)

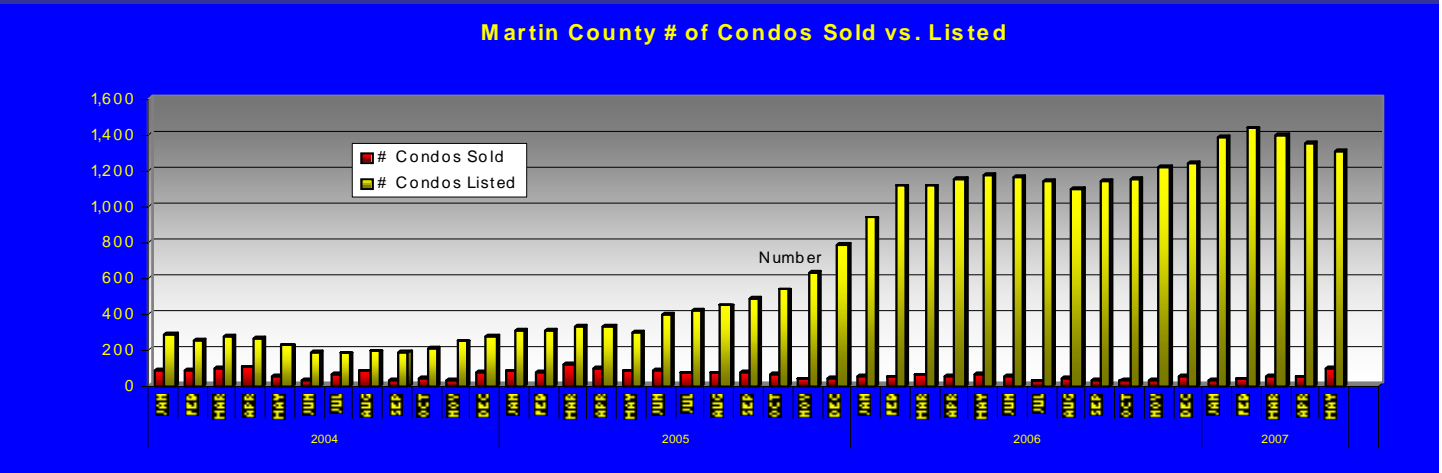
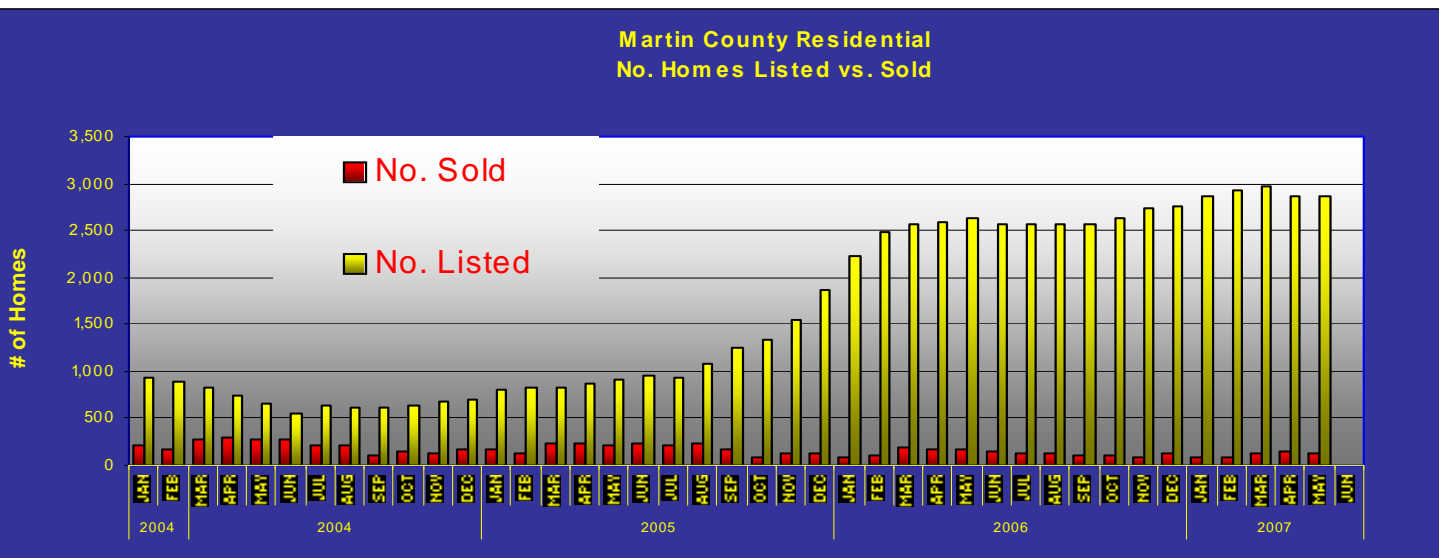
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