



Gabe's January 2018 Stuart Florida Real Estate HouseCalls



Airline Fees Taking Flight

Air travel is very convenient for those who need to cover great distances in a hurry. Although airfares have trended downward in recent years, the number of fees charged has more than outweighed the benefits of cheaper flights. According to NBC News, fees have been going up since airlines were ordered to unbundle their prices in 2008. The Government Accountability Office says that checked bags, priority boarding, reservation

changes, and other services added up to \$7.1 billion in revenue for airlines in 2016 which accounts for a substantial portion of their total incomes.

USA Today points out that many travelers are caught off guard at the airport by fees that are not addressed during the purchase of tickets. Buying tickets through different travel agents and online portals can further complicate matters if the differences between included options and a la carte additions aren't made clear.

Pop the cork on the bubbly! It's a great time to sell (and buy)

Everything is coming up champagne and roses for home sellers in 2018 as experts predict more home sales and rising home prices as Millennials appear to finally be buying.

For the new year, the real estate scene looks great for both sellers and buyers.

Buyers will benefit from low mortgage rates, ticking just past 3.9 to 4 percent in mid-November 2017 for a 30-year fixed rate mortgage. Analysts do not expect those rates to rise much, if at all.

In many areas, the number of houses for sale is low and that drives prices up. On the other hand, prices are not as high as in the recession-era market. Experts say that should give buyers some confidence.

The construction industry appears to be addressing the problem of a low supply of homes for sale as new construction rose in mid-November 2017, according to the U.S. Census Bureau.

The overall economy also forecasts a healthy housing market, as more people are working and tax cuts may add money to the economy.



third quarter of 2017, the highest level since 2014.

Sellers should take note that Millennials make up 66 percent of all first-time home buyers and 34 percent of buyers overall, according to Inc.

This generation is tech savvy and they shop the internet for everything from clothes to houses. That means good photos and online listings are essential to their buying power.

Millennials are more interested in home office space than previous generations as working from home is becoming more acceptable to employers. Today more than 3 million Americans work from home.

Cell reception is essential for this home buyer whose use of smart technology represents 43 percent of the smart market.

Millennials don't want to commute and they say convenience to their workplace is important in choosing a neighborhood. According to Inc, they also want to be near cities but not in them.

Millennials are buying

Millennials, who have married later than other generations, appear to be settling down and buying homes according to the Wall Street Journal. The Census Bureau in November reported that ownership increased to 63.9 percent in the

Ask the Expert



We want to buy a house right now. We can easily afford a mortgage payment, but we don't have a 20 percent down payment. What are our options?

The short answer is this: If you have good credit, you can probably get a loan. But, without a good down payment, your costs will go up.

To start with, you must have some cash to buy a home. There will be closing costs and you'll have to pay for taxes and insurance. But the key is that, without 20 percent down, you'll have to pay for Private Mortgage Insurance. The idea is that people who put their savings into a property are much less likely to default on a loan. The lender wants insurance that you will pay on your mortgage.

PMI is expensive and the less you put down, the higher the mortgage insurance is. The cost of PMI depends on your credit score and the size of your down payment. According to Mortgage lender Freddie Mac, the cost is from \$30 to \$70 per month for each \$100,000 borrowed. This is added to your monthly payment.

Still, if you want to buy now, you could get a loan from family mem-

More precious than diamonds: The rarest blood in the world

Suppose in one room we gathered Duffy, Kidd, Diego, Lutheran, Langereis, Vel, and Junior.

This would constitute a most extraordinary meeting because these are the names of the rarest blood types ever identified. Only 550 people in the world have Lutheran blood, for example.

But if in that meeting we included a man named Thomas from Switzerland, you would have the rarest meeting in the history of the earth.

There's no engaging name for Thomas' blood, except insofar as some have called it 'golden.' His blood is RH-null and it is so extraordinary that, of the 7.5 billion people in the world, only 43 have ever been identified as having it and only nine are active blood donors today.

Most people know there are eight blood types: A, B, AB, and O, positive or negative. But each of these blood types can be divided into distinct varieties depending on which antigens the blood contains or doesn't contain. AB blood has A and B antigens. O blood doesn't have either. Positive blood contains the Rh D antigen; negative blood lacks it. But there are hundreds of antigens coating the blood, making perhaps millions of combinations, according to Smithsonian.

It's important to know the antigen profile of blood because, if the wrong antigen combination is transfused, a patient can die. Even so, doctors do millions of transfusions every day with few complications.

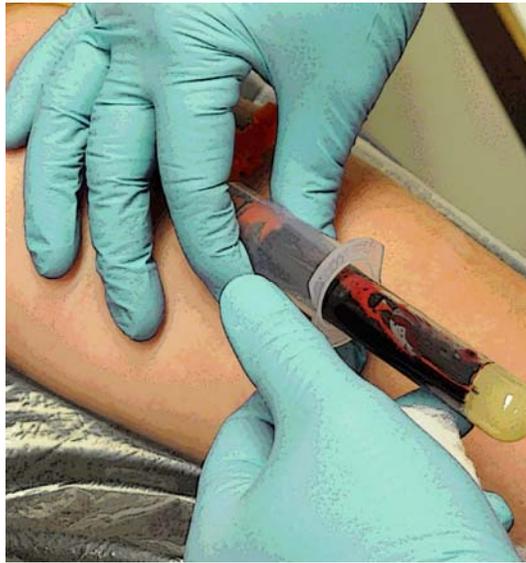
But golden blood is unique, and that is an understatement. Rh-null has no antigens. It can be accepted by anyone with a rare blood type in the RH system and that makes it infinite-

ly precious. It is so precious that it is never used except under the most extreme circumstances.

The flip side is that a person with RH-null blood can only accept RH-null blood. That means Thomas of Switzerland should never find himself in the position of needing a blood transfusion. If he does, he should certainly not find himself in a remote part of the world. This rare blood can be provided if the tiny

number of donors are available, but it requires an international mobilization of blood providers to do it. Much would depend on timing and Thomas' location.

In 2014, Thomas told Mosaic Science that he drives carefully, never speeds, and doesn't take vacations to exotic locales. But he does ski.



bers. Most lenders will accept this if the family members assert that money is a gift that doesn't have to be repaid.

If you have 3 percent as a down payment, Fannie Mae and Freddie Mac will back the loan, assuming your credit is good. You will pay PMI.

FHA backs loans with down payments of 3.5 percent. It also has lower credit score requirements. Buyers will have to pay a mortgage insurance premium.

For veterans, a VA loan requires a funding fee of 2.15 percent of the loan up front, in lieu of PMI.

USDA will guarantee loans with nothing down in rural and suburban areas if your income qualifies. It charges a mortgage insurance premium of 2 percent of the loan plus a monthly charge, according to US News.



Snow Global Warming

New Year's Resolutions: Try something new

Everyone resolves to lose weight and stop procrastinating.

Why stick with the obvious? Here are some resolutions that will make 2018 a little more interesting.

1 Master some jokes.

Why resolve to be more social if you don't know what to do when you get to the party? Try to find a selection of one-liners that will work in a variety of situations. Find a longish joke that will be suitable to tell at lunch with a friend. Maybe a spicy joke to tell a really good friend. But always have a sweet joke to tell someone's mother.

2 Learn a useful phrase in three languages.

Hey, you want to be debonair? Here's your chance. Go for Arabic and Mandarin if you are adventurous. If you want laughs, learn something silly. With one resolution, you tick off 'learn something new.' Done.

3 Learn to juggle.

A good party trick that will get everyone else involved and keep you busy while listening to YouTube videos. Hey, you aren't wasting time.

4 Give yourself a big win.

The problem with New Year's resolutions is that only 8 percent of resolvers keep their resolutions. That leaves 92 percent feeling like failures. They are resolving the wrong things. Instead, try something that you have a good chance of accomplishing:

- Always drink beer during a football game. If you break this resolution, you've probably quit drinking. Win.
- Spend more money on fun. If you break this resolution, you are saving more money.
- Never buy another organizational basket. So, if you do break down, you are getting organized.
- Never go to a gym. No sweat. But if you find yourself sweating, more's all the better.
- Never become a circus acrobat. Unless you are one now, this is a resolution you can keep.

Where are the parrots?

The beautiful and endangered Puerto Rican parrot should begin nesting this month in tree cavities throughout the El Yunque National Forest.

Except the forest is bare.

After two devastating hurricanes, the El Yunque forest of Puerto Rico is denuded of its canopy and, most ominously, it is silent.

No bird calls echo through the forest and none of the characteristic shrieks of the native Puerto Rican parrot.

The parrot, called iguaca, is found only in Puerto Rico. Once a million strong, by 1973 only a dozen parrots remained. Captive breeding programs have brought the numbers up to 500, more than half in the wild. An elaborate hurricane protection program saved 230 captive birds. But the double punch of two hurricanes in 2017, have left researchers wondering about the fate of the wild population.

Did they go elsewhere? Were they killed? And if they lived, where will they nest?

Since the storm, researchers have identified about 80 parrots, foraging for royal palm fruits, the last remaining of the scarce vegetation.

Some evidence hints that wild birds may have traveled away from the storm. One parrot was spotted miles away from the forest.

A few individuals were found dead.

What survivors there are will have to make a living in a forest without cover, at risk of attack by hawks. Artificial tree cavities are largely gone and trees are knocked down all over the forest.

Researchers fear an entire generation of parrots may be lost to the storms.



T MacKenzie, US Fish and Wildlife

Use a frugal month to catch up after the holidays

The holidays are often filled with extra spending on things like travel, gifts, and food and many people end the year feeling weighed down in the financial department.

Blog Frugalwoods suggests that people make January an 'uber frugal month' by spending as little money as possible.

Before starting, analyze all of the currently expected spending for the month.

Then, divide those expenses into a discretionary list and a mandatory list. Rent, for instance, is non-negotiable, while a latte can be easily skipped. Entire areas, such as entertainment, need a plan to decrease spending by substituting free or cheap options for the normal routines.

According to Bankrate, using no-spend periods isn't just about saving money but also learning to control impulses. Being able to separate actual needs from simple wants will go a long way toward creating sustainable spending habits as well as provide an excellent jumpstart to a more frugal lifestyle.

For people that can't manage a full month, blog Believe in a Budget recommends starting with a week or even a day. Their favorite, the no spend work week, allows a person to focus in on miscellaneous expenses that pop up during this time such as the before work coffee, expensive lunch at a restaurant, and unnecessary trips to the grocery store after work. It might feel a little strange bringing a bagged lunch to work, but it is also a great way to find more money for savings and investing in the things that are truly important.

January 2018



Gabe Sanders

REALTOR®

E-Pro, SFR

Real Estate of Florida

2391 SE Ocean Blvd.

Stuart, FL 34996

www.GabeSanders.com

Sun	Mon	Tue	Wed	Thu	Fri	Sat
	1 New Year's Day	2	3	4	5 National Bird Day	6
7 Golden Globes	8 College playoffs	9	10	11	12	13
14	15 Martin Luther King	16	17	18 Sundance Film Festival	19	20
21	22	23	24	25	26 Australia Day	27
28 Pro Bowl Grammys	29	30	31			

St. Lucie County Single Family Homes November 2017

Click on the Image for the full report

Monthly Market Detail - November 2017
Single Family Homes
St. Lucie County

The Voice for Real Estate® in Florida

Summary Statistics	November 2017	November 2016	Percent Change Year-over-Year
Closed Sales	425	371	14.6%
Paid in Cash	114	134	-14.9%
Median Sale Price	\$216,850	\$189,950	14.2%
Average Sale Price	\$228,513	\$206,324	10.8%
Dollar Volume	\$97.1 Million	\$76.5 Million	26.9%
Median Percent of Original List Price Received	96.9%	96.4%	0.5%
Median Time to Contract	41 Days	43 Days	-4.7%
Median Time to Sale	83 Days	84 Days	-1.2%
New Pending Sales	451	446	1.1%
New Listings	560	505	10.9%

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