

# HOUSECALLS



Gabe's July 2017 Stuart Florida Real Estate HouseCalls

## Buying a home? Clamp down on your credit usage

If you are pre-approved for a home loan, or ready to apply for a mortgage, lock down your credit use immediately.

One thing you don't want to do is make significant charges on your cards. Lenders can and will check your credit report a final time before approving your mortgage. If your debt to income ratio has changed, or your credit score has dropped, you might find your mortgage declined.

According to [thesimpledollar.com](http://thesimpledollar.com), it is best not to apply for new credit, open new accounts, or run your cards up to the limit.

A changing credit profile, especially your credit score, can cost you big money. A 100-point drop in your credit score would, at best, cause lenders to offer you a higher interest rate.

A 1 percent increase on a mortgage can increase your monthly payments by \$200 and increase the cost of the loan by thousands of dollars.



## Selling a home is often an emotional life experience

To you, your home might be priceless, the holder of your memories, hopes, dreams, even your sense of style and worth. But now, when you want to sell or have to sell, you have to start to think differently.

Every house has a price that someone is willing to pay. Your real estate agent will help you find that best price and the best person who will pay it. That match lets you move on to your next life adventure.

The good news is that in a sellers market, while your home isn't priceless, its value might be increasing.

According to CNN Money, nationwide, the median home price was \$225,000 during the first quarter of 2017, up 13 percent from a year ago. Expensive markets in California, for example, have seen six-figure price gains. In these markets, houses sell very quickly. Nationally, the average house was on the market for 45 days in the first quarter of 2017. That is substantially down from 84 days during the same period in 2011.

That is not true for all housing markets. About 46 percent of housing markets still have depressed



home values.

The key to selling a home quickly is pricing it right.

One key idea in pricing a home is finding a price that accurately reflects the market. You don't want to post a high price and then lower it to find a buyer. That just makes buyers wonder what is wrong with the home. You don't want to price your home too high. That turns off otherwise qualified buyers. The buyer and the seller want the best price. Your goal and the goal

of the real estate agent is to make that match.

To that end, sellers must not be sentimental about their home's worth or exceptionally optimistic about home sale prices in the area. A real estate agent will use comparable sales as a guide to pricing a home: What homes in the neighborhood are, as nearly as possible, identical to the sellers' home and what have they sold for in the last few months? This tells more about home worth than money spent on renovations or upgrades.

In fact, upgrading a home might not make it more sellable, if the home becomes the most expensive house in the neighborhood. Buyers who can afford the home, don't want to buy where they are surrounded by less expensive homes. Buyers who want the home, might not be able to afford it.

Location is crucial in home pricing. If, during your tenure in a home, the neighborhood has naturally upgraded, then you in for a happy surprise as to the home price. But if the neighborhood has deteriorated, then the price will also reflect that.

If everything remains the same, a house will not sell for more than a comparable property, no matter what the seller hopes to get out of it.

## Ask the Expert



*With our new baby on the way, my wife and I want to buy a slightly larger house. The house we can afford now isn't what we ultimately want. We will probably move in five years. Our lender recommended an ARM. But would it be good for us?*

An Adjustable Rate Mortgage (ARM) might work for you. They differ from a fixed rate mortgage in that ARMs start with a low interest rate and that rate rises over time.

Generally, ARMs are best for people who aren't planning to stay in one place for a long time.

They have some advantages. The rates will be lower in the short term and so payments will also be lower.

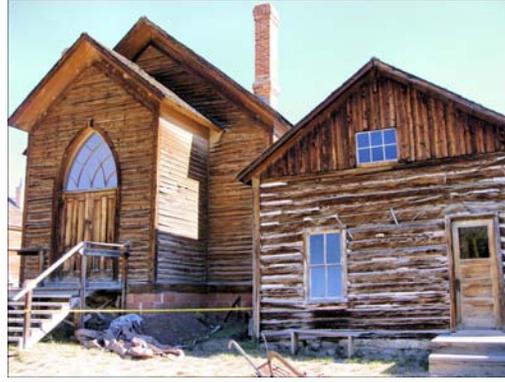
In fact, you might even be able to afford more house today because your lender will qualify you for the loan using a lower payment. But rates will rise over time. Ask yourself if you can afford the highest rate on the ARM.

You are only guaranteed a lower payment for the introductory term. If interest rates rise, then your payments will go up as well. That is why an ARM is usually best for people who won't stay in a property for a long time.

## A Ghost Town With Style

From East to West, July is the month for festivals, including these unique and lesser known celebrations.

In the West, the Bannack, Montana, ghost town is the high culture of ghost townering. No torn up wood buildings here for scary October celebrations. The Bannack Days celebration has never gained a lot of press or international tourism, but the ghost town, which is a national park, is truly unique. Built as a gold mining boom town around 1863, fortune hunters swarmed the remote area to pan for gold. They built a lively town of enduring brick and wooden structures: Bakeries, saloons, and a lovely Methodist church. Check out Bannack Days July 15-16 at the old town, if you can find it.



The address? It's about 11 miles upstream from where Grasshopper Creek joins with the Beaverhead River south of Dillon. Folks in Dillon will know where it is. Just ask around.

It is indeed a remote location, connected to Salt Lake, Utah, mainly by the Montana Trail. Back in the day, traders said you could pluck out a sage brush along the Grasshopper Creek and shake out a panful of gold. While there, don't miss the Lewis and Clark lookout hill nearby -- a tiny 8-acre park where Western explorer William Clark climbed a towering hill to chart the direction for the Corps of Discovery.

## Dutch Stone Homes

More than 275 years ago, the Dutch were constructing homes of stone of such enduring quality that the homes are still part of Main Street Hurlley, Massachusetts.

You can stroll down the street July 8, rain or shine, as residents open their old homes to visitors.

The 330-year-old village has quite a history in the new world.



According to [stonehouseday.org](http://stonehouseday.org),

"Among the open houses every year is the 1740 Van Deusen House, the temporary capital of New York after the British torched Kingston in October 1777, and the 1685 Spy House where a British spy was held before being hanged on an apple tree across the street in retaliation for Kingston's destruction."

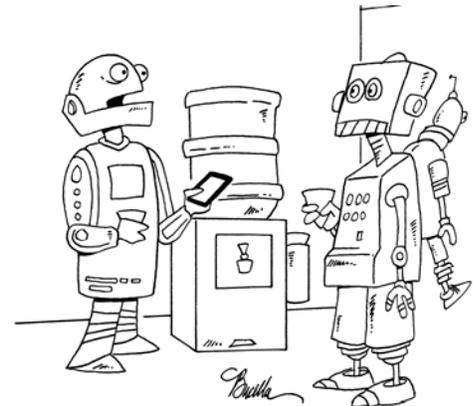
ARMs can be useful for some buyers, but they are often complicated and you should make sure you fully understand how your loan will work.

Interest on ARMs always increases and your monthly payments will increase with it. Nearly all ARMs have rate caps that will limit how much the interest can be increased and on what schedule.

The introductory rate on an ARM can be seductive because it is usually very low. This introductory rate will be limited to a certain period, five years for example.

There is also an adjustment period to tell you when your ARM interest will go up.

Other options on an ARM can limit the overall interest rate you can pay. Review this information carefully before deciding on an ARM.



"It just dawned on me that every time we make a phone call, it's a robocall."

## Don't swallow pool water

Outbreaks of a yucky pool parasite have risen two-fold in the last two years, according to the Centers for Disease Control.

The parasite goes by the nickname of crypto (for cryptosporidium) and is spread through human feces. It causes three weeks of diarrhea, stomach cramps, nausea and vomiting.

The parasite gets into the water at parks and pools primarily through kids under the age of 5 who poop in the pool even in small amounts.

Once in the water, ordinary chlorine levels that are safe for swimming don't affect the nasty bug. It can survive for up to 10 days at swim-safe chlorine levels. When detected, pool owners must keep people out of the water and add high levels of chlorine.

It's best to caution kids and adults never to swallow water from a swimming pool.

## Should you stop folding?

Folding laundry soaks up time. Should you stop doing it?

Blogger Dawn Madsen says yes.

Instead of folding everything from underwear to shirts, Madsen, a mother of three, sorts.

Kids clothing, she says, just doesn't need to be folded. She designated boxes in the kids' bedroom for pajamas, underwear, tops and bottoms. The kids can pull out the box they want, look for their favorite shirt, and return the box to the closet. The kids don't look ruffled, she says, since the fabrics are no iron.

She also completely eliminated sock matching by disposing of all unmatched socks. She bought identical socks for the kids. Now she just tosses the socks into a designated basket and, since every sock matches the others, kids simply reach in the basket and get two.

Her husband's clothing does need to be folded, she says. But some things don't, such as underwear and undershirts. These are tossed unfolded into a basket. Read more at [ithink-wecouldbefriends.com](http://ithink-wecouldbefriends.com).

## Lack of sunlight affects brain power, study says

It has long been known that sunlight can affect mood. A new study shows that sunlight, or lack of it, can affect thinking power.

Short-term recall in particular can be affected by lack of natural light, according to a University of Alabama study by a team led by Shia Kent.

The effects were most striking in study participants with depression coupled with lack of sunlight.

## Best way to cook mushrooms

If you want to retain all the vitamins, amino acids and fiber in mushrooms, don't fry. A study by the Mushroom Technological Research Center in Spain found that antioxidant activity increased when cooked by microwave or grill.



## America's Great Seal: Conspiracy magnet

Got a conspiracy? Want one?

Look no further than the Great Seal of the United States: A magnet for all things arcane from conspiracies of Freemasonry, secret plans, and even Satanism.

The Seal didn't start out to be mysterious. When the American revolutionaries, men like Benjamin Franklin and Thomas Jefferson, finished their revolution, they had to set up a government, and that included creating an official seal for documents.

According to the Great Seal's official history, it took years and three committees before Congress could decide on a design that everyone liked. Franklin and Jefferson offered different models that included everything from Moses on the shore of the Red Sea to a depiction of Hercules.

Most everyone has seen the final product, though perhaps not everyone knows what it is. The Great Seal, adopted in 1782, appears on the dollar bill and passports.

On one side it features a bald eagle clutching an olive branch in one hand and a bundle of arrows in the other along with the famous saying E Pluribus Unum (Out of many, one) motto on a banner in its mouth. The eagle is covered in a shield that looks similar to the American flag.

On the other side is an unfinished pyramid with the Eye of Providence above it and two mottoes in Latin: Providence Approved and New Order for the Ages.

And, enter the conspiracies:

*\* Freemasonry controls the United States.*

The Eye of Providence is said to be a Freemason symbol. But, in fact, the masons may have copied the idea from the Seal since the Eye was not a symbol of masonry until 1797. But Benjamin Franklin was a Mason. So, hey...¶

The Eye, especially, might seem cryptic to modern viewers, but it was a traditional symbol of God, found in paintings throughout Christian history.

*\* Satanists and other evildoers put the 'New Order' motto in as a map to their goal of establishing one government for the world.*

Either that or it was supposed to be hopeful.

*\* A Secret Society of Power, vested in 13 families.*

Think not? Well why are there 13 stripes on the eagle, 13 arrows in his talon, 13 leaves upon the olive branch, 13 olives on the leaves? Conventional explanation: They stand for the 13 colonies. Seems right. But hey...¶



# July 2017



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Sun	Mon	Tue	Wed	Thu	Fri	Sat
						1
2	 July is time for family reunions		5	6	7	8
	Dog Days of Summer July 3—11		<b>Independence Day</b>			
9	10	11	12	13	14 Bastille Day (France)	15
16 Nat'l. Ice Cream Day	17	18	19 National Hot Dog Day	20	21	22
23 Parents' Day	24	25	26	27	28	 <b>Danger!</b> Use extreme caution
30 National Cheesecake Day	31					

## St. Lucie County Single Family Home Sales May 2017

Click on the Image for the full report

### Monthly Market Detail - May 2017

#### Single Family Homes

#### St. Lucie County





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Summary Statistics	May 2017	May 2016	Percent Change Year-over-Year
Closed Sales	592	538	10.0%
Paid in Cash	177	153	15.7%
Median Sale Price	\$205,000	\$176,000	16.5%
Average Sale Price	\$227,187	\$194,931	16.5%
Dollar Volume	\$134.5 Million	\$104.9 Million	28.2%
Median Percent of Original List Price Received	96.3%	96.0%	0.3%
Median Time to Contract	40 Days	38 Days	5.3%
Median Time to Sale	82 Days	83 Days	-1.2%
New Pending Sales	605	554	9.2%

View all Market Reports for [Martin County](#), [Saint Lucie County](#), and [Florida \(statewide\)](#)

Click on the name of the region above to view the reports.



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