

Gabe's March 2013

HOUSECALLS

The Gabe Sanders Real Estate Team - 2 N Sewalls Point Road, Stuart, FL 34996 - 772-323-6996

Give the guest bath some thought before a party



Gabe Sanders

It's a party. The home is lovely and the guests' half bath features a wall-and-a-half that's beautifully painted with tropical vines and flowers. There's fancy soap, hand lotion and a small but lovely sculpture on the marble counter.

As the 15 or 20 guests intermittently migrate in and out of the half bath, you decide it's your turn. The room competes with the rest of the house for beauty, including the embroidered towels.

But there are just two towels. Each is either damp or wet from previous hand washings, and you can't help but feel uncomfortable about drying your

hands where many others have already wiped theirs.

It's not an uncommon situation even in upscale homes.

The solution is to provide a stack of high-quality paper towels for those who want to use them and a handy disposal basket. For extra class, you can buy monogrammed towels.

Other matters that bring success to your party include soft lighting in the half bath, which makes guests feel attractive as they enjoy a respite from the festivities. One decorator offers a chair and a book of (very short) poems.

Sellers: Keep an eye on the details to make the sale go through

After you've waited impatiently for home prices to rise, you're finally ready to sell. And you have an offer or two.

You probably want to go ahead quickly with the deal so you can buy a new home or move to another city. But don't get too excited before you know certain facts. Is the buyer preapproved for the mortgage amount?

Preapproval is basic, but it doesn't guarantee that the buyer's loan will go through. One study showed that financing problems were responsible for 40 percent of failed deals.

Your agent will check with the buyer's agent to make sure the buyer has provided the documentation the lender requested.

Consider a "financing contingency" agreement so you can entertain other offers if financing can't be arranged by a certain date.

If the buyer is getting an FHA insured loan, your real estate agent will help you correct problems ahead of time that might be flagged in the appraisal, such as chipping paint. Your agent might suggest that



you do your own inspection to catch problems early.

Consider a cash offer

A buyer who doesn't need financing is more of a sure bet. A cash bid is typically lower, but the deal is faster to close and doesn't require an appraisal. Some sellers feel that avoiding the appraisal process

can compensate for a somewhat lower offer.

Prepare for the appraisal

First, price the home according to your real estate agent's advice. It should be in line with comparable homes in the area. Still, appraisers are often overly conservative in their valuations, even as home prices are rising.

As a seller, you need to think about what to do if the appraisal is low. In one case, the appraisal came in \$5,000 short. The seller dropped the price by \$2,500 and the buyers brought \$2,500 more to the table.

Solve title problems early

A preliminary title report doesn't tell the whole story of your property. Have your real estate agent check for any problem that will delay the closing.

He or she will determine whether the title was actually recorded; whether an easement was granted that you aren't aware of; or whether there's a lien of some sort on the property that you don't know about.

Ask Gabe



Now that we've listed our home with you, what can we do to help you sell it fast?

There are a number of things. Some seem obvious, but there's a "best way" to do each one.

First, get several storage boxes that are all the same size and color. You're going to fill them and stack them in the garage, so you want the stacks to look nice.

Then go about your home and de-personalize it. Pack away all the family photos so prospects can visualize the place as theirs, not yours. Remove the religious items for the same reason.

Though some sellers hire a professional stager, there's a lot you can do yourself. Think about how builders' model homes look. There are no unnecessary objects anywhere.

Try to look at your shelves, closets and countertops with new eyes and you'll see clutter. Don't get sentimental about anything, especially gifts from others. The givers don't care. Give much of it to charity and put the rest in boxes.

Closets, cabinets and drawers have to be neat

Trends in Home Automation

These days, you're probably hearing a lot of buzz about home automation systems that allow homeowners to remotely access and control things, like heating, air conditioning, and even some kitchen appliances, using a smartphone. Here's a look at the different systems in the market, and a peek at what may be coming next.

What makes a smart home smart?

Home security systems, lighting timers and programmable thermostats are nothing new. In recent years those technologies have evolved, becoming integrated into comprehensive, Internet-connected systems that give you an unprecedented level of control when you're away from home.

Home automation services like ADT PulseSM, Comcast's XfinityTM Home and AT&T Digital LifeTM offer features like remote video monitoring, alarm alerts, appliance monitoring and much more. Using a smartphone or tablet app, you can keep an eye on what's happening at your home, turn lights on and off, lock and unlock doors, and set your thermostat so the house is warm when you get home.

Forgot to close the garage door? What if your teenager loses the house keys? Not sure if you left the oven on? With a home automation system, these could be problems of the past. The upside of this technology is obvious—it offers a tremendous amount of convenience and control. But, is it right for you?

Is a smart home system the smart choice for you?

The first thing to consider if you're looking at a home automation system is cost. Like traditional home security systems, some providers charge monthly or annual fees to monitor and maintain home automation systems. They all

and organized. People will look inside to see how their stuff will fit.

The next step is to rearrange rooms so they have a spacious feel. Get rid of extra chairs, end tables and magazine racks in the living room. Take extra chests and chairs out of the bedrooms. Get rid of the extra clothes or pack it up.

Check to see what rooms should be painted. A neutral beige is best.

The exterior view of your home is what prompts buyers to make an appointment to see it, or to

require an Internet connection, and you'll need a compatible smartphone or tablet in order to control the system remotely.

There are expenses associated with each of these components, so it is best to have a good idea of the total cost of a home automation system including the initial set-up and ongoing operation.

Imagine getting a text from your refrigerator.

In addition to whole-home automation systems, connected technologies are beginning to appear in a variety of home appliances. Some

high-end appliance manufacturers now offer WiFi connected appliances, including refrigerators and washing machines, that allow remote monitoring and control through smartphone apps.

Imagine your fridge sending you a text telling you that you need milk. With today's technology, it's possible.

There's even a water faucet filtration system on the horizon that will communicate with your smartphone and tell you what's in your water, when to replace the filter and which filter is best for your water chemistry.

What's next?

The possibilities of integrated home technology seem to be limited only by the imagination of product designers.

Your next coffee table could double as a giant tablet computer that functions as the digital hub for your entire home. New types of glass even hold the promise of turning your bathroom mirror into a touch-screen digital display. And the list goes on.

Whether you choose to install a smart home system in your home or not, it seems that the age of web-connected home technology is just beginning.

drive on to the next place. Have the yard cut and trimmed, clear the driveway and walkways and make sure the house number is clearly visible.

Now that you're almost ready. A very thorough cleaning comes last. A professional cleaning is worth the cost.

Many prospective buyers begin their home search on the Internet. We'll create an ad listing for you, or you can do it yourself. Either way, it pays to use professional photos taken of the exterior and some of the inside rooms.



National kite month

Visit a kite festival, or fly one in the great outdoors

National Kite Month begins on March 31 this year and continues through the month of April. Kite flyers of all ages attend festivals to participate in competitions, swap ideas and designs, view awesome demonstrations, see a spectacular array of kites, or buy a few new ones.

In Texas. On March 3, you can fly a kite in Austin, Texas, at the 85th Annual Zilker Kite Festival, the nation's oldest. Its mission: Fly a Kite, Help a Child. The Kite Tournament was created in 1929 to encourage kids' creativity and give them a constructive activity the community could participate in.

In Washington, D.C., March 30, on the grounds of the Washington Monument on the National Mall, the Blossom Kite Festival is held. It's now a part of the National



Cherry Blossom Festival and remains one of the most popular annual events.

Thousands of kite enthusiasts from across the United States and the world

come to show off their stunt skills and compete for awards in over 36 categories, including aerodynamics, beauty, box, and funniest. Top prizes are given for the Theme Award, People's Choice, Family Trophy, and Highest Overall Score. This year's theme is "100 years of friendship," encompassing 100 years of blossoms, Japan-USA friendship and springtime in DC.

You don't have to travel far to enjoy a kite festival. Kite flying has become one of the fastest growing sports worldwide, although people were flying kites 1,000 years before paper was invented!

Over 50 million kites are sold in the United States each year.

This month, when someone tells you to go fly a kite! Do it! Benjamin Franklin and the Wright brothers did.

Check your sump pump before big spring rains

The lowly sump pump in your basement or crawlspace may be something you rarely think about.

Before the biggest spring rains start to fall, it's time to test it, check its operation and its discharge. Don't wait until it should work and doesn't.

If properly installed, the pump will be in a well of some kind. To test its operation, use a garden hose or a bucket to run water into the well. It might take more than you think to start pumping. Continue filling until the pump has cycled on and off three times.

Turn off the breaker that provides electricity to the pump and reach down to see if debris has gathered around the intake. Clear it out to avoid future problems.

Plugging the pump into an extension cord will shorten its life. Ideally, you should have an electrician install a dedicated circuit (20A) and a cord long enough to reach it without interruption.

Next, go outside to check what discharge water is doing. It should be some distance from your home and on a slope to assure that the discharge will not flow back to the pump and have to be pumped over again and again. Be sure the discharge hose isn't partially plugged with sticks and leaves.



The pump itself will give no indication that it's going to quit, but it will after five to seven years. If this would cause a serious problem for you, it's a good idea to invest in a battery-operated pump to back it up.



Some companies celebrate 'Formal Friday'

Casual Friday encourages employees who dress up for work to wear casual clothes on Friday.

Nonconformist workplaces in Silicon Valley and other trendy parts of the country think that's too conformist.

Now Fridays are formal.

One reason for the change: workers who wear super-casual clothes on Monday through Thursday want to get away from their hoodies, T-shirts and jeans for a day.

Silicon Valley gaming giant Zynga has Formal Friday traditions when some groups of workers dress to the nines. Since 2005, Facebook has had a design team that dresses up for what has become known as "Corporate Friday."

Our Featured Listings

No expense spared from conception to completion. Old world charm. Mediterranean architectural ambiance and hand crafted finishes. Gold Medallion award winner for best architectural design and winner of the highly coveted Aurora Award; the Southeast's premier building industry's highest recognition, epitomizes luxurious yet casual waterfront living. You will be mesmerized by miles and miles of sweeping waterfront views ending your day in awe of the magnificent sunsets and the tranquil sparkling lights of town at night. Deep water dock and covered slip. Only with a personal, private preview of this masterpiece could you truly appreciate the special opportunity presented. Professional photographs and a detailed feature list available upon request.

\$2,900,000

[Click here for more info.](#)

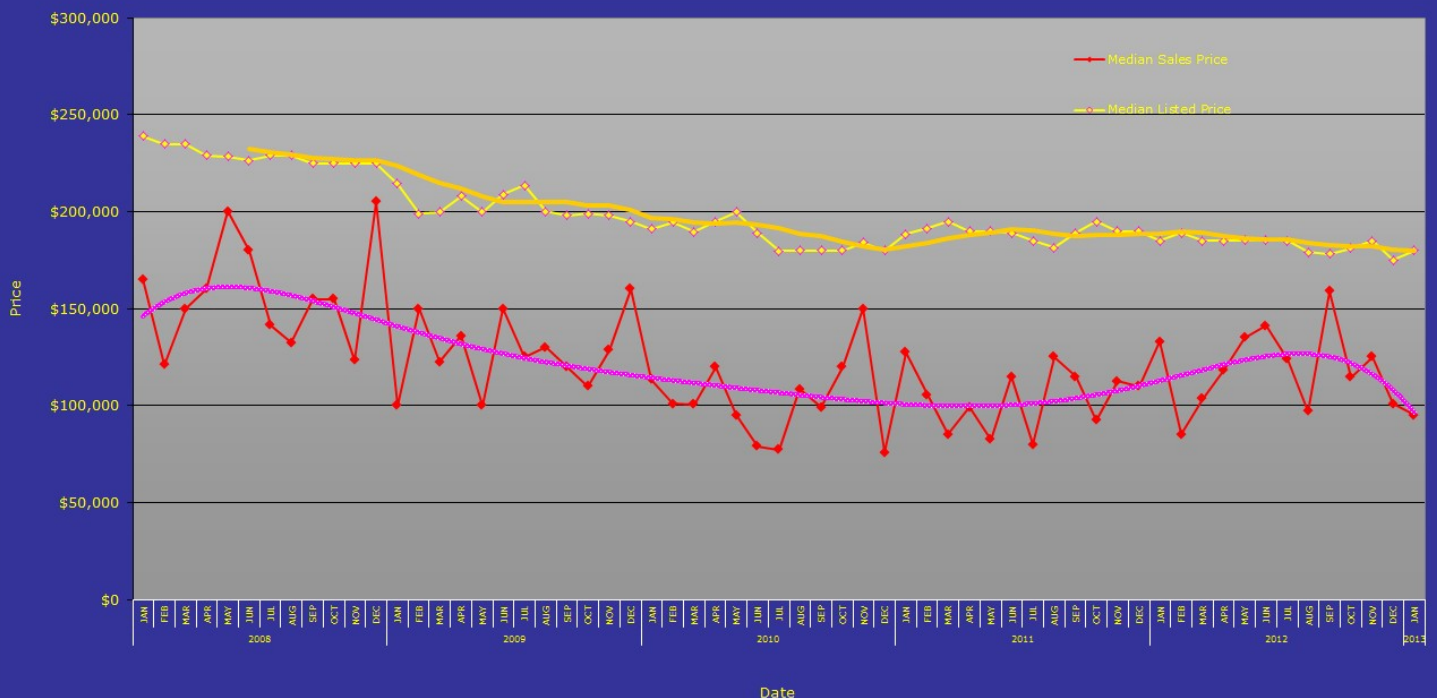


Spacious town home with private quiet location in River Pines. Only a short walk or bike ride to the Saint Lucie River with access for kayak launch. Boat ramps also nearby. All ages welcome and 2 small pets permitted. 2 reserved parking spots with additional guest parking. 2 Community pools, tennis courts and racquetball/handball courts. Well run community with excellent financials. Residents have the option of joining the Miles Grant golf club (just across the street). A partial list of updates include: Roof was replaced and updated in 2001, new AC in 2009, All sinks and toilets updated, Updated appliances, Patio is enclosed with argon glass filled roof and 75 mph windows and three glass skylights, Extra storage in patio as well as exterior shed.

Offered for \$115,000

[Click here for more info.](#)

Martin County Condo Price History



View the complete set of Martin County graphs at: www.TreasureCoastFLHomes.com



Disclaimers: All real estate information deemed reliable but not guaranteed and should be independently verified. All properties are subject to prior sale, change, or withdrawal. Neither listing broker(s) nor this company shall be responsible for typographical errors, misinformation, misprints and shall be held totally harmless. If your property is currently listed with another real estate broker, this is not a solicitation of that listing.