

HOUSECALLS

Gabe's February 2018 Stuart Florida Real Estate HouseCalls



News from home: Renting out a room to travelers?

Millions of people are renting rooms in private homes instead of hotels. And millions are doing the 'hosting.'

Before you join the crowd to rent out a room for that extra dash of cash, review your homeowners insurance.

Likely, your homeowners insurance doesn't cover damage or liability if you rent rooms, according to How Stuff Works. Once you rent a room, your home becomes a business.

Be sure to talk to your insurance agent before you rent out a room. You might be well advised

to get a landlord policy to cover liability and damage. That is especially true if you have a pool.

Tension rods: Cheap, and useful, too!

Curtain tension rods aren't just for curtains.

The useful little devices can help you create all sorts of things:

- Under the sink, use rods to hang spray cleaners.
- In cabinets, use as plate or pan lid separators.
- In closets, use them to hang shoes.
- In craft spaces, they can hold spools of ribbon.
- In kitchens, use them to hang rolls of paper towels in cabinets or under the sink.

Feel the breeze? A home for your Valentine is in the wind

If you have a heart for a new home this year, the real estate market is shaping up nicely for February.

The market has a nice breeze pushing it along as good job numbers, lower tax rates, and a stronger economy push a market that has been good for sellers because prices are higher, and good for buyers because mortgage rates are low.

Meanwhile, the Federal Reserve is widely expected to raise interest rates incrementally during 2018 to reach a 2 percent increase. Since the next Fed meeting isn't until the end of March, February remains a great time to get a mortgage and buy a home.

Homeowners who have waited to market their properties are increasingly likely to do so now because asking prices are a little higher but still attractive to potential buyers.



For buyers, the time is right to get a jump on the Spring sales season.

The new tax plan passed by Congress in December 2017 won't affect many homebuyers, at least as far as the new mortgage deduction is concerned.

For buyers of very expensive homes, it allows a deduction of mortgage interest up to \$750,000. This is lower than the previous limit of \$1 million.

The limit only affects new mortgages, not existing mortgages. Since the median list price of a home is about \$250,000, most homeowners won't be

affected by the limit decrease. The new limit is expected to affect about 1.3 percent of new mortgages on very expensive homes, usually in expensive housing markets such as coastal areas.

The new limits on deductions aren't expected to affect many people national-

ly, according to realtor.com. That's because homeowners can only take the deduction if they itemize and only about one-third of taxpayers do that. Of those that itemize, just over 21 percent use the deduction. However, it will affect high-cost markets in local areas.

Experts are divided as to the impact of the new tax plan. Some see the tax changes as encouraging renting in high-cost areas, causing housing prices to fall. On the other hand, with a higher standard deduction, taxpayers in lower brackets could be able to buy. That could push prices up, according to realtor.com.

Ask the Expert

What is a USDA loan?

Many people are currently hoping to live the American Dream of becoming a homeowner, and according to Nerd Wallet, the U.S. Department of Agriculture's special home loan might just be the ticket they are seeking.

While this department might seem an unlikely place to find a loan for a new house, the point of the program is to help growth in the more rural parts of the country where incomes are typically lower than their urban counterparts. To spur that growth, USDA loans come with excellent benefits.

One of the most significant incentives for going after a USDA loan is that they require no money down at all to secure the loan and it guarantees lower interest rates. This will help young buyers or families that otherwise struggle to save up for a down payment on a traditional loan. Nearly 140,000 families were able to take advantage of this in 2014 alone.

The loans work in a couple of ways: loan guarantees and direct loans. With a loan guarantee, a buyer will use a local lender affiliated with the program. Then, the government will act as the guarantor on that loan so that the buyer will have access to better terms, much like how it would work using a co-signer. A direct loan is one issued straight from the USDA, and these are found among the low- and very low-income applicants to

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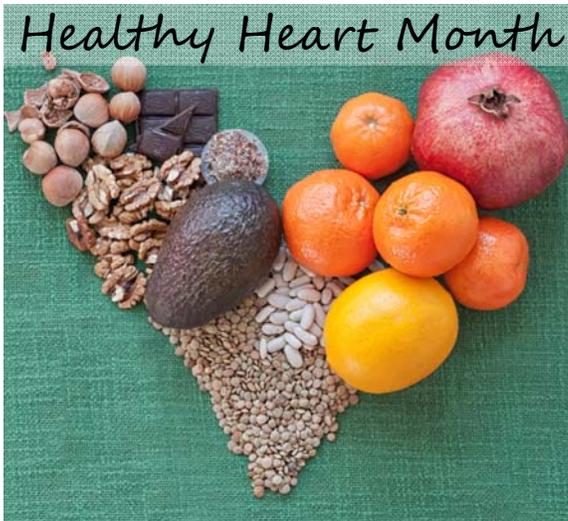
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the program. Subsidies with direct loans can bring the interest rate down to as little as one percent.

The supply of houses that are eligible for the loan are located in rural areas. There are, however, some options in more suburban locations that could strike a right balance for daily commuters. Applicants must also fall within some specific income, debt, and credit score thresholds and these vary from location to location. Typically, the monthly payment on the home cannot exceed 29 percent and credit scores should be at or above 660. USDA mortgage lenders will also be looking for a good payment history to other creditors, and applicants with a score under 580 will have to undergo a more thorough review.



"I'm trying to figure out online shopping. I've found some pants I like, but can't find a fitting room."



What's new

One shot could someday reduce heart attack risk

Gene therapy might lead to a one-time vaccine-like treatment that would permanently lower bad cholesterol and reduce the risk of heart attack by as much as 88 percent.

Heart disease is currently responsible for about one in every four deaths in the United States, adding up to more than 600,000 deaths each year.

According to the Harvard Stem Cell Institute, however, new genome research shows great promise of permanently reducing the risk of heart attack.

Work on this project first started in France in 2003 when researchers discovered that a specific gene in the liver, PCSK9, seemed to be responsible for cholesterol regulation. Some families with a mutation of this gene had very high cholesterol and were very likely to have early heart attacks.

Meanwhile, in Texas, another research group identified a population that had a different kind of mutation of PCSK9 -- this time a very good mutation. This mutation produced the opposite effect. People with the mutation have very low levels of low-density lipoprotein (LDL or bad) cholesterol levels. What's more, they were significantly less likely to have a heart attack.

A recently developed gene editing technology called CRISPR/Cas9 allowed these researchers to alter the PCSK9 gene in mice to convert it to the good version. This change caused the liver to stop producing a particular protein that would prevent the removal of cholesterol in the bloodstream. It also solved the problem that traditional cholesterol drugs have - they don't last very long. Rather than constantly having to get shots or take medicine to reduce cholesterol, scientists hypothesize that it may be possible to have a lifetime change in effect with just one application.

Mayo Clinic tells how to build a healthier heart

A healthy heart is essential for longevity and an active life. The Mayo Clinic and Gaiam, the alternative health and wellness experts, have teamed up to bring you an integrated plan to help you maintain a healthy heart and live life to the fullest.

Gaiam is a lifestyle brand that also has products geared toward healthy living. Gaiam is well-known for fitness products, especially those relating to the practice of yoga

This three-step action plan combines techniques that are helping many improve their heart health.

1. Start with understanding your condition. Your doctors will share essential information about your heart and your health — how to prevent leading heart conditions, and how to manage existing conditions while using the most successful conventional and alternative therapies available today.

Dean Ornish, M.D., a professor and researcher in San Francisco, has pioneered ways of reversing heart disease. His approach combines a number of alternative therapies, including vegetarianism (eating no meat, poultry, or fish), meditation, and yoga.

2. Eat well to feel better. Heart doctors will tell you about shopping, how to shop smart and select everyday foods that you and your family can enjoy while promoting better health.

Mayo Clinic dietitians say vegetables and fruits are good sources of vitamins and minerals. They are low in calories and rich in dietary fiber. Vegetables and fruits contain substances found in plants that may help prevent cardiovascular disease.

3. Moderate exercise and stress-relieving techniques bring this action plan into balance.

Stent patients should beware of sleep apnea, study warns

Obstructive sleep apnea, the most common type of sleep problem, has long been linked to coronary artery disease, stroke and other heart-related problems.

A new study takes these findings further, linking OSA to blood clot formation in stents in heart patients.

The condition, called stent thrombosis, is a life threatening problem.

Writing in the August 2017 issue of BMC Cardiovascular Disorders, researchers found that patients with OSA had a 7.34 times greater risk of stent thrombosis than patients without OSA.

People with OSA frequently snore and gasp for breath during sleep. They can be excessively sleepy during the daytime and have insomnia at night. They also have frequent incidents of nightmares.

OSA affects the cardiovascular system by disrupting the balance of clotting and anticlotting factors, leaving the person predisposed to blood clotting, according to Duke Medicine.

OSA increases the risk of stroke for both men and women, but men with OSA have double or triple the risk.

OSA is a treatable condition. Continuous Positive Airway Pressure (CPAP) is one treatment.

The new study also suggests that in stent surgery on OSA patients, cleaning out plaque before inserting a stent might reduce rates of later thrombosis. The researchers also advised using the largest stent possible and following up with the most potent antiplatelet drugs to inhibit clots.

February 2018



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Sun	Mon	Tue	Wed	Thu	Fri	Sat
				1	2 Ground Hog Day	3
<i>February is Healthy Heart Month</i>						
4 Superbowl!	5	6	7 Nat'l. Signing day	8	9	10
11	12	13 Mardis Gras	14 Valentines Day	15	16 Chinese New Year	17
18	19 Presidents Day	20	21 	22 Natl. Margarita Day	23	24
25	26	27 Spay Day	28			

Martin County Single Family Homes December 2017

Click on the Image for the full report

Monthly Market Detail - December 2017
Single Family Homes
Martin County



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Summary Statistics	December 2017	December 2016	Percent Change Year-over-Year
Closed Sales	181	195	-7.2%
Paid in Cash	61	78	-21.8%
Median Sale Price	\$340,000	\$312,500	8.8%
Average Sale Price	\$443,576	\$446,396	-0.6%
Dollar Volume	\$80.3 Million	\$87.0 Million	-7.8%
Median Percent of Original List Price Received	94.4%	94.4%	0.0%
Median Time to Contract	61 Days	50 Days	22.0%
Median Time to Sale	109 Days	82 Days	32.9%
New Pending Sales	165	134	23.1%
New Listings	192	177	8.5%

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



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