

Gabe's February 2014

HOUSECALLS



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Gabe Sanders

There are hot new devices at the mall

You're hot. Or at least warm. And stores like it.

An estimated 1,000 retailers, from tiny boutiques to Macy's, Inc., have installed heat sensors to monitor shoppers' paths.

The idea is that store owners can see through residual heat signatures exactly what their customers are looking at up close. They can tell what they pick up. They can see the highest traffic areas in their stores.

That's good information that allows store

managers to put popular items in lower traffic areas. This way, shoppers don't get all bunched up in one small area.

One such system by Prism Skylabs, Inc., is made to track people's movements in real time. Prism Skylabs combines video from security areas with software to build flow charts of people's movements. It uses heat maps to show which products get picked up more frequently than others.

Smart homes make some very cool sales

Smart homes powered by smart phones are coming in the near future and they are coming a big way.

From high end integrated systems to basic kits, homes are getting smarter and, as you might expect, the smarter a home is the more valuable.

According to IHS Electronics and Media, 20 million home automation devices shipped worldwide in 2012, with 1.5 million home automation systems installed in the U.S. in 2012.

That number is expected to rise to 8 million by 2017.

But today there are smart homes and there are really smart homes.

At the high end, Creston home automation is an example of a company whose installation can start at a cool \$1 million for complete control of a home.

Coming home from vacation? Get your smart phone out, turn up the air conditioning, heat up the pool, turn on the lights and, when you arrive, wave your phone across a door sensor to enter. Sweet, but you still have to carry the luggage unless the footman is available.

According to the New York Times, this sort of integrated system, installed during construction or at remodel, can set a high end house apart from the competition.

But homes that are not built to be smart, can get some learning for just a little bit of effort and money.

A smart home that does some very basic tasks, using a broadband internet connection and a computer, tablet or smart

phone, are becoming very affordable.

ADT offers a beginning system for about \$80.

Lowes' DIY Iris System, for example, costs \$179 for basic components and requires little more than a broadband connection and a phillips head screwdriver to install.

These are a component group that connects with a broadband modem. You can buy various components to suit your needs. For example, if you want to control lights, you can buy smart plugs for lamps and decide when the lights will go on and off.

With a pet collar device, your pet doors will open and close as the animal approaches the door.

Video cameras can let you see your house when you are away and keypads will email you if someone opens the door without a code.

Nearly every system offers thermostat control, but beware. Customer reviews note that if you do not understand how the system works, or

if you make the wrong setting, your utility bills could soar on your mistake -- especially if you are out of town.

Other home features that you can install include entertainment controls, voice controls, security pendants for seniors, and window monitoring.

These modest systems will probably offer sellers a slight 'wow' edge -- if they work properly. But they could also detract from a sale if the buyer likes another brand.



Ask the Expert



Beverly Bray

I have taken a job in another city and want to sell my house fast. How about an auction?

One good thing about an auction is that you stand a good chance of selling your property in 30 days, and on a day you choose, as opposed to the 190 days a traditional sale might take.

But there are drawbacks.

For one thing, you will probably be selling your house at your rock bottom price. Make sure it is the lowest price you can tolerate, taking into consideration the cost of holding the property for six months or a year.

While your price can be bid up, the lowest price is your reserve, and no one will be able to purchase your home below it unless you renegotiate. The reserve can be private, if you want.

Many real estate companies have auction divisions but, regardless, you might want to hire an agent to help with researching comparable properties, pricing and advertising. When you auction a property, the auction is only as good as the advertising, and you'll have to get involved in that.

Hire a professional auctioneer whose firm specializes in real estate and can stream your auction on the internet.

Clever Solutions for Under the Kitchen Sink

Plumbing Workaround

An assortment of pipes and valves is the bane of under-sink space. To the rescue: A custom-made drawer (\$150-\$300) with carefully planned indentations and drawer depths that allow for drain pipes and water purifiers. Because it's a drawer, everything pulls out and is right at your fingertips.



Hang 'Em High

Spray bottles have built-in hooks — their triggers — that you can use to store them. This clever homeowner has added an inexpensive tension rod that she uses to store spray bottles, suspending them from their triggers and taking advantage of the upper part of the cabinet.

Easy Does It

Low-cost (\$16-\$26) under-sink storage shelving kits let you configure a solution that meets your needs. Kit parts snap together or assemble with simple tools, so you can go from messy to marvelous in a matter of minutes. Kits include plastic shelves and rust-resistant supports.



According to the Christian Science Monitor, remote bidders can drive sales up by 9 to 11 percent.

The auctioneer should also be able to bring serious, prequalified bidders to the sale.

The auctioneer will take a commission. The commission is negotiable.

At auction, if your minimum bid is reached with no other bids, the bidder signs a Purchase and Sales agreement at the auction. If your minimum has not been met, the auctioneer will offer your property to the high bidder or the second high bidder at a negotiated price.

Auctioneers are paid at the closing.

One more thing, don't think of auctions as distress sales. These days some agents call them express sales and they often involve high-tone properties.



"Does he give booster shots?"

Bulls and bears tell their stock market predictions for 2014

The bulls have been rampaging through Wall Street for five years and the pessimists say, if you are not in the party now, it's too late to join.

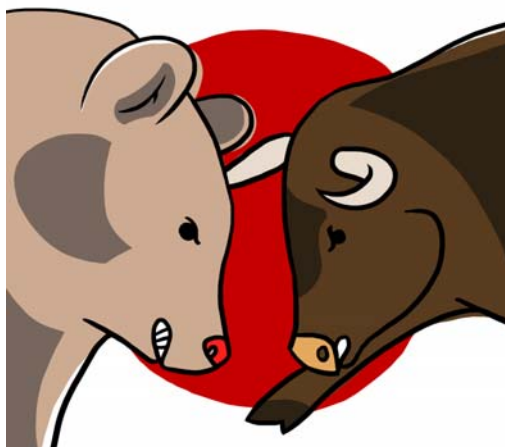
Quoted in USA Today, Barry Bannister, chief equity strategist at Stifel, says he is not a bear, but the upward trend in stocks won't continue. He predicts a leveling out of prices in 2014.

Meanwhile at JPMorgan Chase, the chief equity strategist predicts rising stock prices for at least another year.

Blogger Toby Connor of Gold Scents says the market is ripe to reverse and appears to be in a bubble of overvaluation caused by the Fed. Connor recommends individuals save their money until stock prices correct and buy low.

At the end of November, 2013, the Standard & Poor's 500 stock index was up by 25.4 percent and topped 1800 for

STOCK MARKET BULLS AND BEARS



the first time. It posted 36 record closes, the most since 1998.

The average year-end price target of 13 strategists polled by Bloomberg Businessweek was 1890. By now, we

know whether they hit the target or not. Either way, the S&P did very well in 2013. He predicts a 13 percent gain in 2014.

Bannister predicts that the S&P will stand at 1750 at the end of 2013. John Stoltzfus, chief investment strategist at Oppenheimer, was positive. He says the stock market will receive support from the ongoing migration of investors' cash from bonds to stocks. And stocks are more attractively priced than bonds. He expects the S&P 500 to grow profits at 5.5 percent in 2014.

Stoltzfus doesn't believe the Federal Reserve's bond-buying program, or quantitative easing (QE) is responsible for 2013 stock market gains and says it just primed the well of the U.S. economy. He says the market will be able to avoid relapse when the Fed starts dialing back on its stimulus.

Coming:

The Internet of Things, a new economy

No one would deny that The Internet of People has changed the world, but the next revolution will be even more dramatic: The Internet of Things.

Take your basic soda machine. It can take your order, make change, or take your credit card, but even so, it is a dumb machine.

What it might do, what it will do, is take inventory of sodas and wirelessly order sodas that it needs. It will take inventory of itself as well, noting which of its parts are not working in optimum fashion, and order the replacement parts.

Humans will serve the machines.

According to Alain Louchez, Center for the Development of Application of Internet of Things, this technological revolution could well signal a new, dynamic economy of experts in data storage, analytics, data security, consulting, education, and training services, all industries that will spring up to support the machines.

Louchez says that in coming years, a trillion everyday objects will become smarter.

50th anniversary of the Civil Rights Movement: Can Booker T. Washington get more respect?

Booker T Washington was the most famous African-American of the early 20th century. He was born into slavery in 1856 and, by the time of his death in 1915, he was an advisor to presidents.

Washington founded Tuskegee Institute and championed the education of African-Americans emerging from slavery.

Washington's memory has long been criticized as too accommodating to whites, segregation, and racism. To his detractors, he has been denounced as an Uncle Tom who was infuriatingly, optimistic:

"The individual who can do something that the world wants done will, in the end, make his way regardless of race," he wrote in his autobiography, *Up From Slavery*.

This belief earned Washington no credit in the Civil Rights Movement of the 1950s and 1960s, when African Americans couldn't even sit where they wanted on a bus. Civil rights leaders dismissed Washington as a collaborator. Even as



early as 1898, Washington had angry, and famous, detractors such as W.E.B Du Bois.

In recent years authors have defended Washington.

Robert J. Norrell, in his book *Up From History*, defends Washington against charges that he ignored civil rights claims.

Norrell writes that Washington had anticipated all the NAACP's civil rights agenda and that he financed helped court challenges in voting and civil discrimination cases. But he did so privately.

Norrell defends Washington by pointing out the rural south in 1900 was a brutal place for blacks and being a leader in that place and time made him tread carefully. But he also calls him a 'heroic failure' who did not see that just being educated wouldn't result in a legitimate vote. In the end, confrontation, what Washington avoided, worked.

It is still to be seen whether Washington's message of dignity, skills and education will have a place in the next 50 years of the Civil Rights movement.

Featured Listing

Maritimes TownHome on Hutchinson Island

Enjoy your very own spacious Hutchinson Island townhome with beautiful views of the Indian River in a rare three bedroom, 2 & 1/2 bathroom home with a garage. This spacious home has a generous open plan with lots of room to roam. Large master suite with a private balcony overlooking one of the two heated pools and the Intracoastal Waterway. Tiled throughout and with impact glass windows, an updated kitchen and a washer and dryer inside the unit. The Maritimes is a pet friendly ocean to river community allowing for up to two large dogs. There are ocean access docks that may be available for purchase or lease. Beach access and tennis are also included. A wonderful and tranquil setting that's close to both downtown Stuart and Jensen Beach.

Offered for \$389,000

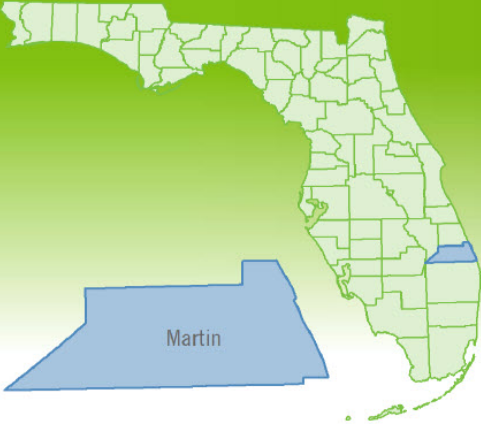
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Monthly Detail for December 2013 Single Family Homes Martin County

Click on the Image for the full report

Monthly Market Detail - December 2013
Single Family Homes
Martin County





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Summary Statistics	December 2013	December 2012	Percent Change Year-over-Year
Closed Sales	212	180	17.8%
Paid in Cash	79	84	-6.0%
New Pending Sales	185	169	9.5%
New Listings	236	185	27.6%
Median Sale Price	\$268,000	\$250,000	7.2%
Average Sale Price	\$315,736	\$416,192	-24.1%
Median Days on Market	51	88	-42.0%
Average Percent of Original List Price Received	92.1%	90.0%	2.3%
Pending Inventory	355	(No Data)	N/A
Inventory (Active Listings)	1,253	1,220	2.7%
Months Supply of Inventory	6.5	7.6	-14.0%



View [ALL](#) the Market Data for [Florida](#), [Martin County](#) and [Saint Lucie County](#) [Here](#)

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