

HOUSECALLS



the BlueWater Realty Team's May 2015



Gabe Sanders

For charisma: floor lamps with knotted stems

The late, great decorator to royalty, Geoffrey Bennison, was known for his artistic layering of pattern and color in his room designs.

Lighting was also an important part of Bennison's decorating style, and his choices were sometimes whimsical.

In the lavish library decorated for director Peter Glenville, unique floor lamps frame an ornate fireplace. The brass lamps have claw-foot stands that give way to a wood-look stem with leaves.

To see these lamps, check out the new book by Gillian Newberry, a former assistant to Bennison. Her book, *Geoffrey Bennison: Master Decorator*,

includes a photo of the lamps.

Floor lamps can be more than boring poles, decorators say.

Quoted in the *Wall Street Journal*, decorator Alexandra Pappas, owner of New York design firm Pappas Miron, said floor lamps tend to be spindly and lack presence.

To find your personal lighting style with the right amount of substance and grace, do as Bennison did and scout antique shops for unique and interesting buys.

Or, you can find a twig floor lamp right now at shadesoflight.com.

Looking for a brand new home? Watch for price reductions, free appliances and more

Newly built homes are selling at a brisk pace, but there are deals out there.

In December, sales of new houses reached their fastest pace since 2008, according to U.S. Department of Commerce data.

Most sales were for \$450,000 or more, leaving fewer buyers in the pool of prospects for that price range. Second, in the spring buying season, they have a lot of competition in the form of existing home sales.

Builders are making their prices more attractive, sometimes offering a discount of \$50,000 on an expensive home. In addition, some will finish a basement or pay closing costs to attract buyers.

In recent years, the big builders shifted away from entry-level homes because those customers had difficulty getting loans.

Today there is a shortage of entry-level homes, and so there is also a lot of potential growth.

Happily, loans are easier to get now, and the lower-priced market is moving.



Who wants to wait?

The National Association of Home Builders forecasts that ground breaking for single-family homes will increase 26 percent this year to 804,000 units. The estimated construction spurt is backed up by rising consumer confidence, job growth and low mortgage rates, according to Bloomberg Businessweek.

But buyers who are ready to move into another home right now often don't want to wait for one to be built. They want to move before Fall and get a lot of house for their money. For these buyers, existing homes would fit the bill.

There are many beautiful homes to consider, and many are closer to workplaces than those in new develop-

ments. Existing homes come in all sizes and may have more charm and character than a new home would have.

Your real estate agent will help

Let your agent know where you want to live, what size, and what features you want.

Ask Beverly



I hear that Fannie Mae and Freddie Mac have lowered down payment requirements. Is that right?

Yes they have. In December last year, they rolled out a 3 percent down payment program, which is down from 3.5 percent

One of the goals is to make home ownership more attractive to first-time buyers. Fannie Mae and Freddie Mac, the quasi-government entities, think the move will make first-time buyers perk up the housing market.

It has long been thought that a robust down payment significantly improved the chance that buyers would not default on their loans.

But a recent study by the Housing Finance Policy Center at the Urban Institute found that the borrower's credit score better predicted whether a borrower would honor the terms of the loan.

Analysts for The Kiplinger Letter predict that new-home sales will climb about 25 percent this year, buoyed by the economy and various housing deals. Housing starts could top one million this year for the first time since 2007.

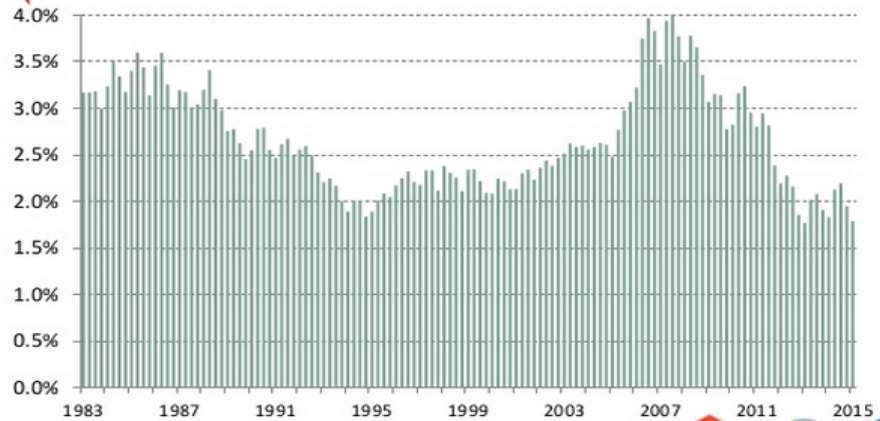
Existing-home sales are predicted to rise by 8 percent.

If you have your eye on a home that would be just right for you, get prequalified for a loan and see a real estate agent. You'll want to make a bid



For-Sale Home Inventory Has Recently Been Very Low

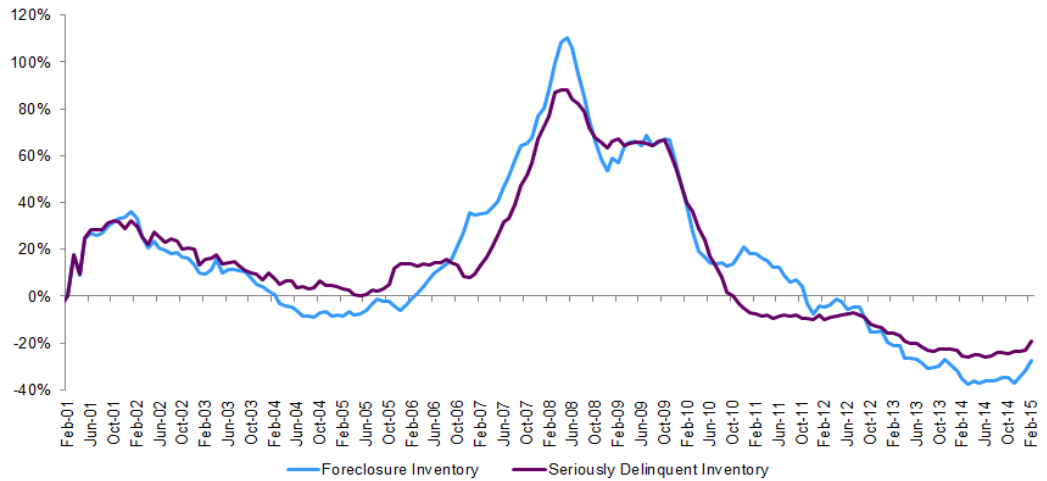
Homes-For-Sale Inventory as a Percent of Households



Sources: National Association of Realtors, U.S. Census Bureau (New Residential Sales and Housing Vacancy Survey). Note: Existing home inventory excludes Condo & Co-op inventory before 1999. 2015Q1 based only on data for January and February.



Figure 1: Distressed Inventory Continues to Shrink
Percent Change from a Year Ago



Source: CoreLogic February 2015

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quickly and, if your offer is accepted, you'll want to lock in these low interest rates.

Take the same steps if you can close a deal with a builder even though the house isn't built yet.



"We're looking for a nice home near a lousy school. If we buy a house, we can't afford to send our kids to college."

Need for foster parents remains great

Today the foster care network of families houses nearly 400,000 children, according to the Department of Health and Human Services.

Foster children are children removed temporarily or permanently from their biological family because of abuse, neglect, or addiction of the parent. Children range in age from infancy to teen.

The need for foster parents is enormous, but so are the challenges for children wounded by abuse and neglect.

According to the American Academy of Child and Adolescent Psychiatry, children who have been abused or taken from parents and siblings tend to blame themselves for being removed from their birth parents. They often hope for a reunion with parents, even those who abused them. Children in foster care are often repeatedly moved to new foster homes, making them feel helpless, unwanted, and unsure about becoming attached to their foster parents or any adult.

Critics of the system say too many chil-

dren are put in foster care, and even unpleasant home situations are sometimes better than foster care situations. Others say wholesome group environments would be better than long-term foster care.

Nonetheless, some foster parents can change the world of a child with consistency, safety and kindness.

Here are some important tips if you consider becoming a foster parent:

- * Make your home emotionally, physically, and socially safe. Be just as vigilant

and protective of a foster child, as you would be of yourself and other children.

- * Reach out to other foster parents for advice. Go to the National Foster Parent Association site nfpaonline.org for resources.

- * Be patient. Not all children are alike. Some will bond quickly, some will never bond. Take a step back, take offense to nothing, and just show continued consistent support.

- * Get involved in your foster child's social and school life. Take an interest in his or her interests. Give them responsibility.

- * Understand family ties. Visitations with family can be confusing and emotional.

- * Keep communication open. If a foster child is moved to another home, offer an email or a number to get in touch.



National Foster Care Month
"Making a difference"

Hate shopping? Or do you just love unusual food?

For cooks and non-cooks, online food companies offer delicacies from entrees to desserts to liquor

Hellofresh.com delivers a box of food suitable to make an assortment of recipes they provide. Their chicken & artichoke cassoulet requires ingredients you may not have or may not have fresh — panko, a bit of thyme, and cannellini beans — but no sweat. They deliver all the ingredients sorted into the right amounts including a colorful recipe card with instructions. You don't have to buy a bottle of thyme for a pinch you need in one recipe.

If you love cooking and love trying new dishes, check out trytheworld.com. The company promises food made by artisans in far-flung locales, a different box from a different place each month. Choices are exotic: Moroccan Argan oil and raisin and onion sauce, French chestnut creme, pacoquita snacks from Brazil, and, of course, pricey Italian fresh truffles.

What about the meat and potatoes guy? Suppose you want to send that guy a gift. Try mantry.com — they claim to be the modern man's pantry. You can order a box of goodies made by American artisans: barbecue sauce from Alabama, Vermont summer sausage, hot sauce from New York, bread from Nashville, steak rub from California and bacon from Kentucky.

Check out buzzfeed.com for a list of 19 companies that do food by mail.



The modern wedding: Just send money

One person invited to a wedding was shocked by the couple's gift registry. It included no merchandise, just ideas about what they would do with cash.

The money-and-ethics advisor for Kiplinger's Personal Finance says there's nothing unethical about asking for money, though it may seem crass.

Advisors for TheKnot.com, says cash is attractive for a couple. For one thing, many people have already set up households and have plenty of material items. That is especially true if this is a second marriage.

Cash might be what they really need, but it does put the guest in the awkward position of revealing just how much they intend to spend on the couple. On the other hand, guests don't have to shop.

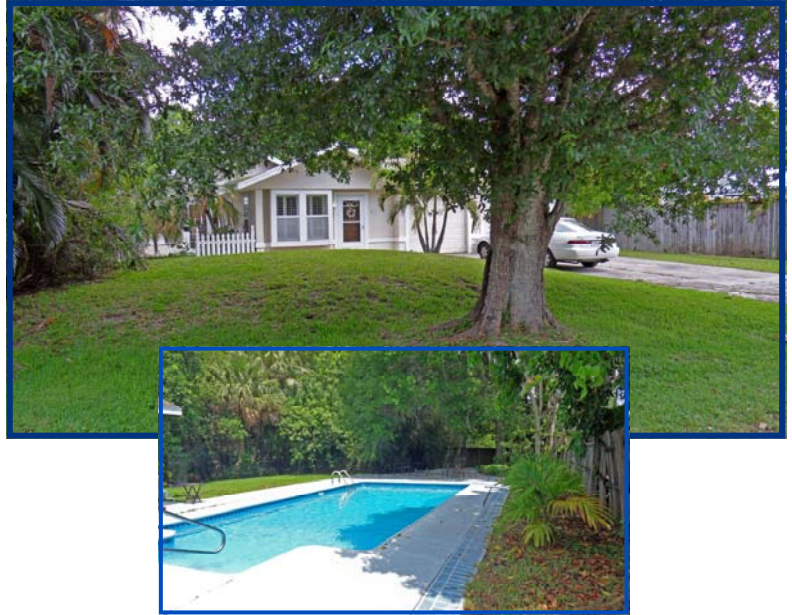
If you do ask for cash gifts, make sure your handwritten thank you notes are gracious no matter what the amount.

Featured Listing

Affordable Palm City Pool Home

Enjoy the good life in this Palm City pool home with no HOA. Sitting in a quiet neighborhood with mature trees and landscaping. Enter this charming 3 bedroom, 2 bathroom home into a huge oversized kitchen. Then, move on to either the living room or family room with serene views of your large pool and fenced backyard. Step outside for a swim or just play in your private pool or gather your friends and neighbors for a barbecue in your own outdoor space. This home is conveniently located close to shopping, restaurants and just a quick ride to the downtown Stuart area and beaches as well. Less than one mile to a public boat ramp, this is Florida living at its best and it's yours for under \$200,000.


Offered for \$189,000.




Florida Single Family Homes Report for March 2015

Click on the Image for the full report

Monthly Market Detail - March 2015
Single Family Homes
Florida





Summary Statistics	March 2015	March 2014	Percent Change Year-over-Year
Closed Sales	24,811	19,911	24.6%
Paid in Cash	9,670	9,034	7.0%
New Pending Sales	30,257	26,797	12.9%
New Listings	36,284	33,422	8.6%
Median Sale Price	\$190,000	\$174,000	9.2%
Average Sale Price	\$275,499	\$261,175	5.5%
Median Days on Market	56	58	-3.4%
Average Percent of Original List Price Received	93.3%	92.5%	0.9%
Pending Inventory	47,187	46,806	0.8%
Inventory (Active Listings)	108,344	107,657	0.6%
Months Supply of Inventory	5.1	5.7	-9.9%

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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