

HOUSECALLS

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Smartwatches: Way slicker than Dick Tracy



His cartoon-chiseled face looks to his watch: "Dick Tracy to Hemlock Holmes. 6-2-and even. Over and out." It was 1931.

Tracy predicted by 80 years what will be a reality for Christmas buying in 2012. The smartwatch won't phone your crime fighting unit or anyone else, but it will tell you the weather, accept texts and tweets, and even tell you the time.

Tech reviewers give the new gadgets mixed

reviews. Sony's smartwatch requires an Android phone to work, which one reviewer called a clumsy pairing. Other smartwatches are promised but not yet on the market.

The main advantage of a smartwatch is that they vibrate to receive texts and tweets – much less disruptive than a cellphone.

Early entries are priced at about \$150 and come in various styles with your choice of bands.

Signs point to improved market for home sellers

The numbers are starting to add up for home sellers (and buyers).

Statistics show consumer confidence is on the rise and that could be good for the economy.

At the same time, low mortgage interest rates are making home ownership a reality for many people.

When you add up the factors that are in a seller's favor, it could finally be time to put up the "For Sale" sign.

If you plan to sell and buy another residence, this might be the very best time to do it. In some areas of the country, sellers are receiving multiple competing offers for their homes.

In some areas, you might get a little less for your home than you want, but you'll also pay less for your dream home.

Experts at wealthpilgrim.com give a comparison of trade-up home values. Say your current home is worth \$250,000 and you want to buy one that costs \$500,000. If you wait a few years to complete the deal, your present home might go

for \$25,000 more, but your new home will cost \$50,000 more. And today's super-low interest rates might not be there

when you trade up.

There are four key elements that go into a successful home sale:

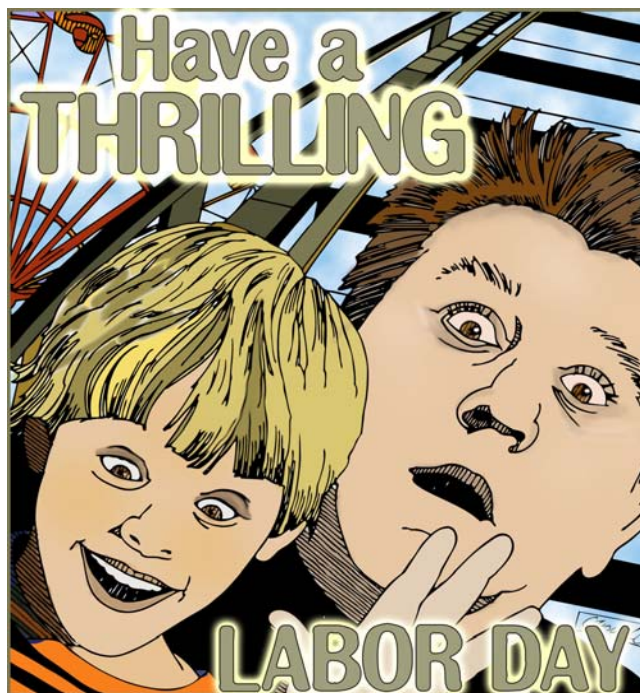
- * Find a realtor who has the experience and the work ethic to advertise, negotiate, use technology and handle all facets of the sale.

- * Price the property competitively. Your real estate agent will make a competitive market analysis (CMA), considering prices and features of recently sold homes in your area. He or she will help you zero in on the best asking price.

- * As the seller, you need to do your part by presenting a home that is attractive, clean and uncluttered. Make any

necessary repairs so the home is in "move into" condition.

- * Consider your home's curb appeal. Cut the grass, place pots of flowers by the door and make sure the windows shine.





Ask the expert:

We want a vacation home with a water view. How expensive are they?

If you want a home that has city lights sparkling in the water like stars, reflected sunrises, wildlife, and waterfront fun at your doorstep, you will pay quite a bit.

Still, with some searching, we might find an owner who needs to sell and will accept a reduced price, but the aforementioned home would still be pricey.

Here are some other things to consider when looking for a water-view deal:

* Properties that are one or two rows back from the water have lower prices but may still have nice views of the water.

* Would you consider a "wilderness" cabin? For properties that are on or in view of certain lakes, we might find a deal for you. You would have to know what lake areas interest you. Almost all have indoor plumbing.

* How about a home near Disney World in Orlando? If you are interested in Florida, I can put you in touch with a real estate broker who offers deals on repossessed properties and possible short sales.

Gabe's Pick of the Month



Intracoastal Chalet

Completely redesigned Intracoastal home offers the best of waterfront living at an affordable price. Built a solid CBS construction, this four bedroom, two bath residence has been updated by a local designer, and is in move in condition. The two fireplaces add warmth to even the coldest of days. Tile, carpeting and hardwood floors have been thoughtfully used. The location is just minutes to the blue waters of the Atlantic Ocean, yet the Intracoastal is also world renown for the marine life. The home is located on the Designated Floridian Scenic Route of Indian River Drive.

Offered for \$299,000

[Click here for more pictures](#)

Tax advantages

You've probably heard that owning a second home provides some tax relief and it can, but you need to know the rules.

To figure out what type of tax breaks you might get, you have to know how you'll use the property and how the Internal Revenue Service will categorize it. Note that you can't deduct mortgage interest on Schedule A, if it's considered to be investment property.

Your vacation home will be a residence if

you use it for personal purposes at least part of the year. If you rent it all year, it's considered to be a rental or investment property.

In order to have your vacation home qualify as a residence, you need to spend at least 14 days a year there, or 10 percent of the time that the property is rented.

If you own a vacation home and rent it for less than two weeks, you get a tax break because you don't need to report the rental income on your tax return. That rental income is, essentially, tax free.



Family Photo walls replace cluttered displays

Having grown up with a million family photos on display, decorator Alexa Hampton says she now prefers more restrained displays. Gone are the days you should have dozens of photos on top of a piano.

If you have a surplus of photos, place them in beautiful scrapbooks that give joy to you and your family.

Writing in *The Wall Street Journal*, Hampton stated that she believes displayed family photos should be no larger than 8 by 10 inches and most should be smaller. She likes to see photos of her children in plain silver frames on her bedside table. For such an intimate setting, she likes casual or intimate photos. Too formal a photo can seem uncomfortable in a bedroom, so hallways are better.

She uses hallways as "a canvas upon which to create a composition" for posed family photos. They allow a collection to grow on either side.

Until you have a place for them, family snapshots can dwell where most photos are in this era: on your iPhone or on a cloud server for ultimate security.



"You could learn a thing or two from them. They're not abducting me until after the game is over."



With the first strains of "Achy Breaky Heart," sung by Billy Ray Cyrus, or "Good Time" sung by Brooks and Dunn, women leave their tables and prance to the dance floor.

Some say would-be cowboys love line dancing because they are too shy to ask for a dance, but line dancing gives them a chance to mingle. Individuals of all ages can come to a dance and not worry about finding a partner.

Newer dances like the Electric Slide have been added to the old standards like the Cotton Eyed Joe.

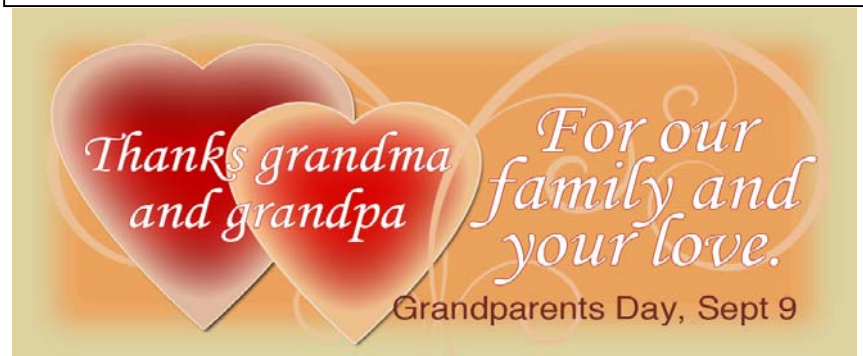
Western style line dancers often wear the whole western costume: Boots and hats. The boots aren't the kind used for dealing with cattle and horses. They're lighter and have thinner soles.

Even at wedding reception ballrooms, sooner or later the band or DJ will play a song like "Watermelon Crawl," and then it begins. As ladies in fancy gowns take to the floor, their husbands may follow, and their children will take a place in one of the lines. Kids love to try it.

The new Saddle Up Saloon and Dancehall in Indianapolis has a 3,000 square-foot dancehall. It draws hundreds of line dancers and offers free lessons twice daily. Saddle Up in Aurora, Ill., near Chicago, usually has long lines of dancers waiting to come in.

It's not just Western music that attracts line dancers. A lineup can include everything from show tunes to the George Burns favorite "Old Bones," as dancers stomp, kick, sidestep and turn. Magically, everyone knows exactly when to clap.

Even churches are getting into the act. At St. Paul's Episcopal Church in Naples, Fla., Marilyn King (wife of Father Frank), says their line dancing class is a great part of their outreach ministry. People from different parts of the city come to take lessons and dance.



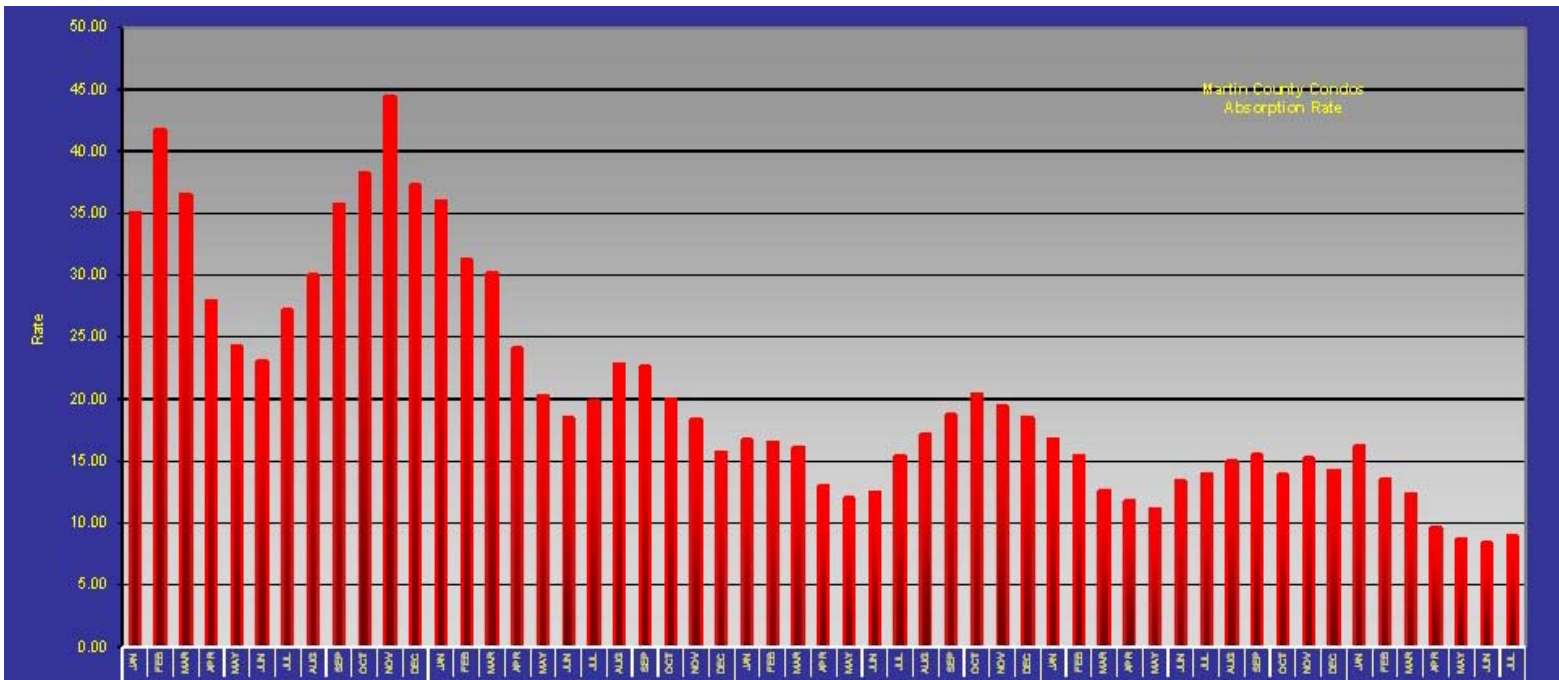


Featured Listings

A bargain Palm City, Florida home that features 3 bedrooms in a split plan, 2 bathrooms and a 2 car garage. Solid concrete construction with a newer metal roof. Flexible open floor plan with lots of possibilities. The master suite has a walk in closet. Washer and Dryer included in the inside utility room. Private backyard with a large covered and screened patio. Hurricane shutters. This home in the Granada subdivision of Palm City which boasts low HOA fees as well as a gated RV/Boat storage area for the exclusive use of residents. Conveniently located close to shopping, restaurants and the many waterways that Martin County has to offer. Also in an 'A' rated school district. Short Sale offered for \$145,000 - [Click here for more info.](#)



If you're looking for a winter getaway or a full time residence near the ocean with boating access, then you've found it here. On the Jensen Beach Causeway, less than 1 mile from the Ocean is this charming and updated 2 Bedroom office/den or 3'rd bedroom, 2 Bath home with an attached 1 car garage. Spacious open living area with lots of space and light. Dining nook and breakfast bar accompanies the updated kitchen with Corian counters. The Office/Den features a wet bar. French doors lead to the private patio and barbecue area. This waterfront community features docks which are available to rent or purchase. There's a community pool, tennis court and RV/Boat parking as well. Perfect opportunity for a dream Florida lifestyle. Rentals are permitted. Available for \$275,000 - [Click here for more info.](#)



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



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