

HOME GUIDE

A personal Real Estate Newsletter published bi-annually for our friends & clients.

1st Qtr ~ 2015

Is It Time To Sell?

Selling your home takes time so if the signs point to yes, you should start the process now. It's hard to decide however when is the right time to take that plunge and sell your home. Is the market right? Do I need a change? Is now the right time in my life? These are all questions we ask ourselves when trying to make this big decision. To help you find the answers and tune you in on what to look out for when selling your home, here is a list of 5 signs that you may be ready to sell.



It's still a seller's market. The seller's market from 2014 is predicted to continue into 2015. The market is cooling down with inventory expected to grow, but sellers should still expect good offers and a market in their favor with a lower than average inventory. It's the perfect time to put your house on the market – before spring when everyone else decides to bring their house on the market.

Your home is appreciating – and you've built equity. Homeowners gained **\$2.2 trillion** in equity in 2013 according to new data collected by the Federal Reserve, rising prices bringing **2.5 million** previously underwater homeowners back to positive equity. Home values have been coming up for the past two years. Prices are expected to continue rising into 2015 to lift even more homeowners into positive equity situations. With the equity you've built in your home, you can put it toward a down payment on that home you've had your eye on and lock in on these lifetime low rates!

Your life demands something new. Whether you've been struggling with a longer commute to work, wishing you were closer to your loved ones, or longing for a nicer home to settle in with your family, it's time to make a change. Whatever the reason now is the best time to relocate to make your life more convenient, and most importantly happy. If your life has changed but your living situation hasn't, it is time to play catch up before interest rates start heading back up. (Rates are expected to rise significantly in the future. Feds promised to hold off sometime this year, but who knows when?)

Space is an issue. Maybe you need more up

space for your growing family. Maybe you've got too much space in your empty nest now that the children have all moved out. Either way, it's time to let your living situation catch to your special needs. It's not smart to add stress by living in a home that's cramped and too small or waste money and energy on space that's not needed. Evaluate your situation and if your space is creating issues for you, it's definitely time to move.

You want to. Selling your home is a personal decision. The best time for you to sell is when you feel that it's right. If you want to sell your home to cash in on your growing equity, want to take advantage of

If You Want or Think It's Time To Sell—That's a Pretty Good Indication

these lifetime low interest rates or if you're just looking forward to something new, then it's time to do it! If you want to sell your house, then that's a pretty good indication that it's time.

The old adage, "sometimes we can't see the forest for the trees" may apply here, as most homeowners and home buyers can't fully appreciate what a rare point in time we are experiencing right now. Lifetime low interest rates, loan standards, down payment requirements loosening up and lenders passing out \$5,000 grants! If there was ever a time to be buying and selling it'd have to be now.

If you're ready to sell your home, give us a call. We are highly experienced and ready to help you through every step of the process. Call, text or email us now if you're interested in getting started on finding your new home or just want a better idea what your home may be worth in today's market..❖ THE END

Inside This Issue

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Rare Opportunity... Yet Few People Notice

In the early 1980s, mortgage interest rates brushed the stratosphere with highs of 18% and even 19%. Imagine trying to get a home loan with an interest rate of 18%. Believe it or not, many of your parents or grandparents did.

During the 1990s, mortgage interest rates ranged from around 7% to roughly 9% for many years. It was only in 2000 that rates began to fall to earth. They held at less than 9% in 2000, less than 8% in 2001 and less than 7% in 2003.

Today rates on a 30 year fixed rate of 3.5% are at lifetime lows. Imagine how cheap that is, here let me show you: 30 years Fixed Rate

\$100,000 mortgage @18% = \$1,485/mo.

\$100,000 mortgage @ 9% = \$ 799/mo.

\$100,000 mortgage @ 3.5% = \$ 448/mo.

What that means is there are a lot of people out there that are renting that can now afford to step up to owning. I might add for emphasis that the last time rates were this low was in the 1930's. Think about that.

Even more amazing are the number of potential homeowners out there that think they still can't get a loan. Maybe they tried several years ago, or maybe their credit scores were too low back then. Well, a lot of that has changed dramatically in your favor. A majority of 1st time homebuyers are still getting no or low (3%) down payment FHA loans. RD financing still offers 100% financing and they have dropped their credit scores to new lows.

If there was ever an opportunity to move up to homeownership - it'd be now!

Plus as you will read on the next page two local lenders are offering up to \$5,000 grants to assist with down payments and closing costs. Wow, what's your excuse now not to own a home? Ask yourself, if you can't afford to buy now, when if ever, will you be able to buy?

Sellers are missing out too!

Equally naïve to this rare opportunity are homeowners contemplating selling this year. Traditionally sellers procrastinate and miss out on the opportunities created with limited competition in the "off-season" and the pent up demand from buyers trying to take advantage of these lifetime low interest rates. Homes on the market right now are selling on the high end.



\$5,000 Grant Available For HomeBuyers

They want to give you \$\$\$ to buy a house!



**Kelley Saam, Realtor®
Welcome Home Specialist**

There's a special \$5,000 grant program for home buyers coming available in a week or two. It's called the "Welcome Home Program" and participants may be awarded a

grant up to \$5,000 per homebuyer to purchase an owner-occupied home.

This grant doesn't have to be paid back either, as long as you stay there and live in the home for five years. This could be an opportunity of a lifetime, almost like having a rich uncle that fronts you your down payment and doesn't expect you to pay him back. How good is that?

This grant does have some income eligibility guidelines, but they are very generous. A family of 3 can make up to \$59,000 and still be eligible. The target population they are trying to serve are those homebuyers that haven't been able to save up a down payment or need help with their

closing costs. It is my understanding it isn't just limited to 1st time home buyers. It is supposedly open to any homebuyer that meets their criteria.

It's called the Welcome Home Program

Now here's the downside (there's always a give and take). These grants will be available on a "first-come, first-serve basis." The Welcome Home Program will start reserving grants for eligible homebuyers that have put a house "under contract" by March 2nd, 2015. In the past the lenders that participated kept accepting eligible homebuyers until the money was expended. So it starts in a month and will continue until the grant money runs out. So if you are a potential home buyer interested in applying for this up to \$5,000

grant you need to get in gear now. Don't wait because your chances of getting the grant diminish with the longer you take to find a home you want to purchase.

There is NO TIME to waste pick up your phone right now and call a real estate agent that you want to work with and ask them for more information on the Welcome Home Program. The first thing the agent should do is mail, email or text you a list of homes that meet your criteria, so you can immediately get out there and start looking at homes for sale.

Why, **RENT** When **YOU** can **OWN**?

If you are a renter, now is your opportunity to be a homeowner! Did you know that a home loan at 4% interest fixed for 30 years equals: ↓

\$500 Rent Payment = \$105,000 mortgage

\$600 Rent Payment = \$126,000 mortgage

\$700 Rent Payment = \$147,000 mortgage

**Call or Text any of these Realtors®
NOW to get started:**

Kelley Saam	(419) 236-5602
Maisie Tyler	(419) 296-6758
Brian Schoonover	(419) 376-2655
Jim Price	(419) 303-5289

Lessons Learned, from Selling My House Last Year



**Brian Schoonover
Realtor® Associate**

As someone who sold their house last year, I can tell you empathetically I wish I had known then, what I know now!

Of course being a Realtor® you just assume you know more than the 'guy on the street.' Boy did I get my eyes opened.

First lesson learned:

like just about everybody, I thought I'd wait until school was out to bring my house on the market...wrong! Why? Because everybody else thought that way and I had three times the competition. So my sale took longer as wave after wave of buyers came through. Since buyers had three times as many houses to choose from and go through, they took longer before they made up their minds. End result: Our sale took longer than expected and we missed a lot of our summer activities. If I had to do it over again, I would sell in the off season, when competition is lower and fewer houses are for sale to compete with.

Second lesson learned: I started out overly

optimistic on our asking price. Like I said there was way too much competition to be that optimistic. I may have had better luck at a higher price, if I wouldn't have had as much competition and brought it out earlier.

Third Lesson Learned: It really makes a difference what real estate agent you have. Now it was our house, so obviously I represented the seller, but of the 23 other real estate agents that showed our house there were maybe 2-3 that I would consider to be 'true real' estate professionals. These were the one's that got back after every showing to give us some feedback as to what the buyers thought of our house. This was invaluable information to us. We did some things different after we recognized and started to see re-occurring drawbacks that buyers said they didn't like.

These were also the agents that made sure lights were turned off and doors locked. I had my eyes opened, thinking that all real estate agents would do these things out of common courtesy. It is unfortunate they were the exception, rather than the rule.

Fourth Lesson Learned: One of the most

frustrating experiences we had to deal with was getting the house ready for a showing on the time schedule requested. Not always an easy task when you have kids, who have a busy schedule and one has to go here and the other has to go somewhere else. It can be a logistical nightmare. Then you have a real estate agent who doesn't know the first thing about showing a home. They run their buyers through a 2,400 sq ft house in 5 minutes and whisk—they're gone.

LESSONS LEARNED: The key to a successful, stress free sale is in who you decide to list your home with. As time went on I learned how to say "no" to impossible showing requests that inconvenienced my family. I also learned how to handle other real estate agents who lack training in the art of the sale, or how to show a home. Actually being a Realtor® trying to sell my home gave me invaluable experience that I feel has made me a better, more insightful Realtor®. Yes, I do turn lights out, check that doors are locked and look out for the "best interests" of my clients, too! ❖ **THE END**

Have you thought
about selling?
Do you know anyone else
who is?
Please keep us in mind!



203K - You won't believe



MAISIE TYLER
Renovation Specialist

Here's one of the best kept secrets in real estate and many of you won't believe what I'm going to tell you.

How many houses have you gone through when you were looking for a house and you thought, "oh jeez I really like this one except, ... the kitchen is sooo dated, or I wish they would have updated the windows, wiring, furnace, a/c, had newer energy-efficient appliances, more insulation..."

And when you talked it over with your significant other, they countered with "gosh if we did those improvements we'd have to get a home equity loan and the payments would be

Just say "NO to home equity loans"

more than the mortgage!" Sadly they were right so you passed up the home that could have been a good deal, if those things had been done or you had known about 203k.

If only you had been told about 203k loans you may have made a different and better decision to go ahead with the purchase of that home and do those much needed improvements. 203k loans are tailor made for almost any house from the fixer-upper, to the showcase kitchen renovation and more. You see the 203k is a renovation loan, with a "unique twist," unlike the Home Equity loans that hit you with a steep interest rate and a 3-5 year payback, the 203K allows you up to 6 months to complete your renovation then wraps that into your 30 year mortgage for a huge savings!

The 203k program may be the right choice for homebuyers who want to make minor repairs and /or cosmetic improvements to the property they wish to purchase. Here's some examples: Install new flooring, appliances, a deck, repaint exterior, landscape grounds, create handicap access, remodel kitchen, bathrooms, upgrade electrical, plumbing, heating, replace roof, siding, windows, add a bedroom, bath or family room and many more standard upgrades especially anything that would improve energy-efficiency.

There is a streamline 203k which limits improvements up to \$35,000. Then there is a more robust 203k with higher limits and even one for investor occupied 1-4 units.

Common questions I hear from clients:

☞ Can I do the work myself?

• Every situation can vary yet unless you are employed in the housing renovation business, it isn't likely they will let you do improvements. The use of a general contractor is required.

☞ Is there any limit on what I do to my house?

• The future value of the property must support the mortgage amount.

☞ Is the 203k just for homebuyers only?

• No most banks that handle 203k also offer a Refinance & Renovate loan for existing homeowners looking to upgrade or enhance their living space.

Renovation Loans up to \$35,000

☞ How can I learn more?

These are FHA loans with only a 3% downpayment requirement. (They also offer conventional conforming loans.) Not every lender offers these loans, I know of 3 in the area that do: AmeriFirst Home Mortgage—**Rex Whetstone at (419)234-7310**; Western Ohio Mortgage Co.—**Greg Lovett (419)234-4893**; and Citizens National Bank, Mary Ann George 1(800)-448-0025

Call or text, **Maisie Tyler, Realtor® and Renovation Specialist at (419)296-6758**

Why didn't we have a drug problem when we were growing up? *Jim Price*

The other day, someone at a store in town read that a Methamphetamine lab had been found in an old farmhouse in an adjoining county and asked me a rhetorical question, "Why didn't we have a drug problem when you and I were growing up?"

I replied, I had a drug problem when I was young: I was drug to church on Sunday morning. I was drug to church for weddings and funerals. I was drug to family reunions and community socials no matter the weather.

I was drug by my ears when I was disrespectful to adults. I was drug to the woodshed when I disobeyed my parents, told a lie, brought home a bad report card, did not speak with respect, spoke ill of the teacher or the preacher, or if I didn't put forth my best effort in everything that was asked of me.

I was drug to the kitchen sink to have my mouth washed out with soap if I uttered a profanity. I was drug out to pull weeds in mom's garden and flower beds & coddle-burs out of dad's fields. I was drug to the homes of family, friends and neighbors to help some poor soul who had no one to mow the yard, repair the clothesline, or chop some firewood and if my mother had ever known that I took a single dime as a tip for this kindness, she would have drug me back to the woodshed.

Those drugs are still in my veins and they affect my behavior in everything I do, say or think. They are stronger than cocaine, crack, or heroin and if today's children had this kind of drug problem, America would be a better place.

God bless the parents who drugged us!



Save \$\$\$ with Energy-Efficient Windows

The National Association of Home Builders recently issued a list of keys to saving energy in your home. Near the top of the list: look for "double-pane windows that have high-performance glass that helps reduce heat loss in the winter and heat gain in the summer." Both the NAHB and the Energy Department recommend looking for double-pane windows which are low-e coated or solar control spectrally selective. What? Well, it's actually a lot easier than it sounds.

"Low-e" stands for "low-emissivity." Emissivity is a measurement of how much heat is emitted from an object by radiation. In other words, how much of the sunshine hitting your window gets spread throughout your room, or how much of your home's heat is lost to the outside. Low-e coatings on a window reduce that flow and give your air conditioner or furnace a break.

Windows carry a label that provides the information you need to make a wise window choice. The label provides four ratings;



1. The "U-factor", or how well a window keeps heat inside a building. A U-value of 0.35 or below is recommended for colder climates. The lower the U-value, the better the insulation.
2. Solar heat gain, or a window's ability to block warming caused by sunlight. The rating is expressed as a number between 0 and 1. The lower the number, the better the window is at blocking the sun's heat. It's recommended that windows in hot climates have a low rating, while south-facing windows in cold climates should have a high rating.
3. Visible light "transmittance," or how much light gets through a product. The higher the number, the more light is transmitted.
4. Air leakage, or heat loss and gain through cracks in the window. The Energy Department recommends you select windows with a rating of 0.3 cubic feet per minute or less.

The EPA also recommends looking for the Energy Star label on windows. For more valuable information. Go to: www.energystar.gov

or energystar.gov

Au Glaize Real Estate agents are trained to go the extra mile to point out to their clients, energy-efficient features or lack of these money-saving features. You purchase a home through us, you'll soon learn about energy-efficient features that add up to monthly savings. There's a lot to learn before you buy your first house. Be wise in who you choose to guide you through the home buying process. ★★★★★

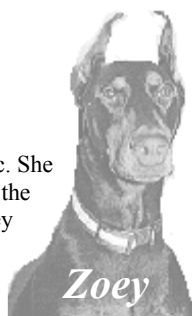


'Lil Kids ~ Zoeys' Corner

WARNING: GRAPES or RAISINS—Can be fatal to your pets.

We recently received an email from a lady who runs a 'lil kid (pet) training clinic. She stated that the ASPCA-run Animal Poison Control Center is working hard to get the word out that feeding grapes or raisins to your 'lil kid (pet) can cause them kidney failure. This was particularly painful for me to hear, because I've always shared grapes with our Dobermans. They always seemed to enjoy them as I tossed them in the air and they 'd catch them. But, then I painfully remembered that we had lost one of our Dobermans to kidney failure. We had always attributed it to lawn chemicals that we used unknowingly on our yard. The Animal Clinic at Purdue University School of Veterinary Medicine told us that people who use **commercial lawn services** put their pets at risk. (There's a reason why they are required to post those 'just sprayed tags' in your yard after they spray. Read them!) We learned the hard way...

Back to the grapes.. The email we received stated that the Animal Poison Control Center is working hard to get the word out. They are also trying to collect hard data to further study this phenomena. (They don't know if it is specific to a certain amount of the food, if some breeds are more susceptible than others, etc.) Kidney failure is the common result, and they have had the opportunity to study the specific kind and areas of renal failure in some of the victims. If you had a pet recently die from kidney failure after feeding them grapes you can call **888-4-ANIHELP** (yes there's an extra digit there but never mind-- this will help you remember the number). They do charge for immediate crisis poison counseling, but **do NOT** charge people (of course) who call to provide information about a case. They act like they are grateful for the data.



Pet Health Safety

Here are some tips to insure your pet is safe and maintains good health:

- Make sure not to let your dog, cat, or ferret have grapes, raisins or currants. They can cause kidney failure. (see article under 'Lil Kids)
- Many plants are hazardous. Among them are lilies, poinsettia, holly, mistletoe, spider plants, dracaena, peace lily, and asparagus fern.
- Dispose antifreeze properly. It has a sweet taste but is deadly to your pet!
- Chocolate is toxic to your pet along with caffeinated products.
- Xylitol (sugar substitute), found in gum, candies, baked goods and smoking-cessation products, causes life-threatening drop in blood sugar and liver damage to dogs.
- Avoid allowing your pet to eat onions, garlic, chives, and leeks. These vegetables cause red blood cell destruction and anemia. It only takes 0.5 percent of their body weight to be toxic.
- Do not feed your pet uncooked yeast bread dough. It will continue to rise in your pet's stomach and bowels creating a life-threatening situation that requires emergency surgery.
- Do not allow your pet to ingest alcohol. Along with alcoholic drinks, alcohol can be found in rum-soaked cakes and candies and some dressings. Alcohol causes toxicity in the blood.
- Fatty foods will cause pancreatitis. Certain breeds are more prone to develop it than others. Avoid letting your pet have access to butter, oils, meat drippings, grease, chocolate, and meat scraps.
- Be sure if you dispose of food scraps or bones, that you place them in containers that have locking lids that your pet cannot get in. Pets can get pancreatitis from ingesting them or have a bone become lodged and require emergency surgery

Courtesy of: **County Animal Clinic, Inc.**
 Dr. Ronald C. Anders, DVM, CVA, CCRP
 800 North 7th Street
 Coldwater, OH 45828
www.countyanimalclinic.net
 [Sign up for their monthly newsletter.]

Caring for Senior Pets

Cats and dogs age differently than humans. By the time your pet is a year or two old, she's already a teenager in human years. By the time she's ten, she's considered middle-aged, and when she's just a few years older than that, she's well into her golden years. Here are some "senior signs" to watch for as your pet ages, but unless you notice something very out of the ordinary, there's no need to rush your old faithful friend to the veterinarian.

Hearing loss – Many cats and dogs (and humans, of course) experience hearing loss as they age. This is normal and may eventually result in a total loss of hearing. If you notice your older cat or dog not coming when you call as they used to, don't be alarmed. It's likely just a natural part of the aging process. However, hearing loss can also be caused by parasites, infection, or other ailments of the ear, so have your veterinarian check your pet's ears to make sure that the loss isn't caused by something treatable.

Slowing down – Most animals slow down as they age. Your pet may no longer be able to jump as high as she did in her prime, and she may sleep a lot more than usual, as hard as it might be to imagine her sleeping more! Her grooming habits may trail off a bit, as those hard-to-reach areas become more difficult to groom. Older cats tend to lose muscle mass, causing them to slow down considerably and even have gait problems, especially in their hind legs.

Vision problems – Cat and dog eyes often become cloudy with a bluish tint in the pupil as they age. These are not cataracts. The condition is called lenticular sclerosis and is a normal sign of aging. You may want to have your pet's eyes checked by your veterinarian just to make sure that the condition is normal and not another medical issue. Also, as pets age they can become more photosensitive, so older animals may not appreciate bright sunlight or well-lit areas. Often, when this condition occurs, the eye becomes lighter and has a tattered appearance.

Senility – Just like humans, pets can develop memory loss and dementia associated with old age. In cats, this may mean that they have trouble finding their litter box, meow or cry for no apparent reason, or undergo a general change in behavior. Alzheimer's research has shown that cats can also get the disease. ➔

Thinking of Selling?

- Got too much house, or too little?
- Tired of all the upkeep, or busting at the seams?
- Don't know what you want to do for sure or what you should do first?

Start with a Market Analysis!

CALL US ! We'll tell you what your house is worth. (See back page)

Dental problems – As cats and dogs age, they may develop dental issues or tooth loss and may need to start eating softer food. If you suspect dental problems—perhaps your cat is drooling abnormally or your dog isn't eating as much—consult your veterinarian. To care for your senior pet, make sure that she's on the correct diet for her age group—your veterinarian should be able to give you dietary advice. Also, provide your pet with a couple of comfortable beds in her normal sleeping area(s). Try to keep her away from busy or noisy situations, such as holiday parties or when kids come to visit. She may need a little more peace and quiet in her old age.

There's no companion more loyal than a pet!



Rare Opportunity... Yet Few People Notice

Continued from page 1 column 3

mainly because there are so few homes to choose from and potential buyers feel pressured to buy them instead of gambling on interest rates slipping up and going higher by the time summer and more inventory arrive.

Prudent home owners contemplating selling this year would be wise to call their real estate agent now and start by getting an idea what their house is worth. Most brokerages get you started by doing a CMA (Comparative Market Analysis.) When you are interviewing an agent to market your home, you should be introduced right away to this priceless document.

You and your agent will use the CMA, among other tools, to determine where your home will stand in comparison to others which are on the market and those which have recently sold to determine the highest possible asking price.

CMA's are about facts, which can be qualified and quantified. The CMA is typically designed to give quick capsules of information and compare your house to ones that have sold. This report should be laid out in an easy to understand format, but watch out for the CMAs performed by computer algorithms. You want to be assured your CMA was done with human input on the adjustments that are made. Ask yourself has an algorithm ever walked through your

house? I would doubt it has, yet an experienced agent has been through a multitude of homes that have sold and can provide invaluable insights on value.

Let's face it when you finally decide to sell, you want to be able to feel assured that you have chosen the best possible real estate company to handle the complexities of your sale and the

Hurry before this Opportunity passes!

selection of another residence. You want the sale to go as hassle free as possible and you want the most you can get! Your first step should be in carefully selecting an experienced real estate team who you can trust and count on to effectively market and sell your house.

If you would be interested in knowing what your house is worth in today's marketplace call or text any of these agents and ask for them to perform a free CMA on your house!

Call or Text any of these Au Glaize Real Estate agents NOW to get started:

Kelley Saam (419) 236-5602

Maisie Tyler (419) 296-6758

Brian Schoonover (419) 376-2655

Jim Price (419) 303-5289

❖ THE END

Victims of Home Equity Schemes

SOMETHING'S terribly wrong with a segment of America's consumer mortgage industry. Homeowners, often equity-rich, cash-poor, are targets of an ever increasing array of predatory lending practices designed to saddle homeowners with unnecessary debt that can eventually mean the loss of their home.

The ploys are often aimed at younger, less-sophisticated or financially stretched homeowners living beyond their means. They include practices such as overcharges, hidden charges and bait-and-switch tactics and have become so prevalent that the abuses are widespread and it doesn't appear that anyone cares about the consumer. It's incumbent upon consumers to get wise to the potential misdeeds of lenders, often so-called "sub-prime lenders," who write equity mortgages to high-risk borrowers.

Lenders use several common practices to sell high-cost home-equity loans to homeowners, regardless of consumers' ability to repay the loan, the report says.

- Lenders make loans in conjunction with home improvements that often never materialize..
- They sell loans under the guise of "rescuing" homeowners from foreclosure, when merely saddling owners with more debt.
- They offer high-interest, disaster-related home loans. ➡

- Consolidate debt into unaffordable home-equity loans, again under guise of "making life easier." Part of the problem is that there are no limits on the interest rates they can charge. There are no limits on the points and fees. There also no limits on the type of claims they can make in advertising. The sub-prime industry alone originates more than \$120 billion dollars in loans a year. It's the bad apple and it's up to the industry to do something about it, but don't hold your breath it doesn't appear likely anything will happen.

Tips to help protect you against predatory lending practices

- Before you start looking for an equity loan (including those for reverse mortgages, bill consolidation or to stave off foreclosure) or home improvement loan, get free, independent loan counseling from a community, church or social group, credit counseling service or recognized consumer advocacy agency. Avoid door-to-door and direct-mail pitches for home-equity loans. Instead, get referrals from family members, friends, co-workers and others you trust.

Avoid come-ons that begin "No credit? No job? No problem! Don't worry. You have plenty of equity in your home to qualify for a loan." To disreputable companies, what really "qualifies" you for the loan is your inability to pay it. When you fail to meet payments, they

Do Americans Really Care What We Eat?

Here in the U.S. around 94% of soybeans, 93% of corn and 96% of cotton are GM (genetically modified) crops.

Polls consistently show that 72% of Americans do not want to eat GM foods and over 90% of Americans believe GM foods should be labeled.

Since 2012, the agrichemical and food industries have mounted a complex, multifaceted public relations, advertising, lobbying and political campaign in the United States, costing more than \$100 million, to defend genetically engineered food and crops and the pesticides that accompany them. The purpose of this campaign is to deceive the public, to deflect efforts to win the right to know what is in our food via labeling that is already required in 64 countries, and ultimately, to extend their profit stream for as long as possible. This campaign has greatly influenced how U.S. media covers GMOs.

The industry's PR firm, Ketchum, even boasted that "positive media coverage has doubled" on GMOs. Due to this influence over the media, the public hears mostly what the industries claim: GMOs are safe, and anyone who disagrees or raises questions is not trustworthy. Please read more go to:

www.usrtk.org/gmo/seedy-business

can legally take your home.

- Avoid interest-only, non-amortizing or partially amortizing loans. After you make years of payments you will still owe the money you borrowed, often as one large "balloon" payment at the end of the contract's term.
- Never allow yourself to be pressured into signing a contract unless you've read and understand every word. If the offer is good today, it should be good tomorrow. Likewise, don't sign anything with blank spaces.
- Remember the old adage that your grandmother use to say, "If it's sounds too good to be true, it probably is!"

Report suspected predatory practices or lenders to the Better Business Bureau or the Ohio Attorney General office.

Inspectors top 10 home problems list

- 1 Improper surface grading or drainage
- 2 Improper electrical wiring
- 3 Roof damage & leakage
- 4 Malfunctioning heating or a/c systems
- 5 Deferred maintenance issues
- 6 Wet basements or structural problems
- 7 Old or incompatible plumbing
- 8 Flawed windows, doors, walls
- 9 Lack of adequate insulation
- 10 Scaling, peeling Lead-Based Paint



Homeowners To Be Affected By New Water Heater Reg's in 2015

The Department of Energy (DOE) recently passed new regulations that will bring about major changes in the water heater industry for both homeowners and contractors. Effective April 16, 2015 the DOE will require higher energy factor (EF) ratings on all residential water heating products including gas-fired, oil-fired, electric, tabletop, instantaneous gas-fired and instantaneous electric. The new tankless water heaters that have become popular among some homeowners already meet the new requirements.

Homeowners will see the most significant change on the install costs of the new equipment, with the yearly energy savings helping offset the higher initial costs. A water heater is going to be taller and wider than what they have been in the past. In order to improve the energy efficiency the manufacturers have to add insulation to the top, bottom, and sides allowing for less energy loss. Similar to the new high-efficiency condensing boilers, water heaters are going to have multiple components now, such as venting materials and condensate pumps, which means they will require more yearly maintenance. The install cost increase is due to higher materials costs and the possible need to relocate their current water heater

Takes effect on April 16, 2015

because of size restrictions and louder operational noise. The most upsetting part is after the whole process to install the larger, noisier, more expensive water heater, the new water heaters are likely to have lower hot water deliverability.

Contractors will have to adjust to the new regulations as well as homeowners. Water heater manufacturers are preaching that training will be essential for all the new products, so installers will have a better understanding of installation options and benefits for the customer. Due to the larger and heavier water heaters, installation will no longer be a practical job for one person. This is especially true when talking about those models over 55 gallons. Service trucks may also need to change to accommodate transporting the taller, wider and heavier equipment. The plans for the new gas-fired models include venting and drainage systems which means the current location of the existing water heater may not work, and may need to be moved significant distances.

If you have an older water heater that is on the verge of reaching its lifetime, it may be a good idea to start thinking about replacing it to avoid any new equipment headaches. Supply houses are already starting to run out of existing model water heaters to make way for the higher efficiency models. High efficiency boiler equipment has become extremely popular in the plumbing and heating industry and it was only a matter of time before the water heaters followed suit.



Cheryl McCullough
Agent in Training

training at Hondros College and will soon be joining our real estate team.

Cheryl is the mother of four beautiful girls. She is married to Jesse and they also own a Heating & Air-Conditioning business here in Wapak.

Hopefully you have heard of **McCullough Heating & Air Conditioning**. If you haven't, you will. They're the 'Go To Team' breaking into the area market with a "Can do attitude!" "We want to offer everyone the best deals and customer service possible!" Cheryl said.

We asked Cheryl to run this DOE change by Jesse and see what he thought of the new Reg's about to take effect on water heaters (see article to left). His response was, "On one hand the new regulations are great. It is better for environment, omitting less fumes and gases into the air. It should save the homeowner quite a bit of money over time and pay for itself. On the other hand it could be quite a nightmare for some. What if you don't have the room? Some hot water heaters are in tight spaces. With these new regulations they will require more room. Which could be costly, due to having to move the whole unit to a completely different area. As with everything there are positives and negatives. Best choice would be to call a reputable company, get an expert opinion and go over all your options before making a decision. Hope this helps your readers!" ❖THE END

Thought You Should Know

Inadequate HVAC (Heating, Ventilation & Air Conditioning):

- Increases energy costs
- Fail to heat or cool the home
- May cause the premature failure of components

Tonnage is the unit of measurement that describes the cooling capacity of an air conditioning system. For each ton, the typical HVAC unit can cool 500-600 square feet of living space. This isn't a hard & fast rule. To confirm that the home is equipped with a properly sized HVAC system and industry recognized "load calculator" may be necessary, which takes into consideration several factors beyond square footage (i.e., height of ceiling, number of windows, exposure to the sun. etc.) That said a quick calculation based on square footage may help determine whether or not an HVAC system is adequate.

❖THE END

Au Glaize Real Estate

The Times They Are A Changing,...

You may have noticed things are changing around Au Glaize Real Estate. It's not a secret we are expanding, training a new generation of skilled agents and trying to keep up with the times. It's a new century and things have changed radically from what use to be. As hard as it is for us boomers, change is necessary and I'm starting to get that. Barb started in real estate in 1979, I got in 1987. It's completely different from the way it use to be. "The times, they are a changing'..." as Bob Dylan use to sing. You boomers know what I'm talking about.

Those of us that grew up in the "Ozzie & Harriet Days" usually had one working parent and the benefit of a full-time mother. Life was less complicated, kids played in the street and rode their bikes all over town. The pace was noticeably slower, families ate meals together, went to church and sat together. Sundays we went to visit relatives or grandma's. Everybody worked, (there wasn't welfare, let alone an entitlement class) you knew all your neighbors up & down the street and crime was when you slept out in a canopy tent with the neighbor kids and raided the old man's garden down the street.

Everybody is *so* busy now-a-days, it's all hustle and bustle. People don't seem to have time to interact with each other anymore. Technology has taken over our lives, making us slaves to our devices. I understand to a degree that it keeps everyone always-connected, but at what price? There's still a significant number of us "old-schoolers" out there that don't want to be constantly connected to the outside world. I see a whole generation living their lives on the internet, instead of living their lives. We recently drove by OSU campus in Columbus. I couldn't help but notice as a group of students getting ready to cross High St. were all 'texting' as they huddled in a crowd. No one was striking up a conversation with a fellow student. It struck me as odd. Back in the day, you'd be honing your social skills on that cute blond in the crowd as you waited for the light to change.

I see it more evident today in real estate as the younger generation are jumping into homeownership. They tend to be more oriented to what we call the "glitz & glitter" factor when buying a home. They are Smart-phone savvy so they download all the photo's and whatever information they can gleam off the 'net in a nano-second or two. Then they punch in the agent who has the house listed and they're off to look at the house. Of course, in the minute that took they all ready posted on Facebook to friends, family and ➡



the rest of the world that they were going to go look at that cute house on Barbara Ln. So you say, "What's wrong with that?"

Well it depends,... Does the buyer realize the agent they just called solely represents the sellers "best interests" minimizing their chances of buying under terms more favorable to them? Since that agent was hired by the Seller to represent their "best interests," will they get an honest, independent evaluation of the property? Will they have the good sense to have a professional Home Inspection? Will they know enough to insert a clause in their offer that assures they have the right to withdraw from the contract if the Home Inspector finds something major wrong? Will they be encouraged to ask the seller to help with their closing costs, which now-a-days run into the \$2-3,000 range. Will the sellers agent help them get the best price? Best loan for their situation? Or even suggest that they call in a professional to help evaluate ➔

Hiring the Wrong Agent

We have all seen it, the big colonial home on the Main St. of town or the cute as a button ranch house that the "wrong agent" somehow ended up listing. You know the agent...the one who never answers their phone, has another job that constantly keeps them away, isn't perceived to be totally honest, doesn't follow-up, throws a sign in the yard and disappears, has nearly zero marketing...yes, the one that gives our industry a black eye!

This often happens because some sellers are too eager to get their home listed and instead of finding the "right agent" they:

- Call the first person they see on a sign
- Call a big brand and take whomever is available
- Use the person their step-cousins friend knows or a former classmate
- Make an impulsive, frustration, or anger hire

The point is, sellers MUST do their homework before hiring a listing agent. Take the advice of trusted friends, go online and do research to see if the agent utilizes the Web as part of their marketing plan, read reviews from past clients, and lastly, make sure to interview all potential candidates.

While there are many more questions that can be asked, here are a few that sellers can ask prospective Realtors® before deciding on the right agent to list and sell their home.

- How long have you been in residential real estate? Is it your full-time job?
- Do you have a Marketing Plan? Will I have input?
- How many homes did you sell last year? Where was the last one you sold?
- Are you mainly a seller's agent or buyer's agent?

the three layers of shingles on the roof, or what it might cost to increase the houses energy-efficiency to keep their utility bills at a minimum? It's doubtful.

Instead of being in a hurry to jump on the agent who listed the property they maybe should have considered the advantages of having their own real estate agent to insure someone was looking out for their "best interests." Whether they know it or not, they are paying for that representation in the sales price. Why pay for representation and not get it? You aren't being protected, let alone having someone look out for your interests when you use the sellers agent!

Today, the complexities of buying real estate are far greater than the typical consumer realizes. Would you use the same attorney that the person suing you uses? No! Even more reason why you should have your own real estate agent. You're paying for it! ❖THE END

- Do you practice dual agency? (That's like having two wives)
- How familiar are you with my neighborhood?
- How will you market my home?
- Will you perform a written Comparative Market Analysis? Will it be done by a computer algorithm or by (pen & pencil) you?
- How will you keep me informed of showing activity?
- What methods will you use to stay in touch? How often?
- How many listings do you have?
- What sets you apart from all the other agents in town?
- What listing price do you recommend? How did you come up with that price?
- How can I enhance my homes appeal?
- On average, how many days does it take you to sell homes? What is the market average?
- Can you provide me with references?
- When are you NOT available?
- What percentage of your listings expire?
- Will you recommend service providers to help me with home repairs, staging, cleaning, etc.?
- What is your business philosophy?

The bottom line for sellers is to take your time and make sure the agent you choose to list your property is one you are comfortable working with and meets all the criteria you are looking for in an agent. Happy selling! ❖THE END

SELLING-RELATED TAX BENIES

As the time nears to pay your dues in Club America, your home offers financial shelter from what otherwise could be a taxing expense -- especially if you've sold your home when your tax returns are due.

The Taxpayer Relief Act of 1997, credited with having a significant role in keeping the real estate sector ahead of the rest of the economy, is perhaps the best tax shelter your home provides.

Generally, the federal tax law says when you sell your home, if you qualify, you can keep, tax free, capital gains of up to \$500,000 if you are married filing jointly or \$250,000 for single taxpayers, or married taxpayers who file separately.

Under the law, to qualify for the \$500,000/\$250,000 exclusion, the home must have been your primary residence for at least two of the prior five years.

The exclusion is not a one-time deal, but a benefit you can use again and again, theoretically every two years -- provided you qualify each time by meeting the owner-occupied-two-out-of-five-years requirement.

If, for example, you have two homes and live in one for two years, sell it and then live in the other for the next two years and sell it, both sales qualify for the exclusion.

Special provisions are available if, through some unforeseen event such as a job change, illness, death of a spouse, divorce, disaster, war or some other hardship, you are forced to sell before you meet the two-year residency requirement.

For qualifying unforeseen circumstances, you can prorate the \$500,000/\$250,000 exclusion (not your specific gain) if you are forced to sell early. That means if you only live in your home a year (half the two-year requirement) before you are forced to sell because of some qualifying unforeseen event, you can exclude from taxes up to \$250,000 (half the exclusion) in capital gains if you are married and file jointly or \$125,000 for separate and single filers.

Selling Costs

If, when you sell your home, you realize a taxable gain even after the exclusion, you can reduce your gain with selling costs. Your gain is your home's selling price, minus deductible closing costs, minus your basis. Your basis is the original purchase price, plus capital improvements, minus any depreciation.

Real estate broker's commissions, title insurance, legal fees, administrative costs and inspection fees are all considered selling costs. Selling costs can also include ➔

(continued on Page 8, Column 1)



SELLING-RELATED TAX BENIES

(continued from Page 7 Column 3)

items otherwise considered repairs -- painting, wallpapering, planting flowers, maintenance and the like -- provided you complete them within 90 days of your sale and provided they were completed to make the home more saleable.

Moving Costs

If a new job forces you to sell your home and move, you can deduct some job-related moving costs. Your new job must be at least 50 miles from the old and you must work full time at the new work place for 39 of the 52 weeks following the move. Deductions include travel or transportation costs and expenses for lodging and storing your household goods.

To be eligible for moving costs deductions if you are self-employed, you must work full-time for at least 39 weeks during the first 12 months and a total of 78 weeks during the first 24 months after arriving at the new job location.

Check with your tax professional about home selling-related tax benefits. ❖THE END

Call McCullough Heating & Air Conditioning

Any time, day or night, we'll see to it that it's done right!

Timely response, dedicated to serving our clients.



(419)953-2423

Can save \$3,000 in electricity

Heat Pump water heaters are a newer product, based on proven technology. And they look very promising! There are two main types of heat pump water heaters - an add-on unit that can be added to your existing electric, gas or propane water heater; and a package unit that replaces your existing water heater. Both types use the same principal: Heat pump water heaters extract heat energy from the surrounding air and deliver it to your water heater. The result is impressive - heat pump water heaters are typically at least twice as efficient as your existing water heater. And that's significant, since water heaters are the second largest energy user in most homes behind only the heating and cooling system.

Choosing an ENERGY STAR certified high efficiency electric storage water heater, known as a heat pump water heater (HPWH), instead of a standard model can save \$3,000 in electricity costs over the lifetime of the water



What is your house worth?

Call us for a free market analysis

\$250

VALUE



You should know what your real estate is worth for tax & estate purposes, or before you decide to sell.

This certificate entitles any home-

A FREE ~ CMA COMPARATIVE MARKET ANALYSIS

We agree to waive our normal \$250 fee

EXPIRES 9/1/15

Typical Market Analysis takes us 6 hours to perform

Priority will be based on need.



Good Time to be thinking about
GETTING YOUR HOUSE ON THE MARKET

\$250

VALUE

DIVORCE and Real Estate

Divorce is the legal breakup of a marriage. Sad to say 60% of marriages today end up in divorce. Financial issues are over 70% of the cause of marriage break ups.

Often we speak to couples that are considering a split and would like to either sell their family home, or one of the parties would like to buy another home on their own.

In one situation, the husband was leaving the wife and has told her that he doesn't want anything and she can do anything she wants with the house. The wife, not being able to afford the house, wants to sell it. In situations like this we always advise either party to check with their attorney first, because often it isn't that simple to sell under these circumstances.

In Ohio, if a property is your primary residence, both parties must sign the documents, so that both are aware that the property is being sold. Both parties have to sign the listing agreement, they also must sign when an offer is received and again at the closing. (Even if you owned the property before your marriage. But always check first with your attorney.)

If they weren't selling, typically even the husband quit claims his interest in the property to the wife that would not legally get him off the hook for the property's mortgage. The property usually has to be refinanced by just the wife to completely get the husbands name off it.

Recently we had a wife looking to buy a house of her own, without her husband. She was planning on getting a divorce. Yet, if she tries

she is married, knowing she is going to file for a divorce, her new purchase could become part of a divorce settlement. In Ohio, in order to buy a property, her current husband would have to sign closing documents, indicating that he is aware that she is buying a house. Later, she discovered that her soon to be ex would never agree to let her buy anything.

Divorces can be difficult. It is usually an emotional time not only for the spouses but the children as well. Unfortunately, divorce can put a lot of stress on everybody and brings out the worst in some.

There are so many issues in a divorce settlement to be addressed, besides just a primary residence. Another reason to consult an attorney before making any abrupt move. ❖THE END

DECADES OF EXPERIENCE = RESULTS

Au Glaize Real Estate Office



FOR ALL YOUR
REAL ESTATE
NEEDS

- BUYING
- SELLING
- APPRAISING

CALL US!

TIME TO CONSIDER A MOVE! HURRY BEFORE INTEREST RATES HEAD BACK UP↑



RECYCLE—SHARE US WITH A FRIEND