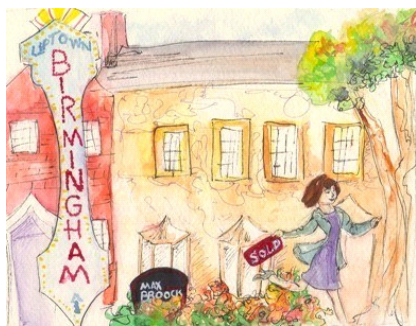


# News On The Move

Brought to you by: Linda Hiller Novak  
Max Broock Realtors  
248-408-7811  
[www.LindaHillerNovak.com](http://www.LindaHillerNovak.com)



## Early Spring Market Update

This update is comprised of information I received from my corporate headquarters. I thought this was very interesting and would give everyone some optimism about the future of our Michigan real estate market.

March has continued the same pattern as the prior six months. All the statistical news is good news, just in small increments. Housing inventories continue to shrink and sales continue to rise. There is however, still a dramatic difference in the markets below and above \$100,000 (Months Inventory of 5.2 months vs. 16 months). So what about appreciation? Vacant homes still constitute about 60% of available homes for sale. The percentage appears to be shrinking, but appreciation will begin at the 20-30% range so homes still need to be priced forward against a declining market (particularly for homes above \$200,000).

The Northwest Michigan market has also continued its trend of the past six months of settling to a slower sales pace. With fewer financially distressed sales, the northern markets will not see the same average price declines as southeast Michigan. Distressed sales also have the positive effect of driving up the number of sales, so the down side will be a continued decline in the number of homes sold but without the 30-40% price declines we have seen in Southeast Michigan.

The good news is that showing activity is growing and web activity levels are growing even faster, indicating there is a significant build up of buyers sitting on the fence waiting to make their move.

Also, the various federal housing and mortgage incentives are just beginning to filter through to the market. They will not have a dramatic impact and to some degree will borrow some future sales, but overall they will do only good for home buyers and sellers. So far the single biggest government support success story has been the lowering of interest rates. As a result, housing is the most affordable since the Affordability Index began in 1977!

Even better news is that MSHDA is working on an additional first time home buyer incentives, combined with the Federal Tax Credit, which could total over \$15,000 towards their home purchase!

### ***Why Not Pass Me to a Friend?***

If you've enjoyed this newsletter and found its information useful, please pass it to a neighbor, friend or co-worker.

And if you have any comments about it, don't forget to give me a call or send me an email!

## How to Stay Optimistic on the Gloomiest of Days

“When it comes to bad news, we’ve never had it so bad.” That sentiment by Laurence Shorter, author of *The Optimist: One Man’s Search for the Brighter Side of Life*, sums up the way most people are feeling given today’s uncertain economic situation and foreboding future.

Unfortunately, excess worry and a pessimistic attitude are associated with everything from poor health to bad business deals. Fortunately, it’s possible to remain positive by learning how to overcome negativity and take control of your health, happiness and home with these quick tips:

**Count Your Blessings:** That old advice your grandparents gave you really does work! They lived through world wars, economic turmoil and other hardships, so perhaps there really is something to be said about remaining grateful for what is going right rather than merely focusing on what is going wrong.

**Do Something for Others:** Those that give of themselves know it truly is more blessed to give than receive; somehow it tends to put things into perspective and allows us to become more open to the friendship of others.

**Make Time for What Matters:** Family, friends and the simple pleasures of life take on greater importance than ever when times are tough. Make the most of what life has to offer by setting aside quality time to spend with loved ones.

**Take a Time-Out:** Allow yourself to take personal time when you need it; whether you go for a walk or splurge on a little something special, remember that you are only human.

# How to Make Sure Your Home Is Priced to Sell

Pricing right is one of the most important aspects to selling a home.

Price too low, and you are leaving hard-earned money on the table or worse... you can actually create a reverse incentive for buyers to view the home since they may assume the property is in need of extensive repairs. Price too high, and the listing will languish on the market until everyone grows bored of seeing it.

Use these simple steps to obtain a ballpark figure on finding the right price for your home.

**Obtain current comparable estimates.** If you live in a neighborhood with similar-sized homes, try to find a recent sales example and then extrapolate the price per square foot to derive a rough rule of thumb. Increase or decrease the

estimate based upon condition, age, upgrades and other amenities.

**Include income potential.** If the property is capable of generating an income via rental or other ventures, then use the profit potential of the property to estimate the return on investment or ROI. Most investors expect an ROI at or above the safe, headache-free option of investing in Treasury bonds.

**Get a second opinion.** Work with a real estate agent who specializes in that location to provide valuable feedback and a second opinion. Remember, if you expect a fast sale then search for all available properties and then plan to price your home near the bottom range of the properties currently listed and sold in the area.

## Keeping it Local

Don't throw out those over-ripe bananas, pair them with the season's delicious blueberries for a moist and delicious treat!

You can even store over-ripe bananas in the freezer until you are ready to use them. Just thaw and use.

### Blueberry and Banana Bread

#### Ingredients:

1 cup sugar  
1/2 cup unsalted butter  
2 medium eggs  
1 cup mashed banana  
1/2 tsp vanilla  
1/2 cup chopped pecans or walnuts  
1 1/2 cups flour  
1/2 cup quick-cook oats  
1/4 tsp nutmeg  
1/2 tsp vanilla  
1/4 tsp salt  
1 tsp baking soda  
1/2 cup fresh blueberries

#### Instructions:

1. Preheat oven to 350 degrees
2. Cream the butter, gradually adding the sugar, beat until light and fluffy.
3. Add the eggs one at a time, beating well, then stir in the banana and vanilla.
4. Combine remaining ingredients together, stirring gently and then add to the creamed mixture and blend well.
5. Spoon the mixture into a greased and floured 9x5x3 inch loaf pan.
6. Bake for 50-55 minutes or until wooden pick inserted in center comes out clean.
7. Cool in pan for 10 minutes before removing and cooling on wire rack.

## Worth Quoting

Here's a sampling of what some famous people said about the economy:

"A creative economy is the fuel of magnificence."

Ralph Waldo Emerson

"Writing is the ultimate something-for-nothing economy."

David Alan Ross

"The global economy is a doomsday machine that must be stopped and reprogrammed."

Kalle Lasn

"The economy is in bad shape. So bad, I saw a Wal-Mart executive shopping at Wal-Mart."

Jay Leno

"Economics and politics are the governing powers of life today, and that's why everything is so screwy."

Joseph Campbell

"The truth is, we are all caught in a great economic system which is heartless."

Woodrow Wilson

## Did You Know?

Can you identify these phobias? (Answers below)

- alliumphobia
- apeirophobia
- katagelophobia
- logizomechanophobia
- mnemophobia
- ombrophobia
- orthophobia
- phagophobia
- sinistrophobia
- verbophobia

(Answers: garlic, infinity, ridicule, computers, memories, rain, property, swallowing, left-handedness, words)

# Don't Make These 4 Home Buyers Blunders

Buying a home needn't be a high-risk venture. With a little planning, preparation and the use of a knowledgeable real estate agent, you can avoid these common buying blunders.

## Procrastination

How many times have you called on a property only to learn it was already under contract? It happens more often than you might realize, especially for the biggest bargains or areas in high demand.

Working with a real estate agent allows you to make your buying preferences clearly defined and then be automatically notified once a property that meets your expectations is listed.

## Budgeting

Find out how much home you can afford by getting pre-qualified and pre-approved by the bank. Not only does it send the message that you are a serious buyer who is willing and able to close on the right property, it can also help the broker negotiate other terms, such as closing costs, on your behalf to make the deal work.

## Assumptions

Never assume that the taxes and insurance quotes for a property will remain the same after purchasing.

Property or homeowners insurance also involves your independent credit score as well as the history of the home and its condition.

Likewise, property taxes are often years

behind or may have a cap placed upon them if the property was eligible for homestead exemption or other special limitations placed on tax increases. Always obtain at least three independent insurance quotes on a property and obtain a newly revised estimate for property taxes before making a final offer.

## Skipping Inspections

A complete, independent inspection is one of the best investments you might ever make, especially when it comes to purchasing a home.

Whether the home is brand new or 100 years old, always invest in an inspection to prevent costly repairs and other hazards.

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## Cool Ways to Use Your iPhone

Feeling a little behind the times? Nothing says "hip" like adding applications to your iPhone. Learn how to make the most of your phone for business, pleasure and just showing off a little technological savvy by implementing these cool tricks for your Apple cell phone.

**Reminders:** Implement reminders to keep your day running smoothly and avoid procrastination. Available as a paid application, Milk Pro allows users to establish alerts, tasks, reminders and even geo-location features.

**Weigh In:** Weightbot is a big help for those wanting to track their weight. Whether you made a New Year's resolution to shed a few pounds or simply need to train a little harder for your revised work-out, Weightbot tracks Body Mass Index (BMI), weight and other goals down to 1/10 of a pound.

**Money Manager:** Today it seems everyone needs to watch their money so bring your budget with you with Mint.com's money manager. It's free, easy and keeps track of your hard-earned cash.

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## Birthdays to Remember this Month

Joseph Rowntree, who was born on May 24, 1836, was one of the great social reformers of the 19th century. While he was alive he gave half his money to the Rowntree Trusts, part of his chocolate-making empire in Britain.

Jane Jacobs, who was born on May 4, 1916, is best known as a critic of urban renewal policies of the 1950s. She is famous for her work that led to

the cancellation of the Lower Manhattan Expressway in New York.

Henry John Kaiser, who was born on May 9, 1882, is best known for the Kaiser Shipyards in California, which build a cargo ship every 30 days during World War II. It later was able to build ships in as few as four days thanks to Kaiser's innovative production techniques.

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## Ask the Agent: This Month's Question

**I have a loveable but quite noisy dog. Can I show my home to potential buyers while my dog is there?**

Selling a home with a pet in residence can be a difficult undertaking. Many home buyers - even those with pets of their own at home - can be put off by yours. An unexpected reaction could frighten potential buyers away before they've even looked at your home.

The safest course of action is to remove a pet while your home is listed for sale. Ask friends or family members to care for the pet, or board it at a nearby facility.

If this is not possible, put your pet into a carrier during showings and alert visitors not to disturb it.

Buyers also frequently take issue with a pet's impact on the cleanliness and condition of the home.

To help your home bring the highest possible price, remove stains and repair any damage your pet may have caused.

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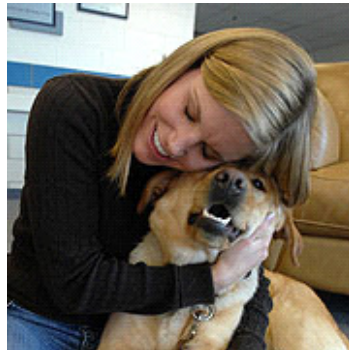
## Piper & Tucker's Pawspace

This month we chose to honor our heroes, the Leader Dogs. A good friend of ours, Rio, is a 13 year old retired Leader Dog. Leader Dogs for the Blind programs enhance the lives of people who are blind, visually impaired and Deaf-blind. Various programs are offered at the Rochester Hills, Michigan campus where students live during their training.

All programs are offered free-of-charge to the recipient with Leader Dog paying for travel expenses within North America, room and board and - with the exception of the Trekker GPS unit - equipment costs.

Leader Dogs for the Blind operates entirely on donations from individuals, foundations, community service groups such as Lions Clubs, and corporations to fund our programs. They receive no United Way, state or federal funding. As a 501(c)3 organization, your donation is 100% tax deductible to the extent provided by law.

There are several giving options available depending on your philanthropic goals and personal circumstances. If you have questions about how to make a gift, please contact Philanthropy at 888-777-5332 or [donorsupport@leaderdog.org](mailto:donorsupport@leaderdog.org).



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## Wondering How Much Your Home Is Worth?

How has the price of your home changed in today's market? How much are other homes in your neighborhood selling for?

If you're wondering what's happening to prices in your area, or you're thinking about selling your house, I'll be able to help.

Just give my office a call for a no-fuss, professional evaluation.

I won't try to push you into listing with me or waste your time.

I'll just give you the honest facts about your home and its value.

And maybe I'll also give you the "inside scoop" on what's happening in the housing market near where you live!

Just give my office a call at 248-408-7811 to arrange an appointment.

Alternatively, stop by at the office. The address is on the bottom of the newsletter.

*News You Can Use* is brought to you free by:

Linda Hiller Novak

Associate Broker

Max Broock Realtors

275 S. Old Woodward

Birmingham, MI 48009

[lnovak@maxbroock.com](mailto:lnovak@maxbroock.com)

[www.LindaHillerNovak.com](http://www.LindaHillerNovak.com)

Thanks for reading! If you'd like to tell me what you think about this newsletter, or if you're thinking of buying or selling real estate, please get in touch.