

realtyreport®

Compliments of Donna Reilly

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Greetings! You're receiving this newsletter with hopes that you find it informative and entertaining.

If you're thinking of making a move, or are just curious as to real estate trends in your area, please feel free to call at any time. It's always good to hear from you!

All the best,

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LOCAL VALUE

Spring traditionally brings a flurry of real estate activity, and even if you're not planning to move right now, it's always important to be aware of current home values. This is a reminder that you may call for a no-obligation real estate update at any time, even if you're just curious about what's going on in your own neighborhood.

Just as you're the expert on your own home's features, a local REALTOR® is the expert on the most current home prices and local market activity. And that's why homeowners engaging the services of a REALTOR® to sell their home typically have a higher success rate than those attempting to sell their house on their own (referred to as FSBO – For Sale By Owner).

A recent, independent survey involving 1,000 home sellers reported that 59 percent of homeowners who used a REALTOR® to sell their home were successful, versus 39 percent of FSBOs. This reflects a 50 percent higher closing rate for home sellers using a REALTOR®.

According to the National Association of REALTORS® (NAR), most homeowners who choose a REALTOR® to list their home enjoy not only a higher sales rate, but also a higher sales price than homes FSBO. NAR reports that the typical FSBO home sold for \$140,000 in 2010, compared to \$199,300 for agent-assisted home sales. In fact, 23 percent of FSBO sellers reported that the most difficult task in the process was getting the right price for their home.

Planning to buy or sell? Wondering what your property is worth, or even what the house across the street sold for? Your real estate sales representative has the answers.

THE LATEST LOCAL INFORMATION IS JUST A PHONE CALL AWAY!



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A PRIMER ON TRIM

You've just moved and your new décor lacks that finishing touch that makes it feel like home. Or you're selling your property and want to lend its interior some of that "wow" factor that snaps buyers to attention. Whatever your reasons, adding trim to your décor is a great way to give it a facelift.



Relatively inexpensive and easily installed, trim encompasses all those decorative elements that adorn walls and ceilings, from baseboard to panel molding. Available in a seemingly limitless number of different profiles, trim adds elegance and visual interest to any room, and trim can be used to draw attention to choice features. But lest you think trim merely serves aesthetic purposes, here are brief descriptions of the most popular types used in homes, as well as their functions:

BASEBOARD MOLDING. Probably the most commonly used type of trim, rooms just don't look complete without baseboard molding, which provides a finished look to that area where floors and walls meet. It serves to protect the bottom of your walls from damage done by things like vacuuming and moving furniture, and to conceal any gaps between the floor and wall.

CASING. This term refers to the trim found around doorways, archways and windows. As casing tends to be the most noticeable type of trim in a room, its impact on your décor can be significant, particularly if you choose something more ornate. Like baseboard molding, casing serves a practical purpose in that it hides gaps between the jamb and adjacent wall.

CHAIR-RAIL MOLDING. Originally intended to protect walls from damage done by chair backs, this type of molding is installed horizontally around a room's perimeter, three feet or so from the floor. More often serving as decoration now, chair-rail molding unifies a room's architectural elements and is often used as a dividing line, between painted and wallpapered sections of walls, for instance.

CROWN MOLDING. Applied where walls meet ceilings, crown molding has traditionally been used to soften the transition from one to the other. In today's interiors, they're increasingly being used for decorative purposes, such as capping features like cabinetry, shelving, and fireplaces; creating "tray" (recessed) ceilings; and defining different "zones" in an open-concept floor plan.

PANEL MOLDING. As decorative as trim gets, panel molding is used to create frames on walls and ceilings. Such frames can be used to dress the walls above and/or below a chair-rail divider (a look evocative of Colonial homes) or to emphasize accessories like large works of art or mirrors. On ceilings, panel molding is often used as a border around light fixtures.

SOME PARTING WORDS ON SELECTING TRIM:

Choose a style consistent with your home's style. For example, if your décor is contemporary, opt for trim that's simple and streamlined in design, rather than ornate. When it comes to trim size, scale is key — big rooms call for proportionately big moldings, while smaller rooms are complemented by smaller trim.

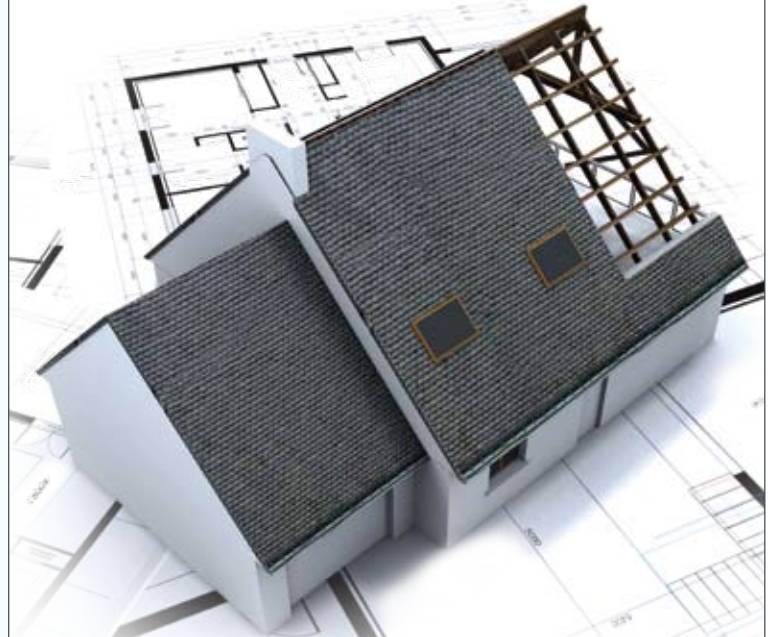
Risky Business

When considering selling their homes themselves, many homeowners focus so much on the potential rewards that they often overlook the risks. What are these risks? Well, by selling without professional representation:

- You risk inappropriately pricing your home. Without access to the knowledge needed to establish a home's market value, most FSBO (for sale by owner) sellers overprice their properties, and consequently their homes linger on the market longer than necessary, often selling for a song as a result. Or, they list for too little and end up selling their home for considerably less than it's worth.
- You risk a lack of exposure for your property. Exposing it to as many buyers (and real estate sales representatives) as possible is crucial to selling your home faster and for more money. Unfortunately, most homeowners don't have enough time to devote to marketing a property, nor do they have the advantage of exposure on the Multiple Listing Service®.
- You risk wasting your time on people who aren't serious about your home or who can't afford it. Real estate sales representatives are experts when it comes to distinguishing a looky-loo from a purchaser, and an unqualified buyer from a qualified one. For example, by not immediately recognizing the type of buyer, you may spend a lot of time with someone only to have the deal fall through before closing because they couldn't get financing.
- You risk finding yourself with a legal problem on your hands. The sale of a property is a complex transaction fraught with legalities surrounding things like contracts, home inspections, disclosure, title insurance, appraisals, and more. Unless you can recognize an issue for which you may need legal advice, you could end up in over your head.



The Perfect Fit



BUY TOO BIG A HOME AND YOU COULD STRUGGLE FINANCIALLY; BUY TOO SMALL A ONE AND YOU MIGHT HAVE TO MOVE (AGAIN) SOONER THAN YOU'D LIKE. SO HOW MUCH HOME DO YOU NEED? HERE'S SOME ADVICE ON HOW TO FIGURE THAT OUT.

To determine the space you need, start by assessing the space you have. Survey your current home – list each room's square footage, and its function(s). Are there rooms on your list you feel are too small for their purposes? Too big? Are there any you could do entirely without? Perhaps you don't need a living room *and* a family room. Or is there space you wish you had – another bathroom, perhaps?

As you think about your needs, also consider what they're likely to be in the near future, too. Will you be a host for guests more often? Less often? Will you need more or less room to pursue your hobbies? Will you be growing a home-based business, or folding one? Is your family growing in size or is your nest emptying? Will you be traveling more, be it for work or pleasure? It's the answers to these sorts of questions that'll help you determine whether you should be upsizing or downsizing.

Lastly, edit your belongings – get rid of anything you don't need and use regularly. Too often, people buy square footage they don't need just to house things they don't use. Without all that extra stuff around to cloud your judgment, you'll more accurately be able to see what size a space you really need.

THE GRASS IS GREENER

You can have a green lawn in more ways than one. Follow these simple eco-friendly lawn care tips for a yard that not only looks great, but also is easier on the environment and your health.

- **MOW AT THREE INCHES FOR HEALTHIER GRASS, AND A HEALTHIER WATER BILL!** Shorter grass has shallower roots, making it weaker and susceptible to disease and drought. Taller grass encourages deeper root growth and provides more shade for roots and soil, reducing moisture evaporation so your grass needs less watering.
- **AFTER MOWING, LEAVE THE GRASS CLIPPINGS ON YOUR LAWN.** Clippings consist mostly of water, as well as nitrogen, so they'll help you conserve water by helping your lawn retain moisture. And they'll return nutrients to your lawn, fertilizing it as they break down over a day or two.
- **WATER WISELY.** Do it early in the morning, and infrequently but thoroughly – an inch a week should do it. Don't waste water on areas that don't need it, like the driveway or street. Use a rain gauge or tin to time how long it takes your sprinklers to disperse one inch of water.
- **COMPOST.** Buy it wherever green gardening supplies are sold. Or, better yet, make your own – it's a great way to put yard waste like leaves and hedge trimmings to use, while cutting down on the kitchen waste you'd otherwise have to deposit at the curb each week. Easy and cheap, organic compost makes a nutrient-packed fertilizer that will actually improve your soil.
- **KILL WEEDS NATURALLY.** Synthetic herbicides are loaded with toxic chemicals. Check the Internet for alternate weed-killing recipes, made from common household products: salt, vinegar, bleach – even boiling water!



Terminology Tip

Open Mortgage — A type of mortgage that offers borrowers the flexibility to pay off the balance of the loan before it matures, without incurring any pre-payment penalties. To find out the specifics of an open mortgage, and if it would be a good fit for you, consult your mortgage advisor.

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Please don't forget to visit my website www.DonnaReilly.com. Here you will find valuable and timely real estate information, including up-to-the minute West Windsor neighborhood market updates. I hope you find this website helpful, and would welcome any suggestions or comments you may have. Please feel free to call me any time at 609-462-3737, or send me an email at DonnaReilly@weichert.com. It will be my pleasure to be of service to you.

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