

# realtyreport®

Compliments of Donna Reilly

Weichert, Realtors



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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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## Let the Moves Begin!

While some businesses wind down in the summer, real estate tends to peak at this time of year. Much of that movement comes from families with children, who are anxious to buy, sell and get settled before the start of the new school year.

For families with children in school, often, the goal is to be able to finish off the school year in the old neighborhood, and start the next grade in their new school at the same time as all the other kids, helping to ease some of that "new kid on the block" anxiety that comes from making a mid-year move.

Neighborhood sports and other local activities, in addition to extra-curricular school groups, often start in the fall, so kids can join programs and assimilate into new social circles in their new neighborhoods easier by moving in the summer.

Even if your household doesn't include school-aged children, you'll find this is a great time to both buy and sell, because of the higher

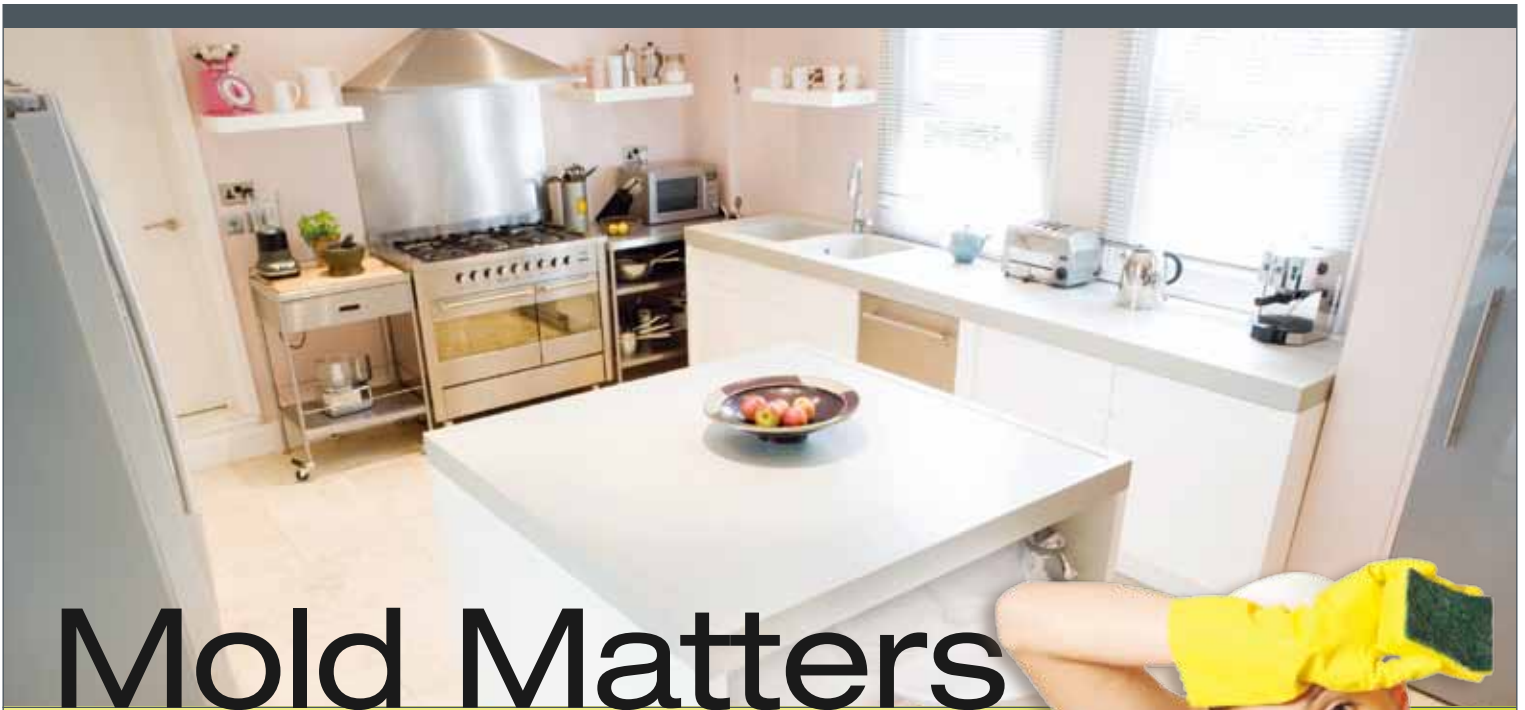
number of buyers out in the good-weather market, and the higher number of properties to choose from. In fact, because, according to the National Association of REALTORS® (NAR), the average homebuyer in 2010 viewed 15 properties over the course of 12 weeks in their search for a new home, you'll want to start your home hunt now, while the selection of homes for sale is most abundant.

According to Lawrence Yun, NAR's chief economist, existing home sales are "expected to rise 5 to 10 percent this year with the economic recovery, job creation and excellent affordability conditions providing confidence to buyers who've been on the sidelines."

Please call for the latest real estate conditions in your specific area of interest.



USSF



# Mold Matters

THOUGH IT COMES IN A VARIETY OF SHADES — BLACK, BROWN, GREEN, EVEN ORANGE AND PINK — YOU CERTAINLY DON'T WANT TO INCORPORATE IT INTO YOUR DÉCOR. NOT ONLY IS MOLD UNSIGHTLY, IT CAN COMPROMISE YOUR INDOOR AIR QUALITY AND RESULT IN UNPLEASANT ODORS AND HEALTH PROBLEMS.

While exposure to indoor mold doesn't always pose a health threat, it can cause problems for people with sensitivities. Spores travel easily through indoor air, triggering allergic symptoms like eye and skin irritations; runny nose and watery eyes; respiratory difficulties like coughing and wheezing; and even headaches and flu-like symptoms.

Mold requires certain conditions in order to thrive: lack of air circulation, humidity/moisture, and lack of light. It's no wonder, then, that mold is most commonly found in bathrooms and kitchens. To prevent it from growing in these areas, you need to address those conditions.

- **LACK OF AIR CIRCULATION** — Your kitchen and bathrooms should have exhaust fans — be sure to use them while cooking or showering. If you don't have fans, install them, or at least open a window.
- **HUMIDITY/MOISTURE** — Exhaust fans and open windows help, but where humidity/moisture is a significant problem, a dehumidifier may be needed. Don't let surfaces stay wet — squeegee tubs/showers and wipe down kitchen and bathroom surfaces with a dry cloth. Always hang damp cloths and towels.
- **LACK OF LIGHT**. Make sure your kitchen and bathrooms are well lit. Turn the lights on when showering and leave them on for 15 minutes or so after your shower, when your bathroom is most wet. Allow as much natural light as possible into rooms where moisture is an issue.

If you currently have mold in your kitchen or bathrooms, there are plenty of commercial cleaning products that claim to eliminate it. But why spend money on toxic cleaners when you likely already have products at home that'll do the trick.

- Vinegar is highly effective in killing mold when left to sit on the problem area. You don't need to water it down, but if its odor is too much, just add a bit of essential oil.
- Bleach and ammonia work for non-porous surfaces, of which there are many in kitchens and bathrooms, though you might not want to use them in small spaces due to harsh fumes.
- Solutions of water and either Borax or baking soda can also be used — both are natural deodorizers that, when left on to dry, help to prevent the regrowth of mold.
- Remember that serious mold problems are best tackled by a professional mold removal company. Consider asking your real estate sales representative for suggestions.

Finally, did you know there's such a thing as mold- and mildew-resistant paint? Specially formulated for moisture-prone areas like kitchens and bathrooms, the paint contains chemicals that won't kill mold (which is why it's imperative that surfaces be mold-free before application), but will inhibit its growth. Look into this product as a preventative measure.

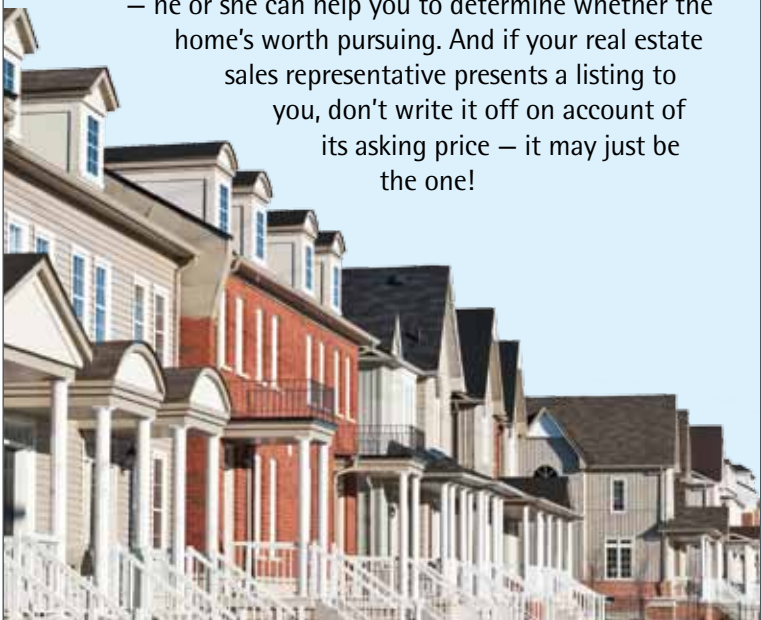
# RESERVING JUDGMENT

Just as you can't always judge a book by its cover, you can't always judge a property by its listing price. If you do, you may miss out on a home that's ideal for your needs. Here's why.

If you're like most buyers, you assume an underpriced home must be fundamentally flawed in some way. "It's probably on the verge of collapse," you might think. "Or next to a shooting range." But that's not necessarily the case; there are many reasons why perfectly good homes are priced below market. For example, the owner may be under pressure to sell quickly due to a divorce or a job transfer. Or the home has lingered for sale because it doesn't show well or hasn't been properly marketed, and its price has steadily declined as a result.

On the other hand, many buyers immediately discount overpriced homes, assuming they're out of reach. But that isn't always true. While it is true that some sellers won't budge on price, many overpriced listings don't generate much activity, which means that owners serious about selling will be motivated to consider offers lower than their asking price.

Pursuing an under- or overpriced home can be advantageous, as you'll probably face less competition from other buyers than you would for a home priced at market value. So if you see a listing that otherwise interests you, contact your real estate sales representative — he or she can help you to determine whether the home's worth pursuing. And if your real estate sales representative presents a listing to you, don't write it off on account of its asking price — it may just be the one!



## Worth 1,000 Words

With the Internet now playing a significant role in real estate, photographs are an invaluable marketing tool for sellers. And a professional real estate sales representative is the key to getting quality photos — and getting them seen.

As well, studies have shown that it's not just the quality of pictures that counts, but the quantity. Results revealed that the more photographs a listing had, the more leads it generated and the more showings the home had. Also, as the number of photos went up, so did the selling price. Meanwhile, the number of days the property spent on the market went down, meaning properties with more photos sold faster.

To get good photos, and plenty of them, enlist the help of a real estate sales representative, who is likely an expert at distinguishing good photos from poor ones, and who can make sure the latter aren't used to market your property. As well, your real estate sales representative knows what's appealing to the kind of buyers looking for a home like yours, so he or she knows what features are best shown off in photos in order to pique interest. Plus, your real estate sales representative can help you stage your home for the camera.

As well, you may want to discuss the possibility of hiring a professional photographer. A photographer's skillful eye, guided by your real estate sales representative's insight into what buyers want to see, can capture your home at its most appealing.

But what's the point of great pictures if few buyers are going to see them? To get maximum exposure for your photos — not just among buyers, but other real estate sales representatives, too — get on the MLS®.



# PRE-FLIGHT CHECKLIST

It's almost that time of year when many homeowners lock up the house and take off for summer vacation. But locking up isn't all you should do to prepare your house for your absence.

- Leave a key to your house with a trusted neighbor, or a friend or family member who doesn't live too far away, in case they need to enter your home due to an emergency, and let them know your departure and return dates, as well as a phone number where you can be contacted.
- Make it look occupied while you're away. Add timers to indoor/outdoor lighting systems, radios and TVs; have someone collect your mail or request the post office to hold it until your return; arrange for someone to keep up your outdoor maintenance; if you normally keep your window coverings open, don't close them when you leave – doing so could signal your absence.
- Don't give burglars an easy in. Make sure all points of entry to your house are well lit; trim bushes and trees so they don't provide cover for burglars nor allow access to second-floor windows; don't hide a key outside your house; don't leave ladders outside, nor any tools that could aid a burglar's break-in.
- Take precautions against fire and water damage. Turn off the water supply to your washing machine, dishwasher, sinks and toilets. Unplug electrical devices, as they could spark a fire in the event of storms or power surges – but leave plugged in, of course, your fridge and anything you've hooked up to a timer.



## Terminology Tip

**Expired Listing** — When a seller contracts with a real estate sales representative to sell his or her home, the seller determines the length of the listing contract — 60, 90 or even 180 days, for example. If the property does not sell within that time frame, it becomes what's known as an expired listing. Once a listing expires, the seller has the options of re-listing with the same or different real estate sales representative, and the seller may decide to change the price or terms at that point.

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*Please don't forget to visit my website [www.DonnaReilly.com](http://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](mailto:DonnaReilly@weichert.com). It will be my pleasure to be of service to you.*

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