

# The Real Estate Advocate

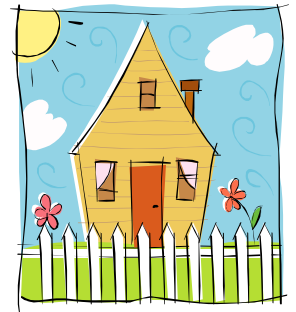
An Update On Real Estate News Published by *Ginthner and Associates* of Windermere Real Estate

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## WHAT'S NEW?

2010 has started off busy. To better serve our clients we have spent the last six months attending classes and seminars to earn the designations of short sale and foreclosure resource specialist. SFRS and Certified Short Sale Specialist CSSS. This is no small feat, but we felt it necessary to stay ahead of this ever changing market. Obtaining this designation gives us the credentials and tools to assist our sellers in negotiating with their underlying lien holder as well as assist buyers in protecting their interests when purchasing short sale or bank owned property. To read more about short sales check out our web site [www.ginthner.com](http://www.ginthner.com) and click on the short sale tab.



*Diane and Kris*

I've grown to realize the joy that comes from little victories is preferable to the fun that comes from ease and the pursuit of pleasure.  
- Lawana Blackwell

*It is only through your continuing business, referrals and goodwill that we have been able to build our successful team. We truly appreciate your continued support!*

## Mark Your Calendar



**June 19th  
& 20th  
Fremont  
Fair**

Founded in 1972, the Fremont Fair is one of Seattle's most beloved neighborhood street festivals. Held annually in mid-June to coincide with the Summer Solstice. The Fair, takes place in downtown Fremont north of the Fremont Bridge.

## PENDING SALES ARE UP

Northwest MLS brokers report 51% jump in pending sales

A Excerpt taken from NWMLS KIRKLAND, WA, April 5, 2010 – Home sales around Washington state surged last month, with brokers reporting activity at levels "like we haven't seen in a while," according to the owner of a Seattle brokerage. Northwest Multiple Listing Service members reported 8,605 pending sales during March

for a 51 percent increase over the same month a year ago. Notably, while entry-level home sales have been driving the market, brokers also reported strong activity at the upper end of the price spectrum. Last month, 91 residences (76 of them in King County) sold for \$1 million or more; twelve months ago only 40 homes and condos fetched \$1 million or more.

Pending sales (offers made and accepted, but not yet

closed) in the four-county Puget Sound region rose 60 percent from twelve months ago, led by Snohomish County where the number of transactions jumped more than 77 percent.

MLS brokers also reported year-over-year increases in the number of new listings added to inventory and in the volume of closed sales.

Continued on page six.

# DID YOU KNOW

- Every ton of recycled paper saves about 17 trees.
- Percentage of Africa that is said to be wilderness: 28%.
- Percentage of North America that is said to be wilderness: 38%.
- Changed world: it is said that Hallmark makes cards for 105 different familial relationships.

## YOU COULD BE NEXT....

Congratulations to...

**It could have been you!**

The winner of the last months Trivia Contest!

Q: What was network TV's first children's show broadcast in color?

A: Howdy Doody

# VEGETABLE TARTS

## Ingredients:

- 1 package flaky dough sheet (like Pillsbury Crescent Recipe Creations)
- 1/2 cup shredded Gruyere cheese
- 1 tomato, diced small
- 4 asparagus spears, cut crosswise into 1/4-inch-thick slices
- 1 egg
- 3 tablespoons whipping cream
- Salt and pepper to taste

## Cooking Instructions:

Preheat oven to 375 degrees F. Unroll dough until flat and cut into 12 equal squares.

Line mini muffin tins with mini baking cups.

Place dough squares in cups and shape edges to keep contents from spilling out.

Divide cheese among cups; top with vegetables. Pat down with a spoon.

In a small bowl, combine egg and whipping cream and beat until frothy. Add salt and pepper to taste. Using a spoon, divide egg mixture over vegetables to the edge of the tin.

Bake tarts for about 15 minutes at 375 degrees F. Cool slightly before serving.



## VOC PAINT: Q + A: Is there any benefit to using low-VOC paint, other than it being good for the environment?

I had a client ask me a good question the other day. He was wondering if there was a good reason to use low or zero-VOC paint, other than it being good for the environment. I found a link on the EPA website that describes some tests that were done to monitor the VOC levels in a room after painting. If you are interested, please follow this link: <http://www.epa.gov/appcdwww/iemb/abstracts/source.htm>. The results show that standard drywall (or gypsum wallboard) and other materials absorb VOC emissions while you are painting. Up to one year after the painting



has been completed, VOCs slowly, but continuously, are re-emitted from the surfaces that absorbed the VOCs (ie gypsum wall board) exposing the inhabitants to low levels of toxins via indoor air. I think that this is a pretty good reason for us all to reconsider what type of paint we purchase before painting a room. Most standard paint companies now carry a line of low and/or zero-VOC paint.

In addition, low and zero-VOC stains can also be purchased from a variety of dealers (i.e. Ecohaus, Benjamin Moore, Sherwin Williams, etc)

Contact Heidi Helgeson and H2D at 206-370-4762 to learn more about healthy changes you can make in your home.



## Terrific Trivia

Do You Know The Answer?  
Call us today!

In what year was Father's Day first celebrated?

Be the first reader to call Diane @ 206 940 8908 or Kris @ 206 940 1706 and answer the trivia question correctly. The winner will receive a \$25.00 gift certificate.

# PUGET SOUND FARMER'S MARKETS



Market	Day	Hours	Market Dates	Location
Bellevue Saturday Farmers Market	Saturdays	10 am – 2 pm	June 5 <sup>th</sup> – November 20 <sup>th</sup>	Washington Square Bellevue
Broadway Sunday Farmers Market	Sundays	11 am – 3 pm	May 10 <sup>th</sup> – December 20 <sup>th</sup>	On Capitol Hill, Seattle, Behind Bank of America on East side of Broadway St. at E Thomas St. Seattle
Ballard Farmers Market	Sundays Year round	10 am – 3 pm	Year Round	5300 Ballard Ave NE & 22 <sup>nd</sup> Ave NE
Crossroads Farmers Market	Tuesdays	12 pm – 5 pm	May 25 <sup>th</sup> – October 5 <sup>th</sup>	Crossroads Mall 156 <sup>th</sup> and 8 <sup>th</sup> , Bellevue
Friday Night Market @ Juanita Beach	Fridays	3 pm – 7 pm	May 14 <sup>th</sup> – October 8 <sup>th</sup>	9703 NE Juanita Dr, at Juanita Beach, Kirkland
Fremont Farmers Market	Sundays	10 am – 4 pm	Year Round!	North 34 <sup>th</sup> & Phinney Ave N
Issaquah Farmers Market	Saturdays	9 am – 2 pm	April 10 <sup>th</sup> – October 9 <sup>th</sup>	1730 - 10 <sup>th</sup> Ave NE (Pickering Barn) Issaquah
Kirkland Wednesday Farmers Market	Wednesday	2 pm – 7 pm	May 5 <sup>th</sup> – October 15 <sup>th</sup>	Park Lane East between 3 <sup>rd</sup> and Main Kirkland
Lake Forest Park Commons Farmers Market	Sundays	11 am – 4 pm	May 9 <sup>th</sup> – October 3 <sup>rd</sup>	LFP Town Center @ the corner of Ballinger Way (SR 104) & Bothell Way (SR 522)
Madrona Farmers Market	Fridays	3 pm – 7 pm	May 14 <sup>th</sup> – September 24 <sup>th</sup>	M L King Way & East Union
Redmond Saturday Market	Saturdays	9 am – 3 pm	June 1 <sup>st</sup> – September 14 <sup>th</sup>	Redmond Town Center on LearyWay
University District Farmers Market	Saturdays Year Round	9 am – 2 pm	Year Round!	NE 50 <sup>th</sup> & University Way NE Seattle
Sammamish Farmers Market	Wednesdays	4 pm – 8 pm	May 19 <sup>th</sup> – September 29 <sup>th</sup>	801 228 <sup>th</sup> Ave SE Sammamish
Woodinville Farmers Market	Saturdays	9 am – 3 pm	May 1 <sup>st</sup> – October 9 <sup>th</sup>	Downtown Woodinville @ Carole Edwards Center

## ZOO TUNES SUMMER CONCERTS

- Jewel with Radney Foster - June 27
- Steve Earle with Joe Ely - June 30
- Carbon Leaf - July 14
- The Round 62 featuring Star Anna, Damien Jurado and many more - July 18
- Jimmy Cliff with Trevor Hall- July 21
- Great Big Sea - July 29
- Mary Chapin Carpenter with Shawn Colvin - August 3
- The Levon Helm Band with Joe Pug - August 11
- John Hiatt and The Combo - August 25
- Herbie Hancock's The Imagine Project - August 29

Tickets on sale NOW at Metropolitan Markets and at the zoo's West and South Entrances

# SEATTLE BACKYARD COTTAGES

Effective December 4, 2009, backyard cottages are allowed throughout the City of Seattle. Backyard cottages are also known as detached accessory dwelling units or DADUs. Prior to the 2009 legislation, backyard cottages were allowed only in southeast Seattle neighborhoods.

Backyard cottages can give families a place to grow, adults a place to grow old, and they can serve as to supplement a mortgage payment. They're a good answer for affordability and life-long changes in families while not changing the character of single-family neighborhoods.

Legislation is a "grace period" that

allows owners of existing, unauthorized backyard cottages the opportunity to legalize their unit without penalty. Owners have until June 30, 2010 to apply for a building permit and until December 31, 2010 to obtain final inspection of the unit.

Owners who submit for a building permit before June 30, and receive a final inspection before December 30, 2010, will not be subject to violation penalties. Owners who do not take advantage of this grace period opportunity and are found to be in violation may be subject to civil penalties including per-day penalties and a one-time penalty of \$5,000.

Permit fees for backyard cottages will vary. Additional information on permitting requirements for backyard cottages can be found online at [www.seattle.gov/dpd/backyardcottages](http://www.seattle.gov/dpd/backyardcottages).



## First-Time Home Buyer Tax Credit Extended For Armed Service Members

The expiration date of the \$8,000 first-time home buyer may have already passed for most, but there are some potential homebuyers who can still take advantage of this great opportunity.

For those who are qualified service members, you have an extra year to cash in on the credit. Your new deadline is April 30, 2011. The government defines "qualified service member" as a member of the uniformed services of the U.S. military, a member of the Foreign Service of the U.S., or an employee of the intelligence community."

The reasoning behind this extension is simple. National Association of Home Builders Chairman, Bob Jones, says, "Congress recognized that many service

members may have missed out on the home buyer tax credit due to being posted overseas. It is only fitting that they be given another year to take advantage of this opportunity in appreciation of the sacrifices they have made serving our country."

There has been another modification to the credit for members of the armed service. Currently, a buyer must repay the credit if they move out of their new home within three years. This particular contingency has been waived if the move is due to government ordered extended duty service.

Buyers must meet the other qualification for the credit, however, including the income limits. These limits are set at \$125,000 for single taxpayers and \$225,000 for married taxpayers filing joint returns.

You must be a first-time home buyer, which is defined as "a buyer who has not owned a principal residence during the three-year period prior to the purchase. For married taxpayers, the

law tests the homeownership history of both the home buyer and his/her spouse."

If you don't fit under this definition, then be sure to check into the \$6,500 repeat buyer tax credit.

To get the first-time home buyers credit, you will need to claim it on your federal income tax return. There is a specific form (IRS Form 5405) that helps you determine how much the credit will be. Be sure to talk to your tax professional about the credit to ensure it is submitted correctly.

For those interested in the credit, you can visit [FederalHousingTaxCredit.com](http://FederalHousingTaxCredit.com) to find out more information.

By: Carla L. Davis  
Realty Times

# WHAT'S HAPPENING IN THE MARKET?

LOCATION	<u>Year-to-date 2009</u> Closed Sales thru April			<u>Year-to-date 2010</u> Closed Sales thru April			PRICE CHANGE %
	Number of Homes	Median Sales Price	Average Market Time	Number of Homes	Median Sales Price	Average Market Time	
East of Lake Sammamish	212	\$499,450	108 days	382	\$496,500	85 days	Down 0.6%
West Bellevue	38	\$915,000	106 days	87	\$875,000	99	Down 4.4 %
East Bellevue	91	\$483,500	79 days	166	\$466,100	75 days	Down 3.6%
South Bellevue/ Newcastle/Issaquah	107	\$525,000	114 days	233	\$560,000	106 days	Up 6.2%
Kirkland/Rose Hill	95	\$550,000	107 days	170	\$526,250	78 days	Down 4.3%
Redmond	120	\$517,000	84 days	198	\$514,995	80 days	Down 0.4%
Mercer Island	24	\$941,000	106 days	46	\$803,500	114 days	Down 14.6%
Woodinville/ Juanita/Bothell/ Duvall	199	\$409,000	107 days	348	\$398,500	92 days	Down 2.6%
Renton	133	\$390,000	90 days	216	\$334,000	93 days	Down 14.4%
Ballard	333	\$395,000	60 days	476	\$408,500	52 days	Down 3.3%
Madrona	120	\$470,000	63 days	228	\$494,000	73 days	Up 4.9%
West Seattle	213	\$340,000	73 days	330	\$342,975	68 days	Up 0.9%
NE Seattle	219	\$420,000	53 days	287	\$437,000	44 days	Up 3.9%
Queen Anne/ Magnolia	97	\$560,000	71 days	156	\$565,000	89 days	Up 0.9%
Central Seattle	84	\$348,975	77 days	148	\$329,500	64 days	Down 5.6%
Shoreline	65	\$335,000	82 days	79	\$320,000	72 days	Down 4.5%
N. Bothell/Maltby	228	\$414,150	127 days	343	\$367,000	82 days	Down 11.4%
Lynnwood/Mt. Lake Terrace	285	\$336,500	100 days	411	\$310,000	82 days	Down 7.9%
Mill Creek/Everett	313	\$303,000	78 days	584	\$285,000	72 days	Down 6.0%
Monroe/Snohomish	124	\$272,250	98 days	198	\$260,000	107 days	Down 4.5%

\*All data compiled from information supplied by Northwest Multiple Listing Association on 5/10/2010 Accuracy of information herein is not guaranteed. This information was only taken of single-family homes, and does not include condominiums or vacant land.

Continued from page one.  
Pending Sales Are Up

Members added 12,994 new listings to the system last month, up 26.7 percent from the year-ago total of 10,252 new listings.

Last month's new listings included 11,041 single family homes and 1,953 condominiums. Those additions brought the total inventory to 38,716. That compares to 39,825 total active listings at the same time a year ago, a decrease of about 2.8 percent.

Closed sales outpaced year-ago totals by a wide margin. Members reported 4,972 completed transactions during March, a gain of 1,590 sales for a 47 percent increase. Prices for last month's closed sales of single family homes and condominiums (combined) were down about 2 percent system wide. Since January, however, prices have inched up almost 1.8 percent.

Within King County, price changes from a year ago ranged from double-digit increases for homes on Mercer Island (up 26.9 percent), Central Seattle (up 14.9 percent), and Vashon (up 10 percent), to double-digit declines in some parts of South King County.

"Homes that are positioned well – at every price range – are selling quickly," commented NWMLS director Pat Grimm, the owner/designated broker at Windermere Real Estate/

Capitol Hill, Inc. in Seattle. Among examples he cited was a Medina home that sold for its \$2.35 million asking price in seven days. It drew three quick offers with escalation clauses.

At the lower end of the price spectrum was a 2-bedroom Capitol Hill condo listed at \$230,000. It also received multiple offers and sold for full price in three days. Some buyers have to make offers on multiple properties before they win, but they're still reticent about paying more than the list price, according to Grimm. He noted buyers are not waiving inspections, but said some bidders are doing pre-offer inspections.

"Sales activity is at a high level like we haven't seen in a while, but still not the frenzy we saw a few years ago," Grimm remarked, adding, "And that's a good thing." Condo sales across the 21 counties in the MLS system showed significant improvement from a year ago. MLS members reported 1,199 pending sales last month, which compares to 645 sales for the same month a year ago for an increase of almost 86 percent.

Condo prices still lag year-ago figures. The median price for last month's completed sales was \$225,000, down about 7 percent from the year ago figure of \$242,000. Within Seattle, however, prices are up. The median price for last month's completed sales of condos in Seattle was \$291,000, an increase of 5.8 percent from a year ago when the median sales price was \$275,000.

## OUTDOOR MOVIES IN YOUR NEIGHBORHOOD

**Seattle Center Mural Amphitheater** - Fridays & Saturdays in August & September

Fremont - Every Saturday night of summer. And sometimes, Twisted Flicks, too!

West Seattle Sidewalk Cinemas - Saturday nights through August

**Kirkland Carillon Point** - Saturday nights mid-July through end of August

**Redhook Brewery in Woodinville** - not always G-rated; Thursday nights through late August

**Everett Park Drive-in** - doesn't bother listing titles on the web, but has shows most nights. Call for information (425) 338-5975



### :-) Sideways Smiley Face (1982-2010)

Sideways Smiley Face died on March 14, 2010, surrounded by his loved ones. The cause of death was over-use. Born on a Computer Science on-line bulletin board at Carnegie Mellon University, Mr. Face devoted his life to pointing out that the previous sentence was meant to be funny. He also gained worldwide recognition for his tireless efforts as a glib substitute for the words "I'm amused." His other interests included frowning and winking. He is survived by his children, Sideways Surprised Face, Sideways Glasses Face, Sideways Abraham Lincoln Face, Sideways Santa Claus Face, Sideways Pope Face, and, of course, his beloved wife, XOXO. In lieu of flowers, Mr. Face's family has requested that people use actual words to express their feelings.

## PREPARING FOR HOME SHOWINGS

By: Carla L. Davis

It's a very exciting time. Your agent has just lined up a prospective buyer. A deal can be made or broken, however, during the showing. How can you prepare your home to its best advantage?

The National Association of Realtors suggests that your first course of action should be removing clutter. The reasoning behind this is simple. Clutter distracts the mind and it distracts the imagination. A potential buyer needs to be able to see themselves and their own style in your home.

By banishing disorder and welcoming in neatness you can give your house an advantage over any competition who is lesser prepared.

2. After de-cluttering, the next step is to clean. In the same sense that de-cluttering is removing "you" from the potential home of another, cleaning is removing your grimy mark. Have carpets cleaned, wax the floors, and remove any odors of pets or smoking.

3. Luxurious bathrooms are a must. A bathroom that is clean and full of comfort is appealing to most every

buyer. Arrange new towels and rugs, as well as burn fresh smelling candles.

Consider adding rich decor, such as paintings.

4. Windows that shine. We can become desensitized to the finer details of our home, but buyers will hone in on each and every imperfection. Be sure that during your cleaning and de-cluttering, you don't forget to wash your windows. This way buyers will be able to focus their attentions on the beautiful grounds of your property, as opposed to the spots on the glass.

5. Let there be light. Burned out bulbs can make rooms look dark and dingy. Consider buying eco-friendly fluorescent or LED lights for use in your home.

6. Minor repairs are important. There are buyers who are turned off by even minor repairs. They see that loose cabinet door or that warped deck board as a two-fold evil. Either the house has been poorly cared for with bigger repairs waiting for discovery under the surface, or that the home may be too much work for them.

7. Don't neglect your yard. For many buyers, a yard is an extension of the

home. Be sure that for each showing, your yard is freshly mowed and any debris, trash, or clutter (toys, tools, etc) are put away. A great way to make flower beds appear neat and well tended is to add mulch. Clean off sidewalks with a quick power wash.

8. Add punches of seasonal color. Even if you aren't a garden guru, you can still plant low maintenance flowers in beds and pots. Some examples of low maintenance flowering plants are: petunias, pansies, and vincas.

9. A petless home. We all love our pets, sometimes like they're our own children. But they should be safely at a friend's house or kennel during showings. While you're at it, take your children and yourself out of the home during the showing as well!

10. Lock up your valuables. It would be nice to think that no potential buyer would steal from your home, but it could happen. Be sure that anything easily removed is locked away for safe keeping. And be sure that your real estate agent gets anyone's contact information before they are allowed into your home.

## MONEY FOR WOODSTOVES

### *"Turn in Your Old Wood Stove, Get Money"*

The Puget Sound Clean Air Agency is asking property owners to participate in wood stove trade-out programs that will provide financial incentives to people who trade in older wood burning stoves for new cleaner burning models that emit less pollution, especially during winter

months. Examples of incentives include:

- The federal government's energy tax credit of up to \$1,500 on the purchase of a qualifying wood stove or pellet stove, high efficiency furnace, heat pump or insulation.
- Low-Income Home Energy

Assistance Program

- USDA Rural Housing Repair and Rehabilitation Grants
  - Puget Sound Energy programs
- A complete list of incentives is available on-line from the Puget Sound Clean Air Agency at: <http://www.pscleanair.org/programs/community/burnclean/offers.aspx>

## *Bill the Butcher*

**the only meat to eat**

Bill the Butcher believes in supporting sustainable farming practices and working with local farmers and ranchers who raise beef, pork and poultry without hormones, steroids and genetically modified feed. We also feature open pastured organic and natural grass fed beef that has not been artificially and intentionally fattened on corn. This gentle and natural diet creates meat that is high in Omega 3 and 6 essential oils and is far healthier than traditional beef raised in a feedlot.

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