



RE/MAX advantage

Go to HomesInBucksPA.com to sign up for my Market Snapshot! Receive auto email updates of properties listed & sold in your community!

Drew's Clues

DREW FERRARA, Your Bucks County Specialist



Drew Ferrara

Your Bucks County Realtor!

49 South Main Street
Yardley, PA 19067

Office: 215.369.HOME
Cell: 215.620.1107

March, 2010

Presorted Standard
US Postage Paid
Morrisville, PA
Permit #206

Disclosures: All real estate information deemed reliable but not guaranteed and should be independently verified. All properties are subject to prior sale, change, or withdrawal. Neither listing broker(s) nor this company shall be responsible for typographical errors, misinformation, misprints and shall be held totally harmless. If your property is currently listed with another real estate broker, this is not a solicitation of that listing.

Visit my Website: HomesInBucksPA.com

Home Improvement

Handyman or tradesman? To keep home improvement costs at a reasonable level, you have decisions to make.

Electrical work: A licensed electrician can handle anything related to electricity. They cost about \$75 to \$100 an hour. You should hire one for any basic electrical work or anything that involves new wiring in the walls.

A good independent handyman has less experience but costs only \$25 to \$50 an hour. He probably has many capabilities. For example, he could not only install a new ceiling fan, he could also paint the ceiling.

Franchises, such as HouseDoctors, charge more but are more likely to insure and bond their crews.

Plumbing. Similarly, the independent handyman could not only replace the faucet or install the toilet, but he could replace most bathroom floors as well.

His work will cost less than that of a union plumber. But for projects

that require new pipes or rearranging pipes under the floor, a professional plumber is your best bet.

Heating and cooling: Depending on the handyman's experience, he could replace the thermostat or a thermocouple, but for actual furnace or air conditioning repairs, call a pro.

General contractor or tradesman? Experts reporting in Money magazine say a general contractor will handle everything related to a home improvement project. It's a big help if the project includes several subcontractors. He will mark up their fees by 10 percent or 20 percent to cover his own expenses.

If your project requires only one or two subcontractors, you might be able to manage it and save money.

And remember, I have an extensive list to top professionals in the area. Please contact me if you are interested in making any improvements in your home.



March is Women's History Month

In 1911 in Europe, March 8 was first celebrated as International Women's Day. In many European nations, as well as in the United States, women's rights was a political hot topic. Woman suffrage — winning the vote — was a priority of many women's organizations. Women (and men) wrote books on the contributions of women to history.

But with the economic depression of the 1930s which hit on both sides of the Atlantic, and then World War II, women's rights went out of fashion. In the 1950s and 1960s, after Betty Friedan pointed to the "problem that has no name" — the boredom and isolation of the middle-class housewife who often gave up intellectual and professional aspirations — the women's movement began to revive. With "women's liberation" in the 1960s, interest in women's issues and women's history blossomed.

By the 1970s, there was a growing sense by many women that "history" as taught in school — and especially in grade school and high school — was incomplete with attending to "her story" as well. In the United States, calls for inclusion of black Americans and Native Americans helped some women realize that women were invisible in most history courses.

And so in the 1970s many universities began to include the fields of women's history and the broader field of women's studies.

In 1978 in California, the Education Task Force of the Sonoma County Commission on the Status of Women began a "Women's History Week" celebration. The week was chosen to coincide with International Women's Day, March 8.

The response was positive. Schools began to host their own

Women's History Week programs. The next year, leaders from the California group shared their project at a Women's History Institute at Sarah Lawrence College. Other participants not only determined to begin their own local Women's History Week projects, but agreed to support an effort to have Congress declare a national Women's History Week.

Three years later, the United States Congress passed a resolution establishing National Women's History Week. Co-sponsors of the resolution, demonstrating bipartisan support, were Senator Orrin Hatch, a Republican from Utah, and Representative Barbara Mikulski, a Democrat from Maryland.

This recognition encouraged even wider participation in Women's History Week. Schools focused for that week on special projects and exhibitions honoring women in history. Organizations sponsored talks on women's history. The National Women's History Project began distributing materials specifically designed to support Women's History Week, as well as materials to enhance the teaching of history through the year, to include notable women and women's experience.

In 1987, at the request of the National Women's History Project, Congress expanded the week to a month, and the U.S. Congress has issued a resolution every year since then, with wide support, for Women's History Month. The U.S. President has issued each year a proclamation of Women's History Month.

Correction: The February issue incorrectly identified Black History Month. It is February.



Betty Friedan

March Events Quiz (answers below)

Sun	Mon	Tue	Wed	Thu	Fri	Sat
	1	2	3	4	5	6
7	8	9	10	11	12	13
14	15	16	17	18	19	20
21	22	23	24	25	26	27
28	29	30	31	<p>March 3: Alexander Graham Bell born, 6: Greg cookbook introduced, 9: Barbie birthday, 11: Day light savings begins, 15: Caesar's assassination Spings begins, 24: Houdini born in 1874, 28: Palm Sunday, 30: Passover</p>		

Custom Estate in Wrightstown

This luxurious property boasts all of the nuances required by today's discriminating estate buyers. \$949,000



HomesInBucksPA.com

Drew Ferrara, Your Bucks County Specialist

Thinking of Selling...contact me today to learn about my Innovative Marketing Plans & Strategies

Ask the Expert

Q Our adjustable rate mortgage will soon be up for renewal. We are wondering if taking a new, 15-year mortgage is a good idea. What do you think?

A If you have enough equity in your home to qualify for a fixed-rate mortgage, the 15-year plan is definitely recommended.

Many borrowers attracted to the 15-year have already owned their homes for several years. They would prefer to shorten the mortgage term rather than extend it for 20 or 30 years.

It's a good idea, but the main question you must ask yourself is whether you can afford the higher monthly payment now and for 15 years to come. Of course, interest rates on the 15-year are lower, so that helps.

Recently, interest rates on a 15-year mortgage averaged 4.46 percent, according to HSH Associates, which tracks the rates. That's significantly better than rates of 5 percent to 5.25 percent which were being charged for the 30-year.

Here's an example that will give you an idea of the difference in payments. Because rates change slightly all the time, we'll consider a \$100,000 mortgage at 4.5 percent for 15 years. Your payment would be \$765 a

month.

Over the life of the mortgage, you would pay a total of \$137,700.

On a 30-year mortgage at 5.25 percent, the monthly payment would be about \$552. Over the life of the mortgage, you would pay \$198,720.

According to the Mortgage Bankers Association, the shorter term mortgage is more popular

with people refinancing than with home buyers. Only 5 percent of home buyers choose the 15-year.

People refinancing, however, are apparently more able to handle the higher monthly payment. Originations of 15-year mortgages at Wells Fargo & Co. are up 55 percent from last year.

At J.P. Morgan Chase, 15-year loans now account for 20 percent of refinances, up from 10 percent last year. That's double the number from a year ago.

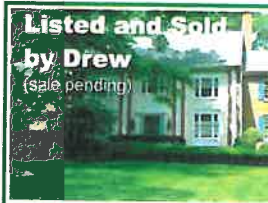
I would recommend the 15-year mortgage to everyone who can afford the higher monthly payment. If you can afford the payment, go for it!

Contact me to re-finance your mortgage; I'm a licensed loan Originator!



Current Listings

View all MLS Listings at HomesInBucksPA.com



Beautiful Estate in Yardley

Welcome to this architectural gem sitting in the midst of large, unique estate homes along the very prestigious Makefield Road. This sprawling colonial with 3 fireplaces built in 1970 has only known one owner. Long established trees & an old-world lantern light the way to this tremendous home which offers over 4,200 square feet of high-end finished living space on over an acre.

\$835,000



Oxford Falls

Pennsbury Schools

12 BRAND NEW spacious 2-story town homes with basements & Garages in Langhorne (Falls Township). Impressive list of Standard Features and Luxurious Options. Starting at **\$309,900**



Pine Brook Farms - Yardley

This lovely home features a large out-door living space which overlooks a scenic babbling brook. Enjoy two large main suites, and spacious living areas.

\$379,900



Green valley - Langhorne

Continuously updated over the last 25 years, this home offers a spectacular Kitchen, huge Living & Family Rooms- both with fireplaces, charming Main Bedroom Suite plus a 23' Sun Room overlooking the private .61 acre lot.

\$389,900



Sutphin Pines in Yardley

This beautiful townhome boasts three spacious living levels, large, bright rooms, and a lovely updated kitchen with granite counters. Contact me for further information on this property.



Is it Time to Get Off the Fence?



There's not much time left. If you are seriously considering the leap to home ownership, I remind you that the window is closing on federal tax credits.

First-time home buyers, and those who own a home and are buying another one, have until April 30 to set up a contract with a lender. The mortgage closing can come later, but the approval has to come by April 30.

Getting off the fence and under the wire to qualify for the deadline is no small matter. First-time buyers can qualify for an \$8,000 tax credit. Home owners can qualify for a \$6,500 tax credit.

SELLERS SEE MARKET RISE! Present home owners, including those who want the tax credit for buying another home, will be pleased to know that the real estate market is brightening. They have a better chance of selling their present home in a shorter period of time and perhaps for a little more than they would have received last year.

The National Association of Realtors says sales of existing homes recently rose by 7.4 percent above the same month in the previous year.

Though there are still some troubled areas, such as Florida, prices are generally inching up. They have firmed up considerably for middle-class homes in areas with short commutes.

Investors and buyers are scrapping for bargains because they know selling prices are rising.

The recent sales boost is helping real estate companies work through their lists of unsold homes, which have been declining for several months.

AN EXCITING TIME! So many conditions in the real estate market make this an exciting month:

- Spring begins in March. It's the most significant time of the year for real estate buys and sells. People will be out there looking, and the weather will be nice.
- There are bargains available on foreclosed homes and homes that have been on the market for six months or more.
- Mortgage interest rates are still near their lowest point in real estate history, but that situation could soon change.
- Real estate prices are rising, so more buyers are looking to lock in a deal right now.
- Sellers are looking forward to spring sales.

Contact me today!

"RAT" - a New York Times Bestseller

Ken Fisher's new book, *How To Smell a Rat*, has struck a cord with amateur and professional investors. The rest of its title is *The Five Signs of Financial Fraud*.

Fisher has written three other bestsellers and has been writing *Forbes* magazine's "Portfolio Strategy" column for 25 years. He gives investors a fraud-proof plan for investing that can benefit both novices and professionals.

He says investment fraud can strike anyone at anytime. But nearly every investment Ponzi scheme ever perpetrated, including, Bernard Madoff's massive fraud, could have been easily detected, and more easily avoided.



Using the example of "Everyman Jim," an investor swimming in shark-filled waters, Fisher gives a clear, fast-paced guide to his principles, such as, "Due diligence is your job, no one else's."

Fully referenced data, insider details and examples of the finer points of investing keep the reader engaged and entertained. Fisher not only tells the reader what to avoid, he gives practical, easy-to-follow examples of investment strategies. Some are from his own firm. He is founder and CEO of Fisher Investments, one of the largest registered investment firms.

The reader who likes stories will be interested in those about Madoff, Allen Stanford and a

number of other historical scam artists.

Fisher's five red flags that should alert investors back away include:

- Advisors who have access to your money.
 - Promises of returns that are too good to be true.
 - Mumbo-jumbo that takes the place of explaining investment strategy.
 - Information on the fake benefits of exclusivity and other strategies.
 - Relying on someone else for due diligence.
- How to Smell a Rat: The Five Signs of Financial Fraud by Ken Fisher, Wiley, 224 pages.
There is no better investment than real estate. Contact me today to explore the possibilities.

Refinancing

your Home Mortgage?

I am a licensed Loan Originator with Federated Lending...and, with this resource, I am able to assist with all your unique borrowing needs.

