



Kristine Beck
Real Estate Consultant

at Home



October 2008 Volume 9

Inside this issue:

Fannie Mae Freddy Mac	2
Market Watch	2
Featured Property of the Month	2
Paneling Problem Paint It	3
Pumpkin Farm	3
Recipe of the Month	4

Trick or Treat!

I hope you enjoy this month's copy of my *At Home* newsletter. It's filled with helpful information for you as a homeowner.

My time as a Real Estate Professional enlightens me with keen insights to my client's needs and challenges, and I want you to know that my experience is always at your disposal.

Feel free to call me anytime!

262-770-6475

Control Household Clutter by J. A. Young



Dealing with household clutter can be a constant task, but the need to organize everything from seasonal clothing to kitchen spices is vital for the overall running of the home. While some households appear to tackle clutter better than others, every homeowner can benefit from clutter busters that help keep this and that in their proper place around the house.

Buy Containers for Storage The first step to dealing with clutter is not to buy a bigger house; instead, buy organizing features that will allow you to cope with your accumulation of stuff. Clear plastic totes in various sizes will allow you to see what's stored inside and they can easily be stacked on basement or closet shelving. Store everything from photos, to shoes, to seasonal decorations, in these bins. Other simple organizing features might include space bags, closet organizers, and matching basketry for storing various items.

Buy Dual Purpose Furniture When furniture shopping for more general needs like coffee tables and children's beds, buyers might consider purchasing pieces that provide additional function.

For example, a large square coffee table might double as a storage receptacle for audiovisual materials, board games, or photo albums. Some beds come with drawers built into their bottoms for additional storage. Adequate storage receptacles are the key way to deal with a clutter accumulation.

Keep Items Together Another good tip to eliminate the appearance of clutter is to keep similar items together. By storing items such as books, baking ware, dishes, glassware, or toiletries in their own specific locations, the appearance is apt to look neater and more suited to function. Try to store any extra items away in order to keep organized those items, such as silverware, that are needed on a daily basis.

Keep a Cleaning Schedule Instating a cleaning routine can help maintain good household organization and keep the home from looking cluttered. When setting aside time for chores like vacuuming and dusting, try to put aside time just for replacing those items that have been left out. By performing this task often, there will be fewer messes of clutter to deal with.

Have Everyone Help Out Finally, and some might say most importantly, enlist the help of other household members to maintain a clutter-free atmosphere. When family members take responsibility for their personal space, it is much easier to maintain an organized home. The art of good organization requires much practice, but even the youngest family members can benefit from its lessons. When items are stored in their proper place, a clutter-free home is guaranteed.

Fannie Mae and Freddie Mac Takeover: What Does It Mean? by Kimbrough Gray

Earlier this month it was leaked that the government is taking over Freddie Mac and Fannie Mae. On Sunday it was official. Freddie Mac and Fannie Mae have now been taken over by the federal government. But what does it mean for the real estate market, mortgage interest rates, and the US economy.

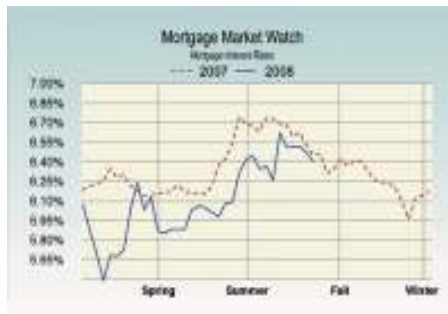
First let's look at what it means for mortgage rates. I would expect that the government takeover will result in lower mortgage rates, possibly a full point lower. Why? Basically the Fed has been struggling to lower mortgage rates for the last year in an attempt to assist the troubled real estate market. The Fed has lowered prime rates several times in an attempt to pull down mortgage interest rates. In spite of this over the last 8 months mortgage interest rates have mostly risen. Now with full control of Freddie Mac and Fannie Mae (which provides insurance for most mortgages in the US) they will have much more control over the mortgage market and mortgage rates. As long as their objective stays the same, we can expect lower rates.

What does the takeover say about the current situation in the real estate market? This should have been obvious from all the events that preceded this but the takeover shows that the real estate market is in serious trouble. The federal government doesn't just take over large companies on a whim, especially an administration with a Republican president that believes strongly in free markets. This is not simply a government takeover. This is the largest takeover in US history. Basically the takeover happened because it was believed if nothing was done we were headed for economic catastrophe.

How is this going to effect the real estate market? Although the takeover is a bad sign about our current situation it should have a positive effect on the real estate markets moving forward. First lowering mortgage interest rates should be quite a boon for the real estate market. Lowering rates lowers the effective cost of a house. And historically lowering rates has a positive effect on real estate values. Additionally, if the Fed is smart they will reduce some of the mortgage restrictions Freddie Mac and Fannie Mae have created in the last year. While I would not like to see the mortgage market return to the free-wheeling lending of a few years ago, some of the current rules are bizarrely restrictive. The lending environment typically works like a pendulum moving from one extreme to another. Currently lending restrictions are not just stricter than what we saw during the real estate boom a few years ago but they are more restrictive than anything we have seen in the last 15 - 20 years. Hopefully a federally controlled Fannie Mae and Freddie Mac can help return us to normal as far as lending restrictions.

Lastly the government takeover could put taxpayers in the lurch for billions in loan losses. In the short term the government is going to have to infuse money into Freddie Mac and Fannie Mae. They have been losing money for quite some time and that is

not going to change overnight. The government will have to around 20 to 30 billion into Fannie Mae and Freddie Mac to get them back to financial solvency.



Does this mean the federal government is insane? It depends on how you look at the issue. While taking over Fannie Mae and Freddie Mac will be very costly for the government and taxpayers, allowing them to fail could have led the US economy into a depression. In a depression those that keep their jobs have to make up for all the lost tax revenues for the large number of people that lose their jobs. So taxpayers could have been in a lurch if the Feds had decided to stay on the sidelines. So in summary the federal government found itself in a tight spot and decided to bet that they can fix the real estate market. We will find out if they were correct over the next several months.

Featured Home of the Month



This adorable starter home features:

- newer roof and windows
- remodeled kitchen, fresh paint and carpet
- 1 bedroom with large walk-in closet
- oven/range/refrigerator included
- full bath with shower over tub
- living room built-ins
- washer/dryer included, new water heater
- additional storage room in back of home
- expansive front yard with new walkway
- great location/near public transportation



**1508 Cleveland Ave.
Racine, WI**

\$74,900.00

Perfect for the first-time home buyer or investor/rental opportunity. Call today for a private showing—motivated sellers!

Paneling Problem? Paint It! by Ellen Russell

Many homes built or remodeled in the nineteen-seventies and eighties have extensive, dark wood paneling throughout the home. What was once considered vogue has become something of a decorating nightmare for homeowners. Although updating and replacing wall paneling with sheet rock is the best permanent solution, it is also an expensive, messy, and time-consuming process. If replacing paneling is not an option for you, then painting over dark paneled walls is one fast economical solution to improve upon the look of your home.



Use a Quality Primer - Since paneled walls usually have a very smooth, slick surface, you will need to apply primer to cover the paneling and create a surface that the paint can readily adhere to. An application of primer also adds a layer of color so that less paint is necessary.

Begin by painting the deep-set, beveled lines of the wall paneling before you paint the entire wall surface. Use a good quality, thin paintbrush (one half to one inch wide) and paint in all the lines of the paneling.

Next, cut in two to three inches along all edges and corners. Cutting in refers to painting the edges and corners of the walls with a paintbrush, filling in the areas where a paint roller cannot reach or would scrape adjacent walls and ceilings.

With edges and grooves prepared, paint the wall surface with a paint roller. Start at the top of the wall and work in patches three or four feet square. Roll paint in a "W" shape to avoid roller marks, drips, and streaks. With the first area filled, paint the adjacent area below, working from the top of the wall down. Repeat the process throughout the room, continuing to work in "W" formation, until the entire room is covered with paint.

Other Creative Ways to Disguise Paneling - Another decorative way to work with paneling is to achieve a wainscoting effect. Paint the paneling as described above, then hang a trim board along the walls midline. This works especially well if paneling exists only on the bottom third or half of the wall, but can be done as well by choosing an upper wall and lower wall paint color to cover the paneling. Another option is to have the top half of a paneled wall skim-coated with plaster and painted or wallpapered, then create the wainscot look by painting and trimming the bottom half of the panel.

Living with paneling is not a must simply because you don't have the time or money to invest in ripping out and remodeling the walls entirely. A weekend paint project can breathe new life into a paneled interior.



Join Me At Swan's Pumpkin Farm!



Saturday, October 25th

10:00 a.m.—1:00 p.m.

5930 Hwy H—Franksville



Pumpkins



For more information call 770-6475 or email me at kabeck@wi.rr.com



Prudential
Southeast Realty

Kristine Beck
Real Estate Consultant

6233 Bankers Road
Suite 3
Racine, WI 53403
Phone: 262-554-9752 ext. 225
Mobile: 262-770-6475
Fax: 262-554-9756
Email: kabeck@wi.rr.com



*Providing Value in
Your Community!*



There are many qualities and skills that go into being an excellent real estate professional; integrity, in-depth community and market knowledge, marketing savvy, effective negotiation skills, technological know-how and a high-quality professional network, all of which are hallmarks of how I work.



That said, in my experience as a Real Estate Professional, I've found that providing the very best service is essentially about **putting my clients first**. This means keeping myself accessible, being a good listener as well as a good communicator, and responding quickly to your needs. This "client first" philosophy has always been my approach and it requires me to continually improve my skills and ways of doing business.

Recipe of the Month

Double Decker Pumpkin Bread

Ingredients

- **1/2** of an 8-ounce package cream cheese, softened
- **1/4** cup sugar
- **1** 8-ounce carton dairy sour cream
- **1** egg
- **2** tablespoons finely chopped crystallized ginger
- **3** cups all-purpose flour
- **2** teaspoons baking soda
- **2** teaspoons ground cinnamon
- **1** teaspoon ground ginger
- **1** teaspoon ground nutmeg
- **1/2** teaspoon salt
- **2** cups sugar
- **4** eggs
- **1** 15-ounce can pumpkin
- **1** cup cooking oil
- **1/3** cup water



Directions

- 1.** Preheat oven to 350 degrees F. Grease the bottoms and 1/2 inch up the sides of two 9x5x3-inch loaf pans; set aside. In a medium bowl, combine cream cheese and the 1/4 cup sugar. Beat with an electric mixer on medium speed until combined. Add sour cream and the 1 egg; beat until combined. Stir in the crystallized ginger; set aside.
- 2.** In another medium bowl, stir together flour, baking soda, cinnamon, the ground ginger, the nutmeg, and salt; set aside.
- 3.** In a large bowl, combine the 2 cups sugar, the 4 eggs, the pumpkin, oil, and water. Beat on low speed until combined, scraping side of bowl occasionally. Gradually add flour mixture, beating until combined.
- 4.** Spoon 1-1/2 cups of the pumpkin batter into each of the prepared pans. Divide the cream cheese mixture between pans, spreading evenly. Spoon the remaining pumpkin batter onto cream cheese mixture, spreading evenly.
- 5.** Bake for 60 to 70 minutes or until a toothpick inserted in the center comes out clean. Cool in pans on wire racks for 10 minutes. Remove bread from pans. Cool completely on wire racks.

Wrap and store in the refrigerator overnight before slicing. Store any leftover bread in the refrigerator for up to 1 week. Makes 32 servings.

Visit www.bhg.com for more Pumpkin recipes.



Kristine Beck, ABR
Real Estate Consultant

**Call 262-770-6475 for all
your Real Estate Needs!**

I'm on the Web!
www.kristinebeck.com

