

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 me at any time on my cell at 609-462-3737. And remember, up to the minute West Windsor real estate information is always available at West-Windsor-Homes-NJ.com or [Facebook.com/West.Windsor.Homes.NJ](https://www.facebook.com/West.Windsor.Homes.NJ).

All the best,

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CONSUMER CONFIDENCE SOARS

Based on The Conference Board *Consumer Confidence Index*®, Americans are feeling very positive about the economic forecast. In fact, consumer confidence in July 2014 hit its highest level since October 2007!

According to Lynn Franco, Director of Economic Indicators at The Conference Board, "Consumer confidence increased for the third consecutive month and is now at its highest level since October 2007. Strong job growth helped boost consumers' assessment of current conditions, while brighter short-term outlooks for the economy and jobs, and to a lesser extent personal income, drove the gain in expectations. Recent improvements in consumer confidence, in particular expectations, suggest the recent strengthening in growth is likely to continue into the second half of this year."

With consumer confidence brings purchasing confidence, which can

translate into higher real estate activity. Lawrence Yun, National Association of REALTORS® Chief Economist, predicts a slight uptick in sales during this second half of the year. "The good news is that price appreciation has decreased to its slowest pace since March 2012 behind much needed increases in inventory." He adds, "With rents rising 4 percent annually, potential buyers are less likely to experience sticker shock and can make smart decisions on whether or not it makes sense to buy or continue renting."

Wondering what the market mood is like in your area? Simply call today for your no-obligation neighborhood update!



A CLEAN SWEEP!



While just about everyone enjoys a clean house, there are precious few who enjoy the work involved. Even the most hygienic of homeowners would rather spend their time doing something else. Make cleaning your home an easier, faster and less unpleasant process with the following tips.

First things first, have the right tools – your cleaning equipment should be easy to maintain while making your task easier. For instance, brooms with angled heads and dusters with telescopic handles make it easier to clean hard-to-reach places; mops with removable heads are easier to clean, and those with looped (as opposed to cut) ends are more effective and durable.

Be sure to keep your cleaning equipment in good working order, too. You'll spend considerably more time passing a poorly maintained vacuum over the same area of carpeting – and still leave more dirt behind – than you will with a vacuum whose filter you've regularly cleaned/replaced or belt you've changed as needed.

Now that you're well equipped, it's time to get organized. Gather all your essential cleaning supplies – your all-purpose cleaner, sponges, microfiber cloths and gloves, for example – into some kind of caddy that can travel with you from room to room. Having everything you need within handy reach will help prevent you from wasting time or getting distracted as you retrieve that forgotten item.

Organize a plan of attack, too. Figure out what chores need to be done, when and by whom. Create cleaning checklists and/or schedules that will work for your particular family/

lifestyle. You might have a different checklist for each room or person in your home, for example, or checklists for each day, week, and/or month.

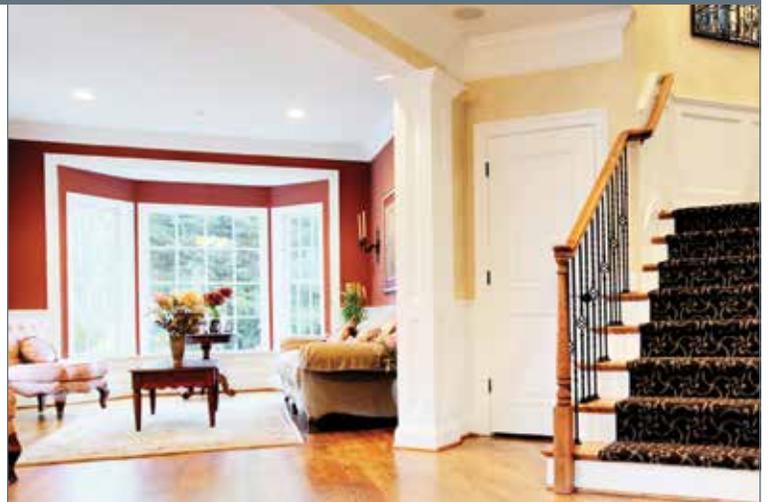
When it comes time to get down to business, do whatever you need to do to get in the right headspace. That might mean cranking up the high-energy music, playing that newly downloaded podcast or streaming your favorite TV show. For those who need to see the light at the end of the tunnel, that may mean setting a timer – when your 15 or 30 minutes are over, so is your work. For parents, that may mean setting up a cleaning game like musical chores for children – when the music changes, the kids switch chores. If it helps motivate you (or your spouse or children) have a reward ready for when the chores are done.

Of course, another helpful way to make your home easy to clean is to design it that way. When you have the opportunity to redecorate, opt for finishes and materials that will help reduce the amount of time you need to spend cleaning, rather than adding to it. Walls need a fresh coat? Choose a paint with a high scrubbability rating. Carpeting looking worse for wear? Consider replacing it with carpet tiles rather than the wall-to-wall variety. Ditching those outdated appliances for new models? Avoid stainless steel unless you want to spend more time erasing fingerprints.

GETTING SETTLED

Moving day has come and gone; you'll be unpacking and decorating for months. In the meantime, there are a few things you can do to make your new house or condo feel a little more like home.

- **Maintain your routines.** When your surroundings change, it's important for you, your kids and even your pets to remember you haven't changed. So be consistent: make a point of honoring the same rituals – bedtime(s), mealtimes, appointments such as date night or family game night – in your new home as you did in your old one.
- **Make sure everybody's "comfort items" are at the ready upon arrival in your new home.** For a toddler, that may be a certain stuffed animal and for you it could be a favorite coffee mug. This tip is a lot easier to follow if you pay these items special attention while packing for your move – make sure they're easily accessible!
- **Carve out a sanctuary space.** Setting up your new home is a lengthy process. In the short term, make a priority of establishing one room, or even a corner of a room, with all the creature comforts. Ideally, this space is a relaxing retreat from cleaning, repairing, unpacking and all the other stresses that are part of settling into a new home.
- **Get outside and explore – on foot.** Walking is the best way to get your bearings in a new setting; you won't be distracted, you can dawdle, and you'll be able to go places you can't by car, all of which means you'll see more. Discover your new favorite café or find the local gym so you can return to your pre-move routines.



LEAVE IT

Much is said about what should go when you list your home – clutter, odor – but what should *stay*? Here are some things a savvy seller might consider leaving in their for-sale home.

- **Some furniture.** Without it, potential buyers may get confused as to a room's purpose, and have difficulty remembering the details of your property and envisioning themselves living in it. As well, imperfections in your walls and floors (like scuffs and stains) will be all the more noticeable in an empty room. Consider having your home staged if you can't leave your own furniture in it.
- **Paperwork.** For sellers of houses, this could mean an explanation of any improvements you've made that lower utility or other costs of running the home. For condo dwellers, this could mean a current condo newsletter and/or activity schedule, so buyers can see what life in your condominium has to offer. You can even consider leaving a note about a few things you've particularly enjoyed about living in this home and this area. Tell them, for instance, about those tucked-away hiking trails and that fantastic little restaurant nearby that they might not know about otherwise.
- **Photographs.** If you've done any renovation work, you might want to put some before and after photos in an album so buyers can see the value you've added to the property. Similarly, provide some photos of your property's exterior on a sunny spring day, for example, so buyers can see it at its best no matter what the conditions are like on the day they come to view it.

ASK AWAY

Attending the home inspection is a great opportunity to learn more about a house you intend to buy. Here are some questions well worth asking during the inspection:

- **Can you show me?** The language inspectors use can be confusing. Asking to see problems first hand is extremely helpful in clarifying your understanding, and gives you the opportunity to take pictures, video and notes as needed.
- **How serious is it?** What sounds like a serious problem may not be and vice versa. This question will help you decide whether you still want the home and help you to prioritize repairs should you proceed with the purchase.
- **Who can fix it?** Maybe you'll be pleasantly surprised to learn the problem is one you can easily remedy yourself. Or maybe you'll need to call in a specialist, in which case you'll need to know what kind to contact.
- **How does it work?** Inspectors are experts who are happy to demonstrate their knowledge. Asking them to show you how to shut off the gas, water and electricity can save you critical time in an emergency.
- **How could I make this house more livable?** Your home inspector can help you identify areas of the house that could be improved to make it more livable and even save you money, like making it more energy efficient, for example.



Terminology Tip

SURVEY — An assessment of property lines summarized on a document that shows property boundaries and measurements. The survey specifies the location of buildings, fences and other improvements on the property, and states easements or encroachments that should be noted on the title of the property.

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