

The Home Edition

The Chicken-and-the-Egg Question:

Buy or Sell First? by Michele Dawson

For homeowners aiming to sell their home and buy another, it's the classic real estate, which came first, the chicken or the egg, question - buy or sell first?

If you sell first, you may find yourself under a tight deadline to find another house, or be forced in temporary quarters. If you buy first, you may be saddled with two mortgage payments for at least a couple months. You may need the money from the sale of your original home in order to pre-qualify for a loan for your new home. You may be facing a job relocation and need to sell quickly.

There are many variables involved; there is no universal correct answer. It basically comes down to your specific circumstances.

Dan Gregor, a Realtor in Pickerington, Ohio, says there is generally less pressure when you sell first.

"It really comes down to risk," Gregor said. "It's whether you want the risk of owning two houses, or possibly none at all."

Gregor says that if you have the money to make two mortgage payments, the pressure is off. But if you need to sell your house in order to qualify for a loan, then you have no choice - you'll have to sell first.

"You can write contingent contracts, but if you really want the home, you'll pay a premium - that's if the seller will even entertain a contingent offer," he says.

And if you go ahead with a contingent offer, then you may end up settling for less for the house you're selling in an effort to get it sold quickly.

Gregor says for most people, the

stress level is lower when you sell first.

"You have time to get pre-approved for your mortgage and see all the housing options in the price range you'd like to buy," he said.

When your selling house is in contract, he suggests you pick the three best homes of those you've viewed and prepare to make an offer on the one that best meets your needs.

"The absolute worst that can happen is the right home isn't available," Gregor said. "You end up in a short-term rental with the cash in your pocket and pre-approved financing for the balance you need. So you look like a cash buyer when you make an offer on the home you finally decide on."

But brisk selling conditions in some parts of the country require more aggressive tactics.

Brett Furman, a broker in suburban Philadelphia, says the strong market dictates that homebuyers focus on buying first, and selling later.

"The housing market in the suburban Philadelphia market is moving very quickly," said Furman. "Normally we advise our buyers to sell their home first and buy second ... However with the faster moving market, we are advising many of our buyer clients to obtain a mortgage commitment that is not contingent upon selling their existing house."

In their book, *House Selling for Dummies* (Hungry Minds Inc., 1999), Eric Tyson and Ray Brown "strongly recommend" that you sell first.

"Even in good real estate markets, sales frequently drag on much longer than you expect," the au-



Deciding whether to buy or sell a home first can create many challenges

thors say. "Selling in a weak market usually compounds the problem. Homeowners tend to overestimate their house's resale value and underestimate the length of the selling process - a fiscally deadly one-two punch."

But selling first isn't the perfect solution. Some of the issues that may come up include:

Being forced out of your house before you have a new place available. Where will you live? Where will your kids go to school?

Having to move twice. Do you want to go through the hassle? Where will you store your extra furniture while you live with family and friends or rent an apartment?

Not being able to find a house you like. How long are you willing to live in temporary quarters until you find a suitable house?

Whichever way you go, it always seems to work out in the end, at least in Gregor's experience.

"I've been in the business for 30 years," he said. "We've never had anyone out on the street and the vast majority of our clients that make double moves are those building new homes that had to have their property sold first."

*originally published on realtymag.com

Volume 13, Issue 1

January/February/March 2005

Inside this issue:

Buy or Sell First?	1
An expert's perspective	
Protect your home	2
Investment	
Market Trends for Hampton Roads	3
Farmers Almanac: Tips for Landscaping and Gardening	3
From Nana's Kitchen:	4
Leek, Potato and Kielbasa Soup	
From Elaine's Desk	4



Elaine VonCannon ABR RE/MAX Capital

1176 Jamestown Road
Williamsburg, Virginia 23185
(757) 564-1557 office
(757) 564-0885 fax
(757) 288-4685 direct line

Protect your investment through timely inspections

by M Anthony Carr, realtytimes.com

When the weather outside is frightful, it may be a little late to have your heating and air conditioning system inspected. Even for folks in warmer climates, there's nothing that could ruin your holiday time faster than an air conditioner that breaks down on a sweltering Christmas Day dinner.

Inspecting this system (meaning spending a little money each year) can save you a bundle on the backside. A number of



"Maintenance, rather than emergency repair, is always the best move."



heating and air companies offer a biannual inspection program where a technician looks over your system for wear and tear, leaks, and impending breakdowns.

I've carried this type of protection for several properties and it's always been worth the investment. While many homeowners seek out ways to lower their monthly expenses, this is not one of those places. Think about it -- the furnace-a/c is used nearly every day of the year and in the winter time, it is an absolute necessity for those in colder climates. For many homeowners it accounts for up to half of all utility costs, so we know it eats up a lot of energy. If you have an exterior unit, it is abused by the elements and we hope it keeps working 24/7 despite all the abuse.

Several years ago, I had a unit break down in February. I had a very chilly family and a backup on the waiting list for a technician. I found out I wasn't the only one with heater problems on this cold weekend and techs make premium money off those who want the heater working now. Thus a regularly scheduled maintenance program is your best insurance policy.

A qualified technician should take a look at the following elements of your

heating-a/c system:

Check and adjust fan switch. If not operating properly a fan switch can waste energy and cause nuisance fan cycling.

Check air filters. Dirty air filters increase your system's operating costs and cause undue wear on the system.

Inspect the heat exchangers. Heat exchangers crack and deteriorate with age. These cracks pose a risk of serious illness from the fumes.

Clean the burners and check all components. Poor combustion is caused by dirty burners or defective components, wasting precious heat as it "goes up the stack."

Clean/check ignition components. Failure of this one element of the system can cause ignition failure and shut the unit down.

Inspect unit wiring. Loose connections and/or weak fuses lead to motor or control failure.

Check safety controls. This is an obvious safeguard and if they are not operating properly, they can cause dangerous problems.

Clean blower wheels and lubricate motors. This one item of the inspection alone will provide longer life for the motor and



more consistent temperature control.

Check fuel line/shut off valves. Undetected leaks waste energy and could become dangerous.

Inspect flue pipes. This is another area where pipe corrosion or leaks can cause a very dangerous situation.

Check/calibrate the thermostat. Defective or improperly calibrated thermostats increase operating costs while decreasing your comfort level.

For heat pumps, the technician will also check Freon levels and test for leaks in the system. If levels are low, this could be a sign of leaks in the system, which should be tested further. If none exist, then the system should be charged up with more Freon.

Maintenance, rather than emergency repair, is always the best move.



Market Trends for Hampton Roads Home Sellers and Buyers

If you're looking to sell property in Virginia, than now is the best time.

The current forecast on real estate in Virginia reports a very vigorous seller's market in all corners of the state. About the current market trend, experienced realtor Randy Schonk says, "The seller's market continues to be strong in the area due to the lower than normal inventory of homes.

While this can make it a challenge for buyers, the building industry is working hard to increase the inventory so it should become easier for the buyer to find their ideal home in the future." The area with the most real estate activity in Virginia seems to be the southern Tidewater region. Southeastern Virginia's Tidewater and Hampton Roads region is one of the premier locations to live in the country. The birthplace of Colonial America, the area has a rich historical significance that blends serendipitously with a breathtaking landscape surrounded by water. The area includes such well-known destinations as Virginia Beach, Chesapeake, Williamsburg, Newport News, Smithfield, Portsmouth, Suffolk, and Hampton. This region has always garnered plenty of real estate

attention. It remains a somewhat exclusive area for prominent Virginians. Understandably, real estate value is extremely high, and the value will continue to escalate, as demand for property in this area is always constant. The area has everything you can ask for - a mild climate which allows the residents to enjoy outdoor activities for much of the year; gorgeous natural surroundings with the marine environment including many rivers, inlets, magnificent Chesapeake Bay, the picturesque and serene Great Dismal Swamp, and not to mention the Atlantic Ocean on your doorstep; and of course world-class entertainment facilities, museums, historical landmarks, and a vibrant night life.

Source: www.everythingre.com

Farmers Almanac tips for landscaping and gardening

January 2005

1-2 A BARREN TIME. BEST FOR KILLING WEEDS, BRIARS, POISON IVY AND OTHER PLANT PESTS. CLEAR WOODLOTS AND FENCEROWS.

3-4 FAVORABLE DAYS FOR PLANTING ROOT CROPS. FINE FOR SOWING GRAINS, HAY, FORAGE CROPS. PLANT FLOWERS.

5-6 PLANT CARROTS, TURNIPS, ONIONS, BEETS, IRISH POTATOES, OTHER ROOT CROPS IN THE SOUTH. LETTUCE, CABBAGE, COLLARDS AND OTHER LEAFY VEGETABLES WILL DO WELL. START SEED BEDS.

7-8 SEEDS PLANTED NOW WILL DO POORLY AND YIELD LITTLE.

9-10 FIRST DAY GOOD FOR PLANTING ROOT CROPS WHERE CLIMATE PERMITS. SECOND DAY GOOD FOR PLANTING ABOVEGROUND CROPS SUCH AS SWEET CORN, BEANS AND PEPPERS IN SOUTHERN FLORIDA, TEXAS AND CALIFORNIA.

11-12 A GOOD TIME TO KILL PLANT PESTS OR DO PLOWING. POOR FOR PLANTING.

13-14-15 FINE FOR PLANTING ANY ABOVEGROUND CROP WHERE THE CLIMATE PERMITS. EXTRA GOOD FOR PEPPERS, TOMATOES, PEAS AND OTHER VINE CROPS.

16-17 BARREN DAYS, DO NO PLANTING.

18-19-20 FINE FOR PLANTING BEANS, PEPPERS, CUCUMBERS, MELONS AND OTHER ABOVEGROUND CROPS WHERE CLIMATE IS SUITABLE.

21-22 POOR DAYS FOR PLANTING, SEEDS TEND TO ROT IN GROUND.

23-24-25 FIRST 2 DAYS BEST FOR PLANTING ABOVE-

GROUND CROPS. THIRD DAY MOST FRUITFUL TIME FOR PLANTING BEETS, CARROTS, ONIONS AND OTHER HARDY ROOT CROPS IN THE DEEP SOUTH. ALL DAYS GOOD FOR STARTING SEED BEDS AND FLOWERS.

26-27-28-29 A BARREN TIME. BEST FOR KILLING WEEDS, BRIARS, POISON IVY AND OTHER PLANT PESTS. CLEAR WOODLOTS AND FENCEROWS.

30-31 FAVORABLE DAYS FOR PLANTING ROOT CROPS. FINE FOR SOWING GRAINS, HAY, FORAGE CROPS. PLANT FLOWERS.

February 2005

1-2 PLANT CARROTS, TURNIPS, ONIONS, BEETS, IRISH POTATOES AND OTHER ROOT CROPS IN THE SOUTH. LETTUCE, CABBAGE, COLLARDS AND OTHER LEAFY VEGETABLES WILL DO WELL. START SEED BEDS.

3-4 NEITHER PLANT NOR SOW ON THESE BARREN DAYS.

5-6-7 ANY ROOT CROPS THAT CAN BE PLANTED NOW WILL DO WELL.

8-9 BARREN DAYS. FINE FOR CLEARING, PLOWING, FERTILIZING AND KILLING PLANT PESTS.

10-11 PLANT PEPPERS, SWEET CORN, TOMATOES AND OTHER ABOVEGROUND CROPS IN SOUTHERN FLORIDA, CALIFORNIA AND TEXAS. EXTRA GOOD FOR CUCUMBERS, PEAS, CANTALOUPE AND OTHER VINE CROPS. SET STRAWBERRY PLANTS.

12-13 SEEDS PLANTED NOW WILL GROW POORLY AND YIELD LITTLE.

14-15-16 FINE FOR PLANTING BEANS, PEPPERS, CUCUMBERS, MELONS AND OTHER ABOVE-GROUND CROPS WHERE CLIMATE IS SUITABLE.

17-18 ANY SEED PLANTED NOW WILL TEND TO ROT.

19-20-21 FINE FOR PLANTING BEANS, TOMATOES, CORN, COTTON, CUCUMBERS, PEPPERS, MELONS AND OTHER ABOVEGROUND CROPS WHERE CLIMATE ALLOWS. PLANT SEED BEDS AND FLOWER GARDENS.

22-23-24 CLEAR GROUND, TURN SOD. KILL PLANT PESTS.

25-26-27 FAVORABLE DAYS FOR PLANTING ROOT CROPS. FINE FOR SOWING GRAINS, HAY, FORAGE CROPS. PLANT FLOWERS.

28 PLANT CARROTS, TURNIPS, ONIONS, BEETS, IRISH POTATOES AND OTHER ROOT CROPS IN THE SOUTH. LETTUCE, CABBAGE, COLLARDS AND OTHER LEAFY VEGETABLES WILL DO WELL. START SEED BEDS.

For more tips please visit:

www.farmersalmanac.com



Elaine VonCannon ABR

RE/MAX Capital

1176 Jamestown Road
Williamsburg, Virginia 23185

Phone: 757-564-1557
Direct Line: 757-288-4685
Fax: 757-564-0885
Email: voncannonrealestate@cox.net

www.voncannonrealestate.com

*“You see things
and you say
‘Why?’; but I
dream things that
never were and I
say ‘Why Not?’”*

--George Bernard Shaw

From Elaine's Desk....



Q: Dear Elaine,

We are getting ready to list our home and we have 3 small children. Is it really that important to get rid of excess clutter, won't people overlook it because we have children?

-Wendy

Williamsburg, Virginia

A: Dear Wendy,

I will let my buyer's broker answer this question as she deals exclusively with buyers;

Elaine

"I am sure your children are wonderful, but buyers can be very picky and demanding even in a seller's market. Therefore, to get top dollar for your property, your house needs to be in the best condition possible. I know it will take extra effort on your part but it will be worth it in the long run. May I also suggest renting a storage unit or POD to store all the excess belongings, furniture and other items from your attic and garage so your house can be presented in the best possible light. Remember when you are using a RE/MAX agent, you will get 10% off your first months storage and delivery of a POD unit."

Diana Bisbee

Each issue (every two months) Elaine will answer your questions on real estate related topics. If Elaine chooses your question to appear in *The Home Edition*, you will receive a \$50 gift certificate to the restaurant of your choice. Please send questions to either:

voncannonrealestate@cox.net

or

Elaine VonCannon
1176 Jamestown Road
Williamsburg, Virginia 23185

From Nana's Kitchen:

Leek, Potato and Kielbasa Soup

1/2 teaspoon fennel seed, lightly crushed
2 tablespoons unsalted butter
2 cups sliced leeks, white part only, rinsed
and drained
5 cups chicken stock
2 medium boiling potatoes, peeled and diced
1/2 pound kielbasa, diced
1/4 cup heavy cream
1/2 cup thinly sliced arugula
1/4 cup finely diced red bell pepper, for garnish,
optional

- In a small skillet toast the fennel seed over moderate heat until very fragrant (2-3 minutes)
- In a large saucepan, melt the butter and cook the leek until very soft (about 5 minutes)
- Stick in stock and potatoes and bring to boil.
- Simmer the soup until the potatoes are tender (10-15 minutes)
- Stir in the toasted fennel, kielbasa, cream and salt and pepper to taste
- Before serving, stir in the Arugula
- Garnish with red bell pepper



Recipe taken from
Gourmet Magazine

