



Harbour Heights Real Estate News®

Fisherman's Village
Realty, LLC

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Half A Decade

In January of 2007 I was asked to participate in the planning of the second annual Harbour Heights Fun Day. As usual there are a lot of ideas thrown around about as to what events to have, or what to cook, timing etc... The idea was to raise some money for the local elementary school and civic association. At that same time my family received what we considered devastating news. Our Grandson Marcus had just been diagnosed as having Autism Spectrum Disorder. We were as stunned as any family that receives tragic news is and did not know where to turn. Debbie and I talked, and one of the decisions that we made was that we would "kill two birds with one stone". We would organize a 5K event, and make sure that the proceeds went to developmentally disabled children at the neighborhood school and to bring some attention to Autism Spectrum Disorder.

We went out and got a few generous sponsors, printed 50 T-Shirts celebrating the 50th anniversary of the founding of Harbour Heights and hoped for the best.



The weather was much like it was this past Saturday, the best that you can get in Florida in February. We had just 12 people show up that year. It was fun, we had no awards, and we used tongue depressors with numbers on them to keep track of racers and laughed about how successful it was. We raised \$1,875 to donate that year, and said let's do it again.

Each year we get better at what we do. Our family takes an entire year to put

on the event we all saw this past weekend, we are so proud.

This years event had 178 runners/walkers, many more children than we had ever seen, teachers, County Commissioners, participants from 16 states and one foreign country. Live music filled the air. The Charlotte County Sheriffs office turned out in force to keep the race route safe. The turnout was greater than we expected.

We do not have a final calculation on funds received as we are waiting on word from a grant applied for but, we feel that in the end Autism Speaks and each of the three elementary schools will receive a hefty donation and this years event will be a springboard for a much bigger event in the future. Thanks to all that volunteered and participated, SEE YOU NEXT YEAR!



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Special Points of Interest:

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**Harbour Heights
Real Estate Run Down
2011**

Homes For Sale: 27
Homes under contract: 10
Homes sold: 5
Vacant lots For Sale: 73
Lots under contract: 1
Lots sold: 3
Give us a call to see any of these fine properties.

**Rediscover
Harbour Heights /
Punta Gorda, Florida**

Motel Sells at Auction

The long neglected motel on Sunnybrook Road was sold at auction on February 26th, 2011. The property consisted of 12 kitchenette type units and had been in dis-repair since Hurricane Charlie rolled through seven years ago. An attempt by neighborhood groups to clean it up with fresh paint and landscape helped the appearance but, it was clear that the owners had no desire to clean it up themselves. Plans for the property are not clear yet but, any changes will require rezoning and much public debate. We will keep you posted as always.



Caveat Emptor



Over the last six months I have written about the next "gold rush" in real estate, vacant residential and commercial lots. Right now it is difficult to get any buyer to purchase vacant land of any type. Why would a potential buyer purchase land for any price when you can purchase a home for as low as thirty thousand dollars, fix it up and flip it?

The problem with that scenario is that many of those properties have been picked and prices have started to rise simply because what are left may be better homes than the latter and warrant the price. The problem with land is you have to know what you are buying. For those of us that live here the talk of scrub jays, or paper roads are pretty much a part of our conversation, we know to watch out for those conditions.

A reader of our newsletter wrote to me recently, he took a bold step and purchased a number of vacant lots in HH. The buyer used our website to do his research, select the lots that he wanted, and then called the agent that had them listed, not realizing that we could have handled the transaction for him. He wrote to me after the purchase for my thoughts, I researched his purchases and found that a helicopter would be a good way to get to three of the lots, and the other two were classified as scrub jay lots. I took the time to explain both conditions; he explained that he lives in Malaysia and counted on his agent for their expertise.

That is where we come in, we are the neighborhood experts, don't let your friends or yourselves be misinformed. Contact us, we have the correct information, and if we don't, we will get it.

Existing Home Sales Rise in January

The uptrend of existing home sales continues, with January 2011 sales rising for the third consecutive month with a pace that is now above year-ago levels, according to the National Association of Realtors.

Existing home sales, which are completed transactions that include single family, townhomes, condominiums' and co-ops, increased 2.7% to a seasonally adjusted annual rate of 5.36 million and are 5.3% above the January 2010 level.

A NAR survey showed that first time home buyers purchased 29% of homes in January. Investors accounted for 23% of purchases in January, the balance of sales were repeat buyers.

Increases in all cash transactions, the investor market share, and distressed home sales all go hand in hand. It is not so surprising to see so much activity where "cash is King" and investors are taking advantage of conditions to purchase undervalued homes.

Other statistics show that overall inventories fell to just over a 7 month supply of existing homes, the average commitment rate for a 30 year conventional, fixed rate mortgage was 4.76% down from just over 5% a year ago.

In the south, the median home price was \$136,000.



More Americans confident about homeownership

WASHINGTON – March 2, 2011 – Americans are more confident about the stability of home prices than they were at the beginning of 2010, according to Fannie Mae's latest national housing survey, conducted between October 2010 and December 2010.

And when it comes to homeownership, younger Americans are particularly optimistic, the survey finds.

Nearly 80 percent of all respondents, including homeowners and renters, said they thought housing prices would hold steady or increase over the next 12 months – that's up from 73 percent expecting rising prices in January 2010. In fact, survey respondents expressed more confidence over the stability of home prices than they did about the overall strength of the economy – sixty-one percent said the economy is heading on the wrong track.

Young Americans, Hispanics and African-Americans had the most positive views about homeownership among the general population, according to the survey. Nearly 60 percent of Generation Y respondents (those between 18-34 years old) say that buying a home offers a lot of potential as an investment. Also, more than one-third of Hispanics and African Americans say they plan to buy a home within the next three years, compared to one in four of the general population.

"We are also seeing encouraging signs in the positive attitudes toward homeownership among younger Americans, despite the severe impact of the housing crisis on Generation Y," says Doug Duncan, Fannie Mae's chief economist. "But most respondents to our survey continue to lack confidence in the strength of the economic recovery, and they are less optimistic about their ability to buy a home in the years ahead. This sense of uncertainty is weighing on the housing recovery today and reshaping expectations for housing for the future."

Source: "Fannie Mae's latest national housing survey shows key changes in American's attitudes toward housing and the economy," RISMedia (March 1, 2011)

What's behind low appraisals?

WASHINGTON – March 1, 2011 – Low appraisals are hampering home sales, but whether they're inaccurate is in dispute.

Ten percent of the nation's Realtors said they had sales canceled because appraisals came in below the prices buyers agreed to pay, according to a January survey by the National Association of Realtors. Another 15 percent said contracts were renegotiated after appraisals came in too low. Sellers dropped prices or buyers put up more cash.

A third of home builders said they had lost sales because of low appraisals, according to an August survey by the National Association of Home Builders. That was up from 26 percent in a 2009 survey.

Lenders often require appraisals before approving a mortgage to ensure that the house's value exceeds the loan.

Low appraisals were rarely an issue during the housing boom, when prices rose steadily. But the bust revealed how inflated appraisals had contributed to the housing bubble. Now appraisal and lending standards are both tighter.

Lenders and appraisers say falling home prices, not flawed valuation practices, drive low appraisals. U.S. home prices are 30 percent off their 2006 peak, and many economists expect them to fall more.

"In a rapidly moving market, the appraisal process becomes more difficult," says Robert Davis, executive vice president of the American Bankers Association. "Home prices are still falling, and there's a lot of people who can't believe they're that low."

Foreclosures are a key factor. Market researcher RealtyTrac says foreclosed homes accounted for almost 26 percent of sales last year, fetching 28 percent less on average than non-foreclosed homes. In some markets, foreclosed homes are a greater share of sales.

Appraisers may count those to determine values of non-distressed properties, and the appraisals may not reflect the superior condition of the latter, says NAHB Chief Economist David Crowe.

Beazer Homes, a national home builder, said in a recent Securities and Exchange Commission filing that "appraisals continue to be negatively impacted by foreclosure comparables," boosting home sale cancellation rates in some markets.

Also, since 2009, new rules have aimed to lessen lenders' ability to influence appraisers. That's led to more lenders outsourcing appraisal selection to other firms. They may hire appraisers who aren't as familiar with the neighborhoods of the houses they're valuing, Realtors say.

"You get people from one end of the state appraising stuff in the other end," says Don Hammer, manager of Realty Executives in Paradise Valley, Ariz. In his office, about half of all canceled sales are appraisal-related, he says.

In Lake Arrowhead, Calif., million-dollar homes are across the street from \$250,000 weekend cabins, says Steve Keefe, owner of Coldwell Banker Sky Ridge Realty. Low appraisals led to canceled sales for about six of the 48 homes his office has handled this year. In many cases, appraisers had never been to the area before, Keefe says.

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