



Judy Goldberg

REAL ESTATE

Judy's Corner

Why 2019 Is A Good Year To Sell Your Home

According to an article By Devon Thorsby, Editor Real Estate | March 7, 2019

Relatively speaking, 2019 might be the best time for you to put your house on the market. Especially if you're on the fence about selling this year or next.

Nick Ron, CEO of House Buyers of America, recommends going with the devil you know rather than the devil you don't.

"I think it'll be better than 2020 and 2021 – who knows what's going to happen in those years," Ron says.

Home price growth slowed in the second half of 2018, with fewer buyers entering the market, at least partially due to rising interest rates issued by the Federal Reserve.

In 2019, consumers shouldn't expect homebuyers to flood the market again and drive prices through the roof, but it's also unlikely to be a crisis for home sellers.

Here are three reasons to sell your house in 2019:

- New buyers are still entering the market.
- Interest rates are still on the lower end.
- You have high equity.

So, whatever your real estate needs may be, I am always here to walk you, your family and your friends through a minimal stress free transaction.

'Til next month, and for all your real estate needs ...



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First Quarter 2019 Housing Affordability

CAR, May 15, 2019

More Californians could afford to purchase a home in the first quarter of 2019 as lower mortgage interest rates and cooler seasonal home prices combined with higher income levels to improve California housing affordability, according to the California Association of REALTORS® (CAR).

The percentage of home buyers who could afford to purchase a median-priced, existing single-family home in first-quarter 2019 rose from 28% in fourth quarter 2018 to 32%, and from 31% in the first quarter a year ago, according to CAR's Traditional Housing Affordability Index (HAI). The index climbed above 30% for the first time in a year. California's housing affordability index hit a peak of 56% in the first quarter of 2012.

A minimum annual income of \$114,860 was needed to qualify for the purchase of a \$545,820 statewide median-priced, existing single-family home in the first quarter of 2019. The monthly payment, including taxes and insurance on a 30-year, fixed-rate loan, would be \$2,870, assuming a 20% down payment and an effective composite interest rate of 4.62%. The effective composite interest rate was 4.95% in fourth-quarter 2018 and 4.44% in first-quarter 2018.

Housing affordability for condominiums and townhomes also improved in first-quarter 2019 compared to the previous quarter, with 41% of California households earning the minimum income to qualify for the purchase of a \$450,000 median-priced condominium/townhome, up from 37% in the previous quarter. An annual income of \$94,690 was required to make monthly payments of \$2,370. 39% of households could afford to buy a condominium/townhome a year ago.

Compared with California, more than half of the nation's households (57%) could afford to purchase a \$254,800 median-priced home, which required a minimum annual income of \$53,620 to make monthly payments of \$1,340.

Key points from the first-quarter 2019 Housing Affordability report include:

- Housing affordability improved from first-quarter 2018 in 28 tracked counties and declined in 16 counties. Affordability in four counties remained flat.
- In the San Francisco Bay Area, affordability improved from a year ago in every county. San Francisco County was the least affordable, with just 17% of households able to purchase the \$1,532,500 median-priced home. 46% of Solano County households could afford the \$430,500 median-priced home, making it the most affordable Bay Area county.
- Affordability results in the Southern California region were mixed as only Orange and San Diego counties recorded an improvement from a year ago, while San Bernardino and Ventura counties experienced a decline. Affordability was unchanged in Los Angeles and Riverside counties.
- In the Central Valley region, affordability held even from a year ago only in two counties — Fresno and Sacramento — and fell in three counties — Kern, San Benito and Stanislaus. Kings, Madera, Merced, Placer, San Joaquin and Tulare counties recorded improvements.
- Housing affordability improved in all four counties in the Central Coast region, which includes Monterey, San Luis Obispo, Santa Barbara and Santa Cruz counties.
- During the first quarter of 2019, the most affordable counties in California were Lassen (63%), Kings (57%) and Siskiyou (53%). The minimum annual income needed to qualify for a home in these counties was \$47,340 or less.
- Mono (10%), San Francisco (17%), Santa Cruz (17%) and San Mateo (18%) counties were the least affordable areas in the state. San Francisco and San Mateo counties required the highest minimum qualifying incomes in the state. An annual income of \$322,480 was needed to purchase a home in San Francisco County, and an annual income of \$323,010 was required in San Mateo County.

Q1 2019 California Housing Affordability

32%
of California households could afford to purchase a median-priced home*

\$545,820
median-priced home*



Q1Q: -3.3% Y1Y: +1.3%



\$114,860
minimum income required to make monthly payments of \$2,870 @ 30-year fixed-rate mortgage of 4.62%.

YTY Change



CALIFORNIA ASSOCIATION OF REALTORS®
*existing detached home
www.car.org/marketdata

June HomeWork



- Clean and seal decks.
- Hire a certified chimney sweep to inspect and clean chimneys. Doing this now allows plenty of time for repairs and it's also easier to schedule a sweep.
- Wash the exterior of your house using ordinary garden hose pressure and a mild detergent. Avoid pressure washers as they can actually force water under the siding where it may encourage mildew and rot.
- Caulk exterior joints around window and doors.
- Clean lint from the entire clothes dryer vent system, from the dryer to the exterior vent cap.
- Inspect and repair or repaint all patio and deck furniture.
- Check operation of attic fans and roof-mounted turbine vents.

Source: www.weather.com

June is Great Outdoors Month



features include National Trails Day®, National Fishing and Boating Week, the Great American Backyard Campout, and National Get Outdoors Day. Welcome to the Water on National Marina Day, hosted by the Association of Marina Industries, will also be celebrated across the nation during June.

June Observances

On June 6th, we remember **D-Day**, a recognition of the Allied soldiers who landed in Normandy, France in 1944, fighting to end World War II.



 We celebrate **Flag Day on June 14th** to honor the US flag and to commemorate the flag's adoption. On the same day, the **United States Army celebrates its birthday.**

Father's Day is June 16th

He didn't tell me how to live; he lived, and let me watch him do it.

~ Clarence Budington Kelland ~



Juneteenth commemorates the Union army's freeing of all remaining slaves in Texas in 1865. **June 19th** is a day for all Americans to celebrate freedom and equal rights.

Celebrated annually on June 20, American Eagle Day

commemorates the day in 1782, when the American Eagle was added to the official Seal of the United States. In addition to being an important American national symbol, bald eagles hold significant value in many Native American cultures and religions, where the birds signify freedom, strength, honesty, wisdom, and power. On this day, conservation and educational organizations hold public outreach programs such as lectures, workshops, and informational sessions to raise awareness about the importance of preserving and protecting bald eagles and other wildlife.



The Summer Solstice occurs on June 21st, marking the longest period of daylight in the year and first official day of summer.

Source: www.timeanddate.com/holidays/us



Successfully Negotiate Your Medical Bills In 7 Simple Steps

You wouldn't dream of buying a car without trying to get a better deal, so why are you resigned to paying thousands of dollars in medical bills, no questions asked? Try negotiating your next big bill and see how much money you can keep in your pocket.



One in three people has difficulty paying their medical bills, according to a report from the Kaiser Family Foundation. And it's not just those without insurance who are struggling. People with high-deductible plans are finding themselves on the hook for thousands in medical bills before their plan kicks in a cent.

Fortunately, the price of medical care is negotiable. It's just that, in the past, only the insurance companies did the negotiating. However, Steve Neeleman, a board-certified physician, says consumers shouldn't be afraid to do their own negotiating. Neeleman, is also the founder of health savings account provider HealthEquity, and here are his steps for successfully dropping the bottom line on medical bills.

Step 1: Keep your bills low from the start. That means keeping your medical bills low upfront rather than negotiating after the fact. The biggest portion of the cost is usually the facility cost, and you can bring that cost down by exploring options. Your doctor or surgeon likely has the ability to work in a variety of settings, so ask whether there is a cheaper venue (outpatient surgical center vs hospital?) that can be used. If you do find a cheaper facility, make sure it's in your insurance provider's network. An out-of-network facility could mean you pay significantly higher co-pays or your out-of-pocket cost may not apply toward your deductible.

Step 2: Wait before calling on an outstanding bill. Resist the urge to immediately call and plead your case. Billers are less likely to negotiate a payment right after the bill has been sent. Wait a few weeks, but don't let it go to collections.

Step 3: Call in the morning. When it is time to call, try earlier in the morning. By the afternoon, worker enthusiasm wanes, which may make them less likely to want to help you. By the afternoon, if the worker you get on the phone has been beaten down by a dozen angry callers before you, they may be feeling a bit angry and combative themselves and not inclined to negotiate.

Step 4: Put on your happy voice and ask for a supervisor. Sometimes we think we need to be firm to get our way, but that's not always the case. Being firm on the phone can come across as grumpy, angry or terse. All those adjectives are likely to put the person you're talking to on the defensive. When you call to negotiate your bill, be pleasant, even happy if you can muster it. Tell the person who answers that you need to speak with a supervisor. If they press for a reason why, say that you have a billing question that you were told needs to be addressed by a supervisor. Keep in mind that some smaller offices may only have one or two workers in the billing department, and the person who picks up the phone may also be the person with the power to negotiate bills.

Step 5: Ask for a discount if you pay cash now rather than in installments. Before you call, you should have a dollar amount in mind to offer. Make sure the money you're offering is something you can access to pay your bill today. Tell the supervisor you can't pay the full bill, but you do have X dollars. If you paid that amount today, would they accept that as payment in full rather than having you pay in installments? If they accept, ask for written confirmation saying the amount you send will pay the bill in full. Some providers are willing to accept a lower guaranteed payment in cases where they think a bill may go to collections. In that case, they could end up with nothing. Normal collection rates in the field of health care are 40-50%.

Step 6: Request procedures be verified and recoded as necessary. If that doesn't work, at least ask the billing department to verify your procedures and recode them if necessary. Medical coding is complex, and sometimes several different codes can be used to designate the same service. Swapping in a new code is sometimes all that is needed for the insurance company to pay more of the claim.

Step 7: Take it to the doctor, if appropriate. If none of the other steps work, you could discuss the matter with your doctor. You don't want to start with the physician, but if needed, schedule a follow-up to discuss the bill. This tactic may be best reserved for larger bills and instances in which you have a long relationship with the doctor. Before you go in, find the going rate for similar services in your area. You may be able to find this information through a price comparison tool on your health insurance company's website or through a third party site like Healthcare Bluebook. If you can show that your bill is higher than what other providers charge in your area, you may be more likely to get the price lowered.

Source: www.moneytalksnews.com

