



# OC Housing Newsletter



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## Calendar of Events



- Feb 1st**  
Relay for Life: Mission Viejo
- Feb 9th**  
Valentine's Dinner & Dance:  
Dana Point
- Feb 9th**  
Chinese New Year Celebration:  
Dana Point
- Feb 12th**  
San Juan Capistrano Farmers  
Market: San Juan Capistrano
- Feb 14th**  
Valentine's Day:
- Feb 26th**  
Free Comedy Wednesday:  
San Clemente
- Feb 26th**  
"The Emerald Forest" Family  
Fun Night with Wild Won-  
ders, Inc. - Laguna Niguel



## The Median is telling the wrong story



Prices are currently not appreciating despite year over year and month over month increases in the median sales price.

**Median Sales Price:** Don't be fooled by reports of the median sales price. Reports of the median sales price for last month are in and in Orange County they are up 21.3% year over year and 1.8% from November to December

2013. As a result, there's an extra "giddy up" in sellers' approach to the housing market. If you are a seller or are thinking about selling, please heed the following warning though: hold your horses, values are currently NOT rising like you might think.

The median sales price is up, but values are not rising? Where's the disconnect? Property values did not recently appreciate, the median sales price did. It is confusing because the median sales price is widely used as an indicator of the direction of values, but it simply is not a precise indicator of exact home value changes.

To understand why the median is not that accurate, let's dive into Econ 101 and take a look at what it means. When you list all of the sold prices of every home that changed hands in the month of December and sort them from highest to lowest, the exact "middle" value was \$570,000, the median sale. That was up from \$470,000 in December of 2012, and \$560,000 in November 2013. Values had risen dramatically in the past year, but if you ask REALTORS® and sellers who had participated in the housing market during the fourth-quarter of 2013, they would all agree that home values had stalled. Most homes had to reduce their asking price to find success. Here's a look at the median sales price in recent months:

August 2013	\$560,000
September 2013	\$550,000
October 2013	\$540,000
November 2013	\$560,000
December 2013	\$570,000

So, did values drop \$20k from August to October and then rise \$30k from October to December? Absolutely  
*(Continued on page 2)*

## Get Your House Ready for a Quick Sale



If you're planning to sell your house this spring, you're likely to have a lot of competition for potential buyers. According to the National Association of Realtors®, more homes are listed and sold between February and June than any other time of the year.

With so much competition, what can you do to make someone want to buy your house instead of the one down the street? The number one answer is "keep it clean!"

### Make sure it's clean.

It is easier for prospective buyers to envision themselves living in the house if it is clean. If the house is dirty, the first thing they think about is how much work would be involved in bringing it up to their standards.

### Clear out the clutter.

As much as you may be fond of all those personal photos sitting around, you want the prospective buyers to "think" of themselves living there. Store out of view, toys, personal goods, vanity products, tools, and other personal items that may mean a lot to you, but won't to anybody else. Creating a "blank slate" for the prospective buyers will allow them to "see themselves in their new home."

### Tidy up.

No one wants to see a messy closet littered with dirty clothes and piles of shoes or kitchen cabinets stuffed with food, and pots and pans.

*(Continued on page 4)*

## Real Estate Corner...

**Q. Why should I get pre-approved before buying a home?**



**A.** Years ago, buyers didn't worry about financing their home purchase until after they found the home they wanted to buy. Once they had an accepted offer, they'd shop around for a week or so and then submit a loan application.

The recent low inventory of homes for sale (in general) has made home buying highly competitive in some areas. To compete, many buyers are now getting pre-approved for a mortgage. This way, the buyer is seen as more stable, has greater influence in negotiating a purchase price, and can act quickly when they find a home they really love. A pre-approved homebuyer is considered almost as strong as a cash buyer.

There are two parts to mortgage approval:

- 1) approval of the borrower, and
- 2) approval of the property.

Mortgage pre-approval is a process whereby the borrower is approved for a specific mortgage amount. The approval is usually good for a period of time.

A property approval is one with satisfactory appraisal and a clear title report. Final mortgage approval also requires a purchase agreement that is signed by the buyer and the seller.

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not. Instead, the median sales price was skewed by the mix of homes. In the latter months of the year, there were far fewer resale homes sold compared to the same month in 2012. For example, sales were down 19% in December 2013 compared to December 2012. Yet, there were 330 sales over \$1 million last month, 14% of all sales, versus 305 a year earlier, 11% of all sales. In sorting the sales from highest to lowest, when there is an increase in the number of higher priced sales taking place, the median is skewed higher.

New home sales have been skewing the median sales price as well. The number of new home developments has skyrocketed and so have the number of new home closed sales. In December new home sales were up 121% year over year. The median sales price for new homes was \$707,500. Since they have a higher sticker price, they also skewed the overall median sales price for all of Orange County, significantly.

For real estate professionals and sellers that have been engaged in the market for a while, the reports of increases in the median sales price are extremely frustrating to hear. Recent reports of the median hitting a "six-year high" in December compound the problem by motivating more homeowners to place their homes on the market. With rosy expectations of the Orange County real estate market, most are opting in an aggressive approach by grossly overpricing their homes. This year is going to be all about sellers learning the hard way that the market is not like it was for most of 2012 and for the first half of 2013, when homes flew off the market at seemingly whatever price. Multiple offers, offers over the asking prices, and open houses attended by a steady stream of interested buyers were the norm. That market was driven by lower values, lower interest rates, and fewer homes on the market.

My biggest concern is the number of overpriced homes coming on the market already during the first couple of weeks of the year. This will result in an increase in the active listing inventory as more homes come on the market and stay on the market until they come to the realization that a price reduction is necessary to achieve success. The inventory is anticipated to swell during the Spring and Summer Markets.

Today, home values are higher, interest rates are higher, and there are more homes on the market. Buyers are much more cautious due to these circumstances and are looking to pay the fair market value for a home, not a made up value \$25,000 above the most recent comparable sale. Now, in order to be successful, sellers must rely on the expertise of a REALTOR® to help establish the actual market value of a home.

The bottom line, the next time you read or hear of a change in the median sales price, understand that it is a great gauge of the general housing health, but is not an exact measure of home price appreciation.

**Active Inventory: The inventory rose 7% in the past two weeks.**

In Orange County there really is not much of a Winter Market, especially this year. With temperatures in the 70's and 80's, there is no good excuse to avoid the real estate market. With the holidays in the rearview mirror, it already feels like spring. Our Spring Market actually begins a bit earlier than most of the country due to our incredible weather. There is a noticeable shift in the market right after the Super Bowl, just a couple of weeks away. Cyclically, the inventory rises throughout Orange County, and this year is no exception.

In the past two weeks, the active listing increased by 344 homes and now totals 5,077, the largest increase since August. At this time last year, the inventory only grew by 88 homes and totaled 3,249 homes, 1,828 fewer than today.

**Demand: Demand increased by 4% in the past two weeks.**

Demand, the number of new pending sales over the past month, increased by 63 and now totals 1,558. Demand will continue to increase and will continue to gain momentum through spring.

Last year demand was at 2,172 pending sales, 614 more than today. Even with fewer homes on the market, demand was much higher and buyers would do whatever it took to isolate a home. The market was soaring at a feverish pace. Flash forward to today and buyers approach the market much more methodically, seeking value, the fair market value.

**Distressed Breakdown: The distressed inventory increased by only four homes in the past two weeks.**

The distressed inventory, foreclosures and short sales combined, increased by four homes and now totals 275, a 1% increase. Only 5% of the active listing inventory and 12% of demand is distressed. Compare that to last year when it represented 11% of the inventory and 33% of demand, and two years ago when it represented 37% of the inventory and 59% of demand. Today, there are some distressed properties, but they play an overall insignificant role compared to recent years.

In the past two weeks, the foreclosure inventory decreased by 9 homes and now totals 58. 1% of the inventory is a foreclosure. The expected market time for foreclosures is 38 days. The short sale inventory increased by 13 homes in the past two weeks and now totals 217. The expected market time is 49 days. Short sales represent just 4% of the total active inventory.

You can read the entire article including extra information at my website:

<http://www.AnaDreamHomes.com>

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If you would like free advice on

1. getting the very best financing for your home
2. how to get pre-approved for a mortgage
3. refinancing or a home equity loan
4. even selling your home

Please call me at 919-929-8387.

**Repair & DIY Center**



**Save With This E-A-S-Y Energy Tip**

When was the last time you cleaned your thermostat coil? One year ago? Five years ago? Are you're asking yourself, "what in the world is a thermostat coil??"

Your thermostat regulates your home heating and cooling system. When the coil inside the thermostat cover is dirty and dusty it won't give an accurate reading. The dust interferes with the coil's ability to sense temperature changes. Room temperature changes make the coil curl and uncurl, thus activating your heating or cooling unit to turn on or off.

Here's how to easily clean your thermostat coil. Simply remove the thermostat cover and clean the coil by blowing away the dust or gently wiping it away with a cotton swab. If you have a clock or timer thermostat, make sure to replace the batteries twice a year

**Garage Door Home Safety Tip...**

Make sure to test your garage door openers monthly to ensure the safety features are working properly. To run the test, simply place a 2" x 4" board on the floor of the garage in the door's path. If the door does not properly reverse when it strikes the board, you will want to have the door serviced as soon as possible.

And, make sure the wall switch for the door is at least five-feet from the ground. You don't want young children playing with the door and becoming injured.

Finally, keep your automatic door openers safely locked in your automobile away from children or would-be thieves who could use the opener to enter your home.

**Helpful Hints Make Homemaking Easier...**

Throughout history, people have discovered tricks that can make life easier in the kitchen. Here are a few that have been passed down:

- Stuff a mini-marshmallow in the bottom of a sugar cone to prevent ice cream drips...
- Use a meat batter to squeeze your pancake batter onto a hot griddle and you'll get perfectly shaped cakes every time...
- To keep potatoes from budding, place an apple in the bag where the potatoes are stored...
- To prevent eggs from cracking, add a pinch of salt to the water before hard-boiling...
- To get more juice out of fresh lemons, bring them to room temperature and roll them under your palm against the kitchen counter before squeezing.

**Quote of the Day**

**"Example is not the main thing in influencing others. It is the only thing."**

Albert Schweitzer (1875-1965) German medical missionary, Nobel peace Prize winner



## Trivia Center!

### Did you know?

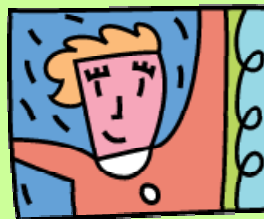


- Here's good news for golfers and anyone who works or plays outside: Placing a folded sheet of fabric softener in your back pocket can help keep bees away.
- The first home TV set was demonstrated in 1928 and the size of the screen was 3-inches by 4-inches.
- President George Washington owned foxhounds named DRUNKARD, TIPLER and TIPSY.
- As a twelve-year-old contestant, star PATTY DUKE won over \$8,000 on the TV game show "THE \$64,000 CHALLENGE".
- It takes 110 domestic silkworm cocoons to make a man's tie and 630 to make a blouse.
- PHILLIP DRINKER and Louis Agassiz Shaw built the first IRON LUNG with two vacuum cleaners at Harvard University in 1927. Iron Lungs are known as DRINKER RESPIRATORS.
- The first vending machines in the United States were installed on New York City train platforms in 1888 and dispensed CHEWING GUM.
- For his first JAMES BOND film Dr. No, 32-year-old SEAN CONNERY received a reported \$16,500. By 1966, his salary was \$750,000.
- "IN GOD WE TRUST", motto of United States, adopted July 30, 1956, first appeared on US coins in 1864.
- CHRISTMAS became a National Holiday in the U.S. in 1890.
- The FIRST TRANSOCEANIC CABLE MESSAGE was sent on August 16, 1858 and said "Europe and America are united by telegraph. Glory to God in the highest and on earth peace and good will towards men".
- BUDDY was the name of the FIRST SEEING EYE DOG in AMERICA, brought to the U.S. in 1928 from Switzerland by owner Morris Frank.
- The Pony Express only lasted 18 months, from April 1860 to October 1861.
- The Lone Ranger's mask was made from the vest of his dead brother Capt. Daniel Reid by Tonto.
- Actor JAY SILVERHEELS who played the character TONTO retired from showbusiness in 1984 and became a HARNESS-RACING DRIVER.
- DERRY CHURCH, PA was the original name of the town known today as HERSHEY, PA home of HERSHEY CHOCOLATE.
- CLEO and CAESAR were early stage names of CHER and SONNY Bono.
- Colgate claims "Tooth Fairy" as a registered trademark.
- Money isn't made out of paper, it's made out of linen.
- Most American car horns honk in the key of F.
- Most lipstick contains fish scales.

## Interior Painting Tips: How to Paint Your Walls Like a Pro

### Don't Skip the Primer

Primer serves three main functions. First, it blocks stains from bleeding through. Second, it allows one-coat coverage for the paint. Third, and most important, it improves paint adhesion, which greatly reduces blisters and peeling.



### Go for Canvas Drop Cloths Rather than Plastic

Canvas is extremely durable and rip-resistant. It lays flat and presents much less of a tripping hazard. Canvas absorbs paint drips, unlike plastic drop cloths, which become slippery when splattered with paint.

### Reach for an Extension Pole

Forget the stepladder and get yourself a telescoping extension pole for your paint

roller. Extension poles come in various lengths, up to 18 feet long, but one that extends from 18 to 36 inches is good enough to paint rooms with 8- to 9-foot-tall ceilings. Check that your paint roller's handle has a threaded hole in the end, then simply twist it onto the extension pole.

### Overnight Storage

Simply brush or roll off the excess paint, then tightly wrap them in plastic food wrap. If necessary, double up the plastic to seal out any air, then place the wrapped brushes and roller sleeves in the refrigerator to keep them fresh. This might sound crazy, but it works - it'll keep the paint from drying overnight and rendering your equipment unusable.

The next day, simply remove the gear from cold storage 30 minutes prior to painting, and it'll be supple and ready for use.

Excerpted from the same article @PopularMechanics.com

## 10 ways to make your kids turn green

### Tired of struggling to get your children to eat vegetables? Give these tried-and-tested ideas a go.

If you've ever had one of those weeks where the only green thing that's gone into your child's mouth is a piece of lego, then you know how difficult it can be to get them to eat the smallest spoonful of spinach, let alone five portions of vegetables a day.

Here are some ideas that have worked for me. They mostly consist of disguise - sneaky, but effective. If they don't work for you, remember that yesterday's hated vegetable may become tomorrow's favorite. Research has shown that children need to be introduced to food up to eight times before they will accept it, so the message is simple - keep trying.



1. Children love things to be visually appealing, so try designing edible faces with carrot circles for eyes, strips of pepper for eyebrows, baby sweet corn for the nose and broccoli pieces for the mouth. Kids will enjoy helping with the composition, especially if you deliberately make a few anatomical mistakes. Add wild hairdos with shredded cabbage, watercress or zucchini ribbons.
2. Introduce color into your children's diet with stir-frying. It's quick, so they get to see instant results. Try stir-frying peas, pepper strips, bean sprouts and Chinese cabbage, or a mixture of sweet corn, small chunks of carrot and peas.
3. Lightly cooked carrots, broccoli and peas puréed with tomato sauce makes a great pasta sauce.
4. My two-year-old, who recently decided she hates broccoli, happily ate it when I mashed the florets of some cooked broccoli into the sauce of her macaroni cheese.
5. A pile of raw grated carrot often goes down better than a heap of cooked discs.
6. Cut zucchini into ribbons before cooking them.
7. Use a ridged grill pan to give a stripy effect to vegetables - tiger peppers, anyone?
8. Roast butternut squash and sweet potatoes instead of boiling them - this brings out a sweetness that children love.
9. Get them involved. Enlist the help of older children to help thread cherry tomatoes, chunks of cucumber and pieces of carrot on to kebab sticks, then dip them into cottage cheese or soft cheese. Or ask them to help mix a salad - it may actually persuade them it's worth eating.
10. Don't overcook vegetables. Steaming or microwaving retains more nutrients than boiling. Although babies need mushy textures, older children prefer a little 'bite' and may like to eat their veggies as finger foods.



**“Who Wants To Win?”  
Movie Tickets For Two**

*Take my Trivia Challenge and you could win too!*

Now...let's move on to this month's trivia question...

This Issue's Question:

**Q. The Body Of An Average Adult Has Approximately How Many Square Feet Of Skin?**

A. 82 sq. feet b) 58 sq. feet c) 18 sq. feet d) 24 sq. feet e) 126 sq. feet

**Last Months Question...**

Q. How Many Toothpicks Can Be Produced From A Cord Of Wood? And the answer is c) 7,500,000

*Call me right now with your answer! (949) 929-8387*

**The XXII Olympic Winter Games**



See the entire Olympics Schedule on my website at @ <http://www.anadreamhomes.com>

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**Don't forget the garage.**

Prospective buyers will most likely want to look into the garage, so give it a once over as well.

**Keep the property in "showing" condition.**

Be prepared with short notice to have your home shine. A serious buyer is going to do more than just walk through the home. They will want to closely examine the appliances, closets, kitchen cabinets, etc. If they're confronted by dirt and clutter, they may leave without giving the property a second thought.

*Consult your Real Estate professional about what you can do to showcase your house as best as possible and you may just get that quick sale you are after.*

*Excerpted from ARA Content*

**Recipe Corner**

**Indian Matar Paneer  
(Cottage Cheese and Peas)**



Prep Time: 25 Minutes

Cook Time: 40 Minutes

**Ready Ingredients:**

- 1 gallon whole milk
- 1 lemon, juiced
- 2 teaspoons olive oil
- 1 tablespoon cumin seeds
- 1 onion, finely chopped
- 1 red bell pepper, finely chopped
- 1/2 cup canned whole kernel corn
- 1/2 cup frozen peas
- 1/2 teaspoon garam masala
- 1/2 teaspoon ground turmeric
- 1/2 teaspoon chili powder
- 1/4 cup chopped fresh cilantro

**Preparation Method:**

In a large saucepan, bring the milk to a boil. Stir in the lemon juice. Continue cooking 15 minutes, stirring constantly, until curds have formed. Using a cheese cloth, separate the cheese from remaining liquid, and set aside.

Heat the olive oil in a skillet over medium heat. Stirring constantly, cook the cumin seeds and onion in the skillet until golden brown. Mix in the bell pepper, corn, and peas. Season with garam masala, turmeric, and chili powder. Continue to cook and stir 10 minutes, until vegetables are tender.

Mix the cheese into the skillet. Reduce heat to low, cover, and continue cooking 10 minutes. Sprinkle with cilantro to serve.

**Joke of the month.**

**Who's Leading Who...**



For years, each morning at about 11:30 AM the telephone operator in a small Sierra Nevada town received a call from a man asking the exact time. One day, the operator summoned the nerve enough to ask him why the regularity. "I'm a foreman of the local sawmill," he explained, "every day I have to blow the whistle at noon, so I call you to get the exact time." "That's really funny," she replied, "all this time we've been setting our clock by your whistle!"

**Ivy Lee**



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**California Beach Search Puzzle**

E L V P C G Z Z E L J P O I N T D U M E  
J T A Q D N B P A D K I X Z N A H O A Y  
G I N G U O K E N R M C H E V C W B N F  
E V H E U L S A I Z L F Z L A I W P H K  
U D A L M N W U W Q G A K B T N Z S A P  
L L Z C F E A K N Q Q L R N H O V S T U  
O Z Q B C Q L D S M E I O C P M C K T Y  
T R O P W E N C G A L A I K B A W A E Z  
Z S T X A A I Z N L N E L T B T F Z N N  
N A B N S S Y U O A A T E C I N E V O Y  
T J F A O X Y O Y G S L A O M A U T W W  
A B P J M L V E N T U R A C D S G C W U  
A R A B R A B A T N A S U A R N I M I N  
P X B B E F P C D R L N C B I U O E X Q  
E P H Y H O O M F I O W S T I Y Z D L B  
B U H C T R I T H N A Y N F T L T V E M  
B E U X O X L W J S K U Z L M I A S R R  
L R P N S M W G I H H A E L L E G M Z S  
E A A Z C W I C Z Q X U V V N S Y R L V  
K N S U L T J H S T C E I O Y W I H Q K

CABRILLO  
CORONA  
HERMOSA  
HUNTINGTON  
LAGUNA  
LONG  
MALIBU  
MANHATTEN  
NEWPORT  
PRBBLE  
POINT DUME  
REDONDO  
SAN CLEMENTE  
SANTA BARBARA  
SANTA CRUZ  
SANTA MONICA  
SEAL  
TOPANGO  
VENICE  
VENTURA

**Sudoku**

For Solution go to my website @ [AnadreamHomes.com](http://AnadreamHomes.com)

7	6	9		5				
8			2	4			3	
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3	9			7			1	
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9							1	4
		1				8	3	6
						7		3 2 1