

The Cardinal Flyer

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You Just Might Have Been Wearing Blue This March 17

“The wearing of the **blue**?” St. Patrick’s Day on March 17 usually celebrates all things **green**. But St. Patrick – in whose name we celebrate St. Paddy’s Day – was British. So even though he was credited with introducing Christianity to Ireland in the fifth century, he might well have worn British blue instead of Irish green.

March 17 hasn’t always been a celebration. In fact, it began as a solemn day recognizing Ireland’s patron saint, whom some believe died on that day. And there doesn’t appear to have been anything green about it. Says an article on mentalfloss.com: “The color green only became associated with the big day after it was linked to the Irish independence movement in the late 18th century.”

Even stranger, St. Patrick was born Maewyn Succat, taking the name Patricius when he became a priest. Imagine if it had been St. Maewyn who chased the snakes into the sea, ridding Ireland of the pests? And what about those snakes? According to fossil experts, there never were snakes in Ireland. And, says *Popular Science* magazine, there still aren’t.

The shamrock worn on St. Patrick’s Day actually is associated with the Saint himself, who allegedly used it as a teaching tool to symbolize the Trinity. But interestingly, it was the Druids who believed the shamrock brought luck by warding off evil spirits.

These days, though, March 17 is a great party that celebrates Irish culture with

Are You a First-Time Buyer? Get My Free Guide



Buying your first home is a big step and one that is likely to impact your financial future for years to come.

Make it easier by requesting my free guide, “How First-Timers Can Make a Wise Buy.”

Just call me at **703-928-4428** and I’ll send it right out to you.

The Best-Laid Plans: Things to Consider in Your Kitchen Remodel

If a kitchen remodel is on your agenda for spring, be sure you have a comprehensive plan in place.

Here are some issues to address in your plan. (Your New Kitchen: 7 Tricky Questions You Didn’t Know You’d Ask, published recently on Houzz.com, identifies other factors to consider.)

Research your local building code: In the Houzz article, designer Yanic Simard notes that some building codes have rules around venting and the type of hood fan you install. And, if you’re renovating an apartment-style condominium, you may not be able to relocate the plumbing. Check with your association.

Outlets: Early on, decide where your electrical outlets should go. If you’re adding an island, consider outlets at the outset.

Flooring: This decision should also be made early, as everything else will depend on it.

Appliances: Your kitchen needs to work for you; where you put your appliances will affect everything from cabinets to countertops.

Sink: Before you consider finishes or backsplashes, decide what sink style you want. These range from undermount, with no edges, to drop-in, which offers the easiest install. Apron or farmhouse sinks have a deep basin for washing big pots.

Cabinets: Making a mistake here can be expensive. Decide the function and location of each cabinet before thinking about hardware. If it’s a DIY, online 3-D software can help you envision cabinet placement so two cabinet doors don’t open into each other.

Once the tough decisions are made, you can relax and consider the “jewelry,” such as cabinet hardware and backsplash. Enjoy.

Just What's So Great About 3.14159 Anyway?



It's March 14. Happy "Pi Day"! And, no, it's not a celebration of the much-loved dessert with the flaky crust. Pi Day celebrates the much-loved ratio derived from the diameter and circumference of a circle.

To refresh: Take the distance around a circle, called the circumference. The distance across a circle through its center is the diameter. And the distance from any point on the circumference to the center is the radius, or half the diameter.

Thus, explains an article on Wonderopolis: "Pi is the ratio of a circle's circumference to its diameter. Regardless of the size of the circle, pi is always the same number. So, for any circle, dividing its circumference by its diameter will give you the exact same number: 3.14159 ... or pi." The fact that pi is a constant number has fascinated

math enthusiasts from ancient times to the present day. Notes Wonderopolis: "For most purposes, pi can be approximated as 3.14159. Some people even shorten it to 3.14, which is why Pi Day is celebrated on March 14 (3/14)."

And naturally, today's technology has gone several better and calculated pi to a million digits.

Both adults and kids can celebrate "Wonderopolis-style" on pi's special day. Collect several different-sized circular items easily found around the home (cups, plates, décor pieces, hula hoops, etc.) and measure them to prove whether pi really does always measure 3.14.

You can also browse several pi websites, and many pi fans watch for Google's March 14 Doodle to see if it, too, will recognize Pi Day this year.

Quick Quiz

Each month I'll give you a new question.

Just email me at buysellbell@gmail.com or call **703-928-4428** for the answer.

Where was America's first newspaper printed?

Thanks for All Your Referrals!

I succeed when people like you refer me to your friends, neighbors and loved ones. It's the best kind of feedback I can receive.

So thanks for continuing to pass this newsletter on to people you care about.

Wondering How Much Your Home Is Worth?

How has the price of your home changed in today's market? How much are other homes in your neighborhood selling for?

If you're wondering what's happening to prices in your area, or you're thinking about selling your house, I'll be able to help. Just give my office a call for a no-fuss, professional evaluation.

I won't try to push you into listing with me or waste your time. I'll just give you the honest facts about your home and its value. And maybe I'll also give you the "inside scoop" on what's happening in the housing market near where you live!

Just give my office a call at **703-928-4428** to arrange an appointment.

Alternatively, stop by at the office. The address is on the back page of this newsletter.

Homebuyer Rates in 2018

Many potential homebuyers who have been looking to purchase at the beginning of 2018 have noticed that rates have begun to move a little higher.

These higher rates can translate to a larger monthly mortgage payment and may affect the purchase price and loan amount that a borrower can qualify for.

The professional experienced loan officers at First Heritage Mortgage have many options to help a borrower get in the home of their dreams with the best payment and secure financing options available.

Please contact a loan officer with First Heritage to explore your options.

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Northern Virginia Real Estate Market

Sold Summary

	Jan 2018	Jan 2017	% Change
Sold Dollar Volume	\$944,252,513	\$954,264,424	-1.05%
Avg Sold Price	\$514,860	\$487,616	5.59%
Median Sold Price	\$429,950	\$414,000	3.85%
Units Sold	1,834	1,957	-6.29%
Avg Days on Market	62	65	-4.62%
Avg List Price for Solds	\$525,180	\$497,335	5.60%
Avg SP to OLP Ratio	96.9%	96.8%	0.13%
Ratio of Avg SP to Avg OLP	96.5%	96.3%	0.19%
Attached Avg Sold Price	\$377,466	\$360,956	4.57%
Detached Avg Sold Price	\$673,217	\$629,508	6.94%
Attached Units Sold	982	1,034	-5.03%
Detached Units Sold	852	923	-7.69%

Notes:

- SP = Sold Price
- OLP = Original List Price
- LP = List Price (at time of sale)
- Garage/Parking Spaces are not included in Detached/Attached section totals.

Inventory

	Jan 2018	Jan 2017	% Change
Active Listings	4,195	5,022	-16.47%
New Listings	2,940	3,042	-3.35%
New Under Contracts	960	847	13.34%
New Contingents	1,588	1,797	-11.63%
New Pendings	2,548	2,644	-3.63%
All Pendings	3,185	3,591	-11.31%

Financing (Sold)

Assumption	0
Cash	257
Conventional	1,076
FHA	199
Other	85
Owner	2
VA	215

Days on Market (Sold)

0	89
1 to 10	421
11 to 20	219
21 to 30	150
31 to 60	325
61 to 90	223
91 to 120	132
121 to 180	160
181 to 360	93
361 to 720	15
721+	7

Time to Wake Up and Smell the Coffee

Coffee drinkers are becoming younger. According to online restaurant supply store WebstaurantStore: "The fastest-growing demographic of coffee drinkers is the 13- to 18-year-old age group." And this is changing the way we drink coffee. Here are some WebstaurantStore trends to look for:

Younger consumers like mobile coffee. Ready-to-drink portable bottles of prepared Frappuccinos and other popular hyper-sweetened coffee beverages are now readily available in convenience stores, meaning fewer trips to coffee hangouts.

When they do head to local coffee spots, younger drinkers are looking for something special: presentation. The Instagram generation now loves selfies with coffee and milk served French-style in beautiful café au lait bowls.

Nitro coffee – coffee infused with nitrogen gas – is popular thanks to its rich creamy taste, and the new cold brew coffee is an in-demand cold drink that's stronger, but less bitter. Finally, the interest in gourmet coffee continues, driven by more sophisticated consumers who aren't interested in the latest trends and still value the taste and the

What to Buy and What to Skip in March

Want to stretch your dollars this month? Here are some buys and skips for March, courtesy of dealnews.com.

Buy: Frozen foods. It's National Frozen Foods Month, and frozen food brands and grocery stores take this seriously. You may score discounts of up to 10% off frozen products.

Buy: Around St. Patrick's Day. Some stores and restaurants give discounts to green-wearing customers. Also expect

florist discounts between Valentine's Day and Mother's Day.

Skip: Spring clothes. If possible, hold off. Not many discounts on new arrivals now.

Skip: Phones. Because new products were launched at February's Mobile World Congress, many believe that March is a good time to buy. But manufacturers have their own timelines. Do your research.

Ask the Agent: This Month's Question

Should I Sell My Home Myself?

Probably not, and here's why.

It's more work than you think. Will you be able to rush home if a buyer wants to see your house in 30 minutes? Do you have time to keep track of your showings, follow up for feedback, and vet any potential offers? You'll also need the know-how to negotiate any offers that come in. This negotiation is extremely difficult when you factor in the emotional and financial investment that comes with being the owner of the home. Similar struggles come into play when prepping your home for the market. It's hard to see what changes should be made when the space is your own.

An agent has all the necessary resources at his or her disposal to handle these situations for you. Agents' professional perspective and experience create a smoother and more profitable process. Consider leaving it in their capable hands, so you don't wring yours.

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

Sudoku instructions: Complete the 9×9 grid so that each row, each column and each of the nine 3×3 boxes contains the digits 1 through 9. Contact me for the solution!

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Lamb Kabobs with Creamy Avocado Dressing

Serves 4

1 ripe avocado
 Juice of 1 lemon
 $\frac{3}{4}$ cup olive oil
 $\frac{1}{4}$ cup white vinegar
 Salt and pepper to taste

$1\frac{1}{2}$ pounds lamb, cut into 1-inch pieces
 $\frac{1}{4}$ cup lemon juice
 2 tablespoons olive oil
 3 cloves garlic, minced
 1 tablespoon fresh oregano, chopped
 1 tablespoon parsley, chopped
 1 tablespoon sweet paprika
 1 teaspoon salt and pepper

Blend the avocado flesh, juice, oil, vinegar, and seasoning on high for 10 seconds or until it reaches a smooth consistency. Set aside.

Marinate lamb pieces in lemon juice, oil, garlic, oregano, paprika, salt, and pepper for at least one hour or overnight. Thread lamb pieces onto skewers and discard marinade. Preheat grill or grill pan over medium-high heat and cook skewers until charred and cooked through, about 8–10 minutes, turning occasionally. Remove from heat. Drizzle with avocado dressing and serve over greens, grains, or grilled vegetables.

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