

You've Come a Long Way Baby!

Change, change and more change. When most of us were young they started building little subdivisions. You remember where homes were strategically placed in an area so the neighbors shared lots in common. Mostly regarding income and kids.

Next they started to build the country clubs where golf and tennis were the focus of the residential population. It was just a subdivision and the club was something you joined or not, but the homes were built around the outside of the country club property.

Gated communities came next. They offered security and a sense of oneness with all the other families within the gates.

Then we got the country clubs of the late 90's. They offered everything security, golf, tennis, Jr. Olympic pools, exercise rooms, restaurants and full time activity directors.



Each new developer working to out do his last project or the project done by a competitor. WCI combined Golf and Water building on or near water and combining that with golf have made them successful.

But there is a new face on the horizon. The truly planned Master Community. The be all and end all to community living. Designed for young and old alike. They have left nothing to chance. From developing the local commercial parts that include everything from grocery stores to barber shops, medical facilities, restaurants and perhaps even a movie theatre. Parks where families can picnic, to lighted soccer and base ball fields, biking trails and walking paths, and even areas where you can walk your dog. Boating out of their own private marina, and if all that isn't enough they are not building just one golf course but several. A public course, a private course and perhaps the last one will be semi-private. The individual communities will be separated by the type of dwelling so you can choose to live with or without kids.



Covering not just a few hundred acres, but thousands of acres. The real master plans have only one main entrance and subdivisions within the community. The older master planned communities have the land but the individual communities are not connected or behind the same gate.

It is truly the wave of the future, with controlled gated entries there is security and a sense of camaraderie that was not found in the older master planned communities.

I hope no one is going to try and tell us this does not all come at a cost. It does, but what a great place to bring up your children. These new Master Planned Communities are truly 21st century. They offer something for everyone regardless of age and it looks as though they are going to continue. When you look at the number of people buying into

these communities you know they are here to stay. Of course, they are here as long as the land is available.

Proposed Flood Insurance Changes!

President Bush proposes a raise in flood insurance for second homes and at-risk properties. Tucked into the proposed budget for fiscal year 2003 is a provision that would make flood insurance more expensive for some homeowners that rely on federal subsidies – mainly owners of second homes, investment properties and those facing beach erosion.

If it becomes law, this could affect up to 29% of the 4.3 million homes in the nation that have federal flood insurance. The proposal would also affect those at "high-risk" of erosion, though under the proposal, those homeowners would pay higher premiums and remain in the federal program while all others would lose the federal subsidy.



This proposed change could increase the cost of flood insurance by 300 to 500 percent. Florida will be directly affected by this change with so many homes and condos on barrier islands, ocean fronts and inter coastal waterways.

Flood insurance can add hundreds of dollars to a mortgage, and Mr. Capper says "that this information is often not disclosed until closing". I do not know what state he is referring to but in the State of Florida all real estate agents are required to disclose in a listing if a property is in a flood zone and flood insurance will be required. Many properties not on the coast are in flood zones. Rivers, creeks and bays are home to many people and they are all required to have flood insurance and to disclose this information when selling their property.

I guess if you live along the Mississippi or on the Atlantic Sea Board or on a barrier island in the Gulf of Mexico you should be smart enough to know that you are in a flood area. Therefore if you elect to live in these areas you should be prepared to pay the price for living there. Howard Marlowe, a lobbyist who represents coastal towns, disagrees, he feels that people should not be treated as though they "are somehow living in sin because they choose to be near the coastline". So for those of us who are lucky enough to be able to afford these properties, they will come with an added price tag in 2003.

Investors will be raising rents to offset the increase cost, but others will not be so lucky if the bill passes.*

*Planet Realtor News February 7, 2002

What You Should Know When Buying A Home!

Last month I started discussing how to start searching for a retirement home in Florida. We talked about price, type of home and location. There is nothing simple or easy when

starting your search. Finding the right area for you, the right community and the right beach or golf course is the hard part there is no doubt about that. However many people have said they are afraid of making a mistake. They always know someone who did!

Good Mistakes vs Bad Mistakes

There are good mistakes and bad mistakes. What do I mean by that. Well lets consider the family that purchased a brand new home in a brand new community. They were so excited at the prospect of having an affordable new home and were so impressed by what they were told they selected the site and construction began. Did they bother to check on what the resale market was like, or check out the area outside the development? No! They simply talked with the builders sales people and were told all about the wonderful community that was under construction, all the amenities, the golf course, all the snug neighborhoods and the low cost of building in this grand community.

After 6 months or a year they found that this was not the community for them. So now they want to sell. But they are in the middle of a developing community. When buying this sounded wonderful – all these people coming into the area. It actually made the area more appealing, but now that they are selling – guess what – it is not so appealing. You paid all the start up costs, along with all the closing costs, (developers pass these costs to the buyer) and now in order for you to sell your home and not take a loss you will have to list your home close to the same price or more than the new homes are advertised at. You may know that the advertised price does not include all the costs, but when you advertise your home you have to include all those cost so as not to loose money. This is good for the developer, but not for you!



On the other hand, if they had purchased in as area of high demand, the home would sell quickly and would pay a profit. Knowing and understanding the market and the area in which you are looking are key factors. If the people referenced above had purchased in a high demand area they would have made a profit and not lost several thousand. For additional information refer to last months **Buyers Market versus a Sellers Market** WARNING – do not ask the developers sales people about resale's – they only sell new not used.

Save the Salespeople!

“Even though professional salespersons make up a large portion of our economy, salespeople are often treated poorly, lied to, hidden from and worse.” According to Alan Buhler of Sales Research & Consulting.

There is nothing more disheartening than working with a prospective buyer for days only to have them leave you and buy from another agent who had an open house or an ad that caught their eye, or who have walked into a new development and not mentioned your name.

Having been in the sales field in one form or another for the past 20 years, I have found that in real estate loyalty from buyers is the hardest to achieve. I can well understand why the big companies have gone to Buyer Broker Agreements and way agents burn out so quickly

However, I have always believed that a person who does not wish to work with me should not be required to do so.. Providing accurate and honest information, combined with an extensive knowledge in the fields in which I have chosen to specialize have been the key to buyer loyalty. As a person I treat people the way I would like to have them treat me, and this same philosophy applies to my work.

I also recognize that I get a lot of calls from people who will never display any loyalty but that is part of what goes with the position.

So Please as prospective buyers, select your agent carefully and be good to them, he or she is working hard for you and asks only loyalty in return. Always give their name when talking with other agents or developers.

It's Easy Being Green

Exterior house paint that kills algae, a common occurrence on the northern front of many Florida homes. Researcher Clovis Linkous of the Florida Solar Energy Center says the key is a photoactive paint that, when exposed to sunlight, creates a "mildewcide" that rids the wall of algae and fungi. Indoor tests have proven the paint effective, and scientists are in the process of conducting outdoor tests. The next step is to develop paint formations and complete field-testing, after which the product should be ready for the commercial market. The technology also should help researchers develop a sealer for roofs, enticing more homeowners to opt for light-colored roofs instead of using dark-colored shingles that mask algae. "I think if everyone had a light-colored roof, Florida's energy bill would drop 10 percent overnight," Linkous says.

Source: Stuart News/Port St. Lucie News (FL) (02/22/02); Cicchese, Amy

Course of the Month

Stoneybrook Golf Club is a public course, but we want to mention it as it has been built in a true Master Planned



community. Course opens March 4, 2002. \$50.00 per round. Designed by Arthur Hills from the back tees it play 7131 with a 74.8 rating and a slope of 142. Is this a challenge or what!