

"Your Monthly Bill"

1008 Adams, Downtown Bay City. 989.892.4800

Baseball is just around the corner!
Early Spring 2014 Edition



Real Estate Newsletter

Brought to you by Bill Branigan, Assoc. Broker

The Most Amazing Renovation of Historical Homes

I recently had the honor of listing two of the most amazing complete restorations of Bay City's best examples of early 20th century architecture. The homes at 1720 6th and 1314 McKinley were the best "top to bottom" renovations in area homes that I



have seen in my 15 years as an agent. Starting from the basics of electrical and plumbing to the refinishing of all the woodwork to the finishing touches of the kitchens and baths, these homes now offer another 100 years of life to the heritage of the properties in the historic north-east side of town.

Both homes are owned by Mike and Jane Wittbrodt who have also renovated 3 other homes in a similar manner. Long days of work and

many trips to area hardware and lumber stores on a daily basis for months and even years on end show the dedication to "saving" these old homes. Owning a 100+ year home and renovating most of it myself, makes me appreciate all the work that has been done to get the best of both worlds... a significant piece of architecture with all the features of a new home. The YouTube videos that I have produced for these homes get a ton of viewings and comments from agents and buyers. See them yourself by going to my website and seeing them on my homepage or on YouTube under my channel titled BayCityRealtor. Incidentally, the home at 1720 6th went "pending" with an accepted offer in 8 days.



The Osprey Awards Sold Out Again!

The Saginaw Basin Land Conservancy presented the Osprey Awards at their 2nd annual sold-out affair, January 21st at The Boathouse in downtown Bay City. The Ospreys are designed to recognize key people and organizations or businesses in our community who have taken exemplary steps in keeping with the Conservancy's mission of conserving land and water uses to sustain communities and provide for a higher quality of life. Food, refreshments, prizes and an excellent keynote speaker made for a wonderful evening. See www.sblc-mi.org for more on this very successful event.

The SBLC is also announcing plans for their newest park, Discovery Preserve at Euclid Park. It is located between Ionia and Salzburg on the east side of Euclid. Look for their upcoming signs and plan on enjoying a walk there this summer.



Food: Buying Organic, Buying Local

This winter I watched documentaries on Netflix and read books about food, including farming practices, processes, additives and nutrition. The information was important for me to know to make 2014 a year where I could make healthier choices. My wife, Carol and I also joined the Family Y and are going there 4-6 times a week. We have begun to take a closer look at what options are available for better food. What we learned was surprising and clearly gave reasons why the American public is experiencing an alarming rate of health related illnesses due to their diet.

The University of Michigan Center for Sustainable Systems published a study on the U.S. Food System and it is available online. In it they outlined that Americans consumed 2534 calories per day in 2010 which is a 17% increase from 1970. More than 68% of U.S. adults are overweight or obese and 17% of children ages 2-19 are obese. On top of the added amount of food eaten is that there is tremendous waste. An estimated 26% of edible food is wasted at the consumer level. This accounts for roughly 15% of the municipal solid waste stream and represents a loss of \$390 per person each year.

Down on the farm statistics are surprising as well. As Americans, we enjoy a diverse supply of food at just 9.8% of our disposable income. Just 16 cents of every dollar spent on food in 2011 went back to the farm while 40 cents went back in 1975. And insecticide use is stunning. Despite a 10-fold increase in insecticide use between 1945 and 1989, crop losses due to insect damage nearly doubled. In 2007, the U.S. agriculture sector used 877 million tons of pesticides. In 2012, 88% of corn and 93% of soybeans were genetically modified. Fields are continually planted and crops altered

to provide yields, thereby not allowing the land to be naturally enriched which contributes to topsoil loss as well as nutrient food value. In 2007, 1.73 billion tons of topsoil was lost to erosion, equal to about 200,000 tons each hour. 40% of agriculture production energy goes into making chemical fertilizers and pesticides. Consolidation of farms, food processing operations and distribution warehouses place further distance between food sources and consumers.

What is the solution to this growing dilemma? According to the U of M study, sustainable alternatives include; 1. **Eat Local.** Fresh produce travels more than 1500 miles to stores in the Midwest. Buying from Farmer's Markets and Community Supported Agriculture (CSAs) would save millions of gallons of fuel each year and have more food value. 2. **Eat Less Meat.** A meat based diet with 28% of calories from animal products, uses twice as much energy as a vegetarian diet. This practice of excess meat eating has significant environmental impacts on land and water use, pollution and air emissions. 3. **Eat Organic.** Organic foods do not use the chemicals and energy for production and results in a positive human health impact. 4. **Reduce Waste.** Buy small amounts. Plan your meals and stick to shopping lists. Freeze, can and preserve extra produce. Go to my website www.billbranigan.com and on my home webpage is the link to the **Local Fresh Food Guide** for Eastern Michigan which has a map, addresses of farms and farmer markets where fresh produce can be purchased and even phone numbers that you can call to see what is available. Or, if you want to email or call me, I will be happy to send you the Food Guide in time for the spring season where you can enjoy the benefits of good eating and support the local growers and economy. Take care of yourself and your family and eat better in 2014.

Real Estate Sales Out Like a Lamb in 2013, In Like a Lion in 2014!

Real estate sales never recovered from the government shutdown in 2013 and the lackluster 4th quarter resulted in the yearly sales slipping downward from 2012. Sales totals ended up at 1319 units compared to 1463 in 2012. The average sale edged upward at \$79,000 vs \$76,200 a year ago. Homes sold in 40 fewer days than 2012. Cold weather and constant snowfall limited new inventory from coming out in January and February. Current totals of 553 active properties are half of what is typical. Buyers are ready and pent up demand is going to explode once the weather breaks. Forecasts from all the economic experts contend that the first half of the year will be exceptionally busy as new properties become available and new construction ramps up. Distressed sales are now just 14% of all sales as opposed to the 35% that it used to be according to CoreLogic. Home sale prices have risen 12% nationally over the last year, the biggest gain in 8 years. Despite the bubble burst, 22 states have now reached or are within 10% of their record high 2006 peak. Barring unforeseen tragedies, the 2014 Real Estate market will be busy for both buyers and sellers.

Top 10 Issues Affecting Real Estate Today

1. Low Interest rates. Historically, low rates propel the economy and spur sales. If the inventory increases watch for the pent up demand to take off.
2. Health Care. Demand for medical services and facilities is finally reaching a point of dramatic growth and expanded health insurance coverage will provide impetus for growth.
3. Commercial markets to increase. The volume of commercial real estate sales improved significantly in 2013 and is projected to continue in 2014 if inventory will also increase
4. Event Risks. Tragic storms like Katrina or terrorist events like 9/11 are key influences

on market performance. The potential for event risk, the uncertainty of Crimea, Ukraine and Russian involvement for example is so high the potential for an event makes this a top ten issue.

5. Effect of Climate Change / Weather on coastal properties. Superstorm Sandy was a game-changer and now FEMA and the National Flood Insurance Program for 5.5 million homes and businesses in special hazard zones are raising rates to cover the "true" risk and costs. Ongoing flood map changes are creating uncertainty for many communities.
6. Echo Boomer Housing Demand. 80 Million people born between 1982 and 1995 are changing demand preferences with a preference for smaller urban homes.
7. Increased U.S. Natural Gas Mining and

Reserves. U.S. oil production is up 75% from 2008 and gas is up 25% from 2006. Reserves have made the U.S. more energy independent. Boom and bust local economies is happening as production ramps up and then wanes while the environment is suffering degradation.

8. Global Real Estate Growth. Emerging markets are presenting investment and development opportunities and risks. The U.S. is viewed as a safe haven by foreign investment.

9. Impact of Technology on Office Space. Office space declined by 22% from 2010 to 2012 as a result of new mobility and office technology.

10. Retail Repositioning. The increase in internet sales is causing brick and mortar stores to downsize or possibly close.

Baked Oatmeal with Warm Fruit Compote and Cider Syrup!

The first time that I had baked oatmeal was at Heather's Restaurant on 3rd St. in Bay City. It was yummy and a fun way to eat oatmeal. This recipe smells and tastes great.

Syrup: 2 cups apple cider. Bring to a boil in a small saucepan over medium-high heat. Cook until reduced to 1/3 cup, about 20 min.

Compote: 2 cups water. 1/4 cup packed brown sugar, 1/2 tsp. ground cinnamon, 7 oz. of dried / chopped fruit. Combine water, sugar, cinnamon and fruit in a medium saucepan. Bring to a boil and then reduce heat. Simmer for 20 minutes or until thick.

Oatmeal: 3 cups water, 1 cup fat-free milk, 1/4 cup packed brown sugar, 1 tsp cinnamon, 1/4 tsp salt, 1 1/2 cups old fashioned oats, cooking spray and 1/4 cup butter divided. Combine water, milk, brown sugar, cinnamon and salt in a large saucepan. Bring to a boil over medium-high heat and then stir in oats. Reduce heat and simmer for 20 minutes or until thick, stirring occasionally. Spoon oatmeal into an 11x7 inch baking dish coated with cooking spray. Cool to room temperature and chill at least 1 hour or until set. This can be done the night before and it will be easy to bake in the morning. Invert chilled oatmeal mixture onto a cutting board and cut into 8 rectangles using a sharp knife. Melt 2 Tbsp

butter in a large nonstick skillet over medium heat. Add oatmeal rectangles. Cook 3 minutes on each side or until golden brown. Remove from pan and keep warm. Add remaining rectangles and repeat procedure. Place oatmeal pieces on a plate and top each serving with 4 Tbsp of fruit compote and some syrup.

Excellent source of protein, carbs and fiber.



Subscribe.....

Do you know that Bill publishes eNewsletters? The only hard copy letters he will be doing in 2014 will be the Tigers and Lions schedules in March and August. If you want to keep up on what is happening and get links to online fun, just call or email Bill and give him your email address. He never sells your address, so don't worry. Almost 200 subscribers already get the Monthly Bill eNews already.

Bill's Buyers & Sellers

Ayre/Rhinehart Bay's Transaction Sales Leader Since 2011

- 2816 S Monroe, SOLD!, \$189,900
- 2704 S Westgate, SOLD! \$137,600
- 1809 Fremont, SOLD! \$83,900
- 1008 S Farragut, SOLD! \$59,900
- 819 S Jackson, SOLD! \$52,500
- 604 Nurmi Ct., Pending, \$179,900
- 1720 6th, Pending in 8 days, \$164,900
- 1001 Germania, Pending, \$118,800
- 2349 Bay Woods, Pending, \$93,900
- 1008 N Chilson, Pending, \$34,900
- 1314 McKinley, New Listing, \$129,900
- 1807 Michigan, New Listing, \$119,900
- 2142 Center Ave., \$128,900
- 815 E. Midland St., \$198,000
- 1009 S Sherman, \$59,900
- 0 S Carter Rd. Lot, \$50,000
- 0 Midland Rd., Lot, \$28,800
- Scheurmann Rd. lot, \$29,900
- Court Street lot, \$18,300

Buyer Contracts:

- 1109 N Dean, SOLD! \$39,900
- 6258 Greenview Pl., Pending, \$74,900
- 304 Marsac, Pending, \$47,500