



A Dream Deferred?

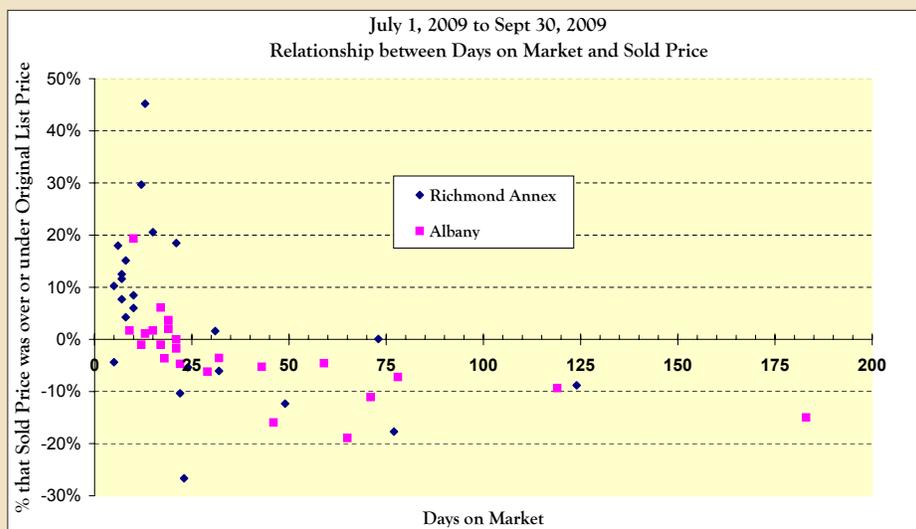
Many of us have dreams of moving to a new home and improving our lives. Young families sometimes feel cramped, or wish they were in a better school district. Empty nesters long for less maintenance and the opportunity to travel, and still have space for visiting family. It's difficult to make a big change and there are a lot of details to work out, numbers to crunch. You're probably thinking that since this is a newsletter from a real estate company, our advice would be to just go for it. Put your house on the market and just see what you can get! Actually, this would be the last thing we would suggest.

It is our goal to help you find out if the nuts and bolts of your dream will actually work. Can you really get what you need from the sale of your house? Is what you're looking for available in your price range? We want to make sure that what you're planning can be accomplished, and if not, see if there is another way. We are problem solvers. We can connect you with decent mortgage brokers who aren't the crooks you've been reading about in the papers; we can get bids on painting and landscaping that will maximize the value of your house. But the one thing we can't do is make your house worth more than the market will bear.

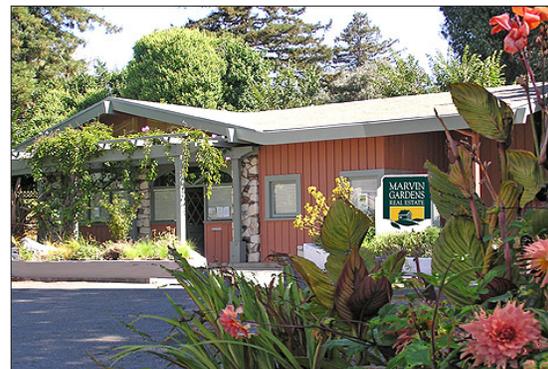
Overpricing the house to try to get more money backfires every time. We have to be very realistic, especially in this challenging market, about the list price of your home. It must be based on comparable sales, location, the market, and the condition. The list price should not be based on what a seller hopes they can get.

To illustrate the importance of pricing, we analyzed data of sold homes in two different but interesting housing markets, Albany and Richmond Annex from July 1, 2009 to September 30, 2009. The graph shows what we as realtors experience every day. When a property sells within 25 days of coming on the market, it has the greatest opportunity to get at or above the original asking price. When it lingers on the market, the property typically loses value. How do you get your house to sell quickly? Get the house looking its best and price it reasonably.

A well-presented home priced fairly will sell quickly in a decent market. An overpriced house is nobody's dream.



Marvin Gardens ~ Hopkins Street!



Marvin Gardens Real Estate is pleased to announce that we have recently opened a new office in North Berkeley at the corner of Hopkins Street and Monterey Avenue, diagonally across from the Monterey Market. The building was once "The Flying 'A'" gas station, and was first converted to office space in the late 1970's. We have remodeled the space, repaved the parking lot, and reconfigured the gardens! By opening up the original vaulted metal ceiling, we discovered long-covered clearstory windows that let light in over what were once the car bays for the old garage. We replaced all the lighting with new "smart lights" to work towards the Green Business certification for this office, and used recycled materials wherever possible, including wooden desks and tables made from the floors of an old bowling alley, re-used cyclone fencing, and previously used office desks and dividers.

Our goal was to enhance the appearance of the office to complement the community feel of the neighborhood, and to improve the flow of foot traffic to and from the parking lot and the local shops. We created a garden path from the sidewalk to the front of the building, including a couple of benches for the public to enjoy. Overall, the experience of remodeling this office reminded us of our recommendations to sellers when preparing a home for market. Fresh paint, light, curb appeal and plenty of flowering plants do wonders to attract both new buyers and new business. We invite you to stop by and have a tour of our new office and gardens.

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