

The Salem Leader
Educationally Speaking
10/1/07
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Timing is everything

A few months ago I was sitting at work eating lunch with a few co-workers. We were discussing matters related to property and real estate. We started to discuss mortgage payments and one of my co-workers said she pays around \$600 a month for a condo in Carmel, Indiana. I immediately interjected with, "Holy cow! I'm getting robbed!" My rent for a modest one-bedroom apartment in Fishers was costing me \$700 a month. So that afternoon I immediately contacted a Realtor based on the personal recommendation of another co-worker.

Let me set the stage a little further: I'm a 20 year old college student holding a full time job with no prior experience in real estate or mortgages. I knew that now is a "buyer's market" and it made good fiscal sense to invest in a house over my apartment. I explained this situation to my Realtor, and eventually my mortgage broker (twice, because they evidently don't see many 20 year old home buyers) to learn I could get a house in Indianapolis with a monthly payment just \$90 more than what I'm already paying in rent.

Next, my Realtor, Rachel, and I set out every Saturday morning looking for houses in the price range I designated. Most every house we looked at were "fixer-uppers". I had to calmly inform Rachel that I most certainly do not have the skill set to be a "fixer" or an "upper". This led to a change in our home buying patterns. Eventually, we came across a house on the east side of Indianapolis that was perfect for my needs: three bedrooms, two bathrooms, a deck, two-car garage and a large kitchen and living area.

I then learned that finding the house is the only hard part. Buying the house is easy – everyone around town was quick to offer me a mortgage that far exceeded my needs. Once I found the broker I trusted, we signed the papers and the mortgage was mine. Two days later, Marion County, my soon-to-be-new-home, realized they were \$65 million in the debt. So they raised property taxes. My timing was a little off on that one.

After Marion County raised property taxes, people revolted. So the Governor ordered a reassessment of all property in Marion County. But Marion County still needed cash so they decided to raise income taxes. I thought to myself, "Great. Now I'm thousands of dollars in debt to a mortgage company and Marion County wants to take more of my income." Again, my timing was a bit off.

But I decided to ride out the tax storm and while I'm at the title company waiting to sign the papers to get the property into my name, every news network in the country is reporting about lousy mortgage lenders that lend too much to low-income people and how the country is going to fall apart. I thought to myself, "Great. Now I'm destroying

the nation's economy, too." Alas, my fears subsided and I bought the house that I'm certainly capable of making payments on.

The next step is to pack up all my stuff and hire movers. Friends of mine will note that the last time I moved I neglected to start packing until the day before the movers were scheduled to show up. That almost proved disastrous, so, this time around I decided to be more proactive: I started packing a week before the movers were scheduled to show up. For once, my timing seemed perfect.

Next, after everything was packed, I was ready for the movers to show up at 8 a.m. I was going to wake up at 6:45 so I'd have time to corral my cats, pack up necessary toiletries, the shower curtain, bed sheets and a few dishes I set aside for breakfast, etc. Instead, I rolled out of bed at 7 a.m. and the movers showed up at 7:30 a.m. Again, my timing was just a little off.

The movers started hauling stuff into the back of their truck as I'm frantically attempting to package my computer equipment and last-minute items. I was throwing un-boxed items in the back of my car, along with two cats in a crate they didn't want to be in. In the end, my cats were at the bottom of a pile consisting of a lamp, two pillows and a blender.

Last, the movers followed me down the highway to the new house and started unloading my things. I then began unpacking and things are moving smoothly here at my new home. As I read today's newspaper, one story from the Indianapolis Star reads: "Reassessment shows little change in 75% of [Marion] county's property taxes." Again, my timing seems a little off.