

# Keylon4Homes.com News & Notes

April 2011



Linda G. Keylon, CRS,  
Managing Broker

Coldwell Banker Danforth Assoc.

2111 N. Northgate Way #101

Seattle, WA 98133

206-718-8244

[lindakeylon@gmail.com](mailto:lindakeylon@gmail.com)

[www.Keylon4Homes.com](http://www.Keylon4Homes.com)



## Top 5 Home Improvement Projects Based on Average Cost and Return on Investment

[1]RIS MEDIA, January 20, 2011— HomeGain.com, a website to offering Web-based, free instant home values, announced that it has released the results

of its nationwide home improvement and home staging Home Sale Maximizer survey. HomeGain surveyed nearly 600 real estate professionals nationwide and configured a list of the top 10 do-it-yourself home improvements that cost under \$5,000 and benefit sellers most when they sell their homes.

According to the HomeGain survey, the top five home improvements that real estate professionals recommend to home sellers based on average cost and return on investment (from highest to lowest ROI) are:

1. Cleaning and de-cluttering – (\$290 cost / \$1,990 price increase / 586% ROI)
2. Lightening and brightening – (\$375 cost / \$1,550 price increase / 313% ROI)
3. Home staging – (\$550 cost / \$2,194 price increase / 299% ROI)
4. Landscaping – (\$540 cost / \$1,932 price increase / 258% ROI)
5. Repairing electrical or plumbing – (\$535 cost / \$1,505 price increase / 181% ROI)

Cleaning and de-cluttering continues to rank as the top suggested home improvement (since the survey was originally conducted in 2000), recommended by 99% of real estate professionals, costing less than \$300 and returning a value of nearly \$2,000 to the home's sale price, or a 586% return on investment. "Sellers need to prepare their homes for sale before putting them on the market," said Louis Cammarosano, General Manager at HomeGain. "Homes that have initial appeal have a better shot at selling faster and closer to the asking price than homes rushed to the market with no improvements."

Rounding out the top 10 low cost, do-it-yourself home improvements includes: updating electrical systems and/or plumbing, updating the kitchen and bathrooms, replacing or shampooing carpets, painting interior walls, repairing damaged floors, and painting the outside of the home.

The home improvement projects with the highest price increases to a home's resale value are updating the kitchen (\$1,265 cost / \$3,435 price increase), followed by painting the outside of the home (\$1,467 cost / \$2,222 price increase) and home staging (\$550 cost / \$2,194 price increase).

In this Issue:

- Top 5 Home Improvement Projects
- New blog/website
- Seattle Sweet Streets
- Pending Home Sales Rise
- Class schedule
- Houses we've helped clients buy or list

### Sweet Streets — Seattle's 11 Best Neighborhoods

Seattle's most livable, walkable destination neighborhoods. Plus, what it costs to move in now and nearby schools

Once again, Seattle Magazine has come out with their list of the Best Neighborhoods in Seattle - rated so because of their walkability, access to amenities and services, "cool" factor, etc. My neighborhood, stodgy old Magnolia, doesn't make the list. Check out the article to see if yours does—I have a link on my blog, or you can go directly to

<http://seattlemag.com/article/guides/neighborhoods/sweet-streets-seattles-11-best-neighborhoods>



## I've Updated My Website and Added a Blog

I've updated my website and added more functions—you can search for houses, see my listings, get neighborhood and school info, register for a homebuyer class, connect with a lender, and read my new blog where I'm posting items of interest weekly. Check it out at:

[www.Keylon4Homes.com/blog](http://www.Keylon4Homes.com/blog)

## February Pending Home Sales Rise

(NAR, Washington, March 28, 2011)

Pending home sales increased in February but with notable regional variations, according to the National Association of Realtors. The Pending Home Sales Index\*, a forward-looking indicator, rose 2.1% to 90.8, based on contracts signed in February, from 88.9 in January. The index is 8.2% below the 98.9 recorded in February 2010. The data reflects contracts and not closings, which normally occur with a lag time of one or two months.

Lawrence Yun, NAR chief economist, says it's important to look at the broader trend. "Month-to-month movements can be instructive, but in this uneven recovery it's important to look at the longer term performance," he said. "Pending home sales have trended up very nicely since bottoming out last June, even with periodic monthly declines. Contract activity is now 20% above the low point immediately following expiration of the home buyer tax credit."

Yun notes there could have been some weather impact in the February data. "All of the regions saw gains except for the Northeast, where unusually bad weather may have curtailed some shopping and contract activity." The PHSI in the Northeast fell 10.9% to 65.5 in February and is 18.4% below a year ago. In the Midwest the index rose 4.0% in February to 81.1 but is 15.9% below February 2010. Pending home sales in the South increased 2.7% to an index of 100.3 but are 5.3% below a year ago. In the West the index rose 7.0% to 105.6 and is 0.6% higher than February 2010.

"We may not see notable gains in existing-home sales in the near term, but they're expected to rise 5 to 10 percent this year with the economic recovery, job creation and excellent affordability conditions providing confidence to buyers who've been on the sidelines," Yun said.

\*The Pending Home Sales Index (PHSI) is a leading indicator for the housing sector, based on pending sales of existing homes. A sale is listed as pending when the contract has been signed but the transaction has not closed, though the sale usually is finalized within one or two months of signing. The index is based on a large national sample, typically representing about 20% of transactions for existing-home sales. In developing the model for the index, it was demonstrated that the level of monthly sales-contract activity parallels the level of closed existing-home sales in the following two months. An index of 100 is equal to the average level of contract activity during 2001, which was the first year to be examined as well as the first of five consecutive record years for existing-home sales; it coincides with a level that is historically healthy. Each February, NAR Research conducts a normal review of PHSI seasonal adjustment factors and fine-tunes monthly data for the past three years.

### HAPPY EARTH DAY, APRIL 22, 2011



### Free Classes for First-time Homebuyers

Do you know someone thinking about buying their first home? Tell them about our first-time homebuyer classes, sponsored by the Washington State Housing Finance Commission. I team with Angela Cohen from Network Home Loans to cover all aspects of the home-buying process, as well as financing and down-payment assistance programs available to help first time buyers. Participants get a certificate they can use for WSHFC programs. Have them call me for more information or to register for a class.

Here's our schedule of upcoming classes:

- ◇ April 10 ◇ June 5 & 19
- ◇ May 15 ◇ July 10 & 24



Angela Mears Cohen  
(425)218-7821



Opening doors to a better life.

Houses we've helped  
our clients buy or list  
this winter/early spring



Magnolia —March



After 16 long months,  
Tyler and Trista  
FINALLY get to move in!



A great new listing  
Shoreline—March



KHM Construction—W Seattle  
project—what a view the new  
house will have!