



REVERSE MORTGAGE SPECIALIST

AMERICAN[®]
PORTFOLIO MORTGAGE

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Welcome to April!

Spring is a time when the world around us renews in many ways. Recently, Renee and I have become Grandparents again! My grandson Blaine Callan Stacy was brought into the world and clearly couldn't wait to get out and get things going. He was eight weeks premature and brought with him a good strong set of lungs! He's healthy, wealthy, and wise as they say. A true fighter, I can tell.

My son Bryant and his wife Chelsea are doing well and I can tell you that little Blaine showed up just in time for Golf season.

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How a Reverse Mortgage Helps Offset the Rising Cost of Homeownership

The cost of home-ownership has risen dramatically in recent years due to increasing property taxes, insurance premiums, maintenance expenses, and utility costs. For retirees living on a fixed income, these rising costs can significantly strain their finances.

A reverse mortgage can be a valuable financial tool that helps older homeowners access their home equity to offset these rising expenses while allowing them to remain in their homes without monthly mortgage payments. Here's how a reverse mortgage can help seniors manage the rising cost of home-ownership.

1. Eliminating Monthly Mortgage Payments

One of the biggest financial burdens for homeowners is their monthly mortgage payment. Many retirees enter retirement while still carrying a mortgage, which can take up a large portion of their income. A reverse mortgage allows homeowners aged 62 and older to convert home equity into cash while eliminating required monthly mortgage payments. This frees up a significant portion of their budget, allowing them to cover other essential expenses.

- **How It Helps:** Instead of using their limited retirement savings to make mortgage payments, seniors can redirect those funds toward property taxes, insurance, and other necessary costs.

2. Covering Property Taxes and Insurance Costs

As home values increase, so do property taxes and homeowners insurance premiums. For many seniors, these rising costs make it difficult to afford to stay in their homes. If they fail to keep up with these payments, they risk foreclosure.

- **How It Helps:** Reverse mortgage proceeds can be used to pay property taxes and insurance, ensuring that retirees can remain in their homes without financial

stress. Additionally, many reverse mortgages include protections, such as a mandatory financial assessment, to ensure borrowers have a plan to cover these costs.

3. Funding Home Repairs and Maintenance

Maintaining a home becomes more expensive over time.

Whether it's replacing a roof, upgrading an HVAC system, or making accessibility modifications, these costs can quickly add up. Retirees who live on fixed incomes often struggle to afford these necessary expenses, putting their safety and comfort at risk.

- **How It Helps:** A reverse mortgage provides a lump sum, monthly payments, or a line of credit, giving homeowners the flexibility to make repairs and modifications as needed. This allows seniors to age in place comfortably and safely.

4. Offsetting Rising Utility and Living Costs

The cost of utilities, groceries, and other daily living expenses has increased significantly due to inflation. Many retirees find themselves cutting back on essentials to make ends meet.

- **How It Helps:** Reverse mortgage funds can provide a steady stream of tax-free income, helping seniors keep up with rising costs without depleting their savings or relying on credit cards.

Conclusion

A reverse mortgage is a powerful solution for retirees struggling with the rising cost of home-ownership. By eliminating mortgage payments, covering essential expenses, funding home maintenance, and providing extra income, a reverse mortgage allows seniors to remain in their homes with financial peace of mind. When used strategically, it can be an effective tool to ensure long-term housing stability and a more comfortable retirement. Stay safe everyone, and as always, may God bless you all.

— David Stacy

Keep Your Home Safe While You Traveling This Summer.

It can be hard to relax on vacation if you're worried about what's going on back home. But a few simple measures can help properly secure your house and give you the peace of mind you need to enjoy your time away.

Hold mail and deliveries — The U.S. Postal Service makes it easy to put a temporary hold on your mail. And don't forget to suspend newspaper and other recurring deliveries, like Amazon subscriptions.

Make it look like you're home — Use automatic timers for indoor lights and maybe a TV or two. And keep some curtains open; closed curtains suggest that you're away and give criminals more cover.

Recruit a friend or neighbor — Ask a neighbor to keep an eye out for unexpected deliveries and park their car in your driveway from time to time. If you'll be gone for an extended period of time, arrange for someone to mow your lawn.

Freeze your social posts — Don't announce your travels on social media, and wait to share photos until you're back home. Burglars are increasingly scouring social networks for victims. Check your social network settings, too, so you're not auto-tagged in photos by your travel companions.

Monitor from afar — From cameras and sensors

Never announce your travel plans on social media, and wait to share photos until you're back home.

Secure your valuables — Before you go, make an indoor sweep and lock up sensitive financial statements, jewelry, laptops, and other valuables for additional security and peace of mind.

Lastly, it's a good idea to give your financial institutions a heads-up about your travel plans. A stream of out-of-state or out-of-country charges could prompt an unnecessary alert that puts a hold on your account. *Happy travels!*

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From the Inside

"How Do I Keep My Credit Score High?"

Your credit history reflects how you have managed debt in the past. And that history shows up in your credit score—a three-digit number that summarizes the information

in your credit report.

Creditors can use that score to determine creditworthiness and when setting the terms of loans, including mortgages. So maintaining a good credit score can have a big impact on your financial future.

What Affects Credit Scores?

There are multiple factors that can affect your credit score. Things like bill-payment history, credit utilization, age of credit accounts, and recent credit inquiries can all play a role. The number and types of balances you have can also impact your score.

It's important to remember there are different scoring models. *FICO*® and *VantageScore*® are two common examples. Each uses their own formula to calculate different scores, so you might see a slight difference between them.

Ultimately, each lender uses their own credit poli-

cies to determine an applicant's creditworthiness. But a good credit score can still mean you're more likely to qualify for a loan or get a better interest rate.

Steps to Maintaining Your Credit Score

A good credit score depends on using credit responsibly over time. Here are a few tips from the Consumer Financial Protection Bureau (CFPB) to help keep your score up:

1. Pay Your Bills on Time

Paying your credit card bills and other loans on time is important—especially since a history of late or missed payments could cause a dip in your credit score. If you're concerned about missing a due date, features like automatic bill pay can help you stay on top of your account payments.

2. Stay Below Your Credit Limit

Try to keep your credit utilization ratio low by not using up all of your available credit. According to the CFPB, experts recommend keeping your credit utilization below 30% of your available credit.

3. Maintain Credit History With Older Credit Cards

Account history is another factor in your credit score. So the longer you show good credit habits, the better it could be for your score. Closing a credit card account can increase your credit utilization rate, since it reduces the amount of credit you have available. Plus, depending on the age of the account, it could reduce the length of your credit history. And both these factors could lower your score.

4. Check Your Credit Reports for Errors

Proactively checking your credit report for errors periodically is another way to help maintain a good score. You may be doing everything right, but others may not. And errors can potentially hurt your credit scores.

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The Contractors Corner

Helpful home owner's tips and tricks you should know.

MOLD - IT CAN BE HARMFUL IF YOU LIVE IN A HOUSE WITH IT!

As the winter months have passed, and spring and warmer weather are upon us, there's a chance that mold has made its way into the home so, if you've spotted mold, here's a few things you can do with white vinegar.



Yes, white vinegar can be used to kill mold, as its acidic nature effectively combats a significant portion of mold species, making it a suitable option for cleaning moldy surfaces in your home, but it's important to use it undiluted and let it sit on the mold for at least an hour before wiping clean; always wear protective gear when dealing with mold and be aware that vinegar may damage certain surfaces like stone countertops or wooden floors. White vinegar is incredibly inexpensive and is good for many cleaning tasks aside from mold.

Key points about using white vinegar for mold:

Effectiveness: White vinegar can kill around 82% of common mold types.

Application: Spray undiluted white vinegar directly onto the moldy area using a spray bottle.

Contact time: Allow the vinegar to sit on the mold for at least an hour without scrubbing or rinsing.

Protective gear: Wear gloves, mask, and goggles when handling mold and vinegar.

Surface considerations: Check if the surface can tolerate vinegar before using it, as it can damage certain materials like natural stone.

Some home improvement and repairs are best handled by a qualified and licensed professional. Please seek professional advice before attempting

How to Get Your Home In Top Showing Shape Fast!

It's the call every home seller loves to hate: Your listing agent calls to say they've got a hot prospect in her office, and wants to know if she can bring them by *today!* Of course you shouldn't refuse, but your home looks unsettled. This is hardly the first impression you want to give buyers, right?

While you may not have time to clean your home from roof to basement, there are some easy ways to improve its appeal in record time. Try a few of these tactics to help whip your home into top showing shape by the time the buyers pull up to the house.

Clear counters

The kitchen is key. Remove everything from the countertops except for the appliances and maybe a fruit bowl. A side benefit of this activity? Your bare countertops will appear bigger. This is critical for potential buyers—who may want to imagine baking cookies in your (now very organized) kitchen with their kids. Keep a basket handy and swipe everything into it—bills, catalogs, kids' art projects, etc. *Done!*

Let in the light

There's a reason phrases such as "lots of light," "sun-drenched," and "huge windows" pepper listings: Dimly lit homes feel small, dirty, and depressing. So, take 10 seconds to maximize light by opening all drapes and shades wide, which not only lets in the sunshine, but also shows off your lawn, trees, and/or flowers outside. If it's dark out, do the next best thing: Turn on every single light in your home. Everyone wants to walk into a house that's well-lit, so if you don't have natural light, pull out a couple of lamps from the closet and plug them in.

Stash stuff under the bed

Many home sellers make the mistake of stashing

things they want to quickly hide in their closet. *Bad idea:* Any homebuyers worth their salt are going to check out your closets, and the more you store in there, the more cramped and small they will appear. So what's a better alternative? Under your bed. Few will stoop so low as to check under this furniture, so feel free to quickly stash clutter there.

Purge pets

We all love our pets, but some people have very different tolerances. You can't exactly drive the cat to the kennel every time you get one of these be-there-in-five-minutes calls, but you can eliminate most signs of your pet. For starters, scrape out stinky wet food from your pet's bowl, toss toys in a basket or drawer, and stash the pet bed in a closet (or under the bed!). Don't bother dragging out your heavy vacuum; instead, grab the hand-held version and suck up dry kibble as well as tufts of hair on the kitchen floor and couch cushions.

Check the bath

You don't have time to re-glaze the tub or scour grout (but definitely do these at another time). What you should do is make a fast pass over the faucet and sink with a sponge and disinfectant and swab the toilet with a squirt of cleaner. A dirty bathroom will send a buyer running in the other direction. Let's be honest: No one wants to visualize a stranger going through their hygiene routine, let alone witness any evidence.

Straighten up

There's something to be said for right angles, so create them in your wake as you zip through the

living and dining rooms. Push chairs in, stack magazines carefully, and fluff up throw pillows. Spritz a bit of furniture polish on a rag and quickly run it over any wooden furniture surfaces.

Depersonalize

What's the harm in having a few family photos up, or artwork from your kids on the fridge? Such

personal touches make it clear to homebuyers that this home is *yours*, not (potentially) *theirs*. Prospective homebuyers need to envision themselves in the space, but this can be difficult to do if the home is unkempt or

too personalized by the current owner. So take a moment to stash these items in a drawer.

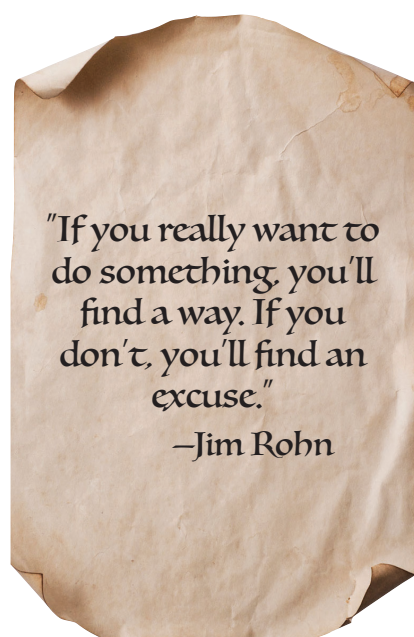
Banish bad smells

No matter how great your home looks, it will all be for naught if your home has some kind of smell, whether that's a whiff of wet dog or the lingering odors of lunch or last night's fish dinner. So whether or not you suspect your home is haunted by a slight funk—it's hard to tell if you're already in it—play it safe and open all the windows, turn on the vents, and light a scented candle. Or at the very least, splash some cleaning fluid in the sinks for that just-cleaned smell.

Get out, now!

There's one last thing you need to clear from the premises: *yourself!* As much as you may think it's helpful to hang around to answer questions or explain the great features of your home, now is the time to let your beautiful home speak for itself.

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AFI's Top 25 Movies of All Time

At #1 **Citizen Kane** is frequently cited as the greatest film ever made. For 40 years (*five decennial polls: 1962, 1972, 1982, 1992 and 2002*), it stood at number one in the British Film Institute's Sight & Sound decennial poll of critics, and it topped the **American Film Institute's** 100 Years ... 100 Movies list in 1998, as well as its 2007 update. The film was nominated for Academy Awards in nine categories and it won for Best Writing (Original Screenplay) by Mankiewicz and Welles.

Citizen Kane is praised for Gregg Toland's cinematography, Robert Wise's editing, Bernard Herrmann's score and its narrative structure, all of which have been considered innovative and precedent-setting.

The quasi-biographical film examines the life and legacy of Charles Foster Kane, played by Welles, a composite character based on American media barons William Randolph Hearst and Joseph Pulitzer, Chicago tycoons Samuel Insull and Harold McCormick, as well as aspects of the screenwriters' own lives. Upon its release, Hearst prohibited any mention of the film in his newspapers.

****Editors Note:** The Top Grossing Film of All Time is still - Avatar as of this writing at \$2,923,710,708.



The American Film Institute (AFI) is an American nonprofit film organization that educates filmmakers and honors the heritage of the motion picture arts in the United States.

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We're so happy to have this new addition to the family!

April means, golf season is in full swing and it's time for the upcoming Masters in Augusta. As you know, I'm a big Masters fan, and it's truly God's greatest golf tournament and the prettiest place on Earth. I hope to make it at least for one day this year, catch a practice round and enjoy the beautiful surroundings of the course, my fingers are crossed.

I have a good friend who's a golf pro who will call me as he has many times at the last minute if he can get me a ticket. Since I'm 3 hours away from Augusta's front door, I'll be on my way if I get the call! So here's hoping for that call.

I also wanted to let you know that I have started working with a new company, American Portfolio Mortgage. A larger company with much more to offer for clients. It was an opportunity that offered better options, better pricing, and the way the department is built, it's giving me far more flexibility to produce the best outcomes overall. Newfed has

been very good to me as well as all of my clients, however, I felt it was time to offer more, and American Portfolio Mortgage was in my opinion, the right move to make, at the right time.



The Masters - A Course Like No Other!

Now's the time to get out there and enjoy some of this wonderful spring weather.

If you need any insights on reverse mortgages or the state of the financial environment in general, call me; I'm always here to help.

— David

David Stacy

"Mortgages for every stage of your life."

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