



Your South Loop Neighbor and Chicago Real Estate Specialist



Happy February!

I hope you enjoyed Presidents Day Weekend Holiday and Valentine's Day.

Chicago magazine has an article this month basically concluding that Chicagoans just aren't that romantic. Is this true? It might be too late to make Molly's cake for Valentines Day this year, but it is not too early to start for next year. There are a lot of steps, but well worth it.

I am excited that Terry Griffin has joined us this month in our *Client's Corner*. I dream of the day that I can give Terry a blank check and let her go to town on my own home. If you are in need of a talented and professional interior architect, your search is over!

In *Market Trends* I compare sales of January 2010 to January of 2009 for the South Loop and the West Loop. The good news is that homes continue to sell, but at a lower price over last year.

February in Chicago doesn't have to be all bad. There is still some fun to be had, as you will see in *Surviving Febuary in Chicago*.

As you'll notice, it is staying lighter longer each day. There is hope!

Thanks for reading. See you in the neighborhood!

Terri



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Visit us on [Facebook!](#)



Single Family Home
3b/3ba
\$995,000

[21 W. 15th St.](#)
[Chicago IL 60605](#)
Take The [Tour](#)

- 2 car garage
- MBR suite w/ luxurious bath w/ heated marble floor
- Eat in kitchen w/ island & granite counters
- LR w/ FP & Bay window
- Finished basement
- Landscaped yard
- Freshly painted & new carpeting
- New hardwood floors
- New Duro Last roofing system



Single Family Home
4b/2ba + 2.5ba
\$834,000

[Chicago IL 60615](#)
[1030 E. 50th St.](#)

Market Trends

Below are the results of the sale of properties (Single Family Excluded) according to the MLS for January 2009 and January 2010 for The South Loop and The West Loop. Basically, prices are for the most part lower this year and market times are up. Short Sales and Foreclosures are higher this year, which could help explain the price reductions and increased market times .

This is good news for buyers. Lower prices, low interest rates, and buyer tax credits all make for a true Buyer's Market. Don't forget the deadline is approaching to take advantage of the [buyer tax credits](#). A signed contract by April 30th, 2010 and closing by June 30th, is required.

- Featured in *Images of America: Chicago Mansions*
- Landmark historic built by Civil War Colonel
- Veranda off both LR & DR
- Fenced yard
- 3 FPs
- Seperate studio/garage
- Built ins, leaded glass, mouldings, arched doorways
- Floors redone
- New roof
- New electric
- New windows

South Loop

	Jan. 2009	Jan. 2010	% Change
Properties Sold	52	48	-8%
Avg. Market Time	220	294	34%
Median Price	\$400,497	\$337,675	-16%
Average Price	\$461,714	\$487,945	6%

West Loop

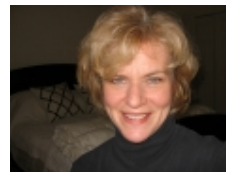
	Jan. 2009	Jan. 2010	% Change
Properties Sold	34	40	18%
Avg. Market Time	107	139	30%
Median Price	\$313,500	\$251,000	-20%
Average Price	\$345,853	\$279,467	-19%

To find the value of your home [click here](#).

Client's Corner

A New Approach to Interior Design: Griffin Design Inc.
By Terry Griffin

A drastic change was realized in Chicago's real estate boom and in the public's financial comfort level as the global economy experienced a sharp decline over the past couple of years. As the tumultuous downturn struck us with fear we watched, listened and learned that all that seemed solid and



Terry Griffin
tgriffindesign.com



Single Family Attached
2b/2ba
\$495,000

[949 W. College Pkwy](#)
[Chicago IL 60608](#)

- 2 suites w/ private bath
- Cook's kitchen
- Granite counter & SS appliances
- Grilling balcony off kitchen
- Rooftop deck w/ skyline view
- Landscaped courtyard



Single Family Attached
2b/2.5ba
\$445,000

[1338 S. State St.](#)
[Chicago IL 60605](#)

- 1 car garage + pad
- MBR w/ bath
- Eat in kitchen w/ island
- FR w/ access to private yard
- W/D
- East-West exposure
- Gated community
- New water heater
- Close to grant park, lake, loop, museum campus, and trains

dependable could easily be disassembled, lose value, and taken away. These lessons gave birth to a new way of achieving stability, or rather re-introduced the old-fashioned values and work ethic that many of us learned from the Greatest Generation.

As the owner of an interior design business, my perspective of this transition was unique. My company was established in 2003. At that time the trend to spend uninhibited amounts of money on luxury prevailed. The aristocratic feel of airy apartments, breathtaking lake views, sumptuous fabrics and European finishes demonstrated the rewards of successful business people. Following the crash of 2008, several of these unfinished projects were suddenly abandoned, resulting in losses of thousands of dollars previously invested in new properties and design time. The prosperous spendthrift group quickly disappeared. In its place a fresh mixture of people have been growing, including some of the original big spending clientele who are now choosing to make more modest investments in their existing homes.

In this new era of practical living I have been fortunate to work with new clients thanks to collaborations with Terri Buseman. As my wise neighborhood realtor, she works tirelessly to find fairly priced city homes for a variety of markets such as first time buyers, growing families or empty nesters. After finding the appropriate property in a desired price range and location her clients often choose to make updates or rearrangements in their new home. Terri has generously shared my name with many of them, knowing that I am eager to help create their desired home with the least amount of pain to their wallets and daily lives.

Gone are the days of "Budget? Who needs a budget?" My clients and I work closely to determine how to create ultimate comfort and aesthetic pleasure at a great value. Armed with training from various architectural firms, including Booth/Hansen and Scott Himmel, I provide all the necessary drawings and details for a complete interior architectural build-out, while my dependable group of contractors and tradesmen are very skilled yet sensitive to our clients' budgetary constraints.

The irresistible draw to the beauty of artfully arranged homes with fine furnishings, cabinetry and finishes is undeniable. My classic approach to space planning is guided by experience and an awareness of my clients' desires and lifestyles. The most successful interiors offer a glimpse of the past, juxtaposing different eras and styles, they are never dull and predictable. The overall composition mirrors the personality and interests of the life within.

Once my clients and I have finished designing the heart of the home—the kitchen, baths and living room—we slowly work together to create their intimate vision of quiet elegance and sweet life. By dressing the home in the best furniture for the price, often by mixing retail with vintage or antique and finishing the decor with paintings, sculpture, photographs, books and other treasured objects we create the soothing, calm home they have been waiting for.

To see samples of Terry Griffin's design work, please visit tgriffindesign.com.



Single Family Attached
1b/1ba
\$237,000

[1040 W. Adams St.](#)
[Chicago IL 60607](#)

- Parking addnl \$15K - spot stands alone, no other cars on either side!
- MBR w/ organized walk-in closet
- Granite island & maple cabinets
- South facing loft w/ exposed brick & huge windows
- Bright living area
- Angled HW floor
- Private courtyard building
- 12 FT timber ceilings
- W/D
- Party RM, movie, exercise, & business cntr



Residential Rental
3b/2.5 ba
\$2,800

[3117 A N. Orchard St.](#)
[Chicago IL 60657](#)

- Duplex in East Lakeview
- Garage parking
- New appliances
- FP & balcony



Surviving February in Chicago

February in Chicago, the holidays are over, the wind is strong, and everyone is dreaming of spring. It's no secret February is one of the least anticipated months in the year. The good news is that it is no secret. To brighten the winter blues there are a number of great events and deals this month for Chicagoans to take advantage of. Here are some highlights:

Chinese Opera
First Place
Winner of
Snow Days
Chicago

- 2/1-28 [ComEd presents Free February](#) at the Art Institute of Chicago
- 2/5-28 [Chicago Winter Dance: Ice Skating](#) in Millenium Park
- 2/6-28 [Chicago Winter Dance: Dancing](#) in Millenium Park
- 2/11-14 [The 9th Annual Chicago International Salsa Congress](#) at the Westin O'Hare
- 2/12-21 [Chicago Auto Show](#) at McCormick Place
- 2/20-3/6 [Chicago Restaurant Week](#)
- 2/20-3/17 [The Damnation of Faust](#) at the Lyric Opera
- 2/21-4/25 [The Twins Would Like to Say](#) at the Steppenwolf
- 2/26 [Ashaki Black History Month Celebration](#) in Washington Park
- 2/26-28 [2010 International Kennel Club Cluster of Dog Shows](#) at various locations.
- 2/27 [Chicago Maritime Festival](#) at the Chicago History Museum

Monthly Recipe

By Molly Heyen

My sister made this recipe for our family in 1990 when it first appeared in *Bon Appétit*. I loved it so much that I tried it the next year and it has become a Valentine's Day staple in my own house ever since. My husband likes it so much that I even made it for our wedding!

You will need a heart shaped cake pan for this recipe. They are usually very easy to find this time of year. Sur la Table tends to have them year round, as does the internet.



This recipe is for *The Ultimate Valentine Cake* from *Bon Appétit*, February 1990.

Chocolate Heart Lid

3 ounces imported white chocolate (such as Lindt or Tobler), chopped
3 ounces bittersweet (not unsweetened) or semisweet chocolate, chopped

Cake

9 ounces imported white chocolate (such as Lindt or Tobler), chopped
5 large eggs, separated, room temperature
1/2 cup plus 1 tablespoon sugar
1 tablespoon framboise liqueur or Grand Marnier
1 teaspoon vanilla extract
6 tablespoons (3/4 stick) unsalted butter, melted, warm
3/4 cup cake flour

Icing

12 ounces bittersweet (not unsweetened) or semisweet chocolate, chopped

- MB w/ private bath & jacuzzi tub
- Windows on all four sides
- Rooftop deck
- Close to shopping, lake, & restaurants

NEW TO MARKET

Pictures Coming Soon !!

Single Family Attached
4b/3.1 Ba
\$847,500
57 W. 15th Unit D
Chicago IL 60605

- 2 car garage + 2 car pad for parking
- MBR suite w/ 2 walk-in closets
- Gourmet kitchen w/ 6 burner Wolf oven, Bosch dishwasher, Sub Zero fridge, and pull out drawers
- Bath on every level
- Hardwood floor throughout
- 3 balconies & private fenced in yard overlooking landscaped courtyard
- Flat screen and wine cooler stay

Office Condo
1500 sq/ft
\$325,000
531 S. Plymouth Ct.
Unit 103
Chicago IL 60605

- Base of Mergenthaler building
- 4 offices, conference

1 1/4 cups (2 1/2 sticks) unsalted butter
 3 tablespoon light corn syrup
 3 tablespoons framboise liqueur or Grand Marnier

Assembly

1 1-pint basket strawberries, hulled and halved
 1 1/2-pint basket raspberries
 1 1-pint basket strawberries with stems, halved through stem end (stems left intact)

Berry Compote

2 1-pint baskets strawberries, hulled and sliced
 3 tablespoons sugar
 2 tablespoons framboise liqueur or Grand Marnier
 2 1/2-pint baskets raspberries

To make heart lid:

Cut heart-shaped piece of waxed paper about 4 inches larger than 8x2-inch bottomless heart-shaped cake pan (this can be done just as well in a pan with sides). Place on cookie sheet. Lightly oil inside of heart pan with vegetable oil. Butter outside of pan. Place heart pan atop paper on cookie sheet. Press waxed paper up onto outside of buttered pan to adhere, to prevent chocolate from leaking out. Place white chocolate in bowl. Set bowl over saucepan of simmering water; stir until smooth. Remove from over water. Place bittersweet chocolate in another bowl. Set bowl over saucepan of simmering water; stir until smooth. Remove from over water.

Drop white chocolate by spoonfuls inside heart, spacing apart and allowing some to touch inner edge of pan. Drop bittersweet chocolate by spoonfuls into spaces. Move heart pan gently from side to side to distribute chocolate evenly and fill in heart completely. Swirl mixtures together using tip of knife. Holding cake pan to cookie sheet with hands, tap sheet firmly on counter to flatten chocolate. Freeze until firm, about 20 minutes.

Run small sharp knife around outside of pan to loosen chocolate. Remove pan. Refrigerate chocolate lid until ready to use. (Can be prepared 1 week ahead. Cover with plastic wrap.)

To make cake:

Preheat oven to 350°F. Butter and flour 8x2-inch bottomless heart-shaped cake pan (This will be a layered cake, so you might want to use two pans from the start). Cut heart-shaped piece of heavy-duty foil 4 inches larger than heart cake pan. Butter and flour foil. Place on heavy large cookie sheet or double-stacked cookie sheets. Center heart pan on foil. Wrap foil around outsides of pan, folding, pressing and crimping firmly to adhere, to batter from leaking out. Place white chocolate in bowl. Set bowl over sauce-pan of simmering water; stir until smooth. Remove from over water.

Using electric mixer, beat yolks and 1/2 cup sugar in large bowl until pale yellow and slowly dissolving ribbon forms when beaters are lifted, about 3 minutes. Beat in framboise and vanilla, then butter. Add melted chocolate and beat until just combined.

Using electric mixer fitted with clean dry beaters, beat whites in large bowl to soft peaks. Gradually add remaining 1 tablespoon sugar and beat until just stiff. Mix flour into chocolate mixture (batter will be very thick). Stir in 1/4 of whites to lighten.

Gradually fold in remaining whites. Pour batter into prepared pan. Bake 45 minutes. Cover top with foil. Bake until tip of small knife inserted into center of cake comes out clean, about 20 minutes (cake will be well browned). Cool in pan on rack.

To make icing:

Melt chocolate, butter and corn syrup in heavy medium saucepan over low heat, stirring until smooth. Stir in framboise. Cool icing

room, reception area and lofted common room

- Access to private and common area deck and outdoor space
- Exposed brick, high ceilings, and wood floors
- Bright space
- Convenient to public transportation and major expressways
- Walk to the Loop, Lake, and Nightlife

until firm enough to spread, about 2 hours.

Run small sharp knife around cake pan sides to loosen. Cut cake into 2 layers using serrated knife. Place bottom cake layer on platter cut side up. Spread 2/3 cup icing over. Cover with top cake layer cut side down. Spread all but 1/2 cup icing over top and sides of cake. Refrigerate cake until icing is set, about 1 hour. (Can be prepared 1 day ahead. Cover and refrigerate cake and remaining icing separately. Rewarm icing over very low heat until just spreadable before continuing with recipe.)

To assemble:

Mound some hulled strawberries and raspberries on right half of heart cake. Position lid atop berries at angle, moving berries around so that left edge of lid rests on left edge of cake. Tuck half of strawberries with stems, stems facing out, between cake and lid. Spread remaining icing over sides of cake where lid is attached, smoothing with spatula to create boxlike appearance. Reserve remaining strawberries and raspberries for garnish. Refrigerate cake until icing is set, about 1 hour. (Can be assembled 12 hours ahead.)

To make Berry Compote:

Toss two 1-pint baskets strawberries with sugar and framboise in large bowl. Chill at least 1 hour or up to 6 hours. Add raspberries and toss gently.

Arrange reserved berries on platter around cake. Serve cake, spooning compote over each piece.

Variations

This is a very involved cake. If you don't have enough time, but would like to achieve the same presentation simply make a box chocolate cake and top it with the fruit and chocolate lid.

Chocolate dipped strawberries make this a true show stopper dessert.

The original recipe suggests removing the chocolate lid before serving and breaking off pieces to nibble on with the cake. I like to cut right into it and leave it on the pieces of cake. Either way works.

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