HOMETOWN

JOURNAL

LOCAL INSIGHT. LOCAL LIVING.

NOVEMBER 2026 · BRICK · POINT PLEASANT · OCEAN AND MONMOUTH COUNTY



THE NOVEMBER ISSUE

Grateful for Local

INSIDE THIS ISSUE

What October told us about the winter market

Two recipes for your Thanksgiving table

The veteran food drive I run every year

Dennis Mark Interdonato

THE DENNIS MARK GROUP · KELLER WILLIAMS REALTY OCEAN LIVING

(732) 598-2672 · DENNISMARKREALESTATE.COM

Dennis Mark Real Estate | Endorsed by KW Ocean Living, Keller Williams Realty

Why this shows up every month.

I grew up around here, and I still live here. So when somebody stops me at a Chamber event or in the grocery store, the question is almost never "Should I sell?" It's "What's going on with the market?" or "What's my house worth?" or "Who do you use for gutters?"

That's what Hometown Journal is. The answers to those questions, once a month, in one place.

Before I did this full time, I worked for the township sewer department and sold houses on the side. I was good at the deals. What took me longer to learn is that the deals are the smallest part of this job. The bigger part is being the person people turn to. I'd rather earn that than ask for it.

Inside this issue: what the numbers in Ocean and Monmouth County did in October, five jobs to knock out before the first freeze, my favorite Saturday in Brick, how half the Shore used to be Brick, two local businesses worth knowing, two recipes for your Thanksgiving table, and the food drive I run every year for our veterans.

None of it is a sales pitch. Most of you aren't moving, and that's fine. But when a question comes up, at a barbecue, over the fence, or at 11 at night, you know where to find a straight answer. Call me. No appointment attached.





DENNIS MARK INTERDONATO

Dennis Mark Interdonato

THE DENNIS MARK GROUP · KELLER WILLIAMS REALTY OCEAN LIVING · KELLER WILLIAMS REALTY OCEAN LIVING, 1513 RICHMOND AVE, POINT PLEASANT, NJ 08742 · 44 PRINCETON AVE, SUITES C AND D, BRICK, NJ 08724 · EQUAL HOUSING OPPORTUNITY

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READ IT ONLINE

Every issue lives at dennismarkrealestate.com, where the links in these pages are live. Questions about anything you read here go straight to (732) 598-2672.

What October Told Us About the Winter Market

Three numbers that matter if you might move in the next year.

Here's what's happening. We're heading into the slowest stretch of the year. Fewer buyers are out looking, and rates have been jumping around week to week. Put those together and a lot of people around here have decided to sit tight until spring.

What I see is different. The buyers still shopping in November and December are not window shopping. They've already lost a house or two. Their lender already has their file. They're ready to move, and there are fewer of them chasing each home.

Here's what October actually looked like across Ocean and Monmouth County. 1,502 homes sold, about the same as last October. The typical home sold for $618,500, up about 10% from a year ago. And the typical home spent about three and a half weeks on the market. The full numbers, and where they come from, are on the next page.

Sellers feel the opposite. The phone rings less after Halloween, and it's easy to read a quiet week as a bad market. Those are not the same thing. Fewer showings from serious buyers can sell a house faster, and for more, than a crowded spring open house full of people who are eight months away from being ready.

Winter is also less forgiving. There's less traffic to cover up a mistake. A price set on last spring's sales, photos taken on a gray afternoon, or one obvious repair left undone will sit while the better-prepared house down the street sells. The market is the market. It just gets picky about who it rewards.

Skip the national headlines. They average a Manhattan condo with a farmhouse in Ohio and describe neither one. What matters is your street, your price range, and the last few homes that actually closed near you.

If you're even thinking about a move next year, the useful question isn't "Is it a good market?" It's "What would my house do in the next 60 days?" I can answer that one with real numbers.

Get your market evaluation **calendly.com/dennismark/1-1-w-dennis-mark**

BY THE NUMBERS

Four Figures for Ocean and Monmouth

The local picture, one number at a time.

$618,500

MEDIAN SALE PRICE, OCTOBER 2026

Flexmls, 1,502 sales closed 10/01 to 10/31/2026. October 2025: $560,000.

24.5

MEDIAN DAYS ON MARKET

Same 1,502 October 2026 sales. October 2025: 24 days.

3.0

MONTHS OF INVENTORY

4,489 homes for sale on 11/15/2026 divided by 1,502 October sales.

100%

SALE PRICE AS A PERCENT OF LIST PRICE

Median of the same 1,502 sales, against the final asking price. Against the first asking price: 98.6%.

Source: Flexmls, Ocean and Monmouth County residential sales (houses, condos and adult communities), October 2026. Based on information from the MOREMLS for the period 10/01/2026 through 10/31/2026. Information deemed reliable but not guaranteed. Want the numbers for your own street? Those are the ones that actually matter.

More local numbers in the Brick Town Guide **online.fliphtml5.com/btydv/gyce/**

THE LIST

Five Jobs to Do Before the First Freeze

None of them take a weekend. All of them cost less now than in January.

01

Shut off and drain the outdoor shower and hose spigots

The Shore's favorite summer luxury is also a classic frozen pipe. Close the valve inside, open the tap outside, and let it drain. Ten minutes.

02

Book the furnace or boiler service now

In November it's an appointment. In January it's an emergency call, at emergency prices, after two cold nights.

03

Clear the gutters after the last leaves drop

Clogged gutters send melting snow toward the foundation and under the shingles. Do it once the trees are bare, not before.

04

Test the sump pump and run the generator

Nor'easter season is coming. Pour a bucket of water in the pit and make sure the pump kicks on. Run the generator for a few minutes so you're not finding out during a storm.

05

Know what your home is worth today

Even if you're staying put. A refinance, a remodel, or a second home all start with that one number. Ask me and I'll run it.

Meet local pros on Hometown Hustle **dennismarkrealestate.com/podcast**



AI PHOTO ILLUSTRATION

Why I Run a Food Drive Every Year

October 11 through December 20. Here's how to help our local veterans.

It's more of a passion project than anything. It keeps me connected to my veteran roots.

DENNIS MARK INTERDONATO

When I went full time in real estate, one of the first things I did had nothing to do with selling houses. I started an annual Veteran Food Pantry Drive.

It benefits the Bill Reeves Food Pantry in Forked River, run through Vetwork. Vetwork helps veterans in a lot of parts of their lives, and the pantry is one of the most direct. Food on the table for people who served.

I served in the Army. This drive keeps me connected to my veteran roots. It's more of a passion project than anything, and I've done it every year since I started. I'm going to keep doing it.

This year's drive runs October 11 through December 20. Here's how to help:

What to bring: canned food, non-perishables, or grocery gift cards.

- **Where:** Keller Williams Ocean Living, 1513 Richmond Ave, Point Pleasant.
- **Can't make it?** Text me at (732) 598-2672 and I'll come pick it up.

Veterans Day was November 11, but a thank-you never needs a date. If you know a veteran, tell them. If you want to do one more thing, bring a bag to the drive. Think about what you'd want in your own pantry and start there.

Nothing about this is marketing. It's what being local means to me: pulling the people around me into something that matters. Thank you to my partners on this year's drive, NUYU Fitness, Vetwork and the Righteous Few, and to every neighbor who has dropped off a bag in years past. You're the reason it works.

What Actually Moves Your Home's Value at the Shore

Four things change the number. The rest is decoration.

Most of what gets called "adding value" doesn't. A kitchen done in somebody else's taste. A pool on a street where nobody else has one. A garage turned into a family room. It all costs real money, and a lot of it never comes back when you sell. The things that actually move the number are more boring than that, and usually cheaper.

Number one is location, and nobody can change it. Two identical houses a few blocks apart won't sell for the same price. At the Shore that gap can be bigger than anything a renovation would close. Know that before you spend money trying to make up for an address.

Number two is condition. Not updated. Maintained. A roof with records. A furnace serviced this year. Gutters that drain. No soft boards on the deck. Buyers are pricing risk, and a house that's obviously been taken care of looks like less risk before anybody opens a folder.

Number three is the layout, and whether it fits how people live now. A wall in the wrong place can cost less to move than most owners think, and do more for the price than any new backsplash.

Number four is timing, and it's the one you control. Being the third similar house on the market at the same price is a discount. Being the only one is an advantage. That's a calendar decision, and most people make it too late.

One more, because this is the Shore: have your paperwork ready. If you have an elevation certificate, flood insurance history, or records of storm repairs, find them now. Buyers ask, and a seller with answers in hand looks like a seller who took care of the house.

Thinking about a project? Ask before you spend, not after. My market evaluation shows you the real data, my read on it, and a recommended price, so you know what your house is worth today and what would actually change it.

Ask what your house is worth today **calendly.com/dennismark/1-1-w-dennis-mark**

By the time we're done, you're not going to have any questions left.

WHAT I TELL EVERY BUYER BEFORE WE LOOK AT A SINGLE HOUSE

WHY WE KEEP SAYING THIS

I spend about an hour with every buyer before we tour anything. Contracts, inspections, the appraisal, the money at closing, all of it, up front. Most people have never had anyone walk them through the whole thing before they start. A buyer who understands the process makes better decisions, and makes them faster when the right house shows up.



JEN, FOUNDER

Eat My Cupcake

A love of baking, two girls, and something of her own.

Jen started Eat My Cupcake with a love for baking, her two girls, and the wish to create something of her own.

"I've always loved being in the kitchen, trying new things, and making people smile with something as simple as a cupcake or sweet treat," she says. "What started as something I loved doing slowly turned into a business I never imagined would grow the way it has."

Today Jen makes custom orders, pops up at local events, and rolls around in EMC on Wheels, her cupcake trailer. "It's definitely not all cupcakes and sprinkles," she says. "There are long days, late nights, and plenty of craziness behind the scenes, but I truly love what I do."

One of the best parts, she says, has been the people: the friendships she's made and everyone who keeps showing up to support Eat My Cupcake. "They've made this journey even sweeter."

"I'm proud of what I've built, but even prouder knowing my girls get to watch me build it," she says. "That's what makes all the long days and late nights worth it."

WHAT THEY HANDLE

- Custom orders
- Pop-ups at local events
- EMC on Wheels, her cupcake trailer

HOW TO REACH THEM

Based in Barnegat
Serving Ocean and Monmouth counties
Call or text (908) 216-0191



EMC on Wheels, her cupcake trailer. Photo courtesy of Eat My Cupcake.

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THE LIST

Five Things to Do This November

Local, mostly free, and all worth getting off the couch for.

01 Drop a bag at the food drive

Turn back to page 7. Canned food, non-perishables and grocery gift cards all go to the Bill Reeves Food Pantry for local veterans. Drop off in Point Pleasant, or text me and I'll pick it up.

02 Walk an empty beach

November is when the Shore gives the beach back to the people who live here. No badges, no crowds, just you and the water. Island Beach State Park is open all year. Dress warmer than you think.

03 Run or walk a riverfront 5K in Brick

The River Rock 'N Run 5K starts at 9 AM on Sunday, November 22, at River Rock on Route 70 in Brick, and every dollar raised goes to Fulfill, the food bank for Monmouth and Ocean counties. Run it, walk it, or just stand at the finish and cheer.

04 Shop small on Saturday, November 28

Small Business Saturday is the Saturday after Thanksgiving. Skip the mall for one day and spend it with the shops and restaurants your neighbors own.

05 Save a night for Brick's tree lighting

Brick lights its Christmas tree outside the municipal building on Chambers Bridge Road on a weeknight in early December, with music, hot chocolate and a visit from Santa. Watch the township's page for the night, and bring the kids.

> More to do in town: the Brick Town Guide **online.fliphtml5.com/btydv/gyce/**



AI PHOTO ILLUSTRATION

Thanksgiving at the Shore

Quiet roads, a full table, and one long walk before the pie.

Every chair in the house ends up at one table, and none of them match.

Thanksgiving at the shore runs on its own clock. The summer crowds are long gone, the roads are quiet, and for one long weekend the whole town slows down.

By noon the kitchen has taken over. One person owns the turkey. Somebody else "helps" by hovering near the stuffing with a fork. Every chair in the house ends up at one table, and none of them match.

Then comes the part everybody waits for: a couple of hours when nobody checks a phone. Go around the table and say one thing you're thankful for. Somebody will roll their eyes. Do it anyway.

After dinner, take the walk. Bundle up and head for the water while the pie cools. Twenty minutes of cold salt air makes room for dessert.

New Jersey brings something of its own to the meal, too. The cranberries in your sauce may well have grown in the Pine Barrens, just inland from here, where growers flood the bogs every fall to bring in the crop. That's where the first recipe on the next page starts.

If someone on your street is spending the day alone, bring them a plate. And if you'd like to help a veteran's family this season, the food drive on page 7 is still collecting.

However your table looks this year, big and loud or small and quiet, we hope it's a good one. Happy Thanksgiving from all of us.

Two Recipes for the Table

One for the turkey, and one for after the walk.

Jersey Cranberry-Orange Sauce

Fifteen minutes on the stove, and it beats the can every time.

MAKES ABOUT 2 CUPS · 15 MINUTES

YOU'LL NEED

- 1 bag (12 oz) fresh cranberries, rinsed
- 1 cup sugar
- ½ cup orange juice
- ½ cup water
- Grated zest of 1 orange
- A pinch of salt

HOW TO MAKE IT

1. In a medium saucepan, bring the sugar, orange juice and water to a boil, stirring until the sugar dissolves.
2. Add the cranberries and salt. Simmer over medium heat, stirring now and then, until most of the berries pop, about 10 minutes.
3. Take the pan off the heat and stir in the orange zest.
4. Let it cool, then refrigerate. It thickens as it chills. Serve cold or at room temperature.

> **Make it ahead.** It keeps in the refrigerator for up to 3 days, so it's one less thing on Thursday morning.

Apple Crisp for After the Walk

Put it in the oven when you head out, and it's close to ready when you get back.

SERVES 6 TO 8 · ABOUT 1 HOUR

YOU'LL NEED

FOR THE APPLES

- 6 medium apples, a mix of tart and sweet, peeled and thinly sliced (about 2½ pounds)
- 2 tablespoons sugar
- 1 tablespoon flour
- 1 teaspoon cinnamon
- 1 tablespoon lemon juice

FOR THE TOPPING

- ¾ cup flour
- ¾ cup old-fashioned oats
- ¾ cup packed brown sugar
- ½ teaspoon cinnamon and ¼ teaspoon salt
- 1 stick (½ cup) cold butter, cut into small pieces

HOW TO MAKE IT

1. Heat the oven to 375°F. Butter a 9-inch square or 2-quart baking dish.
2. Toss the apples with the sugar, flour, cinnamon and lemon juice. Spread them in the dish.
3. In another bowl, mix the flour, oats, brown sugar, cinnamon and salt. Rub in the butter with your fingertips until it looks like coarse crumbs. Scatter it over the apples.
4. Bake 40 to 45 minutes, until the top is golden and the juices bubble at the edges. Let it rest 10 minutes. Serve warm, with vanilla ice cream if you have it.



AI PHOTO ILLUSTRATION

A Saturday in Brick

Ocean, bay and river, and you never leave town.

Most towns get one kind of water. Brick gets three.

DENNIS MARK INTERDONATO

Most towns get one kind of water. Brick gets three. Ocean beach on the barrier island, Barnegat Bay on the other side, and the Metedeconk River winding along the north end of town. That's a big part of why Brick is where I'm planting my flag.

Start early on the ocean side. Brick's beaches are quiet in November, and a cold morning walk on an empty beach is one of the best things about living at the Shore. Bring coffee. Dress warmer than you think.

Head back over the bridge to Traders Cove Marina and Park on the bay. Walk the waterfront, watch the boats come out of the water for the season, and look back at the bridge you just crossed.

In the afternoon, find the river. Windward Beach Park sits right on the water and gives you a completely different view of town from the ocean you started at.

Finish the day with an early dinner at Oolala Lasagna on Princeton Avenue, one of the newest spots in town. Lasagna is the star of the menu, so order one you'd never make at home.

That's one Saturday, three kinds of water, and you never left town. If you know someone thinking about moving here, tell them to do this before they look at a single house. The houses will still be there in the afternoon.

Half the Shore Used to Be Brick

How one township, one ironworks and one river shaped the towns we live in.

Here's a fact that wins bar trivia at the Shore. Point Pleasant, Point Pleasant Beach, Bay Head, Mantoloking and Lakewood all used to be part of Brick Township.

Brick was created on February 15, 1850, the same year New Jersey carved out Ocean County. Back then this was mostly woods, water and not much else.

The town got its name from Joseph W. Brick. He owned the Bergen Iron Works on the Metedeconk River, and in those days an ironworks was the biggest employer for miles. Iron meant jobs, jobs meant families, and families meant a town. So when it came time to name the place, they named it after the man who kept it running.

Then the town started giving itself away. Point Pleasant Beach and Bay Head split off in 1886. Lakewood followed in 1892. Mantoloking left in 1911. Point Pleasant went its own way in 1920. Every one of those towns has its own name, its own Main Street and its own personality now. But they all started on Brick's map.

That's part of why Brick is so unusual today. After all that, it still kept a piece of the barrier island and its ocean beaches, the bay side and the river. Most towns at the Shore got one kind of water. Brick held on to three.

Next time you drive over the Metedeconk, think about the ironworks that used to sit on that river and the guy whose last name ended up on every street sign in town.

Got a piece of local history I should know about? An old photo, a family story, a building that isn't there anymore? Send it my way. The best ones might end up in a future issue.

Read the Brick Town Guide **online.fliphtml5.com/btydv/gyce/**

Meet Your Lifestyle Connector

Sewer department, the Army, a podcast, and a lot of phone calls.



AI photo illustration

If you've gotten this far, you deserve to know who's behind it.

I served in the Army. Before I sold real estate full time, I worked for the township sewer department and did deals on the side, about two hours a day. Somewhere in there I figured out I liked connecting people more than I liked closing deals. I went from transactional to relational, and it changed everything about how I work.

That's where "Lifestyle Connector" comes from. It's on my business card, and it's the job I actually do. Somebody needs a plumber, a contractor, a good place for a birthday dinner, or just an answer about their house. I'd like to be the first call.

It's also why I started Hometown Hustle, a podcast that gives Jersey Shore small business owners a free platform to tell their story. And it's why this magazine exists. Most of you aren't moving. I'd still like to be useful.

IN THEIR WORDS

Hometown Hustle

MY PODCAST. A FREE PLATFORM FOR JERSEY SHORE SMALL BUSINESS OWNERS.

The Veteran Food Pantry Drive

EVERY YEAR SINCE I WENT FULL TIME. BENEFITS THE BILL REEVES FOOD PANTRY THROUGH VETWORK.

Rookie of the Year

BRICK CHAMBER OF COMMERCE, OCTOBER 2026.

Dennis Mark Interdonato is a Realtor® with The Dennis Mark Group at Keller Williams Realty Ocean Living.

Listen to Hometown Hustle **dennismarkrealestate.com/podcast**

Wonder Washers

A crew that goes home proud of the day's work.

Tom Jara has run Wonder Washers for about four years, helping homeowners and local businesses take care of their properties.

"I wanted to create jobs that keep the work interesting and give people with a strong work ethic a chance to make a good living," he says. "I want my crew to go home proud of what they did that day and still have time for their families."

Ask him for a favorite job and he won't pick one. "Every job means something different to us," he says. It might be an older couple who can't do the work themselves anymore and want someone they can trust, a family that just doesn't have the time, or someone who simply needs a hand. "I'm proud when we can take that off their plate and leave them happy with the work."

The crew walks the property before they start, protects plants and outlets, and chooses the right cleaning method for each surface. "Those little steps make a big difference," Tom says. Before exterior cleaning, he worked as an auto mechanic, and that experience "still comes in handy with all the trucks and equipment we run."

His tip for every homeowner: "Keep the pressure washer off asphalt shingles. High pressure can damage them, so use a cleaning method approved by the shingle manufacturer."

Wonder Washers works all over New Jersey, from the far north of the state down to the southeastern shore. Tom says the business is licensed, insured and bonded.



WHAT THEY HANDLE

- House washing
- Window cleaning
- Holiday lighting
- Snow removal

HOW TO REACH THEM

wonderwashersnj.com
(732) 703-2394
Instagram @wonderwashers_nj

UNPAID FEATURE. No payment was exchanged for this page. The page is built from the owner's own answers. Inclusion is not a warranty or endorsement. Check licensing, insurance and references before hiring anyone.

I can connect people, I can do good things for good people, and I can be the person that everyone turns to.

DENNIS MARK INTERDONATO, ON WHAT CHANGED WHEN HE WENT FULL TIME

WHY WE KEEP SAYING THIS

It's November, so here's the thank you. To every neighbor who called with a question, every client who trusted me with their home, and every local business owner who sat down on Hometown Hustle: thank you. You're the reason this magazine exists.

If Someone You Know Is Thinking About Moving Here

The questions newcomers actually ask, answered the way I'd answer a friend.

A few times a month somebody forwards me the same kind of message. A cousin, a coworker, a buddy from the service is thinking about moving to the Shore and wants to know what it's really like. Here's roughly what I tell them.

First question is always the commute. The answer depends less on miles than on which way you're headed at 7:30 in the morning. Two addresses the same distance out can be very different drives. Drive the real route at the real hour before you decide anything.

Second is the water. Do you want ocean, bay, river, or none of it? Each one is a different life, and a different conversation about flood zones and insurance. Ask about both on day one, not after you fall in love with a house.

Third is money, and the useful way to think about it is total cost, not purchase price. Property taxes can be very different from one town to the next. An older house has older systems. A newer one costs more up front and less for a while after. Neither is wrong. They're different bills on different schedules.

Fourth, for military families, the timeline. Orders don't wait for the market. As an earned Keller Williams Military agent, I plan around the report date first and the house second.

The last question never gets asked out loud: will I regret it? Nobody can promise that. But the people who settle in fastest pick a town before they pick a house, and spend one weekend here that isn't a house-hunting weekend.

If this sounds like someone you know, send them the town guide below, or have them call me. I answer these questions for people who haven't hired anybody, and I'm happy to.

Send them the Brick Town Guide — **online.fliphtml5.com/btydv/gyce/**

Hometown Journal

NOVEMBER 2026

Thanks for spending part of your month with me.

Dennis Mark Interdonato

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BRICK · POINT PLEASANT · OCEAN AND MONMOUTH COUNTY

Book a call with Dennis

calendly.com/dennismark/1-1-w-dennis-mark

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