

# Austin Post-Bulletin

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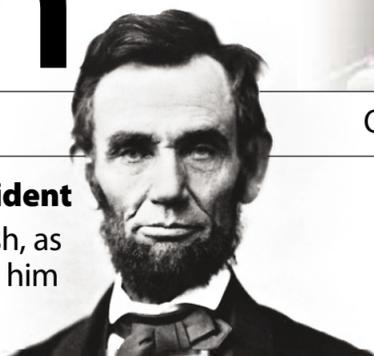
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## Despite drop, home sales continue roll

BY MIKE KLEIN  
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Austin single-family home sales dropped 23 percent in October compared to a year earlier, but they're still up 4.2 percent year-to-date.

For October, there were 30 home sales, down from 39 last year, according to newly released statistics from the Southeast Minnesota Association of Realtors. Year-to-date, there were 323 sales, up from 310 in the first 10 months of 2011.

"It feels like a stronger market," said Joe Fuhrman,

owner of Fuhrman Real Estate in Austin. "Interest rates are extremely low, and we have a good supply of homes yet."

Buyers and sellers are more optimistic, and Fuhrman's agency is selling more homes than last year, he said.

"Our numbers are up, and our average sales price is up



Fuhrman

considerably," he said, adding that foreclosures are slowing.

In October, the median sales price in Austin was \$80,000, unchanged from a year ago.

In Austin, the average days on market in October was 165, up 49 percent from a year ago, and year-to-date the average is 125 days, down 1.5 percent.

Pending sales in October were down 7 percent to 28. The housing comeback is widespread.

Rochester single-family home sales rose 36 percent in October compared to last year, and they're up a whopping 21

percent year-to-date.

"Across the area, the month of October continued to show signs of a housing comeback," said Jim Anderson, a Rochester Realtor and SEMAR MLS president. "The overall housing inventory across the region continued to drop. Prices seem to have stabilized, and overall sales of existing residential homes year-to-date have increased when compared to the same time frame in 2011."

In the Twin Cities metropolitan area, the overall median price of \$175,000 is up 14.8

percent compared with a year ago and up from the \$174,000 reported for September, according to a report from the Minneapolis Area Association of Realtors.

"Compared to a year ago, we're well ahead of where we were in median price, even though the market slows down this time of year," said Herb Tousley, a professor at the University of St. Thomas and director of its Shenehon Center for Real Estate.

Redfin, an online real estate broker, says U.S. home sales increased in October by 21.8

### October home sales

Sales: 30, down 23 percent

Year-to-date sales: 323, up 4.2 percent

Median sales price: \$80,000, unchanged

Average days on market year-to-date: 126, down 1.5 percent.

percent across 19 U.S. major housing markets.

The Associated Press contributed to this report.

## 'For all intensive purposes'

Author offers common communication issues

BY HEATHER RULE  
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The character Chandler is worried he'll never find somebody to be with, he tells Joey in an episode of the television show "Friends."

"What if I already found her, but I dumped her because she pronounces it 'supposeably'?" Chandler asks.

Joey repeats "supposeably," when the word is "supposedly."

"He couldn't understand what's wrong with that," author John Schwietz said.

That scenario was just one of the examples of common communication mistakes Twin Cities author Schwietz used as he presented his book "Irregardless...ain't a word," which he co-wrote with Patrick Hawkins. He spoke to students and community members throughout the day Wednesday at Pacelli Catholic Schools.

"The way you speak and the way you write says a lot about you," Schwietz said. "Keep that in mind."

Pacelli Vice Principal Mary Holtorf saw Schwietz speak at a retreat, so she contacted him to see how much it would cost to bring him to to speak to Pacelli students.

"He said, 'I would do it for a can of Spam,'" Holtorf said. "I got him four cans of Spam because I'm an overachiever."

Schwietz isn't an English teacher or a grammar expert. But he's been a self-declared "word nerd" for a long time. He's an attorney from St. Paul who spends his days writing and talking to people. Schwietz and Hawkins are college buddies and, a few years back, started emailing and calling each other whenever they came across incorrect words or word usages.

They came up with nearly 500 examples of mistakes in emails; they couldn't believe it, he said. So, they figured maybe they should



Seventh-grader Isai Lopez listens to stories about common grammatical mistakes Wednesday at Pacelli Catholic Schools.

write a book about it.

Schwietz presented a lot of examples, which are also in the book. Many came from people in the corporate world via emails, Christmas card letters, former president George W. Bush and even a former Minnesota Vikings coach who used "irregardless" multiple times in one interview.

People try to sound smart by using big words, Schwietz said.

"If you're going to use the word irregardless, don't. Please," he said. "Keep it simple."

What's also happened is that modern technology has made communicating with others much easier. It's also undermined our ability to learn. People have become lazy, and they no longer know how to spell, Schwietz said.

There was one point he couldn't emphasize enough: "Spellcheck isn't always going to be your friend," he said.

Some of the most common written mistakes include: there/they're/their, principal/principle, to/two/too, then/than, affect/effect. Spoken mistakes include: eXspecially, "for all intensive purposes," "I could care less," "You shoulda saw this guy."

It might not seem like a big deal to some, but it can really become a factor on things such as job applications, college applications or



Austin author John Schwietz talks about his book "Irregardless...ain't a word" Wednesday at Pacelli Catholic Schools in Austin.

school papers.

"This stuff matters because we communicate every day," he said.

He isn't afraid to call people out on their mistakes either. If he gets an email with some obvious mistakes, he sends the errors back to the person.

"What's interesting is people don't send me emails anymore," Schwietz said, a bit jokingly.

The book features characters Chip and Chazz when they get hired at the Central Security

Agency. There's a story throughout the book, with 125 examples along the way of emails the characters send, as well as 26 lessons, one for each letter of the alphabet.

It came out about a year ago, and volume two (or is it too?) will be coming soon. People are having fun with the first book, and the authors have collected more pet peeves to add to it.

"People want to be in on the joke," Schwietz said. "I think that's what it boils down to."

## West St. Paul man guilty of 4 felonies

BY BRETT BOESE  
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After a lengthy jury trial, a 32-year-old West St. Paul man was convicted Tuesday in Mower County District Court on four of eight felony charges from a 2011 incident in which he pistol-whipped his girlfriend in southeast Austin. The jury also named him a danger to public safety in a ruling issued Wednesday morning.

Alfredo Jesse Rosillo was convicted of first-degree burglary, first-degree aggravated robbery, fifth-degree possession of drugs and domestic assault after a trial that began Nov. 5 wrapped up before Judge Donald Rysavy. He was found not guilty of a first-degree burglary charge, two counts of second-degree assault and illegal possession of a firearm.

Sentencing has been scheduled for Jan. 4. The first two convictions carry a maximum sentence of 20 years in prison and a \$35,000 fine. The maximum penalty for the drug charge is 10 years and a \$20,000 fine, while domestic assault has a limit of five years and a \$10,000 fine.

Rosillo has four previous felony convictions in four different counties dating from 1999. His last prison sentence was for 39 months in 2008 for making terroristic threats and domestic assault in Faribault County.

The most recent convictions stem from an incident that occurred June 21, 2011, at about 7 p.m. in Austin. According to the court complaint, members of the Austin Police Department responded to a report of a burglary in progress, which turned into a domestic assault situation.

Rosillo fled when officers arrived, prompting a foot pursuit that included nine law enforcement members and a police dog. He eventually was "apprehended by canine" while trying to hide in long grass after refusing to give himself up, according to the complaint.

Upon being arrested, he denied any wrongdoing with a gun but admitted to having smoked methamphetamine earlier in the day.

According to the complaint, the victim initially declined to cooperate when authorities arrived, saying Rosillo was a member of the "Mexican mafia" who claimed to have been involved recently in a killing in Mankato. Eventually, the woman said that she'd been "pistol whipped" by the .22 caliber hand gun three or four times, after he'd pointed it at her head and neck, and that Rosillo had stolen \$50 from her purse. Multiple shots also were fired into the woman's driveway, vehicle and home.

As authorities retraced Rosillo's steps from the pursuit, they found a wad of cash and 5.5 grams of methamphetamine in a flower bed.



Rosillo

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### Weather A6

Friday

**44**  
**30**

6 a.m. 21° Noon 40° 6 p.m. 36°

### Corrections

The Post-Bulletin is committed to fairness and accuracy. If you have a concern, contact Managing Editor Jay Furst at 285-7742 or [furst@postbulletin.com](mailto:furst@postbulletin.com).

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### Punchline A2

The woman reached in her purse and gave her son the money.

### Austin, Minnesota

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