

# BUSINESS

DOW 13,170.19 ▼ 68.94 | NASDAQ 3,074.15 ▼ 4.17 | S&P 500 1,405.52 ▼ 4.23 | RUSSELL 2000 829.24 ▼ 8.53

## SOLAR PANELS

**Commerce imposes new import fees:** WASHINGTON — The U.S. Commerce Department has imposed new import fees on solar panels made in China, finding that the Chinese government is improperly giving subsidies to manufacturers of the panels there.

The Commerce Department said Tuesday it has found on a preliminary basis that Chinese solar panel makers have received government subsidies of 2.9 percent to 4.73 percent. Therefore the department said tariffs in the same proportions will be charged on Chinese panels imported into the U.S., depending on which company makes them.

The tariff amounts are considered small, but the decision could ratchet up trade tensions between the U.S. and China. Several U.S. solar panel makers had asked the government to impose steep tariffs on Chinese imports. They are struggling against stiff competition from China as well as weakening demand in Europe and other key markets, just as President Barack Obama is working to promote renewable energy.

12.7 percent from a year earlier, according to the South Bay Association of Realtors.

The median is the middle figure where half of homes sold for more and half for less.

The Realtor group's data covers the South Bay, excluding the Palos Verdes Peninsula and Inglewood.

The prices of condominiums and town houses also fell, with a February median price of \$323,000, down 16.1 percent from the same month last year.

However, sales improved. The 140 single-family homes sold in February represented a 4.5 percent increase from a year earlier.

Condos and town houses also

12.4 percent.

Single-family homes usually are more expensive than condos and, therefore, do not always follow the same sales trends.

"I think it's an encouraging market," said Susan Curson, a Realtor at Hunter Mason Realty in Redondo Beach. "It's a great market for first-time buyers or people looking for an investment opportunity because interest rates are low and prices are lower than they've historically been."

Curson said she and her colleagues are noticing rising demand for homes. She said the housing market appears to be leveling out.

houses, the median price fell 8.2 percent to \$216,520, as sales increased 9.3 percent.

"While the median home price dipped in February, the year-over-year decline was the smallest recorded since December 2010," said LeFrancis Arnold, president of the statewide Realtor group, in a statement. "This may be a signal of a possible stabilization in home prices, which should bode well for prospective buyers who have been on the sidelines waiting for prices to level out and may entice them to jump into the market."

[muhammed.el-hasan@dailybreeze.com](mailto:muhammed.el-hasan@dailybreeze.com)

Follow Muhammed El-Hasan on Twitter at <http://twitter.com/dailybreezebiz>

their finances. At this point, mom can't keep track of her investments or income, so she's asked me to keep an eye on things.

But her husband and his son say there's nothing I need to know, and they refuse to give me any information. I feel torn. I don't want to butt in, but there's no way I can look out for my mother's interests if I'm in the dark. How can I solve this without upsetting people?

Mom gave me power of attorney, if that helps.

**Answer:** As long as your mother's husband and his son stonewall you, there's no way to resolve the situation without upsetting people, namely them. So be it. Your mother wants you to have access to her financial records, and these folks' refusal to provide it ought to make you suspicious — suspicious enough to hire a lawyer. He or she can tell you how best to employ that power of attorney to get the information you seek.

We can appreciate, of course, why you'd prefer not to be confrontational with your mother's husband. But the time has come to ruffle some feathers. Your mother's financial security — and perhaps your inheritance — is at stake.

**Q** My son and daughter-in-law are expecting a child. They live in a small, two-bedroom apartment, and I'd like to see them take advantage of the depressed housing market and low interest rates to buy a home.

To help them do this, I'm considering giving them \$50,000 toward a down pay-

