

Barrie & Area Realty Report

Compliments of Team Burley

echelon realty inc., brokerage



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Greetings! You're receiving this newsletter with hopes that you find it informative and entertaining.

If you're thinking of making a move, or are just curious as to real estate trends in your area, please feel free to call at any time. It's always good to hear from you!

All the best,

Terry and Darren



Stronger Home Sales Lift National Forecast

The Canadian Real Estate Association (CREA) increased their 2009 national home sales forecast to 432,600 units, just 0.4 percent less than levels set in 2008, and a significant upward revision from the previously forecast decline of 14.7 percent from last year. The national MLS® home sales activity is projected to continue rising, with an expected 5.3 percent increase to 455,400 units next year.

"Sales activity started off the third quarter on a strong footing," said CREA President Dale Ripplinger. "The difference in the resale housing market now, compared to the beginning of the year, is night and day."

Chief Economist Gregory Klump noted, "Low interest rates are boosting sales by returning homebuyers to the market who moved to the sidelines late last year." He added, "Buyers are also shifting purchase decisions forward as they take advantage of attractive interest rates now before financing costs increase."

CREA previously forecast a decline in the national average price of 5.2 percent for 2009, when in fact recent figures point to an increase

of 1.5 percent this year, mostly due to the strong rebound in sales activity in some of Canada's most expensive markets.

"The speed with which the Canadian resale housing market has rebounded is unprecedented," said Mr. Klump.

Is 2010 the year you sell your house, and upsize, downsize or move to a more appropriate living arrangement? If so, please remember that a qualified real estate representative can make the difference between an efficient, informed transaction and a stressful moving experience.

Take the first step toward a smooth move by calling today for the latest housing news in your area.

CNSF

DECK THE HALLS?



If your home will be for sale this holiday season, you have some décor decisions to make. Should you maintain tradition and put up your holiday decorations as usual or forego them altogether? If you do decorate, how can it best be done while not turning off buyers?

The argument for foregoing holiday decorations while your home's on the market goes like this: Adding holiday-themed accessories to your décor can cause your home to look cluttered and less spacious. As well, holiday decorations can hide important selling features from buyers' eyes (for example, a tree placed in front of a window could obscure a great view). Privacy is another reason to forego holiday

decorating — people can be prejudiced, so, it's best to avoid sharing personal details, such as your religious beliefs.

On the other hand, some homes feel warmer and more welcoming when they are all dressed up for the holidays — an atmosphere that can entice buyers. As well, just as holiday decorations can hide a home's assets, they can serve to detract from its flaws (for example, a tree placed in front of a window can camouflage an unappealing view).

The decorating decision is ultimately yours, of course, but you'll only gain from soliciting your real-estate sales representative's opinion on the matter. Your representative can help you determine whether holiday decorating might be beneficial or detrimental, depending on your particular home, area and buyers.

If you decide to decorate, keep in mind the following tips to help you balance your desire to observe tradition with the need to keep your décor appealing to buyers:

- If your holiday traditions include a tree, buy a small one. Consider a tabletop tree — they don't take up any floor space and aren't big enough to hide any of your home's selling features.
- Keep blatantly religious decorations packed away this year, and opt instead for decorations of a seasonal, secular nature: garlands and wreaths, pinecones and cranberries, candles and poinsettias, etc.
- Use only a portion of your decorations, or, for every holiday decoration you add to your décor, temporarily remove another item. Both strategies will help you curb clutter.
- Put your decorations up a little later and take them down a little sooner than you normally do. Since you're planning to move, you'll have to pack them up anyway — might as well do it sooner than later.



Celebrate With a Green Tree This Year

Celebrate the environment while you celebrate the holidays! Buy LED holiday lights — they last substantially longer than old-fashioned strings and use considerably less energy. And if buying a holiday tree, get a real one. Provided you buy from a sustainable tree farm, real trees are actually the greener option — a lot of energy and chemicals go into the manufacture of artificial trees.



SILENCE IS GOLDEN

REALTY REALITY

Many a seller has lost money on their home sale, or even lost the sale altogether, because they said the wrong thing to buyers. Don't let it happen to you — below, learn what *not* to say.

Don't disclose why you're selling — you might inadvertently help buyers decide they don't want to purchase your home for the very reason you want to sell it. Alternatively, if buyers discover you're selling because you *need* to (whether due to financial reasons or a job transfer, for example), you'll be relinquishing the upper hand you want to have during negotiations.

You also risk giving buyers the upper hand if you reveal that your property hasn't had a lot of people through to view it or that it hasn't generated many offers. Because you want your house to appear desirable, keep this kind of information to yourself. Similarly, keep mum about the lowest price you'd be willing to settle for.

Also, you may think you're being helpful by volunteering information about your neighbors and neighborhood, but what you find appealing the buyers might find off-putting. For instance, saying, "This is a mature neighborhood — mostly retirees," might make buyers with children think twice. This is especially true of matters pertaining to religion and politics.

As you can see, there are many ways even the best-intentioned seller can succumb to "foot-in-mouth" disease. That's why it's beneficial for you to be absent during your home's showings, and to let your real-estate sales representative handle the buyers.

Real estate is one of those professions people have a lot of preconceived notions about. Below are some commonly held myths — and their realities — about working with real-estate sales representatives.

- *"I shouldn't tell my representative how much I dislike this property; I might offend them."* Actually, your honest feedback about the homes you and your representative view — even if it's negative — is not only welcome, it's valued. The more honest you are, the more time and energy you will save both you and your representative.
- *"If I work with multiple real-estate reps, I'll find my next home that much faster."* Most real-estate representatives use the same MLS® and, as such, would likely provide you with the same listings. Plus, when you work with multiple representatives, you may miss out on the high level of service you can expect when loyal to one.
- *"I don't need a representative; I'm buying brand new."* Remember, the builder's onsite salespeople work for the builder — it's the builder's best interests they're concerned with, not yours. A real-estate sales representative can be valuable to you in modifying the builder's contract for your protection, negotiating pricing and upgrades, protecting you against builder's liens, and more.
- *"I'll save money by not hiring a real-estate sales representative to help me with my next home purchase."* On the contrary, with representation you're less likely to overpay for a home, as real-estate sales reps have access to information (known as comparables) that help them determine what you should be paying for a property, and they are experts at negotiating the best deal.



Rooms to Improve

Buying and renovating a fixer-upper can be very rewarding, so long as you know what you're getting into. If you've got your eye on a house that needs some work, you'll want to think about the following points.

First things first, consider location very carefully. Putting a lot of money into a house that's in an undesirable area doesn't make a lot of sense, as you won't likely recoup your renovation expenses. You're better off buying a fixer-upper in a neighborhood where property values are appreciating – the location, coupled with the renovations, will make the house worth that much more.

Next, be sure to have any fixer-upper you're considering professionally inspected so that you know the amount of money and nature of the work that will be required. If after the inspection you still want to buy the house, the inspector's results will be useful in determining and justifying your offer price.

Now that you know what work is required, it's time to weigh whether doing the work will increase the house's value enough to make the effort and expense worthwhile. A fixer-upper needing significant structural, plumbing or electrical repairs is a house you'll want to evaluate carefully – such improvements are less likely to pay off. However, a fixer-upper in need of the kind of improvements buyers can see – cosmetic fixes like kitchen and bath makeovers and new floors – is a house worth considering.

Some parting wisdom: Before you buy a fixer-upper, give some thought to how you intend to fund the work required. And always budget extra for unexpected expenses and last-minute additions to your to-do list.



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The greatest compliment we can receive from our clients is the referral of your family, friends and colleagues. We promise to treat anyone you refer with the greatest consideration. Thank you for your loyalty.

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