



GALE TRACEY AMP- YOUR MORTGAGE PLANNER FOR LIFE

News To Help You Save Time And Money

THE DREAM HOME MAKER!

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Inside This Issue...

- Is Now The Time to Refinance...1
- Client News.....2
- Valentine's Day Origins.....2
- Variable vs. Fixed Rate.....3
- Himalayan Rock Salt Benefits .3
- Quiz of the Month.....4
- Free Renovation Guide.....4

Quote of the Month

"I don't understand why Cupid was chosen to represent Valentine's Day. When I think about romance, the last thing on my mind is a short, chubby toddler coming at me with a weapon."

~Author Unknown

Why are mortgage rates so low, and is now the time to refinance?

In January, Bank of Montreal introduced a 5-year fixed rate mortgage at 2.99%, which was the lowest advertised 5-year fixed rate from any major bank in Canadian history. Immediately, the other big banks lowered their rates in an effort to compete.

Since mortgage rates were already at historically low levels, why would the banks do this? Unlike shorter-term variable mortgage rates which are tied to the Bank of Canada rate, longer-term fixed rates are determined by bond yields. Here's how it works.

The continuing economic crisis in Europe, shaky stock markets, and volatility in global currency and commodity markets have made investors very nervous. Since Canada's economic condition is relatively better than many developed countries, investors have been rushing to buy relatively safer Canadian bonds. All that demand means the issuers of the bonds can pay lower interest rates (unlike the very high rates that European bonds are forced to pay). This means the cost of money in Canada is getting lower so the banks can afford to lower their mortgage rates.



The next and more important question is: should I break out of my current mortgage to take advantage of these lower rates? Here, the answer is equally complicated. Most of the new fixed rate mortgages have several restrictions—limited amortization choices (25 years), no portability, prepayment privileges of only 10%, etc.—so you have to decide whether they're right for your needs. You also have to consider the penalty you'll pay to break out of your existing mortgage, which can be tens of thousands of dollars in some cases.

The only way to know for sure if these new low-rate mortgages can save you money in the long term is to review your financial situation and current mortgage. I'd be happy to do a thorough no-charge analysis to help you see if refinancing makes sense for you. If that interests you, call me today!

A REALTOR YOU CAN TRUST!

If you're considering buying or selling please call me if you would like a referral to a professional, experienced, trustworthy Realtor. I've dealt with several realtors in the Surrey, Langley/Tri-Cities areas for over 8 years and can guarantee you will be happy with the results from all of these "Over Achievers". Why call a stranger, when you can be referred to a professional I "know" "like" & trust"!



Client News

Here are the new and loyal repeat clients who we've assisted with their mortgage needs in the last month! We'd like to welcome and thank you publicly, and send you our best wishes!

Julia A. of Surrey, B.C., “Mortgage free soon!” (Repeat loyal client)

Katie D. of Port Moody, B.C. “First new home!” (Referred by Brenda Cheng, Re/Max Sabre)

Evan E. of Coquitlam, B.C. “New bachelor pad!” (Referred by Realtor, Jeff Shapka, Re/Max Sabre)

Brad & Pam D. of Surrey, BC., “Historic low rate!” (Repeat loyal clients)

Linda & Harrison N. of Langley, B.C., “Simplifying life!” (Repeat loyal clients)

Ivo & Margaret S. of Abbotsford, B.C., “A home of their own!” (Referred by Realtor, Bernadine Jensen, Lighthouse Realty)

THANK YOU!



We love giving recognition to our new friends and our wonderful existing clients who are kind enough to refer their friends and relatives to us!

We're all helping each other, which is the whole point of all this! Right?

Seasonal Article of the Month

The origins of Valentine's Day.

Valentine's Day is named after one or more early Christian martyrs named Saint Valentine. It was established by Pope Gelasius I in 496 but was removed from the Catholic calendar of saints in 1969.

The day got its romantic theme from British author Geoffrey Chaucer in a book published in 1382. But it wasn't until the late 1700s that the holiday started becoming popular. In 1797, a book called “The Young Man's Valentine Writer” provided romantic verses that could be sent to eligible young ladies. Printers soon started mass producing Valentine's cards with verses and sketches. But it was the reduction of postal rates in the 1800s that made the sending of Valentine's cards almost universally popular.

In North America, the first mass-produced Valentines of embossed paper lace were produced around 1850. A century later, this tradition was expanded to include romantic gifts, such as roses or chocolates in red satin heart-shaped boxes. In the 1980s, the diamond industry started promoting Valentine's Day as an occasion for giving jewelry.

Today, almost 200 million Valentines are sent each year in the US alone. On top of that, 15 million e-Valentines were sent in 2010. Surprisingly, while 66% of the population gives a Valentine's gift to a significant other, even more—83%—give a gift to their children!



Financial Freedom Tip of the Month

Variable vs. fixed rate. Which saves you more?

Over the past 25 years, Canadians have generally saved money with variable rate mortgages. This is because there's a price to pay for the security of knowing what your rate will be over the long term. The banks charge a premium on fixed terms to cover the risk of rising rates.



~~Health~~ Holistic Health Tip of the Month Because variable rates haven't been rising (due to the Bank of Canada's belief that our economy is still fragile) and fixed rates have been dropping (due to the reasons outlined on page 1), the spread between the two rates is unusually slim (just .24% in January).



The question is do you believe that over a 5-year term the Bank of Canada rate (which influences variable rates) will increase by more than .24%? The Bank of Canada itself has practically promised that it will. Obviously, that makes a fixed rate mortgage an attractive choice right now. But it's essential to also consider your future plans. When you're locked in, you have few options for paying off your mortgage early. If you're unsure of your plans, it may be wiser to take a variable rate, pay down the principal as quickly as possible and make sure you have the option to lock in when rates rise. For a no-cost analysis of whether variable or fixed is best for you, talk to me today.

Health benefits of Himalayan Rock Salt

Himalayan rock salt comes from the Himalayan Mountains in Pakistan where it's mined, crushed and washed by hand, then dried in the sun. Originating from sea salt deposits that formed 200,000 million years ago, the salt is considered virtually free of pollutants and toxins.

The Himalayan people have used rock salt for thousands of years to preserve fish and meat, and for adding to bath water. The salt crystals form into perfect geometric patterns and are typically pink or red thanks to their high mineral and iron content. In fact, Himalayan rock salt is thought to contain the same 84 essential elements that are found in our bodies, such as calcium, magnesium, potassium, copper and iron.

Himalayan rock salt (found in most health food stores), used in moderation as a seasoning in your diet may help:

- Regulate the water content of your body.
- Promote a healthy pH balance in cells, particularly brain cells.
- Reduce signs of aging.
- Absorb food particles in the intestinal tract.
- Balance blood sugar.
- Support respiratory health.
- Increase bone strength.
- Promote sinus health.
- Prevent muscle cramps.
- Promote restful sleep.
- Enhance vascular health.
- As with regular salt, Himalayan rock salt helps regulate your blood pressure.

Quiz Question of the Month

Valentine's Trivia

Which flowers are the most popular gift on

Answers to Last Month's Quiz

Which month-long event is celebrated in January?

How does this contest work?

The first person to respond with the correct answer will win a FREE Dinner at the VAULT Restaurant or Washington Avenue Grill, \$25 value!

How do I submit my answer?

To respond with your answer, email us at: gale.tracey@mtgarc.ca or fax 1-866-280-9427 in your answer. The contest deadline is Feb. 29, 2012.

Resource of the Month

FREE Guide Reveals Nine Secrets to Make Your Home Reno Pay for Itself!



Whether your goal is to get a fixer upper ready to sell, increase the market value of your home or just make your home more comfortable, this free guide will show you nine home renovation secrets you need to know before you get started. Here's just a portion of what you'll learn:

- **What types of renovations provide the highest return on your investment?**
- Renovating vs. buying a new home: How to determine which option is best.
- **Insider secrets on how to maximize the value of your kitchen and bathroom renovations.**
- Unique and innovative ways to enhance the comfort, beauty, enjoyment and resale value of your home.
- **How to finance the entire project, eliminate credit card debts, and boost your equity – without any out of pocket costs or increased monthly payments.**
- And much, much more!

ANNOUNCING LAST MONTH'S WINNERS!
 Congratulations to **Natalie L.** of Surrey for winning January's quiz contest! She has won a FREE dinner at The Vault Restaurant. Enjoy!

K I D S

O  **Valentines Word Search**

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N
E
R**

E B V Z N B E B O E D T
 S G A E H E A R T K K I
 G G S C A N D Y E N O H
 Y Z A A S I E W U I D N
 A G R L R T R U F P I N
 P F R I E N D S H I P Y
 H K O S W E E T I E U Q
 T R W B O L N E X E C P
 Z L Y Z L A I E V O L T
 J E U L F V M W Y K M I
 K N M R O S E S Q J C K
 S S C I N S B Y N P J C



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|------------|-------|-----------|
| ARROW | HEART | RED |
| BE MINE | HONEY | ROSES |
| CANDY | LACE | SWEETIE |
| CUPID | LOVE | SWEETS |
| FLOWERS | PINK | VALENTINE |
| FRIENDSHIP | | |

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