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**Make sure you visualize  
what you really want, not  
what someone else wants  
for you.**

~ Jerry Gillies

All the best,  
**Rein**



## SMOOTH SELLING

Canadians continue to be optimistic about the benefits of home ownership, including its advantage to consumers as a safe investment. Low mortgage rates have resulted in a seller's market in many cities, although the Canadian Real Estate Association (CREA) recently noticed a slowing of that trend, with a rising number of new listings resulting in a more balanced national resale housing market.

Whether you're in the market to buy a property, sell your home, or both, you'll want the services of a professional mortgage broker on your side, to ensure the smoothest, most successful transactions possible.

A mortgage broker's job is to help you make sure you know your financial ropes before embarking on any kind of real estate transaction. For example, buyers are encouraged to secure financing through a pre-approved mortgage before they even start looking at properties, helping to narrow the search by determining what they are qualified to purchase. And sellers need to be aware of issues that may jeopardize the sale of their home, such as a tax lien against their home that's discovered before the final papers are signed.

Even if you're not looking to make a move at this time, you can still use the services of a mortgage broker for regular reviews of your current mortgage and other loan requirements. You may be curious to find out if refinancing your existing mortgage would make sense in your situation, for example. It's always worthwhile to learn how your situation would change if your interest rate was adjusted, if you increased or decreased the length of your mortgage, or if you changed from a fixed-rate mortgage to a variable-rate mortgage.

For more ideas on how to finance the smoothest real estate transactions, please call today.

CNMB

# Green Wallpaper

Wallpaper is a great way to add color, pattern and texture to your walls. Unfortunately, most wallpapers aren't great for your home's air quality or the environment. But with a growing number of eco-friendly alternatives available, wallpaper may be coming back in fashion.

Just what is it that makes traditional wallpapers a poor choice for your health and the environment? Well, the problem is that they're made from traditional vinyl, which off-gasses harmful volatile organic compounds (VOCs) into the air you breathe at home, and which sits in our landfills taking a long time to decompose. Additionally, traditional vinyl wallpaper doesn't breathe well, meaning that moisture gets trapped behind it. Moisture is known to encourage the growth of mold – which also has a definitively negative

impact on indoor air quality. As well, the adhesives used in pre-pasted wallpapers emit toxic vapors, and the inks they're imprinted with are toxic, too.

But not all vinyl wallpapers are created equally – not anymore, at least. Now, manufacturers are offering recycled vinyl wallpapers.

There are, however, options that are even more eco-friendly, such as wallpapers that are made from – if can you believe it – actual paper, be it recycled and/or recyclable paper. Also more eco-friendly are wallpapers made from naturally sourced and sustainable materials like bamboo and other grasses, jute, cork, rice paper, silk, sisal, hemp, and wood from sustainably-harvested forests. In addition to decomposing more quickly and being easier to recycle, wallpapers made from natural materials allow your walls to breathe, helping to prevent moisture and mold.

Other features that make some wallpapers more eco-friendly than others include their imprinted inks (green ones are made with water- or vegetable-based, non-toxic or low-VOC inks and dyes), their glazes (which should also be non-toxic for maximum friendliness), and the process used to manufacture them (some manufacturers not only produce green products, but do so using green manufacturing processes).

In the past, eco-friendly wallpapers were hard to find, were available only in a limited selection of designs, and were quite pricey. But all that's changing now, as more and more people are becoming health and environment conscious and are demanding products that befit a greener lifestyle. Interior designers, always the trend setters, are making it easier for the average homeowners to get their hands on a wider variety of green wallpapers at more reasonable prices.



If you're committed to having your next wallpaper project be an eco-friendly one, complete your green movement by making the application process green, too: use an eco-friendly wallpaper paste. Regular pastes are loaded with chemicals intended to prevent mold growth and make removing the wallpaper easy, but which also contribute to poor indoor air quality. You can buy eco-friendly wallpaper paste that's free of harmful toxins like fungicides or you can make your own — recipes are typically based on flour and water, and are easily found using your preferred Internet search engine.



# FSBO UH-OH

If you're thinking of selling your home yourself as an "FSBO" (For Sale By Owner), think again, from a buyer's perspective. Buyers may be more hesitant to deal with sellers representing themselves than with those working with a professional real estate sales representative.



Owners selling their own homes probably don't have access to the information needed (e.g., comparables) in order to assess their home's true market value. As a result, they're more likely to overprice their homes and less likely to recognize a fair offer when they see one. For buyers, this can make for a more frustrating and time consuming negotiation process, which is always a turn-off. And so when the market's moving fast, buyers will be especially motivated to avoid such sellers.

Also, real estate transactions can be incredibly complex, requiring detailed financial and legal knowledge in order to see a sale through. For example, do the sellers know how to properly fill out paperwork? Are they familiar with local disclosure laws? Buyers may be wary of dealing with homeowners selling their properties themselves, fearing the sellers lack the breadth and depth of knowledge needed in order to successfully complete the transaction.

Lastly, some buyers may be reluctant to deal with do-it-yourself sellers because they're of the opinion that sellers who won't hire a professional to handle the sale are frugal and like to cut corners. They may even wonder if the sellers will try to nickel and dime them (e.g., with chattels and fixtures) and where else the sellers will try to cut corners.

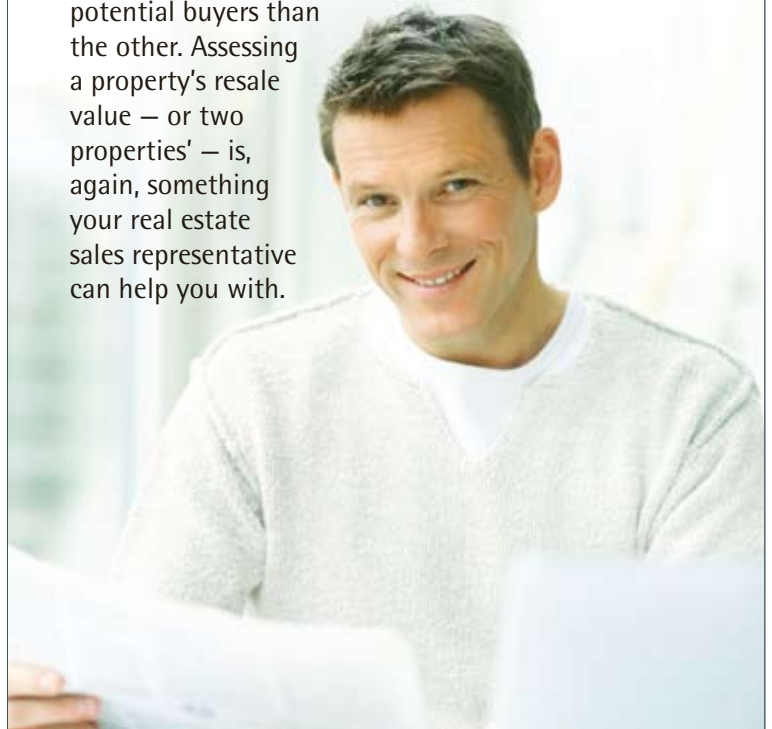
For a transaction as significant as buying and selling a home, it's important to involve real estate professionals, starting with a qualified real estate sales representative.



## Two Perfect

You've narrowed the search for your next home down to two properties. You like both equally in terms of price, the properties themselves, and their locations. So how do you choose one?

- If each property is in a different neighborhood, find out which of the two boasts better schools. All other factors being equal, you'd be wise to buy in whichever area offers superior schools. This is applicable even if you don't have children – looking ahead, potential purchasers of your home might have children, and will assess the school factor.
- Think about how well each property will be able to meet your needs in the coming years. Sure, both may ideally suit your needs now, but will one of the homes you're considering allow you greater opportunity for growth in the future than the other? Think here of eventualities, like having children or starting a home business.
- Consider how each property's respective neighborhood might change in the future or is already changing. You may like both areas now, but what you like about them may not be sustainable, whether due to economic or social factors – factors your real estate sales representative can give you insight into.
- Factor in resale value. No matter which home you choose, you probably won't live in it forever. So consider whether one property might hold more value for future potential buyers than the other. Assessing a property's resale value – or two properties' – is, again, something your real estate sales representative can help you with.



# Income Inquiries

One of the most important pieces of information you will need to provide when applying for a new mortgage is evidence of your gross annual income. To do this, you'll need to supply your mortgage broker with an employment letter, on company letterhead, confirming:

- Your current gross or base income.
- How long you have worked at the company.
- Your title, or current position.
- Your status: full-time, regular part-time, contract, or casual.

The situation gets a little more involved if you are not working a permanent, full-time job. For example, contract workers may need to attach a copy of their contract to their employer's letter. Regular part-time or casual workers must break down their hourly wage and number of hours worked per pay period. Self-employed or commission-based workers, whose income typically changes from year-to-year, must usually submit two or three years worth of tax returns — although workers of any status should be prepared to provide the same.

Be aware that income from sources other than employment can also be reported in order to qualify for a mortgage. This income may be generated from a pension, from investments, dividends or annuities, from rental income, from child tax credits, from child support or alimony payments, or from any other income of a continual nature.

Often, borrowers only call their mortgage broker when they're ready to check out different rates, but you're encouraged to call right at the beginning of the mortgage process to gain help through all the different qualifications of applying for a mortgage.

Do you have questions on any step of the mortgage application process? If so, please call, today!



## Terminology Tip

**Annual Percentage Rate (APR)** — An APR is the annualized cost of borrowing for a mortgage loan. APRs provide a standard for comparing mortgage costs between lenders. They show borrowers a more complete picture than just interest rates, as APRs take into account the total cost of borrowing, including things like interest and transaction fees. Not all lenders use the same fees in their calculations, so borrowers should check that any APRs they're comparing are based on the same criteria.

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*My commitment is to deliver the highest level of service to earn the deepest level of trust. I want you to be so satisfied with my services you feel compelled to refer your friends, family, neighbours and co-workers to me. Not by obligation, but because you truly believe they will benefit from my services.*

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