

Homes London

Providing Services You Can Recommend



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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,
Greg McCarvell



Each office is independently owned and operated.

Buying? Selling? Experience The Professional Difference.



Buying or selling a house is much more than just plunking a sign outside and waiting for interest to materialize. While real estate transactions may look easy, there's more to them than meets the eye when you're looking for the best value for your investment. Our recommendation is to take a deep breath and call in the experts - starting with a phone call to our office.

For example, one tip that a real estate sales representative may pass on to someone interested in buying a property for the first time is to get prequalified for a mortgage before you even start looking for a home. This gives you a set budget to work with, and a stronger bargaining position should you come up against another buyer who may not be as prepared.

If you're looking to put your current property up for sale, recognize that a qualified real estate sales representative can make the difference between a drawn-out, harrowing experience and a swift and satisfying real estate transaction. Remember that the best sales representative isn't the one who promises you the highest price on a listing, it's the one who knows your area, is familiar with the local pricing and selling patterns, and can showcase your home to the greatest number of people so that it sells quickly and efficiently.

We will arrange for all the proper forms and agreements, and can suggest resources, if you need or want them, for everything from staging to legal or financial assistance.

If you, your family or friends are looking to buy or sell, or you'd like a no-obligation consultation on your current property, I invite you to call me today.

CNSF



A Garden To Go!

Whether you have the tiniest of terraces or the biggest of backyards, you can exercise your green thumb by creating a container garden – a garden you can easily take with you the next time you move.



Container gardening is just that: gardening in containers. Containers offer the advantage of being mobile. Move your plants around if they're not thriving in a particular spot, keep your vegetables and herbs close at hand, and even bring your beloved bougainvillea with you should you move. What's more, container gardening is a great solution for limited space or poor soil conditions.

Choosing your containers is arguably the most fun aspect of container gardening. Just about anything that can hold soil and withstand frequent watering will do: metal buckets, produce baskets, urns, fish tanks, birdhouses, dresser drawers, wheelbarrows. The possibilities are limited only by your creativity – and not at all by your pocketbook.



Each material has its strengths and weaknesses: plastic is cheap and lightweight, but doesn't endure; wood drains well, but is heavy and can rot; terra cotta and clay drain well, but can dry out and are heavy; metal is lightweight, but can rust. Your choice of container should also take into account the size of your plantings; deep-rooted vegetables, for instance, will require deep pots or root growth will be limited.

Whatever your containers, they'll need at least one drainage hole. Without proper drainage, the plant's

roots will rot in waterlogged soil, so drill some holes about a half-inch in diameter in the bottom of any containers that don't have them already. To prevent soil from escaping through its holes, line your container with newspaper or screening.



Speaking of soil, you'll want to use a commercially available potting mixture in your containers. It might be tempting to use real garden soil, but your plants won't do well in it. It's too heavy, compacts with watering and retains too much moisture. This inhibits root growth, due to lack of air. Intended specifically for container gardening, potting mixtures are more porous, delivering both air and water to plant roots.

You'll need to be attentive when it comes to watering your containers, as they can dry out quickly due to the relatively little amount of soil inside. There are no hard and fast rules as to how often you should water: small containers need water more often than large ones; terra cotta and clay containers dry out faster than other materials; hot, dry weather necessitates more frequent watering. Simply check them daily and water them when the potting mixture feels dry.



As for sunlight, some plants require a lot while others require little – check the specific requirements for the type of plant you're potting. And remember, the great thing about container gardening is that you can move your containers around in pursuit or avoidance of the sun, as need be!



DOLLARS AND SENSE

A buyer's opinion of a home is largely influenced by subliminal factors. Increase your odds of fetching top dollar for your property by appealing to buyers' senses.

▪ **SIGHT** – Buyers want to see every square foot they're paying for, so give your home a thorough decluttering (closets too!) and flood it with as much light (natural and artificial) as possible. Buyers must also be able to see themselves living in your space, so depersonalize it by removing personal mementos and applying a fresh coat of paint in a neutral shade.



▪ **SOUND** – Dripping faucets, squeaky doors, running toilets, rattling appliances: sounds like these signal to buyers that yours is a home that's been neglected, so eliminate them. While you'll want the TV to be off during a showing, softly play some classical or smooth jazz in the background, as a totally silent home can make buyers uncomfortable.

▪ **SMELL** – While you may be accustomed to them, buyers will immediately notice odors caused by pets, smoking, cooking or mildew – get rid of them, even if it means professionally cleaning your upholstery. Avoid using scented sprays or air fresheners; buyers may be allergic to synthetic fragrances. Opt instead for natural scents: a simmering pot of cinnamon sticks or freshly baked batch of cookies.



▪ **TASTE** – If you're going to tempt buyers with the scent of baking, don't disappoint them! Leave out a tray of homemade treats and some freshly brewed coffee or a pitcher of lemonade with a note indicating that guests should help themselves. Such a personal touch will surely make your home one that buyers remember.



Over And Out?

You've found a property that meets your needs and, ideally, at least a few of your wants. There's just one problem: it's overpriced. Now what?

You might want to make an offer anyway – one closer to the property's market value. Some buyers won't make a bid at all, for fear a lower offer would insult the seller. And, in truth, some sellers (those whose egos inform their asking price and who aren't serious about selling) do take offense, so be prepared for the possibility of rejection.

Most homeowners, however – those who are serious about selling – will be receptive to your offer, even if it's considerably lower than their asking price. Why? Because their overpriced property likely hasn't generated much activity in the way of showings or offers. Yours could be one of only a few offers the seller receives, if not the sole offer, which will greatly increase your odds of success.

To help offset its relatively low price, consider other terms of your offer that could boost its attractiveness to the seller's eyes. For example, you could offer a larger deposit, or a short or long closing (depending on the seller's needs).

If you do decide to make an offer on an overpriced home, you'll need to be patient, persistent and prepared for rejection. Negotiations could take days or weeks and it's possible that an agreement won't be reached. As such, pursuing an overpriced property can be risky: you may instead wish to focus your time and energy on a property that's more reasonably priced.

Keeping Your Cool

With the hottest days of the year about to arrive, you'll no doubt be putting your central air conditioning system to the test. What follows are a few common air conditioner failures and their fixes.

- **IT WON'T TURN ON.** Most obviously, make sure your thermostat is set to "cool" and below room temperature. Otherwise, check that power is getting to your air conditioner: is your furnace's power switch turned on? Is there a blown fuse or did the breaker trip?
- **IT RUNS BUT WON'T COOL.** Check and replace the filter; it may have become clogged to the point of restricting airflow. If this doesn't work, the unit may be in need of a good cleaning. You can do this yourself, following the instructions in your owner's manual, or call a professional.
- **IT'S EXCESSIVELY NOISY.** Make sure your air conditioner's fan blades aren't dirty, obstructed, loose or bent. The problem might also be a fan belt that needs replacing, loose blower-mounting bolts or a faulty motor, all of which would take a professional to diagnose and repair.
- **WATER COLLECTS AROUND THE UNIT.** Air conditioners produce condensation, which normally drains into the floor via a plastic tube. Standing water is likely caused by a blocked or leaking drain line, which can easily be replaced. Perhaps the condensation pump needs repair or replacement.
- **IT WON'T SHUT OFF.** The culprit may be a stuck, worn out or dirty contactor. Clear the contactor of dirt and debris. If this doesn't work, you may need to replace the contactor – luckily, they are readily available. Alternatively, the problem could be your thermostat or its wiring.



Terminology Tip

FSBO - FSBO (pronounced "fizzbo") stands for For Sale By Owner. The term refers to a property that is being sold directly by its owner, without the assistance of a real estate sales representative. Some homeowners opt to list their homes as FSBOs in order to avoid paying an agent's commission. However, it should be noted that FSBOs have a high failure rate, for a number of reasons ranging from overpricing to lack of proper marketing and representation.

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RE/MAX Centre City Realty Inc., Brokerage

\$699,900



26 Pitcarnie Cres.
5400sq.ft. Finished!

SOLD!



4 transactions to date with
this client! Congratulations!

\$259,900



963 Bitterbush Cres.
BRAND NEW BUNGALOW

\$289,900



1548 Beaverbrook Dr.
Wow! 4 Level Backsplit!