

# News You Can Use



AN INDEPENDENT MEMBER BROKER

Brought to you by: **Robin McInnis**  
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## Four Back-to-the-Future Tips to Keep the Family Entertained

Entertaining children over the summer doesn't need to be expensive or exhausting if you follow these kid-approved tips.

Make a schedule; then add a few of these fun and budget-friendly activities to the list each week. They're sure to keep kids entertained while allowing adults a little time-out of their very own. Best of all, kids and adults can have fun together to make this the best summer ever.

**Renew those library cards.** If you haven't visited the library in a while, you are in for a pleasant surprise. Rent videos and books and encourage children to participate in storytime or other fun activities. Not only is a library visit fun and educational, but it provides plenty for kids to do back at home.

**Rediscover yard games.** Break out the lemonade; then plan a day of fun by rediscovering old-fashioned yard games: horseshoes, croquet, volleyball and other great games are sure to be favourites.

**Picnic in the park.** Take the family out for a little quality time at the local park. Thursdays in July and August are for the kids at Douglas Park Community Centre where they have live music and entertainment starting at 5 PM.

**Roast and toast hot dogs and marshmallows.** Summer is a special time, even when the sun goes down. Let your kids share in the simple delight of roasting marshmallows and hot dogs on an open fire; then chasing lightning bugs or watching the moon for a summer full of memories that will last a lifetime.

## Want Your Home to Sell Faster? Get These Fix-Up Tips



In a buyer's market, it's important that your home compares well with other homes on the market. That can often mean making sure it looks its best.

To give yourself a head start, get my free guide, "Great Ideas for Quick, Easy Fixes that Will Help Your Home Sell."

Just call me at (604) 808-9661 and I'll send it right out to you.

## Enjoy a Sneeze-Free Summer with These Allergy Busters

Summer allergies are nothing to sneeze at, especially for those with potentially severe insect or food allergies.

Learn how to relieve summer allergies and rejoin the summer fun with these helpful hints.

### Prevention

Avoid contact with known allergy triggers such as plants, pet dander and other common culprits by reducing exposure and eliminating possible contact. Cut back trees and keep areas where insects can hide free of debris.

### Keeping It Clean

Keep pets and the household clean with frequent dusting, mopping and washing and by using a HEPA air filter. Cleaning upholstery and air ducts is also a great way to reduce watery eyes, asthma symptoms and other air quality issues associated with pollen, pet dander and spores.

### Medication

Use an age-appropriate allergy medication that won't leave you sleepy, and keep a variety of gels, creams and oral and topical medications on hand. For more serious allergies, make sure to wear a medical alert bracelet and, if it has been prescribed, keep your EpiPen handy at all times.

### Wear Protective Clothing

Invest in a lightweight hat, gloves, eye-glasses and other protective gear that will reduce direct exposure to potential irritants such as grass, pollen or plants. Remove clothing and wash carefully to minimize exposure.

# Easy Touch-Ups to Give Your Home Curb Appeal

Spruce up your yard in time for summer entertainment with these quick and affordable fixes for the most common complaints.

**Pressure Wash and Spray.** Start at the roof, then work your way down, to remove stains and dirt from walkways, driveways and even fences. Whiten and brighten the concrete, crevices and other corners of your home and yard to lighten the entire area.

**Clear the Clutter.** Trim and remove low branches and excess clutter to create the look and feel of clear, open space. Consider purchasing plastic partitions or other low-maintenance storage units to hide away trash cans and other unsightly items that add to the perception of clutter and detract from the beauty of your home.

**Touch Up the Paint.** Shutters, doors and awnings are all prone to excessive wear and tear over the winter months; make a point of touching up the paint. It's an easy and affordable way to revitalize the look of your home.

**Add a Touch of Colour.** Bring in fresh mulch; then follow up with strategically placed flowers, potted plants and other enhancements throughout the yard. This will add interest while helping hide those tough trouble spots.

**Create a Focal Point.** The most successful landscapes incorporate a central element that serves as the focal point for the entire area. Use the same strategy in your own yard. Begin with something affordable and small like a garden bench or pond to add elegance and appeal.

## Quick Quiz

Each month I'll give you a new question.

Email me at [robinmcinnis@shaw.ca](mailto:robinmcinnis@shaw.ca) or call (604) 808-9661 for the answer.

What word in the English language has three consecutive sets of double letters?

## Why Not Pass Me to a Friend?

If you've enjoyed this newsletter and found its information useful, please pass it to a neighbour, friend or co-worker.

If you have any comments, questions or suggestions, don't hesitate to give me a call or send me an email!

## Wondering How Much Your Home Is Worth?

How has the price of your home changed in today's market? How much are other homes in your neighbourhood selling for?

If you're wondering what's happening to prices in your area, or you're thinking about selling your house, I'll be able to help.

Just give me a call for a no-fuss, professional evaluation.

I'll give you the most current market data about your home and its value.

Maybe I'll also give you the "inside scoop" on what's happening in the housing market near where you live!

Call me today at (604) 808-9661 to arrange an appointment.

## Worth Quoting

"Never eat more than you can lift."

**Miss Piggy**

"There are painters who transform the sun to a yellow spot, but there are others who, with the help of their art and their intelligence, transform a yellow spot into the sun."

**Pablo Picasso**

"There is no such thing as fun for the whole family."

**Jerry Seinfeld**

"When the Gods wish to punish us, they answer our prayers."

**Oscar Wilde**

"I'm thankful for laughter, except when milk comes out of my nose."

**Woody Allen**

"Forgive your enemies but never forget their names."

**John F. Kennedy**

## Did You Know?

**Can you fill in the missing words in these well-known phrases and sayings? (Answers below)**

Mankind \_\_\_\_\_ an evil man but heaven does not.

The palest ink is better than the best \_\_\_\_\_.

\_\_\_\_\_ rides a fast horse.

He who begins too much \_\_\_\_\_ little.

Keep your \_\_\_\_\_ to the grindstone.

When ill luck falls asleep, let none \_\_\_\_\_ her.

The girl who can't \_\_\_\_\_ says the band \_\_\_\_\_ can't \_\_\_\_\_ play.

(Answers: fears, memory, Trouble, accomplishes, nose, wake, dance)

# Tips for First-Time Buyers

While real estate prices are rising in some areas –notably Vancouver’s west side and Richmond – now might just be the best buying opportunity in some others. Follow these steps to determine where to begin:

**Establish a Realistic Budget.** Owning a home involves more costs than meet the eye. In addition to mortgage, taxes and insurance, wise homebuyers set aside a little savings toward maintenance and unexpected emergencies. Remember, you will eventually need to repair or replace many items in the home.

**Buy What You Need.** While real estate is often considered an excellent investment, it’s important to only purchase as much home as you actually need. Bigger isn’t always better;

sometimes it’s simply more expensive. Higher taxes, bigger insurance bills and more maintenance can eat away at even the best budgets. So buy what you need, unless it’s wise for you to...

**Plan for Growth.** First-time buyers can also be too modest when it comes to purchasing their first homes. If you intend to begin a family, you may quickly outgrow the home. Plan for growth to ensure you will be as happy in the home tomorrow as you are today.

**Understand Appreciation.** Although you don’t want to base the purchase of your home solely upon appreciation, it’s important to understand how the future value of your home is likely to impact your ability to move up later in life. When the time comes to sell, rent or exchange the current property, a home

with long-term appreciation provides greater buying options in the future. Search for neighbourhoods expected to rise in value over time.

**Work with a Reputable Agent.** A great real estate agent or broker is often worth his or her weight in gold, which is why you will typically find that investors would never think of going it alone. Unfortunately, many first-time buyers are under the mistaken impression they can save money by helping the seller eliminate or reduce the commission. Research shows this is rarely the case. Most agents help negotiate a lower sales price and ensure that funding, necessary paperwork and other important legal considerations are all taken care of.

## Two Ways to Save on Your Phone Bill

Still spending too much on monthly telephone bills? Start saving today by slashing the cost of long distance and extra features with these super-inexpensive telephone providers:

### Vonage

Starting from \$19.99 per month – including 500 minutes of local and long distance calls – Vonage is a leader in VOIP, or Voice over Internet Protocol, phone service. The base rate includes all the extras you have come to know and love at no additional cost. In many areas you can even pick your own phone number. For \$39.99 per month, you get unlimited calling anywhere in Canada, the US and some European countries. Visit [www.vonage.ca](http://www.vonage.ca).

### Skype

Make free video calls and regular telephone calls by downloading Skype. Free voicemail, group chats and a variety of other fun features make Skype a popular choice for VOIP. Visit [www.skype.com](http://www.skype.com).

## Pop Culture

**LEGO** – when LEGO was invented, it only had two colours, red and white.

**Campbell’s Soup** - Seventy cans of Campbell’s soup are sold every second in the U.S. More than any other product.

**Dr. Suess** – Suess’ editor, Bennett Cerf, bet Suess that he couldn’t write a book using fewer than 50 different words.

Cerf lost when Suess produced Green Eggs and Ham.

**The Beatles** – their first recording contract in 1962 paid a \$.01t royalty for every single sold in the U.K. – and they all had to split it!

**Mount Rushmore** – took 14 yrs to finish and its sculptor, Gutzon Borglum, died 7 months before its completion.

## Ask the Agent: This Month’s Question

**In a slower market, what can I do to give my house the best chance of attracting a buyer?**

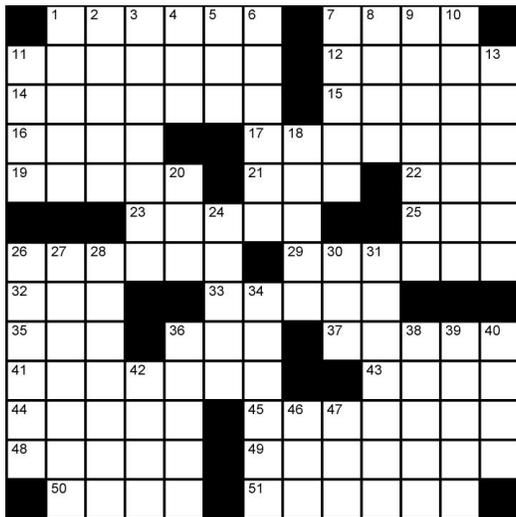
Without a doubt, the most important consideration in any market is to **price the home right**...especially if you want a quick sale. When the market is hot, homes sell faster so it is easy to forget that historically homes are on the market an average of six months before selling. Be realistic and work with your agent to price right.

In addition, make sure your home looks its best by updating paint, making small repairs and taking the time to properly stage your home for online and in-person viewing. Don’t neglect the outside of your house – its curb appeal makes a lasting impression on buyers.

Remember that window-shopping is a popular pastime, even when it comes to real estate. One of the benefits of working with an agent is the ability to preserve your valuable time and only entertain serious offers from qualified potential buyers.

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## Crossword

Contact me for the solution!

### Across

1. Fundraiser with tickets
7. Kind of hockey shot
11. North American reindeer
12. Word after Supreme or tennis
14. I'd like to thank my \_\_\_ fans ...
15. One on horseback
16. Key \_\_\_ pie
17. Hard to find
19. Full of froth
21. Capture
22. Grain or coal holder
23. Peter Peter Pumpkin \_\_\_
25. Was the front-runner
26. Full of gumption
29. Continues the subscription
32. \_\_\_ and wisdom
33. Clothes go in and out of it
35. \_\_\_ you kidding me?
36. Also
37. "Me and Bobby \_\_\_"
41. Operation to catch a fugitive
43. Northern Iraqi
44. Map in a map
45. Android's lack
48. "Rocky" costar Talia \_\_\_
49. One waltzing Down Under
50. \_\_\_ vera
51. Withdraw from the Union

Crossword by Douglas R. Fink

### Down

1. "Video Killed the \_\_\_ Star"
2. Scent
3. Hook-and-ladder people
4. Agt. Mulder and Scully's employer
5. Actor Chaney
6. Playwright O'Neill
7. Use an SOS pad
8. Superman's gal
9. Hearable
10. Sneak peak showing
11. Farm animal, or part of its leg
13. What the fashion-savvy watch for
18. A Stoooge
20. Gab
24. He caught Holyfield's ear
26. Wise men with turbans
27. Vicious fish
28. Tool or implement
30. Shade tree
31. Kid's formal clip-on
34. Carvings on a pole
36. Private pupil
38. Artisan alliance
39. Wear away, like a canyon
40. "Hairspray" mom
42. Purple Heart wearer, say
46. Actress \_\_\_ West
47. Like NASDAQ tradings

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## Recipe: Honey Mustard Tilapia with Pecan Crust

Serves 4

- 4 filets tilapia
- 2 tablespoons honey
- 2 tbsps Dijon mustard
- 1/4 teaspoon garlic powder
- Salt and pepper to taste
- 1/2 cup chopped pecans

Preheat oven to 375 degrees.

Prepare a baking sheet by lightly greasing it, then set aside.

In a small bowl combine the honey, mustard, garlic powder, salt and pepper. Place the chopped pecans on a plate. Dip or spread the honey mustard mixture on one side of each tilapia filet, then gently press into the pecans so that they stick and create a uniform coating. Arrange the fish filets pecan side up.

Bake uncovered for about 10 minutes or until the fish is cooked through and the pecans are lightly toasted.

Note: The chopped pecans should be about the size of a peppercorn or slightly larger. The size is important so that the pieces can adhere to the fish without falling off.

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