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## AGENT BOSKO'S JOURNAL

Welcome to my April 2011 Newsletter!

### GTA REALTORS® Report Monthly Resale Housing Market Figures

#### GTA REALTORS® Report Monthly Resale Housing Market Figures

TORONTO, April 5, 2011 -- Greater Toronto REALTORS® reported 9,262 transactions through the TorontoMLS® system in March 2011, representing the second best March result on record. The number of transactions was 11 per cent lower than the record result reported in March 2010.

"The strong home sales reported in March and throughout the first quarter of 2011 have been based on a solid affordability picture and improving economic conditions in the GTA and country-wide," said Toronto Real Estate Board (TREB) President Bill Johnston.

The average selling price for March 2011 was up five per cent year-over-year to \$456,147. The strongest average annual price growth was reported for condominium apartments and semi-detached houses, at approximately seven per cent for both home types.

"Market conditions were tighter in March compared to last year. With more competition between buyers, we have seen a strong but sustainable rate of price growth," said Jason Mercer, TREB's Senior Manager of Market Analysis.

Summary of March Sales and Average Price

Area	Homes Sold (2011)	Average Sales Price (2011)	Homes Sold (2010)	Average Sales Price (2010)
City of Toronto (416)	3690	\$497,276	4037	\$477,263
Rest of the GTA (905)	5572	\$428,910	6393	\$407,817
Total	9262	\$456,147	10430	\$434,696

Sincerely,

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# A Few Myths About Debt

By David Ramsey author of "Financial Peace"

**Myth #1:** You need to take out a credit card or car loan to build your credit.

**Truth:** Open credit cards with zero balances and car payments count against your credit score.

**Myth # 2:** I pay off my credit card every month.

**Truth:** 78% of North Americans do not pay off the balance at the end of the month. If you pay by cash or debit you always spend 12-18% less at the grocery store, most people will buy 25-50% more because a grocery store is 'The Land of impulse buying'.

**Myth # 3:** I can get air miles if I use my credit card.

**Truth:** Consumer reports say 75% of all air miles are never redeemed. Even if you try many of the flights you want are 'blacked out'. Jupiter and Mars generally must be perfectly aligned with the moon in order to redeem many of the Air miles.

**Myth # 4:** Credit card companies team up with car manufacturers to offer a 5% rebate to a maximum of \$3,000.00 towards the purchase price of a new car.

**Truth:** You will have to spend \$60,000 on the credit card in order to earn it. Then when you drive it off the lot, the car automatically loses \$7,000 in value.

## Pre-Listing Preparation Is More Than Half the Battle!

Normal wear and tear to a home is often not immediately apparent to its owners. Few have the time to maintain their property in "showroom" condition on a daily basis. One of the most important services a Realtor can provide is an objective assessment of the jobs that should be completed before a property is listed for sale.

Recently, I was invited to do a pre-listing inspection of a lovely home that had some wonderful features, but had simply gotten a bit 'tired'. I carefully suggested a few improvements that would more than pay for themselves; some fresh paint here and a few yards of new carpet there, nothing unusual. You should have seen the results!

The 'new' version offered 'just move in' appeal, and for much less than the owner quickly realized in his 'bonus' sale price!

**Do you know someone who is thinking of selling?  
I'd be pleased to do a similar 'pre-listing' inspection for them too!**



# CURB APPEAL



## 5 Quick Fixes that Improve Curb Appeal... For Under \$500!!!

It's a known fact: Good-looking well maintained homes sell faster (and command a higher price) than houses that appear worn down and tired. In today's attractive rollercoaster real estate market enhancing curb appeal- the first impression of a house as seen from the street - can mean the difference between attracting serious buyers, resulting in a sale, or having the property languished for months as unsold. "Adding curb appeal is a quick and easy way to liven up the home's exterior and improve value of the home" says Leslie Segrete. She offers the following curb appeal tips for under \$500 :

### Tip # 1: Refresh Exterior Wood

One of the most significant curb-appeal improvements home owners can make is to refresh all exterior wood surfaces. Check wood siding, trim, doors, mailboxes, decks and fences for fading, dirt and peeling paint. If the wood is unfinished, use a wood cleaner; if it's finished, use a wood stripping solution. Next, add a fresh coat of stain so these wood surfaces look clean and new again. Consider adding colour to outdoor wood furniture with an exterior wood stain; it's an inexpensive way to "decorate" outdoors.

### Tip #2 : Prune Foliage and Shrubs, Add Mulch

Trim shrubs and trees, manicure the lawn. Consider energizing the landscape by planting fresh flowers -simply adding \$100 in brightly coloured annuals will instantly improve the total appearance of the yard. Take time to prune the dead branches, trim back overgrown shrubbery and spread mulch or lark around trees, shrubs and flowers for a weed-free, well-kept look. Also,

small shrubs are great for concealing unattractive aspects of a home's exterior, including unappealing air-conditioning units.

### Tip #3: Freshen Up Windows, Shutters and Gutters

Clean windows that flank the front door and repair broken windows and torn screens. Repair and clean shutters to complement the revitalized front entrance, and remember to clean surrounding gutters as they can instantly ruin a first impression.

### Tip #4: Lighten Up

To add warmth and add interest , consider installing exterior lighting fixtures to shed some light on a favourite tree, or illuminate the walkway. Remember to clean existing light fixtures and replace burnt-out bulbs.

### Tip # 5: Accessorize

A small number of accessories add charm, especially at the home's entryway. Consider adding a few understated ornaments like burgeoning flowerpots, a colourful welcome mat, a name plate or a small rocking chair to make the space look "homey" and welcome. These small additions will attract home buyers who can envision themselves in the lovely space.

Quick, easy and inexpensive, these five tips will infuse instant energy and appeal into any home's exterior.

## Why Paying Off Your Mortgage May Be the Best Investment You Ever Made!

It has been said that the best investment advice is to invest in what you **already know**. I believe that one of the best things that you can do right now is invest in paying off your mortgage. Why? In today's low interest environment it is pretty hard to find a safe and secure investment that will pay more than 3 or 4%. When you pay down your mortgage, every \$1000.00 you pay off, saves you 3 to 4% automatically. Unless your investments are in your RRSP, you would have to make at least a 6 to 7% return on your investments, in order to get the same return as paying down your mortgage.

Paying down, or paying off your mortgage achieves two objectives:

- 1) Getting a guaranteed return by automatically saving you the annual interest that is paid.
- 2) Eliminating risk and keeping your family safe.

The moment your house is paid off, you have a greater ability to save for your kids education, travel, live on one salary, or (I am knocking on wood as I write this) if you were to get "hit by a bus" or become seriously ill, you could sell the home easily and live off the proceeds for at least 5-10 years.

## Kids' Proverbs

A third grade teacher collected well-known proverbs. She gave the class the first half of the proverb, and asked them to come up with the rest. Here's what the kids came up with:

Strike while the ..... Bug is close  
Never underestimate the power of ..... Termites  
Don't bite the hand that..... Looks dirty  
A miss is as good as a ..... Mr.  
You can't teach an old dog..... Math  
If you lie down with dogs, you ..... Will stink in the morning  
No news is ..... Impossible  
The pen is mightier than ..... the pigs  
An idle mind is ..... The best way to relax  
Early to bed and early to rise ..... Is first in the bathroom  
When the blind lead the blind ..... Get out of the way  
The grass is always greener ..... When you leave the sprinkler on  
The squeaky wheel ..... Gets annoying  
If you can't stand the heat ..... Don't start the fireplace



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