

Breathing Out And Breathing In

As I commence composing this month's Update (and the final edition of 2008), I am gazing at the REBGV Average Price graph for Jan 1977 to Nov 2008, you know, the one that has appeared frequently in the newspaper and in articles (and advertisements exhorting people to become home owners – until earlier this year, that is!).

It is created by placing a “pin prick” on the graph each month which represents the average price of all detached, attached and apartments sold in that specific month. As is the nature of graphs, a squiggly line appears by “linking the dots” much like that on a patient's chart at the foot of a hospital bed. (view the REBGV Average Price graph for Jan 1977 to Nov 2008 by clicking here)

Since earlier this year (I've heard theories ranging from Jan to May '08 as the “height of the market”) this jagged curve has been falling, representing higher supply and lower demand, or, as one commentator stated – those on the selling side who have to sell and those on the buying side who can buy at their price. The point being that nobody really “has to” buy. The “softer” demand is borne out by the fact that, in Greater Vancouver, the total number of sales Nov '07 to Nov '08 dropped by 70% (i.e. to 874 during this past month). The clear message to sellers continues to be “if you have to sell in the short term (with minimal evident demand) accept a lower, and declining, sales price”. If one can, “wait and see” with an anticipated recovery of demand that may well be to their advantage.

The \$64,000 question is, of course, when (and how soon) will that demand recover? Could today's unhurried seller become tomorrow's (or next quarter's) frantic seller? Either way it augers well for those seeking enhanced affordability and, yes, those seeking a great deal.

As this year coasts to a quiet close, I reiterate a previous injunction – potential sellers seek advice from an experienced Realtor on when to sell (and at what price to list the property) and potential buyers do likewise with a heightened emphasis on an experienced negotiator to pin down that “great deal”. Please note, no Realtor can make you buy or sell – you must have the confidence that your decision is the right one for the times.

Now, as we approach the Season, it is once again the time to embrace our families, give thanks for our blessings, and some extra cheer to strangers in need. Thanks to all my friends, colleagues, clients and acquaintances for your support, feedback and for reading my monthly missives! To all, stay safe and keep warm in your abodes… ‘til 2009….

Again, visit my website to see and “hear” the new developments. I continue my commitment to keep you…. www.OnTopOfTheMarket.ca. This work in progress strives to be the “go to” site for North Shore Real Estate analysis and jumping off point for FULL market listing information.

To join the group getting the e-mail version of this “update” - send a request now to alanskinner@shaw.ca and you'll be assured receipt; phone me at (604) 988-7368 or visit www.OnTopOfTheMarket.ca