

RESALE HOMES COLLECTIONS

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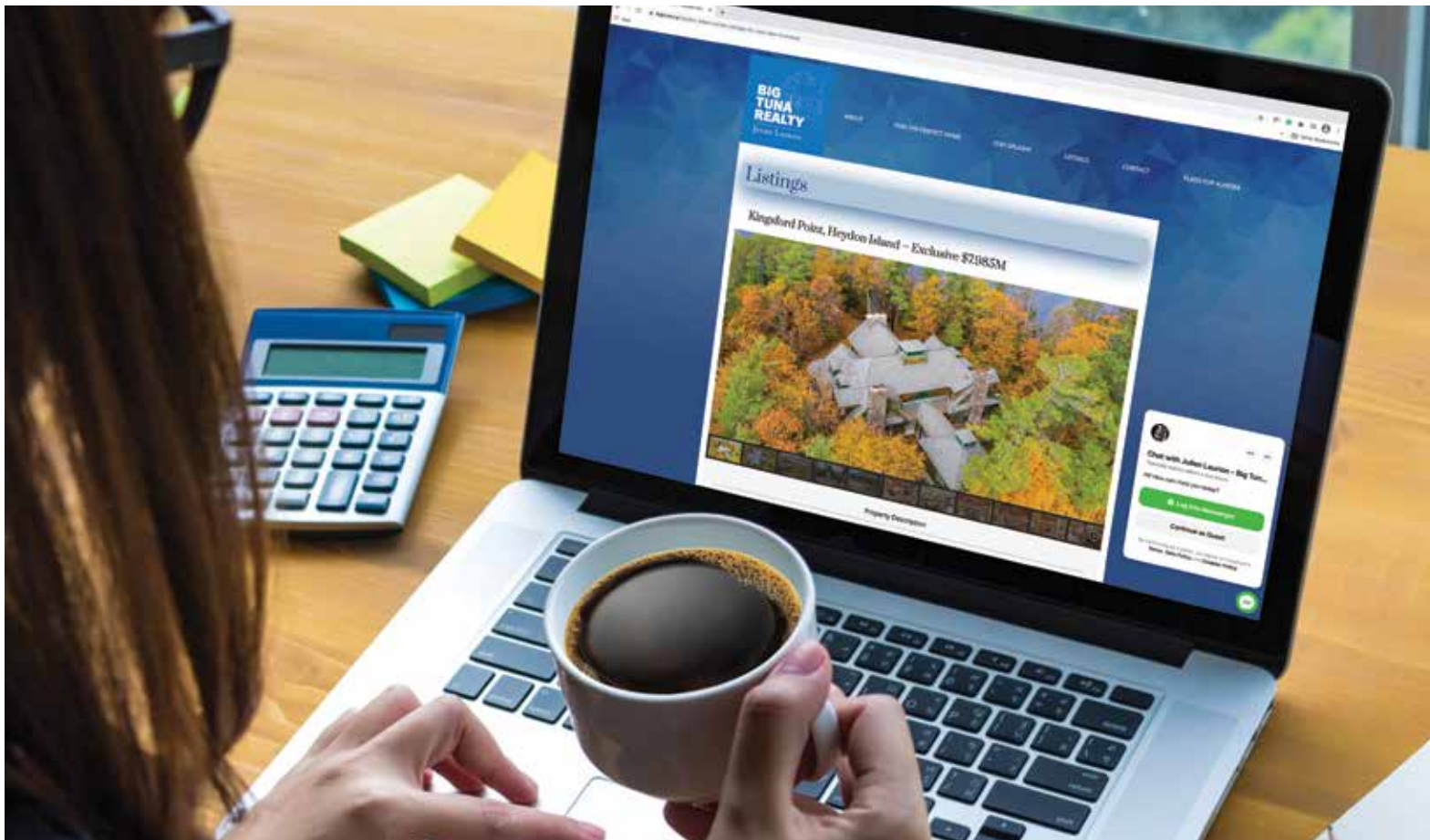
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Creative ways to get your photos off your phone and enjoy them

(NC) Did you know that today only an average of one in every 100,000 photos are printed?

With most of us taking all our shots on smartphones or digital cameras, we have more images, but fewer tangible records of our best memories.

Fortunately, there are many ways to enjoy your life's precious moments and make sure that they're not just another file in the cloud. Here are some key ways to enjoy your photographs to the fullest:

- 1 Don't just print the highlights:** Every moment is print-worthy, from the candid to the curated. Print off and display photos that make you happy, even if they weren't taken in a studio.
- 2 Manage digital photos:** Create a yearly album in your cell phone and print a photo book for each year. Instead of printing individual photos and putting them in albums yourself, you can upload them all to a photo book throughout the year. Pro tip: add your favourite photos to a folder on your phone as you take them to save time when sorting later.
- 3 Surround yourself with photos:** Hang up, frame and show off your favourite moments with pride. Surrounding yourself with your favourite memories is a great way to decorate your home and brighten your day.
- 4 Gift photos:** Use your favourite pictures with friends and family to create unique gifts such as blankets, puzzles, books and canvas art pieces. Fujifilm Printlife is a great and affordable service for making jaw-dropping, high-quality gifts locally in Canada.

Find more gift ideas and ways to enjoy your photographs at fujifilmprintlife.ca.

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Real estate and the pandemic

By **Julien Laurion**
The Big Tuna of Real Estate

HAPPY NEW YEAR! Even though the beginning of 2021 looks just like 2020, the great news is there is a vaccine on the horizon which is a game-changer! In the meantime, we must endure and abide by the stay-at-home order and health guidelines that are in place. The spread of Covid 19 is at alarming rates in the province and the GTA. The latest stay-at-home has created considerable confusion around a number of areas. I will try and clarify how this order impacts the world of Real Estate.

Masks are required to be worn at all times! Inside a home, outside a home and anytime you are with people. This has been the case all along, so no change there.

All open houses are BANNED. Full stop.

Virtual options are to be utilized first before an in-person viewing, which is permitted. Realtors are encouraged to use this option as much as possible and may replace an in-person visit if the purchaser is satisfied with what can be observed via video.

If a virtual tour is not available on a specific property, your agent could go into the home and walk you through with a Facetime or Zoom call. This reduces risk by quite a bit since the realtor would be alone in the home. If you would like to see a sample of a virtual tour, feel free to head over to my website bigtuna.ca and click on my listings tab to see an active listing where I had to employ all the virtual tactics. Not only because of the pandemic, but it's a luxury property on its own private island in Muskoka.

Should the purchaser wish to do an in-person tour of the home, PPE must be in place and all social distancing measures are to be followed. A detailed log must be kept on who enters the home. Additionally, a consent form must be completed certifying that you have not been in contact with someone who has COVID and you are free of any symptoms.

Real Estate transactions have been deemed an

essential business/service. However, it is not business as usual. We are all becoming very familiar with the procedures and protocols that have to be followed to keep everyone safe and healthy. By following them, you can comfortably sell or buy a home. I would be happy to speak to anyone who would like more information on how to proceed. Stay healthy everyone!

Julien Laurion AKA Big Tuna is a local Real Estate Sale Representative with Royal LePage Your Community Realty in Aurora. I am a real estate agent who has expertise in both Real Estate and Renovations and has been involved in this community for over 20 years. If you have a question for my monthly article or if you are considering buying, selling or leasing a home please feel free to call or email me directly at (416) 402-5530 or julien@bigtuna.ca or by alternatively visiting my website www.bigtuna.ca or Facebook page @bigtunarealty

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Planning a renovation?

Staying safe is your number one priority



(NC) As we spend more time at home during the pandemic, we're thinking about our spaces differently so we can make the most of them. Reinvention can help you extend your functional square footage and ensure your home keeps up with your evolving needs. Here are some inspiring ideas to try:

RETHINK YOUR OUTDOORS

We've all fallen in love with spending time outside, as it's a safer way of seeing friends and family separate from our household. But as the temperature dips, it's time to get creative to keep these get-togethers going. You can continue to enjoy your backyard with an outdoor firepit or heating lamp. Your garage can function as a man cave with a well-loved couch and foosball table, while a screened-in porch can make the perfect sunroom when you add a comfy armchair and fuzzy blanket. To help make your garage, covered porch or patio feel cozy and inviting, lay down some subfloor panels from Dricore. They insulate against cold, hard concrete to create a softer and warmer environment.

REIMAGINE YOUR CLOSETS

Who says a closet can serve only one purpose? There are many creative ways to use these small spaces throughout your home. If you have a walk-in closet in your bedroom, consider turning it into a snug nursery with a basinet and a couple of chests of drawers for your clothes and the baby's things. If you have a traditional sliding-door closet in the kids' room, try pulling off the doors and using the resulting nook for a dedicated playspace or at-home learning spot. If you're planning on keeping your closets for storage, then invest in quality organizers to fit more things and free up space in other areas.

RECLAIM YOUR BASEMENT

A chilly, damp basement is uninviting and doesn't encourage you or your family to spend time there. But what if you could turn it into a warm and comforting space? Dricore subfloors can also help in here by helping to protect against moisture, mould and mildew so you have peace of mind knowing your flooring is safe. Once you have this essential step down, you can transform your basement into a valuable area of your home, like a gym or playroom. And because subfloors provide cushioning and warmth, you can feel comfortable walking around in your bare feet while doing yoga or letting the kids have fun on the floor.

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Planning a renovation? Staying safe is your number one priority

(NC) Whether it's for safety, work, or play, many of us are spending more time in our homes. Renovations and DIY projects are great ways to enhance your living space.

Whether it is just a new coat of paint, wallpaper, or something more involved like updating your kitchen, safety should always be priority number one.

Here are six tips to keep you and your family safe during renovations:

- 1** Gather the appropriate personal protective equipment. Protective gear may include gloves, a proper mask or respirator and safety glasses. Product labels and additional instructions included with the product may provide more detailed information on what you need to wear, including special types of masks or respirators. Remember – a dust mask will not protect you from chemical fumes.
- 2** Some building materials (like wallpaper, cleaning products, glues, particle board, paints and sealants) can emit harmful gases called volatile organic compounds (VOCs) into your indoor air. So be sure to buy low- and zero-VOC emission products wherever possible.
- 3** Keep your work areas well ventilated. This is especially important when refinishing furniture, using paints, varnishes, glues and adhesives, or doing other renovation projects that may create dust or release chemical fumes. Open windows and doors, run your exhaust fans and work outdoors, if possible.
- 4** Asbestos can be found in older building materials like insulation, cement, plaster, ceiling and floor tiles, house siding, and automobile parts. Hire a professional to test for asbestos before doing any renovations, remodeling or demolitions if you think you have some in your home. Never disturb or try to remove asbestos materials yourself. Hire an asbestos removal specialist.
- 5** Hire a professional to check for lead-based paint in homes built before 1990 as it can release harmful dust if disturbed or removed during renovations.
- 6** Find all mould and sources of excess moisture throughout your home. Depending on where you're renovating, check basements, closets, windowsills, roofs, and around sinks, tubs and pipes. Consider hiring a professional to clean it up, especially if there is a large amount of mould. If the mould keeps coming back after you clean it, seek professional advice for help identifying and repairing persistent moisture issues.

Now that you've done your all-important safety homework, you're ready to get down to business with picking colours and designs. Find more information on keeping a healthy home at canada.ca/healthy-home.

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Indoor winter activities the whole family can enjoy

(NC) Got cabin fever? You're not alone.

Being stuck indoors all winter long is such a buzzkill. Instead of going stir crazy, channel your inner creativity and try out these indoor winter activities to do with your kids.

1. Make a snowman suncatcher. There are plenty of tutorials online, but you can try this one: Print out a suncatcher snowman craft template onto heavy cardstock. Cut out the snowman template. Then, cut out a piece of clear contact paper. Stick the front side of the snowman onto the contact paper. Remove the excess contact paper.

Cut out the eyes, nose and button templates. Trace them onto coloured construction paper and cut out and place them on the snowman. Cut small squares out of white tissue paper. Place them on the inside of the snowman, making sure to completely cover the contact paper. Hang it in a window that catches the morning sun.

2. Cozy up with homemade hot cocoa. Embrace the cold winter nights and warm up with some hot chocolate, your favourite pjs and a cozy blanket.

If you've got older kids, let them take the reins in the kitchen. You could even try to make a coffee-flavoured dessert to accompany the hot cocoa.

3. Host a living room campout. Grab chairs from the kitchen, sheets from the linen closet and comfy blankets, pillows, throws and stuffed friends from the bedroom to build your fort. Next, bundle fairy lights inside Mason jars so when you turn off the lights it looks magical. Finally, serve up some snacks with camping vibes like Orville Redenbacher buttery microwaveable popcorn with no artificial colours, flavours, or preservatives, hot dogs and gummy worms.

Find more recipes to enjoy this winter at orville.ca.
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Working remotely? How to optimize your setup

(NC) Though social distancing has been in place for months now, perfecting our work-from-home setup continues to be a challenge for many of us.

Here are a few surprising ways that you can streamline your routine using your mobile phone from anywhere:

1 Consider dark mode. Need to give your eyes a break? While blue light blocking glasses can help, another option is to give your eyes a rest by catching up on email from your phone using dark mode, which will help alleviate strain as you read.

2 Get a stand. Using your smartphone for conference calls can help add flexibility if you're having to move rooms to accommodate other family members' schedules. That said, the quickly draining battery and constant holding can be a pain. Look for a phone stand that has a built-in charger so battery life doesn't slow you down and you can dial in hands free.

3 Wi-Fi vs data. With home now acting as everything from the boardroom to the movie theatre, it's worth assessing your internet plan to ensure you get good download speeds and a reliable signal. But Wi-Fi is only half the equation. Connect with an unbiased mobile expert like those at The Mobile Shop virtually or in store to make sure your mobile plan is working optimally for you right now. If you have internet issues, you may want to consider an unlimited data mobile plan, so you don't get dropped from conference calls.

4 Use alarms and reminders. Have you dialed in late to a virtual meeting since working from your home office? Set up reminders and alarms on your phone to add extra security for important meetings and mix in reminders to walk the dog or check in with the kids while you're at it. Our routine has changed, we can all use an extra nudge or two.

5 Create space. Whether we're at home or out of the house during the day, many of us need constant access to our mobile devices, so juggling the needs of family members who may need to get connected for at-home learning can be tough. Accessories like noise-cancelling headphones and phone stands can be game-changers if you're not able to spread out.

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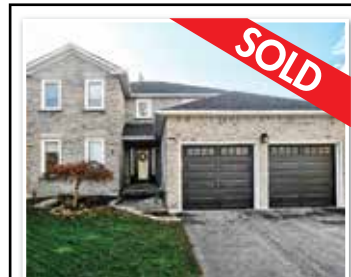
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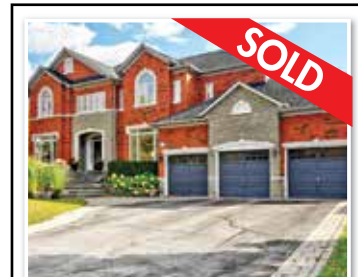
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Plow through layers of laundry with some simple hacks

(NC) Sometimes it can feel like we have an endless laundry list of chores to take care of around the house, and laundry is one of them. And as we start to bundle up, put on more layers and continue to swap out masks daily, it's important to work smarter, not harder.

Here are some easy tips to help you reduce your time in the laundry room and keep your clothes looking brand new.

- Preparation is key – purchase a multi-bag laundry hamper for you and your kids. This way, when it's time to throw things in the laundry, clothes can be sorted with little-to-no effort.
- Skip the detergent measuring. Did you know if you use too much detergent in your washer it can actually make your clothes dirtier? With Whirlpool's load and go feature, simply add detergent once and skip refills and measuring, so you get the perfect

amount of detergent for each and every load, meaning you never have to worry about too much detergent again.

- Use mesh laundry bags for small and delicate items like face masks to ensure they don't get lost in a pant leg or damaged during the cycle.
- There's nothing worse than staining your favourite new shirt. Avoid wasting your time soaking and scrubbing day-old stains, instead look for a washer that will fight the stains for you. While some stains dissolve best in hot water and others in cold, a Maytag washer can fight both in a single load with

its extra power button feature with dual-temperature wash. Easily transfer loads from washer to dryer and from dryer to laundry basket without worrying about clean clothes falling on the floor by getting a dryer with a hamper door.

Most importantly, picking a washing machine and dryer that do the hard work can help you spend more time with your family and less time doing laundry. Look for Wi-Fi capabilities so you can be notified as soon as your laundry is done, and you never have to worry about forgetting a load in the washer or dryer again.

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TOP TIPS FOR AFFORDABLE winter storage solutions

(NC) It's time to pack away the last of your warm weather wear as we transition into another cold winter. But with home serving more functions than normal right now, space is at a premium and you may not have many places left to store things in an organized way.

To make this year easier, we spoke with Kevin Joyce in Hardgoods Buying, from Canadian discount retailer Giant Tiger for some tips for affordable storage solutions for your home and car.

WINTER WARDROBE
When using and storing winter gear like scarves, hats, mittens and other knits, it's important to ensure they have air circulation. Many of these fabrics are at risk of being put away damp, which can cause odours if stored in plastic bins or air-tight containers. An easy solution is

to purchase a rolling rack with wire baskets. Each member of the family gets their own basket shelf, and the open-wire design allows air to flow and items to dry. If you buy a rack on wheels, it can be easily stored in your hall closet and wheeled out when needed.

WINTER FOOTWEAR
Make sure to protect your floors from salt or water damage caused by wet footwear. Keeping your outdoor shoes on a plastic boot tray may be one of the simplest and most cost-effective winter storage tips. Additionally, shallow plastic bins can be placed on the closet floor, perfect for organizing winter footwear that comes in various heights and sizes.

WINTER CAR STORAGE
From ice scrapers to extra gloves, chances are you've got a variety of seasonal accessories that are loose inside your vehicle. Try using collapsible organizers with multiple compartments to keep all your items in one place. This will help declutter your cargo space and prevent items from rolling around while driving. Any low-cost storage bins will do the trick, but if they are collapsible you can easily hide them under the seats when not in use.

Storage solutions come in a wide variety of shapes and sizes to meet your needs, but they also come in a variety of price points. Organizing your home for the winter doesn't need to break the bank, so try your local discount retailer like Giant Tiger where you can find quality items for less.

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RECIPE FOR STYLISH SPACES: Designer tips to transform your kitchen with colour



(NC) The kitchen is truly the heart of the home, pulling more than just double duty by serving as study space, second living room, work-from-home zone and dining room.

With more of us spending more time at home – and more time cooking – now is the perfect time to transform your kitchen. Here Sharon Grech, Benjamin Moore colour and design expert shares her designer advice to give your kitchen a fresh new look.

True blue This year, one of the hottest trends in kitchens is blue accents. “If you tend towards a more

neutral palette, blue is an ideal colour to experiment with as it pairs well with multiple styles and with other colours,” says Grech.

Stylish shades of blue-green, like the 2021 colour of the year Aegean Teal 2136-40, will make your kitchen a welcoming, comforting space for creativity and culinary adventure.

Serve up looks One of the most impactful, fast and cost-effective ways to transform your kitchen is by painting your cabinets.

“I am an advocate for repainting, not replacing and with Benjamin Moore paint a DIY kitchen transformation with professional results is possible in a weekend,” says Grech.

The kitchen is the most high-traffic space in any home making durability essential. “Opt for the

hard, furniture-like finish of Advance interior paint, available in four popular sheens, including matte and high gloss, to suit any kitchen style from farmhouse to ultra-modern.”

Once you have repainted your cabinets, add new hardware to replace existing door pulls and handles to complete your DIY transformation.

Accent your island Want to add just a touch of colour to your neutral kitchen? Painting the island in a complementary shade is a favourite designer trick to add style and a focal point to the kitchen.

Grech recommends shades like Hale Navy HC-154 and Van Deusen Blue HC-156 for blues that suit styles ranging from minimal to traditional.

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Remodel your kitchen habits for less waste

(NC) Although kitchen renovations can be very worthwhile, sometimes it's the little things that can make a big difference. For example, consider some more eco-friendly habits.

The kitchen has more potential for waste and inefficiency than other areas in the home, but there are easy ways to be less wasteful without a major overhaul, all while helping to take a load off the planet. Here's how:

RETHINK STORAGE FOR FOOD AND LEFTOVERS.

Swap single-use food wrapping for reusable elasticized bowl covers, beeswax wraps and non-plastic zipper-top storage bags. Use recyclable mason jars or glass containers with airtight sealing lids. These all come in pretty designs and colours to suit all tastes.

INVEST IN REUSABLE BAKING ESSENTIALS.

With home baking here to stay, trade in the disposable parchment paper and cupcake and muffin liners for eco-friendly silicone baking mats, pans and baking cups. The icing on the cake – pop them in the dishwasher for easy cleanup.

PREVENT FOOD WASTE WITH A MEAL PLAN.

Plan meals ahead with more mindful grocery shopping and do more home cooking. Learn how to use commonly discarded – yet still usable – parts of food, such as vegetable scraps for soup stock; think broccoli cores and kale stems. Get into composting what you can't use to keep it from landfills. Buy yourself a stylish compost tin for the counter to collect organic waste and discard appropriately.

USE THE DISHWASHER MORE.

Contrary to popular belief, running the dishwasher half full wastes less water and energy compared to handwashing those same dishes. An Energy Star-certified dishwasher uses 15 litres of water every cycle while a running faucet uses the same amount every two minutes. Consider Cascade Platinum ActionPacs, which save water by not requiring pre-washing.

Find more tips and information at cascade.takeahalfoff.ca/en.

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Organizing your home?

DON'T FORGET THIS IMPORTANT STEP

(NC) With many of us spending more time at home, we're tidying our closets, basements and storage spaces. While you're doing this, it's a great time to calculate the value of your belongings with a personal inventory.

Over the years, we accumulate a lot of things, and it's easy to lose track. However, all belongings are worth a price, and you may be surprised. That's where a personal inventory comes into play. To create your own and ensure you will be adequately compensated for your possessions if they are stolen or damaged, here are some tips to follow:

DO YOUR RESEARCH

Shopping addicts will be thrilled because an important step to creating your personal inventory is to identify the retail price of your goods. Do some online sleuthing at your favourite stores to have a better idea of what it would cost if you had to replace everything.

CLEAN OUT YOUR CLOSET

You don't have to wait for a change of season to tidy up your wardrobe. Go through your clothes and accessories one by one in order to have an accurate count and take the opportunity to donate what you don't want anymore. This will help you develop an estimate of what your closet is worth. In the future you can save your receipts to update your inventory with new items.

USE ONLINE TOOLS

Some insurance providers such as Belairdirect offer user-friendly forms to help you. They will speed up the process and make it easy to keep it updated, organized and accessible.

RENT WITH PEACE OF MIND

Even if you are a tenant, it is important to make an inventory of your belongings. Whether it's the fridge your aunt gave you when you moved out, your grandmother's sofa or your parents' old bed that furnishes your home, all your belongings must be listed so that you have an accurate replacement cost for all your household goods should anything happen.

After all the hard work you've done, it's important to stay on top of your list with check-ins every year or each time you make large purchases.

Find other tips and learn more about the importance of an up-to-date personal inventory at belairdirect.com.

www.newscanada.com



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Aerial Photos of 13155 Hwy 27 & 13161 Hwy 27 Properties Combined

Real Estate Market Update – Aurora



Strong demand to lead into the New Year

W

With high anticipation for a fresh start to a healthy New Year, 74 homes were sold across Aurora at an average price of \$1,104,698 in December 2020. There were 66 new homes placed for sale, and on January 1st, 2021, only 92 homes were available for sale, making it a strong Seller's market with such a low inventory of homes on the market.

Sellers are typically yielding 100 percent of the asking price, and on average, all home types were sold in 31 days or less.

There were 17 percent more homes sold in 2020, translating to 1,125 sales across the ten neighbourhoods of Aurora, and the average price for a detached home at year-end was \$1,264, 812 which is a 40 percent improvement year over year. In the month of December, the average price for a detached home rose to \$1,399,166, a 32 percent improvement compared to the prior year.

Low-interest rates are keeping Buyer's interested in the real estate market regardless of the COVID-19 concerns, and REALTORS® is continuing to serve clients

as essential service real estate professionals as safely as possible with COVID-19 protocols.

If you're considering selling or buying real estate, book an online virtual appointment with a real estate professional to safely review market statistics for the neighbourhood and to design the ideal plan of action keeping safety as a top priority.

– Written by Connie Power

Connie Power is the Manager, Real Estate Sales Representative CNE® SRS® ABR® SRES®, for RE/MAX Hallmark York Group Realty Ltd., Brokerage serving York region and beyond in the Greater Toronto Area (GTA).

Empowering you in Real Estate, Call Connie today to make an appointment to discuss your next move at (905) 726-0856.

*The statistics provided herein were obtained from the Toronto Regional Real Estate Board; Statistics and Counts for York Region, Aurora for December of 2019, 2020.

***Not intended to solicit those currently under a real estate contract.

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