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FEATURES

Why it's smart to have a smart home	2
Items to get you started on creating your smart home	2
Valuable renovations.....	5
Ask A Realtor	7
Ask Big Tuna, The Renovating Realtor	9
Organize and declutter room-by-room	9
Market Update.....	10
12 ways to maximize vertical space	11

AURORA/KING

VOLUME 7, ISSUE 1

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Learn to view houses with open eyes!

Remaining objective can be a difficult task when viewing a house. It is easy to fall in love with a home's appearance, blind to problems that may make it unsuitable. While aesthetics can be an important consideration, it is necessary to look beyond window-dressing.

Continued on page 4

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WHY IT'S SMART to have a smart home

Developments are everywhere. According to a recent visual networking index forecast from Cisco, by 2021, there will be four networked devices and connections per person across the globe. Those figures are even greater in North America, where Cisco estimates each person will have 13 networked devices and connections by 2021.

With all those devices, it's no surprise that a greater number of people are embracing the smart home movement. Those who have yet to jump on the bandwagon can benefit from learning more about smart homes and why it's intelligent to have a smart home.

What is a smart home?

According to SmartHomeUSA.com, the term "smart home" is commonly used to define residences in which appliances, lighting, heating and cooling units, televisions, computers, entertainment systems, and security systems are capable of communicating with one another. Each of these components can be controlled remotely, typically via a smartphone.

Why is it smart to have a smart home?

The benefits of a smart home are numerous, and will likely only multiply as people utilize more devices.

TIME: A recent joint survey from CNET and Coldwell Banker found that 57 percent of Americans say that smart home technology saves them an average of 30 minutes per day. That's an especially beneficial advantage for busy parents and/or professionals who find it difficult to juggle all of their daily responsibilities.

MONEY: Another benefit to smart homes is their cost savings. Because devices can be controlled remotely, smart home owners can adjust the temperatures on their heating and cooling units while away from home. That means they can arrive home each night to a comfortable home without having to run their HVAC systems all day while no one was home. In fact, the CNET/Coldwell Banker survey found 45 percent of Americans say that smart home products save them an average of \$98.30 each month.

INVESTMENT: Whether you're a developer or a single-family homeowner, real estate is an investment. Making a home as appealing to prospective buyers as possible is a great way to get a better return on your real estate investment. The CNET/Coldwell Banker survey found that 81 percent of buyers would be more likely to buy a home if smart home products were already installed. That can make the market for your home more competitive, ultimately earning you more money at resale.

Smart homes are both the present and the future. Homeowners who want to make their homes more livable today and more marketable tomorrow should consider investing in smart home products.



...Those who have yet to jump on the bandwagon can benefit from learning more about smart homes and why it's intelligent to have a smart home....

Items to get you started on creating your smart home

TECHNOLOGY HAS CHANGED the way people live in the 21st century. Once ubiquitous, land lines anchored to kitchen walls have now given way to smartphones that can be taken anywhere. Bulky television sets that required at least two people to move have been replaced with high-definition offerings so light and thin they can be mounted on living room walls.

It's no great surprise that technology also is changing the physical places we call home. Smart homes are a rapidly growing trend. In a typical smart home, devices such as the thermostat, television and even the refrigerator can be controlled remotely through the internet.

Converting an existing home into a smart home can seem intimidating, especially for people

who don't consider themselves tech savvy. But today's user-friendly technology makes it relatively easy for anyone to turn his or her home into a smarter one.

Before you get started, recognize that there are certain must-have items to turn a home into a smart home.

HUB

The hub refers to software or hardware that connects all of your devices and gets them to work together. Think of the various devices you have and then think of their manufacturers. Chances are strong you have devices manufactured by various companies, and enabling those to work together might seem impossible. A hub does that work for you. And because they can be connected to your smartphone, hubs also make it possible to control devices while you're away from home.

WIFI ROUTER

Some people rent their routers from their internet/cable providers, while others buy their own routers. Regardless of which category you fall into, you're going to need a good WiFi router to get your smart home up and running. Determine which type of WiFi your home cur-

rently has and then find a router that's compatible with that WiFi. Request a list of routers that are compatible with your WiFi from your service provider, as not all routers will necessarily work with your internet connection. If possible, upgrade to the fastest WiFi your internet provider offers, as that will make your smart home that much more enjoyable and frustration-free.

DEVICES

You won't necessarily need to upgrade your devices to get a smart home. In fact, if you control or can control any device in your home with a smartphone, you are already on your way to having a smart home. Upgrading to a programmable thermostat that's compatible with your smartphone might be a great idea if your current thermostat is old and not internet-compatible. With a programmable thermostat, you can control the temperature in your home remotely. That ensures the home is a comfortable temperature when you arrive home and allows you to turn off costly heating and cooling units when no one is home.

Smart homes may seem futuristic. But chances are strong your home only needs some simple, inexpensive upgrades to join the smart home revolution.



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180 Hedge Road Georgina



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Mike Lacey* & Cinda Brown* \$ 1,775,000

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Stephanie Sinclair \$ 1,450,000**

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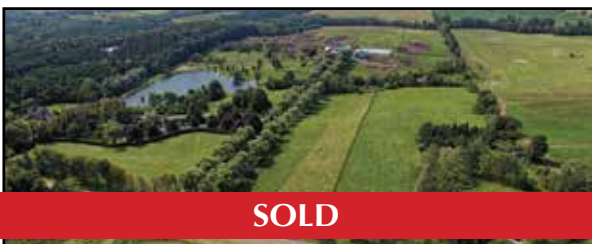


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Mike Lacey* & Cinda Brown*

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Stephanie Sinclair**

110 King Summit, King



Beautiful, Wooded 2 Acre Lot With Original Bungalow Situated Perfectly At The End Of A Winding, Paved Driveway. Privacy Abounds With The House Well Situated Back From The Street. Perfect For A New Build Or A Renovation. Great Location In The Heart Of King, Close To All Amenities, Private Schools Etc. Easy Access To Hy 400 And Only 30 Minutes To Pearson Airport.

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Continued from the cover

A qualified home inspector should be hired before purchasing a home, but there are areas that consumers can examine on their own. This will shorten your list of potential homes and reduce the likelihood that a home inspector will reject it as unsafe or unsuitable. Here are some considerations and common problem areas to look for when touring an open house:

GENERAL UPKEEP

Much can be surmised from the general state of the home. Is the home clean? Are the lawns left uncut? Are the walls chipped and need of paint? If smaller chores have been ignored it may be an indication of a broader disregard for home maintenance.

WATER LEAKS

Check ceilings and drywall for stains, bulges and other signs of water damage. Water that works its way inside via a leaky roof or cracked foundation

can rot wood, create mildew and mold, destroy possessions and be expensive to repair.

FLOORS

As you walk across the floors be aware of "spongy (soft or springy) sections. Excessive squeaking and uneven, bumpy floors may also be indicative of expensive forthcoming repairs.

POOR DRAINAGE

On a wet day walk around the yard and look for areas where water collects. This can be an especially bad sign if there are soggy areas near the home's foundation.

DOORS & WINDOWS

Check that doors and windows fit snugly in their jambs and operate smoothly. Look for flaked paint and loose caulking. If the wood around windows and doors is not protected from moisture, it can rot away. Feel for drafts in these areas too.

GROUT & CAULKING

If the grout and caulking around the bathroom and kitchen tiles is loose and crumbly, there is a good chance that water is finding its way into the wall or under the floor.

MISCELLANEOUS CONCERN

Naturally, one of the most important factors will be determining if the house suits your family's needs. If you do not want to replace all your furniture, make sure it will fit into the rooms of the new house. Also take note of storage space. If you are moving from a home with large closets and a shed, make sure your new house is able to store an equivalent amount of belongings.

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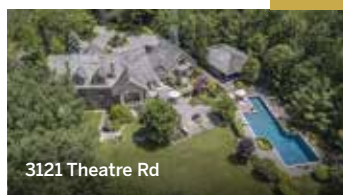


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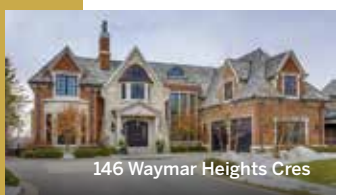
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\$VALUABLE\$ RENOVATIONS

Each year, Remodeling magazine publishes its "Cost vs. Value" report to give homeowners a greater understanding of how much popular home projects will cost across the nation, as well as which renovations will offer the greatest return on investment.

According to their research, these projects improved in value between 2017 and 2018 and can be smart choices for homeowners looking to add popular features to their properties. Below are the popular projects and the average cost of the renovations.

- Midrange bathroom addition: **\$44,717**
- Midrange bathroom remodel: **\$19,134**
- Midrange deck addition (wood): **\$10,950**
- Midrange entry door replacement (steel): **\$1,471**
- Upscale garage door replacement: **\$3,470**
- Midrange manufactured stone veneer: **\$8,221**
- Midrange minor kitchen remodel: **\$21,198**
- Midrange siding replacement: **\$15,072**
- Midrange universal design bathroom: **\$16,393**
- Upscale window replacement (vinyl): **\$15,955**



156 WILLOW FARM LANE, AURORA
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11 KENNEDY STREET EAST, AURORA
\$1,075,000



35 FINCH AVENUE EAST PH #201, TORONTO
\$625,000



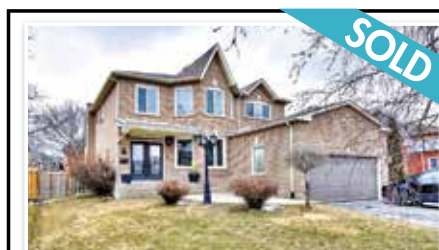
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372 FLANAGAN COURT, NEWMARKET



52 NORMAN DRIVE, KING

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59 Skyline Trail, Nobleton

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26 Royal Ave., Nobleton

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We went to an Open House on the weekend but we don't think we can buy now; do you think there will be more like this one on the market later?

This is a crystal ball question that is often posed on any given week to REALTORS®. Home supply and demand ebbs and flows and the available homes for sale vary drastically in style, price, maintenance and Seller's motivation or lack of motivation to sell at any given time of the year.

When considering getting into the market to purchase it's crucial to get organized and consult one if not 2 or 3 lenders from various institutions to come up with a unique comprehensive plan.

Each Buyer's personal story is unique whether they are employed with a corporation, self-employed, contract or new graduates with their first job and little established credit or new Canadians as an example just trying to figure out where to settle. Some are buying after a change to their family situation where there is now only one income earner who will be holding the mortgage. Pre-qualify-

ing has become stricter however the market has also corrected and the average cost of homes has also reduced in many areas of Aurora and the Greater Toronto Area. Ask your lender for their best rates as they apply to your individual situation and for challenges that you may uncover ask them for solutions. The good news is the lender may agree that now is the best time to make that next purchase or at the very least advise you on how to improve your credit scores in the shortest amount of time to improve buying power with an action plan.

– Written by Connie Power

Connie Power is a Real Estate Sales Representative, Assistant Manager CNE® SRS® ABR® SRES® and New Agent Mentor and Career Development for RE/MAX Hallmark York Group Realty Ltd., Brokerage serving York region and beyond. EmPOWERing YOU in Real ESTATE!

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\$768,000 Amazing Family Oriented Community! Large Mature Pie Shape Lot On Quiet Cul De Sac! Walk To Schools, Library, Shops! 3 Bedroom Bungalow! Bamboo Flooring! Custom Kitchen! Main Floor Wood Burning Fireplace! Finished Lower Level W/Separate Entrance, 4th Bedroom, Playroom, Gas Fireplace & 3Pc Bath! Finished Garage!



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\$2,175,000 Beautiful 5 Bedroom Family Home On Over A Half Acre Mature Lot On Prestigious Kennedy St. Amazing Private Backyard Retreat With In-Ground Pool And Large Deck. Eat In Kitchen W/Granite Counter And Travertine Flooring. Wood Burning Fireplace In Living Room. Master Bedroom W/Walk In Closet, 5Pce. Ensuite, Sitting Area & Separate Staircase. Comfortable Lower Level Family Room, Exercise Room & Laundry W/Above Grade Windows. Hrdwd. Floors Thru Out, 9 Foot Ceilings.



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\$1,049,000 Spacious Bright 4 Bdrm.Home In Much Desired Culdesac Location! Main Level W/9' Ceilings, Family Size Eat-In Kitchen W/Cstm Backsplash & Granite Counters. Family Rm. W/Vaulted Ceiling, Gas Fireplace & W/O To Deck. Master Bdrm. Features Walk-In Closet & 5Pce. Ensuite W/Double Sink, Oversize Shower & Bath Spa. Lower Level W/Spacious Entertainment Area, Sitting Rm. & W/O To Patio. Amazing Mature Tree & Landscaped Backyard Backs To Ravine & Walking Trails!



KING CITY

\$949,000 Welcome To "The Residences Of Spring Hill" You Will Love This Gorgeous & Bright 2 Plus Den Corner Unit Featuring 2 Walkouts To Large Terrace Overlooking The Ravine And Pond. Great Southwestern Exposure Offers All Day Sun! Spacious Unit Approximately 1560 Sft. Open Concept Layout, Built In Sub Zero Appliances, Large Eat-In Kitchen With Granite Counters & Pendant Lighting. Spacious Master Suite With 3 Piece Ensuite Washroom And Walk-In Closet. Spotless Suite!

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Ask Big Tuna, The Renovating Realtor



By Julien Laurion
The Big Tuna of Real Estate



Dear Julien, I am helping my parents downsize their home. My parent's home is quite large and unnecessary at this stage in their lives. The home is dated and the budget is very small to spruce it up for resale. What would you suggest to help make the home seem livelier to help us get top dollar? Sincerely, Alex

Hi Alex! Great question. Downsizing a home can be a tough task and there are a lot of memories to deal with, which can sometimes hinder the efforts to clean out and move forward. The good news is that there are a lot of things you can do that do not cost anything but time.

Reducing clutter in the home can make a huge difference. I suggest to my clients to remove old and dated home décor and furniture. Large pieces of furniture, items on the counters and art on the walls can make the home seem smaller than it truly is. Your goal should be to reduce as many visual distractions as you can, as you want the prospective buyer to see the home and not focus on the vintage.

A big clean up, even the places you cannot see such as behind the fridge, windows sills etc., is a must. A clean and tidy home goes a very long way.

After you have cleaned all the windows and window coverings open everything to let in the natural light.

Finally, after all that tidying up and you still think the home lacks a bit of pizzazz, I tell my clients to employ the tactic of cheap and cheerful! Some very cost effective upgrades include hiring a landscaper to tidy up the grounds and power wash the driveway and siding. Consider changing all the light bulbs in the home to LED bulbs to help brighten up rooms, hallways and closets. If you have chips, dents or nail holes in the walls it is very easy to fill those holes and touch them up with paint to make the walls look as good as new.

Alex, getting a home ready for resale is a lot of work regardless of what stage of life you are in. If you know this is in your future, get ahead of it by keeping things clean, tidy and simplify décor and

furniture. Best of luck and do not forget to call Big Tuna if you need help!

Who is Big Tuna, The Renovating Realtor?

Julien Laurion AKA Big Tuna, is a local Real Estate Sale Representative with RE/MAX Hallmark York Group Realty in Aurora. I am a real estate agent who has expertise in both Real Estate and Renovations and have 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 by visiting my website www.bigtuna.ca or Facebook page @bigtunarealty

ORGANIZE AND DECLUTTER ROOM-BY-ROOM

Getting organized is a popular New Year's resolution.

Clutter can be a major source of stress that affects how individuals feel about their spaces. Psychology Today indicates messy homes and work spaces can contribute to feelings of helplessness, anxiety and overwhelming stress. Clutter bombards the mind with excessive stimuli, makes it more difficult to relax and can constantly signal to the brain that work is never done.

Tackling messes no matter where they are lurking is not a one-time project. With these organizational tips and tricks, anyone can work through their home room-by-room and conquer clutter.

FIND A PLACE FOR EVERYTHING

Over time, failure to regularly go through belongings and thin the herd can lead to the accumulation of clutter. But clutter also can accumulate if people fail to find

a place to put items. Racks for garages, organizational systems for closets and furniture with storage capacity, such as storage ottomans, are some storage solutions that can help people find a place for their possessions.

UTILIZE VERTICAL SPACE WHEN POSSIBLE

Getting items up and off the floor can maximize square footage in a home. Bookshelves, hanging wall shelves, hooks, cabinetry, built-ins, and other storage solutions that rely on walls and ceilings are simple and effective storage solutions. Hang razors or toothbrushes on medicine cabinet walls and curling irons and other hair tools on the interior of cabinet doors in bathrooms.

CREATE A CODING SYSTEM

Home offices can be some of the more disorga-

nized rooms in a house simply due to the volume of electronics and paperwork within them. HGTV suggests using a color-coded system for important files to keep them organized. Label important items, whether they're paper or digital files, in accordance with your system.

PUT IT AWAY

If you can't put it away immediately, have a few baskets on hand labeled for the different rooms in the house. Pop the items in the requisite baskets and then routinely take each basket around the house to return the items.

Investing in custom cabinetry and organizational systems also can help people organize their belongings. Tackle rooms such as the garage, basements, bedroom closets, and pantries, or those areas that tend to accumulate clutter the fastest.



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12 WAYS TO MAXIMIZE VERTICAL SPACE

Who hasn't, at one point in their lives, lamented a lack of space and organization at home? A lifetime's worth of items have to be kept somewhere, and without the right organizational strategy, clutter can quickly take over.

The home improvement site Home Therapy says that, when square footage is limited, tapping vertical walls is the fastest way to maximize and multiply the space available. Hooks, rods, shelving, built-ins ... the sky is the limit when it comes to finding additional storage and adding a bit of personality to tight quarters. Even homes that may have adequate space can benefit from vertical solutions.

Here are some ideas to put vertical and other less-utilized areas to work for you.

- 1 Hang wire or plastic file organizers on the inside of kitchen cabinets to easily store cookie sheets, trays and cutting boards.
- 2 Save on counter or cabinet space with hanging spice racks. These can be hung directly on walls or on the inside of cabinet doors.
- 3 Stack all the stuff you can, including washers and dryers, beds (with storage drawers underneath) and even stacking nesting tables.
- 4 Choose furniture that is tall rather than wide. This can mean swapping out a dresser in a bedroom for an armoire or vertical chest of drawers.

5 Canvas bags hung on a towel bar on a wall can keep dirty clothes wrangled until it's time to wash them. This also eliminates clothes hampers on the floor.

6 Add a second rod or shelving to the inside of closets to create more space for clothing and other items.

7 Take kitchen cabinets all the way to the ceiling. Store lesser used items on the uppermost shelves and the items you use each on the most accessible shelves.

8 Install a shelf over the entryway to a room to utilize this seldom-used space. Shelves also can be custom cut and placed in oddly shaped areas, such as in attic rooms under the eaves or on slanted walls.

9 Dowels or curtain rods and some fabric can be used to fabricate slings to hold books or magazines.

10 Invest in some magnetic boards that can hold keys or notes by the front door or store knives on a kitchen wall.

11 Install two towel bars parallel to one another on the wall of a bathroom. These can hold extra toilet tissue or rolled hand towels.

12 Use rope plant hangers to store potatoes or onions near prep areas. The same plant hangers can wrangle stuffed animals and small toys in kids' rooms.

Utilizing vertical areas in a home is a great way to increase storage capacity and keep rooms more organized.

Holiday Buys and New Year Confidence

There was a quiet but steady stream of Buyers taking action in December 2018, 44 sales in Aurora paying a median price of \$806,500 and the average price was \$936,741 for all home types. There were 194 homes remaining for sale to start the 2019 new year and 56 homes were placed for sale in December. At the current rate of home purchasing there was only 4.5 months of inventory available and sales to new listings ratio of 35.9% favouring Buyer's with more selection but that number hovers very close to the balanced market model. Seller's yielded about 96 per cent on average of their asking price and the reported time to sell was tracked at 46 days. At the end of November there were 301 homes remaining for sale so supply is far lower currently month over month making now a great time to stand out for sale no matter that it may be a winter wonderland outdoors.

With the Bank of Canada announcing on January 9th, 2019 there won't be a rate hike for now to the current key interest rate of 0.75 per cent it's indeed a happier start to the new year. This news may improve consumer confidence to take home

buying action well before Spring on purchasing in Aurora and beyond. Lenders are expected to continue to be stricter with their consumer qualifying guidelines but more products and services are continually being introduced for Buyers and Sellers to solve challenges faced. Consult a couple of lenders to discuss your options well before taking action to sell or buy your next home.

Call a REALTOR® today to provide you with an understanding of the local market and comparable market value trends.

– Written by Connie Power

Connie Power is the Assistant Manager CNE® SRS® ABR® SRES®, Mentors and Develops New Real Estate Sales Representatives 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 Real Estate Board; Market Watch December 2018 Summary of Existing Home Transactions Regional Housing Market Tables; York Region, Aurora for November of 2017, 2018 and the Summary of Existing Home Transactions of all home types, November 2018 for all TREB Areas.

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

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