



# thesinghalreport

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**Niraj Singhal**  
Hon. B. Comm., B. Admin.  
Real Estate Broker

Office: 613-749-5000  
Direct: 613-513-5658  
Fax: 613-728-0548

[niraj@thesinghalgroup.com](mailto:niraj@thesinghalgroup.com)  
[www.thesinghalgroup.com](http://www.thesinghalgroup.com)

Welcome to this month's issue of **The Singhal Report** – our monthly real estate newsletter courtesy of The Singhal Group. We bring you this newsletter in hopes that you find it informative and useful. If you're thinking of making a move or have a general real estate related question, please don't hesitate to contact us. We're here to help in any way we can and we would love to hear from you. Be sure to visit our website regularly for up-to-date information on our current listings and to download an electronic copy of this newsletter.

Best Regards,

**Niraj Singhal**



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Each office is independently owned and operated.



## SITE UNSEEN

**Could you imagine buying your next house, before even physically stepping foot into it? For any number of reasons, you may find yourself in that position.**

In the process of being transferred from one end of the country to the other, and have time and logistical considerations that make it impossible to visit properties in person? Looking to buy an investment property in another province? Online tools allow out-of-country, out-of-town, or even just overly-busy potential buyers to research different neighborhoods and take virtual tours of different properties to get a good idea of the house or condo that could fit their needs. In cases where a potential buyer is not able to tour the home in person, the benefits of technology are important; however, having a real estate representative physically visit the place, on your behalf, is crucial.

Sounds (would the sound of traffic interfere with your outdoor enjoyment?)

Would that club across the street keep you up all night? Are you right under an airplane flight path?), smells (does an upwind send the smell of the neighborhood dump in the direction of the house?) and sights (look at the beautiful park/ broken down housing project across the street) are part of any buyer's home-buying considerations, and the value of having your real estate representative report these to you honestly is crucial when you can't physically be there to check them out yourself. In addition to your trusted real estate representative's opinion, having a professional home inspection conducted will provide peace of mind for you, or at least an honest picture of what's in store once the home is yours.

**Please call today for assistance with your own house-hunting dreams!**



## Terminology Tip

### COMPARABLE PROPERTY SALES

Also referred to as "Comparables" or "Comps," Comparable Property Sales help to determine the value of a property by comparing sales of homes that have similar characteristics (size, condition) and are situated in a similar area to the property being sold. By analyzing the recent selling prices of comparables, a homeowner, real estate sales representative and/or an appraiser can determine a fair home value for the seller's home.



# STOP BEFORE YOU SHOP

The holiday music has already replaced the background muzak in many stores, which usually means the pressure of gift buying is quickly rolling in. Before you shop until you drop, take a step back to remember your larger goals, and how mindless spending (and over-spending) can put a big dent in your finances, and set back your long-term plans.

If you're planning to buy a new home in the new year and already have a pre-approved mortgage, good for you! But before you celebrate this big step toward financing your next home, be aware that what you do between the mortgage pre-approval and the actual closing of your home purchase can adversely impact the chances of your loan actually going through.

First of all, it's important to recognize that just because you've been pre-approved for a loan of a certain amount, it doesn't mean you should plan to utilize that full amount towards the sales price of the home. Buying a home is about so much more than the selling price — closing costs, taxes, home insurance, private mortgage insurance, moving costs, maintenance costs, painting, decorating, new furniture and maybe appliances too ... these expenses all need to be planned for, on top of your mortgage.

Even if you recognize your home buying budget limitations, you might still be feeling flush with money now that your home loan has been pre-approved. That's not an excuse to run out and buy all new furniture and appliances for your new place! In fact, put the brakes on all big purchases for now, as if your debt-to-income ratio becomes skewed, your lender may become concerned about your ability to repay the home loan, and pull the rug on the paperwork. Also refrain from signing up for a new credit card during the time between your mortgage preapproval and the closing of your home purchase. Not only can applying for a new credit card lower your credit score, if you do get the card and start using it, your debt load will rise and again, could affect your debt-to-income ratio.

If you have any family members feeling generous this holiday season who decide to present you with a cash gift toward



your new home, make sure you disclose those large bank deposits to your mortgage loan representative first. Likewise, discuss any large withdrawals that could significantly decrease the amount of cash reserves your pre-approval was based on.

One thing you may not be able to control, but still need to be aware of, is that you ideally shouldn't switch jobs just before closing on your new property. Even if you secure a better-paying job, your lender needs to be assured you have a steady income and as such may delay the settlement until they receive verification and view your pay stubs from your new employer.

Continue to save more money than you spend as your closing date comes closer. Pay your bills on time to reinforce your financial stability, and never give creditors a reason to have to report you to the credit bureaus.

In the meantime, set a holiday spending budget and stick to it. After all, your best present will be opening the door to your new home in the new year!

## HOUSEHOLD TIP: COOKING (AND MORE) WITH COOKING SPRAY



Cooking spray is great for making sure your food doesn't stick to pans, but don't put away that spray can just yet!

**SQUELCH THE SQUEAK.** Squeaky door hinges? Simply spritz a bit of cooking spray to silence them.

**DO A "GRATE" JOB.** Coat your cheese grater with cooking spray for smooth grating and an easy cleanup.

**USE AS A KEY INGREDIENT.** If your house key is hard to turn in the lock, simply coat the key in cooking spray and glide it in to lubricate the lock and allow for an easier entry.

**PREVENT FOOD STAINS IN PLASTIC CONTAINERS.** Coat the inside of your plastic food storage containers with cooking spray before pouring in leftover tomato sauce.

**AVOID A STICKY SITUATION.** Coat your measuring cups with cooking spray before measuring out peanut butter or sticky liquids like honey, maple syrup and molasses, and they will pour out cleanly.

**MASTER YOUR MANICURE.** Help set and dry your nail polish faster by lightly spraying your painted nails with cooking spray. Once polish is dry, massage the oil into your cuticles.

# IS “AS IS” GOOD ENOUGH?

**Sellers are sometimes encouraged to have a professional home inspection conducted before they list their house, so they can take care of any repairs before taking the chance that defects show up later that delay or even cancel a buyer’s offer. Some sellers, however, will forego the inspection process and list a property “as is”. Why would a seller list their property “as is”, and why would a buyer accept a house described as such?**

A seller might not have the time, nor be in the financial position to make even the smallest repairs to a property before they move, or, especially if they are elderly, they may not be capable of dealing with renovations or repairs. They may be in a hurry to move on, and as such will sell for less in order to compensate for any possible future costs to the buyer.

Sellers who have inherited a property might list it “as is”, as they simply aren’t familiar with the property and don’t know of any current defects. Lenders who foreclose on a property and rental property investors are also known to list homes “as is”, since they haven’t actually been living in the home to know if there is anything wrong. These are often the properties that have great potential to be picked up at a bargain.

While a house listed for sale “as is” should certainly be approached with caution, it also doesn’t automatically mean there is something seriously wrong with it. A buyer may be willing to take a chance on a property for the sake of a lower sale price, or easier financing. “Caveat emptor” – or, “Let the buyer beware” – should always be observed; however, as even if a seller is obligated to inform the buyer of any known defects in the property, he may honestly not know of or anticipate any problems. The “as is” designation means that the buyer cannot renege on his offer because of defects, if any show up later.

**Let’s discuss the process of a home inspection, and if it’s something you should consider in your real estate plans.**



## WORDS THAT WORK

**After trudging through one property after another with your real estate representative, you’re just about ready to give up on finding your perfect next home until you take one step into a certain front door and realize ... “This is it!” Unfortunately, you may not be the only person who feels that instant connection. What can you do to give you the edge over another potential buyer?**

~ Monthly Musing ~

*“What I know for sure is this: The big secret in life is that there is no big secret. There’s just you, this moment, and a choice.”*

~ Oprah Winfrey

Obviously, money talks and the highest offer is typically the primary trigger to sway the sellers. If the sellers are faced with two similar offers, however, an appeal that targets the emotional factors in this type of transaction can often tip the scales. Consider expressing yourself to the sellers via a personal letter that creates a personal connection.

What you should aim for in your letter is to convey to the sellers how much you love their home and the area, how you felt a connection with the home as soon as you entered, and how you can envisage building memories in their home with your own family. What you don’t want to mention in the letter is how you’re desperate for a property because you’ve lost out on so many other

ones, or how you can’t wait to completely gut and renovate the place.

You may be able to tell if the seller has kids, or pets. If you have a similar family makeup you could certainly mention that in your letter too: “We could immediately visualize our own family — my husband Michael and me, 4-year-old Emma and our 3-year-old Pug, Sam — spending many happy hours playing in your airy, sunny den, and enjoying daily adventures in the beautiful park across the street.” Sellers have even been known to be swayed by a photo of the buyer’s dog, when included with the letter!

If you love the seller’s decorating style, upgrades and attention to details, mention it. If you grew up in the area and/or have family in the area you want to live close to, by all means add that to the letter. If you’re flexible with the closing date, or if you can offer a cash sale, those can often sway a seller too. Talk to your real estate sales representative for more ideas to include in your successful buyer letter!





# Maple-Glazed Salmon

## INGREDIENTS

- ¼ c. maple syrup
- 2 Tbsp. soy sauce
- 1 clove garlic, minced
- ¼ tsp. garlic salt
- ⅛ tsp. ground black pepper
- 1 lb. salmon, cut into 3"-wide portions

## DIRECTIONS

1. In a zippered plastic bag, mix the maple syrup, soy sauce, garlic, garlic salt, and pepper.
2. Place salmon in the bag, seal it well and gently turn the bag to allow the maple syrup mixture to coat each piece of salmon. Place the bag in the refrigerator and allow to marinate for 30 minutes, flipping the bag once.
3. Preheat oven to 400°F (200°C).
4. Place the salmon in a baking dish and bake (uncovered) for 20 minutes, or until the fish flakes easily with a fork.

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**SOLD!**

**3 SILVERTHORN COURT**



**SOLD!**

**258 DUNCAIRN AVENUE**



**Westboro Beauty!**

**137 SUNITA CRESENT**



**4 Bed/4 Bath With Pool**

*Notes:*

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