



THE WORD FROM GARY

It's hard to believe we are already coming to the end of 2007. This year has been one of some very significant changes for me on the professional front. By far the biggest change was expanding my role to become **Branch Manager**. My first office was **in the basement** of an old house in NE Portland. It was quite literally a former broom closet that Mike and I faux painted in an effort to cover up all the ductwork, wiring and plumbing! With my office now on the 26th floor of the US Bancorp Tower, some of my long-term clients love to joke that I have **moved up 27 floors since they have known me!**

The great part of expanding my role has been the opportunity to help others grow their business and do it the right way. The toughest part has been learning that there is a big difference between being a coworker and leading an organization. You simply can't make everyone happy when you are the one making the final decision. Thankfully our office is filled with great people who make the job seem easy, even with all the ups and downs this last year in the mortgage market. **And oh, what a year it has been!** The good news is that I have been fortunate to continue growing my business thanks to all of my great clients. **I am still a Sr. Loan Officer** and I don't plan on ever giving up working with my clients – that's my favorite part of my job.

On the home front, everything is great. Mike's business has taken off this year, and most importantly he is loving it. Our Parents are all doing well, and we even had the good fortune to have ALL of our Parents together for Thanksgiving at our house. To celebrate their **25th Wedding Anniversary**, Mike's Mom and Stepdad celebrated by taking the Empire Builder train from Chicago out to Portland. Our dogs are still wandering around the house looking for Roger (Mike's Stepdad) who spoiled them the entire time he was here.

As 2007 comes to a close, I hope you and your loved ones are happy and healthy.





THE YEAR IN REVIEW

I don't think even someone stranded on a deserted island has not heard about all of the changes hitting the housing and mortgage markets this year. **It has definitely been the most fascinating year of my career.**

To the surprise of many, **it is likely interest rates are going to end this year lower than they started** with 30-year fixed rates right around 6%. With rates looking great and many good deals on homes out there, I have seen a lot of people getting back into the market. Despite what you hear on the news, **there are many great loan options still out there.** For example, you can still buy a home with 100% financing and many of these options have actually EXPANDED this year. In addition, there are great things happening with FHA & VA loans which will **help more people become homeowners in the future.** The areas of most noteworthy changes are second mortgages and borrowers who are self-employed.

This is where experience counts. Now more than ever **I believe it is very important for you to be working with a professional** who can guide you on how to structure your financing and help you achieve your goals. I have always believed that one of the most important aspects I provide to my clients is looking at how your home fits into your complete financial picture. I have become rather passionate about this over the years. To take that to the next level, I have **earned my Certified Mortgage Planning Specialist designation (CMPSInstitute.org)** which is held by less than 1% of brokers nationwide.



Certified Mortgage Planning Specialist

As you start making your New Year's Resolutions please remember it is never too early to start planning! Your referrals are very important to me. If there is ever anything I can do for you, your friends or your family, please let me know – **that's what I'm here for.**

