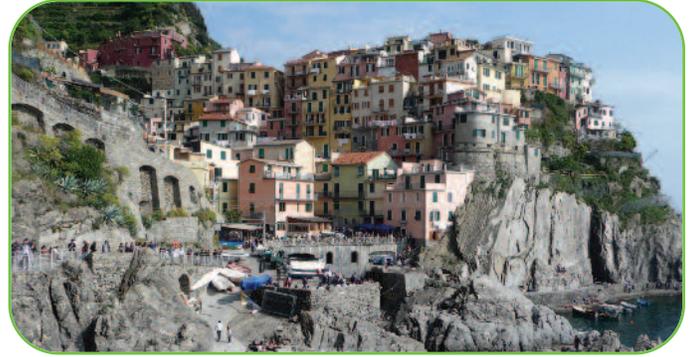


The Word from Gary

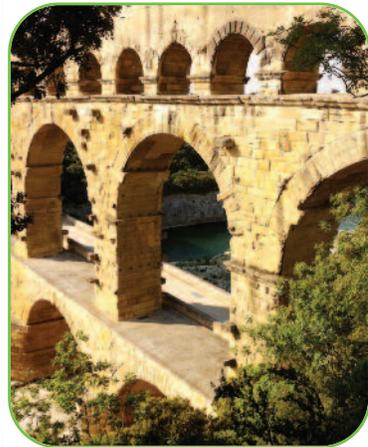
Our summer got off to an early start this year. The first big event was Mike graduating from school in April. I'm **very proud to say that he graduated at the top of his class!** He then quickly dived into passing his state "Boards" so that he could get to work as a Respiration Therapist. Right after he finished his tests, the scenery changed dramatically for us.

It was **time to celebrate and what better place for that than Northern Italy and Southern France!** Even better, we got to share the experience with a couple of my favorite family members. Mike's Aunt Nancy and Uncle Pete flew in from Illinois. They are ideal travel companions: They are not afraid to eat and more importantly, drink!



Our first stop was **Cinque Terre**, which is a World Heritage Site right on the rugged Italian coastline. The towns were everything you imagine and more. **We dined overlooking the sea, hiked between the towns and drank wine grown right on the hillsides overlooking the villages.** The only downside was that I ended up walking about five miles into town because traffic and parking was so bad. At least I was smart when we left: I hired a taxi to take me to the car. It's one thing to walk five miles downhill, it's quite another going back up!

Next, we headed to Florence for a bit of culture. Seeing Michelangelo's David is something I will always remember. The scale is the most stunning part. It's 17 feet tall! We also visited the Uffizi Gallery. **This is truly where I am a bad gay guy.** After about an hour there my head was spinning. In my opinion, **the human brain can only take in so many paintings of virgins and babies.** The highlight for me was sitting in the front seat of a double-decker tour bus for an evening tour of the city. We thought we were going to crash about 20 times! It was better than any roller coaster I've ever been on!



After several days in Northern Italy we headed to Southern France where we rented a flat. Soon, we were acting like locals. A quick trip to the local market and we were **kicking back and enjoying fresh baked bread, local cheeses, olives and of course a bottle or two of French wine.** We sat outside and enjoyed the warm winds and the fresh air for hours. I can still picture everything like it was yesterday. Southern France was magical. I got to drive on the route for the Monaco Grand Prix and visit Princess Grace's final resting place. We also visited Cannes as they were preparing for the film festival. We even got to visit **Pont Du Gard, a towering three-level former Roman aqueduct** that was simply awe-inspiring.

The memory that I will hold close for the rest of my life happened by accident. After getting lost one day, we stumbled on a tiny town called Bar-sur-Loup. We walked up stairs to a cafe called Le Michelangelo. We then turned around and saw a gorgeous valley spread out before us. **The sky was filled with paragliders and the Alps were in the background. It felt like a scene out of Under the Tuscan Sun.** The food was amazing and the restaurant was run by a newlywed couple. They were so wonderful and nice to us. We were there for hours and just kept ordering food and drinks because no one wanted to leave.

When we returned home we got a lot of grief from our loved ones. **Apparently it is considered rude to come back with a deep golden tan while it has been raining incessantly at home.** We were also very fortunate that as soon as we got home Mike got a job offer. He is now hard at work and doing great. I know that we will both treasure the memories from our trip and if you ever get the chance: **GO, it's worth it!**

On the business front, there have been some good signs recently and I'm feeling better about our local economy. Hope you enjoy checking out my thoughts and please let me know if there is anything I can do for you, your friends or loved ones - that's what I'm here for.



For more pictures of our trip please visit:
www.facebook.com/mortgagemonkey



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Inside: Finally, some good housing news!



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Crystal Ball



I'm excited to **see some clarity in my Crystal Ball** in the second half of 2011. Currently, mortgage rates have stabilized in the mid 4's for a 30-year fixed rate loan and with the "debt ceiling" debate finally behind us, I am hopeful that we can get through the last few months of the year without another financial crisis.

This sentiment is showing in the housing market with the **supply of houses for sale dropping every month this year** down to levels not seen in years! The biggest driving force is that Oregon's unemployment rate has improved significantly. Over the past five months our **unemployment rate has dropped 1.3%**.

The part that got me really excited was seeing the median sales price of homes in our area increase in both May and June. Seeing positive momentum reinforces my view that it is an incredible time to become a homeowner. Many fear

they will not be able to qualify for a home loan. The funny part is that **a lot of you reading this probably thought you would never get into a house as well and now you are reading this in your living room!** I look forward to helping your friends, family and loved ones explore their options.



One of the questions I am asked most frequently is **where I see the market going.**

My impression of 2009 and 2010 was that people hunkered down to ride out the storm. I expected 2011 to play out much the same way. That has not been the case from my perspective. Early in the year I heard repeatedly that people were tired of waiting and it was time to move forward with their lives.

Introductions: The most important part of my business!

Introducing me to your friends, loved ones and colleagues is **truly the highest compliment you can give me.** Nearly every day I get an email or a quick call wanting me to give advice to someone. They are also curious to know if I have already talked to the people they sent my way.



and copy or cc me at the same time. A quick email introduction is a **great way for me to open the door and welcome them to take the next step.** If you have their phone number that is great too. I can leave them a message. Once they hear my friendly voice it helps them feel comfortable talking with me.

One of the best ways I have found to make sure your friends and loved ones are taken care of is for you to send an email to them

Most importantly, keep those referrals coming - I love them and always have time for them.



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