



THE WORD FROM GARY



The end of 2008 turned out to be rather momentous for us. **We sold our house.** After 4½ of hard work it was looking good. This meant Mike was bored. To our great surprise, one of our neighbors had been watching the progress for years, and made an offer to buy our house. Of course, that meant **we had to find a place to live!**



I think everyone in the housing industry should be required to sell their home every five years to remind themselves **what it feels like with the shoe on the other foot.** It is the best form of on-the-job training. When I'm working with a client, I am very good at being calm resource as they go through counter offers, inspections and all the worries that come with buying a home. Unfortunately, as many of us heard from our Parents **"Do as I say, not as I do!"** That certainly applies to me when buying or selling a home. I was a nervous wreck!

I also believe that if you work in the mortgage business anything that can, will go wrong. For example, somehow Mike and I found the **ONLY** sellers in the Portland area **who didn't really care if they sold their house.** A brief summary: We made an offer. They **NEVER** responded. Okay, maybe we were too low. So, we tried again. Finally, they responded. We met their list of demands, though my Mom was not happy about giving up her first born. We asked for a credit (roof shot, furnace was older than me, etc.) then nothing. A week later they finally decided to grace us with a response.

Meanwhile, we got the last laugh! I started surfing around and found a new house that caught my eye. It was everything we could dream of: **Avocado appliances, flocked wallpaper, popcorn ceilings,** and tons of potential! Within 24 hours we had a deal in place with someone who wanted to sell!

This meant it was time for the real fun to begin. Mike calls it the **three G's: Going, Garbage & Goodwill.** I'm really not sure how so much stuff got in our house over the years. To help us out, our friends went around the house during the "goodbye" party and put post-its on things they liked. At one point, someone even put a post-it on Mike. We did get quite a bit cleaned out in the **Gay-Me-Down program.** It's like Hand-Me-Downs, but with more stylish stuff!

We're very excited about our new place. It's in a great walking neighborhood, and our dogs will love the **HUGE** backyard. Mike and I have been like kids again tearing into the walls. We absolutely **LOVE** the **process** of taking a diamond in the rough and making it shine. Of course, by **WE,** I really mean Mike...but I am very supportive!

Best wishes for a wonderful holiday season,





THE YEAR IN REVIEW

First things, first. YES, I'm still here.

After a decade in this business, I have gotten to know a lot of people. It is truly the most amazing part of my job. I have received many wonderful calls, and emails checking in to make sure I'm doing okay after seeing a headline or two. **Oddly enough, 2008 will go down as my best year ever thanks to all of you.**



It is easy to understand why many of you have been so concerned. **We have seen many unprecedented events.** From the Federal takeover of Fannie Mae & Freddie Mac to bank failures, and daily 1,000 point gains and losses in the stock market. Those headlines have definitely caused some concerns. Some of the most common questions I have heard this year are very simple: "Can I get a loan? Is there anything out there for me?"

The simple answer is **yes**, for most borrowers there are **still great loans available**. The vast majority of my clients fall into a category known as "conforming," which means a loan amount under \$417,001. There is tremendous Federal support for conforming loans, and that has actually expanded this year. In addition, FHA loans have made a huge comeback which is GREAT news for first-time buyers. I also believe the **\$7,500 Tax Credit for first-time buyers is an amazing opportunity.** (www.mortgagemonkey.com/taxcredit.php for details)

However, there is no doubt that the constantly shifting landscape has made getting to top of the hill much tougher. **Experience, expertise and tenacity count** in this market. You also need to have a good strategy in place, and knowing the little stuff counts. Every program has tons of ins and outs. Being a little obsessive, compulsive helps me make sure my clients are getting a great loan.

With the markets changing daily, I strongly encourage you to look at your options if you have been putting off buying or refinancing. I believe some fantastic options that are still here today, may not be around down the road. I have said this before, but I believe it is worth repeating: Call me, **that's what I'm here for.** Also, If you know someone in trouble please encourage them to reach out. I will do everything I can to help them find a solution, and **I don't care if there are my client or not.**

The bottom line for me comes down to being a valuable resource to my clients and my community. I am grateful for the opportunity to continue doing what I love and working with a great team. Finally, **THANK YOU to my loyal clients** - I wouldn't be here without you.

