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**BUY | SELL | RENT**

Compliments of Les Twarog

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Hello again valued clients!

I thought I would remind you about the online tools we use to help you buy and sell your properties. They are also useful for you to use.

**CallRealEstate.ca**

This is the newly branded site that was our industry dominating 6717000.com

**BCCondos.net**

With over 7,000 websites, one for each strata building in Metro Vancouver.

**BCFloorPlans.net**

Vancouver's most sophisticated & comprehensive online floorplan service.

**RentCAN.ca**

Search the biggest rental site in Canada.

Come and see me in Coal Harbour at 1487 West Pender Street, Vancouver. I am usually there on Saturdays.

In gratitude,

*Les Twarog*

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## GREATER VANCOUVER MARKET ENJOYS BALANCED CONDITIONS

The Real Estate Board of Greater Vancouver (REBGV) describes housing activity in Metro Vancouver as "in the upper reaches" of a balanced market.

Residential property sales in Greater Vancouver reached 3,061 on the Multiple Listing Service® (MLS®) in July 2014, a 3.9 percent increase compared to sales recorded in July 2013.

"This is the fourth consecutive month that the Greater Vancouver market has exceeded 3,000 sales," Darcy McLeod, REBGV president-elect, said in July. "Prior to this, our market had not surpassed the 3,000 sale mark since June of 2011."

Inventory is keeping up with sales demand, as new listings for detached, attached and apartment properties in Metro Vancouver totaled 4,925 in July. This represents a 1.5 percent increase compared to new listings in July 2013.

The MLS® Home Price Index composite benchmark price for all residential properties in Metro Vancouver is currently \$628,600 – a 4.4 percent increase compared to July 2013. Breaking down home prices by housing type, the benchmark price for detached properties increased 6.5 percent to \$980,500 from July 2013 to July 2014, while the benchmark price of

an apartment property increased 2.2 percent during the same time period to \$376,500 and the benchmark price of an attached unit increased 3.4 percent to \$472,400.

Is now the right time for you to move? Let's talk about your own specific circumstances. Please call for a no-obligation discussion today!



VREB



## OVER THE (CONVENTIONAL) COUNTER

Granite may have grandeur and laminate may be low-cost, while man-made corian and quartz counters make for a beautiful and practical presentation, but if you're thinking about installing new counters in your kitchen or bathroom, why not think outside the box? Below are five fabulous and functional countertop alternatives you probably haven't considered – but maybe it's time you did!

**Concrete** – Concrete's biggest appeal is its customizability – there's practically no limit to your choice of shape, color, and finish. Want your concrete counters to incorporate a sink and drainboard? You got it! Want them stained to mimic marble or granite? Can do! Extremely tough, concrete is scratch and heat resistant, but it's also porous, so it must be sealed for stain resistance. Unfortunately, the sealant itself isn't heat resistant and must be regularly reapplied, so your concrete counters will require routine maintenance and you'll still need to use trivets.

**Glass** – Smooth or textured, transparent or opaque, colored or clear, glass is a surprisingly versatile countertop material that's especially at home in sleek, modern interiors. Add lighting and the effect can be dramatic. The non-porous surface of glass counters is easily cleaned (a relief, since fingerprints and water spots aren't easily avoided) and resistant to heat, moisture, stains, and germs, making them a surprisingly functional choice for kitchens and bathrooms. The biggest drawback to glass countertops is that they're vulnerable to scratching and chipping. Choose recycled glass for more environmentally friendly counters.

**Metal** – From the professional look of stainless steel to the rustic look of copper, metal can really make an impression. Unfortunately, it can also literally make an impression, as metal counters are susceptible to dents, scratches and fingerprints. On the plus side, you needn't

fear plunking those hot pots and pans right down on your metal counters, and bacteria is easily washed off their non-porous surface. Copper, pewter and zinc develop a patina over time, which may be just the look you want; if not, they'll need regular sealing/waxing.

**Paper** – Bet you didn't see this one coming! If you like the appearance and performance of solid-surface countertops, but want to make the most eco-friendly choice available, paper composite counters are just the ticket. They're made from post-consumer recycled paper and petroleum-free resin; that resin is what makes the paper virtually waterproof and thus stain resistant. While not scratch- or heatproof, paper countertops can be sanded. Aging can have an effect on the color of these counters, which should be periodically treated with mineral oil.

**Wood** – Think wooden counters and sinks can't mix? Think again! While wood does necessitate regular oiling and attending to spills quickly, it boasts some practical advantages: it's long lasting, forgiving, due to its softness, and easily repaired (scratches and stains – or the entire surface – can be sanded and refinished). Aesthetically speaking, wood counters age well, offer incomparable warmth, come in a variety of beautiful, naturally occurring patterns and can be stained and finished for a customized look (e.g., inlays and borders). For more eco-friendly counters, opt for bamboo or FSC-certified or reclaimed wood.



# ON THE UPSWING

Buying in an up and coming neighborhood is a savvy move that can really pay off. But how do you find such an area? Here are some tips to help you identify neighborhoods on the upswing.

- **Take a drive or walk around town.** Are the locals improving their homes and businesses? Look for such evidence as scaffolding, removal dumpsters, trucks and lawn signs belonging to trade services like general contractors, roofers, and painters. Improvement at the individual level is often tied to improvement at the community level.
- **While on your local tour, keep an eye out for signs of commercial investment.** Businesses do their homework on an area before moving into it; if there are many new stores and services under development in a neighborhood – popular coffee chains and trendy shops and eateries, in particular – that's a good indicator of positive growth.
- **Do some research into local facts and figures.** A by-the-numbers picture of a community can be very telling as to the direction in which it's headed. Take housing starts for example: How have they been trending over the last six months? How do they compare year to year? Is enrollment in local schools decreasing, stable, or on the uptick?
- **Talk to a real estate salesperson.** No one has their finger on the local pulse quite like a real estate rep; in addition to information on all the topics mentioned above, they can tell you if infrastructure plans are afoot for the area, if there's a big employer moving in and if available properties have begun to sell more quickly and for more money, for example.



## IN OR OUT?

When a home sells, which items stay and which go? That's one of the most contentious issues between sellers and buyers. So pay attention, sellers: here's how to avoid confusion – and possibly litigation.

First, you need to understand what sorts of items are considered personal property (movables or "chattels," like your tables and chairs for instance) and thus expected to go with you when you move, and what sorts of items may be considered part of the property and thus expected to stay (like light fixtures). The distinction can be nuanced and can vary depending on where you live, so ask your local real estate representative for clarification.

With that understanding, make a list of all those items you don't want included in the sale, but that might be considered part of the property. Be sure to note details like make and model number, size, color, etcetera – the more specific your list, the less likely a dispute. Discuss your list with your real estate salesperson before listing your home so they can note your exclusions in marketing material and contracts.

An even more effective approach is simply removing from your home anything you don't want included in its sale before listing. After all, buyers can't want what they don't see. Particularly in buyer's markets, however, you may want to replace those items you want to keep with comparable items that can stay behind, and make any repairs your removals may have necessitated, so as not to adversely affect your home's attractiveness. This way, buyers get to keep everything that isn't personal property and you avoid risking a dispute – or even a sale – over something you want to keep. A win-win!

## Les' Lessons

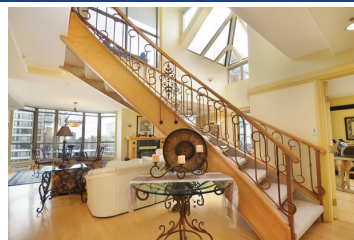
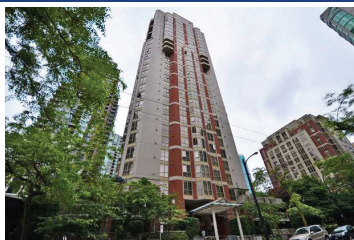
## The world's youngest tech billionaires

Last month, we had the top ten tips for turning your kid into a tech billionaire. Here are the 40 and under billionaires. Just imagine... Bill Gates has given over \$30 Billion to charity. Talk about redistribution of wealth!

1. Larry Page | 40 | Google | \$31.4 Billion
2. Sergey Brin | 40 | Google | \$31.1 Billion
3. Mark Zuckerberg | 29 | Facebook | \$28.5 Billion
4. Dustin Moskovitz | 29 | Facebook | \$6.8 Billion
5. Eduardo Saverin | 31 | Facebook | \$4.1 Billion
6. Robert Pera | 35 | Ubiquiti | \$2.7 Billion
7. Sean Parker | 34 | Facebook | \$2.4 Billion
8. Jack Dorsey | 36 | Twitter | \$2.2 Billion
9. Naruatsu Baba | 36 | Coop | \$2.2 Billion
10. Yoshikazu Tanaka | 38 | Gree | \$1.8 Billion

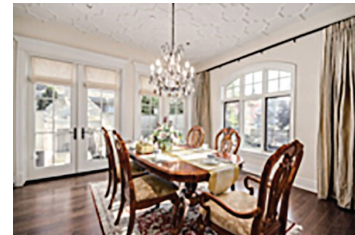
### Vancouver Downtown

Penthouse on 31st Floor  
**Prime Location**  
1,870 sq ft on 2 Levels  
2 Bed / 2 Full Bath  
Rooftop deck with hot tub



### Vancouver West Side

3.5 Floors of Elegant Luxury  
**South Granville**  
5,385 sq ft  
Excellent school catchment  
5 Bed & 6 Bath



### Vancouver West Side

Development Opportunity  
**3 Lots x 38' x 101'**  
11,628 sq ft  
Site is cleared  
Prime location in Marpole



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Check out all our websites at [www.AllianceFirstCall.ca](http://www.AllianceFirstCall.ca)

