



O.M.G. on the Flip Side

We hope you all had a happy and safe holiday! Those of you in Tahoe or Truckee had to brave a very rare "blizzard warning" to start off the new year. The storm produced anywhere from 3-10 feet of snow, providing an excellent start to the Tahoe ski season.

When will the next OMG baby arrive? Mortgage Consultant, Andrew Koijane and family will be expecting their 2 child at any moment. Meanwhile, Vice President of Production Amy Hauptert, will be expecting her second child mid April.

Holiday traveling can be tough

- just ask OMG Client Services Coordinator Ange Solinsky. Due to flight cancelations, Christmas in Indiana this year had to be experienced without luggage or presents! Fortunately, Mortgage Consultant Katie Rice safely toured Thailand, Laos and Cambodia. Teresa O'Dette and family celebrated Thanksgiving with Mickey Mouse and crew at Disneyland.

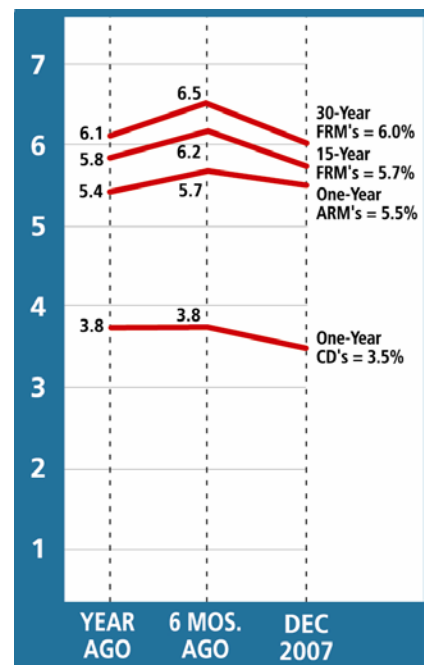
If you or anyone you know is considering a purchase or refinance in the near future - now is the time! Rates have fallen to levels not seen since September of 2005! We will be happy to provide a complimentary mortgage review to determine whether a refinance will make sense for you and your family. Contact your O'Dette Mortgage Group Mortgage Consultant!

*"What do we live for,
if it is not to make
life less difficult
for each other?"*

- George Eliot

Key Interest Rates At A Glance

Rate trends as of mid-December 2007



FRM = Fixed Rate Mortgage
ARM = Adjustable Rate Mortgage



The O'Dette-Thew family at Disneyland over Thanksgiving holiday

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Safety at the ATM

With horror stories abounding about identity theft and fraud, it sometimes seems like your personal information is never safe.

One place to always be alert about the perils of identity theft is when visiting the bank or automatic teller machine (ATM). Here are useful safety tips for consumers who use ATMs:

- Keep your PIN number a secret. Never write it down or share it with anyone.
- Be aware of your surroundings, particularly at night. Make sure the ATM is free of sight obstructions. If you observe suspicious persons or circumstances, do not use the machine.
- Have your ATM card ready and in your hand as you approach the ATM.
- Use your body to “shield” the ATM keyboard as you enter your PIN.



- Always take your receipts or transaction records with you.
- Do not count or visually display any money you receive from the ATM. Immediately put your money into your pocket or purse and count it later.
- If you are using a drive-up ATM, be sure passenger windows are rolled up and all doors are locked. If you leave your car and walk to the ATM, lock your car.

By taking some simple precautions, you can put your mind at ease while using banking facilities.

Countdown to Digital TV

Americans with older, analog televisions must switch to digital by February 17, 2009. Subscribers to cable or satellite service should ask their providers if they need special equipment for digital reception. If



you don't buy a digital model, a converter box will change digital signals back to analog.

The boxes range from \$50 to \$75 each, but starting January 1, 2008, U.S. households may request up to two \$40 coupons, to apply to the purchase of the boxes. For more information, go to www.dtv.gov or call 1-888-225-5322.

Home Selling Tips

Home sellers spend a lot of time and money on the interior of their homes and tend to forget the part everyone sees. The first impression the potential buyer is going to have of your home is the exterior. The big three exterior concerns are the roof, windows and paint.

Check the roof to see if the shingles are warped or curling. If they are, you will need to decide if they can be repaired or is a replacement needed. Do all the windows open and close easily? Are there signs of leaking? Does the exterior paint have cracks, blisters or wrinkles? Maybe a power washing and a little touch up can bring it back to life.

Remember, no one buying a home wants to spend the first six months replacing a roof, windows, and repainting.

Old Computers

Have an old computer, fax or printer you need to get rid of? Well, whatever you do, don't throw it out! You'd be surprised how many charitable organizations, schools and techies are interested in your outdated equipment.

At www.sharetechnology.org and www.throwplace.com, you can list your office machines on a community board. Everything at these websites is given for free – but, if a charity takes your junky old computer, you just might have yourself a tax write-off. You help someone in need, recycle goods instead of tossing them and get a tax break to boot.



It's Time to Start Preparing to File Your Taxes

With the holidays now past, another annual tradition is starting to take shape, even though this one may not be as joyous of a season. It's tax time once again, and deadlines are getting closer each day. But as you begin preparing to file your 2007 tax return, now is a good time to review your overall financial picture as well. As with all your investments, it's important to have a good handle on your tax situation, so you can maximize any savings opportunities that may exist.

While many of your investment decisions won't be made on the basis of tax planning alone, there are still several tax-related strategies you should consider to help minimize the effects of taxes on your finances, leaving you more money to put away for your own future. Following are some items to be aware of as you prepare your 2007 tax return, and also a few things to consider as you look to the future as well.

When figuring your taxes each year, it's important to take note of all your capital gains and losses over the course of the year, and come up with a net gain or loss. For investments you've held for one year or less, you'll be calculating what are known as short-term gains or losses. Long-term applies to those investments you've held longer than one year.

To calculate your overall gain or loss, you'll need to start by comparing similar investments. First you'll net your short-term gains versus short-term losses, and then net your long-term gains versus long-term losses. Once you have those two figures, you can then net

short-term against long-term to come up with your total gain or loss for the year. If you're left with a net loss, you can take a deduction for up to \$3,000 against ordinary income on your taxes for that year. Any excess losses over that \$3,000 amount can be carried over to the next year to go through the same netting process again.

Tax time is also a good opportunity to revisit a couple of long-term savings opportunities. The tax filing deadline is the last day to make contributions to a traditional or a Roth IRA and have them counted for the 2007 tax year. So if you haven't already maxed out your contributions for last year, you still have time to get those in. The maximum contribution for 2007 is \$4,000, and those aged 50 or older are allowed to make additional "catch-up" contributions of \$1,000. Looking ahead, that contribution limit will be raised to \$5,000 in 2008, meaning the total contribution allowable for those nearing retirement will go up to \$6,000 when their catch-up contributions are added to the mix.

While the process of filing our taxes is something we may not always enjoy, it's important to take the time to seek out all the benefits you can find. Consulting with financial and tax-planning professionals could help you uncover opportunities you may not have been aware of before.

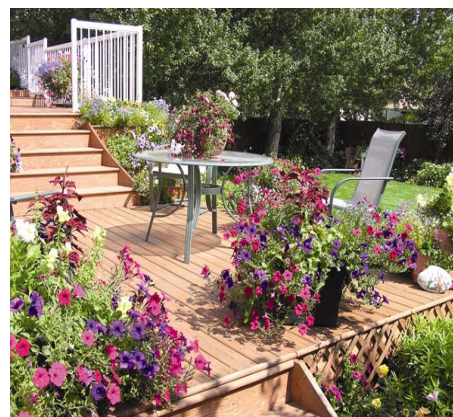
While Diane Morrison is on maternity leave, her associate, Erin Ellis contributed this article to "Money Matters" & is the preferred Financial Consultant to the Katie Rice Team.

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Add Value to Your Home

Whether you're building or remodeling, it's the extras that can add considerably to your enjoyment as well as the resale value of your home. According to a survey of consumer preferences by the National Association of Home Builders, here are the amenities that homeowners want most:

- Double sink in the kitchen
- Walk-in pantry
- Island work area in the kitchen
- Built-in microwave oven
- Home office
- Soundproofing
- Walk-in his and hers closets
- Linen closet in the bathroom
- Separate shower enclosure
- Private toilet compartment
- Dressing/makeup area
- Laundry room near kitchen or bedroom
- Exterior lighting
- Deck/patio at the rear of the house
- Built-in sprinkler system
- Front porch



Home Sale Stoppers

Unintentional neglects are real sales stoppers.

Sometimes, after spending many comforting years in their homes, sentimental and subjective sellers overlook potential home sale stoppers.

Points of neglect by the seller, such as stains on the ceilings, drains that run slowly or walls which show signs of pipe leaks, are all red flags to buyers. The sellers who have lived with these malfunctions can let their emotional attachment overshadow their practical judgment. Beware! These problems become deferred maintenance nightmares to potential buyers.

Also, make these improvements before you sell:

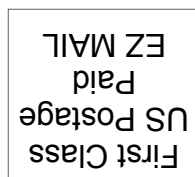
- Clean up and remove clutter
- A new coat of paint, new carpeting, freshly manicured landscaping, updated fixtures, windows, doors and other touches can put your home in the best light.

Travel Savings

There is a travel website that helps you plan where to stay, eat and play around the world with info from databases previously available only to travel agents for a fee.

www.ProfessionalTravelGuide.com does not book travel. You plan at the site, then book through any travel agent or booking site. Best features:

- The hotels section gives a comprehensive list for a destination, with a photo, basic info and price range for each hotel. Clicking on a choice gets you extremely detailed info, including facts such as when the property was last renovated and whether disruptive repairs are under way.
- In addition to a list of attractions and activities by type, the site details things to do nearby.
- The comprehensive restaurant list provides cuisine and price range details.



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