

Christina Koch-Garcia  
301-633-8556  
Samson Properties  
SellmyhomeChristina@gmail.com  
www.MyAgentChristina.net



## REAL ESTATE GPS

---

Welcome to the latest edition of Real Estate GPS. Summer is upon us and the weather appears to be cooperating. The housing market continues to flourish despite minor rate increases. In this edition, a toast to you for International Wine Day, a quick clip on affordable housing, a simple but effective way to put yourself ahead of competing buyers, an appraisal waiver that can save you valuable time and money plus a link to holiday happenings in the area, and a quick and easy recipe to compliment your Memorial cookout!

As always, I welcome your input and feedback.

## AFFORDABLE HOUSING

---

Earlier this month, I had the privilege of attending the Affordable Housing Conference of Montgomery County. It was a great opportunity to learn more about local and statewide initiatives to create and maintain access to affordable housing opportunities for local residents.

Not only was the forum informative, it helped to diffuse the ever present misconception that affordable housing means low income housing or the stigma that affordable housing is bad.

A number of local representatives were present including County Executive Ike Leggett, Senator Chris Van Hollen, and Congressman Jamie Raskin. The conference sponsors an annual, "Break the Barrier to Homeownership Contest." The winner is awarded \$5000 to \$7500 in grant money to help finance their home purchase.

The conference split into break out sessions covering various local topics including the impact of the Purple line on housing, an increase of the number of MPDU units available to the public, among others.

Local statistics show that the average millennial spends about 45% of their income on housing, despite the recommended allotment of 25-30% of your gross income. With Real Estate prices in the DMV on the rise, the subject of affordable housing for recent graduates, young professionals and an increasing senior population is a real concern.

We all want and deserve a safe, warm, and welcoming place to call home.

<http://www.affordablehousingconference.org/2018-summit/our-mission-2/>

## MEMORIAL DAY HAPPENINGS

---

The Washington area offers an array of activities to reign in Memorial Day weekend and the kickoff to summer. If basking in the sun at your community pool or hovering over a hot grill are not your idea of fun, the DMV has something to offer for everyone.

Rockville also continues its Hometown Holidays celebration this weekend with concerts, festivities, and food vendors. However you celebrate the holiday, don't forget to observe a moment of silence for those that have served.

Click the links below for area happenings:

<http://www.capitalregionusa.org/events>

<https://patch.com/maryland/rockville/hometown-holiday-tase-rockville-schedule-memorial-day-2018>

<https://washington.org/visit-dc/things-to-do-memorial-day-weekend-washington-dc>

## INTERNATIONAL WINE DAY

---

Cheers! May 25th is International Wine day and Whole Foods nationwide is celebrating with 20% off all Rose. Some retailers and online wine clubs are extending promotions through the weekend. I can't think of a finer way to start the holiday!

See the link below for local happenings;

<https://www.thrillist.com/news/nation/national-wine-day-deals-2018>

## A NEW TWIST ON APPRAISALS

---

Anyone who finances a purchase or wants to refinance their home is required to get an appraisal. Appraisals are costly, typically paid in advance, and range on average from \$450-\$650 locally. Financing contingencies are subject to appraisal and often have both parties on pins and needles until value is in. If the property doesn't appraise, there is no refund for the service, and buyers are out the fee if an accord is not reached.

Fannie Mae and Freddie Mac have introduced waivers on some of their loan products. In-person appraisals are being substituted for property data and analytics. Restrictions apply.

To request a fast track appraisal, a minimum 20% down payment is often required. If you are refinancing and property values in your community are consistent, you may be able to eliminate the appraisal, streamline the process, and save.

Click the link below for more information:

[https://www.realtor.com/news/trends/are-fewer-appraisals-a-good-thing/?iid=rdc\\_news\\_hp\\_carousel\\_theLatest](https://www.realtor.com/news/trends/are-fewer-appraisals-a-good-thing/?iid=rdc_news_hp_carousel_theLatest)

[https://www.fanniemae.com/content/fact\\_sheet/property-inspection-waiver-fact-sheet.pdf](https://www.fanniemae.com/content/fact_sheet/property-inspection-waiver-fact-sheet.pdf)

## PROOF OF FUNDS LETTER

---

With all the competition for homes these days, you want your offer to be as strong as possible. Apart from a pre-approval letter, some agents request a financial information sheet which provides a snapshot of a buyer's finances. This form includes income, savings, assets, and an overview of debts or liabilities. The idea is to give the seller some assurance that you will be able to perform on the contract once they remove their home from the market. Some buyers, and agents including myself, find the form too intrusive.

If you are a solid buyer however with a sizeable down payment or savings cushion, and want to strengthen your offer against competing contracts, a proof of funds letter could be the key. This letter is prepared and issued by your bank and validates cash or reserves that you may have available. The service is free and is a simple and easy way to put yourself ahead of the competition.

[https://www.realtor.com/advice/finance/proof-of-funds-letter-for-real-estate-purchase/?iid=rdc\\_news\\_hp\\_carousel\\_theLatest](https://www.realtor.com/advice/finance/proof-of-funds-letter-for-real-estate-purchase/?iid=rdc_news_hp_carousel_theLatest)

## CHRISTINA'S CITRUS SALAD

---

Memorial Day marks the beginning of pool season and seasonal barbeques. While we all love our grilled delicacies, there's nothing like a light salad to balance the palette. This simple and delicious recipe is the perfect side dish to accompany your holiday gathering.

1 bag of mixed field greens  
1/2 cup of crumbled goat cheese  
1/2- 3/4 cup of candied pecans  
1 ripe avocado sliced  
1 fresh Navel orange  
Balsamic vinegar  
Extra virgin olive oil  
Sea Salt to taste

Place lettuce in bowl. Peel and slice avocado. Add to lettuce mixture along with goat cheese and pecans. Add a dash of sea salt, a dash of olive oil, and a 2 dashes of vinegar. Lightly toss. Cut orange into halves, then quarters, and chop into small pieces, reserving one quarter of the orange. Arrange on top. Squeeze juice from orange slice just before serving for added flavor. Enjoy!

## MY SHORT SALES PITCH

---

My business is largely referral based. The greatest compliment I can receive is your endorsement to friends, family, and colleagues. If you or someone you know is in need of Real Estate Services, I welcome your referrals. I am licensed to serve in Maryland, DC, and Virginia. I thank you.

## DISCLAIMER

---

The information provided herein is for informational purposes only and does not replace the advice of your accountant, attorney, or other applicable licensed individual.