



TALKING REAL ESTATE



**BERKSHIRE
HATHAWAY**
HomeServices
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SEPTEMBER 2020

Whether you own a home or are looking to buy or sell one, here are some useful tips, ideas and advice. Jennifer D Holds the Key. Expect Exceptional.

HOMEBUYERS' ADVICE



THE RENEWED APPEAL OF SUBURBIA

In June 2020, a stock market sell-off sent investors scurrying to the relative safety of the bond market, causing average mortgage interest rates to fall below three percent for the 30-year-fixed-rate mortgage – the lowest level in modern recorded history, according to *Mortgage News Daily*. What caused such a dip?

Mortgage rates loosely follow the yields on 10-year U.S. Treasury bonds. As more bonds were purchased, yields went down, and mortgage rates followed.

But that's not all that happened. The Mortgage Bankers Association's *Mortgage Credit Availability Index* also hit a six-year low. Lenders don't like uncertainty, so to secure those lower interest rates, borrowers were subjected to higher credit score qualifications (700 or higher), unavailability of some loan programs (no new jumbo loans) and higher down payments (at least 20 percent), among other stricter criteria.

Yet, June mortgage applications were up a whopping 13 percent over the previous year. *Freddie Mac* forecasts that interest rates will remain at or near record lows and that housing prices will moderate throughout 2021.

What does this mean to you, the homebuyer or homeowner? If you have good credit, steady employment, and a sizable down-payment, you should be able to get or refinance an existing mortgage loan.

HOMEOWNERS' ADVICE



THE DISH ON FINE CHINA

Choosing a china pattern is a great way to express your taste and accent your new home. You'll enjoy how your table looks every time you serve a meal or snacks.

What is fine china? According to *Scullyandscully.com*, fine china is made from a white clay called kaolin. It's made of "soft paste," where as porcelain and bone china are "hard paste," explains *Madehow.com*. Porcelain is fired at a higher temperature than either fine china or bone china. Bone china has bone ash added which gives the fired dish the illusion of light.

One way to tell the difference is that fine china is always opaque. Porcelain and bone china are translucent, which means you can almost see through the dish when light hits it. Porcelain is white, while bone china is a softer cream color. Embellishments include everything from hand painting, decals, beading, to gold and silver leaf, but manufacturers may recommend that decorative china be hand-washed to avoid chipping.

Fine china can be informal or formal, so you may want more than one set of dishes on hand. But, don't save fine dishes for special occasions. Use them, enjoy them, and make your own celebrations.



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