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HomeLife Coventry opening today

When Karen Gerrard and Gay Lacoursiere announced they were opening their own real estate office last fall, a lot of people asked them "why now?"

And although the timing was a result of their individual circumstances rather than the market itself, the current economic doldrums have provided some unexpected benefits for HomeLife Coventry Real Estate Inc.

The company, which opened on Nov. 30, is already highly active in both residential and commercial real estate in the Markham area.

Gerrard, who has been in real estate for over 16 years, had always planned to run her own company eventually. "It just came on a little faster than I anticipated," she explained. "Gay and I had been friends for 10 years and had worked together in real estate in Markham.

"When I became available this summer we sat down and discussed what we wanted to do, and decided that this was the time to get something going." With the

uncertain state of the economy, some companies were closing their doors, "and that meant there were a lot of good agents around looking for new opportunities," Lacoursiere points out.

As well, they took a conservative approach to set-up costs, notes Gerrard. "We worked at getting low overheads, to give ourselves flexibility with advertising and the ability to spend more in the direction of service." Recognizing that the market won't stay in its depressed state forever, "we know we'll be in a good position when it starts coming back."

As Lacoursiere puts it, "if we can survive in this downturn, we know we can make it."

She began her own real estate career in Uxbridge, and soon discovered she had a particular flair for dealing with commercial properties. "I like that end of it; that's why I came to Markham," she notes.

"I started working at Century 21 with Karen, who was on the residential side, and we took our brokers' courses together." Lacoursiere has since completed all her CCIM (Certified Commercial Investment Member) courses, and the two women's skills complement each other perfectly.

They have already taken on eight qualified agents, and are currently in the process of recruiting additional representatives. "We're certainly willing to train agents; we have the facilities for that," Gerrard states. The training would also benefit agents who have come into the business within the last two years during the market downturn, she adds.

"The company is involved in a great many power sales right now, and we're working with different finance companies to establish business, as well as networking through HomeLife itself. I don't think we've stopped since we started," said Gerrard cheerfully.

Both women are firm believers in an open door policy and actively promote the concept of teamwork and sharing. "All our agents are involved and feel it's their com-

pany too," Lacoursiere explained. "They feel very excited about being here right from the beginning. They have great ideas and suggestions."

They both agreed that a well-run office is essential to any successful company. Paula Parente is in charge of office administration and hiring night staff and, they say, she does a terrific job. The office itself is decorated in soothing and attractive shades of grey, green and plum.

State-of-the-art technology, private and semi-private offices around the outside, with work stations in the central area, provide a comfortable and professional ambience for agents.

A comfortable and spacious kitchen area with fridge, microwave and dining table, allows staff to take time out for lunch or a cup of coffee and a snack.

HomeLife Coventry is having its grand opening Jan. 30. The company is located at 50 Anderson Avenue, just north of 16th Avenue, off Hwy 48. For more information, call 472-2200.



KAREN GERRARD



GAY LACOURSIERE



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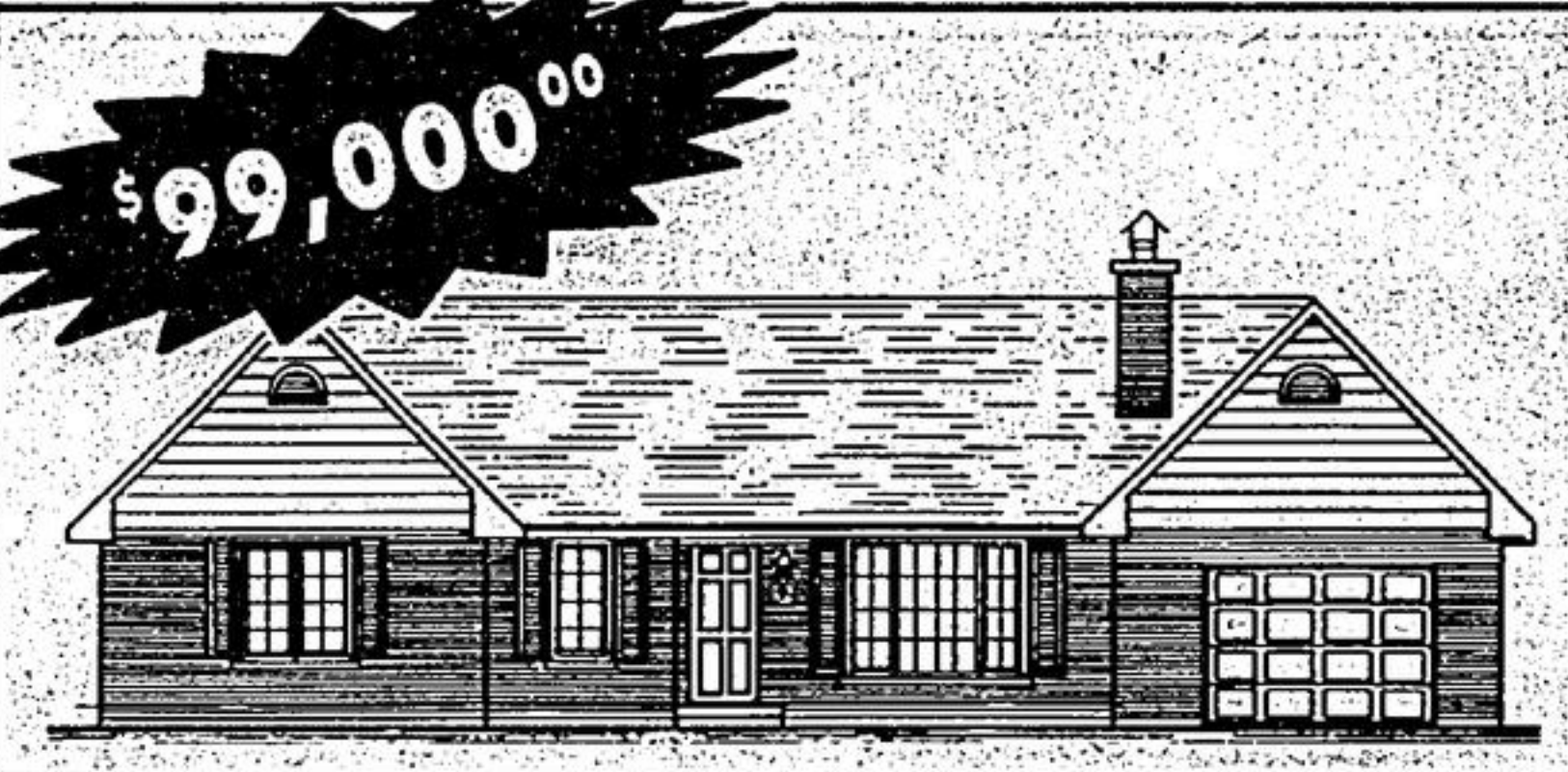
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