

REAL ESTATE NEWS

'Fix up, paint up' pays off for sellers

A little attention to detail can go a long way when turning a buyer to bite on the home seller's terms in a reasonably short period of time.

Diane Howard, a Realtor with Real Estate One, urges her clients to take a five-prong approach — uncluttering, cleaning, repairing, neutralizing and dynamizing — before listing their homes for sale.

"Dynamizing is making every room special," she said. "You might add a plant, potpourri, magazines in a certain area. Add things to make the house more homey. That adds the finishing touches."

Several things demand attention before the finishing touches, noted Ben Denny, a Realtor with The Michigan Group.

"They (sellers) need to get the house in good condition.

It needs to be painted, needs to be cleaned. Rooms should not be overcrowded. The basement should be cleaned out," he said.

Denny finds that only two or three of every 10 houses listed for sale actually are ready for the marketplace.

"Others have something missing — a leaky faucet, the yard's not cleaned up," he said. "All of that little stuff is what turns them (prospective buyers) off. Even if you live in a house and think it's great, it's not necessarily so."

It doesn't make sense to put off minor repairs, especially in communities with a certification inspection as part of the sales process, Denny said. That's because prospective buyers will discount the cost of repairs in their offers and the sellers will end up doing the work anyway.

Carpeting allowances just don't cut it anymore, Howard

and Denny agreed.

"If I feel it's always better to put in neutral color carpeting," Howard said. "In some areas that have hardwood floors, it's a nice touch to sand or refinish."

"Offering an allowance isn't as advisable. A buyer will put a certain value on it and it probably would cost you (seller) less to do. You have conflict right away." So if the carpet's a little worn, replace it yourself, she suggested.

Clutter can bite a seller on the bottom in a couple of different ways.

"It might show there's not enough storage space or enough room, that the house isn't big enough," said Christine Cherry, a Realtor with Reimerich.

Board deaf to complaints about off-duty directors

CONDO QUERIES



ROBERT M. MEISNER

We have a marina condominium in which several board members are extremely noisy with raucous parties. The board of directors does not want to take any action because board members are part of the raucous parties. What do you recommend?

I would write a letter to the board advising it of the noise.

tions of the condominium documents as well as whatever other restrictions there may be in the municipality involving regarding the type of noise or improper behavior that is taking place.

I would point out to the board that it has a fiduciary responsibility to enforce the condominium documents, uniformly and consistently, and to the extent that it does not, the members are personally liable for their acts or omissions.

Perhaps that will have a therapeutic effect on the board. If that does not resolve the problem and you have notified the board as well as the noisy co-owner involved, I would then consult with an attorney as to your legal remedies both against the association and the co-owner.

We are developing a condominium in northern Michigan near a stream and want to take advantage of the benefits for fishing, etc. While we do not have a problem with the Department of Natural Resources, we want to be sure that our condominium documents protect the rights of the members of the association. Can you give us any suggestions as to how that might be accomplished?

Obviously, the stream that is part of the condominium project is a part of the common elements that can be used by all co-owners. I am assuming that the stream is not navigable so there will not be any canoes or other boats traversing the stream through the condominium. While the condominium cannot necessarily preclude the flow of water in the stream, it certainly can take advantage of the stream on the "condominium common grounds."

On the other hand, there may be attendant liabilities with the use and enjoyment of the stream and the condominium documents should provide for adequate remedies available to the association to deal with this potential liability problem. The association may also require that the stream be protected from intruders or trespassers to the extent reasonably possible, by posting signs.

Robert M. Meisner is a Birmingham attorney concentrating his practice in the areas of condominiums, real estate and corporate law. You are invited to submit topics you would like to see discussed in this column by writing Robert M. Meisner at 20200 Telegraph Road, Suite 407, Birmingham 35292.

State housing sales rebound

(AP) — Housing sales in Michigan reached a four-year high during the first quarter of 1992, the Michigan Association of Realtors said Thursday.

Sales in the 16 areas monitored by the association totaled 12,289 from Jan. 1 through March 31 of this year. That was up 8.4 percent from the 11,796 units sold in the same period of 1991, the association said in a statement.

The average price of a house sold during the first quarter was \$85,272, up 4 percent from \$82,014 in the same period of 1991, the statement said. The average price in 1989 was \$77,175 and in 1990 was \$81,892.

Low interest rates and a good selection of affordable housing accounted for the growth in the first quarter, association president Woody Kling said. Sales were expected to stay strong this year as interest rates remained low enough to attract first-time buyers, he said.

The largest increase in sales was reported by the Livingston County Association of Realtors. Sales in that county totaled 337 in the first quarter of 1992, up 25.3 percent from 269 a year earlier.

The Macomb County Association of Realtors reported the largest number of units sold, 3,857. That was a 12.3 percent increase from 3,436 sold in the first quarter of 1991.

The largest increase in average prices was reported by the Shiawassee County Board of Realtors — \$57,687, up 18.8 percent from \$48,579 in the first quarter of 1991.

CLASSIFIED REAL ESTATE

301 Open Houses

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ACROSS

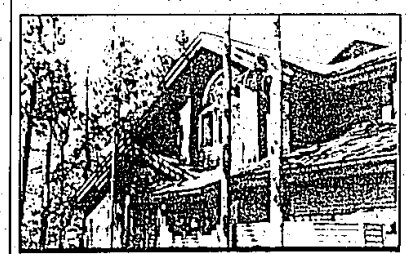
- 1 — of view
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- 14 Temporary
- 15 Spoon
- 17 Leaf
- 18 Make into
- 19 Vanished
- 20 Grow better
- 21 Printer's measure
- 22 Fruit
- 23 Encourage
- 24 "Blame" —

DOWN

- 1 Lightweight
- 2 Scatter
- 3 River in
- 4 Bitter
- 5 Hothead
- 6 Hothead
- 7 Cried
- 8 1992 United Feature Syndicate
- 9 Partners
- 10 Decline
- 11 God of love
- 12 Apportion
- 13 Hardwood
- 14 Tree
- 15 Decorate
- 16 Assumed
- 17 Fear
- 18 Paintboards
- 19 Pined
- 20 Place to
- 21 Workshop
- 22 Conductor
- 23 Turkish flag
- 24 Runs away to be married
- 25 Laid out
- 26 Conducted
- 27 Narrow, flat
- 28 Chicago
- 29 Footstool
- 30 Quilt
- 31 Leverage
- 32 Man's
- 33 Neckline
- 34 Note of scale

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Water lapping the sand,
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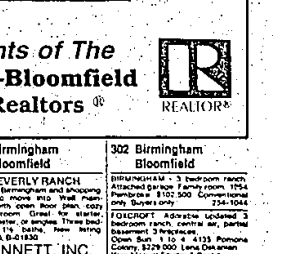
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