Farmington Observer
Homes sold, Page 4F

REAL ESTATE

THURSDAY, SEPTEMBER 21, 1995 • PAGE 1 SECTION E

MOVERS & SHAKERS

This column highlights promotions, transfers, hirings, awards won and other key personnel moves within the suburban real estate community. Send a brief biographical summary — including the towns of residence and employment and a black-and-white photo, if desired — to: Movers & Shakers, Observer & Eccentric Newspapers, 36251 Schoolcraft, Livonia 48150. Our fax number is (313) 591-7279.

Winter appointed

Christy Winter

Christy Winter, a Lake Orion resident, has been appointed manager of education services for the Construction Association of Michigan.

Winter is a member of the American Arbitration Association, National Association of Purchasing Managers and Dispute Avoidance Resolution Task Force.

She is past national director of the National Association of Women in Construction and current national chairwoman of NAWIC Educational Foundation's construction building block program for children.

CAM is headquartered in Troy.

Joins Republic

Rob Schoenberger

Rob Schoenberger has joined Republic Bancorp Mortgage in Plymouth as a senior loan officer. He will specialize in residential mortgage lending in Wayne and Washtenaw counties.

Schoenberger previously was affiliated with D.M.R. Financial in Ann Arbor.

Masko rejoins

David Masko, AIA, has rejoined Kenneth Neumann/Joel Smith and Associates, an architectural, planning and interior design firm in Southfield.

As project designer, Masko will provide design leadership, technical review and quality control.

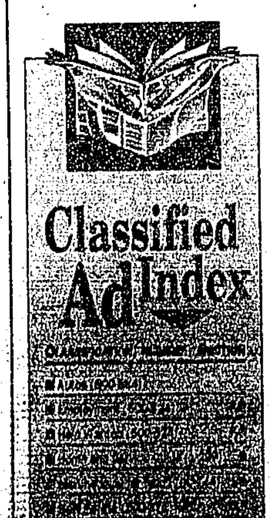
He earned bachelor of science and bachelor of architecture degrees from Lawrence Tech in Southfield.

Messer gets titles

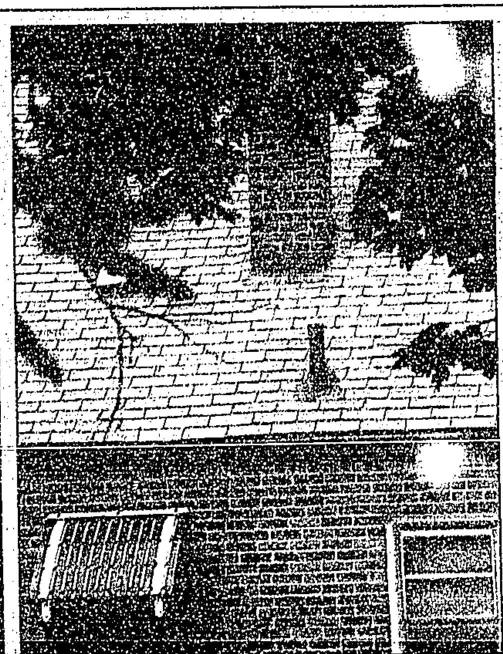
Jay L. Messer, a Troy resident, has earned Residential Accredited Appraiser (RAA) and General Accredited Appraiser (GAA) designations from the appraisal section of the National Association of Realtors.

He is a state certified real estate appraiser and is affiliated with Dean Appraisal in Birmingham.

Messer holds memberships in the National Association of Realtors, Michigan Board of Realtors, Detroit Area Commercial Board of Realtors and the Appraisal Institute.



Sprucing up: *Homeowners who maintain their property usually have an easier time selling and obtaining the asking price.*



STAFF PHOTOS BY ART EMANUELE

Roofing problems: *A bad roof turns off some prospects entirely and generally results in discounted purchase offers.*

Well-maintained property brings more

Some houses sell quicker and at a higher price than similar houses in the same neighborhood. They're usually well maintained and in tip-top showing condition

By Doug Fu[illegible]
Staff Writer

Little things mean a lot to some buyers.

Crumbling concrete steps, aging, curled shingles, paint peeling in shards off a garage and old carpeting may not make or break a deal.

But a tired-looking house can take more time to sell and bring a less generous offer than one that's pleasing to the eye and in working order.

"People who kind of get transferred a lot seem to know what to do. People in a home for a while don't," said Mary Kokeny, a sales associate with Weir Manuel Snyder & Ranke in West Bloomfield.

"Just make it as sharp as you can make it so a person looking can visualize where to put the furniture," said Ken Koenig, an associate broker with Re/Max Crosswinds in Canton. "They don't want to visualize how much work they have to do."

Prospects get an impression, rightly or wrongly, about an entire house and how it's been cared for from what they see when they first arrive, real estate professionals say.

"A lot of buyers drive by a house and if they don't like the outside, they won't go inside," said Sandy Sersen, an associate broker with Mayfair in Livonia. "Maybe it's beautiful inside. It's all eye appeal."

While it doesn't make sense to pour a lot of money into major renovations just to get a house ready for sale, it always pays to take care of the basics.

"It does make a difference, most definitely," said Randal Goodson, an associate broker with Prudential Great Lakes Realty in Farmington Hills. "Stepping into a home that needs a lot of work turns people off."

It's up to the Realtor working with a seller to talk turkey about exactly what needs to be done, he added. Sometimes, it goes beyond talk.

"There was one time when I went into a home that had a vinyl flooring in the powder room, kitchen and nook area," Goodson recalled. "It was old and worn and not today's colors. I had told them that I really thought it should be changed. They balked."

Prospects weren't shy with their negative comments.

"I offered to come in and help them put in flooring," Goodson said. I did come in one Saturday, helped and the home sold within the next week at pretty much the asking price."

Kokeny also has offered advice to relatives and friends.

"My sister is looking to sell a house that has old, green drapes. I said, "Sue, take those down, get verticals, change the carpeting and paint. Keep it neutral, one color, so it all flows, it doesn't look so chopped up."/i"

Homeowners tend to get comfortable with a house over time and learn to live with idiosyncrasies that might really annoy prospective buyers.

"It's hard to get people to fix up and older house they've lived in the last 10 to 15 years," Koenig said. "They figure it was good enough for them, it should be good enough for the next person.

"A lot won't do it, and they will get less money for a house or it won't sell," he said.

Remember, a roof ultimately protects everything in a house. It's a big item for most knowledgeable consumers and a big item at curb appeal. Some prospects who see a roof in disrepair will simply walk away. Others will sharply discount a purchase offer.

Some would-be buyers go through houses keeping a mental tally on how much they will reduce an offer by what they figure to spend on repairs. They can overestimate.

Sometimes, sellers fear making repairs because they don't know how much the work will cost. They can overestimate, too.

Sersen relates a recent experience.

"I had a listing in south Redford. There was a lot of broken-up concrete. It was cracked and raised.

"Buyers were afraid to buy because they thought it would cost a lot to fix. Sellers were also fearful to fix it because they thought it would cost a lot.

"When I had the sellers get an estimate, it was nowhere near what they thought. The sellers got it fixed, and a buyer made an offer that was accepted."

Much updating can be done by handy homeowners themselves or hired out at fairly inexpensive prices.

These include fixing drippy faucets, painting inside and out, replacing concrete steps, caulking windows, recarpeting and landscaping.

"When it comes to little things like paint and cleaning, elbow grease makes a difference," Sersen said. "No one wants to take on other peoples' junk. If they do, they want to steal it."

Liability rules are different for common areas

REAL ESTATE QUERIES

ROBERT M. MEISNER

Q. I recently read an answer to a question concerning landlord/tenant liability. Do those concepts apply where there are common areas over which the landlord retains control?

A. Ordinarily, liability for rental premises lies with the party who has control of them. However, there are exceptions for property on which there are common areas over which the landlord retains control.

Where a tenant's guest, for example, fell on steps of a flat owned by the landlord, the court held that the plaintiff was an invitee of the landlord because she was injured in a common area over which the landlord retained control.

It should also be noted that while there is authority that social guests are licensees rather than invitees, even when expressly invited onto the possessor's land, there is also authority that duties owed by the landlord to the tenant's social guests are duties owed to invitees, not licensees, at least in these common areas.

In Michigan, the landlord is obligated only to use reasonable care for the protection of the invitee and is not the insurer of the invitee's safety. In addition, with respect to licensees, no duty is placed on the landowner to know of potential danger, even if there might have been an opportunity to fully inspect.

The duty is limited to hazards that the landlord actually knows about, whether or not inspection would have revealed them.

Q. I am interested in relocating to the downtown or near the north side of Chicago and am wondering whether there are bargains to be had in regard to the purchase of condominium apartments, presumably in a high rise.

A. Based upon a recent analysis which I conducted in the downtown and north lakeshore Chicago area, it appears that it is, indeed, a buyer's market with respect to high-rise condos.

For example, a condominium located on the Chicago River near State Street has 500-square-foot condominium units available anywhere from $45,000 to $52,000. The monthly assessment ranges from $120 to $140, and taxes are $800 to $1,000 per year.

A 2-bedroom apartment of approximately 1,210 square feet ranges in price from $150,000 to $175,000 with monthly assessments of $300 to $330. Taxes are $1,800 to $2,200 per year.

I found that high-rise condominiums on the lakefront are now going for competitive prices, and studios can be purchased for as little as $30,000 and 2-bedroom apartments for approximately $120,000.

As in the case of any other purchase, location and physical composition of the premises are extremely important.

It is also important to get a good real estate person to assist you in getting the right product for you, assuming all of the legalities are in order.

Robert M. Meisner is a Birmingham area attorney concentrating his practice in the areas of condominiums, real estate, corporate law and litigation. You are invited to submit topics which you would like to see discussed in this column, including questions about condominiums, by writing Robert M. Meisner, 30200 Telegraph Road, Suite 467, Bingham Farms, Michigan 48025.

This column provides general information and should not be construed as legal opinion.