

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 and Shakers, Observer & Eccentric Newspapers, 36251 Schoolcraft, Livonia, 48150. Our fax number is (313) 691-7279.

Stotzky joins Cranbrook



Sylvia Stotzky, an associate broker, has joined Cranbrook Associates in Franklin. Stotzky, a 20-year real estate veteran, is a multi-million dollar producer. She will continue to specialize in lakefront and other residential properties in Oakland County. Stotzky lives in West Bloomfield.

Kelly receives CRP



Leon Kelly, an associate broker with RE/MAX on the trail in Plymouth, has received the professional designation of Certified Relocation Professional. Kelly, a Northville resident, also has achieved the designation of Graduate Realtor's Institute.

Brandewile heads Republic

Douglas E. Brandewile was appointed president and chief executive officer for Republic Bancorp Mortgage.

He brings 15 years of mortgage banking experience to Republic, most recently serving with Unlimited Mortgage Services, a subsidiary of Midwest Savings Bank.

Brandewile, a Bloomfield Hills resident, has a degree in business administration from Wittenberg University, Springfield, Ohio.

Gobba joins Century 21

Carlo David Gobba, a newcomer to the real estate business, joined Century 21 Country Hills in Bloomfield Hills.

Gobba, who plans to major in business at Oakland University, is in process of writing a book "Living Debt Free in America Today."

Clark receives CRS

Bill Clark, an associate broker with Clarkston Real Estate Services, was awarded the professional designation of Certified Residential Specialist.

Clark is past president of the North Oakland County Board of Realtors.

REAL ESTATE

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Staying motivated: Dan Mullan, a Realtor with Mayfair, keeps pictures of his boat and favorite recreation activities, as well as motivational tapes and books around his desk.

Doldrums visit Realtors, too

BY DOUG FURKE
STAFF WRITER

All you have these minutes, we have to be on top of our game all the time. The doldrums hit everyone, including real estate agents.

Marlene Kilmeick, an associate broker with RE/MAX West in Livonia, likes to get out the pen and paper and touch base with previous clients when things get slow.

"I take the time to write little notes... thinking of you... of course, including some of my cards," she said.

"They call and say, 'I couldn't believe you took the time to write to me. I can't believe you do that.' Especially if you can remember the names of their kids or pets."

Kilmeick also has started sending copies of new listings on a regular basis, even to clients who are not currently active. Not only does it keep them informed about property values, but it keeps her name in their memory bank.

"Another thing, I think, is keeping your name in personal advertising," Kilmeick added.

Mitch Wolf, a broker with Cranbrook Associates in Franklin, finds that things can slow down during the holiday season. He says, "I know, and December and also during the summer when people are vacationing."

"When I get that inner voice or something tells you you better hit the stick and get back to business," Wolf said. "I have been house, contact for sale by owners."

Then, good things happen to those who hustle. Wolf describes a specific instance when an unexpected pick-up shook him out of the doldrums. "A client was transferring into town."

Wolf was looking in the \$100,000 to \$150,000 range. He couldn't really find anything he liked financially, he was worried because he was taking a new job. He told me he would take a rental.

"Then someone else I had gone to but who I didn't like the last year but who decided to rent called (unexpectedly) and asked me to look at it again," Wolf said. "The minute I got the listing, I called the buyer who was going to rent."

"I told him it was \$250,000. It was in a great neighborhood, it would sell for much more in a year or two and it was better than having an apartment. He bought it."

One rumor became a buyer, another rumor the seller. And Wolf was in on both ends.

"It just gets you going, moves you, shows you can make your own business," he said.

Dan Mullan, an associate broker with Mayfair in Livonia, said the doldrums usually hit every three or four months with ups and downs in business.

"One of the things I do is go through a list of past clients. I've been in business 15 years. I go through and call and ask for referrals," he said. "It's not exactly cold calling."

"I'll get down to calling and the seventh one actually will say, 'Hi, a matter of fact, I'm going to work with you or my brother-in-law.'"

But Mullan has other strategies. "I'll pull out some of my (motivational) tapes. I'll keep books at my desk, a picture of Aspen, Colo., on my bulletin board and a picture of my boat in the water."

In December, the market does tend to slow down," he said. "Most agents just give up. Typically, my December ad bill is twice most other months."

Mullan also has a story of how maintaining a professional demeanor in the wake of a major setback rocketed him from the outhouse to the penthouse.

"I remember a customer telling me after a long time that he was buying from a for sale by owner. That meant no commission. I was real disappointed. Then the buyer asked if I could recommend a building inspector. I went ahead and did that."

Just by that service to him, the for sale by owner called me to work with them to find a house.

"You've got to come up punching, still be of service, still be positive," Mullan said.

Sally Witt, broker/owner of Heritage Real Estate in Livingston County/Better Homes and Gardens, doesn't find much excuse for agents to be in the dumps.

"We make our own business," she said. "We can't wait for people to come into our office and call us. We have to generate business."

And she's always doing just that.

"Everyone has to live some place," Witt said. "Whether I'm in the grocery store, doctor's office, Builder's Square, I go up to people and say, 'Hi, how are you? I'm in real estate. Do you or can you think of anyone who wants to buy or sell a house?'"

"Or I wear my name tag and they come to me," she said. "This is a communications business first, selling property, second. If I felt self-con-

Last week's article on expenses associated with moving into a new house should have quoted the following rates for Corrigan Moving Systems in Farmington Hills:

- \$100 per hour for three men and a truck
- \$80 per hour for two men and a truck

scious, I wouldn't be in the business. There are ways to avoid burnout and deal with it when it happens, Witt said.

"You need to take some time to smell the roses. You have to be a well-rounded person. You have to regenerate yourself."

"I think most of our people try to take time off for their family, do something special. Then you're ready to get back and do a good job."

That's the thinking of Bob Ogg, a Realtor with Max Brook in Birmingham.

"Go on vacation," he advises. "I'm serious. Take some time off and let your thoughts subside. Get away from the environment. Then come back and do a good job."

"Get a lot of open houses. I know you talking to people. I do mailings to past clients. You call your circle of friends and ask if they know anyone who's thinking of moving."

"I also go to seminars and listen to what other people say," Ogg said. "Often, you can pick up one thing you can use."

"It's hard to not rest on your laurels," Ogg said. "A lot of agents expect it to fall in their lap, but that normally doesn't happen."

You don't need a builder's license to subcontract

REAL ESTATE QUERIES



ROBERT M. MEISNER

Q. My wife and I are planning on building a new house and want to contract much of the work ourselves. Is it necessary or advisable to obtain a builder's license? If we do obtain a builder's license, are we exposing ourselves to any legal issues or liabilities?

A. Under MCL 339.2403 a person may engage in the business of or act in the capacity of a residential builder or a residential maintenance and alteration contractor or sales person in the state of Michigan without having a license if the person is, among other things, an owner of property with reference to a structure on the property for the owner's own use and occupancy. Accordingly, it would not be necessary for you to obtain a builder's license if you plan to reside in the house yourself.

On the other hand, obviously if you want to contract out for the construction of the house, the contractors who work on the house must be licensed.

Moreover, the more information you have about contracting and building, the better you will do in regard to the construction of the house.

You may be well advised to hire a "general contractor" to assist you in letting the contracts to the subcontractors for the construction of the house.

If you were to obtain a builder's license, you would have to take classes and a test, which, would, doubt, more familiarize you with the intricacies of building a house. In general, it is best advised to have as much assistance as possible in any endeavor, and that includes the construction of a house.

Q. We have a provision in our condominium documents restricting minor children. The president of the condominium association board of directors has indicated that since we are not enforcing this provision, we should not be violating any federal statute. Is this correct?

A. In a 1995 ruling by the federal Department of Housing and Urban Development (which enforces the Fair Housing Amendments), it ruled that a restriction on minor children included in the condominium documents, even though not enforced, violated Sec-

tion 804(c)(2) USC, Paragraph 3604(c), which would make it illegal to make... or publish, or caused to be made or be published, any notice or statement which indicates a preference against families with children.

Damages in that case were awarded in the amount of \$1,600 for emotional distress, \$500 to the children, \$500 in actual damages, \$750 penalty to the board member and a \$1,500 civil penalty against the condominium association.

It is incumbent, therefore, upon condominium associations to amend their documents to eliminate any prohibitive reference to children in order to avoid possible sanctions, damages and other penalties.

Robert M. Meisner is an Oakland County area attorney concentrating his practice in the areas of condominiums, real estate, corporate law and litigation. You are invited to submit topics that you would like to see discussed in this column, including questions about condominiums, by writing Robert M. Meisner, 30200 Telegraph Road, Suite 407, Bingham Farms MI 48025.

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