

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) 591-7279.

Dubrowsky is chairman



Harold Dubrowsky, CPA and partner with Grant Thornton LLP in Southfield, has been named chairman of the firm's National Real Estate and Hospitality Group. His duties include staff training, publications and practice development. Dubrowsky lives in West Bloomfield.

Valli was tops in '96



Christine Valli, senior loan officer at Norwest Mortgage in Livonia, was the firm's top loan officer in metro Detroit for 1996. Valli, a Livonia resident, offers mortgage services for purchase, refinance and investor transactions.

Spennachio: top broker



Fred Spennachio, an associate broker with the Michigan Group in West Bloomfield, has received the firm's Top Producer Award for outstanding performance and client satisfaction. He lives in West Bloomfield.

Happenings at Heritage

Stephanie Taylor and **Susan House of Heritage Real Estate/Better Homes and Gardens in Howell** have acquired the professional designation of Graduate Realtors Institute. Taylor, a Ferris State University graduate, also has received historic home certification.

House is secretary of the Women's Council of Realtors in Livingston County. **Julie Troutel** of Heritage Real Estate/Better Homes and Gardens in Brighton has accepted the appointment of corporate relocation specialist.

REAL ESTATE

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New horizons: Tom Tedesco, left, and his mother, Susan, have taken the plunge and opened their own office. Bill Buckley, Susan's father, also was in the real estate business for 20 years.

Mother, son build from scratch

By **DOUG FUNKE**
Staff Writer

Susan and Thomas Tedesco, mother and son who have teamed as real estate sales associates for 10 years, are taking that working relationship to a new level.

The two are in process of establishing their own RE/MAX Showcase Homes franchise from scratch — an exciting, if not challenging task.

"I was waiting for a Birmingham (RE/MAX) office to open," said Susan, who has affiliated with the company for 17 years, the last five in Troy. "When it didn't, I just busted in and did it myself."

"I've always wanted my own office," said Susan, 60. "I feel it's a signature. When most people are winding down, I'm winding up."

"Birmingham is my kind of town," she said. "I get such a hug here. You wouldn't believe how many people walk by. It's so warm. It's so comforting. It's so fun."

During a recent interview, Susan smiled and enthusiastically waved at every pedestrian who passed her office window on Woodward north of Lincoln, drawing smiles and waves in return.

Tom, the broker in charge, and Susan, the primary investor, said they've spent at least \$200,000 in office improvements, furnishings, equipment and franchise fees.

So far, it's just the two of them, four sales associates and a couple of secretaries in the office, which opened earlier this week.

"Finding the location that offered parking, offered enough space to attract good, professional people, good visibility, was the key," Susan said.

"I understand that 65,000 cars go by here daily," she said. "When I found this location, it pushed me into buying the franchise."

Tom, 35, intends to concentrate on accounting and organization tasks.

"The biggest challenge is filling this place up with agents, quality sales professionals," he said. "Our goal is to be the number one RE/MAX office in the region. You measure that by the number of staff that produces bigger dollars and growth."

Tom also plans to stay active in the field.

"I very much enjoy working with first-time buyers and servicing them on their second homes and referrals to their friends and their friends' friends and building a network through service," he said.

Susan, a RE/MAX Hall of Famer for compiling lifetime commissions in excess of \$1 million, will continue to concentrate on listings and sales. But she also intends to broaden her horizons.

"I want to be helping out in management — schedule time for secretaries, make sure we don't run out of supplies, more or less being the mom," she said.

Tom and Susan have used mailings, advertising at kiosks around town and involvement in the Birmingham Chamber of Commerce to get the word out about their business.

They had lots of help starting out.

Bob Tedesco, son, brother and a licensed builder, served as general contractor on office renovations.

Bill and Kay Buckley, Susan's parents, offered encouragement. Both enjoyed sales careers. Bill in real estate for 20 years, Kay at B. Siegel.

"They have their eye on success, which becomes involvement in hard work," Bill Buckley said of his progeny. Susan has been in the business 27 years.

"I was working for a manufacturer as a receptionist," she said. "There was a real estate office across the hall. I was looking at my paycheck and looking at their paychecks. I checked into it and got a license."

"The first person I took out, I sold a home and said, 'This is easy! Then I got hit with reality,'" Susan said.

"I was in sales and saw the type of money my mother was making," said Tom, a 10-year real estate veteran. "I asked her how I could get involved. She brought me on as her assistant and we pretty much worked as a team. She's the best trainer I could have had with all her knowledge."

"She is one of the most determined women I know," Tom added. "When she sets out to do something, she doesn't let up until the goal is met. She was in the top five producers five consecutive years and was number one in 1991."

"He's meticulous," Susan said back. "You can open his day runner and see where he is every moment of the day."

The best piece of advice ever received by the partners?

"Don't spend your commission until

you earn it," Susan said.

"Make sure the client is number one and feels like they're number one," Tom added.

"I'm determined to be successful," Susan said. "I've had a very positive outlook on this situation. I haven't considered failure."

Bill Nance, a real estate lawyer, has known Susan for years and has used her services to buy and sell houses.

"She's very dedicated," Nance said. "I've always found her to be honest, very diligent. I've also found her to be very frank. She's involved in the community. She cares for the community. She will be a good business citizen."

"She's successful," Nance continued.

"She could probably cruise out, but this is something she wants to do. It takes guts and determination. I know she's worked very hard putting this together."

Peter H. Luft, regional director for RE/MAX, believes that Susan has what it takes to start and grow a successful franchise.

"Susan has a tremendous amount of experience in the real estate business as well as with RE/MAX," Luft said. "She's very well versed on our system, its benefits and how to maximize those benefits."

"She's very professional, ethical, high profile. When we get the right people, they naturally attract other people to work with them."

"When you start out, you're wearing all the hats," Luft said. "With Susan maximizing her skills and Tom maximizing his, they will complement each other well."

Nature trail on your property may mean money

REAL ESTATE QUERIES



ROBERT M. MEISNER

Q. Our property had some old railroad tracks, which have now been converted into a "nature trail" for hiking and biking. The railroad formerly had an easement and the city converted the land under something called the Federal "Rails to Trails Act." Somehow I believe we are entitled to compensation. Do you have any thoughts?

A. In a case similar to that where the railroad had acquired an easement back in the 1890s, the owner successfully claimed that once the railroad ended and the land reverted back to them. The court held that the creation of the nature trails was a "taking" for which they were entitled to compensation. The court suggested that if the government wanted to replace "scheduled rumbling freight trains" with "obnoxious in-line rollerskaters," it had to pay to do so. I would suggest that if your facts are similar, you may have an equal basis for compensation.

Q. We are one of a few owners in a condominium complex. The newest member of our association has attended only one quarterly meeting and has been apprised that the assessments are to be paid to the treasurer at that time. The treasurer has had to put weekly reminders in the owner's mailbox each quarter. In addition, the president has telephoned the party to personally ask for the assessments so the association's bills can be paid.

This quarter the delinquent co-owner is six weeks late, and there is no indication that a payment is forthcoming. Our bylaws state that interest may be charged if payment is late.

I would appreciate your comments if you feel this would be of interest to your readers. We would like to know our recourse, how we can collect the funds to run the association, how we can collect late charges, and do we go to small claims court.

A. This, of course, is a very complex issue that is difficult to respond to in this column. It is more thoroughly discussed in the condominium operation class that I teach through Oakland Community College.

The association has a number of remedies avail-

able, including the imposition of interest and late charges if the condominium bylaws or rules provide for same, the recording of a lien and institution of foreclosure proceedings, including the recoupment of attorney fees and costs.

I would not recommend small claims court as that is not a viable way to protect the secured interest of the association, which is established by statute and, presumably, your condominium documents.

I believe that the association, even though small, should take a vigorous and consistent approach toward the collection of these assessments and avoid "pleading" with the co-owner to pay the assessments; rather, a collection procedure should be adopted and pursued, which may include the recording of a lien by the association's attorney and the commencement of foreclosure proceedings, if appropriate.

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 467, Bingham Farms MI 48026. This column provides general information and should not be construed as legal opinion.



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