

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 residency and employment and a black-and-white photo, if desired — to: Real Estate Stars, Observer & Eccentric Newspapers, 36251 Schoolcraft, Livonia 48150. Our fax number is (313) 591-7279.

New asset manager



Theresa Reggio, a Troy resident, has been promoted to asset manager with Acquest Realty Advisors of Bloomfield Hills. Reggio, a financial analyst with the real estate investment advisory firm since 1992, received a bachelor's degree in finance from Walsh College.

Named chairman



J. Ronald Slavik has been elevated to the newly-created position of chairman and chief executive officer for the Farmington Hills-based Fourmidable Group, a property management firm. Slavik, president of the firm since 1975, is a Certified Property Manager and a licensed real estate broker.

New president



Richard Slavik, formerly vice president/property supervisor for the Fourmidable Group, has been promoted to president. Under his direction, the firm created maintenance certification training and expanded its building renovations and rehabilitation activities.

Murray promoted



James M. Murray has been promoted to chief financial officer for Fourmidable. His responsibilities include managing financial operations and computer information services while advising clients on investment, sale and financing decisions. Murray, a certified public accountant and licensed builder, previously was a manager with the accounting firm of Deloitte and Touche.

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STAFF PHOTOS BY LARRY LEACH

Readily accessible: Wide open spaces is a key element of Physically Friendly Showcase Home designed by Jeffrey G. King.

House adapts to limits

Lifestyles change as people grow older or become challenged by illness. One designer suggests that we consider those possibilities when planning a new house while in the prime of our lives.

By DOUG FURZE
WVJW Writer

look designed by Jeffrey G. King of Birmingham and built by Norman Clements of Troy.

All for Judi, paralyzed from the chest down and visually impaired by a virus four years ago.

"The goal was to create freedom and independence for Judith, improve her quality of life," King said.

"The second-case scenario is to educate the public that it makes sense to do these things (now) so that you will not outgrow your house as happens so many times," he added.

"These things will make day-to-day living more comfortable, more efficient, more organized."

Suppliers gave discounts on materials in return for having their products available in the demonstration house.

"I do love the openness," Gerald Haynes said. "That captures me right away. I like the contemporary design. It's not stark. It feels very comfortable even though it's spacious."

The thing that really impresses me is she's going to have such freedom in the bathroom," Clements said. "This will open up a whole new world — the bath, self-access to the spa. It will give her a great feeling of freedom and dignity."

A large connecting shower in the master suite has a roll-in entrance and lower fixtures for Judi, a more traditional entrance and fixture locations for Gerald. Grab bars and a telephone are at Judi's toilet.

A light in the large walk-in/roll-in master closet is on a motion detector. Sinks in the bath and kitchen have angled door panels so that a wheelchair can get in and out. Lower-type fixtures make for easier handling.

"We raised all the furniture up so it would be at the same height as a wheelchair," King said. The cost was only 10 to 20 percent more and the higher furniture is easier for abled-bodied persons to get in and out, he said.

"We use all indirect lighting (sky-lights, track-lighting, wall scones) because people with low vision are very sensitive to overhead lighting," King said.

Elements of a Physically Friendly house don't have to be cost-prohibitive if people are aware of them and incorporate them into the design process early, King said.

"Flush thresholds don't cost anything more than steps," he said. Many of the things wouldn't cost more — wide hallways, hardwood.

"So many standards have been created in an industry that don't make sense. Doors are two feet, six inches wide so when you're carrying a laundry basket you can scrape your elbows."

"There's just things that make sense here," King said. "We've done it on a grand scale. That doesn't mean people can't do it on a smaller scale."

"They can pick one segment and really make a difference on a daily basis," Gerald Haynes said.

Builders are becoming more knowledgeable and sensitive to the issue of making a house physically friendly for all seasons, Clements said, but there isn't a mass movement in that direction just yet.

"If they build them right from the get go, you can live there your whole life," said Elmer L. Cerano, executive director of the United Cerebral Palsy



Powder room: Features lower sink, indirect lighting, grab bar looks like a piece of art.

Association of Metropolitan Detroit.

"If we live long enough, we'll all have disabilities."

"My goal is if everyone comes in here and gets one idea to make their life better, I've succeeded," King said.

The Haynes' house at 55 Manor (east of Woodward south of Big Beaver) is open to the public 1-4 p.m. and 6:30-8:30 p.m. Wednesday through Friday; 11 a.m. to 5 p.m. Saturdays and 1-4 p.m. Sundays through July 30.

Cost is \$7 for adults and \$5 for seniors over 60 and children under 13. Proceeds will be directed to the Cerebral Palsy Association.



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Seller beware if you try to sell your house yourself

REAL ESTATE QUERIES



ROBERT M. MEISNER

Q. We are interested in selling our home by owner and would like to know what legal ramifications we should be aware of, as well as any other helpful publications on how to sell your home by owner. Any information you are able to provide would be most appreciated.

A. While I have not perused the library, there may be certain self-help books in regard to selling your own house. However, I do not necessarily subscribe to doing so on your own for two reasons.

First, marketing your home may be extremely difficult, particularly in a buyer's market, as opposed to hiring an experienced and knowledgeable real estate agent.

Second, whether or not you have a real estate agent, you will need the services of an attorney to assist you in reviewing the purchase agreement which may be prepared by the seller's or the buyer's

attorney, preparing the warranty deed and other closing papers, and reviewing the title policy which you will have to provide to the purchaser.

The best advice I can give you is to retain those professionals necessary to help you in the successful sale of your home. While doing it on your own may be possible, it is not generally advisable.

Q. I am buying a condominium and have used a buyer's agent. We signed the purchase agreement and now are looking for an attorney to assist us in the closing on the condominium. We have since found that there are a number of financial concerns that the condominium association has experienced and are really upset with the situation. Can we get out of the deal?

A. Obviously it would be difficult to determine, without looking at the purchase agreement, whether in fact you can remove yourself from the deal under the circumstances. Your buyer's broker should have advised you to retain a knowledgeable condominium attorney to assist you in evaluating the legal and

practical issues involved in buying a condominium.

One of the items which should be reviewed by any prospective purchaser is the financial condition of the association, as well as the physical condition of the project as a whole, including, of course, the unit in question, and whether the legal documents are state of the art.

Unless there was some contingency in your purchase agreement to allow you to relieve yourself of legal obligations, there has been some default or misrepresentation by the sellers, or both, you may be hard pressed to extricate yourself from the agreement. You should consult with legal counsel, however, as to what recourse you may have.

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 407, Bingham Farms, Michigan 48303. This column provides general information and should not be construed as legal opinion.