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inside REAL ESTATE

Santa Cruz County's Real Estate News Source



Coming April 19th!

By **Tai Boutell**
Santa Cruz Home Finance

AS A MEMBER OF THE NEWLY FORMED SCAOR HOUSING OPPORTUNITIES COMMITTEE, I AM WORKING WITH OTHER VOLUNTEERS TO REACH OUT TO THE COMMUNITY WITH EDUCATIONAL FORUMS, WHICH IS MORE CRUCIAL NOW THAN EVER IN TODAY'S REAL ESTATE ENVIRONMENT.

With this committee, we will be developing educational programs for the Second Annual Santa Cruz County Housing Expo which will be held April 19th from 10am-3pm at the Twin Lakes Church Community Center in Aptos.

I would like to call upon all professionals in real estate, lending, and ancillary businesses like insurance companies, contractors/remodelers, and title companies to contact **Julie Ziemelis** at SCAOR to help sponsor the Housing Expo, participate, show your support and help get the real message out to our community and provide the real story behind today's headlines.

This year, hot topics such as green housing and foreclosure avoidance will be added to the line up. We also plan to spend some time explaining mortgages and what it takes now to qualify to purchase a home.

This is the year of the professional, so as professionals, let's all let the public know who we are.

Exhibitors and sponsors are being sought, please contact Julie Ziemelis at (831) 464-2000 or Julie@scaor.org.

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Getting to know SCAOR's new President

Christa Shanaman, co-owner of Coast Country Real Estate in Soquel, will be installed as the 2008 SCAOR President on February 2nd during a ceremony at the Portuguese Hall in Santa Cruz.

INTRODUCING CHRISTA

Ms. Shanaman has been a REALTOR® serving the local community for over nine years. She co-owns her real estate business with her mother, **Betty Morton-Southstone**. She has served on numerous SCAOR committees and for the past four years, has served on the Board of Directors, following in the footsteps of her stepfather **Bruce Southstone**, Past President in 2002.

Since moving here from Washington State years ago to join the family business, Ms. Shanaman quickly became active in the community. She has served on a number of boards including the Bonny Doon School Board, the Santa Cruz Mountains Art Center, and Glen Arbor School. Christa and her husband Chris live in Bonny Doon with their four children Erin, Cary, Dani and Ian.

Christa is passionate about encouraging others to take part in their local communities. "The community we live in and contribute to is a direct reflection of ourselves as individuals. If we are caring, compassionate people, then the community will be one of caring and compassion. It begins with the individual," Christa stated.



INSTALLATION LINEUP

The 2008 Officers and Directors being honored and installed are: President-Elect, **Lela Willet** of Unique Homes and Land; Secretary/Treasurer, **Steven Allen** of Coldwell Banker Residential Brokerage; Ex-Officio, **Sandy Kaplan**, Santa Cruz Properties; **Debra Frey** of RE/MAX Real Estate Services; **Frank May** of Frank May & Assoc.; **Lauren Spencer** of Coldwell Banker Residential Brokerage; **Candace Bradfield**, Premier Real Estate; **Inez Pandolfi**, Century 21 Showcase REALTORS®; **Katie Smith**, David Lyng Real Estate; **Sharolynn Ullestad**, Bailey Properties, and; **Marjorie Vickner**, Century 21 Showcase REALTORS®.

GET YOUR TICKETS NOW!

Tickets to attend the Installation are \$50 and can be purchased by calling SCAOR at (831) 464-2000.

DUES ARE DUE!

Beware, if you pay your dues after Feb. 29th, your services will be interrupted. This includes C.A.R. Legal Hotline, WinForms, and could include your local association services. If you do not have your invoice, please call SCAOR today and we can fax it to you. You can also call us and pay with a credit card over the phone.



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Frank O. May

Inez Pandolfi

Katie Smith

Lauren Spencer

Sharolynn Ullestad

Marjorie Vickner

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Director of Marketing**& Communications**

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Manager of Advertising**& Graphic Design**

Amy Ferrasci-Harp • Amy@scaor.org

Administrative Assistant

Leslie Flint • Leslie@scaor.org

Bookkeeper

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ADVERTISING INFORMATION

For advertising and deadline information, please contact Amy Ferrasci-Harp (831) 464-2000 • amy@scaor.org

INSIDE REAL ESTATE Newsletter

Inside Real Estate is the official monthly newspaper of the Santa Cruz Association of REALTORS® provided as a member service to inform, educate and update REALTOR® and Affiliate members on local, state and national news, as well as the Association's calendar of events.

Santa Cruz Association of REALTORS®

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President's Message

Exciting New Year ahead for SCAOR

New Year welcomes new president, Christa Shanaman

**Christa Shanaman**

2008 Association President

Coast Country Real Estate

(831) 475-3525

christa@coastcountry

homes.com

It is my great pleasure to announce the selection of Kathy Hartman as the new Association Executive for the Santa Cruz Association of REALTORS®. Originally from the Bay Area, Kathy has spent the last 30 years in Southern California serving previously as the Association Executive for the Burbank Association of REALTORS® and currently as the AE of the Beverly Hills Greater Los Angeles Association of REALTORS®. She has been involved extensively at C.A.R. in a number of committee and leadership positions, and is highly regarded as one of the top association executives in California. Her skills have earned her the status of mentor for a number of new association executives around the state, including our own Phil Tedesco once upon a time. She is as thrilled to be moving "home" to Northern California, as we are to have her joining us. Kathy's anticipated start date is March 1st, and at the time of this writing she is planning on attending the Installation of Directors and Officers at the Portuguese Hall in Santa Cruz on February 2nd. I hope that everyone has the opportunity to stop by the Association, say hello, and welcome Kathy to our Santa Cruz Association family.

I have to say that I stand in awe of the amazing members of the AE Search Committee, who put in a tremendous amount of time, thought and effort into finding the right match for our association. To Sandy Kaplan, Suzanne Yost, Steve Allen, Lela Willet, David Lyng, and Bruce Southstone, I cannot thank you enough for all of your hard work.

Many thanks also to the SCAOR staff, who has held it all together with a sense of humor during this time of transition. *You rock!*

Ok, catching everyone up on the state of the Association...

As many of you know, several months ago when Phil gave the Association his notice, we negotiated an "exchange" of days with the San Mateo Association of REALTORS®, who had been without an AE for approximately five months. They really needed his help as soon as possible, and we wanted to have some extended oversight beyond Phil's 60 days notice to SCAOR so that we could complete our end of the year budget process and make a smooth transition into 2008. San Mateo received one day a week of Phil's time for the first 60 days, in exchange for SCAOR receiving one day a week for the following 60 days. This exchange has been extremely beneficial for both associations, and has helped us to continue the momentum of the Association and the SCAOR Housing Foundation that has been created in the last several years. Thank you both to Phil and Sue Walsh, the President of SAMCAR.

In addition to the "exchange" outlined above, I have asked all of the 2007 Committee Chairs to remain in place for 2008, with only a few minor changes. Given the exciting challenges that we face as an association in the next several months, I felt that it was in our best interest to keep the experience we have in place.

I am truly looking forward to an exciting year for our Association, and hope that all of you have the chance to meet Kathy and welcome her.

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Deborah Powers,
David Lyng Real Estate



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Thanks to the Installation Committee!

Thank you to the following volunteers for their help with the Installation event on February 2nd. I can not thank the following individuals enough for their time to make the Installation a success!

Installation Planning Task Force

Betty Southstone

Loree Doan

Lori West

Bobbie Nelson

Norma Milete

Bruce Southstone

Installing Officer

Gary Gangnes

Master of Ceremonies

Randy Turnquist

Photographer

Robin Turnquist,
Robin's Cake Creations, *Dessert*
Rev. Keith Johnson, *Inspiration*

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Santa Cruz County Market Statistics

Single Family Residences					
	CURRENT INVENTORY	NEW	SOLD	AVERAGE	MEDIAN
OCT. 2007	1,198	255	108	\$872,083	\$755,000
NOV. 2007	86	160	84	\$804,958	\$740,000
DEC. 2007	953	128	77	\$828,206	\$732,000

Condos/Townhouses					
	CURRENT INVENTORY	NEW	SOLD	AVERAGE	MEDIAN
OCT. 2007	252	70	25	\$587,922	\$517,500
NOV. 2007	247	45	24	\$624,952	\$517,750
DEC. 2007	209	31	15	\$644,900	\$500,000

For historical statistical information dating back more than 10 years, go to scaor.org and click on "News / Events."

Join the SCAOR Green Team!

The Green Team just met on January 11th and they are very excited about the possibilities that this new collaboration will provide to our members and the community. The group will meet again on January 30th at 2 pm at SCAOR. We discussed the existing rating systems in place in Santa Cruz and the expansion of the Build It Green's rating system as the green building requirements for new construction and remodel in Santa Cruz. The same requirements will be implemented in Scotts Valley, Watsonville, Monterey and Capitola in 2008. There is anticipation that the state of California will mandate certain green standards upon the sale of homes soon. We all agreed for the need for a simpler rating system for existing homes.

Build it Green has agreed to pilot the new Existing and Remodeling Green Point Rating system with the SCAOR Green Team in the next few months. So we need your input on:

- How do REALTORS® distinguish their listings of existing homes to make them more appealing with the better health and safety features of green building combined with the lower operating costs of an energy efficient home?
- How would a seller renovate the property to make it greener without extensive permitting at a minimum cost?
- What is the input of home inspectors, green renovators, and HVAC contractors to make this rating system simple and cost effective?

Join us Wednesday, January 30th at 2:00pm at SCAOR.

If you are a Green Building professional, home inspector, EcoBroker, Certified Green Building Consultant or a real estate professional seeking the new green building market advantage, please contact Rick Williams, Green Mortgage Specialist and SCAOR's Green Team program leader at (831) 247-5573 or rew123@comcast.net.



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Education

February

GETTING TOUGH IN A TOUGH MARKET

Instructor: David Compton
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OREXCO

Learn how to build and maintain a network of loyal clients and prospects. Design a plan to generate a steady flow of Buyers and Sellers. Take a self-evaluation to determine your level of efficiency in Business Planning, Marketing, and Presentation skills. Learn how to confidently communicate to family, friends, and clients how important referrals are to the growth of your business; and understand the **Four Key Communication Skills** that will dramatically increase your closing ratio of presentations to listings.

Fri., Feb. 1 • 9:00am–12:30pm
\$10 SCAOR members
\$25 non-members

Course is approved for 3 hours of DRE continuing education credit in consumer service

SELLING PROPERTIES IN FORECLOSURE

Instructors: Attorneys
Suzanne Yost & Hank Niles

Selling short sale and foreclosure properties involve challenges that other properties do not. Real estate licensees must be knowledgeable regarding those challenges to avoid risk to their clients and themselves. This program will provide information to help licensees understand these specialized transactions

Wed., Feb. 13 • 7:15–8:30am
at the Seascape Golf Club in Aptos
\$20 Early Bird SCAOR members
(good until 2/1/08)

\$35 non-members anytime and
SCAOR members after 2/1/08

Includes full breakfast buffet!

This class is a partnership of SCAOR and the Santa Cruz County Bar Association Real Estate Division.

Go to scaor.org for more details, continual updates and added classes

TAX STRATEGIES FOR THE REAL ESTATE PROFESSIONAL

Instructor:
Maine Shafer, Bradford & Co.

This seminar is guaranteed to identify between \$2,500 and \$27,500 in NEW deductions that can be used right away. You will save thousands in new, legal, and easy-to-use tax deductions, backed by tax code and court precedent; Simple recordkeeping and documentation tips to “bulletproof” each deduction and save you time while doing it! Marketing/tax strategy combinations that will increase your referrals and sales... putting more in your pocket two ways!

Wed., Feb. 13 • 1:00–3:00pm
\$15 Early Bird SCAOR members good until 2/11/08
\$25 non-members anytime and
SCAOR members after 2/11/08

AVOIDING THE PITFALLS OF SELLING RURAL PROPERTY

Instructor: Guy Berry

Key Learning Points: Identify common problems in rural sales; Solve the problems before they happen; Learn how rural disclosures are different; Learn about septic tanks, propane issues, easements, streams, private roads, and more!

Wed., Feb. 20 • 1:00–4:30pm
\$35 Early Bird SCAOR members good until 2/18/08
\$50 non-members and
SCAOR members after 2/18/08

GRI 102 & 104

#102 Trust Funds: Learn how to: handle trust funds and proper accounting for client's deposits; maintain records and document the receipt and disbursement of trust funds in a manner that is consistent with the law.

#104 Fair Housing: Learn about sources of federal and state fair-housing laws and related civil right and anti-discrimination laws that affect real property transactions and business establishments.

Fri., Feb. 22 • 8:00am–5:00pm
Cost: \$149

To register for GRI call the
Professional Realty Institute
at 888-785-4800

RISK MANAGEMENT

Learn how to protect yourself from liability, what agents must do to fulfill their duties, who you represent, and who you don't, why lawsuits are brought against agents, recent changes in the law, disclosures and more!

Fri., Feb. 22 • 3:00pm–5:45pm
(rescheduled from January 29th)
\$35 SCAOR members
\$50 non-members

Course is approved for 3 hours of DRE Mandated CE credits

LENDERS PANEL

Sponsored by
Old Republic Title Company

The changes in the mortgage industry affect all aspects of your business. Staying on top of these changes will help position you as a trusted advisor in real estate. Please join us for a panel discussion on the changing mortgage industry. Have all your questions and concerns addressed by a panel that will consist of area mortgage experts. Gain insight on the current market - knowledge that will put you ahead of the rest! Build your network of Affiliates and REALTORS® and establish relationships that will help you succeed!

Bring your questions and your appetite!

Monday, February 25th
10:00–11:45am

FREE!

ESCROW COORDINATION SECRETS

Instructor: Diane Turnbloom

Outstanding brokers, agents, and assistants do more than push paperwork. They lead, encourage teamwork, use efficient systems, and understand all areas of a sales transaction. This 4-hour power-packed class will address specific issues that will help you with your day to day management of escrows.

Fri., Feb. 29 • 8:00am–12:30pm
\$89 Early Bird SCAOR members & assistants
good until 2/18/08

\$125 non-members anytime, and
SCAOR members & assistants
after 2/18/08

CDRE institutes new regulations for Continuing Education

Effective March 1, 2008, the California Department of Real Estate will begin instituting the following regulation changes in the area of Continuing Education.

—All courses with continuing education (C.E.) hours will include a final exam.

—Participants in live lecture classes with C.E. credit must present approved photo identification. Home Study exams also require I.D.

—Online and Home Study courses will limit testing to a maximum of 15 hours of course material at a time. This regulation is intended to protect the integrity of DRE approved training.

When it's time to renew your license it's important you don't wait until the last minute. I'm always available to answer your questions please contact me at (831) 464-2000 or karen@scaor.org.

Coming in March

FIRST-TIME HOMEBUYER SEMINAR FOR REALTORS® AND LENDERS

Wed., March 25 • 10am–12:00pm

FREE!

STRATEGIC EQUITY MANAGEMENT WORKSHOP

Mon., March 10
10:00am–12:00pm • \$25




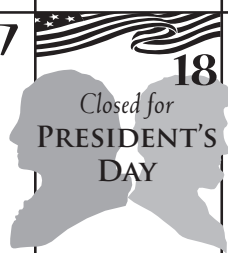
TENANCY IN COMMON (TIC'S)

Wed., March 12 • 9:30am–12:30pm

USING THE REVERSE MORTGAGE TO PURCHASE PROPERTY

Mon., March 17 • 1:00–2:30pm

February 2008

SUN.	MON.	TUES.	WED.	THURS.	FRI.	SAT.
<p>COMING UP IN MARCH... </p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Daylight Savings Time, 3/09 Set your clocks ahead one hour! • St. Patrick's Day! 3/17 					1	2
					9:30am–12:30pm Getting Tough in a Tough Market Class	INSTALLATION of Officers & Directors 6–11pm at Portugese Hall
3	4	5	6	7	8	9
	2:00pm Office Liaison mtg 2:30pm Grievance mtg		8:30 am SCAOR Orientation		8:30 am SCAOR Orientation	
10	11	12	13	14	15	16
			7:15–8:30am Foreclosure Class Seascape Resort 8:30am Affiliates 10–11:30am HF Fundraising 1–3:00pm Tax Strategies 3pm Housing Opps	<i>Happy Valentine's Day!</i> 	8:30am LGR	
17	18	19	20	21	22	23
 Closed for PRESIDENT'S DAY			1–5pm Pitfalls of Selling Rural Property		8:00am–5:00pm GRI class	
24	25	26	27	28	29	
	3:00pm SCAOR HF		8:30am Strategic Planning 10am–12pm Lenders Panel		8:30am–12:30pm Escrow Class	

regularly recurring events:

monthly

Board of Directors 1st Friday, 8:45am
LGR 3rd Friday, 8:30am
Affiliates 2nd Wed., 8:30am
Grievance As needed
Prof. Standards As needed
Housing Foundation 3rd Mon., 3:00pm

every-other-month

Budget & Finance 3rd Wed., 8:30am

New Members

SCAOR welcomes the following new members and wishes them the best of luck!

REALTOR® MEMBERS

American Dream Realty
Angel Huerta

Bailey Properties, Inc.
Bridgette Jones

Russell Gross Real Estate
Sara West

Intero RE – Capitola
Beth Topping

Keller Williams
Maria Kelly

Network Alliance
Peter Bell
Chris Ferrante

AFFILIATE® MEMBERS

Pacific Home Lending
Robert Patterson

Exceedio Inc.
Mat Gafke

Aptos Mortgage
Rick Williams

Casey Printing, Inc.
Jessica Shelby

Comments about an applicant's admittance as a new member or Affiliate member should be submitted in writing to
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Don't forget to

VOTE!

Tues., Feb. 5th!

Affiliate Update

February: Back to business!



Alan Behrens
2008 Affiliate Cmte. Chair
First Net Mortgage
(831) 325-9197
alanbehrens@aim.com

I sincerely hope that your January 2008 was happy and productive. Now that the busy holiday season has passed, we can now fully focus our energies on 2008. The Affiliates are chomping at the bit and ready to make 2008 an even greater year than last. Great social and educational events are already planned for this year with plans for additional events to be added to our busy schedule.

WINE TASTING & OTHER EVENT SUGGESTIONS

Karen Schenk, Old Republic Title, suggested a wine tasting mixer at Hunter Hill Winery in Soquel as a future event. **Lori West**, First American Title, suggested creating an event, which combines marketing/mixing with education. These would be indoor events for the winter months. These suggestions will be further discussed at the February meeting and Affiliates that would like to get involved with planning these events are invited to attend the next meeting.

Even with a record 162 members, we are always looking for more participation. Attending one of our monthly meetings is a great way to start and to learn more about the Affiliates Committee's current goals and future plans. Thank you to all the Affiliates for participating at the January meeting. It was nice seeing **Shelly Paine**, and **Larry** and **Mary Wilks** at the meeting! Welcome back!

INSTALLATION & AWARDS

Please support SCAOR's incoming leadership by purchasing tickets to the SCAOR 2008 Installation and Awards Dinner on February 2nd at the Portuguese Hall at 216 Evergreen Street from 6:00-11:00pm. The Association will be honoring the incoming President, **Christa Shanaman** and the Officers and Directors. The soirée will include a crab dinner, no host bar, vacation raf-

fles, and prizes for the best cowboy and cowgirl, so be sure to wear your spurs and 10-gallon hat. *Yeee-ha!*

All proceeds will benefit the SCAOR Housing Foundation.

If you would like to learn more about the Affiliate Committee or get involved, please contact me at (831) 325-9197 or Norma Milete at SCAOR at (831) 464-2000 for more information. We meet the second Wednesday of every month at 8:30am at SCAOR. We'd love to have you to join us!

UPCOMING EVENTS!

- April 19 : Housing Expo
- May 7 : Annual Spring Fling
- July 18: SCAOR Golf Tourney
- Nov. 13: "A Taste of Santa Cruz"
- Holiday Open House
(November Date TBA)

Affiliate Spotlight

Business Development team combines communication and marketing with education



Karen Schenk
Old Republic Title Company
Business Development
kschenk@ortc.com
(831) 421-0715

Vicki Garside
Old Republic Title Company
Business Development
vgarside@ortc.com
(831) 462-0770

Vicki Garside and Karen Schenk are the Business Development Representatives for Old Republic Title in Capitola. Karen and Vicki work as a team to bring your business to Old Republic Title.

Vicki Garside began her real estate career in the escrow and title business in 1978 and has been a REALTOR® in the past. Vicki feels these experiences provided an invaluable education and background for this multi-faceted industry.

Vicki has been married to her husband Tom, a retired Fire Captain for 28 years and has a son, Travis.

Karen Schenk has worked at Old Republic Title for 18 months and feels fortunate to be working for a company that has been in business for over 100 years.

Karen started her career in 1985 at Pepperdine University in business administration working in the Chancellor's office. From there she worked in the marketing department of a petroleum business for ten years in the Los Angeles area. She says she learned a tremendous amount about people and business from the owner. Karen has been married to her husband, John, for 15 years. They have two children; Sam, 13 and Brant, 10.

Karen and Vicki believe that education, communication and marketing are important keys to staying on top of this ever-changing industry and Old Republic Title is a strong believer in supporting these components. They can assist you in selecting an Escrow Officer and will work very hard to be your Escrow and Title Company of choice!

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A Taxing Year for Property Disclosures

Good news and bad news: The good news is that few homes in CA are affected by new "PTF" laws; Bad news? It's a confusing law for sellers.

This article helps to explain the details

By Judy Coleman
JCP-LGS Account Executive
(831) 277-0527
jlcoleman@jcp-inc.com

Effective January 1, a new State law (AB 980) requires a residential Seller to notify prospective Buyers about any "Private Transfer Fee" (PTF) affecting the home.

The good news is, fewer than one in ten California homes are affected, and the disclosure becomes easier in 2009. Homebuilders are happy. They impose

these fees when developing master-planned communities, for example, to fund community amenities or satisfy local government housing requirements. The new law helps assure the fees will be paid when the homes are re-sold.

The bad news is, complying with the law won't be easy for Sellers and REALTORS®. There's plenty of confusion—in the law's language, in the motley mix of document names which impose PTFs, and in the similar terms used for quite different real estate transfer taxes and fees.

This article explains the new PTF disclosure law, and offers a safe and economical solution for both Seller and REALTOR®.

WHAT'S NEW?

The Seller's duty is to disclose all material facts. The Buyer's responsibility is to read the disclosures, along with the preliminary (title) report and applicable contracts. Nothing has changed there. What's new is that AB 980 shines a spotlight on PTFs.

PTFs, also commonly known as "Private Transfer Taxes", are hidden transaction costs that, often, Sellers overlook (or may be unaware of) and Buyers don't know to ask about. If not disclosed, the PTF can surprise the Buyer as a costly bill delivered months after move-in, and lead to even more costly nondisclosure lawsuits. Disclosing a PTF early allows the parties time to negotiate who will pay it and whether to pay through escrow.

The law mandates disclosure of specific information about any PTF affecting the home: 1) that payment of a fee is required, 2) the amount and method of calculation of the fee, 3) the entity to which it is to be paid, 4) the purpose for which it will be used, and 5) the date or circumstances under which the fee obligation expires.

These statutory disclosure details are often (but not always) spelled out in the original document that created the fee. A PTF could be defined in CC&R's, or it may be hidden in other documents recorded under vague and various titles such as: "Lifestyle Fee Agreement", "First Amended Settlement Agreement & Mutual Release of Claims", "Community Benefit Fee Agreement", "Declaration Imposing Conveyance Fee and Lien", "Declaration of CC&R's Regarding Transfer Fee", "Charitable Housing Grant", etc.

"READ ALL EXCEPTIONS IN THE TITLE REPORT!"

Under the new law, any document that creates a residential PTF now must also be recorded against the property as a standard notice called, "Payment of Transfer Fee Required"—otherwise, payment of the fee is not required after 2008. This clarifies the situation, but

only somewhat. Exempted from the notice are PTFs created before 2008 that otherwise comply with the law. For those, the vague and various document names are still allowed.

Moreover, title companies list such "exceptions" in their preliminary reports differently. One may cite the actual name, such as "Payment of Transfer Fee Required", while another reports it as "Document recorded January 9, 2008, as instrument No 12345 in Book 1 at Page 1".

With such bewildering names for PTF documents and title exceptions, the Seller's only fail safe way to disclose PTFs is to read the preliminary (title) report as well as all exceptions -- not just the summaries of exceptions, but request actual copies of the referenced exception documents and READ THEM—and disclose the details of any PTF that is found.

Title companies will provide free copies of the exceptions, but only if requested. First American's EaglePro2, for example, is a web-based system allowing the parties to view online the preliminary (title) report, a site map, and copies of all the exceptions.

The California Association of REALTORS® has designed Form NTF (11/07), "Notice of Transfer Fee," which guides the Seller in disclosing the statutory PTF details.

NEW TAX REPORT INCLUDES PTF ADVISORY

In December 2007, First American Natural Hazard Disclosures (FANHD) launched its own proprietary tax disclosure product, creating an additional choice for REALTORS® and their clients in the disclosure reporting industry. The new report details all taxes and assessments on the property, includes all statutory tax notices, and advises readers about the new PTF disclosure mandate.

For additional information about the "California Property Tax Disclosure Report™" and other disclosure report products, contact your local JCP-LGS Account Executive, Judy Coleman, at (831) 277-0527 or jlcoleman@jcp-inc.com, or visit www.fanhd.com.

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Gov Hutchinson addresses WCR Luncheon: New laws, codes, forms

By Julie Ziemelis, Marketing/PR Director

On January 16th, the Women's Council of REALTORS® invited C.A.R. Legal Counsel, Gov Hutchinson, to speak about the updates to the C.A.R. legal forms and also laws that have gone into effect within the past few months.

Here are a few of the key issues Gov delivered to the group:

New law for landlords: It is unlawful for a landlord to ask a potential tenant for immigration/citizenship status.

New law for REALTORS®: If you are caught drinking and driving during the course of the day while you are doing your job, you will lose your real estate license.

Forms: There is a new Forms Advisor available through WinForms that asks you questions about your transaction, you press a button and the forms you will need for that transaction are available for print out!

Short sales listing addendums are new forms that are now available through WinForms and are available in the SCAOR store.

AVID: Agents Visual Inspection Disclosures—The civil code does not state that an agent has to be responsible for checking the roof, appliances, etc. However, you must do a visual inspection, check for red flags and record this inspection using the AVID form and use it for every sales transaction as a supplement to the Transfer Disclosure Statement.

Gov mentioned that it is important to note the "Notice of Transfer Fee" found in the prelim. He said that certain builders have imposed the transfer fees or "community benefit fees" on homes and you are responsible for making sure the home buyers know about the fee. C.A.R. has a complete list of the builders who impose this fee. Locally, it was noted by some in the audience, that there are builders in Watsonville who have placed these fees on their entire developments.



Caption: SCAOR Education Director, Karen Kirwan, LGR member, RoseMarie McNair, C.A.R. Legal Counsel, Gov Hutchinson, SCAOR and WCR Past President, Bobbie Nelson, Chair of WCR Programs, Jennifer Walker.

A lot of great information was shared by Gov and for more information on any of these topics, please ask your Broker or check out C.A.R.'s website at www.car.org.

WCR will be holding their next monthly meeting luncheon on February 27

from 11:30am–1:30pm at the Seacliff Best Western Inn.

The topic will be "Meet the Champions: Hear the Strategies of Our Local 2007 Top Producers." Call (831) 457-5578 for more info or to reserve your seat.

Making sense of the new building code



Bob Landry
Landry & Foy Builders
LandryandFoyBuilders.com
(831) 479-9306

On January 1st California adopted the 2007 California Building Code. In December, I went to a training that provided an overview of the key changes that affect residential construction. There are several changes that will affect how we design and build buildings that may be of interest to real estate professionals. I will address some of them here, but encourage you to be cautious when talking to clients about what is code until we have some time for the changes to filter out to all the professionals who are affected by these changes.

MULTI-STORY HOMES AND BUILDINGS

All projects of two or more stories must have a soil report prepared and the stamp of a registered professional, along with calculations proving the

foundation and structural design meet the new Code.

VEGETATION AND FIRE PREVENTION

When planning a construction project it is now necessary to contact the Fire Protection Agency that has jurisdiction in the neighborhood. There is a graduated scale of fire severity depending on native terrain and vegetation that dictates what materials are available to the designer in any given neighborhood. There are many jurisdictions in Santa Cruz County and their rules and personnel vary. Preparing the site according to the rules that apply is required for a final sign off on a building permit.

EXTERIOR MATERIALS

Before you or your clients design a dream, craftsman style bungalow, be sure the designer/builder knows the regulations for exterior materials for buildings!

In conclusion, now more than ever, it is important to have the advice of an experienced professional in navigating the issues involved with planning and building permits.

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Jeff McCormac
Housing Foundation Chair
(831) 465-4007 Tel
(831) 479-6901 Fax
jeff.mccormac@wellsfargo.com

Do you have a low-income client buying a mobile home? If so, the Housing Foundation can now help! When speaking throughout the County regarding the Housing Foundation, the main thing that keeps coming up in discussions is that statement, "If you really want to bridge the gap to homeownership in our county, you need to allow grants for mobile homes." The current grant program does allow grants on fee simple mobile homes and will continue to do so. However, thanks to the efforts of the Housing Foundation's Programs Committee, as well as the funds generated from "A Taste of Santa Cruz" and the \$50,000 CAR HAF grant, the Trustee's have approved a pilot program with 12 grants available for \$2,000 a piece. The qualifying criteria is the same as the current program, but will now be available for non-fee simple mobile/manu-

factured homes in mobile home parks. After evaluating the pilot program, and if the funds remain available, hopefully this will become a permanent grant program.

PROGRAMS COMMITTEE

The Programs Committee would like to welcome a new volunteer, **Nick Torres** of Bank of the West. Nick brings his banking and lending experience to the Programs Committee. If you have any questions regarding the grant program or are interested in helping out, please contact me or you can also contact Committee Chair, **Dave Deteso**, at (831) 466-4430 or david.deteso@wamu.net. Also the grant application and additional information are available on the SCAOR Housing Foundation's website at scaorhf.org.

FUNDRAISING COMMITTEE

Joining Committee Chair **Elaine Della Santina** and veteran committee members **Karen Schenk** and **Jeanne Hatch**, is **Betty Danner** (the widow of **Judge/DA Art Danner**), **Genie Lawless** (daughter of REALTOR® **Roger Lawless**), and **Julia Segovia** (daughter of **Supervisor Ellen**

Grants available for low-income, mobile home clients

Pirie.) There's a lot of great energy and excitement as the committee focuses it's efforts on more out-of-industry sources and corporate donations. We're always looking for more help so if you're interested in helping out please contact me, or you can also contact Elaine at edellasantina@yahoo.com.

2008 OFF TO A GREAT START FOR THE SCAORHF

We finished off 2007 giving away more money and helping put more people into homes than ever before. Thanks to the

efforts of our volunteers, as well as your support and donations, we're hoping to make 2008 even better. The Housing Foundation has already started off with three grants so far, two of which were for single mother's buying their first homes. Also, all committees are in need of help and we need a chairperson for the Budget Committee, so if you're interested in volunteering, please contact me.

A FAREWELL TO KARN

A fond farewell to trustee and former Budget Chair, Tom Karn. Tom, you will be missed! Particularly your energy and gonzo fundraising! Tequila shots at the SCAORHF golf tournament was a huge success in my book!

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Welcome to our newest Trustees



Sandy Kaplan
Co-Owner, Santa Cruz Properties
SCAOR Past-President 2007

Sandy Kaplan has been a REALTOR® serving the local community for over 20 years and has been one half of the Sandy Team for 16 years. A passionate supporter of affordable housing, Sandy has been involved with SCAOR and the SCAOR Housing Foundation for several years. Under her leadership, the first annual Santa Cruz County Housing Expo was created, melding the Housing Foundation with the Association's efforts.



Mark Junod
Branch Manager and Loan Consultant
First Horizon Home Loans

Mark Junod has been in the mortgage industry since 1984. In 1990 he founded Glenbrook Financial. In 1999 he sold his company to First Horizon Home Loans. He graduated from UC Santa Cruz with a degree in Economics in 1984. He has been a member of the Rotary Club of Santa Cruz Sunrise since its charter in 1985 and is a past president of the club. He is currently the district chair for the Youth Exchange Program. He is a past president of the Santa Cruz Chapter of CAMB.



Peter Verbica, REALTOR®
David Lyng Real Estate

Peter Verbica earned a BA from Santa Clara University, a JD from its School of Law (Phi Delta Phi honor's fraternity member) and a Master's of Science from M.I.T. in Real Estate Development. He has had a variety of experience in the real estate industry, as a licensed broker, owner, financier, marketer, trustee, property manager and advisor. Mr. Verbica has also served on numerous non-profit boards and committees, including KTEH-TV, the Hakone Foundation, the DeSaisset Museum, Bellarmine College Preparatory's Board of Fellows, and others.



Sean Pate
David Lyng Real Estate-Watsonville

Sean Pate has been a REALTOR® for 15 years here in Santa Cruz County. He has worked for David Lyng Real Estate for the past four years and lives in Aptos with his wife and 2-year-old daughter. Sean feels that owning real estate is a valuable tool to getting ahead and wants to be involved with helping others achieve homeownership. Sean is also volunteering for the 2008 Housing Expo, as well!

The SCAOR Housing Foundation's Escrow Contribution Program: Frequently Asked Questions

Q: What is the Escrow Contribution Program?

The program is one of the fundraising mechanisms for the SCAOR Housing Foundation. The REALTOR® or lender, during close of escrow of a transaction, makes a donation to the Housing Foundation on behalf of their client, either on the buying or selling side. The funds go directly to benefit the Closing Cost Assistance Grant program.

Q: Who is responsible for initiating the Escrow Contribution Program?

A: The REALTORS® can either download a Demand Form from the website www.scaor.org/hf/pdf/demandform.pdf, or ask their brokers for a copy of the form. They then submit the form to the escrow officer sometime during the escrow period. Then the escrow officer simply removes the requested amount of the donation from the commission check and sends it to the SCAOR Housing Foundation.

Q: Do the title companies have the Demand Forms at their offices?

The title companies may have the forms, however it is the REALTORS® responsibility to obtain a copy before the final closing process to ensure the funds are removed in a timely manner.

Q: How will I know when my client receives the confirmation that I have contributed the donation in their name?

When the SCAOR Housing Foundation receives the contribution check from the title company, a thank you letter will be sent to the REALTOR® and at the same time, a letter will be sent to the seller/buyer. The REALTOR® also receives a copy of the letter sent to their client.

Q: Will I receive a receipt for my contribution?

The thank you letter the REALTOR® receives will include the amount of the contribution along with the tax ID number of the Santa Cruz Association of REALTORS® Housing Foundation. This letter will serve as your receipt that can be given to your tax accountant at the end of the year.

Q: How much should I contribute?

Many REALTORS® make \$50-\$100 contributions. These funds add up to a lot over time and if numerous REALTORS® make the time to remember the Housing Foundation at every close of escrow, we could make homeownership a reality for more potential homebuyers in Santa Cruz County. We also are more than happy to accept large, one time donations, as well!

SCAORHF Fundraising

Nearly \$20k in grant money given away already in 2008!



Elaine Della Santina
Fundraising Chair

The SCAOR Housing Foundation is pleased to announce that 30 days into the New Year, and we have already provided almost \$20,000 in grant money to low-income, first-time homebuyers! At this rate it will be critical that the Foundation develops a mid-year fundraiser to keep the momentum going.

If you have had success with a fundraiser that you think would work for us, please contact Julie Ziemelis or myself and let's explore the ideas. We invite and encourage our members' volunteer involvement in helping us raise the funds to create new homebuyers in our community.

We are all very excited about the opportunity to work with Central Coast Choppers in our "Chopper for Charity" raffle, however, the manner that we had planned to run the raffle was cause for alarm for the lawyers, (go figure) and we have had to put that project on hold

until such time as we can resolve the legal ramifications. Fear not, as "CCC" and the Housing Foundation are working together to find a way to make the raffle happen... it's just taking longer than we had planned.

A huge "Thank You!" goes to incoming SCAOR President, **Christa Shanahan** for making the Installation Event a fundraiser with net proceeds benefiting the Housing Foundation. For a \$20 donation you can buy a shot glass with raffle tickets for an Alaskan get away donated by **Wjoute Swets**, Vanguard Realtors, or a Hawaiian vacation donated by **Linda Baranti-Downing**, Coast Country Real Estate. We want to thank all three of you, and everyone who attends the fun-filled Installation Event. With a kick off like this, the Association should really help get things moving!

Remember it is easy to become involved with the Housing Foundation. You can volunteer as much or as little time as you have. Please call us and we will help you become a part of giving back to the community in which you live and thrive.

We would also like to welcome **Kathy Hartman** as our new AE, we look forward to working with her in our Housing Foundation events.

Congratulations to five new homebuyers!

In the face of tightening credit standards, still relatively high home prices and the perceived slow down of the market during the holidays, five families took the plunge into homeownership thanks to the \$5000 grants they received from the SCAOR Housing Foundation!

Congratulations to Juan Garcia and his wife and

four children on purchasing a home in Santa Cruz, to Ivonne Alexander for her purchase of a home in Watsonville, to Kristie Ferris for her purchase of a manufactured home in Capitola, Susanna Brown, single mom and teacher, who purchased a home in Santa Cruz, and to a County employee who purchased her first home in Santa Cruz.

2008 is starting out with joy and hope for all of these of new homeowners thanks to the continued support of our members! Thank you for all who contributed funds towards the Housing Foundation with your 2008 dues and for those contributing through the close of escrow program! Every little bit helps us keep providing housing opportunities for homebuyers!

Tech Corner

Design your blog like a website



Julie Ziemelis
SCAOR Marketing
Director
julie@scaor.org

Last month, I wrote about creating a blog as an effective marketing tool, especially for those of you who are willing to take the time and effort to get a blog going (through ActiveRain.com or as an addition to your website.)

How can you make sure that important blog posts are easy to locate?

Design your blog like a website!

Most blogging platforms allow you to

create a list of links that will appear on both the front page and every individual post page.

You can create links to posts from your own blog that will make those posts available from every page. These are called recursive links, because they point back to your blog rather than to another site. You can put your recursive link directly below your personal profile.

If you've avoided website design because you aren't comfortable with HTML and the various programs that allow you to build pages, you might want to look at blogging as an alternative. Blogging platforms allow you to easily publish new information, update existing information, and create ways for users to locate that information.

Compelling content keeps your website viewers interested

Or, What is "Viral Marketing?"

Viral marketing is when you create a marketing message so entertaining, interesting, or compelling that others voluntarily spread that marketing message for you. In the old days, before computers, we called this "word of mouth advertising", also known as "referrals", and recognized it as a valuable resource for generating business.

Are you distributing marketing materials and messages that are so entertaining, interesting, or compelling that your clients and prospects would pass them on, or are you simply sending out stock newsletters and "just sold" cards (aka "brag cards") to remind clients and prospects that you haven't left the business yet?

What does it take to produce a viral marketing presentation? It takes a strong message, a little creativity, and smart use of technology. After all, no matter how much I like your hard copy newsletter, I can only pass on the one copy I received, unless I make copies of

it for my friends. With blogs, podcasts, and video, the ability to pass on your marketing message is virtually unlimited, but it needs to be entertaining, interesting, or compelling (preferably all three) to trigger that process.

Here is an example of an effective viral marketing presentation. It is a short video created by Daniel Rothamel, a REALTOR® from Virginia. Daniel posted it on YouTube.com, a free video sharing platform owned by Google that allows him to publish to a global audience. In three weeks, Daniel's marketing message has been seen almost 8,000 times. Most of those viewers were probably outside his target audience, but if he gets one deal, it will have been well worth the effort.

Blog posts persist, so they can continue to spread your message for months, provided the content is not time sensitive. Have you thought about how you can incorporate technology into your marketing approach in 2008?

Moving transactions in WinForms® Desktop

Do you know where your WINForms® Desktop transactions are stored? Here is the default folder path:

C:\WINDOWS\Application Data\REFormsNet\Depot\Local\Master

This path is difficult to remember and unless you backup your entire local drive, you probably aren't backing up your WINForms® Desktop transactions.

Have you ever tried changing the default folder path? Like many processes, it is relatively easy, but it isn't straightforward. Here's how you can change

the default path so that you can find and backup your transactions with ease.

- Create the new folder where you wish to store your WINForms® Desktop transactions.
- Create a folder inside your new transactions folder called Master.
- Open WINForms® Desktop.
- Close the Transactions Manager window so you can access the WINForms® menus.
- Select Options from the Tools menu.

Easy ways to track user behavior on your website

How much do you know about what visitors do at your Web site? The more you can find out, the better you can target the information and design it to fit their needs.

Tracking your Web site statistics is important because it tells whether or not your site is well-trafficked. Statistics can tell you how many people came and what links are most popular, among other things. But what these statistics don't tell you is how users are actually interacting with your site, otherwise known as user behavior.

Measuring user behavior is critical to fine-tuning your site's ability to turn clicks into closes. Once you know what people are doing on your site, you can refine your content and design to better meet their needs. There are two new tools that don't cost very much, but can help you peek into user behavior.

GET HEATED UP

A relatively new and affordable service, www.CrazyEgg.com, allows you to track visitor behavior on any site page using what it calls "heat maps." A heat map is a visual overlay showing where visitors are physically clicking on a page. The brighter ("hotter") a spot is on your page, the more people are clicking on it.

LOOKING OVER THEIR SHOULDERS

Robot Replay is a free, no-frills service that records user sessions in the form of videos. The videos show visitors' mouse movements, revealing where they clicked, how they moved from page to page, and how they interact with your forms (including where they simply gave up filling out a form). The videos are like looking over your visitors' shoulders as they peruse your site. You can see demos of this on the RobotReplay.com website.

Like Crazy Egg, this tool requires you to add a single line of code to the pages you want to monitor (and yes, you can use both Crazy Egg and Robot Replay at the same time). Robot Replay is currently in beta testing and can be a bit quirky at times. However, once the bugs are worked out, I see this as a great tool to really understand what your visitors do when they land on your site.

BEHAVIOR IS KEY

Simply tracking your site's unique visitors, page views, referrals, and the like is no longer enough to ring every last ounce of business-producing potential from your Web site. Once you monitor the behavior of your visitors, you will have the insight necessary to stay on the path of incremental improvement that will maximize your site's value.

Legislative Watch

NAR UPDATE

Statement on President Bush's Signing of Mortgage Forgiveness Debt Relief

By NAR President Richard F. Gaylord

On behalf of the many individuals and families who would have been burdened by a tax after losing their home, the National Association of REALTORS® thanks President George W. Bush for signing the Mortgage Forgiveness Debt Relief Act into law. Today the president offered a Christmas present to many people who have suffered the agony and humiliation of losing their home due to a short sale, foreclosure, deed in lieu of foreclosure or any similar arrangement that relieves the borrower of the obligation to pay some portion of their debt.

NAR has been advocating for such a change to the IRS tax code for nearly 10 years. We have always believed that

it is clearly an issue of fairness and of not kicking people when they are down. By making the forgiven debt taxable income, individuals in already unfortunate situations most likely faced IRS actions because they did not have the money to pay the additional taxes. This legislation will relieve that additional burden and may also encourage families to work with their lender to negotiate terms, knowing they will now not be subject to an IRS bill.

Today's bill will ensure that any debt forgiven on a mortgage secured for a principal residence will not be taxed. This is very significant legislation. This may also mean that some day in the future these families can once again achieve the dream of homeownership.

Senate responds to REALTORS® Request for Action on FHA Modernization Bill

The United States Senate passed a landmark **FHA modernization bill (S. 2338)** that could help stabilize the housing finance crisis. Because there are significant differences between the recently passed Senate legislation and the bill passed earlier this year by the House of Representatives (H.R. 1852) a conference committee with members of the House and Senate will be appointed to reconcile the differences.

Senate action on legislative overhaul of the Federal Housing Administration, was delayed nearly a month because of a hold by Tom Coburn, R-Okla. Earlier this month REALTOR® members from key states participated in a "fly-in" to directly lobby Senators and Staff mem-

bers to urge action on S. 2338. REALTOR® Members from Oklahoma lobbied Senator Coburn's office to impress upon him the importance of acting on FHA Modernization. The Oklahoma Association of REALTORS® also engaged in a state-wide Call For Action and submitted letters to the editors of key newspapers in the state. The South Carolina Association of REALTORS® launched a similar effort to lobby Senator Jim DeMint who also had a hold on the FHA bill.

In a message to REALTOR® members who participated in the Call For Action, 2008 NAR President Dick Gaylord praised the efforts of our state and local association partners, "I want to recognize the extraordinary efforts of our state association partners in Oklahoma and South Carolina. Senators Tom Coburn (Oklahoma) and Jim DeMint (South Carolina) had been using Senate rules to block consideration of the FHA Modernization Bill. Our state and local association partners in Oklahoma and South Carolina impressed upon their

Senators the need to consider and pass the FHA Modernization Bill as an essential component of a comprehensive real estate recovery program."

The Senate passed the measure, 93-1. FHA helps home buyers obtain safe and affordable mortgages by insuring the loans. The Senate bill would increase FHA loan limits; specifically, it would allow the FHA to insure loans of up to \$417,000 in high-cost areas. The current limit is \$362,000, far below amounts that many borrowers need. The legislation would reduce the minimum required down payment and permit homeowners who have fallen behind on their mortgage payments to refinance into FHA-backed loans. Additionally, the measure would increase penalties for fraud.

No timetable for the Conference Committee has been announced but NAR has submitted a letter to the House Committee on Financial Services and the Senate Committee on Banking, Housing and Urban Affairs urging a quick reconciliation of the differences in the legislation.

C.A.R. UPDATE

2008 Federal Legislative Outlook

C.A.R. lobbied hard for REALTORS® during the first session of the 110th Congress. While there were some strong victories for REALTORS®, our work is not done and is continuing into the 2nd session during 2008. While there was success getting our issues through the House, the Senate was slow to move on legislation and we are hoping to get our issues heard in the Senate so they can be passed during 2008.

In the first session of the 110th Congress C.A.R. was successful in getting REALTOR® priorities passed and signed into law. This included passing mortgage debt relief for struggling homeowners, a two-year ban on banks in real estate, and an expansion of the Terrorism Risk Insurance program. Mortgage debt relief will help homeowners who face foreclosure or short sales avoid the phantom income of debt forgiveness. The two-year ban on banks in real estate allows us to be sure that during the chaotic election cycle this ban

will continue. Nonetheless, C.A.R. will continue to lobby to have this ban made permanent. Additionally, the Terrorism Risk Insurance program was expanded for seven years.

While there were some strong lobbying efforts to pass other REALTOR® priorities, often times they were backlogged in the Senate. In 2007, the following provisions passed the House, but not the Senate: a FIRPTA fix, GSE reform that includes an increase in the conforming loan limit for high-cost areas, natural disaster insurance reform, and flood insurance reform. C.A.R. will continue to lobby hard to make sure that these REALTOR® priorities are heard in the Senate and we hope to pass legislation on these priorities in 2008.

Additionally, Congress is close to passing FHA reform and reforming the Qualified Veteran Mortgage Bond (QVMB). FHA reform has passed both the House and Senate, but in different forms. We are lobbying to have any final FHA reform include an increase in the FHA loan limits and the conforming loan limit for high-cost areas. A change to the rules on QVMBs, which would allow veterans who served post 1977 to qualify for these low interest rate loans, is also close to passage. The QVMB legislation should move quickly once Congress returns from recess and the FHA conference should start shortly after their return as well.

2008 State Legislative Priorities

1) GSE Oversight & Conforming Loan Limits

Senate Action Requested: That the Senate introduce and pass legislation to reform GSE oversight and create a new GSE regulator with powers that include the authority to set high-cost conforming loan limits by an area's median home price.

GSE reform is long overdue. After months of scrutiny concerning Fannie Mae, Freddie Mac, and the Federal Home Loan Banks, it is time to expand oversight of these programs to allow them to grow their efforts to assist in homeownership and allow the regulators to make sure the portfolios maintain stability. C.A.R. is waiting for the

Local Government Relations Update

Dinner with Congressman Farr



Barbara Palmer
Chair, LGR
(831) 688-7434 x603
bpalmer@baileyproperties.com

On Friday evening, January 11, 2008, Congressman Sam Farr met with the LGR Committee of SCAOR. They presented a check for his re-election campaign from the National Association of REALTORS®.

The informal gathering was at The Farm in Aptos.

If any member of SCAOR would like to participate in government relations from the local, state, and federal level, you are encouraged to join the Local Government Relations Committee of the Santa Cruz Association of REALTORS®. Our next meeting is February 15, 2008 at 8:30am at the Association conference room. You can call the Association anytime for information about the committee, or contact Barbara Palmer at (831) 688-7434, ext. 603.



Members of the SCAOR LGR Committee, including Barbara Palmer, Suzy Yost, Peg Popkin, Candie Noel, Rosemarie McNair, Fred Antaki, Sandy Kaplan and Bruce Southstone met Congressman Farr for dinner to present a campaign contribution.

Legislative Watch, cont'd.

Senate to take up GSE oversight and conforming loan limit legislation this session.

2) FHA Reform

House & Senate Action Requested: That the House and Senate pass FHA legislation out of conference that includes higher loan limits to reform FHA loans to help make them a more viable option to American homeowners.

These reforms are needed in order to make FHA loans a more viable option for the expanding ranks of American homeowners. In 1999, the FHA insured approximately 127,000 homes bought in California. In 2005, that number dropped to roughly 5,000. By passing this FHA reform, tens of thousands more California home buyers will have access to FHA home loans every year. This will save them thousands of dollars that would otherwise be spent on subprime or alternative mortgage products.

3) Subprime & Predatory Lending

House & Senate Action Requested: That the House and Senate recognize that many states have strong laws concerning predatory lending and that the regulation of the property lending market is best done at the state level. Any federal legislation concerning predatory lending should not preempt state laws.

Currently, most predatory lending is

handled at the state level, and California has a strong anti-predatory lending law designed to protect the consumer. In 1994, the federal government addressed the issue of predatory lending by passing the Home Owner Equity Protection Act (HOEPA). However, this law is only a minimum requirement; each state is allowed to enact stricter laws.

C.A.R. is asking Congress to recognize that California currently has strong successful anti-predatory lending laws in place, and that regulation of the property lending market is best done at the state level. C.A.R. believes the most important thing a predatory lending law must accomplish is to balance consumer protection while simultaneously ensuring an environment conducive to the continuous flow of capital.

4) VA Loan Limit

House & Senate Action Requested: That the House and Senate pass legislation that allows for the VA loan limit to include a high-cost conforming loan limit in order to allow Veterans in high-cost states to have access to the VA Home Loan Program.

Many of California's veterans are finding it more difficult to utilize the VA Home Loan Program due to the high cost of housing in California coupled with the low VA loan limit of \$417,000 (the 2007 conforming loan limit). Vet-

erans unable to utilize the VA Home Loan Program may be forced to pay mortgage insurance premiums and have more stringent credit requirements; this can potentially cost veteran homebuyers thousands of dollars every year.

5) Natural Disaster Insurance

House & Senate Action Requested: That the Senate introduce and pass legislation that would create a reinsurance program to encourage more participation by insurance companies in the homeowner's insurance market.

C.A.R. believes Congress should look to implement legislation that will create a government backstop for private insurance providers, create incentives for homeowners to take steps to mitigate the effects of a natural disaster on their property, and update insurance regulations and the tax code so that insurance companies may better prepare for disasters. The longer Congress waits to pass a federal natural reinsurance program the possibility of another major disaster occurring increases.

6) Banks Out of Real Estate

House & Senate Action Requested: That the House pass H.R. 111 and the Senate pass S. 413, the Community Choice in Real Estate Act, which will permanently prohibit banks from entering commerce.

C.A.R. and NAR policy supports the separation of banking and commerce. If permitted to engage in real estate brokerage and management, national

bank conglomerates would have an unfair competitive advantage and inherent conflicts of interest would result.

Now, more than ever, it is time to pass legislation that would make this prohibition permanent and halt the attempts to erode the lines between banking and commerce. It is time for the House to pass H.R. 111 and the Senate to pass S. 413 to put a full and permanent prohibition on banks entering Real Estate. REALTORS® support the passage of both of these bills to eliminate any questions over the issue.

Make Your REALTOR® Voice Heard & Invest in the REALTOR® Action Fund

To achieve legislative success at the local level, which includes preventing restrictions on your ability to do business, and promoting land use policies that facilitate development, we need your investment in the REALTOR® Action Fund (RAF). As you pay your 2008 dues, please be sure to consider making your \$49 contribution to assist in SCAOR's legislative efforts.

If you have any questions about RAF, and how the fund helps to ensure your success as a REALTOR® please do not hesitate to contact the Association for further information.

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WELCOME TO THE TEAM



RHONDA OBERT

I have immensely enjoyed living in this beautiful area of the world for the past 40 years. I come from a family of Realtors and always dreamed that in the second chapter of my life (when my children were grown), I too, would be able to help others make their Real Estate dreams come true. After a lot of hard work, my dream has come true... and now I'd like to help make yours happen for you.

I am constantly training and improving my education so that I can provide you with the best information needed to make the best choices for your unique needs. For that reason, and because it is my passion, I have added to my qualifications the S.R.E.S. designation, which qualifies me as a Seniors Real Estate Planner and Specialist. I have also completed the highly desirable designation of G.R.I., which means I have devoted many, many hours to improving my Real Estate knowledge above and beyond the standard level of Realtor education. I also have quite a bit of experience in "staging" homes, which I do quite regularly, as well as photography and graphic layout for high quality flyers and mailings, and have done a lot of landscaping—formal and informal. I can come into your home and help you look at what would be best to repair or improve before placing your house on the market in an effort to maximize your hard earned equity dollars. I am a full service Realtor!

My greatest delight is having successfully partnered with you in the sale of your property for top dollar, finding the right investment opportunities to increase your financial portfolio, or that moment when I am handing you the keys to your dream home!

I hope you will choose to partner with me in your next Real Estate venture! I am committed to giving back to the people of this community by donating 10% of every commission to feeding the poor in our county, I regularly give to support our local schools, and I am a founding member of the SCAOR Housing Foundation providing funds for low income new home buyers. Every time you bless me with your business you will be helping this community as well!



LAURIE PETRUZZI

Laurie has lived in Santa Cruz County all her life, and is greatly appreciative of its beauty, climate and character. After receiving her degree in Architectural Design at California State University, Long Beach, Laurie set off on a European vacation. There she met Roberto in Italy and two years later they married and settled in Santa Cruz (of course)! While raising their four children, Laurie worked in the investment industry; opening the Merrill Lynch Office in Capitola.

Laurie always dreamed of being a Realtor. Once her children grew and calmed down a bit, she was licensed and off to a great start. Laurie was a Top Producer and "Rookie of the Year" for 2001 and a Centurion Award Winner in 2003, 2004 and 2005 based on her annual sales volume. She credits her success to hard work, honest communications, constant availability, love of match-making, terrific community connections and her dedication to excellent customer service.

"The opportunity to join the team at Bailey Properties fits perfectly with my goal of offering excellent service and results for my clients."

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