

Realtors® Report

April, 2008



The Seniors Real Estate Specialist designation is one of the largest and fastest growing national designations and part of the most comprehensive seniors' program in the industry. Only one percent of the 1.4 million Realtors® have earned it. The course was developed specifically for those real estate practitioners who are interested in focusing on 55+ real estate clients and consumers.

The two-day training program offers you the unique opportunity to learn and build key skills in counseling seniors through selling their family home, buying rental property, or moving to a senior community, among many other issues. Avoid the expense of traveling a long distance—register now for the class offered at the Association Education Center in Eau Claire on April 3-4. You'll learn to:

- ◆ Identify the power of generational demographics
- ◆ Develop and maintain relationship marketing skills
- ◆ Counsel rather than sell to seniors
- ◆ Use team-building skills with other seniors professionals
- ◆ Understand the implications of tax laws, probate and estate planning
- ◆ Create a point of difference from the competition.

Contact WRA at 800-279-1972 to register or visit wra.org to register online.

GET THE MOST FROM YOUR ADVERTISING DOLLAR

How Much Should You Spend on Advertising? When Should You Advertise? Where Should You Advertise? Different experts advise different formulas for determining advertising spending—a percentage of gross commissions; a percentage of gross revenues; a percentage of gross sales—whatever formula you follow, it results in serious money. Plan to attend the April 10 membership meeting at noon at 29 Pines to hear Jackie Lee of Market Ability share information to help you maximize your advertising budget and tips on creating a recognizable identity for you or your company through marketing and branding. In addition to Jackie's presentation, we'll also be recognizing our past presidents and thanking them once again for their past and ongoing contributions to the Association. Please join us!!

Please register me to attend the April 10 noon meet at 29 Pines (5872 33rs Avenue, Eau Claire). I understand my reservation is my commitment to pay unless I cancel by April 3.

Name _____

Email address _____

Cost of the meal (chicken salad wrap, fresh fruit, chips, dessert and beverage) is \$11; exact cash or a check payable to RANWW will speed up the process.

(fax this form to 835-4621 by April 3 or register and pay online at ranww.org)

REALTORS® ASSOCIATION OF NORTHWESTERN WISCONSIN

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www.ranww.org

TechHelpline 866-414-7387

The Voice for Real Estate in Northwestern Wisconsin

...MEMBERSHIP NEWS...

The following people have made application for Realtor® membership; in accordance with the bylaws, written comment, which shall be kept confidential, is invited.

~

Cat James
Joseph Spoden
David V. Tracy

Woods & Water Realty
Woods & Water Realty
ReMax Properties

Congratulations to *Darin Moravitz* and *Courtney Johnson*, our newest ABRs and to *Ellen Schmidt* for satisfying the CRS requirements!

Best wishes to the following members running for public office: ***Colleen Weber*** (Altoona, mayor); ***Ken Fulgione*** (Eau Claire County Board); ***Sue Beety*** (City Council, Menomonie); ***Jeri Bitney*** (Shell Lake school board); ***Ray Van Gilder*** (Rice Lake school board); ***Pete Wiese*** and ***Rosemarie Bristol*** (Dunn County Board). These members are fulfilling the oath they took when they became Realtors® to be politically involved now do your part—vote April 1!

...MLS UPDATE...

The conversion to MLXchange is moving forward on schedule and has a date of May 6 for cutting over to the new system and disabling InnoVia, although the date could be delayed if complications develop this month. Comments from members using the new program have been for the most part very favorable, however, as in any conversion, there is a learning curve and period of adjustment. Running parallel systems for 60 days is intended to give members an opportunity to learn the new system at a leisurely pace—please don't wait until May 6 to start using it!

The MLS staff (AKA Rhoda!) and MarketLinX are in the process of setting up data feeds for brokers' websites for IDX. **If you have a company website that gets an FTP download, be sure your web developer knows we're making a change in our MLS and encourage him/her to contact the MLS office.** In other developments with IDX, the MLS Committee voted to amend MLS rules to allow agents to have IDX on their websites. Prior to this amendment, agents were required to link to their brokers' websites if they wanted IDX. Most agents will want to take advantage of this change in the rules to set up their own website in MLXchange, but agents will also have the option of getting a download and posting it on their websites in a different format. Agreements will need to be signed by agents, brokers, web developers and the MLS before that can be implemented. Watch the MLS message of the day for more information on when the data and agreement will be available.

While the conversion has certainly been the focus of most members' attention, other questions have surfaced. We've received several phone calls questioning the practice of using MLS statistics in advertising. MLS rules state: *"Use of information from MLS compilation of current listing information, from the Association's "statistical reports", or from any "sold" or "comparable" report of the Association or MLS for public mass-media advertising by an MLS Participant or in other public representations may **not be prohibited**, (emphasis added). However, any print or non-print form of advertising or other forms or public representations based in whole or in part on information supplied by the Association or its MLS must clearly demonstrate the period of time over which such claims are based and must include the following, or substantially similar, notice: Based on information from the Northwestern Wisconsin Multiple Listing Service for the period (date) through (date)." If you are publishing statistics obtained from the MLS, please be sure to include the notice and verify statistics to ensure accuracy.*

The MLS office is also conducting an inventory verification of electronic lockboxes leased to brokers. Please complete the form and return it to the MLS office as soon as possible. The verification is being done as a courtesy to brokers to help them maintain accurate records on the number of safes for which they are responsible. The electronic lockboxes save valuable time and create greater security for sellers—a great MLS enhancement !



VISIT MLXCHANGE SOON!! YOUR LOGIN AND PASSWORD ARE THE SAME AS THE ONES YOU USE IN INNO VIA. THE ADDRESS IS:

<http://ranww.mlxchange.com>

Clip & Save!!



TechHelpline

Your go-to technology experts

866-414-7387

Take a look at the type of support offered!

You have enough pressure keeping pace with the fast-moving real estate market without having to be a technology expert too. Technology products and services are not just difficult for novices to understand, they're also constantly evolving. The Tech Helpline, a **FREE** membership benefit, offers you the support and advice you need for technology related problems and questions. Save time, save money, make the Tech Helpline your first contact when you need technical assistance on anything from a printer issue to a question on a software application..

Operating Systems:

- Mac OS 10.x
- Microsoft® Windows® 2000 Professional
- Microsoft® Windows® XP Home Edition
- Microsoft® Windows® XP Professional Edition
- Microsoft® Windows® CE
- Palm Operating Systems
- Upgrades from Microsoft® Windows® 98, Millennium Edition and NT Workstation

Software Applications:

E-mail

- Eudora Mail
- Entourage
- Netscape
- MS Outlook
- MS Outlook Express
- Webmail

Real Estate-Specific

- Popular Forms Applications
- The Living Network®
- Top Producer®
- TransactionDesk™
- WinForms™

Office/Financial

- ACT!
- Adaptec Toast
- Adaptec EZCD Creator
- Adobe® Acrobat®
- AppleWorks
- Corel Office
- Corel Draw
- Corel Quattro
- Corel WordPerfect
- Intuit Quicken
- Intuit Quickbooks
- LapLink
- Lotus Suite

- Lotus WordPro
- Microsoft® FrontPage® (versions 98 and higher)
- Microsoft® Media Player
- Microsoft® Money
- Microsoft® NetMeeting
- Microsoft® Office Products (Word, Excel, PowerPoint, Access)
- Microsoft® Outlook Express (versions 4.0 and higher)
- Microsoft® Outlook (versions 97 and higher)
- Microsoft® Publisher (versions 2000 and higher)
- Microsoft® Visio® (versions 2000 and higher)
- Microsoft® Works
- Nero BurningROM
- Palm Desktop
- PrintMaster
- PrintShop
- Real Media Player
- Roxio CD-Burning Products
- Winzip Applications

Hardware:

- Accelerators
- CD/DVD Drives
- Digital Cameras
- Laptops & Handhelds
- Modems
- Monitors
- Network Adapters
- PC Cards / PCMCIA
- PDAs and cell phones
- Printers
- Scanners
- SCSI Devices
- Sound Cards
- Storage Media
- System Units (PCs and Mac)
- USB Devices
- Video Cards

And all PC compatible, Macintosh and clones such as:

- Acer
- Apple Macintosh
- AST
- Clones / Whitebox
- Compaq
- Dell
- eMachines
- Epson
- Fujitsu
- Gateway
- Hewlett Packard
- IBM
- Lenovo
- Micron
- NEC
- Packard Bell
- Sony
- Toshiba
- Winbook and many others...

Firewall/Intrusions Applications:

- McAfee Office
- McAfee AntiVirus
- Norton System Works
- Norton AntiVirus
- Spyware/Adware intrusions
- Symantec WinFax Products
- Symantec pcAnywhere
- Trend Micro
- ZoneAlarm and others...

Browsers/Net:

- CompuServe
- ISPs
- Microsoft® Internet Explorer
- Mozilla Firefox
- Netscape Communicator
- Netscape Navigator
- Safari

Have a question on what piece of hardware may best meet your needs? Questions about different software? Take advantage of the Tech Helpline's expertise and advice before buying!

SPOTLIGHT ON . . . Aaron Brunette by Mary Hafenstein



This month I visited with Aaron Brunette of Haselwander GMAC, Realtors® in Eau Claire. Thanks, Aaron, for taking time to answer my questions—I appreciate it when I ask agents and they willingly respond to a few questions.

Mary: Aaron, would you give us a little background on yourself? How long have you been in real estate and what prompted you to change careers?

Aaron: I'm originally from Green Bay where I attended an all boys private Catholic high school and then a private college for a brief period of time. And I mean brief—like a semester. I was housed with sophomores and juniors because I did not sign my letter of intent until after the housing was full. I did not make it to class much because of that and felt it would be best if I left. I started drilling water wells and then moved into the mining industry. I drilled blast holes in rock quarries and also ran a rock crusher. I met Carol, who married me and cleaned me up (as much as possible as the art work on me was already in place!) had our son Seth and our daughter Aria. My mother and her husband were living in Eau Claire and owned a real estate office. They encouraged me to finish my days in the quarries and try real estate. I got my license in May, 2003, sold my house in Ladysmith and moved to Eau Claire with no idea when my next check would come. After a few days of staring at the phone and doing a few open houses, I was reading every listing, word for word, in the great Voyager system and seeing a few agents receiving listings from banks. When I decided to go after that industry, many people thought I was wasting my time because the market was so good. Well, the market has changed a little, and my business plan has paid off.

Mary: Changes are occurring almost daily in technology and clients' demands; how do you feel this affects your market??

Aaron: Change is good and must happen for anyone to expand their business or lifestyle. I find more and more clients/customers expect a return phone call in less than seven minutes and am amazed when I hear of agents not returning calls. A simple call back could lead to a sale. Most of my clients are banks and do not require traditional forms of marketing ; even my live sellers are aware of changing market trends. I educate them from the day of the listing on how my listings are marketed. It's easier to do it up front than to make excuses at the end of your listing. My number one technology asset (and I think everyone should have one) is my email/text/internet/planner/camera, otherwise known as my Blackberry!

Mary: As new agents enter our business, what do you feel they should focus on to achieve their goals?

Aaron: New agents, beware! Customers know how to use the internet. Use it. If you don't know how, use the Tech Helpline. The new generation of buyers are internet savvy. If you can capture those buyers, you'll have a very lucrative career. Become involved in the board and in your area Chamber of Commerce; meet all agents or at least know who they are. New agents must develop a business plan that fit their lifestyle and market. The tools brokers offer are there for a reason. Usually your broker has been around a little longer than you, so listen to him/her and agents in your office. Take all that info and use it!

Mary: Would you care to share one or two past experiences that have stood out over the years?

Aaron: Since most of my business is foreclosure properties, I have to do occupancy checks, evictions and contract for repairs. I often see homes that have a lot of debris left behind and have been vacant for some time. Recently I went to a property the lender had described as a good sized and valued historic home. Never believe that! I arrived at the property and noticed a vehicle in the yard along with an old covered wagon that looked like it had been used in old John Wayne movie. I was a little cautious as I was unsure if the owners had vacated. After seeing the hazmat stickers on the house describing "unknown chemicals inside", I became a little concerned but went to my car, retrieved my economy-size bottle of hand sanitizer and proceeded to enter the house. I can usually overcome any locks on a property with the various tools I carry, but this one had a hasp lock and some kind of weird deadbolt I had not encountered before. I breached the lock but could only open the door a few inches. I am not a very small man, but after shedding my jacket, I was able to squeeze inside. The porch, which was full to the ceiling with personal property, took me a few minutes to crawl over. Once I entered the living room, I felt like I was walking on sea shells. There were small paths throughout all the rooms—it was like an entire lifetime of personal property had been left behind. As I clawed my way towards what appeared to be the bathroom, I noticed a couple dozen milk jugs, filled with some type of dark brown substance, on the floor. The plumbing was non-operational, so I can only guess what the milk jugs contained. When I opened the refrigerator, the house filled with a terrible odor as well as a small army of some type of flying pest. After further investigation, I realized that the sea shell noise was actually open cat food cans as well as the signs of a cat that used the whole house as its personal litter box. 13 roll off dumpsters later and a \$10,000 cleanout bill, my wife refuses to go into any bank foreclosure property again. Most people think they have problem properties but try to top that one!

REALTORS®

got

TALENT

*Now Casting
for
Season One!*

Looking for talent in all areas..
Singing, Juggling, Yodeling, Magic,
Comedy or whatever your
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Registration Fee of \$75

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Winner to Receive \$500

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May 16th @ Turtle Back

More Details to Follow

Contact Courtney Johnson

Email: Courtney@forsalebycourtney.com

Cell: 715-520-0290

Proceeds to Benefit RANWW Foundation

Your Talent Committee: Margo Katterhagen,
Patty Flynn, Courtney Johnson, Martha DeLong