

REALTORS® Report

August, 2009

REALTORS®
Association of
Northwestern
Wisconsin
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*The Voice for Real Estate
in Northwestern
Wisconsin*

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NEW LEADERS ELECTED.

Congratulations to our new treasurer, *David Masterjohn*! Congratulations, too, to our new directors, *Dan Lawler* and *Brian Dunham*! *Michelle Kauffman* was elected as an alternate and will fulfill the vacancy on the board created by David's resignation to assume the treasurer position. Dave, Dan, Brian and Michelle, along with president-elect *Jeff Theisen* and 2009-10 President *David FitzGerald* will all be installed on September 24 at Lake Wisconsin Country Club—save the date.

The election results were extremely close—four votes determined the winners for both the treasurer position and the board of directors, evidence the Nominating Committee made wise choices for candidates. Serving on the

Association's leadership team requires a time commitment and many associations have problems finding members who are willing to serve. We're fortunate to have so many well-qualified members who are willing to commit their time to help lead the association. Leadership is not limited to directors, however. The work of committees is critical—they plan the programs and services offered by the association. Members can attend a meeting physically or participate via conference call. Serving on a committee also gives you a great opportunity to work with fellow members who may be involved in your next transaction, which may help make it smoother! Contact President-elect David FitzGerald at 834-1501 or email him at fitzgerald@klevenrealtors.com if you'd like to serve on a committee.

WRA
Wisconsin REALTORS® Association

Wisconsin Foreclosure Assistance Resource Center

Welcome to the Wisconsin Foreclosure Assistance Resource Center. Whether you are currently facing foreclosure, or concerned about the possibility, the Wisconsin REALTORS® Association has developed this Web site as a helpful and credible source of information. In addition to addressing questions you may have about Wisconsin's foreclosure process, the site includes a variety of resources and contact information to help you steer away from foreclosure or navigate through the process with better results.

We understand that foreclosure is the last thing anyone expects when buying a home, but please understand that foreclosure is often avoidable if you are proactive and communicate with key individuals like your mortgage lender. Please use the links below to find out more.

- Survival Kit**
Action steps for those going through foreclosure
- Prevention Kit**
Action steps for avoiding foreclosure
- Public Info Kit**
Foreclosure trends in Wisconsin

Have you taken advantage of this site developed by WRA with funding from NAR? It's part of the "Right Tools, Right Now" program. The site offers a wealth of information for sellers who need help with the many complex issues they may be encountering. The site has information for sellers already in foreclosure, help for preventing foreclosure and data on foreclosures in Wisconsin. Our Association's homepage has a link to the site—you may want to consider adding the link to your personal or company website as an added resource for consumers.



Hats off to the **Public Relations Committee** on working with Lee Enterprises Newspapers on a very positive, upbeat tabloid, “*On the Move*”. The publication has information on the advantages of home ownership, real estate as an investment, financing tips, current market information and more. The back cover of the magazine features some of the many ways Realtors® have been involved in their communities. In addition to providing buyers and sellers with some factual information and practical tips, it also shows how Realtors® are making a difference in their communities. Copies of the publication will be made available to members soon—watch the message of the day so you can have a supply of the newspaper insert for your office.

MEMBERSHIP NEWS

Welcome to the following new members; in accordance with our bylaws, written comment is invited.

Steven Bushman	Bushman Appls	Ryan Knorn	Woods & Water	<u>WELCOME NEW AFFILIATES!!</u>
Jeffrey Hein	C21 Hilgart Realty	Elaine Mothes	Edina Realty/CV	Jane Gobler Independent Flooring
Kelly Johnson	Midwest Realty	Bruce Ramseier	Woods & Water	Christine Reichert All Title Services

Congratulations to **Jill Rassbach-Pember** on being featured in the Chippewa Valley Business Report as an up and coming business person!. . . Congratulations and thank you to **John Flor** for consistently giving the media accurate information on the housing market while emphasizing positive facts. Not an easy job, but John has done a great job this past year, including his most recent interview in which he’s quoted as saying it’s important for sellers to pay attention to how their homes look and how they are priced—a house needs the “Wow factor”. Great advice for sellers!. . . Our final thanks goes to **Margo Katterhagen** for continuing to serve on the board of directors as past president representative!



On July 16 members of the Education Committee met for about four hours for a planning retreat to work on implementing some of the goals of the Strategic Plan and to develop a master calendar for education programs for the next year. The Committee recognized that Education is a core service offered by the Association and determined that meeting for a couple of hours every other month didn’t really allow enough time to plan for the future—every meeting was spent on making sure the details for the next event were covered. The four hour meeting, held at the home of **Mary Giammona**, resulted in a comprehensive plan that will help guide the Education Committee in determining what programs should be offered, when they’re offered and how they are offered. The Committee also looked at ways of orienting our new directors and committee chairs. Finally, the committee looked at involving our



brokers by scheduling broker meetings. As a result of this meeting, the Association should have a more complete education calendar. When you have an opportunity, please convey your personal thanks to them. Committee members are : **Quincy Chapman**, Chairman, **Jenny Ebert**, **Michelle Kauffman**, **Becky Martino**, **Ben Rivard**, **Chris Wolff**, **Kathleen Beilfuss**, **Mary Giammona** and **Nora Shaide**.





From the President . . . John Flor

Do the Right Thing

I truly believe that most disagreements and misunderstandings in our business can be worked out with a phone call and a positive attitude toward serving our customers and clients. In that spirit, I wanted to share a couple of great experiences I recently had with other brokers in my area.

The first experience was with **Mike Randall** from Real Estate One in Bloomer. Mike had shown one of my listings last fall. Nothing had immediately come of the showing and I had forgotten about it. Several months later a potential buyer contacted one of the agents in my office and wanted to make an offer on the property. She was quite evasive as to how and when she had been in the property and the agent, not wanting to push the good luck, wrote the offer. After many difficulties with inspections and renters, we pushed her to inform us how she had seen the property. It was then she revealed she had viewed the property with Mike. At that time the offer looked dead anyway, so I decided not to alert Mike. After a month of negotiating, estimates, multiple contractors, etc, it looked as if the deal would close. I then contacted Mike and explained the situation to him. I told him we should have been more diligent and checked the BookAShowing log to see if her name was there, but none of us thought of it at the time. Mike thanked me for being upfront and honest with him. He also stated that hopefully we would both be doing this job for many years to come and the best thing to do was to work together and get along to close the deal. We agreed upon a referral fee that satisfied both of us and proceeded toward closing. Unfortunately, I never got to pay that referral fee because the buyer lost his job three days before closing and the deal fell through, but that is beside the point.

“. . . I truly believe that if we put our client’s interests ahead of our own. . . we can work out almost any differences we have. . .”

The second experience was with **Bob Hartman** from C21 Nelson Real Estate in Chetek. In this case, Bob had listed a property I had previously listed. When he listed the property my office forwarded a copy of the protected buyer list to Bob’s office. After several months, Bob informed me that a buyer from our protected list wanted to make an offer and was insisting on working with them as the listing brokerage. We discussed the situation and agreed upon a commission split that we were both satisfied with. I am glad to say that this transaction went to closing after a lot of work by Bob and his firm.

I could list several other instances where a phone call cleared up a potentially messy situation, but I think these two examples get my point across. I hope the next time you have a potential problem with another agent or broker, you will pick up the phone and call the agent before filing an ethics complaint or arbitration request. We are all in this business together and I truly believe that if we put our client’s interests ahead of our own, like the law states, we can work out almost any differences we have without attorneys or hearing panels. It is not always easy, but it is always best to do the right thing.

Editor’s note: At a recent committee meeting, a suggestion was made to feature “success” stories in the monthly newsletter. President Flor’s article is a great success story, but there are many others out there, and we need to share positive stories with fellow members. Have you been involved a closing a transaction using some creative financing? Has one of your closings involved some nontraditional actions? Do you know of an agent who has taken the extra step to close on a property or demonstrated some high ethical conduct? Send your success story to joan@ranww.org—it may be published in a future newsletter.

The Education Committee proudly presents.

Food for the mind & body

Join us for a workshop planned to not only make you proficient with email but also professional! The use of email in the business world is growing rapidly and has gained wide acceptance as an acceptable form of communication. This class will help you communicate more effectively and professionally—don't miss it! Class is limited to 35, so register early.

WHEN: August 19, 2009, 11 to 1:15

WHERE: St. Bede's Priory, 1190 Priory Rd, Eau Claire

COST: \$12 (includes a box lunch of a sub sandwich, chips, vegetable relish and cookie)

Register and pay online at
www.ranww.org

Jerry Bauer of JB Systems will offer some tips on the proper use of email. His one hour presentation will focus on practical, non-technical, aspects of email and will cover:

- ◆ spell check
- ◆ editing messages for forwarding
- ◆ using auto reply
- ◆ blind carbon copies
- ◆ setting up distribution lists
- ◆ more!

Heather Rothbauer-Wanish of Feather Communications will follow Jerry's presentation and will cover:

- ◆ professional options for writing and communicating via email
- ◆ maintaining integrity in communications through concise, accurate information
- ◆ creative techniques in writing

About the instructors:

Jerry Bauer founded JB Systems in 2001 while still in high school. Jerry was featured by the Leader Telegram as a young emerging business leader and in 2008, his company was selected as one of the 10 most dependable web designers in the central U. S.

Heather Rothbauer-Wanish of Feather Communications holds a BBA in management from UWEC, MBA from Lakeland College and is an instructor at Globe University in Eau Claire. She is a frequent contributor to many area news magazines and newspapers.

Send this form, with check payable to RANWW, to:
1903 Keith Street, Eau Claire, WI 54701 by August 12.

Name _____

Email address _____

As an added attraction, a brokers open house will follow the workshop—a great opportunity to tour this unique property to help you sell it!

Directions to St. Bede's Priory:

Hwy 37 S to S on Co Hwy B to left on Priory Rd to property on the left

Sorry—no refunds for cancellations

This event is sponsored by:



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MLS REPORT

The MLS Committee met on July 17 for about four hours, which included a presentation on a lockbox system that allows participants to give non-MLS participants a one-time security code to access the property. One of the most common complaints raised by members who use our lockbox system is that licensees from other areas cannot use the lockbox because they have a different key. This system addresses that problem and is far more secure than the combination locks used by many offices in the fringe areas of our MLS. The code can only be used once, and the lockbox records when the box is opened using that code. Our current lockbox vendor, Risco, no longer carries the lockbox Readerkey we use, although they are continuing to support it. Additionally, many of the boxes are reaching the maximum battery life and may soon need to be sent back to Risco for refurbishing. The Committee is only gathering information on other lockbox systems at this time—**no decision to change lockbox vendors has been made.**

After viewing the lockbox presentation, some committee actions include:

- ◆ Approved a third party licensing agreement, subject to review by our attorney.
- ◆ Adopted a policy requiring brokers to return lockbox audits within 90 days of receipt of verification request. Failure to return the audit within 90 days will result in an invoice to the broker for the total number of boxes.
- ◆ Authorized up to \$7,000 to create “for rent/lease” property type.
- ◆ Directed staff to post notices in newsletter and message of the day defining REO field as bank-owned property. (Short sales or in the foreclosure process properties should be noted in the agent remarks)
- ◆ Approved request from broker to allow home inspectors access to BookAShowing to schedule inspections. (home inspectors have been sent a notice that this service is available and advised that many brokers have reduced their support staff, so using BAS will create efficiency for both the inspector and the broker’s office.)
- ◆ Reviewed a WiREx proposal and requested a presentation at a meeting of the Directors and the Committee.

REMINDER: Please review your listings to make sure the “Internet address field” is completed properly. If the seller has directed you to withhold the property address, the field should be completed as “No”, which means the address is not to appear on any website, including the listing broker’s. If the seller has not directed you to withhold the property address, the field should be completed “yes”. Many listings have “no” in that field but are appearing on the listing broker’s website in violation of our rules.



“Lucy was so excited and happy she even cried—she asked me to write on her behalf. She is able to go outside, unassisted, and get back in without fear. She has been telling anyone who will listen how wonderful your Foundation is!” The Foundation received that comment from the caseworker of a grant recipient in Rusk County. The 84 year-old woman, who lives alone, was unable to use her walker to leave her home in the case of an emergency. The \$920 grant was used to add a ramp and railing, which allowed her to be safer and more independent. This is only one of the many comments we’ve received from grant recipients. In the five years since the Foundation was formed, we’ve awarded \$115,000 in grants to families in north-western Wisconsin. Please remember the difference the grant made to Lucy and how our professional image was enhanced by including a contribution to the Foundation when you renew your membership in October.



Spotlight on. . . **Krag Blomberg & Joe Germain**

Totally awesome, phenomenal, very knowledgeable, really nice. . . Those were the phrases used by Char Glocke, the LaCrosse Area of Realtors® Association executive officer, in describing Krag and Joe.

As members of RANWW professional standards committee, they were asked to serve on an arbitration hearing at the LaCrosse Association since that board was unable to arrange a panel of impartial members from their committee. We have a reciprocal agreement with two neighboring boards (as required by NAR) to serve on panels if that situation occurs. The preamble of the Code of Ethics states that Realtors® should willingly share their experience and knowledge. Thank you, Joe and Krag for doing that!



Have you invested in your business by writing a check to RPAC? RPAC doesn't buy a vote, but it does help open doors so we can share concerns with our elected officials. Think it doesn't matter? Take a look at what we've accomplished by working with legislators.

- ◆ **Commissions** – Stopped sales tax on commissions
- ◆ **Permit Processing** – Expedited DNR permitting process
- ◆ **Impact Fees** – Limited Municipal impact fees
- ◆ **Eminent Domain** – Restricted Eminent domain use
- ◆ **License Law** – Modernized Wisconsin's Real Estate License Law
- ◆ **Appraiser Regulation** – Updated appraiser certification law
- ◆ **Transfer Tax** – Defeated numerous attempts to increase tax
- ◆ **Property Taxes** – Preserved revenue limits to hold down property taxes
- ◆ **Personal Property Taxes** – Eliminated personal property tax on computers
- ◆ **Fines** – Defeated excessive fines (\$10,000) for innocent telemarketing violations.
- ◆ **Closing Agent** – Defeated legislation to require new "closing agent" at every closing
- ◆ **Tenant Property** – Streamlined process for landlords to dispose of property
- ◆ **Condominium Law** – Made significant reforms in state condo laws
- ◆ **Mortgage Interest** – Preserved the federal mortgage interest deduction

Don't wait for Martha DeLong or Bob Ritsch to call you—send your RPAC contribution today!

While every contribution is needed and appreciated, we'd like to recognize the following members.

<u>\$99 Donors</u>	Fouts, Mark	<u>\$200 Donors</u>	<i>There's room on this list for your name!</i>
Bitney, Jeri	Katterhagen, Margo	Nathan, Gary	
Brenizer, Michael	Masterjohn, David	Pavlicek, Karen	
DeLong, Martha	Mickelson, David		
Dunham, Brian	Ritsch, Bob	<u>\$500 Donors</u>	
Donnellan, Ned	Speros, John	Canfield, Paul	
Englert, Joan	Suchla, David		
Fischer, Akemi	Theisen, James	<u>\$600 Donor</u>	
FitzGerald, David	Theisen, Jeff	Flor, John	
Flor, Butch			If you have contributed \$99 or more to RPAC and are not listed here, please contact Joan and accept our apology!



SEPTEMBER 9-11, 2009

- Why you should attend the WRA convention:
1. Complete 12 of your 18 hours of CE
 2. Learn what works in real estate NOW
 3. Wear bell-bottoms at the ice-breaker
 4. Learn what's hot with buyers and sellers and how to engage the next generation
 5. Work towards earning a designation
 6. Network and make new connections
 7. Welcome our own John Flor as Chairman of the Board
 8. Enjoy delicious food, good company and refreshing beverages at the RANWW hospitality suite.
 9. Receive a practical tote bag personalized with RANWW logo to keep your convention materials organized.

REMINDER: The convention registration fee increased on August 1, but you can still take advantage of the guaranteed hotel rates if you act before August 7! After that date, some blocks will be released and rates will increase. Never attended a convention? Contact Joan by August 12 to be eligible for a drawing for a **FREE** convention registration.