



Women's Council of REALTORS®

MARIN MATTERS

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www.WCRMarin.org

PRESIDENT'S MESSAGE

Welcome to the inaugural edition of the WCR Marin Chapter Newsletter *Marin Matters*. Many thanks go to our Marketing and Communications Chair, Charlie Sleep, and President-Elect, David Smadbeck, for getting this communication tool in place. Look for chapter news, relevant articles, calendar of events and hopefully *lots* of advertisers.

For those of you who don't know us, please read the "History of WCR". Our calendar will provide a schedule of Business Resource Meeting speakers, workshops, state and national conferences, fundraisers and gatherings with other chapters.

WCR provides an environment of collaboration in which members can form, build and maximize relationships for business and personal success. Our members operate on a shared value system of integrity, respect, consistency and a commitment to excellence and continued development.

Marin's Yahoo Groups website. We share our vision by networking round table discussion at our Business Resource Meetings. Our membership includes realtors from all of the brokerage firms in Marin along with independent brokers as well as related affiliate members who complement our efforts both professionally and as an organization. Their support is invaluable.

We also have coordinated efforts with M.A.R. and are proud to have Edward Segal, M.A.R. Executive Officer, as a member of our chapter. M.A.R. and WCR have joined in a spring collection of clothing for Image for Success. Thank you to our sponsors for the 2008 calendar year. Please support our advertisers and sponsors of WCR Marin this year. Join us in working together in creating a great year in real estate while having some fun along the way.



Judy LeMarr

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Exterior Staging Ideas

By: Kathleen Hallin, WCR Marin Affiliate Member / Staging and Design / www.khallindesign.com/ 415-899-9798



As a designer and a home buyer, if I were to drive up to a home for sale that didn't have "captivating curb appeal" then it would be a "drive by" and my feet wouldn't even touch the sidewalk.

Start at the front walk. A fresh cluster of flowers at the curb that continues up the path to the front door will be a visual guide for the buyer. Try and group the flowers leaving space between the arrangements. Consider a warm or cool palette for the flowers, not both. For instance, if the house is gray and white, a cool palette of pinks, purples and blues will be a refreshing choice. If the home is a green based in tone, oranges and reds are a fine compliment. Also a yard with all white flowering shrubs mixed with grasses is an elegant touch. Don't forget to consider the deer and their favorite munchies. Also, when considering landscaping, never show your dirt. A few well placed bags of shredded redwood will give any yard a finished touch.

If the front of the home has a flat appearance and lacks depth, window boxes painted the trim color of the home and positioned under the windows give a home an instant character boost. Shutters and awnings can also add detail to mundane windows, depending on the architecture. Sometimes removing all the screens can enhance a clean window and its view. The front door of a home is the focal point, so be sure to freshen the paint with a rich color and upgrade the hardware. Flanking the entry way, should be two ceramic pots with flowers or shrubs to frame your focal point. This will say, "welcome and get out of your car". A lackluster backyard can be instantly transformed by a colorful umbrella and a table set for four. This will be a visual distraction just as a water feature will diffuse the sound of traffic. Target has a great selection of outdoor decor at reasonable prices. If you need something more exciting, my favorite lounge is a \$99. black iron day bed sold at IKEA. Add a blow up single mattress, a sheet, a few big pillows and an umbrella and you will have a great visual for outdoor living. Also, by using simple terracotta pots filled with shrubs and grouped in threes, you can create definition for a patio area. Large terracotta pots with bushy shrubs may also be used as camouflage for deferred maintenance. Don't forget the side yards, they are visible from inside the home. An easy way enhance a rough side yard is a three foot path of pea gravel, flanked by shredded redwood and random shrubs of the same type. These landscaping items can be purchased by the bag or delivered from Shamrock in San Rafael. Lastly, the exterior paint should be perfected. A quick power wash and a touch-up will do, even if it's only for the curb appeal.

HISTORY OF WCR

In **1924**, the California Real Estate Association formed a Women's Division after members founded the idea on a train ride home from the National Association's convention in Washington, D.C.

In **1938**, Joseph Catherine, president of the National Association of Real Estate Boards (now NAR), encouraged the formation of the Women's Council after being impressed by the California group.

At that time, most decisions were made on the local level. However, the National Association was ready to recognize women and they voted to form the Women's Council at their annual convention held in Milwaukee in November of 1938. Thirty-seven women represented nine states at the meeting and the inception of WCR.

In **1998**, the annual WCR Leadership Academy was created. In **2006**, it was expanded to include State Chapter Presidents-Elect. Today it provides over 250 Local and State Chapter Presidents-Elect with in-depth chapter management training.

1999 saw the approval of a Statement of Diversity.

The PMN designation was launched in **2003**.

Today, there are more than 290 Chapters with 18,000 members. WCR is the 12th largest U.S. Women's professional organization and has one of the most successful communication networks in the NAR family.

FORUM 8



Marin WCR Pres. Judy LeMarr & Speaker Dixie Garr at the Forum 8 Networking Extravaganza, April 23rd, Four Points Sheraton



Networking at Forum 8



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Struggling to stay afloat
in today's economy?



CREDIT— IT'S A BRAND NEW DAY

by: Sean Murphy

WCR Marin Affiliate Member

In light of the mortgage market meltdown that the US economy has seen since August of last year, how has that affected the lending landscape concerning a borrower's credit score? The answer to that question is quite simply - A LOT!

Back in the day... (Ok, 2006 and even into 2007!), having a 619 mid FICO score was no big deal. Plenty of homeowners found loan options that helped them "achieve the American dream" in buying a home. Today, having a 619 FICO score could easily cost you an extra \$300-400K more in interest costs above what they would normally have to pay over the life of a loan! With this lower credit score, buyers would also experience 10-29% less purchasing power in today's market. This decrease in purchasing power means buying a less expensive home.

So, what are credit scores and how did they become so important in today's lending world? Fair Isaac Corporation when based here in San Rafael, CA. had created a mathematical model adopted by all the three major credit bureaus, Equifax, Experian, and TransUnion. The FICO scoring system, as seen today, has only been adopted into standard underwriting practice within the past 15 years. While there is a new version being rolled out in 2008, the currently accepted version has score ranges from 350-850 with 150 scoring models and 10 scoring cards.

All of us in the real estate community understand that additional charges have been added to the pricing of mortgages due to levels of perceived risk from a lender. Recently, however, increased pricing adjustments, for credit scores, are being added to the Fannie/Freddie pricing models, which lead to higher rates. Even having a 679 FICO will cost you more today than it did before August of last year.

What are the components that create an individual's credit score? Here are the five key areas:

- 1) Payment History (35%) – How do your borrower's pay their bills. Did you know: A recent 30-day late could cost 50+ points and paying a collection more than 2 years old can actually hurt your score.
- 2) Amounts owed (30%) – Managing Debt. Did you know: balances on debt owed should be kept below 50% at all times to maintain scores BUT below 30% for 3-6 months prior to applying for a loan to increase scores. Debt should be distributed evenly over all credit accounts, not consolidated.

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- 3) Length of History (15%) – Hold onto old credit cards, even if the rate is not great. Did you know: "authorized user" accounts are no longer allowed!
- 4) Mix of Credit (10%) – 3-5 revolving credit accounts with established history and mixture of debt is optimal.
- 5) Inquiries (10%) – Hard vs. Soft inquiries (mortgage pull vs. consumer pull). Did you know: There is a 14-day window for pulling multiple reports but depending upon borrower's scorecard and current credit situation – points can range 2-30 points.

Given this information, what are the action steps TODAY to help people in improving their scores? You should order your credit report from all three bureaus, verify the data being reported, and dispute any inaccurate information immediately. Make sure you communicate with the bureaus through CERTIFIED mail.

In today's marketplace, partnerships are critical for all of our success. Having a "go-to" lender that has a wide array of available product (even in this constricting marketplace), an expert in underwriting, have credit analysis and repair partnerships lined up and are local and accountable to you and your community as you both have a vested interest in each other's success.

For more information and details, please contact:

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HOME MATTERS

by: David Charietta, WCR Marin Affiliate Member

Although we are well into Spring, many of us have put off those maintenance chores that built-up over the winter. Don't feel bad; you're not the only one who hasn't jumped on their "Spring Cleaning" list. Here are a few suggestions in case you can't decide where to start.

Spring Maintenance Tips

Inside

- Test your air conditioning system now. Service techs get busy in the summer months and if you wait until the first hot day to check your AC and it doesn't work, you will have a long, hot wait before the repair people can get to it. They'll be overworked and cranky by the time they get to your home; you'll be cranky because you're so darn hot.
- Remember to inspect your HVAC filter regularly and replace when needed, typically, 2-3 times per year.
- Check and clean the clothes dryer vent and stove hood.
- If you have a coil-back refrigerator vacuum the coils at least twice each year. Your refrigerator will run much more efficiently with clean coils.
- Clean everything, top to bottom! Use non-toxic soaps for better indoor air quality.

Outside

- Trim branches and shrubs that are touching your home. These can provide a pathway for bugs or animals to enter your home.
- Remove dead branches from overhead trees that may fall on your home. If you have old oaks on your property, now is a good time to consider having a qualified arborist inspect those trees to ensure their health and your safety.
- Clean up fallen limbs, branches and other debris around the home to discourage the proliferation of wood-eating insects. Termites = bad
- Check your irrigation system. Make sure that your sprinkler heads do not spray the walls of the house. Sprinkler over spray can damage siding and trim. Make sure your sprinklers are not wasting water by over spraying onto driveways or side walks needlessly. We are sure to hear about water rationing again this year.
- Spring is termite "swarmer" season. Warm days trigger the little buggers instincts and sends thousands of the little guys off to colonize new homes. Make sure one of their new addresses is not at your house. Check window-sills, your foundation walls (inside and out) and piers for termite tubes, winged termites and damaged wood. If you haven't had a pest inspection in the last 4-5 years it wouldn't be a bad idea to have a full pest inspection performed to check you home. Especially, those areas you don't want to crawl into like the attic or sub area. (Ugh!)

Enough procrastinating! With glorious warm weather of late, now is the time to roll up those sleeves and get at it! You know you'll feel better once it's all done. Who knows, you may even burn off a few of those pounds that seem to sneak on to so many of us over the winter.

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David Chiaretta (877) 576-0285



Business Resource Meetings

2008 Calendar

- Jan. 15th- "The E-Myth Solution"
Karin Iwata
- Feb. 26th- "Tax Strategies for Realtors"
Maine Shafer, Bradford Company
- Mar. 25th- "2008 CAR Legal Update"
Gov Hutchinson, CAR Legal Counsel
- Apr. 23rd- "Forum 8"
Dixie Garr
Vice- President, Cisco Systems
- May 27th- "Marin County Report"
Marin County Supervisor
Charles McGlashan
- June 24th- "The Best bang for your advertising buck"
Public Relations and self-promotion
Edward Segal, MAR CEO
Author of Profit by Publicity
- July 22nd- "Marin's #1 Concern: Transportation & Traffic"
Diane Steinhauser
Transportation Authority of Marin
- Sep. 23rd- "Don't allow your thinking to limit your success"
Betty Jo Waxman
- Oct. 28th- "How much do you know about Marin County?"
Richard Torney
Marin History Museum
- Nov. 25th- "Technology Tips"

For more information on upcoming events, go to:
www.WCRMarin.org



Wednesday, June 11

6 - 8 p.m.

Women's Council of Realtors®

SF-Marin
Art & Wine
Mixer



Art! Wine! Networking!

Join members of both the Marin and San Francisco chapters of Women's Council of Realtors for a wonderful evening of art, wine and networking.

As we all know, networking is about developing relationships and you'll get the chance to do just that at this great joint chapter event.

Start building referral relationships with other WCR members that will help you grow your business in 2008!

All Realtors® welcome!

- Build your referral business
- Get tips on building - and maintaining - your referral business
- Learn about additional benefits of WCR
- View fabulous local art
- Enjoy wine & have fun!

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Cost: Members free, non-members \$10, call our reservation line at 415.202.9936 x160 (Please specify) WCR Member Moor)

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We are a network of successful Realtors empowering women to exercise their potential as entrepreneurs and industry leaders.