

Valley of the Sun Real Estate Update

March, 2003

Why use a Real Estate Agent?

This Month: Advantages for Buyers

Long before I was a licensed Realtor, I was a home buyer. When I started looking for a home, finding an agent to work with was far from my mind. Now that I have been through the process a few times, and especially now that I have become active in the local market, I firmly believe that finding an agent who works well with you is one of the most important decisions you can make when buying a home, with advantages at every stage of the game. At Lucas Realty Group, our goal is to save you time, money, and hassles, and make the buying process as smooth as possible.

One important factor for buyers to understand is that, in almost all cases, the services of a Buyer's Agent are free of charge. The Buyer's Agent will get paid at Close of Escrow, out of the seller's proceeds from the transaction. So buyers get a pretty good deal—professional representation at no cost.

Many buyers begin the home-search process by visiting open houses after work or on weekends. This can be a good way to become familiar with different neighborhoods and floor plans, or to develop an idea for what home features are most important to you, but there are some drawbacks. There are many more homes for sale than you could ever hope to see (over 600 available in Tempe alone at the end of this month) and only a small portion of these will have open houses. Through the Multiple Listing Service, a Realtor can provide information for you on homes that meet your requirements, and arrange appointments for you to see them when it is convenient for you. Instead of spending all your free time chasing around the Valley trying to look at properties, your agent can help you focus your search on the homes that are most likely to fit your needs.

Once you find a home that interests you, an agent can save you money on the purchase. By searching the MLS and tax records for recent sales of similar properties, your agent can help you determine a fair price for the home, negotiate with the sellers, and arrange inspections to identify any issues with the home that may require repair. An agent can also refer you to reputable contractors and service providers, to ensure that any work

you have done is of professional quality and at a reasonable cost.

Your agent will also be able to help guide you through the typical 4-6 week escrow process, keeping you aware of all the various deadlines and requirements as you move closer to finalizing the deal. With a 9-page purchase contract, there are lots of details to stay on top of, and overlooking any one of them could be a costly mistake. Your agent will also be the primary contact for communication with the sellers, the title company, the contractors, and the others involved in the transaction, so you can have some peace of mind during this important time.

****Next Month: Advantages for Sellers****

On the Home Front

Usually, we think our lives are pretty quiet, but the last several weeks have been filled with all sorts of big events. The bad news: Jill suffered a complete tear of the ACL in her left knee on the very first night of our Frisbee League. She's out for the season, and now has to plan for reconstructive surgery and a long re-hab program. Fortunately, she works in a home office, and she has a pretty optimistic attitude, so we hope that this won't be too disruptive for her.

In better news, at least Jill got to have a good time snowboarding in Utah the week *before* her injury. She spent 4 days playing in the mountains with a large group of friends. She had with plenty of time on the slopes with some fresh snow, and enough time left over to sample the atmosphere in the local taverns. Ken put in some pub time as well on a 10-day trip to England. His best man, Brian, had a tremendous gallery show of recent glass sculptures, and he got to catch up with friends from earlier visits.

Our flooring project was a big success. The mahogany gives a rich, dark tone to the house, and the slate provides a nice balance of color and texture. Now all we need to do is paint the new baseboards—and move all the furniture back inside from the garage! Everything looks great, but I think it will be a little while before we tackle any new re-modeling projects....

Ken Mayer

Ken@LucasRealtyGroup.com

602-750-3678

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Recipe of the Month

Pan-fried Pork Chops with Apple Chutney

4 boneless pork chops (about 3/4 inch thick)
1 large apple, diced
1/2 cup onion, diced
Olive oil
Apple Cider vinegar
2 tablespoons jam

This stove-top recipe is an update of an old favorite. Be aware that pan-frying can create a fair bit of smoke, so be sure to use your exhaust fan if you have one!

In a large non-stick skillet, warm a tablespoon of olive oil over medium-high heat. Place the pork chops in the skillet, and cook for about 16 minutes. Flip the chops every 4 minutes or so to keep them from burning and ensure that they cook evenly.

Meanwhile, warm a tablespoon of olive oil and a tablespoon of vinegar in a small sauté pan over medium-high heat. Add the diced apples and onions, and sauté until tender and browned, about 10 minutes. Add 2 tablespoons of jam at the end and stir in to provide a little more liquid and flavor. I used mayhew jelly (a gift from friends) but you might also try apricot, cherry, or mango.

Spoon the warm chutney mix over the cooked chops and serve with garlic bread and a tossed salad, asparagus and mashed potatoes, or your favorite side dishes.

Babysitter Classes Offered

Lucas Realty Group sponsored CPR/Babysitter classes are now going to be scheduled on the first Saturday of every month. Classes last from 8:30 to 4:30.

Classes are taught by Patti Luttrell, RN, MS. The cost of the class is \$30.00. Upon completion, students receive an American Safety and Health Institute CPR card.

Class size is limited so call today. Please register through Lucas Realty Group at 480-940-7100.



Culture Corner

Quick reviews of some recent favorites

Books: I just finished "A Few Corrections" by Brad Leithauser. It's an enjoyable read, with an unusual structure. The book opens with the obituary of a Midwestern salesman, and the narrator spends the rest of the book uncovering a series of inaccuracies and exploring a web of familial relationships.

Food: I hadn't been to Caffe Boa for years, but a recent visit reveals that it is every bit as good as I remembered. The Voodoo Penne is still the flagship dish, and the portions are still huge. Go!

Booze: I had a chance to sample several vintage Ports, and by far the best was the Warre's 1977. If you like dessert wines, try this one—very rich and fruity flavor, with a full body and smooth finish.

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_____ I'm thinking about selling my home. Please send me a complimentary current market analysis plus a Home Seller's Handbook with information about Lucas Realty Group, our "Common Sense Commission Plan", "Aggressive Marketing Plan", and other money-saving tips.

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Send this form back: fax: 480-940-7111 mail: 9880 S. Rural Rd. #8 Tempe AZ. 85284 e-mail: Ken@LucasRealtyGroup.com

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