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# Valley of the Sun Real Estate Update

January, 2004

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## A New Year, A New Website

### Your Gateway to Real Estate Information

Well, it finally happened. After several years of digging in my heels and strenuously resisting the inevitable, I now have a website. If you have previously visited the Lucas Realty Group site, my new site may look familiar to you—it is patterned on our main site, and includes all the bells and whistles you will have come to expect. The site features a wide variety of tools and links that you can use to keep yourself informed about your home, your neighborhood, the broader Valley market, or whatever corner of the real estate world is of interest to you. You can check it out at [www.kenmayer.com](http://www.kenmayer.com). Here are a few of the highlights:

### Searching the MLS

The overwhelming majority of homes for sale in the Valley are included in the Multiple Listing Service database. You can use the search function here to a basic search for homes in a particular city, or with particular features. This can be a great way to begin your home search or get an idea of neighborhood values before putting your home on the market. If you want to do a more sophisticated search, just let me know and I can arrange to have the system email you directly whenever it finds a house that matches your search profile. You can either contact me directly to set this up, or just use the "Perfect Match" link off the webpage.

### Buyer and Seller Resources

You can use the navigation bars at the top of the main page to find lots of helpful information. For instance, prospective home-buyers can look up information on local schools, search for answers to common ques-

tions about the buying process, or use a mortgage calculator to estimate monthly payments. Sellers can research marketing plans, commission structures, and tips for getting the most value out of a home. As always, I will be happy to discuss any topics on which you might be looking for additional information.

### Room to Grow

There is a lot of great information on the site, but I'm always interested in making improvements. If you are having trouble finding the information you are looking for, or if you have any suggestions for how I can make the site better, please let me know. It looks like this Internet thing is going to be with us for a while, so I should probably get used to it!

## On the Home Front

The holiday season was very relaxing for me and Jill. We enjoyed the hospitality of some friends here in the Valley for a great Thanksgiving dinner. After a busy December, we headed back to New Jersey to see assorted relatives and friends. We enjoyed a quick brush with fame when the Clinton family chose to attend a Broadway show the same night we were in the crowd. New Year's Eve saw us back in the Valley for another friendly get-together.

We are looking forward to another good year 2004, and it has started out busy as usual. Jill is in the midst of getting huge amounts of paperwork organized for her clients, and I am preparing for the annual springtime upswing in real estate activity. We are also looking forward to having my parents in town in January, when my dad will be one of the thousands of runners in the Rock & Roll (half) Marathon. Better him than me!



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*"Creating excellent real estate experiences...one home at a time"*



## Recipe of the Month

### Cheese & Vegetable Bread

One of the problems I have when hosting a dinner party is remembering to leave enough time for preparing appetizers. This recipe offers a solution, since you can bake the bread the day before and just pop it back in the oven to warm up before your guests arrive. Plus, it's loaded with flavor, but not calories. And nothing whets your appetite like the aroma of fresh-baked bread!

- 1 16-oz package of hot roll mix
- 1/3 cup sun-dried tomatoes,  
packed in oil
- 6 oz cream cheese, softened
- 1/3 cup ripe olives, pitted and  
finely chopped
- 1/4 cup chopped green onions
- 1 egg yolk, slightly beaten
- 1 tsp cracked black pepper
- 2 tsp fresh thyme
- 1 egg
- 1 tbs water

1. Prepare the hot roll mix according to package directions. After kneading, divide the dough into 2 portions, cover, and set aside for 5 minutes. Grease a large baking sheet and set aside.
2. For filling, drain and chop the tomatoes, saving the oil. Combine in a medium bowl with the cream cheese, olives, green onions, egg yolk, pepper, and thyme. Stir in 1 tbs of the tomato oil if needed to make filling easy to spread.
3. Transfer dough portions to a lightly floured surface. Roll each portion out to a 14x11-inch rectangle. Add extra flour to rolling surface as needed to prevent sticking. Spread half of the filling mix over each rectangle, to within 1/2" of the edges. Roll dough up tightly from the long side, sealing the seam and the ends. Place loaves, seam side down, on greased baking sheet. Cover with a towel and let dough rise in a warm place about 30-40 minutes, until about double in size.
4. Using a sharp knife, make 3 or 4 diagonal cuts along the top of each loaf, about 1/4" deep. Combine egg and water, mix together, and brush onto loaves. Bake at 375° for 25 minutes or until golden. Carefully remove loaves from baking sheet and cool on wire racks.

One thing to remember when working with any bread recipe is that bread dough is sticky and messy. You're not doing anything wrong, that's just the way it is. The dough will firm up as you knead it, so roll up your sleeves and dive right in!

## Culture Corner

### Quick reviews of some recent favorites

**Books:** For a quick holiday-time read, try Mark O'Donnell's "Let Nothing You Dismay." This contemporary fable focuses on a young New Yorker struggling to deal with the burdens and blessings offered by friends, family, jobs, and romance. The sparkling and fast-paced writing is laced with wit and literary references.

**Food:** Abuelo's opened up by the Chandler Mall over a year ago, but I just went there for the first time last week. It's got the casual feel and moderate prices you might expect from a Mexican restaurant, but complements those traits with an elegant dining room featuring heavy white linens, stone décor, fountains and plants.

**Movies:** Okay, it's not great cinema, but "School of Rock" is a lot of fun—well worth a couple of bucks at the discount theater. You'll find the usual outsiders-triumph-over-the-odds story, cute kids acting twice their age, and Joan Cusack in a funny turn as an uptight principal, but the real draw is Jack Black. He blends manic intensity with a twisted but deep sense of purpose in a way that reminds me of Jim Belushi in "Animal House" or "1941."



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## How much is my home worth?



**If you would like a free Current Market Analysis of your home, please fill out this form:**

\_\_\_\_\_ I'm not thinking of selling my home. I'm just curious about value. Please send me a complimentary current market analysis.

\_\_\_\_\_ 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.

**Home Description:**

Stories: \_\_\_\_\_ Sqft: \_\_\_\_\_ Beds: \_\_\_\_\_ Baths: \_\_\_\_\_ Pool: \_\_\_\_\_ Garage Size: \_\_\_\_\_

Other features and upgrades: \_\_\_\_\_ Condition of home: \_\_\_\_\_

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

Name: \_\_\_\_\_ Address: \_\_\_\_\_

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