By Pat Farrell

Working in real estate can be extremely rewarding but it can also be extremely disappointing at times. The up and down nature of the business can be quite stressful, especially during the down cycles and there are often frustrations associated with moving a sale along the path from getting the contract to a successful closing. We all try to do our best and usually feel that things are going well, however, what constitutes a reason for someone filing complaints against us depends upon how others perceive our actions as they relate to a client, an agent or even the neighbor down the street!

Anyone can file a complaint against a REALTOR®, at any time and for any reason. Complaints may come into the Texas Association of REALTORS® (TAR) by phone or in a written format. When a formal written complaint, specifying the Articles of the Code of Ethics thought to have been violated, or a request Arbitration is received it is sent to a Grievance Panel to determine only: “if the details in the ethics complaint were true, would it violate one or more Articles of our Code or, in the case of a request to Arbitrate, is the matter actually arbitrable. There has been real concern about complaint processing in terms of the length of time it takes to complete, the number of people involved and the amount of paperwork generated. As a result the National Association of REALTORS® (NAR) encouraged Boards to adopt an Ombudsman program so that when a complaint is received the complainant is offered the services of an Ombudsman. TAR adopted this program in 2001.

In this case the Ombudsman is a member of the TAR Professional Standards Committee who attempts to assist complainants and respondents achieve a mutually agreeable resolution to whatever the dispute is about. Ombudsmen are essentially informal “mediators” who communicate with the parties by telephone, contacting the complaining party first to determine the nature of the problem and how that party would like to see it resolved. After that, provided the complainant agrees, the Ombudsman will share this grievance with the respondent to see if there may be a simple solution to the problem, or if not will act as a go-between until either the parties come to a resolution or determine they cannot agree and, at that point the complainant still has the option to seek other measures.

Often complaints may not actually address code violations but rather behaviors (or lack thereof) which cause the complainant to feel frustration, i.e. “My REALTOR® hasn’t returned any of my calls this week.” or “My neighbor tells me my property manager has not had my lawn cut in several weeks.” The main culprit in most of these cases is poor communication which is where the Ombudsman, in the go-between position, can really be of assistance. Members of the TAR Professional Standards Committee who wish to serve as an Ombudsman receive specialized training in order to do so. They learn that they must be impartial in this role and avoid deciding which of the parties is right or wrong. As in all Professional Standards situations, confidentiality is of prime importance. It is important to note that an Ombudsman is vital to the goal of stopping “molehills” from becoming “mountains.” The Ombudsman service requires only that the complainant, in lieu of filing a formal complaint initially, agrees to see if the process can lead to a satisfactory conclusion.

While the Ombudsman Program is one alternative that can speed up complaint processing, there is another more formal process known as Mediation available. When NAR first introduced Mediation as an option it was offered only for arbitration disputes but now may include ethics complaints. Mediation may be defined as, “a process in which an impartial, third party attempts to facilitate communication, understanding, conciliation and dispute resolution between two opposing parties.” Mediation, while voluntary, requires that both parties agree to come to the table with an intention of seeking a mutually agreeable solution. TAR Mediators receive extensive training to become eligible to serve in this capacity and some of TAR’s current mediators have been providing this service for more than 15 years. NAR offers a three-day Mediator Training in Chicago annually.

Critical to the mediation process is the information the Mediator provides to the parties at the beginning of the session as it sets the tone and lets the parties know what to expect. It is explained that while mediation is entirely voluntary and may be terminated by either party at any time, if an agreement is reached and reduced to writing, the agreement will be binding on both parties. It will be requested that, to keep the focus on the issue(s) at hand and to preserve the natural flow of the information, that everyone turn off cell phones and/or any other distracting devices. No one, including the Mediator, may record the proceedings as any information obtained during the session is confidential and cannot be used as evidence at a subsequent hearing should there not be a resolution during mediation.

It is important for the Mediator to ascertain that the parties agree to devote the time necessary to complete the process, no matter how long it may take. Each party will have an adequate time to present their information and evidence so it will be requested that all parties respect that right and refrain from interrupting when the other party has the floor. While the parties have the right to have an attorney present it is neither encouraged nor necessary as it is the parties themselves who will ultimately make their decisions. The respondent will be advised that once an agreement is reached, their failure to perform will leave the complainant the option to go forward with presenting the issue to a hearing panel. If the issue involves money the respondent can continue on to an Arbitration hearing or may choose to pursue the matter in a court of law.

In general, the sequence of events is (1) All parties will be introduced and will establish how they wish to be addressed.
(2) The complainant will present first as they are essentially why the mediation is being conducted. (3) The respondent will then tell their side of the issue. (4) The Mediator will clarify their understanding of the issues as they have been presented. (5) Each of the parties will then have the opportunity to ask questions of the other. (6) If the Mediator determines there is a need, they may choose to caucus privately with one or both of the parties to review some of the issues. (7) If the proceedings have seemed productive additional caucuses might be warranted to continue progress toward a solution. (8) Should the problem be resolved the agreement will be reduced to writing and each party will sign the agreement. (9) Should the parties still be at odds the parties will sign a termination agreement and it will then be up to the complainant as to what follows. There is little doubt that each of these options, Ombudsman Service and Mediation, can shorten the time until the parties are able to tell their side of the story.

MORAL: mind your “Ps & Qs” and avoid the complaint department!
As SABOR’s Chairman of the Board, I want to make sure that our members are using all of the benefits available to you. The benefits of being a SABOR member are extensive, and here are just a few of the many great resources that everyone should be taking advantage of.

One of the benefits of being a SABOR member includes a complimentary subscription to Inman Select. Usually a subscription to Inman would cost about $200 but as a member of SABOR you get this free! With Inman Select you are connected to the latest real estate news, powerful insights, objective analysis, special reports, and the numbers behind the news. This member benefit can really improve your business and help you stay on top of real estate news. To sign up for your Inman Select account, email communications@sabor.com.

Being a SABOR member also gives you access to the Know Your Market tool. This great service allows you to use market analysis to keep up with your local housing market. Know Your Market provides easy to interpret charts for your selected area, which is an excellent resource for your business.

SABOR also has a full scale Public Relations campaign to bring awareness to REALTORS® and promote a positive image of REALTORS® to consumers. This campaign is extremely beneficial to our members because it is a constant promotion of all members and shows the value and knowledge provided by REALTORS® in any transaction. We promote the REALTOR® brand through radio, television, and print campaigns.

In addition, SABOR offers members access to useful information to promote within your own business. On SABOR’s website members have access to market statistics, infographics and fill in the blanks press releases that can be used in your own company newsletter or blogs. Using the information SABOR provides can prove to be crucial to your business.

The Tech Helpline is a member benefit that offers support for hardware, software, networking and digital devices. One of the great features of the Tech Helpline is that you can contact their knowledgeable analysts by phone, email, fax, or online chat. They troubleshoot problems and offer solutions, often by remoting in to your computer. This is a great benefit to make the most of in your business.

The latest member benefit being offered by SABOR is an account with RealSatisfied. With this program SABOR members are able learn from a client’s feedback and collect client recommendations for use in your marketing efforts. RealSatisfied is a great tool to demonstrate your professionalism to the world.

If you would like to learn more about these and the other numerous SABOR member benefits visit SABOR.com.
Ryland Homes Realtor Open House

Katie Sachse and Stewart Horne, both Ryland Homes.

Donna Fremin, Century 21 Scott Myers and Bernadette Williams, Ryland Homes.


Chris Sierra, Ryland Homes and Weege Henderson, Home Team of America.

Mark Guerra, Sandi Teeter and Mamerto Lyzarraga, all Ryland Homes.

Morgan Bertram and Debbie Ortiz, both Realty Executives Access with Johnnie Childs, ICON Realty.

Kilo Smith, Noble Group and Mike English, Ryland Homes.
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TAR Winter Meeting in Austin

Paula Grigsby, TAP FCU; Elizabeth Lopez, Keller Williams Realty; Scott Jouregui, Keller Williams Heritage; Melisa Steel, Property and Nacho Pecina, Greater McAllen.

Michele Ross, Bunting Ross Realty; Ron Wakefield, Wakefield Realty with Clark Niblock and Doc Martin, both Niblock Company.

Sheila Moran, RE/MAX Access and Randall Zamora, Keller Williams Realty.


Pat Farrell, Slater Realtors and Annette Slater, Landlord Property Management.


Pat Farrell, Slater Realtors and Connie Cooper, Cooper Realty.

Age Matters

Cathey Meyer, 56, is curious why print publications regularly include the age of anyone they are writing about as if the age makes a difference in the content of the story. Recently, I was reading about the history of natural vegetation along the San Antonio Riverwalk when Lincoln St. George, 54, was quoted explaining how elephant ears crept into the mix. St. George is San Antonio’s Downtown Operations manager who oversees maintenance and landscaping of the river. His title is significant, his age is not.

I first noticed this trend years ago while perusing my PEOPLE magazine in the chair. Without fail, Julia Roberts, 49, (at least currently) always had her age attached to her name. For a good while, only females were victims of age judgment, but recently the male species has been rightfully brought into the fold. Jim Parsons, 40, is a young Big Bang; Eddie Murphy, 51, is an older Madagascar character; Chuck Norris, 73, is an ancient martial arts reference.

When youngsters are age-identified, I find it refreshing to know what the youth of our decade are accomplishing. When Nikita Raffikov, 11, of Evans, Georgia developed a way to emit GFP, or green fluorescent protein, into windows to create efficient glass and lighting I was stumped that an 11-year-old even knew what fluorescent protein was… when I was eleven I was debating how to get my mother to let me shave my legs. Sahil Doshi, 14, of Pittsburgh developed PolluCell, a battery that uses carbon dioxide and other waste materials, clearing the atmosphere of greenhouse gases and providing a low-cost alternative to electricity in developing countries. At fourteen, I was still trying to get permission to shave my legs.

Both these kids, besides being blessed with names that lead to scientific discoveries, deserve all the kudos for doing what they accomplish before a driving learners permit even shadows their future. Age is an important reference here. Age references help mark passages of time for us baby boomers. Joshua Michael “Josh” Homme, 43, as stoner rocker Josh is founder and only continuous member of the band Queens of the Stone Age, in which he sings and plays guitar, as well as occasionally plays piano, drums, and bass. He also serves as the band’s primary songwriter. Alfie Deyes, 23, is an English YouTuber and author who runs the YouTube channels PointlessBlog, PointlessBlogVlogs (previously PointlessBlogTV) and PointlessBlogGames (previously AlfieGames). Since 2014 he has released two books in his Pointless Book series and is due to release another in late 2015. Funny, I thought a YouTuber would be older.

Since some of the above information comes from the 21st Century Bible, Wikipedia, for whom I searched the founder: Jimmy Donal “Jimbo” Wales, 50, is an American Internet entrepreneur. He is the co-founder and promoter of the online non-profit encyclopedia Wikipedia and the for-profit Wikia web hosting company. I am guessing there may be more profit there than a 50-year-old might admit to for IRS purposes. I tried to look up the age of the IRS but kept getting references to determining your proper age for retirement, accurate age charts for government purposes and age related information for owing back taxes to the IRS. For obvious purposes, I decided not to dig too deep into the IRS.

The age of buildings, elevators in high rises, automobile tires, ‘historic’ homes and non-historic homes, forgotten pantry canned food and medication is all exceptionally important. The age of a government worker, an exceptional teacher, a dynamite REALTOR® or a caring nurse in a news story is not so important. Some people may want their age plastered all over everywhere. Centenarians who can still remember their name and have the lung capacity to blow out that many candles need an age post. Lovebirds married over a half century and still remember their and their true love’s name need an age post. Everyone else needs to keep a little mystery in the world.

When we make news for a life-long-lived let those obituaries sing our ages!

I am not opposed to folks knowing my age. I shared it with you just to make a point. Yes, that is my actual age and yes I look good for my age or older than you thought or younger considering the lack of botox. The bigger picture is that age is not necessary to appreciate my work—at least not until I am still doing this on an antiquated laptop in the 22nd Century at the ripe young age of 140. (I did the math, that is my actual 2100 age.)

Cathey Meyer, 140, died laughing.
San Antonio WCR March Meeting

Caroline Salcedo, Apartment & Relocation, Sherri Edwards, Netco Title

Amy Kolb, Keller Williams City View and Tom Romanello, Legacy Mutual Mortgage.

Diane Lauer, Keller Williams City View and Bob Jacobs, RE/MAX Associates.


Annette Slater, Landlord Property Management and Paula Grigsby, TAP FCU.

Tracy Blackwell, Insurance Professional and Karen Shaffer, Frontier Title.

Debbie Keeland, Stewart Title.

Charles Bamford, Alamo Zippy Shell and Annette Slater, Landlord Property Management.

Sherri Bailey, Keller Williams Boerne and Dana Taylor, Independence Title.
### Highland Homes

**Move - In Ready Inventory Homes!**

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#### Mercedes E-350 Giveaway!

Sell ONE Highland Home between NOW - Sept 30th for a chance to win!

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Jacob Solis and Travis Wilson, both Reliance Residential Realty with Jerry Conn, First State Realty at the Ryland Homes Realtor Open House.

Jenny Bingham, RE/MAX Northeast and Yolanda Pearson, Alamo Area Realtors.

Cecilia Sosa, North American Title with Lisa Klein, BH&GRE Bradfield Property are enjoying the Ladera Cowboy Brunch.

Lane Rogers and Patricia Zars, both Zars & Rogers Realtors at the Trinity Title Chili Cook-off.

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Sr. Loan Officer
NMLS# 232133

Melanie Barker
Loan Partner
NMLS# 373932

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AshilicPacheco and Liz Payne, both Mortgage Financial Services at the Trinity Title Chili Cook-off.

Kim Springfield, Keller Williams Realty and Ellen Bunde, SWBC at a recent Hill Country Meeting.

Tiffany Wright, RE/MAX Access and Scott Jauregui, Keller Williams Heritage at the March WCR Meeting.
At the Ladera Cowboy Brunch we find Joe Caldwell and Carlos Gradiz, both Copernicus Realty, Copernicus Guerra, Northwest Real Estate with Sandra Guerra and Megan Fox, both Copernicus Realty.

Laura Crane, Keller Williams Heritage at the Grand Opening for KB Home at The Ridge.

Pearl Alvarez-Swartz and Monica Quiroz, both RE/MAX Patriot at the Trinity Title Chili Cook-off.

Lesa Akeroyd, Keller Williams Realty; Yvonne Hoffman, Reliance Residential Realty and Cindy Pena, Trinity Title at a recent Hill Country WCR Luncheon.

VanDyk Says "Congrats" To New Homeowners Ryan And Melissa Sternberg

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Deanna Brinson and Kourtney Helle, Trinity Title enjoy their company Chili Cook-off.

Bill Rice, Ryland Homes and Robert Pike, BHHS PenFed Realty at Balcones Creek.

Erik Viereck, Perry Homes with Ben Aziz ICON Realty with wife Ann Mai at Perry Homes in Cibolo Ranch.

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*Some limitations do apply. Please see a sales representative for details.
Good Communication Can Make A World Of Difference

March was a great month for WCR Hill Country Chapter. We collaborated with the Four Rivers Association of REALTORS® to bring in Nobu Hata, Director of Member Engagement for the National Association of REALTORS® to talk about “What Buyers and Sellers Really Want”. A lot of my takeaway was that good old fashioned communication is still monumental. Don’t worry if you’re not the most tech savvy, social media savant. People want to talk to people. They want REALTORS® who will call them and talk to them. Texting is so easy and with emoticons it takes the guess work out of what someone is thinking, but phone calls and face to face are still the best way to communicate.

Thinking about communication reminded me of a recent incident with my husband. He’s been a District Judge in Guadalupe, Hays and Comal County for 17+ years. When he and I were campaigning in the late ’90’s, I was privileged to hear him speak at several events—he was very good at it. Public speaking is such an art knowing what your audience cares about and delivering it in a way they understand. Several elections have gone by now but he’s never drawn an opponent, so other than the cursory “I’m just here to let you see a face to go with the name” and to tell you thank you for allowing me the privilege to serve you” speeches, he hasn’t had as many opportunities. Before a week ago, it had been about 2 years before that he’d spoken to a group at a church.

He was nervously writing and practicing his speech for a political group in Northern Hays County. He asked if he could practice his speech for me and I said “sure”. Well, it wasn’t good. It would have been great for a group of attorneys, but for the non-legal constituents attending this meeting it would have been boring and not understood. He changed it— included some things I knew would be of interest and it was a home run! He gave me credit and told everyone I said the first speech was crap. I don’t remember putting it that way, but the lesson here is this: don’t talk over your client’s heads. This is more of a warning to those who’ve been in the industry for a long time. Acronyms and terms of the trade are great when talking to other REALTORS® or people who do business in the real estate industry on a regular basis. Your clients may give you no indication they’re lost because they don’t want to appear stupid, but it’s imperative that you communicate effectively. Good communication skills are important in any business, but in our business it makes a world of difference.

If you need to improve your communication skills, there are several great books on the subject and articles on the internet. Asking if your clients have any questions and making sure they feel comfortable doing so with you can keep you as their Go-To REALTORS® for years to come. Communicating effectively is one of the things that makes us humans—and unable to be replaced by Robot REALTORS®. Tone, eye contact and checking with our clients to make sure they understand are all important to the relationship!
Grand Opening of Imagine Homes

Daniella Mahula, Narda Ruiz and Brenda Malcolm, all with Texas USA Real Estate.

Kim Compton, Reliance Residential Realty and Maty Fenlon ERA Colonial.

Holly Gottschall, Cher Miculka and Tina King all with All House San Antonio.

Scott Eichman and Rob Metzger, both Imagine Homes.

Krista Dories and Coleen Taylor, both Imagine Homes.


Liz Cana, Keller Williams Heritage, with her Sister Ivonne Hernandez.
in Estancia

Efrem Martinez, Greg Collier and Dana McDaniel, all Imagine Homes.


Daron Durham, RB Realtors, with Alma Lopez and Linda Vasquez, both Keller Williams Legacy.

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Katherine Tichenor, Legacy Mutual Mortgage, with Angie Sanchez and Jessica Beltran, both Alamo Title.

Christine Rangel, RE/MAX Signature with Rae Saldana and Diane Koennig, both Imortgage.

Tracy Tylman, Supreme Lending, Karen Shaffer, Frontier Title and Lisa Flores, RE/MAX Signature.

Ronnie Sanchez, Mary Lou Sanchez and Nicholas Brinson, all RE/MAX Signature.

RE/MAX Signature Grand Opening

WELCOME BACK!

WITH OVER 20 YEARS EXPERIENCE
in the mortgage industry, Art most recently comes to imortgage from USAI, where he was a manager for a processing, closing and underwriting team. Art is very knowledgeable in a wide variety of loan programs and has received his DE certificate. He also at one time opened a mortgage broker company.

Art is the proud father of two daughters, who are currently in college. His oldest daughter will be graduating from UTSA in May 2016, while his youngest will graduate in May 2017 from Texas A&M. He has been married to Rae Saldana over 26 years, who also is in the mortgage industry.

Art, in his free time enjoys riding his Harley Davidson motorcycle, fishing and working on classic cars.
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Pat Fitzgerald
Residential Mortgage Loan Officer, NMLS# 218508

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Linda Guante and Kathy King, both Keller Williams Heritage at the Ryland Homes Realtor Open House.

Erin Kopplin, Dana McDaniel and Greg Collier, man the Imagine Homes booth at the Realtor Rally.


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David Weekley Homes

David Weekley Homes (DWH) was founded in Houston in 1976 by David Weekley, who serves as chairman of the company that is now recognized as the largest privately held home builder in America and is ranked among Fortune Magazine’s Top 100 Companies to Work For, claiming the #17 spot in 2016. Since its founding the company has extended its building operations to 22 cities within the states of Arizona, Colorado, Florida, Georgia, Illinois, Indiana, Minnesota, North Carolina, South Carolina, Tennessee, Texas and Utah, and has closed on more than $1.3 billion in new homes in those cities. David is the first to admit that it is the enjoyable work environment that has been created for and by employees where they are provided the necessary tools and are encouraged to achieve a high potential in their business that is responsible for company’s success and their customers’ satisfaction.

All DWH homes are built using EnergySaver™, as energy efficiency is essential to modern day living as it results in the customer saving money on their utility costs in the long run. Recognizing that the best home design is in the details, DWH pays close attention to ‘sight lines’ by avoiding obstruction of interior views which results in the overall perception of a larger area and to ensuring that the ‘traffic pattern’ flow moves easily throughout the home. DWH recognizes that ‘room placement’ is an essential factor so may, for example, ensure that the owners have a private area to enjoy that is placed far enough away from noisier parts of the home.

DWH is also very careful to utilize the best combination of ‘windows and light’ placement to accomplish an enhanced and welcoming brightness that can improve the perception of spaciousness within the home.

Customer service is a major focus for DWH so all efforts are geared to that end. For example, all customers will have many choices such as the home site, floor plan, custom options and will have help with design selections. To accommodate future changes, DWH, through their exclusive FlexSpace™ concept, will usually equip one or more rooms in the home with a design feature that permits the owners to, at a later time, easily repurpose those rooms as the needs of the family change. Their New Home Warranty plan provides for the first year DWH limited warranty along with the appliance manufacturer’s warranty; a two year warranty of mechanical systems that covers plumbing, electrical, central air conditioning and heating systems and a ten year warranty for major structural defects.

DWH currently builds locally in at least 12 communities in San Antonio and its surrounding areas including Shertz and New Braunfels with many that are ready for quick move-in such as: Alamo Ranch (from $330,000), Front Gate (from $440,000), Fronterra at Westpointe (from $228,000), Sonoma Verde (from $394,500), Shavano Highlands (from $502,000), The Fountains at Fair Oaks (from $435,000), The Gardens at Urban Crest (from $360,000), Triana (from $287,000) and The Crossvine (from $233,000) to name but a few. Since this list is limited you can visit the website at www.DavidWeekleyHomes.com for information on other developments.

New DWH communities that will be coming soon include St. Mary’s Place which will provide central living near the Pearl Brewery which is conveniently located near downtown San Antonio and The Enclave at Tobin Hill at the corner of McCullough and Courtland. In the New Braunfels area, you will soon find two new, traditional suburban communities, Ridgmont and Hillside at Landa where construction is scheduled to start this spring. For more information about any of these new developments contact an Internet Advisor at 877-933-5339.

DWH is very REALTOR® friendly and their professionals stand ready to assist your clients with finding the special home that meets their specific desires. A visit to the DWH Design Center located at 26495 US Hwy. 281 N in San Antonio will allow you and your clients to learn about the DWH LifeDesign™ concept, about the various stages in the home building process and will offer a view of the many personal options that are available to the home. So REALTORS® do your clients a favor and bring them to a model home fitting their price point where they can experience the David Weekley difference!
CEO’S NOTE
Get Involved at the Local, State and National Levels

We are fortunate to have a diverse membership representing a wide range of expertise and experience. We hear great ideas every day from our members, and many of those have been the catalyst for great innovation in our industry. It is a moment of pride to see this wealth of creativity and knowledge, and we ask each of you to consider giving back by getting further involved in serving in leadership roles at the local, state and national levels.

Applications for positions on SABOR’s Board of Directors just opened, and this is a perfect way for you to lend your unique skills to the decision-making process at SABOR. The term of service is three years and the candidates are interviewed and nominated by a committee of your peers. SABOR’s Board of Directors meets monthly to discuss important and timely topics and issues that specifically influence our REALTOR® members in the San Antonio and surrounding areas. If you are interested in applying for a position on the Board of Directors, simply fill out the online application on SABOR.com by April 25th.

You may also consider involvement at the state level with a Texas Association of REALTORS® committee. TAR committees cover many aspects of the real estate industry including MLS and Technology, Property Management, Public Policy and Professional Development, just to name a few. Take advantage of the opportunity to contribute to the success of the real estate industry and submit your application. Applications open May 2 and close July 1.

The National Association of REALTORS® is also accepting applications for service on 2017 committees. Serving with an NAR committee is an incredible opportunity to effect change at the highest level and a great forum for debate and discussion. You may submit applications for up to five committees, ranked in order of preference. These preferences will be taken into consideration during the appointment process.

To apply, first you will need to create your expertise profile, or if you already have one, you will need to update it. Next you will submit your application, and finally you are encouraged to seek out five endorsements for each submitted application. Once your applications are submitted and endorsements are received, the information is compiled into reports which are used by NAR Officers in the NAR committee selection process. Both applications and endorsements can be made online at www.realtor.org. The application process is open now through May 23.

Thank you to all who are currently serving and we hope you consider taking on new roles next year!

LEGAL UPDATE
Reduce Your Liability by Slowing Down

In the last few weeks I have received a few calls regarding issues that could have been avoided if one of the parties to a transaction took a moment to ask a couple of follow-up questions or do a little bit of double checking. For example, a listing agent was contemplating the cost of a new refrigerator for a home after she learned that the non-realty item her seller agreed to transfer had not actually been paid off at the time of the property transfer. As it turned out, the sellers thought they were transferring not only the refrigerator but also the remaining balance owed to the store.

Another situation involved the sending of an offer to the wrong email address. The buyer’s agent submitted the offer to the seller and very quickly received a signed and initialed acceptance from the seller. A few days later they went to deliver the earnest money and the title company was unaware there was a contract on the property. What happened was the offer was sent to an incorrect email and the person who received the email thought it would be funny to pretend to purchase the property. In fact, the sellers never received that offer. Luckily, the house did not go into contract with another buyer in this instance but in this market a few days could cost a buyer if they are not careful.

Slowing down and double checking your work is the first line of defense to reducing your liabilities.
YOU & YOUR BUSINESS
Making the Most of Your Open House

If you’re planning an Open House this season, it’s time to arm yourself with a few helpful tips to make it a success.

• Don’t wait for follow-up. Talk to potential clients during the Open House rather than saving your sales pitch and charm for a later follow-up call. When they’re standing in the beautiful foyer admiring the flooring and the décor, that’s the time to have your face-to-face with them and gauge their interest in the property.

• Welcome visitors at the door. Greet them as they come in and thank them for coming. Present them with information on the property, and have your elevator pitch ready to highlight a few key features of the home. This is also the time to direct them to the guest book and capture their contact information.

• Engage them in conversation as they walk through the home. Find out if they have any additional questions but don’t be a pest. This is your prime opportunity to land them as a client.

• Get your house in shape. The exterior of the home will make the first impression, so be sure to make it look appealing. You may need to clean the yard, put a fresh coat of paint on the house and shine the doorknob. Inside, consider shampooing the carpet, uncluttering the rooms and even checking the odor of the home to be certain it is not off-putting.

An Open House can be a great tool for marketing your listing, but it’s a lot more than just unlocking the doors. If you take the time to select the right properties for an open house, market it effectively and get ready for visitors, it can be the best tool for getting it sold.

SABOR is holding its annual Citywide Open House Weekend on April 30-May 1. We encourage you to get involved! Simply mark your open houses in MLS and when potential customers search the SABOR website for Open Houses that weekend, they’ll find yours. However, it’s also a good idea for you to do your own marketing. Consider using your social media channels or even purchasing ads in the local newspaper.

For those participating, be sure to take advantage of the package deals we have available at the REALTORS® Store at SABOR.

MARKET STATISTICS - FEBRUARY 2016
San Antonio Area Housing Market Reports Steady Growth in February

San Antonio – The San Antonio and surrounding areas continued to experience considerable growth last month in the housing market with February reporting a 10 percent year-over-year increase in total sales. According to the Multiple Listing Service Report from the San Antonio Board of REALTORS® (SABOR) which reports on all areas contained within the MLS, a total of 1,869 homes were sold in the area during February while prices maintained a steady rate of increase as the average sales price reached $228,992, a four percent increase and median price inched up just one percent to $190,400.

“Our price increases remain pretty even which is a good sign of our market’s stability,” said Bob Jacobs, SABOR’s 2016 Chairman of the Board. “While months of inventory remains low at 3.6 months, there are still enough homes available to keep prices from driving up like they do in other parts of the country, consistently making this an affordable area to live in.”

In Texas, a total of 19,013 homes were sold in February, a 9.9 percent increase. Average sales price rose slightly by 2.1 percent to $243,418 while the median edged up 4.3 percent to $195,000. Meanwhile, Bexar County experienced a 10.6 percent increase in total sales for 1,431 homes sold. The average price of a home sold in the county increased 4.5 percent to $218,736 and the median price had a slight decline of 0.7 percent to $180,000.

In the San Antonio area, the majority of homes sold were priced under $200,000 with those sales making up 54.47 percent of the homes sold in February. Homes priced between $200,000 and $500,000 accounted for 40.92 percent of the month’s sales and 4.55 percent of the homes sold were priced over $500,000.

Homes in the San Antonio area spent an average of 71 days on the market, four days fewer than in February of 2015. The average price per square foot was $106 and the month ended with 2,164 sales still pending.

“We had 3,087 new listings in February alone which is over three hundred more than this time last year,” said Angela Shields, SABOR’s President and CEO. “We continue to see a steady stream of people entering the housing market and taking advantage of the low rates and available inventory. For anyone who has been on the fence about buying and selling, this is a great time to get started.”

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<th>Price Per</th>
<th>Total Sales</th>
<th>Average Price</th>
<th>Median Price</th>
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<td>$106 Square Foot</td>
<td>1,889</td>
<td>$228,992</td>
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4%
1%
UPCOMING BOARD EVENTS

April 2016

12
NAR Tech Edge

20
New Member Orientation

22
SABOR Closes at Noon

30
Citywide Open House Weekend

A COMPLETE LIST OF COMMITTEE MEETINGS, EDUCATION COURSES AND OTHER BOARD EVENTS CAN BE FOUND ONLINE AT SABOR.COM

WELCOME NEW AFFILIATE MEMBERS

Madge Rashell - AmeriPro Home Loans
Jessica Bond - McMillin Texas Homes
Stacey Howell - National Tenant Network
Katie King - Fetch for Heritage
Eyal Avnon - Rialto Homes
Perry Brown - Generations Team, LLC
Brantley Gillespie - PlanOmatic
Kelly Young - Kelly's Essential Inspections
Jesse Garcia - Howland Engineering & Survey

THOUGHTS & PRAYERS

Our thoughts and prayers go out to the family and friends of Mary Ann Wheeler, former instructor for the Real Estate School at SABOR.

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DEPARTMENT UPDATES

NAR Tech Edge at SABOR on April 12

On April 12, SABOR will host NAR Tech Edge to REALTORS® from across the state and feature industry experts providing their insights on the latest technology skills and trends changing the real estate industry. This will be a high energy, fast paced education packed day with sessions on everything from video and photography to increasing leads through online branding and social media marketing. This event only happens in a few locations around the country, and we are excited that it’s coming to San Antonio. The price is just $49 before April 5 and $59 after. The cost includes the full day event plus lunch and you are sure to walk out with action items to build your business. To learn more and get registered, visit nartechedge.com.

The REALTOR® Builder New Homes Bus Tour & Expo is May 20

The REALTOR® Builder New Homes Bus Tour & Expo is just around the corner on May 20! Support TRE PAC by joining fellow members on chartered buses to visit new home communities in the north central area. This is always a great time to network with other members while being among the first to learn about new communities springing up in the area.

REALTOR® Resource

How to Choose the Right Social Media Platform for Your Business

Know Your Audience
In order to choose the best social media platform for your business, you need to know who your intended audience is. Some media platforms cater to vastly different demographics.

Consider the Time Commitment Requirement
Certain social media platforms require much more interaction with your followers. Know the amount of time you will need to dedicate before you choose a platform.

Define Your Goals for Social Media
In order to choose the right platform you need to outline what you hope to get out of your social media interactions. Based on your needs pick the right platform for your business.

Research Ad Power
Each social media platform executes ads differently. Before picking your social media platform be sure to do research on how effective ads are from each prospective platform.

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HSA Real Estate Welcomes Vaughn

HSA Real Estate, LLC (a division of House San Antonio) is proud to announce the opening of Brenda Vaughn, who will be a new agent to join the brokerage. In her role as a Realtor, Brenda will be the first time Platinum Award Winner in the San Antonio Market. WELCOME To OUR CLUB!

Coldwell Banker D’Ann Harper, REALTORS® wishes to congratulate all of the “FIRST TIME PLATINUM AWARD” winners in the San Antonio Market. We are thrilled to have Brenda join our team!!

Coldwell Banker D’Ann Harper, REALTORS®

- Proudly recognized as the #1 relocation firm in the market.
- Over $1 Billion in Closed Sales Volume in 2015!

Brenda Vaughn, originally from Monterrey, Mexico worked for several years with Coca Cola in their administrative offices. She relocated to San Antonio and opened her own business (Little House of Flowers) as a florist. She has excellent people skills and customer service is her first priority.

Broker, Cher Miculka is thrilled to have Brenda join the team!!

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First Time Platinum Award Winners

Coldwell Banker D’Ann Harper, REALTORS® - FIVE TIME RELOCATION PLATINUM AWARD WINNER wishes to congratulate all of the “FIRST TIME PLATINUM AWARD” winners in the San Antonio Market! WELCOME To OUR CLUB!

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- Proudly recognized as the #1 relocation firm in the market.
- Over $1 Billion in Closed Sales Volume in 2015!

At the monthly Roper Rally on February 26th, the students at Johnson Ranch Elementary in Bulverde celebrated when Principal Suzie Seabolt announced the donation of $45,000 from the Johnson Ranch developer and builders to fund a new Strings program, outdoor learning areas and new iPads at the school.

Ryland Homes, Highland Homes, Sitterle Homes, Monticello Homes and the Johnson Ranch developer DHJB Development, LLC have been contributing proceeds from every lot closing to a school fund designated for new learning enrichment programs at Johnson Ranch Elementary School. The Comal ISD school is located within the master planned community near the southern entrance on Johnson Way, just north of FM 1863 near Bulverde.

A portion of the $45,000 will fund a new Strings program for 4th and 5th grade students to learn to play violin. Most schools do not have instrument programs until middle school. This seed money provides for violins and the music instructor.

The funds will also provide the school with outdoor learning classroom environments. The school is designed with many outdoor covered patios and now the teachers will have tables and whiteboards to use to teach outside on the many beautiful Texas days.

The final portion of this $45,000 contribution will fund new iPads for all of the classrooms in the school.

As more homes are built in this 767-acre master planned community located just minutes north of San Antonio on Highway 281, the school fund will continue to build. Close to 1,000 homes are expected in this cluster-designed community with gated and non-gated neighborhoods.

APARTMENT & RELOCATION CENTER

Congratulation Bob and Thank You Mary Ann

Marietta Alba and Caroline Salcedo of Apartment & Relocation Center, wish Bob Jacobs, 2016 Chairman of SABOR a wonderful year leading our Board and thank Mary Ann Jeffers for all her wisdom as our 2015 Chairman of the Board.

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Happy Customers

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Imagine Homes Opens New Community! Estancia in Cibolo Canyons

Imagine Homes celebrates 10 years building award-winning homes and the grand opening of their newest community, Estancia in Cibolo Canyons. Located off of TPC Parkway, near the JW Marriott, Estancia is the first new community to open in this newly developed area of Cibolo Canyons. Homes in Estancia range from $420s to $510s and the fully furnished model home is open seven days a week. Solar shingles, foam insulation, energy efficient windows, tankless water heater, and many other green products are on display in this stunning model home. Homeowners in Estancia will enjoy beautiful views, oversized home sites with green belts, and all the conveniences of living in the prestigious master-planned community of Cibolo Canyons. Three amenity centers with pools, soccer fields, and party rooms are available for homeowners and their guests. The neighborhood also enjoys beautifully maintained walking trails. Stop by today! Model home is located at 4119 Monteverde Run, San Antonio, Texas 78261 or call Scott Eichman at 210.807.3560.

Keller Williams Realty Heritage is pleased to announce that George Canell has joined our team as a residential sales associate. George is an AT&T mid-level management retiree bringing his excellent customer service experience to the KW Team. So, if you are looking to buy or sell a home and you demand excellent customer service, and a Realtor® that will go that extra mile to find that perfect home call George Canell at 210-323-9900 to make an appointment to discuss your needs today.

Houses in San Antonio, Ltd. is a full service real estate brokerage which has been serving San Antonio and its surrounding areas since 1996.

Houses In San Antonio is honored to welcome Anne Kaalund as the latest addition to the HISA family. Anne earned her license in 2003. A seasoned full time real estate professional with over 13 years of experience selling in both the Georgia and Texas markets. “I’m proud to be part of such a progressive league of real estate professionals. Dedication to their profession, loyalty to their community, and a general team approach were the deciding factors for my transition.” says Anne.

(www.HousesInSanAntonio.com)

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Pat Barrett, Tim Deir, Laura Deir and Robert Montalbo, all Mortgage Financial Services.

Scott Caraselli and Andrew Spearhawk, both Prime Lending.

Barbara Coker and Easton Crafts, both Direction Equity.

Art Saldana and Rae Saldana, both Mortgage.

Michael McNair, John McNair and George McNair, all McNair Homes.

Jill Cortissoz, Trinity Title.

David Humphett, RE/MAX Preferred and Joe Jimenez, Movement Mortgage.

Colton Jackson, Bill Klumpp and John Cortissoz, all SWBC.