



AREA

ASSOCIATED REALTY OF THE AMERICAS

www.areamericas.com

January/February 2015 Newsletter

**Diana Bull, Chair**

AREA Liaison Committee

Santa Barbara, California

Comments by Diana Bull

While strolling down the street here in lovely Santa Barbara I got to thinking about the wonderful time Harrison and I had this past October with many of you in Napa. It was truly an extraordinary experience and brought to mind that I have now been a member of AREA for the past five years and my how we have grown not only in size but in sophistication. But that growth has a singular strand running through it that makes it so very wonderful. It is us. Seldom have I had the pleasure of being associated, in such an intimate way, with such a diverse, yet wonderful group of individuals. As an example, just this past month one of our newest and youngest members, Ryan Asao, was named REALTOR® of the Year by the Arcadia, California Association of REALTORS®. In so doing Ryan joins an illustrious group of AREA members who have achieved similar status. Those combined accomplishments underscore why we are AREA members. It is a distinct privilege to be associated with such folks.



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Stowe to be Host City for 2015 AREA Retreat

The 2015 AREA Retreat will be held on the weekend of September 11-14th, 2015.

*Thank those dates to **Bunny** and **Ken Libby** who went to the well to arrange the event and are totally responsible for the great rates we will have.*

Members will be staying at the world class resort, Stowe Mountain Lodge so bring your tennis rackets and golf clubs and enjoy the cool summers of one America's great resort cities. This happens to be high season in Vermont. Sap flows freely from the maple trees in the Spring, making for delicious syrup in the Fall, the leaves are just beginning to turn, the golf course and tennis courts will be in prime condition, and the **rates we will pay are \$199-\$229** as opposed to **\$349**.

(See for yourself on the internet - www.thestowemountainlodge.com)

More information will follow on the business call on February 3, 2015.

But we need to emphasize: IF YOU ARE ATTENDING, YOU NEED TO MAKE YOUR RESERVATIONS AS SOON AS THE OPPORTUNITY IS POSTED.

This year's Mistress of Ceremonies is Atlanta's **Jo Kenney**, the immediate past president of NAR's 20,000 strong Women's Council. Assisting her will be, in addition to **Bunny** and **Ken**, **Sherri Meadows**, immediate past president of the Florida Association of REALTORS®, along with **Gail Hartnett** of Boise, Idaho, **Elizabeth Allardice** of Raleigh, **Marsha Price**, **Boston Vicky Wilson** of Myrtle Beach, **Iris Riley** of Fort Lauderdale, **Sharon Cohan** of Naples, **Doug Azarian** of Cape Cod, **Audrey Novoa**, New York City, **Kinnaird Fox**, New York City, **Miriam Dunn**, Scarsdale, **Suzanne Cooper** and **Bernadette Cormier**, Ridgewood, New Jersey, **Ellyn Mendham** Calgary Alberta and **Jay West**, Cabo San Lucas.

The theme for this year's Retreat is "If you can do it in Stowe, you can do it anywhere!"

EDITORIAL

Stowe's Choice for 2015 AREA Retreat Stirs Major Debate as to Where the Best Skiing in North America is!

News that Stowe, Vermont has been selected to host the 2015 AREA Retreat has brought out some deep seeded emotions among members of AREA as to where the best skiing in North America is located.

"We all know that Whistler, B.C. offers the finest skiing opportunities in North America," stated **Clara Hartree** of West Vancouver."

"Utah is, hands down, the skiing capital of North America," according to **Meri Crandall**, Utah member-at-large."

"The best runs are in Sun Valley, Idaho, just ask the U.S. Olympic Team," was the point made by Ketchum's **Sonja Huntsman**."

"Vail, Aspen, Breckenridge all have the variety for all skill sets and it is simply the most beautiful place in North America," said Aspens' **Rod** and **Sarah Woelfle**.

Even the notorious wine aficionado, **Pierre S. Cargot** got into the mix when hearing about the Stowe location he wrote, "Stowe, like fine French wine, is the perfect ski setting in North America. Desiree' and I ski there often and would never think about any place else."

Yes the debate rages and appears there are others who also have their points of view. Take San Francisco's **Hans Hansson**, who, the week of January 20 was attending the San Francisco (formerly New York) Giants adult fantasy league attempting to try out to be a back-up designated hitter: "All this fuss over skiing. Did you see those guys scale the 3,000 sheer granite peak," he puffed shortly after a brief work out? "Now that is an athletic achievement and it can only be done in California."

What is your take? Please send a letter to the Editor and let us know what your position happens to be. For those living in warmer climates, commenting on artificial, indoor arenas is discouraged.

AREA Presents It's 2014 Gift to Special Olympics



Hans Hansson, San Francisco and a member of AREA, together with **Ronna Brand**, Beverly Hills, chair of AREA's Special Olympics Fund, present their first check to Special Olympics chairman, **Rafer Johnson** (former world champion decathlon athlete) during a ceremony on December 22, 2014 in Los Angeles.

Members of a national real estate referral network, Associated Realty of the Americas (AREA), recently made a down payment on a continuing pledge of support for the International Special Olympics, which was held in Los Angeles, chaired by former world decathlon champion **Rafer Johnson**. It came about through some unusual circumstances punctuated by a touching story AREA member **Ronna Brand** of Brand Realty in Beverly Hills. She told the membership of her incredible reuniting with the former Olympic decathlon athlete, renewing a long dormant friendship first begun when she was a small child.

As a youngster, Ronna attend UES, a very progressive school with a highly unusual curriculum. If one were studying the Hopi Indians the student ate, dressed, and lived like one for the entire semester which included making one's own beef jerky and taking naps in a homemade Hopi Pueblo. Then there was the day when this incredibly handsome gentleman, dressed in his

track attire, was sent by UCLA to their little school located at the edge of UCLA's campus to teach the young students how to run! His name was Rafer Johnson, the world decathlon champion.

One day, decades later, in the winter of 2014, Ronna found herself waiting in a doctor's office in Beverly Hills for an appointment. As she waited she was listening to a stranger explain the finer points of a soccer game that both were viewing on a TV in the waiting room. "So, you must have been an athlete. I can tell by looking at you," she said.

"Yes," he answered. "I played some pro basketball and ran track at UCLA. My name is Rafer Johnson."

And so it was, this former little girl and this giant of a man were suddenly transported back to a magical time that she had never forgotten and the world-class athlete had always remembered. And from it would spawn AREA's support of the Special Olympics.

Canadian Initiative Report

The first meeting of the Canadian Initiative Team Florida took place on Monday, January 12th at the offices of the Florida Association of Realtors® in Orlando. Attending were **Don and Katy Bullock** (Orlando, Daytona Beach), **Sharon Cohan** (Naples and Fort Meyers), **Kim Mills** (Sarasota and environs), **Suzanna Madden** (Tampa Bay and vicinity), **Cheri Foutz** (Lake Mary and the East-central coast) and **Bert and Sherri Meadows** (Ocala, the Villages and beyond). **Carl Bosse** chaired the meeting. There is an exciting concept being discussed which has the opportunity of expanding the program throughout Canada. There will be an update in the March Newsletter.



Suzanna Madden and **Cheri Foutz** enjoy a light moment during the meeting.

Membership Drive

Ryan Asao (Pasadena-Acadia) ryan@thinkrelink.com and **Gabriel Rojas** (San Francisco–Oakland) gabriel@climbsf.com are chairing AREA's first ever membership drive in order to develop member relations in several areas in North America we are currently not serving. If you know of someone in any of these locations whom you feel would fit in nicely, please contact the membership team. Membership drive locations: Ottawa (Ontario), Victoria, Burnaby and Richmond (B.C.), Portland, ME, Springfield, MA, Philadelphia, Pittsburg, Cleveland, Indianapolis, St. Louis, Little Rock, Arlington, VA, Fort Worth, San Antonio, Houston, Austin, Tempe and Albuquerque. Also, if you know of someone regardless of location who would like to join, please also advise. We will never accept anyone where another member is already covering the territory. However, let us make the determination.

Letters to the Editor

Dear Editor,

I am happy to report that Lee Blackstone in Naples and myself just completed a residential referral. Lee's childhood mate from England just acquired a two bedroom, two bath, second home - golf course condo in metro Ft Lauderdale.

Lots of twists and turns with a lender who ultimately could not perform for this foreign national buyer and a sharp buyer who is a precise decision maker and understood the process.

He thought I was as an "angel" throughout the entire process. The power of association can never be taken for granted.

All the best,
Eileen Burns
Business Developer/Broker Associate
Trans State Commercial Real Estate Inc.
Luxury Division
Fort Lauderdale, FL

To send us your comments, simply write an email and note it is for letters and send it to carl@areamamericas.com. We will make every attempt to publish them.



A Look on the Legal Side

with Dennis Badagliacco

Welcome to this on-going and fascinating commentary on significant legal issues with Dennis Badagliacco legal liaison with the National Association of REALTORS® and the California Association of REALTORS®, who reminds everyone that he is not an attorney as he discusses three important issues:

There are three issues of some consequence currently giving the NAR and local real estate professionals fits.

The first deals with nefarious folks filing patents to claim rights to search engine uses. Now this may sound quite ridiculous but it is giving some local associations deep headaches and the national association is spending a ton to defend against it.

The second issue deals with scrapping and then re-selling leads garnered from another source that owns the rights. This, too, is creating some significant issues and creating legal nightmares.

While both of these issues are in the hands of others the third one is totally up to you: make sure that you keep all documents legally current. Let's say you have a long term contract with a given company and one day a deal is made and the next day you are notified that because the document's end date has expired, you lose out. Not a pleasant twist on things. STAY PREPARED!

The base issue in all of these very expensive situations is greed.

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The Tech Corner

with Dana Harris

The Mobile Agent

So what does it mean to really be a mobile agent? First we need to consider the enabling technologies that might make that happen. Many agents I've met or trained deplore technology and think it's just some high-tech stuff they'll never learn, that perhaps is a distraction and a waste of time. I agree that adopting technology just for technology's sake is a rather uninspired approach that many should seriously reconsider. Instead the approach I tend to focus on is adopting technologies that actually solve a problem or simplify the management of a business practice. If one approaches it from that viewpoint then the advantages start to become obvious. The essence of what a real estate agent does is network, take meetings, generate leads, etc., all people related activities. If we can release ourselves from the shackles of a desk or computer and be out in the field we greatly enhance our ability to meet people, service existing clients and hopefully generate leads for future business. We can do this because we are "visible" and out in the community living, volunteering, networking etc. We are effectively WORKING, enabling us to be in that moment as much as possible should be our goal. This is the true meaning of being a "mobile agent" and the technologies that allow us to do this more effectively and productively are the ones we should seriously consider adopting. If that isn't enough consider the fact that our clients are increasingly becoming more and more mobile. Zillow, on weekends is now serving up 70% of the search results to mobile devices. And according to a NAR study in 2014, 92% of people are now using the internet for their home search.

I can't possibly list the plethora of apps for mobile devices that are now available for Realtors® to use in this article. At my company I recently did a training class for our agents on this subject and prepared a presentation with many of these apps listed by type, their cost, and what platform they run on (Apple or Android). I strongly cautioned everyone not to run out and download all the apps just because I mentioned them or listed them in my presentation. I stressed that the best apps to initially adopt are the ones that allow us to work from the field on a phone or iPad or other tablet. My MLS has an app for the iPhone/Android that we can use to enter lock boxes, no more cards that expire, keys to keep track of etc. It's on the phone and with me all of the time, now that is a good app to have. We also have forms apps, digital signing apps, document management apps, and several other key tools to keep us untethered from a desk. In essence, my office is my car with navigation system, my iPhone and my iPad and that my friends are what I call mobile! If you'd like a free copy of my presentation in PDF form just drop me an email to dana@coastlifeteam.com. Happy prospecting!

Dana is AREA's resident Guru on the practical use of the Internet.
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