

REALTORS® Report

May, 2012

MAY IS REALTOR® PRIDE MONTH



The Most Valuable Square Inch in Real Estate

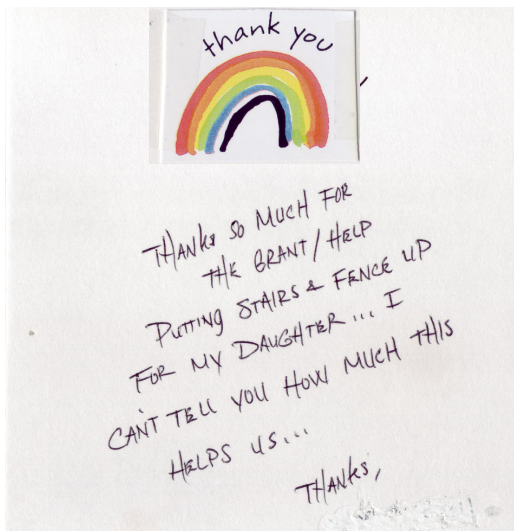
Why wear your Realtor® pin? Because three out of four consumers would choose to work with a Realtor® rather than an agent who is not a member.*

Simply wearing your pin lets everyone know you're a Realtor®, a member of the National Association of Realtors®. It makes a first impression that shows potential clients how knowledgeable and valuable you are to their real estate transaction. Wear the pin and use the Realtor® logo on your materials.

*2008 Public Awareness Campaign tracking study

Years ago one of our members came into the Association office and when asked why he wasn't wearing his Realtor® pin, snapped his fingers and quickly said "Darn, I must have left it on my pajamas this morning!" We're not suggesting you wear your pin to bed at night but you may be surprised by inquiries from the public when you're wearing it!

Contact Jane in our office if you'd like a free pin you can wear this month and every month with pride!



The Foundation received this note from one of the recipients of a grant used to build steps off the deck leading to the backyard. Because the family has an autistic child unaware of traffic or other safety concerns, they needed to make sure she had access to the fenced in backyard. When the work was completed, we received this thank you from the family and this note from the social worker:

"Wonderful program for the community. The grant allowed Wade to have steps put on his deck which is a cost he would not have been able to afford on his own. You don't know how much this helps their daughter. Many, many thanks."

Grants will be awarded again on May 11—thank you for supporting the Foundation and showing our communities we're

Realtors® Making a Difference!

REALTORS® ASSOCIATION OF NORTHWESTERN WISCONSIN

1903 Keith Street, Eau Claire, WI 54701 ♦(715) 835-0923 ♦(888) 221-0112

The Voice for Real Estate in Northwestern Wisconsin

UNDERSTANDING THE CODE OF ETHICS PROCESS

“I have a complaint about a Realtor®” is frequently the opening statement made by both the public and members when they contact the Association office about a problem. The caller proceeds to explain the situation and then confidently waits to hear the whole problem will be taken care of, the offending member will be disciplined, including having his/her license revoked and a notice of the transgression published in our newsletter and the local newspaper. Okay—maybe that’s a slight exaggeration of the caller’s expectations, but when the process of filing an ethics complaint is explained, it usually comes as a great surprise. The caller simply wants it corrected and doesn’t understand the process of determining if there has been a violation of one or more of the articles in our Code of Ethics or the discipline options the Association has. While the first step in filing an ethics complaint is usually a call to the Association office, that call only starts the process, it doesn’t correct the problem. Here’s a little “cheat sheet” of the NAR process of Code of Ethics enforcement process.

1. A formal complaint form (available on our website) is sent to the Association office with a statement of what happened that may have been a violation of the Code of Ethics. Supporting documents should be submitted with the complaint form.
2. A panel of three members of the Professional Standards Committee acting as the Grievance Committee meets to review the complaint to make sure the proper parties are named, the right Articles are cited and the complaint is filed within 180 days of when the events that may have been a violation took place or are known. They do **NOT** decide if there has been a violation—they simply look at the complaint and decide if the facts are true, there may be a violation and it should be forwarded for a hearing. If, however, they determine that even if the facts are true there is no violation of any of the articles, the complaint is dismissed. The person filing the complaint must then file an appeal if he/she wishes to pursue the complaint.
3. If the Grievance Committee has forwarded the complaint for a hearing, the Respondent is notified and both the person filing the complaint (Complainant) and the Respondent are given a list of potential hearing panel members who serve on the Professional Standards Committee. They have the opportunity to challenge any of them for just cause. A panel of three members is selected from the unchallenged members and a hearing is scheduled.
4. At the hearing, which is recorded, the parties are given an opportunity to make a statement explaining what happened and question the other party’s statement. Witnesses can be brought and parties may be represented by an attorney if proper notice has been given. The panel listens carefully to all the testimony and asks questions to clarify any statements or get missing information.
5. At the end of the hearing, each party makes a closing statement and is asked if the hearing has been fair. The panel chairman reminds the parties the hearing is confidential and then dismisses everyone so the panel can write the findings of fact and decide if there has been a violation of the Code. “Clear, strong, and convincing” is the standard of proof the panel uses. If there has been a violation, the panel then determines the discipline. Discipline imposed for violations of the Code should be progressive, that is discipline should increase incrementally for subsequent violations. First time violators typically are disciplined with a letter of warning and/or a requirement to attend a class that relates to the violation, but discipline could also include a fine. Subsequent violations may result in probation or suspension of membership. The Association has a \$500 administrative fee if the member has been found in violation of an article. The panel can also find no violation of the Code, and, of course, then there is no discipline imposed.
6. Both parties are notified of the decision and given a copy of the findings of fact. Based on certain criteria, they can appeal the decision for 20 days. If there is no appeal, the decision and findings of fact are given to the Board of Directors for final action. The directors can adopt the decision verbatim, ask the panel to consider other discipline, send it back for a new hearing because of procedural errors or reverse the decision and dismiss the complaint.

This is just a very brief summary of the steps for filing an ethics complaint. . . .the process of filing an arbitration request is similar but our members seem to be able to resolve their commission—we have not had an arbitration hearing in seven years! The Code of Ethics and Arbitration Manual is 384 pages; the process is very detailed with many provisions to make sure due process is followed. Because the process is complex, the Association’s policy is that members who serve on the Professional Standards Committee and Board of Directors must attend training at least every third year. The Code of Ethics enforcement is a membership benefit but it requires member involvement to enforce it!

. . . . MEMBERSHIP NEWS. . . .

- ◆ In accordance with our bylaws, notice is hereby given that **Kevin Brisky** of Lakewoods Real Estate, **Jonathon Peters** of Peters Real Estate and **Rebecca Cifaldi** of CB Johnson & Johnson have applied for Realtor® membership; written comments, which will be confidential, are invited.
- ◆ Once again we're indebted to members who shared their knowledge with other members. **Carolyn Poepping** and **David FitzGerald** both took time from their busy schedules to teach at new member orientation. Thanks, too, to **Marianne Rigby** for presenting a very informative class on "Staging a Home" as part of our monthly Wednesday Wisdom offerings.
- ◆ Congratulations to **Dan Lawler** who has been nominated to represent District 6 on the WRA Board of Directors. His nomination will be acted on by the WRA Board on May 4.
- ◆ The Nominating Committee, under the leadership of **Jeff Theisen**, is looking for input from the membership for special awards. In the past, the Board Service Award has been given to a Realtor® to recognize extraordinary service to the Association. That award will be changed to the Outstanding Achievement Award and will recognize either an Affiliate or Realtor® who has made exceptional contributions to the Association. If you would like to nominate someone for this very special award, complete the form on the Association's website and send it to Joan or Jeff.



It's Coming! It's Coming!

*Wednesday Wisdom
May 9—9 to 10*

Look for more information on these:

► **Standby offer addendum:** The MLS Committee has worked for many months on this form that will allow sellers to accept an offer on a property with a sale of a house contingency without requiring agents to change the status of the property to active with bump clause. The form will be on Zipforms; watch for more information.

► **Electronic lockboxes:** A final decision on which lock-box system will be chosen will be made soon and information on the change will be shared with everyone. The conversion is anticipated to take place in December so brokers are encouraged to use the next several months to make sure they have an accurate accounting of the boxes they've been issued. The cost of missing boxes will be the broker's responsibility.

► **Fusion:** This next generation of MLS software will offer members an *alternate* to MLXchange for accessing MLS data! It's a new MLS interface for searches, multi-tasking, agent/client collaboration and home page personalization. **Members will have a CHOICE** of using either Fusion or *MLxchange* when accessing the MLS. If you own a Mac or like using Firefox, Chrome or Safari browsers, Fusion is a great option!

Rob Uhrina of WRA will present a program on "Free (or almost free) Killer Apps for Realtors®". This is a great opportunity to hear from a technology expert who specializes in real estate! Watch for an email on May 7 with a link to the meeting site and then learn from the convenience of your home or office! Take advantage of these free programs to help you increase your income!





AFFILIATES. . .OUR PARTNERS

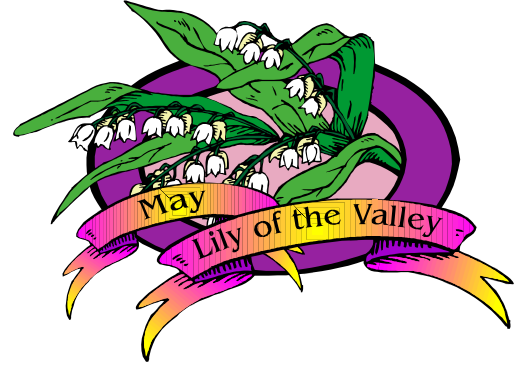
Do you know who our Affiliate members are? Just like you, they serve on Committees. . . attend Association functions. . . pay dues! Because they, like you, support the Association, they should be your first business contact when possible.

Without the strong support of our Affiliate members, we would not be able to offer:

- ◆ continuing education classes
- ◆ legal update
- ◆ two extremely popular golf outings
- ◆ Christmas party
- ◆ Convention registrations

Not only do Affiliates sponsor these events, they help plan them by serving on committees. Affiliates also serve on the Foundation Board of Directors and help enhance our public image. **Our Affiliates support our business. . . let's support them!** A list of Affiliate members is on our Association website. Make them your business partners when possible; show them we appreciate their support.

MAY OPPORTUNITIES



- 4. . . WRA Board of Directors meeting, Madison
- 9. . . Wednesday Wisdom, 9 AM
- 9. . . CE, Hayward, Mods 1 & 2, 8:30-4
- 9. . . Education Committee meeting, 10:30
- 10. . . CE, Hayward, Mods 3 & 4, 8:30-4
- 11. . . Foundation Board of Directors/Rice Lake, 9 AM
- 14-19. NAR Midyear meetings, Washington, DC
- 16. . . CE, Hayward, Electives A & B, 8:30-4
- 23. . . MLS Committee meeting, 8:30
- 28. . . Memorial Day/office closed



Home ownership has a significant impact on net worth, educational achievement, civic participation, health and overall quality of life. And, home ownership helps create jobs here at home. But some are challenging federal government incentives that would keep home ownership affordable. Here are some facts about the importance of home ownership.

Housing is a significant driver of the national economy—it accounts for more than 15% of the gross domestic product. In addition, six of the last eight recessions have ended as a result of robust housing markets; war spending ended the other two recessions.

When people move from renting to owning a home, they're more likely to vote, get involved in community groups and care about their home's appearance. The children of homeowners do 23% better in school, according to a 2001 study by *Harvard's Joint Center For Housing Studies*. And a steady flow of first-time homebuyers makes it easier to sell starter homes so people can move to larger properties.

Help your clients to understand that their home is asset #1. Help them to understand how they can keep its value. Visit Houselogic.com to get more facts on why Home Ownership Matters and encourage your customers and clients to take advantage of the information on that site.

Facts About May. . . .The most widely accepted explanation for the name is that it is named for Maia, the Roman goddess of spring. Memorial Day - a legal holiday to observe the memory of those who died while serving the U. S. — was first observed in 1866. . . . Armed Forces Day is celebrated the third Saturday of May to honor the men and women of the military service.





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CONTINUING EDUCATION REQUIREMENT: All licensees must complete six courses approved by the Department of Safety and Professional Services before December 14, 2012. Four of the classes are mandatory; licensees may choose two electives to complete the required 18 hours.

Hayward classes
May 9, 10 & 16
Flat Creek Inn
10290 Hwy 27 South

Rice Lake classes
October 10-11 & 18
Turtleback
West Allan Road

May 9 & 10—Jon Sayas, instructor

Oct. 10 & 11—Rob Sayas, instructor

- May 9: CE#1, Listing Contracts (8:30-11:30)
- May 9: CE#2, Offer to Purchase (1-4:00)
- May 10: CE#3, New Developments (8:30-11:30)
- May 10: CE#4, Business Ethics (1-4:00)

- Oct. 10: CE#1, Listing Contracts (8:30-11:30)
- Oct. 10: CE#2, Offer to Purchase (1-4:00)
- Oct. 11: CE#3, New Developments (8:30-11:30)
- Oct. 11: CE#4, Business Ethics (1-4:00)

May 16 Electives—Jonathan Sayas

Oct. 18 Electives—Rob Sayas instructor

- Elective A: Short Sales & Foreclosures (8:30-11:30)
- Elective B: Environmental Matters (1-4:00)

- Elective C: Other Approved Forms (8:30-11:30)
- Elective D: Financing (1-4:00)

REGISTRATION FEES:

Each full day of education (6 hours) is \$70 for members, \$80 for non-members, and includes morning and afternoon breaks and lunch buffet; each three hour class is \$35 for members, \$40 for non-members. No lunch included if attending only 3 hours. **NOTE:** Registration begins 30 minutes prior to class; late arrivals will not be allowed into the class and will forfeit their registration fee. Refunds (less \$15 admin fee) will be issued only if cancellations are made at least 3 days before the class.



These classes are made possible through the generous support of Johnson Bank—please be sure to thank them!

Please register me for the indicated classes; my check for \$ _____, payable to RANWW, is enclosed:

Name _____ Email _____

<input type="checkbox"/> CE 1, May 9, Hayward	Send this registration form, With payment, to: RANWW, 1903 Keith Street Eau Claire, WI 54701	<input type="checkbox"/> CE 1, Oct. 10, Rice Lake
<input type="checkbox"/> CE 2, May 9, Hayward		<input type="checkbox"/> CE 2, Oct. 10, Rice Lake
<input type="checkbox"/> CE 3, May 10, Hayward		<input type="checkbox"/> CE 3, Oct. 11, Rice Lake
<input type="checkbox"/> CE 4, May 10, Hayward		<input type="checkbox"/> CE 4, Oct. 11, Rice Lake
<input type="checkbox"/> Elective A, May 16, Hayward		<input type="checkbox"/> Elective C, Oct. 18, Rice Lake
<input type="checkbox"/> Elective B, May 16, Hayward		<input type="checkbox"/> Elective D, Oct. 18, Rice Lake

**REALTORS® ASSOCIATION OF
NORTHWESTERN WISCONSIN &
CITIZENS COMMUNITY FEDERAL**

PRESENTS.....

**Legal Update by WRA Senior Attorney,
Debra Conrad
June 20, 2012, 9:30—11:45
Turtleback Conference Center
1985 18 1/2 Street (W. Allan)
Rice Lake**



- **HOT HOTLINE TOPICS**
 - **ELECTRONIC SIGNATURES**
 - **FORMS UPDATE**
 - **NEW LEGISLATION**
 - **MORE, MORE, MORE!**

Questions on new forms? Need more information on electronic signatures? Listing protection an issue? Changes on landlord/tenant or pier regulations a mystery? Inspection contingency notice versus amendment still a puzzle? Problems with short sales or REOs?

These issues may be addressed by Debra as part of this legal update. Whatever topics are covered, you may be sure they'll relate to your day-to-day business. The update is a membership benefit and a great way to keep yourself current on our constantly changing real estate business. This 2 hours of education could help you avoid a costly lawsuit.

Brokers: consider making attendance mandatory to help reduce your liability—it may be one of your best investments this year!!

SPONSORED BY:



Following the update, plan to attend the annual meeting and enjoy the delicious buffet. Because of the generous support of **Chris Wolff** of **Citizens Community Federal**, the cost of the class and buffet is only \$12.

_____**PLEASE REGISTER ME TO ATTEND THE UPDATE—MY PAYMENT OF \$12 (PAYABLE TO RANWW) IS ENCLOSED. (LUNCH INCLUDED)**

_____**I CAN'T ATTEND THE UPDATE BUT WILL ATTEND THE NOON MEETING. MY PAYMENT OF \$12 (PAYABLE TO RANWW) IS ENCLOSED.**

NAME _____

EMAIL ADDRESS _____

(MAIL TO RANWW, 1903 KEITH STREET, EAU CLAIRE, WI 54701 BY JUNE 13. SORRY, NO REFUNDS)