

REAL ESTATE

suburbanjournals.stltoday.com

See your house through their eyes

“Put yourself in their shoes for a minute,” was the advice my father gave me years ago when I would get frustrated by my inability to convince a friend or colleague to agree with my point of view.

Dad explained that to understand what someone else is thinking, you have to look at the situation from his or her point of view. This sound advice is true today when it comes to selling your home.

In last week’s column, we talked about real estate and that no matter what the market conditions are, it still comes down to the basics. Price, location and condition determine how fast your home will sell. Last week, we talked about the importance of pricing your home correctly. Today, we will talk about the other elements to a successful sale: location and condition.

Since most of us can’t move our homes, location is beyond the control of most homeowners. Similar homes in different areas have always commanded

different prices, and they always will. From time to time, values in different neighborhoods will rise or fall, depending on a variety of factors; and your Realtor can help you evaluate current values in your neighborhoods. Of course, new development, changing traffic patterns and other issues can have a positive or negative effect on your home’s value.

When it comes to condition, it is important to keep in mind my father’s advice. Try to look at your home through the eyes of a potential buyer. It is often difficult for us to get past our family memories and the hard work and money we poured into our homes to objectively evaluate its condition. Your Realtor can be an invaluable partner in helping you see your home through the eyes of its next owner.

Here are a few things to keep in mind when evaluating your home.

Maintenance: In today’s market, potential buyers have more selection available to them. Don’t count on a

potential buyer’s imagination to see past the work that needs to be done and see your home’s potential. Plus, a potential buyer that is willing to take on maintenance or repair issues will take the work into account when they make you an offer. Chances are they will discount their offer by two times or more the actual cost of the work that needs to be done.

Take the time before putting your home on the market to do any needed maintenance or upkeep. Plus, a fresh coat of paint, freshly cleaned carpets or a neatly manicured lawn will enhance a buyer’s first impression of your home. If your home needs updating, your Realtor can help advise you on what inexpensive updates you might want to consider before placing your home on the market.

Depersonalize your home: When my son Jake was growing up, my refrigerator door was filled with his artwork, little league pictures and other family treasures. Chances are if you have children, your refrigerator has a similar decorating style. When you’re selling

your home, however, you want to help potential buyers to picture themselves living in your home. Cleaning off your refrigerator and putting away family pictures that might adorn your tables or bookshelves will help that process.

Potential buyers will be more likely to picture your home as theirs if you have less of your “stuff” in your home. Moving is a great time to get rid of all that excess stuff that clutters up all of our homes. Instead of waiting for moving day, clean house before you put your home on the market. Have a garage sale or call your favorite charity to get rid of clothing you don’t wear anymore, those “awesome” gadgets that haven’t been out of the closets in a year, and the other “stuff” that you won’t be moving with you.

You also may want to go ahead and box up out-of-season clothes, fine china, glassware and other items you won’t need until you move. This will help your closets and cabinets look more spacious and open.

Finally, you want to look at your fur-



YOUR PLACE TO CALL HOME

Keith McCulloh is the 2008 president of the St. Charles County Association of Realtors. E-mail him at comments@StCharlesREALTORS.com if you have any real estate-related questions or comments you would like to see addressed in this column.

niture and see how you can position it to give your rooms a spacious feeling for potential buyers. This may include putting some furniture in storage or getting rid of things you won’t need in your new house.

No matter what the market conditions, it is still the basics that determine when and if your home will sell. Homes that are in good condition and priced right will always sell. Your Realtor is ready to help guide you successfully through the home-selling process.

REAL ESTATE BRIEFS



Vance



Ireland

Vance, Ireland join Brewer Real Estate

ERIC VANCE and KEVIN IRELAND recently joined Susan Brewer Service First Real Estate. Both are

members of the St. Charles County Association of Realtors and will be assisting clients with real estate needs. The firm, which opened in November, now has 12 licensed Realtors.

Office collects items for overseas troops

The Assist-2-Sell office in O’Fallon collected donated items for care packages sent to U.S. troops in Iran and Afghanistan in time for Christmas.

DOUG HOWELL, DIANA HACKER and JEAN HOWELL, owners and operators of the Assist-2-Sell Seller Team in O’Fallon, had asked O’Fallon residents to help create holiday care packages for soldiers. More than 100 households responded by donating hundreds of items, such as snacks, toiletries,

games, music CDs and movie DVDs, according to a news release. Anyone who would like to contribute to care packages can visit www.anysoldier.com for more information.

Builders to present Home & Garden Show

The St. Louis 31st Annual Builders Home & Garden Show is scheduled for Feb. 28-March 2 at America’s Center and the Edward Jones Dome.

Produced by the Home Builders Association of St. Louis and Eastern Missouri, the event will showcase products and services related to lawn and garden, kitchen and bath, interior design, pool and spa, and building products. More than 600 companies are expected to participate.

Show hours are 10 a.m.-9 p.m. Thursday, Friday and Saturday and 10 a.m.-5 p.m. Sunday. Admission costs \$9 for adults, \$4 for children ages 6-12 and free to children 5 and younger. Ticket discounts are available at participating Home Depot and Schnucks stores. Visit www.stlhomeshow.com for more information.

Home buyer training class offered March 1

HOME St. Charles Inc. of St. Charles County and Beyond Housing have scheduled a home buyer training class from 8:30 a.m.-4 p.m. March 1 at the Economic Development Center of St. Charles County, 5988 Mid Rivers Mall Drive in St. Peters.

The program, presented by Beyond Housing, includes a working lunch.

Anyone interested in utilizing the HOME St. Charles down payment assistance program should attend the training class, according to a news release.

HOME St. Charles offers down payment assistance to qualified buyers in unincorporated St. Charles County (\$10,000) and the Saratoga development in Lake Saint Louis (\$7,500). Qualified applicants must complete home buyer training and receive certification.

The training class is called Catch the Dream-Keep the Dream — Steps to Successful Home Ownership. Cost is \$75. To register, e-mail to larnet@edcscc.com or call Linda Arnet of HOME St. Charles at 636-441-6880, extension 254.

For more information about the HOME St. Charles down payment assistance program, visit www.home-stcharles.org or call 636-441-6880.