

REAL ESTATE

Even Amid Worries, It Looks Like a Buyer’s Market

By Erik Derr

While a dip in regional home sales last month left little doubt there’s still a lot of uncertainty in the housing market, one real estate veteran advises homebuyers to push through their fears and place their bids soon. “Right now, all the factors are really good... interest rates are down, along with prices. Buyers are able to negotiate low monthly payments,” said Paul Clark, a 37-year real estate veteran who grew up in Hawthorne and generally focuses his business in the South Bay’s northwestern communities. Put another way, “buyers are in the driver’s seat.” Of course, buyer-friendly conditions often hint at a weaker market, which in turn prompt greater consumer distrust and less willingness to invest.

But, even in better economic times, said Clark, “when someone takes on a mortgage and buys a home, it’s hard to jump in and keep a positive attitude...you can’t always hesitate. Sometimes you have to just go for it.”

Clark, the president-elect of the South Bay Association of Realtors, said an overwhelming majority of the home purchases he’s seen have been successful, whenever they were made. “Ninety-nine percent of the time, it works out.”

Clark’s assurances come as the Southern California market, which includes Los Angeles, Riverside, San Diego, Ventura, San Bernardino and Orange counties, ended a

three-month rise in housing sales with 21,502 new and resale homes sold in August, down 10.8 percent from 24,104 sales in July, according to San Diego-based analyst MDA DataQuick.

On the other hand, the 14-month rise in year-to-year home sales continued with an 11 percent jump from the 19,366 sales logged in August 2008. Meanwhile, the median price for a Southland home was \$275,000 in August --- up 2.6 percent from \$268,000 in July but and down 16.7 percent from \$330,000 in August 2008. The monthly rise in median price was the fourth in a row after the median fell to \$247,000 in April. In mid-2007, the Southland median peaked at \$505,000. Foreclosure re-sales accounted for about 38.8 percent of all August resale activity, down from 40.7 percent in July and 45.5 percent in August 2008.

The news isn’t all promising. “We’re hearing from public agencies and the banking industry that there’s still a lot of financial distress in the pipeline,” said John Walsh, MDA DataQuick president. Some analysts are predicting another wave of foreclosures closer to the end of the year, as more short-term loans written during the housing boom come to maturity.

Of course, said Clark, South Bay communities generally haven’t seen a large number of home foreclosures or bank-owned properties

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Crime Reports

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because it was company policy to contact corporate loss prevention first. Police think one suspect stole the merchandise while the other talked to the employees about getting a job. An employee told police suspects have been robbing the store and then returning to get refunds.

**THURSDAY, SEPTEMBER 10
VEHICLE BURGLARY**

Police responded to 26th Street and Highland Avenue after thousands of dollars worth of personal belongings were stolen from a man’s van, parked in the 200 block of 26th Street. Sometime around 6:45 a.m., the van’s owner and his friend placed their belongings in the vehicle, locking it and placing the key on a cable behind the driver’s side tire. The pair went surfing, returning around 7:30 a.m. to find of their personal items missing. The car owner lost a \$50 wallet containing \$130 in cash, an ATM card, driver’s license and a \$300 iPhone. His friend lost a \$3,000 laptop computer, \$400 laptop computer bag, \$35 wallet containing \$20, ATM card, driver’s license and a \$300 Blackberry Curve phone. One of the victims talked to a neighbor who had been in his garage around of the time, but the resident said he did not see anything suspicious. Police stated that the vehicle had been re-locked and the key had been replaced by the front tire. The police report also stated that the victims gave nobody permission to steal their belongings.

**LOUD HOTEL MUSIC
SATURDAY, SEPTEMBER 12**

A resident called police to report loud noise at a hotel in the 1200 block of North Valley Drive around 10:30 p.m. An officer responded to the hotel and heard no music. The officer then went to resident’s residence and heard music. After walking to the corner of Ardmore and 12th Street, the officer determined the “loud music” was coming from the hotel. Upon returning to the hotel, the officer no longer heard music. The manager said he did not know what music the officer heard but said that if there was music, it was coming from a special event upstairs which was over at 11 p.m. The manager said he’d take care of the problem and the officer said he’d file a report.

**TOILET STALL THEFT
SUNDAY, SEPTEMBER 13**

A man used the restroom at a fast food restaurant in the 1800 block of Manhattan Beach Boulevard around 6:30 p.m. He walked into a stall, removing his fanny pack, placing it on the toilet paper dispenser. After leaving the restaurant and driving away, the victim realized he left his fanny pack in the stall about five to ten minutes later. He searched the restaurant and questioned employees but could not find it. The fanny pack contained a \$200 black Nokia slide phone, a U.S. passport, three credit cards, five Motorola Bluetooth’s worth \$60 apiece, \$700 in cash, credit cards and two Disneyland passports worth \$400 each. The man closed his credit card accounts and no unauthorized transactions had occurred. •

Open House Directory

OUT OF AREA OPEN HOUSE			
1. Sun 2:00-4:00	1822 Speyer Lane, RB	5Bd. 3.5 Ba.	\$1,049,000
Bill Ruane	Re/Max Beach Cities Realty		310-877-2374
2. Sun 2:00-4:00	232 16th Pl, MB	3 Bd. 2 Ba.	\$1,199,000
Bill Ruane	Re/Max Beach Cities Realty		310-877-2374
3. Sun 2:00-4:00	4021 Wade St., L.A.	3 Bd. 3.5 Ba.	\$629,900
Bill Ruane	Re/Max Beach Cities Realty		310-877-2374
4. Sun 2:00-4:00	1215 Ashmill St, Carson	4Bd. 3 Ba.	\$575,000
Bill Ruane	Re/Max Beach Cities Realty		310-877-2374
5. Sun 2:00-4:00	1223 Ashmill St, Carson	3Bd. 3 Ba.	\$550,000
Bill Ruane	Re/Max Beach Cities Realty		310-877-2374



Leadership

from front page

engenders in its students.”

The Monday orientation occurred just days before the weekend retreat at Big Bear Lake, an opportunity for classmates to become acquainted with one another and compare leadership styles through team building exercises and personality tests. Cohen recalled having reservations about the retreat in 2002 as she climbed aboard the bus with her classmates, bound for what sounded to her like a camp for middle-aged adults. “I brought lots of reading material on the bus, so that I could avoid the exhaustion of two hours of anticipated small talk,” she said. “To my complete and utter surprise and astonishment, my experience on that bus and during that magical weekend was not even remotely related to what I had dreaded. From the moment I engaged in conversation, the weekend whisked by like a fairytale, and so went the next nine months.”

The Class of 2010 brings together a diverse group of people, including Mira Costa students, retirees and working professionals. Dr. Larry Scanlan, Anne Konie and Henry Hancock said they thought the program will be a way for them to help the community.

Anne Konie, a member of the Rotary Club and interior designer, said she was influenced by fellow Rotarians to get involved in Leadership. “They basically all told me it was a great program in the spirit of building the community,” Konie said. “Rotary has a ‘service above self’ motto, and from what I know about leadership Manhattan Beach there’s a ‘service above self’ angle, but it’s also about developing oneself as a leader.”

Dr. Larry Scanlan, a scientist at UCLA,

said that as his career begins to wind down, he hopes to use the course to find out how he can continue to be active in the community. Scanlan noted that his son, now in college, considered joining Leadership, and that his nephew Jeff Byron, who manages the Kettle, is a graduate. “He said it was a really great program, and the people that he met were really exceptional and had become really good colleagues and in many cases friends,” Scanlan said. “They had helped him understand how Manhattan Beach works, who the leaders are and how things are accomplished.”

Scanlan, who has conducted research on commitments and the long-term consequences of extracurricular activity on high school students, believes the six teenagers in his class will get a lot out of the program. “They’re going to get firsthand training and experience in leadership and that’s not easily done in high school,” he said. “They seem really excited about it, and all the kids I’ve talked to about it in the past have thought it’s just wonderful.”

Henry Hancock, a technology consultant, said an appealing part of the program is the class project and the opportunities for personal and professional networking. He pointed out that through the project, people might recognize skills that they could apply toward helping the community.

“Part of the program is meeting with the key committees and functioning groups of the town, and through that you get a really personal view of how the town functions and operates,” Hancock said. “I think for some people it makes them want to get more involved.” •