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their real estate professionals," said James Liptick, president of the state association, many of his real estate colleagues "have responded to these demands by utilizing and integrating technology into their real estate business."

All that new technology is coming together in "Real Estate 2.0," the nickname for what market observers say is becoming the new model for online real estate marketing, where individual sites not only provide data specific to the hosting company or agent, but serve as dynamic, interactive conduits for an array of real estate information and resources. An article posted last March at Realtor.org quoted Charlie Young, chief operating officer with New Jersey-based Coldwell Banker Real Estate LLC, who suggested real estate websites must grow beyond static bulletin boards for the latest sale announcements. "The listing information really is a commodity now. You have to look at how you can augment and bring value to it," said Young, who proclaimed the end of the era "when real estate professionals could attract business by promoting themselves while holding on tightly to key information about listings." He continued that the best real estate bloggers "promote communities and not themselves. That's a fundamental shift for a real estate professional who has been brought up in a culture of self-promotion."

It seems, however, not everybody in the real estate business is ready to embrace that high-tech transition. Real estate analyst Kevin Lisota, who writes for the Findwell Smart Real Estate Internet blog site, recalled a recent meeting where about 100 real estate agents mulled over marketing strategies. He reports several anti-Internet comments from participants, including: "If we are going to have any control of our customers, we as brokers have to control the data that they see," "Doctors and lawyers do not have a publicly accessible database for their proprietary information...so why should we as real estate brokers allow the public to access our data?" and, last but not least, "Information is power. I need to maintain this power to serve my customers."

Lisota wrote that he was "stunned that this way of thinking is still prevalent in real estate brokerages. From our perspective, the days of real estate agents hoarding information are over." He argues Internet companies will continue to post property and market information, and increasingly more data will be freely available to consumers, whether real estate agents like it or not. So, in order to survive, agents must realize that their "role as information provider is rapidly diminishing and agents will need to compete on service and knowledge going forward," he said.

Janet Johnston, the flustered home seller, wishes she had met a real estate agent who was straightforward and unafraid to share the latest housing news about her South Bay neighborhood. "If that would have happened, I'd probably have a much bigger smile on my face. Actually, I probably wouldn't still be here," she said.

Consumers deserve to be taught how to understand real estate market numbers, said Keller. But real estate transactions come first and foremost from emotional reactions, from the effort of consumers to change their lifestyles. Which is why the guidance of a trained real estate professional is still needed.

That said, real estate buyers and sellers, said Keller, "are smart, they're sharp," and, despite the beliefs of some, deserve to know as much about the housing market as they can. "The more I hand over control to my clients, the more I show them how to use the tools available to them and educate them on how to read the market and then interpret all that," said Keller, "the better our relationship is, resulting in a win-win-win sale." •

Community Briefs

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Pictured: (Backrow) Rotary President Julie Warner, Sparky, Cameron Rudan, Annika Hatcher, Charese Deleon, Chie Kevin Smith. (Standing, middle row) Pablo Iturrios, Andrew Fleming, Daniel Murphy. (Front, kneeling) Courtney Sprotte, Karinna Madrid, Chrizelle Kayla Soon.

EL SEGUNDO ROTARY AND EL SEGUNDO FIRE DEPARTMENT HOST THE 50TH ANNUAL FIRE SAFETY POSTER CONTEST

The El Segundo Fire Department started the 50th Fire Prevention Week with a longstanding tradition. The El Segundo Fire Department along with The El Segundo Rotary Club has been sponsoring a Fire Prevention Contest for many years. The poster contest consists of drawing a poster on the theme of fire prevention. This year's theme was "Stay Fire Smart, Don't Get Burned" the students in 3rd, 4th and 5th grades at Center Street, Richmond and St. Anthony's were encouraged to participate. The winners were treated to lunch at Fire Station #1 compliments of the El Segundo Fire Department, El Segundo Rotary Club, Whole Foods, and Doubletree Hotel. Congratulations to all the winners.



NATIONAL TREE HUGGER DAY

Provided by Jan Lebow

Dozens of El Segundo residents showed up on National Tree Hugger Day, October 17 to celebrate their appreciation for trees with Tree Musketeers, a local, youth-led environmental organization that sponsored the event.

El Segundo residents show their appreciation for Marcie the Marvelous Tree. Photo by John Miller.

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