

# MONTREUX News



March 2011 Edition

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# MONTREUX News

March 2011

Montreux Web Site: [www.montreux-hoa.org](http://www.montreux-hoa.org)

## **PRESIDENT'S LETTER**

**From Peter Roppo  
your neighbor and volunteer President  
Montreux Homeowners Association**

Greetings to all of our Montreux neighbors.

This year has been a little more trying than usual for all of us due to all of the snow but we will remain optimistic that a warmer spring is coming.

**The annual meeting of the Montreux Homeowners Association is coming-up soon.  
It will be at 7 PM on March 26 at Lewis Creek Park Visitor's Center (across from the fire station on Lakemont.)**

The annual meeting is always important since that is when new volunteer board members are introduced, new officers are elected and you have a chance to ask questions about the conduct of the association, to express your concerns and to offer suggestions. We hope that you will be able to attend.

This issue of the quarterly MONTREUX News contains a wide variety of information of potential use to you. We particularly call your attention a news release from the Washington State Patrol on keeping children safe.

Past newsletters as well as a wealth of other timely and historical information is on the association website, [www.montreux-hoa.org](http://www.montreux-hoa.org). We encourage you to access the website at least monthly to get important notices and other helpful information.

Best wishes for an enjoyable spring.

## **WWW.MONTREUX-HOA.ORG**

**Be sure to visit the Montreux Homeowners Association website EACH MONTH for a wealth of current and historical information about our Montreux community.**

**Charles Hayden, Web Site Manager, 425-522-3776, [cchayden@gmail.com](mailto:cchayden@gmail.com)**

## **LETTER FROM THE EDITORS**

It has been our pleasure to bring the quarterly MONTREUX News to you for the past year. We hope that you have found it to be useful and that it contributed to your enjoyment of our great community.

**It is now time to pass the newsletter job on to some other interested Montreux neighbor.**

If you are interested in volunteering, please contact us or the secretary of the board, Susan Gardner.  
[dorisburke@aol.com](mailto:dorisburke@aol.com) or [duaneburke@aol.com](mailto:duaneburke@aol.com) or [susan.gardner@comcast.net](mailto:susan.gardner@comcast.net).



# **NEW MONTREUX HOA BOARD MEMBERS**

## **Judy Fenyk-Melody, DVM, DACLAM, Montreux HOA Officer Candidate**

Judy Fenyk-Melody is Director at Amgen, Inc., Seattle, Washington. Judy and her family moved to Montreux in 2006. Her husband, David Melody, is General Manager at The Plateau Club in Sammamish, WA. They have two boys, Austin (15) and Dylan (11). The other family members include two cats and a dog.

Prior to joining Amgen, she spent her industry career at Merck Research Laboratories, Rahway, NJ supporting basic and preclinical research and clinical drug discovery and development. Earlier in her career, she was a clinician in both small animal clinical and emergency practices in Wilmington, NC and as a biology researcher in Cancer Genetics and Virology in Bay Pines, FL.

In 1985 Dr. Fenyk-Melody received her B.S in Biology from Emory & Henry College, Emory, VA. She earned her D.V.M. from Kansas State University in 1991, and her post-doctoral residency training in Comparative Medicine from Columbia University, College of Physicians & Surgeons, NYC, NY was completed in 1996.

## **Joseph Nee, New Chairman of the Social Committee**

"My name is Joseph Nee. I have lived in the Puget Sound area since 1987 and moved into this community in 2003. Corinna and I have two children, Christopher, a senior in the UW Business School and Christine who is studying Engineering at University of Washington. We have a dog and his name is Jake. We love travel and gardening. Since I was born in Taiwan, the Chinese Mandarin language is my mother tongue. I am happy to assist our community by accepting the Social Committee chairmanship."

# **MONTHLY HOMEOWNERS BOARD MEETINGS**

Board meetings are generally held on the third Tuesday of each month. Homeowners are always welcome to attend. Check our website, [www.montreux-hoa.org](http://www.montreux-hoa.org), for time and place each month.

6:52 PM  
02/28/11  
Accrual Basis

**Montreux Homeowners Association**  
**Balance Sheet**  
As of February 28, 2011

	Feb 28, 11
<b>ASSETS</b>	
Current Assets	
Checking/Savings	
US BANK - CHECKING	14,700.88
US BANK - SAVINGS	122,537.48
VANGUARD MM CAPITAL RESER...	136,500.30
Total Checking/Savings	273,738.66
Accounts Receivable	
DUES RECEIVABLE	5,150.16
Total Accounts Receivable	5,150.16
Other Current Assets	
PREPAID EXPENSES	2,301.00
Total Other Current Assets	2,301.00
Total Current Assets	281,189.82
<b>TOTAL ASSETS</b>	<b>281,189.82</b>
<b>LIABILITIES &amp; EQUITY</b>	
Equity	
FUND BALANCE	235,873.05
Net Income	45,316.77
Total Equity	281,189.82
<b>TOTAL LIABILITIES &amp; EQUITY</b>	<b>281,189.82</b>

6:52 PM  
02/28/11  
Accrual Basis

**Montreux Homeowners Association**  
**Profit & Loss Prev Year Comparison**  
January through February 2011

	Jan - Feb 11	Jan - Feb 10	\$ Change	% Change
<b>Ordinary Income/Expense</b>				
Income				
HOMEOWNERS DUES	54,450.00	54,450.00	0.00	0.0%
TREE PENALTY INCOME	0.00	1,300.00	-1,300.00	-100.0%
Uncategorized Income	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.0%
<b>Total Income</b>	<b>54,450.00</b>	<b>55,750.00</b>	<b>-1,300.00</b>	<b>-2.3%</b>
Expense				
ACCOUNTING	1,530.00	878.50	651.50	74.2%
INSURANCE	3,386.00	5,753.00	-2,367.00	-41.1%
LANDSCAPE REPAIRS & MAINT.	5,256.00	8,903.45	-3,647.45	-41.0%
LEGAL	0.00	56.00	-56.00	-100.0%
LICENSE/FEE/PERMITS	10.00	10.00	0.00	0.0%
OFFICE EXPENSES	0.00	144.00	-144.00	-100.0%
POSTAGE	136.70	5.98	130.72	2,186.0%
PROPERTY TAX-COMMON AREAS	47.38	47.10	0.28	0.6%
TREE MAINTENANCE	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.0%
UTILITIES - WATER METERS	1,240.02	1,212.71	27.31	2.3%
UTILITIES - ELECTRICAL COSTS	1,096.79	1,275.26	-178.47	-14.0%
LAKE UTILITIES				
UTILITIES-LAKES ELECTRICAL	337.65	407.50	-69.85	-17.1%
REIMBURSED LAKES ELECTRIC...	-2,154.34	-2,053.43	-100.91	-4.9%
<b>Total LAKE UTILITIES</b>	<b>-1,816.69</b>	<b>-1,645.93</b>	<b>-170.76</b>	<b>-10.4%</b>
LAKE FOUNTAINS				
REIMB. LAKES FOUNTAIN REPAI...	-1,389.56	0.00	-1,389.56	-100.0%
<b>Total LAKE FOUNTAINS</b>	<b>-1,389.56</b>	<b>0.00</b>	<b>-1,389.56</b>	<b>-100.0%</b>
Uncategorized Expenses	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.0%
<b>Total Expense</b>	<b>9,496.64</b>	<b>16,640.07</b>	<b>-7,143.43</b>	<b>-42.9%</b>
<b>Net Ordinary Income</b>	<b>44,953.36</b>	<b>39,109.93</b>	<b>5,843.43</b>	<b>14.9%</b>
<b>Other Income/Expense</b>				
Other Income				
INTEREST INCOME-LATE FEES	343.30	523.42	-180.12	-34.4%
INTEREST INCOME-SAVINGS	20.11	27.66	-7.55	-27.3%
<b>Total Other Income</b>	<b>363.41</b>	<b>551.08</b>	<b>-187.67</b>	<b>-34.1%</b>
<b>Net Other Income</b>	<b>363.41</b>	<b>551.08</b>	<b>-187.67</b>	<b>-34.1%</b>
<b>Net Income</b>	<b>45,316.77</b>	<b>39,661.01</b>	<b>5,655.76</b>	<b>14.3%</b>

# CC&R REMINDER TO HOME OWNERS

1. **Please check** that your outside lights are working. It is especially important now that the evenings are shorter and children are going to school in the dark. It is a requirement of the CC&Rs that, because there are no street lights, all driveway lights should be on.
2. **Some complaints** have been received about garbage cans being visible from the street. All garbage cans should be hidden from view per the CC&Rs.

## ARCHITECTURAL CONTROL

Our area continues to be attractive and our homes are being well maintained. Thanks to everyone for contacting the HOA Architectural Control Committee (ACC) for exterior changes this past year.

**Exterior house painting is likely to be on the agenda for many Montreux homeowners for this spring. Please contact the Architectural Control Committee for approval of color choices.**

Following the approval by homeowners of the amendment to the CC & R's regarding roofing materials, there are now two homes with the new composition, multi-layered material. They both look great. Thanks to those homeowners for working with the ACC during the application process.

Your ACC is ready to assist you with questions on any planned work on your property. Please call Jerry Mack, Chair of the ACC at 425-641-3453 or [jerrymack06@comcast.net](mailto:jerrymack06@comcast.net).

THANKS for keeping Montreux a beautiful place to live

## COMMUNITY COMMENTS

### Email Addresses

**Email addresses for 88 percent of the Montreux homeowners have now been received** thus permitting them to receive the MONTREUX News and associated notices as well as email communications from Montreux board members. **Our thanks to Rosemary Freeman**, our accounting representative, for her help by putting reminders on the quarterly invoices asking homeowners to supply their email addresses. If you are not receiving the MONTREUX News, please send your email address to Doris and Duane Burke, Editors of the MONTREUX News, at [duaneburke@aol.com](mailto:duaneburke@aol.com).

### Montreux Women's Club

There used to be a women's group that met every few months at night that had Bunco games, etc.- a few years ago. When the volunteer management changed, I never got any more emails that this continued in Montreux. Does it? -- Sally Goetsch, Mont Blanc

### Driveway and Village Park Lights

I'd like to see HOA input from CC&R about maintaining residence driveway lights (and consequence if not), and input from Electrical about what's to be done about the Village Park Drive lights. I'm out in the early morning and at night with my dog, and the lighting situation is very insecure and unsafe in our community right now. - John Kuechle, 18605 NW Cervinia Ct, [jj.kuechle@comcast.net](mailto:jj.kuechle@comcast.net)

# RESPONSIBLE PET OWNERSHIP

*By Judy Fenyk-Melody, DVM, DACLAM*

**Several recent complaints have been made to Montreux's board that some home owners and children are not picking up after their pets.**

Dealing with pet waste is one of those topics that every pet owner must deal with, even on those wintry, cold and rainy days. The majority of our community and neighborhood pet problems result from the inappropriate handling of pet waste, as evidenced by this second newsletter reminder within the past few months. Remember, pet waste is the greatest source of potential health risk for your pet and your family. Please do your part by always picking up after your pet.

## **Preventing Stool Eating**

While most dog owners think this doesn't apply to their dog, the reality is that most dogs will engage in this unsavory practice at some point in their life. Dogs evolved as carnivore/scavengers and feces were considered fair game in lean times. Fecal to oral spread of disease is a (somewhat preventable) common route of infection for disease.

## **Disease Control**

Did you know that there are several common diseases that can be transmitted to dogs, cats and people through feces? Some zoonotic diseases, diseases that both pets and people are susceptible to, include Giardia, roundworms, Salmonella, and E. coli. In addition, your dog can spread or contract Parvovirus or Coronavirus through infected dog feces.

## **Responsible Pet Ownership**

There are probably fewer things that aggravate neighbors more than when a dog that 'goes' in their yard. Pet owners need to clean up after their pet every time they go to the bathroom. No exceptions. If you are in a park or neighborhood, pick it up with a plastic bag and dispose of properly. Don't make your responsibility somebody else's problem.

# NATIVE GROWTH PROTECTION EASEMENT

*By Joe Preston, Past President, Montreux HOA*

**Many homeowners in Montreux share a boundary with the NGPE (Native Growth Protection Easement).** Homeowners are reminded that the CC&R's, as well as City of Issaquah statutes, impose upon residents the obligation to leave trees and other vegetation undisturbed within the NGPE, except to the extent that the HOA and the City of Issaquah allow any hazardous trees to be removed. This prohibits, among other things, the dumping of leaves, grass clippings and other yard waste, pruning trees or other vegetation, and "improving" any portion of the NGPE by planting grass, flowers or other vegetation. Individual homeowners are not authorized to perform, or to contract to perform, any work in the NGPE area.

**If a homeowner wishes to have a hazardous tree removed from the NGPE, the following procedure applies:**

1. Home owner will contact the Montreux Homeowners Association (CC&R committee) requesting to have the hazardous tree removed.
2. CC&R committee will contact the City of Issaquah to arrange for a field inspection and issuance of a permit. Upon receiving written approval, Homeowner Association will contract with approved specialist to fell tree. Note: felled trees must remain in the NGPE unless at the request of the homeowner, and with the approval of the city, the tree can be dropped on the homeowner's property, in which case the felled tree may be removed.
3. Homeowner will be responsible for all expenses associated with the removal.



# A LITTLE PRUNING ADVICE

*By Lynn Mack*

The neighborhoods of Montreux have reached the age where those little plants we thought would never grow up have finally done just that, and are now taking over our gardens. The first impulse may be to pull out the hedge trimmers or chain saw and give the offending trees and shrubs a flat top! DON'T!! Alas, some have already done just that, and the evidence is heart wrenching to the gardeners among us.

Improper pruning can be compared to trying to put a size 12 foot into a size 7 shoe. You may be able to squeeze it in for a time, but eventually it will burst out and you will have a deformed foot. An improperly pruned tree will be smaller for a time, but in the process the tree will be deformed, water sprouts will grow from the stubbed ends of branches, the tree will be weakened, and may ultimately die. When pruned properly a tree retains its natural beauty and form, and remains strong and healthy. Plants have natural growth habits and patterns: tall, short, wide, narrow, evergreen, and deciduous. And, sometimes a plant by nature is in the wrong location and cannot be pruned into submission. If this were the case, the best solution would be to replace it with a tree or shrub better suited to that site.

## Examples of tree pruning in Montreux



Ouch! Examples of improperly pruned trees. The birch on the left got a flat top 2 years ago and now has water sprouts. In a few years it will have a top knot of water sprouts like the tree on the right.

## RECOMMENDED SERVICE PROVIDERS

**One or more Montreux residents have recommended the following service providers:**

### **Yard Maintenance:**

Sear An, tel. 206-434-9684

Sam Barrett, Lakeside Landscaping, tel. 425-652-5534

### **Gutter Cleaning:**

Wayne Whitney, tel. 206-354-9406

### **Handyman:**

Mike Beffa, tel. 425-830-0306

**Carpet Cleaning**

Fibertech

George Andrew Sedlack, owner; office: 206-283-9915, cell: 206-730-5825

**Dog Walking:**

Taylor Gwinn, tel. 425-643-9945

Austin Melody, tel. 425-283-6480

Kate Rhodes, tel. 425-533-7720

**A/C & Heating:**

Brennan A/C and Furnace, 206-248-7900

**Garage Doors:**

Ric's Garage Door Repair, tel. 425-827-6257

**Sprinklers Systems & Backflow Testing**

Alpine Sprinklers, tel. 425-391-8701

**Painting:**

Antonio Roman, tel. 425-443-8590

**Granite Countertops**

Costco, tel. 425-313-0965

**Roofing Contractors**

CERTIFIED CONTRACTORS, INC.

1551 127th Place NE, Bellevue, WA 98005

(425) 646-9441 (425) 451-3904 (Fax) (888) 206-3676 (Toll Free)

**Medical & Dental Services**

Mayo Clinic, Rochester, MN, tel. 507-284-2111

Dr. Robert L. Frye, Cardiologist

Overlake Clinic & Hospital, Bellevue, tel. 425-688-5000

Dr. Joseph W. Doucette, Cardiologist

Dr. Allen J. Geltzer, Internist

Overlake Clinic, Issaquah, tel. 425-313-0151

University of Washington Medical Center, Seattle, tel. 206-598-3300

Dr. Michael Rizen, Ophthalmologist, Eye Clinic of Bellevue, tel. 425-454-7912

DD. Kris Swanson, Dentist, Overlake Clinic, Bellevue tel. 425-454-4434

**Accounting**

Laurel Rich, Bettinger, Mifflin, Rich CPA Group, tel. 425-827-8771

**Athletic Clubs**

Bellevue Club & Hotel, Bellevue, tel. 425-454-4424

Sue Henderson, water aerobic instructor, 425-637-4610

**Landscape Improvements**

Legacy Landscaping, Tel. 425-391-3134

Lakeside Landscaping, Sam Barrett, owner, Tel. 425-652-5534

# MONTREUX HOA BOARD MEMBERS

**Peter Roppo**

**President**

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**Treasurer**

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**Susan Gardner**

**Secretary**

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**John Bryon**

**CC&Rs**

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**Joe Preston**

**Past President & Advisor**

**425-641-1670**

[jpreston562@comcast.net](mailto:jpreston562@comcast.net)

# KEEPING CHILDREN SAFE

*Submitted by the Issaquah School District*

Please take a moment to read an important [press release](#) the Washington State Patrol has asked Issaquah schools to share with you. Detectives are seeking witnesses and information in the possible sexual assault of a minor just outside Issaquah.

Questions and comments should be directed to Detective Stacy Moate at (425) 401-7746.

This is a good opportunity to share these important safety tips with your children:

- Never talk to a stranger;
- Never let a stranger get too close, whether the stranger is in a car or walking;
- Never tell a stranger any personal information, such as name, age, or address;
- Try to walk in pairs with a friend or an adult;
- Stick to safe, well-lit paths when walking;
- Do not obstruct hearing with iPods or portable music players when walking or waiting outside;
- If a stranger tries to grab you, yell as loudly as you can and run away;
- Immediately alert an adult if a suspicious person approaches you.

Thank you for your help in keeping children safe!

## ISSAQUAH POLICE REPORTS

*A Break-in at Aspen Glow Place*

After having reviewed the reports of daily police activities issued by the Issaquah Police Department for the past six months, we had concluded, once again, that Montreux is a very safe and quiet neighborhood. **However, on February 28<sup>th</sup> there was a robbery in the 4900 block of Alpen Glow Place – a television was stolen.** There have been break-ins and robberies in adjacent neighborhoods over the past couple of months, but this is the first one in Montreux. So, we need to take sensible precautions to avoid problems.

**Safety Tips:** Here are a few reminders of precautions that you are probably already taking:

1. Keep your doors and windows locked;
2. Have a home alarm system and use it.
3. Keep your garage doors shut when not coming and going;
4. Be sure that your outside lights are working and on at night;
5. Don't open your door to strangers and be sure the children don't either;
6. Let a neighbor or two know when you will be out of town.

**Areas for Extra Caution:** As you might expect, police reports show that the commercial areas of Issaquah are where most problems are reported. So, extra caution, particularly at night, is suggested for **Front Street, Gilman Blvd. and East Lake Sammamish Parkway.** Do not leave valuables visible in your car. Breaking into cars is a problem in these and other public parking areas.

## WARNING ABOUT SOLICITORS

*Article contributed by a Montreux homeowner*

Soon the weather will be better and Montreux will be invaded by out-of-town, door-to-door salespeople for magazine subscriptions, donations for rehabilitation camp, artwork, and other **apparently legitimate causes.** I am not talking about our young neighbors selling Girl Scout cookies or middle schoolers trying to fund their band trip to Camp Orkila. **The solicitors I am talking about are highly organized professional groups from out-of-state (the last one checked was traced to the East Coast).**



Older teen-agers and young adults are flown in, dropped off in a neighborhood such as Montreux by a van. They go door-to-door with stories such as "we are former drug users, who are asking support for our rehabilitation program." Generally, these young adults are well dressed and have a professional sales pitch. Many are very polite and engaging. When asked for their permit to solicit door-to-door (required by the City of Issaquah), they will flash some type of ID badge and deny that a permit is necessary. If they are refused they can become pushy, angry, or threatening.

These organizations have been sending these vans of people to our neighborhood for more than 15 years (usually spring and fall). Each time they come, the Issaquah police are called, and one or more of them is stopped and questioned. The van driver then rounds up his solicitors, and they go somewhere else. The police have not been able to target the parent organizations because they are out of state.

I suspect that these organizations are taking advantage of these young people, who probably do not benefit from their work. More important, these solicitors pose a security threat. They are violating the solicitation laws of Issaquah. They are filling our neighborhood with persons who are able to provide information about our homes (which houses bought magazines last year, which people are never home, identity information, etc.). Having these people in the neighborhood also makes it more difficult to identify other suspicious persons (prowlers, burglars, etc). On several occasions in saying "no" to these solicitors, I have had unpleasant and defensive responses. On one occasion, I had to order them off my property and believed there was a real possibility of violence.

One of the reasons these people keep coming back is that some homeowners do buy their products. Of course, everyone is free to follow his or her conscience. However, buying these materials merely encourages them to return next year. The Issaquah Police have recommended that we call them as soon as such persons show up in our neighborhood. In the past, the police have responded immediately and questioned the solicitors. **Most home protection guidelines recommend exercising great care in opening your door to unknown persons, even in a very safe neighborhood such as ours. It is important to the security of Montreux that these organizations not be encouraged to canvass our neighborhood.**

## COUGAR ALERT

*December 19, 2010:* A 70-pound cougar walked our back fence yesterday morning at 9:30 am. Very big, very agile. Earlier, while walking our dog, we heard furious dog barking from the ridge beyond the Isola cul-de-sac. Our home is not on the ridge, but next to the ridge homes. It is interesting (worrisome) that the cougar left the safety of the green-space to come to our back yard.

A similar visit to our back fence occurred 5 years ago, during a bad winter season. At that time I called animal control and police, but nothing occurred in follow-up.

- - Gary Stimac, 18206 NW Montreux Drive, 425-641-7727

### Thanks for warning

Thanks Gary, Doris & Duane for letting us all know. I did hear dogs barking and squealing during daytime several weeks back when I had an arborist over helping me prune, he went to investigate in the green belt against my inclination because he thought it was people being hurt, but he is new here. He couldn't see what or who it was and it stopped. I would never go look myself in case it or cougar came after me next – just being practical since I'm not any type of hulk that could do anything anyway. Wish we had a beebie gun at least, maybe that's one item to have just in case- Sally Goetsch on Mont Blanc, [sallcomm@comcast.net](mailto:sallcomm@comcast.net)

### Additional Information About Local Cougars

Cougars do live here in the Issaquah Alps area. I see cougar tracks all the time in the winter when I go

out hiking. However, it's a rare and special treat to actually see one.

There is strong evidence that cougars watch us all the time, even if we rarely see them. Earlier this year, I was shown a photo taken by a hunter who had killed an elk. The man had been hunting alone. He wanted to remember the moment so he set up his camera to take an automatic picture of himself posing with the elk. When he looked at the picture, he was astonished to see that a large cougar had been sitting just a few feet behind him quietly watching what he was doing. He had been totally unaware of the cat's presence. When he looked around, the cat was gone. The cougar understood that when a man shoots an elk, he would field dress the kill and leave behind the gut pile. The cougar was quietly waiting for this lunch to be served.

Fortunately, statistics show serious human-cougar interactions to be extremely rare. Cougars watch us all the time, but they seldom seem to bother us. We are not their prey. If they wanted to hunt us, it would be a different story.

So if you do see a cougar, consider yourself lucky. It's one of the special benefits of living in Montreux. You live in a wonderful place. There's no need to call the cops. -- Rick Stiles

### **The Last Word on Cougars**

From the Washington Department of Fish & Wildlife:

**Cougar attacks on humans are extremely rare. In North America, roughly 25 fatalities and 95 nonfatal attacks have been reported during the past 100 years. However, more cougar attacks have been reported in the western United States and Canada over the past 20 years than in the previous 80. In Washington, of the one fatal and fifteen nonfatal attacks reported here in the past 100 years, seven attacks occurred during the 1990s. For more: [www.wdfw.wa.gov](http://www.wdfw.wa.gov).**

## **REAL ESTATE & HOME IMPROVEMENTS**

**With spring comes an interest on the part of many homeowners to consider relocating. With that in mind, we have expanded the information on real estate sales and selling guidance.**

**We have two neighbors in Montreux who are in the real estate business, Susan Gardner and Marty Nelson. They have been invited to carry complimentary ads in the Montreux News. We are also pleased to carry ads for DuraCoat, a home improvements company. and another Montreux resident owned business.**

# **DO YOU WANT TO SELL YOUR HOME?**

**To give your home a competitive edge when it's time to sell, make sure it is in good physical condition.**

This not only makes your home more attractive and desirable, it also simplifies the negotiation process when the time comes for the buyer's pre-purchase inspection. According to home inspection experts, approximately half the resale homes in the market today have at least one significant defect. Routine maintenance is the best way to prevent major, costly problems from developing in the first place. If you have been putting off those repairs, now is the time to make them.

**A Home Seller's Check List** can identify a list of common problems that typically appear on buyer's home inspection reports. Early correction of these problems can increase a home's appeal and its selling price. It also sets the stage for a favorable home inspection report for the buyer, and thereby helps to expedite the sale. The following checklist can help you achieve these marketing goals.

## **Check The Major Systems**

**CHECK THE MAJOR SYSTEMS** - After size, style, and location, a home buyer's primary concern is the condition of the home's basic structure and major mechanical systems. Most buyers do not want to invest a great deal of money correcting problems in such critical areas. A pre-listing home inspection of the visible and accessible home components can reveal most of these problems, and include recommended repairs, if needed, on the following major items: Roof structure and covering foundation, basement, and/or crawl space, central heating and air conditioning systems, electrical system and plumbing system.

## **Make Maintenance Improvements:**

A number of maintenance improvements are relatively easy and inexpensive to make, yet they can substantially improve a home's appearance, efficiency, and comfort. A realtor or home inspector may make helpful maintenance suggestions such as: trim trees and shrubs which touch or overhang the house - apply new caulking and weather stripping as needed around windows and doors - clean gutters of debris and leaves - repair or replace cracked or broken gutters, downspouts, and extensions to ensure proper drainage. Replace bathroom caulk or grouting where necessary to prevent seepage and improve appearance. Ventilate closed basements and crawl spaces or install a dehumidifier to prevent excessive moisture build-up. Re-grade soil around the foundation to keep water away from the house. Replace dirty filters in the heating and air conditioning systems. Have the heating and air conditioning systems professionally serviced. Have chimneys professionally cleaned, and install chimney hoods or caps as needed.

**By Marty Nelson, Owner of Sterling Northwest Properties and Montreux Board Member**

With support from Rinehart Inspection Services (December 2010)

# PROPERTY TAXES – WHAT TO DO

*By D. Marty Nelson, Broker, Sterling NW Properties*

Property taxes, one of the privileges that we have for living in a great neighborhood in a great city and a great country. Every year in September, the tax assessment comes in the mail and depending upon the local politics and the economy you may be surprised at what you see. If you are like me you will see that your home assessment has increased in this period of declining home values and slow sales.

I was shocked that my assessed value had risen 23% over 2010 values. If you believe that this is not correct you have the right to petition to protest your assessment and you must start the process within 60 days from the mailing date of your Official Property Value Notice, that arrives in September. Be aware that your taxes are set for the coming year and the assessed value represents the counties estimate of what your home is worth at the time of the notice.

## The process

The appeal process starts with a letter and a reasonable comparison of properties similar to yours that have sold, within your development. The county may choose to compare your property to homes that are not in Montreux and that may have sold up to 2 years prior to the current date. Your letter must present details of homes that you feel are true comparisons to your home and have values that you think more truly represent the value of your home.

Once you have submitted your evidence of value, the county will analyze your information and respond with the analysis that they used to come up with the value of your home. This is where the value discrepancy may arise. The comparable properties that they have selected may not represent the current market or homes that are in your neighborhood that are similar to yours.

Once you have presented your argument to the Board of Assessments they will respond and will determine whether or not you have compelling reasons to dispute their findings. If they agree, they will set a hearing that will allow you to make your case as to why their data is not representative of your home value. If you have convinced the Board to make a value adjustment they will provide you with either a forward adjustment (next year) or they may even provide a refund for overpayment of taxes (this is unlikely).

Good luck. If you don't do this for 2011 there is always next year. If I can be of help feel free to give me a call.

D. Marty Nelson is Designated Broker/Owner of Sterling Northwest Properties, specializing in residential real estate listing and sales and rental property management for owners. He can be reached at 425-891-1082



## Montreux Real Estate Update – March 2011

### CURRENTLY FOR SALE:

List Price	Sq. Feet	Address
\$549,900	3,370	4906 Alpen Glow Pl NW
599,000	3,500	4948 Alpen Glow Pl NW



### PENDING:

List Price	Sq. Feet	Address	Pending Date
\$556,000	2,950	5280 NW Village Park Dr.	02-21-11

### SOLD:

List Price	Sq. Feet	Address	Sold Date	Sold Price	Cumulative Days on Market
\$569,995	2,619	5210 NW Village Park Dr.	02-04-11	\$535,000	86
640,000	2,860	5560 NW Konigs Court	01-28-11	650,000	
799,000	4,060	18108 NW Montreux Dr	11-18-10	785,000	313

**Inventory is low in Montreux and Lakemont,  
buyers are looking, and mortgage interest rates are still at great levels -  
If you are thinking about selling, this is a good time.**

### Considering Downsizing?

Exceptional Lakemont condominium home coming on the market soon! 3 bedrooms, 2 full baths, 1,112 SF, one-level lives large and spacious. Exquisite upgrades and touches you would expect to find in high-end homes, including slab granite, top-of-the-line appliances, over & under counter accent lighting in kitchen; new bathrooms with granite in master, vessel sink in secondary, 12 x 12 Italian tile, decorator mirrors and light fixtures; custom wood-wrapped window trim; French doors (6-panel), and much more. \$244,950. Call for details.



**Susan Gardner**  
*2010 Top 10 Producer*  
**Keller Williams Realty Bellevue**  
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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

January 5, 2011

FOR INFORMATION ..... Tom Hurdelbrink, NWMLS president & CEO, 425.820-9200  
..... or Bob Gent, NWMLS director of business development and member relations, 425.820-9200

### Western Washington home sales during December nearly equals year-ago levels

KIRKLAND, Wash. (Jan. 5, 2011) – December's volume of pending sales around Western Washington nearly matched the total for the same month a year ago, which was the best December since 2006.

Sellers accepted offers from 4,359 buyers last month, only 40 fewer than a year ago when members of Northwest Multiple Listing Service reported 4,399 pending sales of single family homes and condominiums. In 2008, members notched 3,255 pending sales, down from 2007's total of 3,950 pendings and the 2006 figure of 5,744 mutually accepted offers.

Eight counties had year-over-year increases in pending sales for December, with two others equaling the year-ago totals.

"If you were in any mall in Washington state in December, you got the feeling that the economy is headed in the right direction," said OB Jacobi, president of Windermere Real Estate Company and a member of the board of directors of Northwest Multiple Listing Service. "That increase in consumer confidence is the boost the real estate market needs," he suggested.

Closed sales, another barometer of activity, improved on November's volume, but dipped about 6 percent when compared to figures from twelve months ago. MLS members reported 4,430 closings across its 21-county service area during December. A year ago, brokers logged 4,711 completed transactions.

For 2010, Northwest MLS members tallied 52,408 closed sales of single family homes and condos (combined), up slightly from the previous year when there were 52,105 completed transactions.

"Despite the expiration of the tax credit, King County saw about 3 percent more home sales in 2010 than in 2009," Jacobi noted.

*(Note to editors: a comprehensive summary of 2010 activity will be issued on Wed., Jan. 19.)*

The area-wide median price for last month's closed sales of homes and condos was \$255,000, up slightly from November's figure of \$250,000, but down about 3.8 percent from a year ago when the median selling price was \$265,000. In King County, where 40 percent of last month's closings occurred, the median sales price was \$342,400, about 2.2 percent lower than a year ago when it was \$350,000.

Listing activity tapered off last month compared to 12 months ago. Northwest MLS members added 5,460 new listings of single family homes and condominiums during December. That's down 7 percent from a year ago when 5,873 sellers listed their homes with a member-broker.

-more-

Last month's additions boosted system-wide inventory to 32,171 at month end. That number nearly equals the selection of a year ago when the NWMLS database encompassed 32,152 active listings, although thirteen counties have fewer properties for sale than at this time a year ago.

Measured by months supply (the time, in months, that it would take to sell existing inventory at the current rate of sales), there is a supply of less than 7.4 months across the NWMLS market area. (A market with a supply of approximately six months is considered balanced, favoring neither buyers nor sellers.)



Nationwide, the National Association of REALTORS® reported a 9.5-month supply. Both King and Snohomish counties have less than a 6-month supply.

“Buyers are taking their time and looking for the „perfect” house,” Jacobi observed. “One of our agents worked with a couple for over a year before a higher-end home they'd been eying for months had a price drop and they jumped on it,” he noted, adding, “Whether it's a starter home or a luxury property, to sell in today's market a great home also needs to have a great price.”

Lawrence Yun, NAR chief economist, described continuing gains in home sales as encouraging and believes all the indicator trends are pointing to a gradual housing recovery. “In addition to exceptional affordability conditions, steady improvements in the economy are helping bring buyers into the market,” he commented. However, he cautioned, further gains are needed to reach normal levels of sales activity, and home price prospects will vary depending largely upon local job market conditions.

NAR president Ron Phipps, broker-president of Phipps Realty in Warwick, R.I., expects good buying opportunities to continue. The third generation real estate professional noted serious buyers have a lot of opportunities during the winter months since “traditionally there are far fewer buyers competing for properties at this time of year.” He believes buyers will enjoy favorable affordability conditions into the New Year, even though he expects mortgage rates will gradually rise as 2011 progresses.

Northwest Multiple Listing Service, owned by its member brokers, is the largest full-service MLS in the Northwest. Its membership includes more than 24,000 brokers and agents. The organization, based in Kirkland, currently serves 21 counties in Western and Central Washington.

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# The Promise of Spring



## *SPRINGTIME POEMS*

And Spring arose on the garden fair,  
Like the Spirit of Love felt everywhere;  
And each flower and herb on Earth's dark breast  
rose from the dreams of its wintry rest.

*Percy Bysshe Shelley  
The Sensitive Plant.*

That God once loved a garden  
We learn in Holy writ.  
And seeing gardens in the Spring  
I well can credit it.  
*Winifred Mary Letts*