In My Opinion

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I Am Getting Old
By Gary Taylor, CRB, GRI, CDPE, Summa Real Estate Associates

I am not just talking about my advanced age. Nor am I talking about my weight being way over what it should be or my thinning, grey hair and fragile skin. I am not talking about the aches and pains of getting out of bed in the morning, or that I have to walk with a cane to keep from falling over. I am not talking about my last auto accident where I ran into the side of a parked car in a parking lot, trying to pull into a parking spot, nor my wearing of hearing aids and partial dentures.

All of the above are certainly pretty good indicators, but my real problem is with other people. I think I may have become a grouch! Yes, I’m that old neighbor who complains about the actions of other people.

The most recent example is this past 4th of July when, instead of enjoying the fireworks with my family, I spent several hours holding my best buddy, Walle. He is a pure white American Eskimo canine who fully understands me (unlike some people). He was whining and shaking almost uncontrollably from the reports (very loud bangs) from the neighborhood illegal fireworks. There is a wonderful discussion website online for our neighborhood, and among the “lost cat” and “need a babysitter” messages were several before the holiday of our nation’s birth that warned about the dryness of the grass, trees and roofs and that the noise could have an adverse effect on our family pets, and, even more importantly, some of our veterans with PTSD. But, I guess a few of the neighbors disagreed with this and turned our pleasant neighborhood into their personal re-creation of a noisy battleground in the Revolutionary War...neighbors be damned!

What made me feel old in afterthought is that this morning I wrote a message on that neighborhood site thanking those inconsiderate people. I mentioned that I had a discussion with my favorite canine, and he agreed that we should take a stroll through our neighborhood at midnight tonight, and Walle even volunteered to give each of the offending fireworks nuts an option. He would either leave a “present” on the neighbor’s lawn or bark incessantly for about an hour. I thought this was a rather clever idea! However, it was after I read my post that I realized I have turned into the crabby old man in the neighborhood.

I also have kind of become that way in the real estate profession. When I read a post on a Facebook group the other day that many agents were not leaving cards at houses they toured or showed, I thought they were very lazy. I thought even worse of some of them when they started to defend this practice by saying the cards are too expensive to leave in all the houses or that the seller would be much better off if the buyer’s agent would just text the listing agent. Oh sure, I would much rather receive 25 unsolicited texts in addition to the 50 unsolicited e-
mails I receive every day! What do I as a listing agent do with the texts? Do I forward each of them to the seller, or just tell the seller about them?

I am sure the seller would just love either one. In the first instance, Mr. and Mrs. Seller would now get the 25 texts plus the introductory text I sent them. Or they would just flat not believe me. I guess I could print them out and leave the texts on the kitchen counter just like the cards should have been left in the first place! See how cynical I have become?

I also thoroughly enjoy receiving calls from agents and principal brokers who obviously have not bothered to read and study such basic forms as the Sale Agreement or Counter Offer. Fortunately, most of those calls do not come from our own company’s agents. I can’t tell you how many calls I have had from agents who are upset that the seller is violating the law by not responding to the buyer’s offer. Well, it might be a matter of courtesy, but it is certainly not a matter of law. The law does not require that anybody respond to any offer. Think about it. Even if ORS 696 did say that, it would not apply to sellers, since sellers are not licensed.

I also am constantly amazed by agents who seem to refuse to make a business decision. For example, I have seen agents complain that an out of state buyer who wants to make an offer is asking for a referral fee to an agent who represents them as a buyer. It is perfectly legal, and probably wise for them to do so. After all, who wouldn’t want to work with a professional that understands the business? An agent just needs to decide if the requested referral fee makes good business sense. If it does not, either negotiate the fee to a more acceptable level, or don’t do the deal. Too many agents seem to have an entitlement mindset in that they “deserve” a certain amount of money for a transaction. My view is that they need to “earn” it.

The adversarial attitude of some agents has also got me wound up a bit. It used to be that the listing agent and buyer’s agent worked together to try to reach a mutually beneficial understanding and transaction for each of their clients. Now I am seeing things like buyers making offers $20,000 over the asking price in a multiple offer situation, and then once all the other buyers have gone away, they hit the now ecstatic seller up for $19,000 in repairs based supposedly on the home inspection. What ever happened to dealing in “good faith”?

I also have a feeling that Docusign for documents has become what Facebook has become for friendships. I personally feel that a seller, even the dreaded “millennial,” would much rather have an agent spend time with them explaining an offer or offers and be there to answer questions, than to receive an e-mail with 37 pages of documents they do not understand. I have a lot of Facebook relationships, but the ones I cherish the most involve face-to-face meetings and phone calls. Facebook certainly enhances some of those friendships, but does not replace the face-to-face aspect of them.

Having said all that, I have a 12-year-old daughter; I do not have a home phone, just a cell phone; and I haven’t read a map in years because I choose to follow the directions spoken by the beautiful blond who apparently lives inside the GPS in my car. I text several times a day with my daughter and wife and am on Facebook a lot. I seldom post, but I enjoy seeing what other are up to. I have a flat screen TV, play video games and watch Dr. Who. I am even considering not wearing a watch anymore because my cell phone does a better job of telling me the time. Obviously, I am young and hip! (My daughter points out using the word “hip” is a good indication that I am old.)
Maybe I will wait a few years to get REALLY old!

As always, these are just my opinions. Sometimes I am right!

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