

# CURRENTS

The official newsletter of the Coastal Association of REALTORS® of Maryland

Volume I/Issue III

[www.coastalmdcurrents.com](http://www.coastalmdcurrents.com)

Fall 2006

## YOUNG GUNS

*Making their mark on the local real estate industry  
and blowing away the competition*

*Listen up pardners! There's some new cowpokes in town who're scarin' up a mess of business. So what makes them the top guns in town? It could be their cactus-sharp sales skills. Their marketing moxie. Their business smarts. Their casual, yet confident swagger. Or it could be that they know the lay of the land (all are eastern Maryland natives). They don't have one of these bullets in their holsters—they have all of them and more. All of our Young Guns say they couldn't have made it this far without a great posse behind them. Hmm, add charm to the list of weapons in their arsenal. The long and short of it is, we wouldn't want to be in a showdown with 'em. So sit a spell and we'll learn ya about 'em. Sure shootin', you'll be seein' them at a negotiation table real soon.*

### GRANT FRITSCHLE

The Mark Fritschle Group, RE/MAX Premier Properties

**Age:** 29

**Year started:** Licensed in 1998; full-time in 2000.

**How did you get started in real estate?:** I ran out of money on a 7-month "round-the-world" trip, post college graduation. I'd known for years

that I wanted to be in the industry, and this was the perfect time to start.

**Designations:** Currently enrolled in GRI classes.

**Community service:** Children's Miracle Network

**Hobbies:** Running, surfing, camping

**When not working, I'm:** Running or

Please see **YOUNG GUNS**, Page 9

**MOST WANTED**  
**2 • 0 • 0 • 6**



GRANT FRITSCHLE



MARY McCRAKEN



THE BEACH GROUP



MICHAEL PANCO

## CAR Wins a C.A.R.E. Award

For the first time in its history, CAR was named one of the top REALTOR® associations in the state of Maryland when it comes to charitable endeavors.

CAR won Second Honorable Mention for the MAR Community Action & REALTOR® Excellence (C.A.R.E.) Award. The award presentation was held September

19 during the Awards Reception and Installation Banquet at the MAR Annual Conference & Trade Expo.

As part of the award (photo at right), NAR Region 3 Vice President Bill Neary and MAR President Al Ingraham presented CAR President Pat Terrill with a \$1,000 check to be donated to the charity of CAR's choice.



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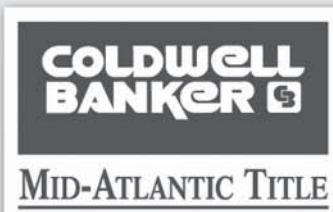


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## 2006-07 Officers & Directors Installed

The Coastal Association of REALTORS® Annual Meeting & Board Installation was held on Wednesday, September 27, at the Grand Hotel in Ocean City.

More than 75 members and guests attended the event.

This year, CAR was honored to have as its guests MAR President Ilene Kessler and CEO Mary Antoun who took time from their exceptionally busy schedules to install the officers and directors.

Kevin White, a REALTOR® with Long & Foster Real Estate's Salisbury office, was installed as the 2006-2007 President.

White has been licensed in Maryland for more than 22 years. He is an Eastern Shore native and attended the University of Delaware. He has served on the Board of Directors for many years,



Left to right, back row: Jim Terrill, Pat Terrill, Susan Megargee, Jennifer Cropper-Rines, Gregg Holland, Ron Edelmann, Kevin White; front row: Pat Waggoner, Maureen Bounds, Shirley O'Neill and Cassie Mead.

has been chairman of almost every CAR committee and has served on several MAR committees.

During his speech, White said that his focus as President will be to "equip our members with outstanding tools so they may in turn deliver outstanding service. Nothing less."

## member spotlight

The Women's Council of REALTORS® recently named Joan Strang as REALTOR® of the Year at its annual luncheon at the Marlin Moon Grill. She is also the Coastal Association of REALTORS® Government Affairs Representative.

Charles Mitchell, a REALTOR® with Long & Foster Real Estate's Salisbury office, was recently recognized in Dover, DE, for 25 years of service to youth and the community by the Boy Scouts of America. Mitchell was



presented the Silver Beaver Award for his dedication in Maryland, Delaware and Virginia. Mitchell is currently serving as District Commissioner for DelMarVa Council's Tri County District.

MITCHELL  
 Weichert, REALTORS®—Buyer's Choice recently opened a new office located at 8201 Coastal Highway. The space, previously occupied by A Perfect Face, was designed to offer clients a luxurious atmosphere while discussing their real estate needs. The new facility will also house Steve Morgan with the Anderson Mortgage Company.

Kathy Panco, Coldwell Banker Residential Brokerage, was installed as the President of the Ocean City Chamber of Commerce on Tuesday, September 26.

## CAR Hosts Meet the Candidate Forums

During the past two months, the Coastal Association of REALTORS® held a series of four Meet the Candidate Forums. A combined committee of Government Affairs and RPAC Committee members planned, implemented and staffed the four forums, which were extremely successful.

Forums were held for Worcester County Commissioners, Wicomico County Council & County Executive, Town of Ocean City Council & Mayor, and Eastern Shore State Delegation candidates.

Members of CAR and the Eastern Shore Builders Association were given the opportunity to meet and learn the candidates' positions on land use and zoning issues, affordable housing, jobs, impact fees/taxes, and the environment.

Members of the Meet the Candidate Forums Committee were: Joan Strang, Cassie Mead, Jack Tellman, Jim Wahl, Sherwood Brooks, Ron Edlemann, Laurie Crawford, Pete Evans, Jay Wise, Mike Weisner, Sally Todd and Josh Morimoto. Thank you all for a job well done.

Now that you know where the candidates stand on

the issues, we encourage you to vote responsibly! Candidates attending the forums were:

### August 24—Worcester County Commissioners

Bud Church, District 003	Harold Scrimgeour, District 004
Shirley Pilchard, District 004	Virgil Shockley, District 004
Judy Boggs, District 005	Linda Busick, District 006
Tom Cetola, District 006	Arlene Page, District 006
Louise Gulyas, District 007	Ellie Diegelmann, District 007

### September 14—Wicomico County Council

Melvin Caldwell, Jr., At-Large	John Cannon, At-Large
William McCain, At-Large	Stevie Prettyman, District 002
Gail Bartkovich, District 003	Michael Pretl, District 003
David MacLeod, District 004	Joe Holloway, District 005
Ed Werkheiser, District 005	

### September 28—Town of Ocean City & Mayor

Rick Meehan, Mayor	Joe Cryer, Town Council
Joe Hall, Town Council	Joe Mitrecic, Town Council
Margaret Pillas, Town Council	Mary Knight, Town Council

### October 5—Eastern Shore State Delegation

Senator Lowell Stoltzfus, District 38
Delegate Page Elmore, District 38A
Candidate Patrick Armstrong, District 38A
Delegate Norman Conway, District 38B
Delegate Jim Mathias, District 38B

# NEWS & NOTES NEWS & NOTES NEWS & NOTES

## HOLIDAY HELP

With Thanksgiving and Christmas right around the corner, it is time to get involved in the community and spread some holiday cheer.

The Community Service Committee invites you to join them in helping our community celebrate the holidays. Whether it be filling stockings for children, selling hot chocolate out in the cold, or giving a donation that will allow less fortunate families to have a nice Thanksgiving meal, your help is needed.

Meal and stocking donations are needed by Nov. 17. Hot chocolate sales are Fridays & Saturdays from 5 to 10 p.m. from Nov. 17-Dec. 30. To participate, please contact Committee Chair Terri Testani at [ttestani@mchsi.com](mailto:ttestani@mchsi.com).

## SALES AWARDS INFO

It's almost that time of year again! Be on the lookout for sales recognition awards applications. Applications will be available in early December and are due by the middle of January.

## FORMS UPDATE

The MAR Residential Contract of Sale has been completely re-formatted as of October 1.

Also, some substantive changes have been adopted. The Broker Information is moved from the front of the contract to the back, and is expressly made for informational purposes only. Those former paragraphs that required the parties to fill in or initial have all been moved to the front of the contract. The remaining notices have been reorganized according to relevance and are located after the provisions requiring action.

Substantive changes within the contract include:

- Expressly makes Buyer's obligation to purchase contingent on obtaining financing.
- Clarifies that Buyer only required to make "a" written application for financing.
- Buyer, upon written verification and notice to Seller, may declare contract null and void upon failure to obtain financing.
- Previous FHA language deleted to conform to new FHA rules.
- Computation of Days added as numbered paragraph.
- Added Notice of Military Installation to comply

with new law.

- Digital image added as an accepted form of electronic delivery.

**Please destroy all previous versions of this form and replace with the new form**, which is available on ZipForms.

## MEMBERSHIP RENEWAL

CAR membership renewal invoices will be mailed to all members on November 1. Payment is due no later than December 31.

## UPCOMING HOLIDAY SCHEDULE

Please note that the CAR office will be closed for the following holidays:

- Thanksgiving (Thursday, November 23, and Friday, November 24)
- Christmas (Monday, December 25, and Tuesday, December 26)
- New Year's (Friday, December 29, and Monday, January 1)
- Martin Luther King Jr. Day (observed Monday, January 15)

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# Local Market Steady After Year of 'Correction'

**Experts Agree:  
It's A Great Time to Buy**

## SOMERSET COUNTY

After a slow start to the year, the small condo market in Somerset County has made a modest recovery. There are not as many contracts being written as in recent years, signaling less competition for buyers. And, interestingly, sales are down by only 10% from last year even though listing inventory is up by 68%. Median listing and sales prices are at an even 100% ratio.

The single-family home market in Somerset County is doing well. Inventory has increased by just 7.7% comparing September 2005 to 2006. Days on the market has dropped from an average of 174 days in March to 116 days in July to 102 in September. The number of contracts being written is down by 7% from July, as settlements comparing year-to-date 2005 to 2006 are down by only 6.8%. REALTORS® could stand to ease up slightly when determining list prices as most homes are selling at just over 92% of the listed price. About half of sold homes are below \$149,999.

## WICOMICO COUNTY

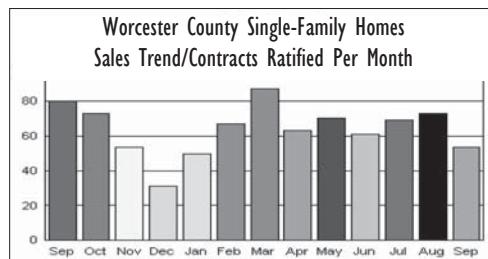
At the end of the second quarter, single-family home inventory in Wicomico County had increased by 68% over last year's pace. It has since dropped to only 47% over 2005's rate. Units are staying on the market at a median rate of 57 days with an absorption rate of 12%. Single-family homes are selling at roughly 98% of the listing price. About 58% of single-family homes are selling below \$199,999.

Inventory for condos in Wicomico County has hovered around 80 since April, one-third more than year-to-date 2005. The number of contracts written is off by only one for the year. The number of settlements is up by a whopping 75% with a condo staying on the market an average of 29 days. This figure has been cut in half since July. Average and median condo prices are up slightly to \$217,450.

## WORCESTER COUNTY\*

Single-family inventory at the end of September was 754, down from July's tally of 792, the highest level in recent years. Though there are more homes for sale, sales are down only 25% year-to-date when compared to 2005, with homes staying on the market at a median rate of 96 days. Two-thirds of median single-family homes are priced between \$150,000 and \$399,999, and being sold at 101% of the listed price.

Condo inventory is up by 69%, and sales are down 46% comparing September 2005 to 2006.



It should be noted that one price range has posted significant gains this year—there have been 65% more condos sold in the \$1 million to 1.25 million bracket. Days on the market decreased to an average of 178 in September, down from 196 days in July. Nearly half of all condos in the county are priced between \$200,000 and \$399,999.

\*Includes Ocean City

## OCEAN CITY

The Ocean City single-family market is in recovery mode as well. In July, there were 55.4% more single-family homes on the market in Ocean City comparing 2005 to 2006. That has been shaved down to only 29%. The number of contracts written is down by only 12% from last year. Homes are staying on the market an average of 100 days—down from a rate of 7.5 months at the end of summer. On average, homes are selling at 93% of their list price.

There are 1,701 condo units on the market in Ocean City—up by 63% over last year—and conversely, the number of contracts written is down by half. These are the same figures we've been seeing since late summer. Some good news: Condos are staying on the market 180 days on average and selling at 92% of their list price; both figures have improved slightly from July.

## COMMERCIAL

The commercial markets on the lower Delmarva Peninsula have had very similar patterns over the last four months. During the summer there seemed to be a slowdown in new contracts written for all types of commercial property. Some investors and agents pointed to the news stories about the slowdown in residential sales. Others blamed the high price of gas and rising interest rates, but whatever the reason it seemed to be across the board.

The good news is that after Labor Day the energy and interest has come back very strong.

Retailers seem to be wanting to catch up to the new residential customers whether they are in the resorts or inland communities. Banks, drugstores, grocery and general retail all seem to have goals for new stores on the Eastern Shore and in southern Delaware. Even though Walgreen's announced

the buy-out of Happy Harry's drugstores and Rite Aid's purchase of Eckerd, both companies have future plans for new stores in the area and independent pharmacies are still opening.

Another bright spot is that interest rates have stabilized and even dropped slightly.

The three local colleges, University of Maryland in Princess Anne, WorWic Community College and Salisbury University, have all announced growing student enrollments. This has encouraged investors in multi-family and student housing to seek new investments.

Many sellers of commercial property are seeking to reinvest in a "like-kind property" to create a tax-deferred exchange, creating a second sale in many cases. Attorneys and accountants are saying that they have many clients seeking new commercial and investment property to complete an exchange. This demand is keeping values high and the stable interest rates are boosting buyer confidence in the region.

—Provided by Henry Hanna,  
Long & Foster Real Estate, Inc. (Salisbury)

## NATIONAL

Home sales appear to be bottoming out with lower home prices attracting buyers in many areas of the country, according to the National Association of REALTORS®.

David Lereah, NAR's chief economist, said the housing market is showing signs of life and that sales may be leveling out.

"Many potential home buyers who have been taking a wait-and-see attitude or taking their time and being methodical in the search process are being enticed by lower home prices," he said. "Given a positive economic backdrop of lower interest rates and job creation, we expect sales activity to pick up early next year."

Existing-home sales are forecast to be fairly stable in the fourth quarter and sales for all of 2006 are expected to drop 8.9% to 6.45 million—still the third strongest year ever, after consecutive records in 2004 and 2005. New-home sales are forecast to fall 17.3% this year to 1.06 million, the fourth highest year on record. Housing starts should be down 10.9% to 1.84 million in 2006.

## RENTAL EXPERT NEEDED

We're looking for an agent who specializes in rentals to write a brief quarterly market overview for this newsletter (like the commercial summary above). Not only will you be our "rental expert," you and your office will get some publicity as your info would be printed along with the column. Interested? Contact [editor@coastalmdcurrents.com](mailto:editor@coastalmdcurrents.com).

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## Mark Fritschle

Mark Fritschle  
RE/MAX Premier Properties  
6200 Coastal Hwy., Suite #301  
410-524-6400  
MarkF@MarkF.com  
www.markf.com

**Age:** 58

**Family:** Four children: Grant, 29; Drew, 25; Chase, 23; Sarah, 21

**Year began real estate career:** 1975

**How did you get started in real estate?:**

I worked as a ski instructor at Beach Mountain ski resort. When summer rolled around, I found myself unemployed. One of the local agents suggested I get my real estate license and sell at the mountain during the summer and ski in the winter. Sounded good, but I never made it back to instructing.

**How long have you been with your current company?:** 18 months



**Licenses and designations:**

Maryland and Delaware, CRB,  
CRS, Allen Hainge CyberStar

**Participation on any CAR committees:** Past President, past MLS Committee Chair, past RPAC Chair, past Publications Chair, many others.

**Hobbies:** Golf, travel, snow skiing, boating

**When not working:** I'm unwinding on my back deck or taking my boat out.

**Favorite getaway/vacation spot:**  
Steamboat Springs, Grand Cayman Island

**Awards:** REALTOR® Associate of the Year, #1 RE/MAX Team Central Atlantic Region

**Greatest professional accomplishment:**  
Enjoying what I do, doing it for 35 years, and only looking forward to more.

**Business goals you'd like to achieve:**  
#1 RE/MAX team nationwide.

**What is your area of specialty (niche or neighborhood):** Listings, new construction, and oceanfront properties.

**What's your inspiration professionally:**  
Service, Service, Service

**Highest-priced home sold:** \$2.2 million

**Any other family in real estate industry:** My son, Grant Fritschle

**Describe the most memorable house you've been involved with:** The Golden Sands Oceanfront Condominium, 1977. It was actually one of my first "projects," and one of my most memorable developers/friends. I have some of the greatest memories of that building and all of those buyers.

**Business philosophy:** Never stop learning. Never stop listening. God gave you two ears and one mouth; use them proportionately. You have to earn the trust of your clients and customers, and then you have to keep it.

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## REALTORS® TAKE TO THE POLLS

As a result of our Meet the Candidate Forums, past voting records, and answers to many real estate questions asked at various forums held throughout the counties during this election season, we have endorsed the following candidates:

### WICOMICO COUNTY EXECUTIVE

Rick Politt

### WORCESTER COUNTY COMMISSIONER

Jim Purnell, District 002; Bud Church, District 003;  
Ted Elder, District 004; Louise Gulyas, District 007;  
and Tom Cetola, District 006 (write-in candidate).

### WICOMICO COUNTY COUNCIL

John Cannon, At-Large; William McCain, At-Large; and Ed Werkheiser, District 005.

### WICOMICO COUNTY JUDGE OF THE ORPHANS COURT

Pete Evans

In addition, MAR RPAC supports the following candidates:  
**FEDERAL**

Ben Cardin, U.S. Senate; and Barbara Mikulski, U.S. Senate. Wayne Gilchrest, House District 1.

### STATE

Robert Erhlich, Governor; and Stuart Simms, Attorney General. Richard F. Colburn, Senate District 37; and J. Lowell Stoltzfus, Senate District 38. Rudolph Cane, House District 37A; Adelaide C. Eckardt, House District 37B; Jeannie Haddaway, House District 37B; D. Page Elmore, House District 38A; and Norman H. Conway, House District 38B.



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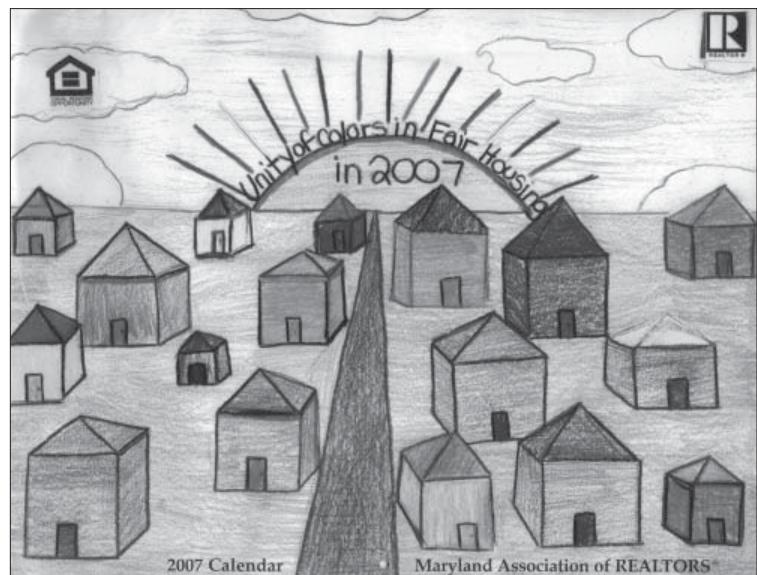


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# 2007 Fair Housing Poster Contest Winners

The winners of the 2007 Fair Housing Poster Contest were recognized on April 25 at the State House in Annapolis by Governor Robert L. Ehrlich. Winners received a savings bond and had their posters displayed on the "Freedom Wall" in the rotunda of the State House throughout June.



Worcester Preparatory School student Erin Royal, 11, won the statewide competition.



Worcester County winners Emma Richardson, Erin Royal (statewide winner) and Claire Dorey with their art teacher, George Zaiser, all of Worcester Preparatory School.



Wicomico County winners, Kayla Wilson from Chipman Elementary School, Peter Buchness from Fruitland Intermediate School, and Madeline Ferraz from Pemberton Elementary School, with Buchness and Ferraz's art teacher, Maurice Cotton.



Somerset County winners Megan Cochran and Ryan Freis with their teacher, Mary Ellen Willey, all of Deal Island Elementary School.

# Young Guns Say ‘Work Hard, Play Hard’

## YOUNG GUNS, Continued From Page I

thinking about how to be a step ahead at work.

**Favorite getaway/vacation spot:** Leadville, Colorado; Sydney, Australia

**Greatest professional accomplishment:** I wake up every morning and I can't wait to go to work. For me, that's the greatest accomplishment I can make.

**Business goals you'd like to achieve:** More referral business, to have our group ranked #5 RE/MAX group nationally, to be more efficient and more productive, and to be CRS & GRI certified within the next three years.

**What is your area of specialty:** Listings and listing presentations

**What's your inspiration professionally:** My Father & Steve Jobs

**Highest-priced home sold:** Home: \$1.9 million; Commercial transaction: \$13.5 million.

**Describe the most memorable house you've been involved with:** One of my first clients (and investors) wanted an oceanfront town-home that he could rehab. After months of searching we finally found one (3 bed, 2 bath, all original, 30+ years old) that was in the worst condition of anything that I've sold... and he loved it. I met him on the beach, walked him up to the unit in his bathing suit, and he bought it on the spot, full price. Today, it's one of the nicest 5 bed, 4.5 bath oceanfront getaways that I've ever seen. Everything was redone, studs down.

**Advice for rookies:** Have patience, follow-through with everyone, find a good mentor, and never stop saying "Thank You" every chance you get.

**Life philosophy:** No regrets, 5th gear all the time, you can sleep later.

**Education:** Bachelors in Management and Marketing, minor in economics from Salisbury University, class of 2000

**MICHAEL JOHN PANCO III**  
Coldwell Banker Residential Brokerage

**Age:** 25

**Year started:** 2005

**How did you get started in real estate?**: Mentored by the top producer and most distinguished sales associate in Ocean City (and my mom), Kathy Panco

**Niche:** Ocean City resort, investment properties

**Outside interests:** International producer/ MC/DJ/surf instructor/snowboard instructor/personal watercraft safety guide

**Hobbies:** International travel and touring to Europe & Russia to DJ at the largest dance music events in the world.

**Favorite vacation:** Euro-Russian DJ tour to Berlin, Dusseldorf, Amsterdam, Rotterdam, Moscow, Paris and Rome.

**Awards:** One of the top 10 agents of 2005 at CBRB 120th Street; 2005 Drum & Bass Scratch Master.

**Greatest professional accomplishment:** The closing of three deals during my first three months. They were my most exciting accomplishments and a great start!

**Business goals you'd like to achieve:** Providing real estate service to foreign speakers through the languages I am forever a student of.

**What's your inspiration professionally:** Both of my parents building and selling homes has given me a priceless knowledge of structures and the current market.

**Highest-priced home sold:** \$500,000

**Any other family in real estate industry:** My mom is the #1 Top Producer in Ocean City, and my father was a local custom-home builder.

**Any advice for rookies:** Try to find a position as a salaried real estate assistant to an experienced, successful, busy REALTOR®, and mimic their methods of success in your personal business.

**Business philosophy:** DREAM the life!

**Life philosophy:** LIVE the dream!

**Education:** 2004 Graduate of the University of South Florida in Tampa for international relations and Spanish.

**Describe your personal dream house:** A house on a small island that is completely separated from the mainland for maximum privacy with a ferry that must be used to gain access to and from the property.

**MARY McCACKEN**

Long & Foster Real Estate, Inc.

**Age:** 32

**Year started:** 2004

**How did you get started in real estate?:** I started working in vacation rentals and naturally

progressed to sales

**Community/outside interests:** Ocean City Elementary School PTA, teacher's assistant, volunteer for the Humane Society and Lions Club Military Support.

**Hobbies:** Bike riding, playing tennis, spending time at the beach.

**When not working, I'm:** Spending time with my son (hopefully at the beach!)

**Favorite getaway spot:** 116th Street Beach

**Awards:** Directors Club, 2004; Chairman's Club and Eastern Shore Region Honor Society Award, 2005

**Greatest professional accomplishment:** Receiving the Eastern Shore Region Honor Society Award; settling 14 transactions in my first 12 months.

**Business goals:** I would like to consistently increase my sales volume each year, and gain education and experience.

**What is your area of specialty:** Investment and oceanfront properties

**What's your inspiration professionally:** Clients

**Highest-priced home sold:** \$714,900

**Describe the most memorable house you've been involved with:** My very first weekend working, I sat at an open house in a very unattractive property, which I chose because of its location for getting traffic. I not only sold that property, but listed the buyers' other Ocean City property that same day!

**Describe your most challenging experience buying or selling a house:** My clients had purchased a property right at the peak of the market in the fall of 2005 for the express reason to 'flip it.' Then the market started to slowdown, and the wife got a surprise pregnancy. So the pressure was on to sell their newly refurbished property. When I wrote the contract for my clients it was the best feeling ever!

**Advice for rookies:** Work, work, work—it works!

**Life philosophy:** Time with family and friends is irreplaceable. So work hard, but make time for those important people.

**Family:** 7-year-old son, Adam

**Education:** BA in business from the University of

Please see **YOUNG GUNS**, Page 10

# Balancing Professional, Home Life Key to Happiness

## YOUNG GUNS, Continued From Page 9

Pittsburgh, graduated 1996.

**Describe your dream house:** Two-level plantation style house (yellow) with a big veranda that wraps around, a few decks off the bedrooms, overlooking the open bay (how much would that cost me!!!!)

### THE BEACH GROUP

(aka Leslie Smith & Mia McCarthy)  
Long & Foster Real Estate, Inc.

**Age:** Leslie, 36; Mia, 39

**Year started:** 2004

**How did you get started in real estate?:** Both of us are business owners and always had a desire to build a real estate career.

**Licenses:** Licensed in both MD and DE

**Volunteering:** Leslie has been chairwoman of the Showell Elementary School annual PTA fundraiser/crab feast, homeroom mom for her

daughter Lexi's second grade class and team mom for her daughter's soccer team. Most important is spending quality time with our families.

**Hobbies:** Both of us enjoy exercise, biking, walking, golfing, and getting to the beach.

**Favorite getaway/vacation spot:** Mia's would be St. Lucia; Leslie's would be Hawaii.

**Awards:** Long & Foster Chairman's Club, Gold Team Members, and CAR Gold Team Award.

**Business goals:** To continue to build our referral business as it's a big part of our business.

**What is your area of specialty:** We have worked hard to establish ourselves in the 9400 Building in Ocean City. We work in the Ocean City, Ocean Pines and the Berlin areas as well, equally as listing and selling agents.

**What's your inspiration professionally:** Our children. We want to show them that hard work and determination creates success both inside and out. That there's nothing you can't do!

**Describe the most memorable house you've**

**been involved with:** Working with a local police officer and his wife to purchase their first home together. They were so excited and grateful and that made us love our jobs even more.

**Any advice for rookies:** Blood, sweat and tears. Money isn't going to fall into your lap. You must go into this business with determination, hard work and lots of long hours. There were many, many open houses that we did in good faith and in return met future clients, which helped our business to grow.

**Life philosophy:** Put good karma into the universe in hopes that it comes back.

**Family:** Leslie's husband is Doug, she has three daughters, Cate, Emily and Lexi. Mia's husband is Kevin, and they have a daughter Kelsey.

**Pets:** Leslie has two malteses, Mackie and Mitch. Mia has a dog, Sammy, three cats and a bird.

**Describe your personal dream house:** On the beach, lots of windows, maintenance-free, state-of-the-art kitchen, professionally decorated, and a cleaning lady.

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# GOING GREEN

## Many Homeowners Going Green to Save Some Green

Most people have preconceived notions about what it means to go “green.” You may think of big changes such as hybrid cars, low-flow toilets, or solar panels. Or you may think simpler green thoughts, such as recycling habits, or even Kermit the Frog. No matter what comes to mind, many view going green as something that is either too complicated, too expensive, or just ‘not for me.’ But despite many misconceptions, and the well known wisdom of everyone’s favorite Muppet, it can be easy to be green.

According to data collected by the National Association of Home Builders (NAHB), there was a 20% increase in 2005 among homeowners who were focusing their attention on green building issues. That number is expected to jump to a 30% increase this year. But why this newfound popularity for being green?

One of the biggest reasons may be the financial advantages to going green. Even though building a new green home will average around 10% more in construction costs, the increased premium is often more than worth it in the long run. And as building green evolves, many contractors learn how to deal with it more efficiently, which can ultimately bring the cost even further down. “Our builders give us examples of how building green is saving them on their bottom line—savings that eventually find the way back to the homeowners,” says Emily English, green building manager for NAHB.

With rising energy prices a major concern for homeowners, it’s a welcome benefit that many aspects of building green can provide relief in energy costs. Energy-efficient windows incorporate low-emittance technology that keep homes cooler in the summer and keep heat from

escaping during the winter. Newer toilets use redesigned bowls to reduce water usage but still function as efficiently as higher-flow models. Advanced shower and sink faucet aerators provide the same flow regardless of pressure to reduce water use and the energy required to heat it. Of course, these aren’t just items to be included into a newly built home. Most energy saving appliances can be easily installed in existing homes, even older ones, creating immediate energy savings and increasing the home’s appeal to potential buyers.

And it’s not just newer technologies that can make a home green. Simple landscaping changes can also play a big part. Tree preservation and placement can reduce energy and landscaping costs, as well as filter out pollutants, improving the air quality around your home. According to English, another low-tech, high-yield tactic involves Xeriscaping, or using only native plants to reduce the need for watering, fertilizer, and pesticides, as well as to provide shading, temperature control, and to control the amount of natural light in a home. “Plants and trees are very important. They are always helpful to have on the property,” said English.

And according to a recent survey conducted by Project Evergreen, a non-profit group which raises awareness about the benefits of environmentally friendly landscaping, 90% of homeowners believe that landscaping can improve their home value. But there’s more than simply a curb value appeal to a new landscaping approach. According to Den Gardner, executive director for Project Evergreen, “We don’t always connect the dots between the economic, environmental, and lifestyle benefits they provide.”

Gardner says it’s the simple things that can make a yard environmentally friendly, such as mowing and watering at the right times and adding nutrients to the soil. He also says that there is a misconception about the cost of green-friendly landscaping. Many big-box stores now offer the same high quality materials that professionals would use, so do-it-yourselfers can save money. “More and more consumers are making landscaping a part of their lifestyle,” said Gardner.

There are currently two sets of guidelines which exist to encourage homeowners to build green. The NAHB Model Green Home Building Guidelines and the U.S. Green Building Council’s Leadership in Energy and Environmental Design (LEED) for Homes initiative. In addition, the Energy Policy Act of 2005 encourages energy efficiency by offering tax credits to those homeowners who build green. But despite a growing number of forces working hard to get the message out, the idea behind going green is still often misunderstood.

One assumption associated with building green is that the house has to be built differently and made to look unique, setting it apart from non-green homes. That simply is not the case said English. “A green home can look just like the house next door. It’s just built smarter.”



  
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