

August, 2008

Dear Friends,



Don and I have known for several years of a non-profit organization in Ventura County that's making a profound difference in our community called Royal Family Kids Camp (RFKC). It puts on a one week camp for kids ages 7 – 11 who are in the county foster care system. The Ventura County Star had a great article on May 17<sup>th</sup> on the background of RFKC and the impact it has on the lives of the campers and staffers.



Ken and Lyz Klopman, camp coordinators, said "We do not attempt to undo any of the damage in the children's lives - we simply show the children that a positive experience with a loving adult role model is possible and that they can succeed because they've done so at



camp... Many campers discover what it feels like to have a caring family as counselors and staff shower them with encouragement, and continually affirm them through compassionate care and love”.



A small part that Don and I contribute to RFKC is lending them our moving truck for the week. The truck is used to carry all the staff luggage and camp supplies plus use it for secure storage during the week. We loan our truck to other non-profits, but this cause brings us great satisfaction in helping RFKC make a huge difference in the lives of these little ones! **By the way** – Don didn't like his “mug” shot on the truck, so we removed the “wrap”. It's just plain white now. Don says I should put my mug shot there instead. Yeah, right...!!



## On to real estate...

Our home buyer workshop and Ventura REO “speed dating” caravan of bank owned homes in July was a great success. We're in a strong buyers market now, with the number of homes sold screaming up while home prices in certain sectors are downward. The entry level marketplace still has a high proportion of foreclosures and many homes are still on the market in “short pay” status which muddies the waters. It'll be interesting to see how the fall plays out with the HUGE federal housing bill that was just signed into law.

Have a great continuing summer, and if you know anyone interested in buying or selling, we love referrals!

**We addressed in the June newsletter: Is this a good time to buy or not?**

**We're starting to see more general media stories now about when to buy. Another case in point:**

**The main article on the front page of the Business section of the Los Angeles Times on Sunday, August 3<sup>rd</sup>, was "Your Money – Should you buy now?" written by Peter Hong.**

The author listed the pros and cons of buying now. The obvious con was maybe home prices will continue to fall.

But the author stated some benefits and pros under "Why Wait?". First, as a homeowner you won't be evicted. We currently have a buyer client who just faced that scenario – the landlord wants to sell now! With a fixed rate mortgage, your payments will remain the same and you can start building equity and someday own it free and clear. It's easier to start now and not, say, 5 years from now.

The author also said there's an advantage of living in an environment that you control. "Houses are lifestyle assets, not investments" – a quote from a Pacific Palisades financial planner. The planner believes that "those waiting for a market bottom may be approaching homeownership the wrong way. As long as one stays within one's means, the financial risks of homeownership diminish over time".

**Make a purchase decision based on your lifestyle and needs, not the market.**

The author quotes another financial planner who stated that a home is almost always a smart investment, even if values do temporarily decline. "Stop fixating on short-term price moves; think about long-term rent savings. Buying a house is risky, but waiting is risky too".

The author ended the article with "words to the wise".

1. **Don't count on price appreciation.** If you can't afford a house now, don't presume you'll be able to tap an increase in your home equity to refinance it.
2. **Don't expect a house to make you financially stable.** You must have a steady and reliable income stream. Don't buy in the belief that simply owning a home will provide financial stability.
3. **Don't buy if you think you may be moving soon.** A good rule of thumb is that you're going to live in your home at least 3 – 5 years.

**When the general media starts thinking it's a good time to buy, public perceptions will follow.**

### **Current statistics for July from our blog...**

We track "Pendings" – homes that have just gone into escrow to see where the marketplace is going. On our blog, click on [July pendings - a strong leading indicator of real estate](#) to see what's happening! Hint: Oxnard is still screaming (compared to July, 2007) and Ventura and Camarillo are way up.

To see the latest statistics on asking prices, selling prices, days on the market, etc, on our blog click on [July sold statistics for Ventura, Camarillo and Oxnard](#).

**The blog website is [www.VenturaRealEstateBlog.com](http://www.VenturaRealEstateBlog.com)!  
Enjoy your summer!**