

One COMMON VOICE

GROUP PRESIDENT'S LETTER

APRIL SHOWERS BRING MAY FLOWERS, and the spring market is now in full bloom. We have now been together for six months, and the word is getting out. We have added over fifty new Agents, new and experienced, from many of our competitors. The real estate community is watching us grow, and we continue to add new tools to help us compete in a challenging market.

So what are the obstacles facing us today? Buyers can't make up their minds and sellers won't lower prices. Consumer perception of what's happening in the market can make or break the market.

I hear all the time: "The market is slow...it's a lousy time to sell...I need to offer 20% less than asking." It's important to understand the difference between reality and consumer perception.

The truth is that the number of sales is up from January – April 2007 versus one year ago for both single family homes and condos. Prices are down less than 1.5% for single family and up just under 1% for condos. Buyers are out there in droves looking at open houses.

It's important to realize the consumer has access to more data than in the past and we have to sift through and interpret that data to help the

consumer make informed decisions. We can't work off of feelings and perception. The buyer doesn't have to buy, and there's a lot to pick from. They need our help; the Boy Scout motto "be prepared" is critical.

I believe we have the best agents in the business to help our clients, and if we are more prepared than our competition we will continue to outpace the market.

ALAN LYMAN/GROUP PRESIDENT



UNCOMMON

Approach

NEW RECRUITING TEAM LAUNCHES AGENT REFERRAL PROMOTION JUNE 1

Drive agent referrals, and you could drive a new Lexus to work in 2008 and 2009!

By Steve Leavey, Group President

I OFTEN HEAR, "Why should I help bring more agents to Commonwealth? That's more competition for me!" As an Independent Contractor, it's hard not to feel that way. When I first entered this industry, I felt that way too, but over time I realized my success is not solely my own. Our client relationships start on high ground because of the number of CENTURY 21 Commonwealth real estate signs they see around town. More signs translate to more influence and a stronger commitment to quality.

Never was this more apparent than when I tried to get a listing in a town that was not in our area, or in an area with a weak CENTURY 21 franchise. I felt like I had a large hill to climb to prove myself. In the end, better market share was worth the tradeoff when we have so many people that we run out of coffee at sales meetings.

WE NEED MORE SIGNS IN MORE YARDS. It's as simple as that. CENTURY 21 Commonwealth has 15 great offices, but we won't continue to thrive if we don't invest in our growth.

To that end, CENTURY 21 Commonwealth has created a **full-time, centralized recruiting team**. This team consists of two recruiters, **Carol Jordon** and **Lauren Patsio**, based out of our Natick office. This team will work tirelessly to bring the most qualified new and experienced sales associates to your office.

One of our key tools to finding great people is the **Real Estate Simulator**. This online resource is on our CommonMoves.com career page, and it allows a prospect to take a "test drive" in real estate. Prospects receive feedback on their fit as a sales associate, and our recruiting team gains valuable insight on the candidate's potential. This tool, combined with our diligent recruiters will hire the best available agents in your market area.

But we can't do it alone. We need your support! **Be on the lookout for great people!** In addition to the recruiting bonus offered for new and experienced agents of \$2,500 and \$5,000 respectively, we are sponsoring an exciting agent referral promotion for the rest of 2007, starting June 1st.

Here's how it works:

BRING A FRIEND TO WORK IN 2007, AND DRIVE A LEXUS TO WORK IN 2008 & 2009!

Call clients and write friends and family. Who do YOU know that would help us make CENTURY 21 Commonwealth the best place to sell real estate in Massachusetts?

We want to hire people that you would want to work with, so fire up your Palm Pilots and "Bring an Agent To Work" with us!

BY THE Numbers

585	Commonwealth Total Listing Inventory (units)
\$232,181,309	Closed Sales Volume YTD
523	Closed Sides YTD
4th	Mass Ranking on YTD Sales Volume
15th	National CENTURY 21 Ranking
92	Relocation & Company Generated Referrals YTD
1,468	Lead Router Leads Generated YTD
15,192	Unique visitors to CommonMoves.com YTD

WELCOME TO OUR NEW CENTURY 21 COMMONWEALTH TEAM MEMBERS

The Hopkinton office welcomes **Max Valenca**, and the mother-daughter team of **Lavonne Suwalski** and **Jennifer Suwalski-Golden**. All are new to the industry.

The Medfield office welcomes **Kelly Hinds** to their team. Kelly is new to the industry.

Gina Perraa joins the Winchester office as a sales associate. She brings a background of property management and recruiting for an Investment & Development firm in Boston.

The Somerville office welcomes back **Patty O'Neil**, who had been living and working in Florida.

LUXURY HYBRID UTILITY VEHICLE



Details: All agent referrals made from June 1st through November 30th 2007 are eligible. Every Commonwealth Sales Associate who refers two or more candidates to ANY Commonwealth office who are ultimately hired and affiliate with Commonwealth prior to 12/31/2007 will be entered into a drawing to receive a leased Lexus GS Hybrid for 24 months. For every additional referral hired in 2007, an additional entry will be made. Referrals must be made per the Agent Referral policy. The drawing will take place at the Commonwealth Holiday Party in December 2007. **See your Manager for more details on this exciting promotion.**

TIP #1

Having a run on selling homes is a wonderful thing. The worst thing an agent can do is get so involved in all of the tasks that they forget to find new business. Every week make at least 50 outbound prospecting phone calls. You may feel like you do not have 50 people to call, but you do. Call your best friend and ask them if they know of anyone who is looking to move. Or better yet, ask your friend if they would help you schedule an appointment with that person. Call all the people that you have sold homes to and see if they know of anyone planning on selling. Call a neighbor or a family member. Carving out time in your day to find new business will ensure that you are not on a real estate roller coaster.

KANDI PITRUS / VICE PRESIDENT
MEDFIELD OFFICE

FINDING COMMONGROUND

What are the essential absolute “must-have” qualities that make a good realtor? Enthusiasm. You can have degrees from the best schools, a high IQ, an impressive resume, but without enthusiasm, who cares? People don’t want to work with somebody who’s not excited about what they’re doing. Recently the National Association of Realtors asked home-buyers to rank the most important qualities in a realtor. The answers were enthusiasm, honesty, and knowledge, in that order.

How has the business changed since you started? The business itself hasn’t changed. It’s still about meeting people and helping them accomplish their goals. How we transact the business has changed. I still remember the day we got this thing called a “fax machine” in our office. The amount information out there is incredible, but ultimately, it’s still about meeting people and making connections.

What are we not doing enough of these days? We don’t talk to strangers enough. I get out all the time and just talk to people and evangelize a little about CENTURY 21 Commonwealth. We have a great group of people, a great team of agents, bright owners and managers and we need to get out and tell that story more often.

What do you like about this business? Everyday you have a chance to work on a fresh slate. Anything you want to make happen, you can make happen.

What don’t you like? What’s not to like? If this is the game you’re in, then play it. If you’re not excited every day, you need to find a different game.

The best advice someone ever gave me was: “No buyer was ever unhappy when they got the house they wanted.” I’ve found it to be true. Whatever the market conditions may be at the time, it’s not about the “deal” a buyer gets, it’s about the house.

The worst advice someone ever gave me was: Here, smoke this.

Would you share one favorite “trade secret”: When we are working for our clients in a negotiation, it’s fundamental to stay objective and not buy into any of the emotions at the table. We will get further and get more if we remain dispassionate. He who says the least, gets the most. Realtors only get themselves in trouble when they open their mouths.



Name: Robert Byrne
Title: Group President
Office: Needham
Hometown: Needham
Where you live now: Boston

Years with Century 21: 1998 when bought company from my parents. Prior to that, I was in real estate in Seattle.

Family: Married to Kathleen Byrne (Group President). We have two English Springer Spaniels. We call “the girls” Jamie and Josie.

In my spare time you’ll find me: Playing the guitar, reading, or doing stuff around the house.

In my iPod right now: You name it, it’s in there. I just got a new CD by Bruce Hornsby and Ricky Scaggs.

Right now I’m reading: Three Nights in August; a biography of Michael Collins; The Tender Bar, and The History of the Irish in America.

Not many people know that I: Have dual citizenship, in Ireland.



Name: Nancy Pallotta
Office: Winchester
Hometown: Winchester

of years with CENTURY 21: 3 ½. I had been in PR/marketing and made the leap into real estate after a horrible experience I had buying investment property. I took the real estate class just to educate myself, but in the process found that I loved it.

Achievements: Two year Master’s award winner (Ruby), Centurion Award Winner, ranked #9 in New England

Family: Married and two boys, Nick (14) and Scott (16) and an English Bulldog, Buttercup

What makes you good at your job? I’m a really good listener. It makes a tremendous difference when you can really hear and accommodate your client’s needs rather than make assumptions.

How do you handle a “challenging” client? Understand clients’ expectations by simply asking... you can nip anything unrealistic in the bud. Try to get a good read on your customer and figure out how to talk to them. There are many ways to deliver a message; deliver it in a way they’ll respond to.

What’s an example of outstanding “above and beyond” customer service? I’ve helped clients moving from out of state get their kids enrolled in school or town sports. I’ve mopped up water with a dry vac after a rain storm when I knew my clients were away. A little extra effort goes a long way.

What trends are you seeing right now? I see agents using “it’s a buyer’s market” as a scare tactic with sellers, and setting listings under the market value to make a quick sale. It’s a disservice and you’re leaving money on the table for your seller. In the long run, tactics like that will only hurt you.

On the flip side, some customers come in with unrealistic expectations about what a “buyer’s market” really means. Even though you present them with hard data about what they can expect, they think you have some miraculous negotiating technique that’s going to convince a seller to cut the price of their home in half. You have to take care to set their expectations from the start.

What are small things we can do to increase business? It sounds basic, but there’s a surprising lack of communication between brokers and clients. It’s an emotional, intense time for most of our clients, even though it’s what we do everyday. They want to hear from you, even if it’s a slow week. I’ll say in the beginning, “I’m going to check in with you every Tuesday,” and then I do, because they expect me to keep them posted.

The last new thing I learned was: When you’re putting in an offer, the number you put in for the inspection allowance can make or break a deal. A higher number indicates a more serious offer. I’ve seen it making or breaking deals recently.

of ground THE COMMONWEALTH

Congratulations to **Diana Roberts** who recognized as Top Producing Agent in the Wakefield office for the month of April. Diana joined our team in 1989. She specializes in new construction, large and small home and townhouse developments, and over 55 communities. Diana is a recipient of the “Centurion Award” and numerous others throughout her career. Diana was also our Top Producing Agent for 2005.



Their 14-year-old son got involved in Relay for Life because he had lost his mother to cancer. Eventually he became the local chair, a position he passed on to Becky.

The Somerville office is proud to be number one in Somerville for single-family, multi-family, and commercial properties, both for dollar volume and units.

For the first time, the Cambridge office is in the top ten in Cambridge market share, both by sides and by dollar volume.

Congratulations to **Judith Watkinson** from the Somerville office for not assuming the buyer really knows what they want to buy. In March, Judith accepted a buyer referral lead looking for a condominium in the \$500,000 range. She ended up selling them a \$1,740,000 single family in Cambridge.



Congratulations to our “Brian Buffini ~ 100 Days To Greatness” graduates **Patty Anderson, Chris Barnard, Liz Darby, Cindy Houle & Nancy Pallotta**. Fantastic work!

The Wakefield office held a party on May 10th to say goodbye to long-time office assistant **Danielle Larson** who will be graduating from Regis College and moving to a position working with special needs children in the Wakefield School system. Congratulations, Danielle! We will miss you.

The Needham office is proud to support their local Relay For Life, thanks to the participation of **Becky Gorman**, who is this year’s event Chair. Becky got involved through a past customer/family. Years ago, Becky and teammate **Karen Gorman** sold a home to a couple getting married and combining households.



NEWS FLASH:

Century 21 Commonwealth has 29 agents in the top 100 agents for Century 21 Eastern New England

13 out of our 15 Commonwealth offices are in the top 100 offices for Century 21 Eastern New England

Commonwealth is listed as the #1 company out of the top 100 companies for Century 21 Eastern New England

Thanks to all of you for being part of the “One Perfect Team”... go for the gold!

ONE PERFECT

Chance
TO WIN AN IPOD!

This month’s iPod contest winners downloaded lady luck in the company’s “One Perfect Chance” contest. This month’s winners are:

Christina Peledje of Medford, who won an iPod at an open house hosted by **Deb Rumon** of the Winchester office.

Nelson Ubaldo of N. Massapequa, NY, walked into Winchester agent **Chris Barnard’s** Sunday Open House and walked out with a free iPod! And who says “never, never on a Sunday”...



Winner **Hans Chew** of Somerville is working with **Francoise Han** of the Cambridge office, and this month’s final winner is **Jen Lavin**, client of agent **Helen Praysman** of Somerville.

Jen accepted the iPod on behalf of her boyfriend’s daughter **Neva**, 8, who actually completed the winning entry form.



TIP #2

Get back to the basics and do a monthly mailing. Agents that get busy tend to get focused on selling, and forget to do prospecting mailings. With the market heating up, an agent can get defocused on developing business. If you do not stay in front of your prospects, they will forget about you. Mail to your customers, advertise on shopping carts, post flyers around town and most of all attend town events so the population sees your face.

KANDI PITRUS / VICE PRESIDENT
MEDFIELD OFFICE

ANOTHER UNCOMMON IDEA

Marie Zorn of the Medfield office has an innovative way to reconnect with past clients of her real estate practice and her former profession, while networking to meet new clients.

Marie was formerly a personal chef, so she signed up to be a guest chef at Medfield’s popular local bistro, Zebra’s. Marie created a great menu, invited all her clients, neighbors, and friends, wrote a press release, and promoted the event to ensure great attendance. At the event, she handed out recipe cards with the evening’s menu and her real estate contact information. The night was a great success, and she was able to combine and her two worlds effortlessly in a relaxed and fun atmosphere.