

WAVE

Ezine of Arizona Regional Multiple Listing Service, Inc.

December / January 2011

- 05 30th Anniversary Calendar of Events
- 06 ARMLS - 30 Years and Counting
- 10 Content is King
- 16 Schooling Habits of Sales
- 18 ARMLS Now Makes House Calls - No Agent Left Behind
- 24 Lost Our Home Pet Foundation - Holiday Fur-riendraiser

people

- 03 Message from the CEO - Bob Bemis
- 22 Title Trainer Spotlight - Bryan Jones - Clear Title Agency of Arizona

data integrity

- 12 Lockbox and Key Rules

mls

- 09 Forms, Forms Everywhere - Profile Sheets

products

- 14 RealFutureCRM
- 20 The Google Universe

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WAVE is a bimonthly publication of ARMLS® dedicated to communication and outreach to its stakeholders.

message

from the **CEO**

Where were you on June 4, 1982?

Some significant things happened that year:

The Justice Department broke up the AT&T phone monopoly.

Commodore introduced the Model 64 home computer at the Consumer Electronics Show. (They sold 12 million in the next 12 years.)

Time Magazine's Man of the Year was given for the first time to a non-human, the **com-puter**.

The first compact discs (CDs) were introduced in Germany.

The first emoticons (smileys) were posted online at Carnegie Mellon University to denote jokes from serious comments.

Gas was 91 cents per gallon, postage was 20 cents, and the average new three bed/ two bath home cost \$82,200.

In Arizona, a group of 18 progressive thinkers formed the first major metropolitan regional computerized MLS in the country – ARMLS®. We owe them a huge tribute for thinking not only out of the box, but out of this world. Gary Melcher, The Melcher Agency, was its first president with Bob Kundrath (now deceased) as the first CEO. (The ARMLS Kundrath Training Center bears his name in memoriam.)

In 2012 we are celebrating ARMLS's 30th Anniversary with commemorative events all year. If it weren't for the grand vision of Brokers, Agents, and Associations, we might still be using MLS books and trading listing information on the backs of cocktail napkins.

As we honor our past, please join us in some of the celebrations to be held throughout 2012. Watch your Inbox and the Training & Events tab on www.armls.com for details.

Full Page Graphic

2012 Calendar of Events

ARMLS plans to celebrate in style with events, training and giveaways.
Mark your calendars and be a part of the party!

Full Page Graphic –
schedule must be viewed
in full PDF

In 1982, **Gary Melcher** of The Melcher Agency was named the first President of ARMLS. Gary, along with eleven other stalwart Realtors (**Will Burgener, Jack Taylor, Dan Hoglund, Frances Rang, Al Mabry, Al Leffler, Jim Sasser, Marty Marino, Ron Sullivan, Dave Froelich and Gary Underhill**) formed the first ARMLS Board of Directors, embarking on a brave new world.

Before 1982, three MLSs, owned by the Scottsdale, Mesa-Tempe-Chandler and Phoenix Boards (Glendale shared with Phoenix), provided MLS services to Valley Realtors. Those who worked wide swaths of the Valley of necessity belonged to multiple Boards and MLSs. Combining MLS services into one MLS offered a huge benefit to Realtors, but great challenges to the visionaries. It took a full two years of discussions to work out the logistics and governance.

ARMLS interviewed Gary Melcher to learn more:

“Phoenix had about 51% of the Realtors in the Valley at the time. They came up with the idea of giving each of the Boards three votes regardless of membership, and that surprisingly worked. Nationally, large metropolitan Brokers were forming their own MLSs (e.g., Atlanta), rather than join multiple boards. Our Boards did not want to squeeze out the small Broker. Dale Rector of Realty Executives pressured the Boards to form one MLS. He corralled other large Brokers to consider a Broker-owned entity, and even incorporated Valleywide MLS. That move became the catalyst the Boards needed and the talks heated up.

“We would meet most of the time in the basement of the Scottsdale Board. All our discussions were very collegial. We wanted it to happen but there was so much to work through. All the meetings were open. Diane Scherer (current Association Executive at PAR) at the time worked for Dale Rector. She would do reconnaissance for Dale, reporting back on progress. In those days everyone smoked and during the meeting the smoke was thick and the ashtrays overflowed. After the meetings we would all go out together and through the process we became friends.”

“ARMLS was initially housed at the Phoenix Board with Phoenix lending us Bob Kundrath. His MLS knowledge was a godsend for the RFP (request for proposal). After a very productive vendor bidding war, PRC was awarded the contract. Phoenix lent ARMLS the \$1,500 for start up with the whole package costing \$5,000. Bob Kundrath became the first CEO and served until his death in 1989. Bob Rucker, who worked for PRC in 1982, was present at most of the open meetings. He was the natural choice to take over and served as CEO until his retirement in 2007 when Bob Bemis took the CEO reins.”

ARMLS Note: All three ARMLS CEOs have been named Bob.

Some of our past leaders.

I am begging ARMLS to fix the conflict between iPad and flexmls.

A.M. Scottsdale

This topic definitely requires a **frank answer** due to the mass confusion about what works, what doesn't, why it isn't perfect yet, who is working on it and WHEN oh WHEN will all of the flexmls features be completely available on the iPad?

THE SHORT ANSWER: The full version of flexmls (armls.flexmls.com) is NOT currently supported when accessed by iPad. Use of the iPad is only fully supported in the mobile version of flexmls (m.flexmls.com).

THE DETAILS: Well that seems reasonable, so why isn't that good enough? It isn't good enough because **the iPad does work in flexmls for most tasks**. Several Flash charts were updated so they would display properly. Other smaller issues, like scrolling, were addressed and now function with the iPad. There are some items in the system which continue to be problematic on the iPad, like Mapping for example. So let's make up a number and say that 85% of the system is usable on the iPad.

The mobile version of flexmls is intended to get Agents the information they need when they need it. Therefore the logical starting place is searching, which has been the focus previously. There was also much effort put into making sure the site will work on as many devices as possible. ARMLS and FBS are working to bring more features found in flexmls to the mobile site. However, it is unlikely that the mobile site will ever be able to accomplish everything currently available in the full flexmls system. So the focus will remain on core tasks that are time sensitive and may need to be done from the field. So let's make up another number that 25% of the full flexmls features are available via the mobile site.

Now here's the real bottom line: using your iPad with flexmls at armls.flexmls.com will get you 85% out of 100% of the standard flexmls features, while using the mobile site at m.flexmls.com allows you 100% access to 25% of the standard flexmls features, as intended for quick field use. It is your decision as to which works best for your needs.

THE FUTURE: While iPad is not currently fully supported for use with flexmls, they are working on it. FBS is working to improve the use of the map to pinch zoom and to pan. They are also working on other minor bugs that cause inconsistent behavior when using the print and email. They are committed to addressing iPad issues, but the path to 100% compatibility is a long one. What you can expect is that as time goes on more and more features will become accessible, rather than a single incident of everything suddenly working.

Forms, Forms Everywhere...

When it comes to tracking down **ARMLS Profile Sheets**, there are several options. Unfortunately, along with multiple options come multiple questions about why there are different versions floating around and which version our Subscribers should use.

Where are the different versions?

ARMLS profile sheets can be found in three locations: flexmls, armls.com, and zipForm.

Different versions of the forms exist due to the time and resources it takes to update each format. The most up to date versions will be those accessed directly from flexmls. The flexmls profile sheets will match the current listing input pages, so they will always contain the latest changes.

The PDF versions on armls.com are the next most current version. These versions were placed on the site as a convenience for anyone needing quick access to the forms. These files can be saved to a user's computer for ease of access and portability, and are updated multiple times a year.

zipForm versions of the profile sheets offer the most features and options of what to do with the form once data has been entered. These are now being updated a handful of times a year. ARMLS is committed to keeping these versions from becoming too outdated, something that was an issue in the past. Updating these versions is more involved in both effort and resources, thus the less frequent updates.

What's the best practice?

One of the biggest complaints about profile sheets is double input. To use the zipForm versions, the listing data needs to first be input there, and later the actual listing entered into flexmls. The only way to avoid this is to begin entry in flexmls and skip zipForms altogether. Then you can use the incomplete listing you have created to populate a profile sheet you print from flexmls. ~~The downside here is that you lose out on the features of zipForms you may like to use.~~

Most Agents have figured out which version works best for their particular needs. For those who were unsure, or those who made the choice when different versions were updated less frequently, we hope this information helps you make an informed decision. Each Subscriber will have to weigh what is important to them and assess which version works best for their needs: most current data vs. convenience vs. features. Just make sure to check with your Broker to confirm the process you choose works for them.

Common wisdom in the digital real estate space is to be everywhere your customers are online.

Example: Your customers read blogs and are on Facebook, so open a blog and get on Facebook.

Getting online is the first step, but creating or sharing great content trumps everything else because **content is King.**

What is Content?

Content, information of value, really drives the Internet and social networking websites. Where would Google be without Web pages to store? What if Facebook didn't have games, photos or status updates? These websites simply wouldn't exist because there would be nothing to do on them.

What is Good Content and How Do I Find It?

Good content is tailored for a specific audience.

Look at the following three article titles. Which would be most appealing to a prospective homeowner?

1. Fannie Mae Short Sale Assistance Desk Launches in Arizona
2. Mortgage Interest Rates Hit Record Low
3. Kim Kardashian Files for Divorce

The first choice would be a great topic if you were ARMLS and your focus was fellow Subscribers. Option number two is the correct choice, a prospective homeowner would benefit from knowing about home affordability. Number three could work in some abstract scenario, but are you, the Realtor, the best source for this information?

Good content has a voice.

This is the key to engagement. The winning article from above can be presented with many different voices:

1. Mortgage Interest Rates Hit Record Low
2. Buy Now: Mortgage Interest Rates Hit Record Low
3. Good News for Home Buyers: Mortgage Interest Rates Hit Record Low

The first choice is flat and lacks a voice altogether. Option two is an aggressive voice, but at least there is a voice. The winner is option three as it enlists conversation by appealing to the home buyer. A sheer mention of your audience is an easy way to engage.

Good content is easy to find

and could be as simple as checking the news. [Google News](#) is a great way to look for real estate related news from many sources. Looking at what your readers, followers or fans are talking about online is also a good way to discover content. Good content doesn't always have to come from others sources, as your own interesting experiences and anecdotes could do well online. Your own real estate stories can add to your authority and credibility.

The Mousetrap

Whether you're opening a new blog or starting out on a social network, make content the "cheese" in your trap. Be careful not to lose your focus on content. Common distractions from good content development are:

Spending too much time on design – pick a basic design. Work to develop tempting content first, then work on that blog template.

Focusing on how many fans, friends or followers you have instead of content – everyone starts out with no fans and zero readers.

Take a good look at the real estate bloggers in the Valley. What are they doing right and what could you do better? The social media mousetrap is wide open, and your content is the lure.

Lockbox and Key Rules

Section 13 of the ARMLS Rules and Regulations addresses Lockboxes and electronic keys. It regulates when a Subscriber is allowed to place a lockbox on a property, permission to access the listed property via lockbox, removal of a key from the lockbox, lockbox removal guidelines and who is allowed to use the electronic Lockbox key.

Underlying these rules is the safety of our Subscribers and their clients. Violations involving Lockboxes and electronic keys are considered serious in nature, as reflected in more severe penalties associated with their violation.

The penalties are covered in Section 5, Lockbox and Electronic Key Violations and Fine of the **ARMLS Penalty Policy**.

The three most common Lockbox and electronic key violations are:

Allowing another person to use your electronic Lockbox key (Rule 13.3)

Since the lockbox Key is the responsibility of the assignee, it should never be shared with *anyone*, not with team members, co-list Agent, spouse or even with clients. Sharing a key puts the unauthorized key user and the homeowners at risk. Disclosure of the key's personal identification or storing it in written format near the lockbox key is also prohibited. Subscribers without a key may contact our **ARMLS Support Centers** to apply for their own key.

Accessing the Lockbox and retrieving the listing property key without permission of the listing Subscriber (rule 13.4)

A listing Subscriber must first obtain the homeowner's permission to add the lockbox to the property, and then abide by the owner's request(s) to limit access to the property. Selling Agents should always review the showing instructions and the remarks field for special instructions to show the home. A best practice is consulting the current listing information either in print or electronically when arriving at the home.

Failure to remove the Lockbox from a listed property within 2 days from the date the listing is placed to Closed (sold or leased), Cancelled or Expired (Rule 13.5)

Lockboxes must be removed within 2 days from the date the status of the property is changed to Closed (sold or leased), Cancelled or Expired. The Lockbox owner is the person responsible for its removal. If you lend your lockbox to another Subscriber for his listing, the responsibility for its removal stays with you and does not transfer with the box to the Subscriber who borrowed it. If a violation of rule 13.5 occurs, the Lockbox owner will be notified and asked to remove the Lockbox from the property within 5 days to avoid a monetary penalty.

Make sure you are knowledgeable about all of the Lockbox Rules in Section 13 of the ARMLS Rules and Regulations, and Section 5 of the ARMLS Penalty Policy.

Click **here** to view the full copy of the ARMLS Rules and Regulations.

Click **here** to view the full copy of the ARMLS Penalty Policy.

*Contributor- Ana Billar
Data Integrity Manager*

Full page graphic explaining RealFutureCRM

Full page graphic of class schedule for RealFutureCRM.

Schooling Habits of Sales

Every month in its STAT newsletter ARMLS publishes the Pending Price Index™ (PPI) which forecasts average and median sales prices 30, 60 and 90 days into the future. The 90 day predictions are the least accurate when compared to the *actual* median and average prices, so ARMLS decided to dive into the pending property pool inside flexmls and learn about the schooling habits of traditional, foreclosure and short sales.

While PPI looks at pending properties in aggregate, we decided to identify individual pendings and follow them while they were navigating the currents in the contract-to-close process. We wanted to know which properties scheduled to close in thirty days actually made it on time. Those that didn't make it on time would move anticipated closing to the next month, and of those we wanted to know which ones made it on the new schedule. We carried this progressive string of delays for individual properties out six months and found some surprising habits.

In 2011 the monthly traditional sales to foreclosure to short sale ratio of pending property units scheduled to close in thirty days was typically 1 : 1: 1, while the same ratio looking at pending property dollar volume is approximately 4 : 2 or 3 : 2.

Traditional sales and forecloses proved to have greater reliability of closing on time than short sales. We suspect that actual Agent experiences in the field would bear this out. As we progressed each additional thirty days into the future, the makeup of the pool became more weighted with delayed short sales. When we followed the school of pendings all the way out to 180 days, approximately 95% of both traditional sales and foreclosures had closed, where as only approximately 68% of the short sales had closed.

In months where the dollar volume of short sales was significantly higher, the accuracy of our ninety day predictions suffered. At the end of our 180 day experimental swim in the pending pool, approximately 13.5% of the pendings, heavily weighted with short sales, still hadn't closed. At the time of this writing, we learned that approximately 65% of those that hadn't closed in 180 days had eventually fallen off, and approximately 17.5% actually closed.

*Contributor - Chris Heagerty, Director – Communication,
Professional and Business Development*

Full page graphic on ARMLS House Calls
must be viewed in full PDF

Full page graphic on ARMLS House Calls
must be viewed in full PDF

Google offers so many **free products** it can be overwhelming. Below is a synopsis of the most popular Google products our Subscribers have been using, as well as some new products.

Google Documents

Roll word processing, slideshow presentations and spreadsheets into one cloud based program and you have Google Documents. Because its focus is collaboration, Google Documents is more than a free Web-based alternative to Microsoft Office. Multiple users can work on the same document at one time.

Cost: **FREE**

Google Calendar

Google Calendar is a cloud based calendar that can be accessed from anywhere and on many devices. Google makes it easy to share and sync with other calendar applications. These calendars can also be published onto Web pages. There are many plug-ins to enhance Google Calendars.

Cost: **FREE**

Gmail

Email with fewer problems is Google's focus with Gmail. You can merge email accounts, organize messages automatically and more. Unlike Outlook, email threads are split into conversations. This makes for a cleaner looking inbox. Gmail is also cloud based so there is no software to install, and access is worldwide.

Cost: **FREE**

Google Voice

What Gmail is to email, Google Voice is to phone calls. Voice allows you to combine multiple phone numbers into one, transcribe voice mail into text and much more. Calls inside the U.S. are free and come with a free telephone number.

Cost: **FREE** for local and domestic calls, competitive prices for international calls

Google+

The newest Google product, Google+, is a social network which aims to integrate the Web. Google thinks content and people can be combined into one network. Google+ works a lot like Facebook where you can have a personal profile and a business page.

Cost: **FREE**

YouTube

Google purchased YouTube in 2006 and has since worked to integrate YouTube into its family of products. YouTube is simply a video website where anyone can upload video or create a video channel.

Cost: **FREE**

Google Maps / Earth

Fly as the crow flies with Google Maps, a mapping and satellite imaging tool. See what a street looks like from over a mile high or at street level. At a minimum, Google Maps is excellent for directions and figuring out a route to host multiple showings. Google Earth is a download with enhanced maps for serious Google Maps users.

Cost: **FREE**

Google offers many free products and cloud computing probably isn't a fad. Talk to your fellow Subscribers. How are they using these tools? As Carl Barks, an animator for Disney and creator of Scrooge McDuck, once said "Work smarter, not harder."

*Contributor - James Marcus,
Writer - Communication Specialist*

Title Trainer Spotlight

Bryan Jones, Business Development Officer, moved to Clear Title Agency of Arizona to work in the Paradise Valley and Biltmore offices in the spring of 2011 after seven years in the title industry. Bryan brings to his role as ARMLS Title Trainer a wealth of technology experience from his sales days selling mid-range and mainframe peripherals for IBM and phone systems for Nortel. He values his association with Clear Title which encourages personal growth and leadership.

A Columbus, Ohio native, Bryan attended San Diego University and graduated with a degree in International Business with an emphasis in Latin American Studies. He admires and respects Realtors as small business people who are willing to go it alone on their own ideas and plans. Bryan values his interaction with Agents through the Title Trainer program, "ARMLS has afforded [him] the opportunity to meet many new Agents which [he] might not have met without the platform of training them on flexmls. Training is invaluable to an Agent's success in the real estate industry and I feel privileged to assist them."

Currently Bryan is preparing for his wedding in December. He is active in the Paradise Valley Rotary and is passionate about life. Bryan believes that he has found balance. "Corny as it may be . . . 40 and making every moment count."

ARMLS thanks Bryan for his service to its Subscribers. You can reach Brian at (602)510-9351, (480) 278-8491 or bryan.jones@cleartitle-az.com.

"Making every moment count."

Theme: Know Your MLS

The online interactive version can be accessed here:
<http://www.armlsblog.com/WAVE-crossword.html>

The answers are
on the last page
of the ezine!

ACROSS

3. Day long training expo
10. Most violated ARMLS rule
11. Highest mountain in the Valley
14. Retiring association executive
15. Online conversation
19. Angelic instrument or refinance plan
21. Realtor property valuation
24. New movie about FBI Director
25. Ale maker or governor
26. Phoenix airport
27. Ashton's wife
29. Subscriber CEO meeting
31. New name for Compliance Department
33. Candidate or oven glove
34. ARMLS first president Gary
37. ARMLS 2012 anniversary
41. ARMLS CEO Bob
43. Governor or admiral
45. Database of all property records in US
46. ARMLS tech fair
47. Underperforming golfer
48. Popular ARMLS webinar day

DOWN

1. First line of MLS defense
2. Fought Ali in Manila
4. ARMLS Board President
5. Notice of MLS change
6. Communication tools on Internet
7. Master of suspense
8. Mobile MLS search provider
9. ARMLS training with dinner
12. Landlocked Valley city
13. Arizona state bird
16. PAR executive officer
17. Deadline to input photos on a new listing
18. Popular mobile device
20. Carried Olympic torch in 1996
22. State with proposed Personhood Law
23. Cardinal Head Coach Whisenhunt
28. Number ARMLS Support Centers
29. Complement to User ID
30. Current Valley wide DOM
32. AZ home of FLW
35. Lockbox system provider
36. Realtor Association with new facility
38. Internet marketing property data
39. Days to file with ARMLS after taking a listing
40. ARMLS statistical newsletter
42. Two and a Half Men bad boy
44. Talented "I Dreamed a Dream" singer

Last year Maricopa County saw more than 100,000 homeless, sick, abused and abandoned animals. With foreclosures still on the rise, many people face the inconceivable choice to abandon their pet. Many animals abandoned in foreclosed homes are left without food, water or the comforts of a climate controlled environment. There is a growing epidemic of abandoned animals, the forgotten, innocent victims of our housing market. This inspired a group of mainly real estate professionals, and that is where this story begins.

Jodi Polanski, a mortgage lender of 13 years with Realtor connections, is the founder of the Lost Our Home Pet Foundation. She is an avowed animal lover and parent to two dogs and three cats. Jodi brought with her five years previous experience in pet rescue and fostering. She had been hearing stories of pets left behind after eviction or foreclosure, so she reached out to several listing Agents, and the brainchild of the Lost Our Home Pet Foundation was born. Founded in June of 2008, the Foundation has already placed 1,500 pets. She is joined by full time Realtors Ronda Emmrich (Secretary), Brenda Breit (answers all the calls and is Jodi's mom), Darlin Gutteridge (food bank), Alex Barragan (first responder), an eight member board and over one hundred foster parents and volunteers, many of whom are Realtors or are in the title or lending business.

The foundation has a rental house which is used for emergency intakes until a foster is found. The rent on the home is very inexpensive thanks to Realtor Blair Balin who owns the home and covers half of the mortgage cost each month. Since they do not have a facility, all the pets are fostered in homes where they are cared for and can stay temporarily until the foundation can find them loving, "forever" homes or until the family can relocate to housing that can accommodate their pet.

The mission of Lost Our Home Pet Foundation is to be a resource for real estate professionals and other members of the community who discover an abandoned pet, and to provide options for pet owners faced with difficult economic circumstances while promoting the spaying and neutering of pets.

What is most inspiring is the holistic approach to their pet rescue. Jodi and her team believe that adoption is not the only solution. There are many reasons that families cannot keep their pets. If you can address the cause, you can often find a solution. Perhaps they cannot afford to feed them. For others the problem is temporary, but when no interim solution exists, they must resort to giving up their pet. The Foundation offers counseling, solutions and brainstorming aimed at keeping families and their pets together. Adoption should be a last resort.

All Realtors who list rental property can help by filling in pet information when loading a listing into flexmls.

The Foundation's food bank provides food for those who cannot afford to feed their pet. Their foster service places animals in good, loving, safe environments to wait for permanent adoption, or holds them for an interim period until the family can get back on their feet, reuniting pet and owner. Another way to help keep pets with their families is to help them find pet friendly rentals. Their website has a complete listing of websites to find pet friendly apartments and they have a link directly to the MLS with a pre-designed search so pet owners can find pet friendly rentals themselves. Their volunteer Realtors also help pet owners find a rental and donate their full commission to pay pet deposits. ***All Realtors who list rental property can help by filling in pet information when loading the information into flexmls.*** It is hard to locate suitable rental housing after foreclosure if listing Agents do not take the time to enter all of the information. There are pet friendly rentals out there that are undiscoverable because the information is not in the MLS. It seems like a small thing to add that information, but for a family and their pet looking for shelter, this is a huge help.

Everyone is invited to participate in the upcoming holiday brunch and fundraiser on December 10, 2011.

REGISTER NOW to attend.

Sponsorships are still available!

Donations for the Silent Auction are needed!

THE ANSWERS

