

ROC Real Estate & Rental

THE SKINNY ON HOUSING

In an effort to help first-time and single-parent homebuyers realize the dream of owning a home, Premium Mortgage Corporation has made a \$100,000 grant to NeighborWorks Rochester and its Western New York Home Purchase Savers Club, which matches a homebuyer's personal savings of up to \$2,500 and helps qualify the homebuyer for a mortgage.

NeighborWorks Rochester, a local non-profit housing agency, will administer the program and award the matching funds to eligible homebuyers who meet a number of requirements including the completion of an 8-hour course on home purchase and ownership and the documentation of systematic personal savings toward a mortgage down payment.

Anyone interested in pursuing this program can contact NeighborWorks Rochester (www.nwrochester.org) at (585) 325-4170.

Secrets to winter season sales

Agents say buyers are more serious

Mary Chao
Staff writer

Trudy and Karl Wittman will not let Old Man Winter deter their home marketing plans.

While most sellers put their homes on the market during the busy spring season, the Wittmans decided to list their Spencerport home for sale last week, smack dab in the middle of the holiday season.

"We got the house ready and we decided to go for it," said Trudy Wittman, 54.

The timing was right: As empty nesters, the couple was looking to downsize, plus the interest rates were still low. So



Karl and Trudy Wittman on their deck overlooking a 2-acre lot, with a 1-acre stocked, spring-fed pond, at their home in Spencerport in late November. KRIS J. MURANTE/STAFF PHOTOGRAPHER

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Home and real estate calendar

Lamberton Holiday Show: Attractions include an eight-foot high Poinsettia pyramid, as well as fresh evergreen Christmas trees, wreaths, tropical plants and lights strung throughout the complex. 10 a.m. to 4 p.m. daily through Jan. 6 (open until 9 p.m. Fridays and Sundays); closed Christmas Day. Lamberton Conservatory, Highland Park, 180 Reservoir Ave. \$3; \$2 seniors and ages 6-18; free ages 5 and younger. (585) 753-7270 or

www.monroecounty.gov/parks-highland.php.

Rochester Public Market: 6 a.m. to 1 p.m. Tuesdays and Thursdays; 5 a.m. to 3 p.m. Saturdays. Rochester Public Market, 280 N. Union St. Free. (585) 428-6907 or www.cityofrochester.gov/publicmarket.

Sonnenberg's Holiday Home and Historic Sites Tour: A tour of seven homes and historic sites. Drive yourself or catch a shuttle bus. The event includes carolers and

snacks. 11 a.m. to 4 p.m. Dec. 8. Sonnenberg Gardens & Mansion State Historic Park, 151 Charlotte St., Canandaigua. \$25; \$22 advance. (585) 394-4922 or www.sonnenberg.org.

The Big Green Egg Cookout: Demonstration on how to grill with The Big Green Egg. Customers will receive \$5 worth of "Gallea Dollars" when they bring in 5 or more canned goods to be donated to the Pittsford Food Cupboard. 11 a.m. to 4

p.m. Dec. 8. Gallea's Tropical Greenhouse and Florist, 2832 Clover St., Pittsford. Free. (585) 586-3017 or www.galleas.com.

Kids' Workshop - Peanut Butter Pine Cone Bird Feeders: 2 p.m. Dec. 9. Registration required. Wayside Garden Center, 124 Pittsford-Palmyra Road (Route 31), Macedon. Free. (585) 223-1222 or www.waysidegardencenter.com or trish@waysidegardencenter.com.

Agriculture Roundtable: Hosted by Cornell Co-

operative Extension and the Ontario County Agriculture Enhancement Board. 7 p.m. Dec. 12. Farmington Town Hall, 1000 County Road 8, Farmington. Free. (585) 394-3977, ext. 427 or www.cce.ontario.org.

Home Improvement Loan Orientation: Learn about your rehab/repair and energy-saving options. 5 p.m. Dec. 12 and 19. NeighborWorks Rochester, 570 South Ave. Free. (585) 325-4170 or www.nwrochester.org.

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Pullout: GALLERY OF HOMES

Winter

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with the help of Joanne Bocach of Nothnagle Realtors, the Wittmans listed their 3,600-square-foot home built in 2002 for \$389,900.

Winter can be a great time to sell a home, Bocach says. With fewer homes on the market, a seller has less competition, so homes that are on the market will stand out

more. Homes sold in the winter also tend to sell closer to their asking price. Buyers in the winter market are serious about buying a home and are more motivated, she said.

There are fewer homes for sale in the winter market — about 20 percent less in the Rochester region, Bocach said. With the low mortgage interest rates this year, those motivated buyers are out there, she added. Winter markets aren't all about

sellers' advantages, though; buyers benefit from the lower activity in the winter market due to the smaller chance of a competing offer.

A seller must understand that selling in the winter market is different than other seasons, so there are considerations, Bocach said. For example, if the snow is not removed, a buyer may get the perception that the home is not maintained or cared for.

"Not removing snow

completely off all walkways, driveway areas, decks and patios will have a buyer missing out on all the amenities your home may have," she said. "If you have a beautiful paver patio or oversized driveway, show it off."

Based on her experience, Bocach thinks winter homes tend to sell closer to their list price.

"In the winter, serious buyers are out looking — the 'tire kickers' tend not to go out in the snow and cold," she said.

If you do have a home on the market during the winter holiday season, be mindful of not over-decorating, said Leona Piro of Act Two Home Staging in Mendon.

"Keep it simple," Piro said. "You want to keep the focus on the house, not on the decorations."

To avoid a cluttered look, choose a few large items in key areas instead of many small ones throughout the house, Piro suggested.

To make the home look

more spacious, opt for a tall slender tree that you can tuck into a corner instead of a full one that takes up precious floor space, Piro said.

Ambiance and setting the mood helps that winter home on the market during the cold dark days.

"I encourage my clients to light the fireplace, light some winter scent fragrance candles, and play some holiday music," Bocach says.

MCHAO@DemocratandChronicle.com

Sales

Continued from Page 2

201 Vollmer Parkway 118,000
104 Patrician Drive 92,000

Irondequoit

199 Titus Ave. 134,000
95 Kings Gate South 128,000
120 Somershire Drive 127,000

63 Madison Terrace 125,000
72 Oneta Road 119,500
1467 Titus Ave. 115,000
55 Gilbert Drive 100,000
56 Shorewood Drive 89,900
35 Spartan Drive 87,000
409 Spencer Road 67,000
1996 N. Goodman Road 57,750

Mendon

1170 Mile Square Road 205,000

Ogden

56 Laurelcrest Drive 177,000
17 Coleman Ave. 145,000
1295 Vroom Road 125,000

Parma

74 Summertime Trail 332,565
37 Shirleen Drive 164,600
116 Railroad Ave. 92,900
312 Burritt Road 23,000

Penfield

56 Timber Glen Trail 325,158
46 Tuscany Lane 239,980

2014 Five Mile Line Road 150,000
49 Hillside Road 134,000
13 Hilltop Drive 129,000
1226 Jackson Road 115,000

Perinton

6 Chantilly Lane 480,000
170 Hulburt Road 149,000
22 Putting Green Lane 146,000
62 Brooktree Drive 129,000
50 Frank St. 119,900
14 Hillcrest Drive 105,000
53 Acorn Lane 74,500

Pittsford

5 Krislynn Drive 425,000
5 Elmbrook Drive 279,000

Riga

188 Stearns Road 104,000
103 Fairbanks Road 86,294

Sweden

21 Frazier St. 105,844
5835 Brockport Spencerport Road 102,000

6043 Lake Road 80,000

Webster

377 Coastal View Drive 500,000
1088 Bay Road 210,000
1109 Nestwood Lane 170,000
110 Cranbrook Terrace 145,500
265 Circle Lane 140,000
933 Gristmill Ridge 135,000
193 Salt Road 105,000

Wheatland

60 Blue Pond Manor 107,000

Holidays

Continued from Page 13

tives in order to secure the correct number of place settings at your table can be necessary as well. These neutral damask pattern chair covers sell for just under \$40 a piece, admittedly a bit of an investment. Granted, you could rent plain chairs for less, but if you are intent on sophistication for a particular gathering, this might be your

solution. If you rent a folding chair with a ballroom cloth cover you will spend about \$8 per chair. Bamboo folding chairs, like mine, rent for about \$7 per chair. A plain white plastic chair rents for under \$2 each.

Dining in front of a fireplace is always a holiday treat. Light from the fire, plus the potential for a dreamy mantel display, adds a lovely ambiance. The room setting shown here is delightful because of the proximity to the

hearth. If space is limited, think about getting rid of the Christmas tree and replacing that space-gobbling tradition with evergreen wreaths, garlands and aromatic fir candles instead.

I once removed furniture from the living room and set up a long table in view of the living room fireplace for Christmas dinner. It was cozy and memorable. I pushed some of the lighter furniture into bedrooms and the rest went into the ga-

rage for a few days. Instead of a full tree, I scouted for a tall narrow specimen that I squeezed up onto the raised hearth. It was just fine.

In the end, what counts most is the welcome you extend to your guests, the quality of the meal prepared and a relaxed attitude that enables you to do your best and then enjoy the moment.

Christine Brun is a San Diego-based interior designer.

Ludwig

Continued from Page 4

stalled under the door sill to protect the framing under it from water damage.

Since there will be a wall covering the area behind the fixed panel, I

think some kind of frosted covering on the inside of this panel is a must. That way you will not see the interior of the wall from the exterior of the house.

A sliding door partially concealed in a wall is not an ideal solution, but it can be done.

However, given the

amount of work and money required to construct this area, I really think that the smart option is to go back to plan A, which is to simply purchase and install an out-swing door in place of the current in-swing unit. This will cause minimal disruption to the kitchen and exterior and

will provide the extra wall space for your cabinets.

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