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Sunday, December 23, 2007

HOUSTON'S HOME SHOWCASE

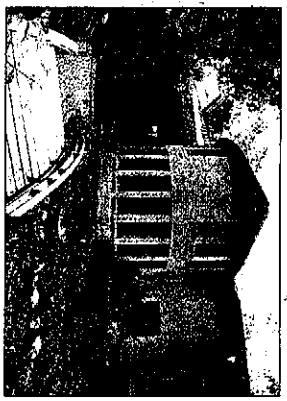
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Today's Open Homes

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Real Estate Agents: We have an ADVANTAGE for you.



PINEY POINT

Custom, contemporary-style home had one owner. Four bedrooms, five baths. Pool. On a 40,000-square-foot lot. Master bath has separate shower. \$1,990,000. Karen Haberg, Martha Turner Properties, 281-546-9444.

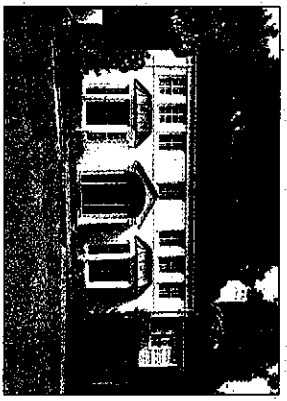


MEMORIAL

Contemporary-style home has four bedrooms, 3½ baths. Island kitchen opens to den. Wet bar, fireplace, master bath with separate tub and shower. Two-car garage. Pool. Greenwood King Properties, 713-784-0888.

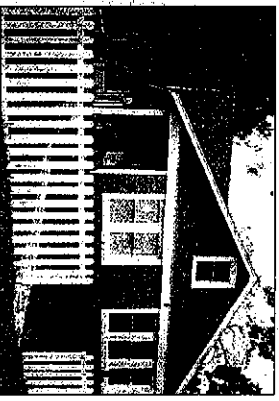


THE WOODLANDS



RIVER OAKS

2116 Chilton. Four bedrooms, 4½ baths. Renovated in 2006 and 2007. Stainless-steel kitchen counters, wire room, library with fireplace and French doors. Sharon Davis, John Daugherty, Realtors, 713-626-3930.



HEIGHTS

1343 Laird St. Three bedrooms, 1½ baths. Front porch, hardwoods throughout, pedestal sink, tile in kitchen and baths. Workshop with electricity. \$225,000. Ellen Wenske, Suzanne Anderson Properties, 713-410-7350.

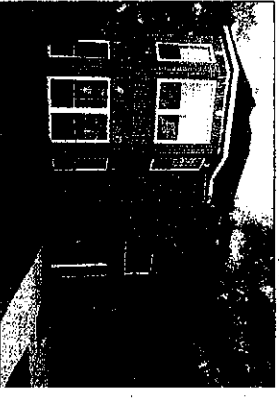


MUSEUM DISTRICT



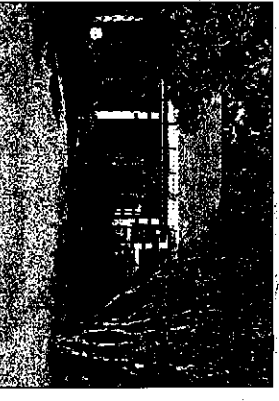
GRAYSON LAKES/KATY

2058 Lake Fountain. Four bedrooms, 4½ baths. Boat dock, lake views, formal, den, game room, media room, study. Slate floors. Brick arches, four-car garage. Rita O'neilly, Heritage Texas Properties, 281-493-3880.



BELLAIRE

4905 Cedar. Four bedrooms, 3½ baths. More than 3,700 square feet. Bonus room on third floor. Two fireplaces, wet bar, hardwood floors, granite counters. \$799,000. Fran Schirmer, Beth Wolf GMAc Real Estate, 713-622-9339.



TIMBERGROVE/HEIGHTS

Surveys play critical role in acquisition, land development

When developing land, one of the most important tools the developer should utilize is the survey. Surveys play a critical role in the acquisition and development of land, and therefore a rudimentary understanding of surveys is important for anyone desiring to enter into the land development business.

Blacks' Law Dictionary defines a survey as "the measuring of a tract of land and its boundaries and contents; a map indicating a result of such measurements." In Texas, there are many different categories of surveys, and each of them has been identified in the Manual of Practice for Land Surveying in Texas).

The Manual is provided by the Texas Society of Professional Surveyors. Perhaps the most common category of surveys used in Texas land transactions is the Category 1A: Land Title Survey). The Land Title Survey's general purpose, as provided by the Manual, is to be "a boundary or property survey for the purpose of conveyance with title insurance."

The Manual defines a Land Title Survey as "a complete and total study, investigation and evaluation of all factors affecting and influencing the location of the boundaries, ownership lines, rights of way and easements within or immediately surrounding a certain lot, parcel or quantity of real estate."

A Land Title Survey differs from a traditional or standard property survey in that the Land Title Survey must conform to the needs of title insurance agencies and therefore must include greater detail not normally gathered in the traditional or standard property survey. "The practice of locating land



BRETT SLOBIN

quires the expert skill of a Registered Public Surveyor well versed in the science and art of boundary law and long practiced in the mechanics of measuring and computing values pertaining to such surveys."

The Land Title Survey can be of critical importance for land development, as it provides a legal description that is used to locate the boundary lines of the property. The Land Title Survey helps to disclose the location of improvements, easements, utilities, the relationship of the tract of land with adjoining land owners, and any unrecorded matters that may affect the land.

The use of a Land Title Survey can prevent nightmare scenarios from occurring, such as constructing a house over the shared boundary line of two adjacent tracts of land, constructing a house over a building setback line, or constructing a house over an easement.

Perhaps the most important purpose a Land Title Survey has, without one, land developers will likely be unable to obtain both title insurance from a title company, and construction financing from a lender.

Brett L. Slobin is an attorney in the Houston law firm of Slobin & Slobin P.C., and he can be reached at bslobin@csllaw.com. His office is located at 10000 Westheimer Road, Suite 1000, Houston, Texas 77042. The information contained in this article is not intended as legal advice but to provide a general overview of legal problems that those whose questions are addressed here, should consult attorneys for advice on their particular circumstances.

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JAN. 5

A free home buyers workshop will be offered 10 a.m. to noon at 5757 Richmond Ave. across from Sam's Boat. Joe Bonaventura, relocation consultant with Keller Williams Realty, will present the seminar.

The complete home-buying process and how to avoid costly mistakes will be discussed. Other topics will include a "Welcome to Houston" for newcomers, buying versus renting, new construction home-building process, prequalifying, financing, contracts, home inspections and how to get started.

There will be a question-and-answer session following the presentation. Seating is limited. For reservations and directions, e-mail relocationhouston@hotmail.com or call 832-723-7577.

JAN. 8

A free down-payment assistance and home-buying workshop will be in Northwest Houston at La Madeleine, 19710 Northwest Freeway (near U.S. 290/FM 1960) from 6:15 to 7:45 p.m.

The seminar will cover the steps to buying a home, various down-payment assistance programs, no-money-down programs for first-time home buyers, and special loan assistance programs for law enforcement officers, firefighters and teachers.

Other topics will include preparation for a mortgage, prequalification for a loan, understanding purchase contracts, negotiation, buying a foreclosed on HUD home, buyer's financial assistance and preparation for purchasing existing or new-construction home. Texas real estate inspector

Free, informational

The Houston Chronicle Real Estate section presents the seminar's calendar as a service to our readers. The sponsors of the seminars state these seminars are informational only. There will be no solicitation of business, and no items will be sold at the events.

Leonaire Wright will cover home inspections and costly mistakes to avoid. Megan Donaldson, a CRS-certified Residential Specialist with RE/MAX Professional Group, will host the seminar. For reservations, e-mail megan.donaldson@remax.net or call 713-385-5231.

Freeway (near Highway 290/FM 1960), from 6:15-7:45 p.m. The seminar will cover the steps to buying homes as an investor, low down-payment programs for investment property, negotiating closing cost, purchasing multiple properties, procedure to purchasing HUD and foreclosed homes and making an investment with retirement funds.

A free "Shapshot" report, which will give up-to-the-minute Multiple Listing Services data on specific markets, will be provided.

JAN. 9

Other topics to be discussed are reselling versus leasing and current market value; preparation for a mortgage; prequalification for a loan; understanding purchase contracts agreement and avoiding fraudulent investment scheme. Megan Donaldson, a CRS-certified Residential Specialist with RE/MAX Professional Group, will host the seminar. Reservation is required. To secure a seat at the seminar, e-mail megan.donaldson@remax.net or call 713-385-5231.

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