The REALTOR® Rap
Winter 2020 Edition

Message from our President
Vikktorina Cooper, SBOR President

Hello Fellow Realtors,

I’m honored to be your 2020 President! The Board and I are already hard at work to bring you new programming and initiatives, so keep your eyes open. But first, wow what a start to the new year! We ended January on an uptick in all three residential sectors; single family, condos, and co-ops. It’s a reflection of your effort in Nov. and Dec. 2019. Take a look.

Outside of the encouraging market stats, the Board hit the ground running with four events already under our belt and more comin’!

Come and mingle with friends and peers at the next SBOR happy hour while helping a worthy cause like Pacific House. Consider bringing a friend(s) to our next event! The more, the merrier.

Attend the continuing ed classes, quarterly meetings, and other events and meet Affiliate Members who are ready to team up with you and your clients towards a happy ending.

And, when the time comes, please respond to CALL TO ACTIONs...it’s incredibly important to support and empower our advocates in Hartford and beyond. Our livelihood as professional realtors depends on our collective voices. To this end consider giving generously to political advocacy or RPAC.

Finally, I’d like to hear from you, your suggestions, your triumphs, your challenges. You know how to reach me.

Be focused, be determined, be purposeful,

~Vikktorina
Sign Up to Receive Text/Voice Message Alerts from CTR
Impacting Legislation Can Be as Easy as “Click, Click, Send!”
By Board Office

Please take notice when you receive a Call For Action email from CTR. With just a few clicks, you can take action on important real estate issues. This is a very effective way to get the REALTOR® voice heard by lawmakers.

Text “CTR” to 52886 to sign up to receive text and electronic messaging alerts from CTR or go [https://www.ctrealtors.com/advocacy/calls-for-action/](https://www.ctrealtors.com/advocacy/calls-for-action/).

You may also text “REALTOR” to 30644 or [sign up online](https://www.ctrealtors.com/advocacy/calls-for-action/) to receive NAR REALTOR® Party mobile text alerts. Just a few times a year you will receive a text notification for our Calls for Action.

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CT Towns Make Inventory List
By Board Office

Several areas in Connecticut made the list of the easiest places to find a home when it comes to inventory. REALTOR.com analyzed housing markets across the country and ranked areas based on the number of listings per 1,000 households.

The Bridgeport/Stamford/Norwalk area ranked as the 4th easiest market to find a home with nearly 30 listings per 1,000 households. The greater Hartford area ranked 16th and the New Haven/ Milford area came in at 17th. REALTOR.com says the inventory in those areas is higher due to lower demand caused by the state’s economy and higher taxes. Check out the full analysis by clicking the link: [https://www.realtor.com/research/toughest-and-easiest-housing-markets-to-find-a-home](https://www.realtor.com/research/toughest-and-easiest-housing-markets-to-find-a-home)

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[https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=ufFqD3-2FTo&feature=youtu.be](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=ufFqD3-2FTo&feature=youtu.be)
Destination Seller: Your GPS
January 30, 2020
By Vikktoria Cooper, SBOR President

A well-attended Continuing Ed class taught by Barbara Fairfield focused on the Code of Ethics via the use of the Quigler app. A warm welcome and special thanks to one of our newest Affiliate Members, Rocco Angiolelli of Ar Jay Home Inspections, who also sponsored the class and provided the breakfast!

Heads Up! For each inspection requested by an SBOR member for 2020, Rocco will donate $50 to the Wounded Warrior Project upon completion of the inspection!

Rocco is licensed in both CT & NY. He can be reached at:

Ar Jay Home Inspections, LLC.
Lic. CT# HO11003
(O) 914-602-9428
(E) arJayInspections@gmail.com

License Renewals!
By Vikktoria Cooper, SBOR President

Quick reminder regarding license renewals! Brokers have until March 31st and Salespeople have until May 31st to renew their license. For more information on completing mandatory and elective continuing education classes, call the SBOR office or find a class online at The CE Shop: http://stamfordrealtors.theceshop.com/
Happy Hour for Pacific House
February 10
Joe Pasquino, SBOR VP

Once again Villa Italia was the venue to a well-attended happy hour. Just over 60 realtors came out to support Pacific House, an organization committed to providing safe overnight shelter for men and young adults who are homeless. To learn more about Pacific House visit: www.pacifichouse.org

Villa Italia put out a great assortment of pizzas, salad, and bruschetta. Jay Tolisano of CrossCountry Mortgage, one of our Affiliate Members was the sponsor of this happy hour. “I’m very happy to be part of this fundraiser and be able to help end homelessness.” Tolisano adds, “Especially on a cold dreary night when we tend to forget that there are people who do not know where they will be resting their heads.”

Jay Tolisano can be reached at:
CrossCountry Mortgage, LLC
(O) 203-635-6757
(E) jay.tolisano@myccmortgage.com

Total amount raised for Pacific House was $1660.00, which includes a very generous donation by Catherine Richardson. THANK YOU CATHERINE!

Housing Development Fund
February 13
By Vikktoria Cooper, SBOR President

It was standing room only at Thursday’s presentation of the Housing Development Fund. HDF’s first-time homebuyer programs were introduced by Kelly Almanzar, Director of Residential Lending.

Almanzar fielded questions from SBOR Realtors regarding the CT programs available; SmartMove, a down payment assistance program, and Live Where You Work, a down-payment AND closing cost assistance program for those who want to buy a home in the same town where they work.

In the audience were Realtors and members of the Stamford community as well as those from as far as the Bronx, NY.

Thank you to Affiliate Member, Mario Pansino, Citibank for sponsoring an informative event and for the beverages and delicious bites.
Mario Pansino can be reached at:
Citibank, NA
(C) 203-952-6491
(E) mario.pansino@citi.com

For those seeking more information to better assist your first-time homebuyers, visit: www.hdfconnects.org/fthb.

Stamford Realtors and community members

Ken Fried (Past SBOR President), Kelly Almanzar (HDF), Vikktoria Cooper (SBOR President), Mario Pansino (Citibank)

SBOR presents a sizable donation to Pacific House
February 15
By Vikktoria Cooper, SBOR President

The Stamford Board of Realtors presented Pacific House with $1,660.00 raised from the Happy Hour Fundraiser. We look forward to a great relationship going forward.

Geri Guzinski (SBOR Director), Pina Basone (SBOR Director), Elsi Lyons (Pacific House, Director of Development & Events), Ken Fried (SBOR Past President), Cheryl McCormick (SBOR Director), Roxanna Bajra (President Elect), Vikktoria Cooper (SBOR President)
Jennifer Broadbin (Business Development Manager), Roxanna Bajra (SBOR President Elect), Viktoria Cooper (SBOR President)

RPAC / Political Advocacy
By Max Schlitcher, SBOR Director
Public Advocacy

Among the hot topics for the Connecticut Realtors Association (CTR) include changes to the Mansion Tax from last session. Connecticut’s so-called Mansion Tax is not actually new, according to Kathleen M. Merrigan, a residential real estate principal at Cumming & Lockwood, the existing state conveyance tax was expanded in Connecticut’s 2020-2021 budget.

The Mansion Tax is a 2.25% conveyance fee on homes sales above $2.5mm. The tax, however, only applies if the seller is moving out of the state. Those who move to another state would get the money back a few years after the sale, in the form of an income tax credit. However, the income tax credit DOES NOT begin until 2023, three years after the levy itself is implemented. It was likely structured that way because property taxes are local and local governments would normally not know whether a person stayed in the state. The measure is only expected to raise $6.3mm per year. Critics of the proposal argue that it sends the message to would-be entrants/buyers not to buy property in Connecticut.

Other tax provisions in the budget include an expansion of the state sales tax (6.35%) to cover things like interior design and laundry services as well as parking and work safety apparel. A surcharge of 10 cents per single-use of plastic bags (before a complete ban), excise taxes on alcohol (excluding beer) will rise 10% and ride-sharing fees will increase 30 cents per ride up from 25 cents. The efforts to boost revenue come as the state faces the multi-billion projected deficit, as well as a massive gap in pension funding. A number of prominent companies have left the state throughout recent years, including GE, Bristol Myers-Squibb and Alexion Pharmaceuticals.
Meet Joseph (Joey) Pasquino
By Olwyn Fagan, SBOR Director
Public Relations Committee

Having been a member of the Stamford Board of Realtors and an active realtor for 14 years, I was pretty surprised to learn that there are nearly 1,000 Realtors Members and Affiliate Members! So, who are they, I wondered? I set myself a task; get to know as many SBOR members as possible over the next three years of my tenure. So, let's start with Joey Pasquino.

Fresh out of Sunday open houses, Joey and I met at a coffee shop. First impressions; great style, well dressed, very neat, polite, friendly face with a great smile and eager to get started. Joey is energetic and oozes positivity a reflection of his youthfulness at just 33 years of age... and single. Ha!

Joey is from a big Italian family. He grew up in the big stone house in the middle of the Manor complex on Strawberry Hill. Back in the day it was a family home before it became the development we all know today. In 2015, he took over Archway Realty from his grandfather (his namesake) and his father, Michael. It’s a "one-stop-shop". If Joey’s clients need home renovations, he puts them in touch with his Dad. Very much a family business.

OF: How long have you had your license?
JP: I have had my license twice. First was when I was 18 but I let it lapse and the second time was in 2015 when I relicensed and then in 2017 I got my broker license.

OF: If you were to spend an hour in your car with any person (living or dead) to show houses, who would it be?
JP: My grandmother, Maddalena. Without hesitation, I miss her. My grandmother passed away in 2010 but I said a long goodbye to her in 2004 when sadly, she was diagnosed with Alzheimer’s.

OF: What music were you listening to while on your way to meet me?
JP: Return of the Mack by Mark Morrison. I also like Rock n Roll and EDM (Electronic Dance Music).

OF: What would you do if you weren’t a Real Estate Agent?
JP: I’d love to start a charity foundation for children suffering through cancer. Before I was a real estate broker I worked in finance in NYC for a few years. Today I’m involved with the Umbrella Club, a 50-man charity that fundraises and distributes approximately $200K to needy families in our area. https://umbrellalclub.org/

OF: How do you switch off?
JP: I don’t! I don’t have an off switch. I think I had ADHD without ever being diagnosed. Ha!

OF: What advice would you give newbies coming into the real estate world?
JP: Find a successful agent and learn from them for 2 or 3 years. Don’t worry about the money. Get the experience from someone more successful than you. I’m a willing mentor to anyone who needs it. All applicants welcome!

OF: What are 3 Do’s and 3 Don’ts that serve as your guide.
JP: DO’s
Always say yes even if you don’t know how to do something. You can figure it out
Always show up – do what you say you will do
Hustle! Put in your time. Nothing is owed to you.

**JP:** **DONT**’s
Don’t underestimate being nice - a smile goes a long way.
Don’t be a closet Real Estate agent – get out there and let people know what you do.
“A lion doesn’t care about the opinion of sheep.” Don’t be afraid of what people might think about you.

**OF:** Are you a morning person or a night owl?
**JP:** A night owl. I don’t go to sleep until 12:00am - 1:00am.

**OF:** Who is your role model?
**JP:** My dad, Michael. He’s the greatest man I know.

**OF:** Favorite TV Show(s)?
**JP:** Game of Thrones, Breaking Bad, and Sons of Anarchy.

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**Stamford Schools Update**
By Jeff Wirz, SBOR Director
School Liaison

The hot topic of the year regarding our public schools is the future of Stamford’s school buildings. The Stamford Asset Management Group (SAMG), a task force that was established to oversee the specific needs of the City’s school buildings, has proposed an innovative plan that could potentially result in the construction of four new school buildings.

The premise of the proposal is for the school district to sell four of these buildings to a private developer who would manage the new construction projects, as well as operate the buildings as the landlord upon completion. The developer would lease the buildings back to the school district at a total cost that SAMG says would be significantly less than the district owning and managing the buildings on its own. The theory is that a private developer can manage the construction projects and operate the new buildings much more efficiently and economically than the district can. The concept has yet to be proven and opponents have expressed concerns because it seems this has never been done anywhere in the country before.

SAMG has presented their proposal to the public (in multiple forums), to both of Stamford’s Planning and Finance boards, and to the the Board of Reps. SAMG is seeking $250,000 to hire a consultant to further evaluate the feasibility of this proposal and to make recommendations for moving forward. They have also requested an RFQ that would allow SAMG to begin the process of looking for prospective developer partners. The Board of Reps has requested further information before it will consider approving the funding to further evaluate their proposal.

In regards to the schools that would be directly impacted, the proposal included the following: Hart Magnet Elementary and Westhill High School would be completely rebuilt at their current locations; Toquam Magnet Elementary would be relocated to an undetermined location in the South End, and Roxbury Elementary would be relocated AND combined with Cloonan Middle School to create new K-8 school. In all cases, classrooms would be temporarily relocated, in a similar manner to how Westover was relocated during the mold remediation project.

The research for this plan originated as a result of a serious mold issue that was discovered at Westover Elementary in the fall of 2018. That school was closed and is currently in the process of being remediated and reopened this summer. Following this discovery a complete evaluation of the other twenty schools was conducted. SAMG has identified these five schools as the most serious and their conclusion is that it would
cost less to build new schools rather than continuing to repair them. Aside from addressing health concerns and the high costs of making perpetual repairs to our aging school inventory, SAMG has also highlighted the fact that these new schools would solve other issues, including addressing Stamford’s increasing enrollment demands throughout our school district.

The full proposal is available on the SAMG website HERE. Stay tuned for further updates.

That's Who We R Campaign Strategy
By Board Office

For REALTORS®...
..."That's Who We R" functions as a rallying cry, instilling pride in REALTORS® everyday actions and all the ways they go above and beyond to improve the lives of their clients, consumers, and their communities.
For Consumers...
..."That's Who We R" educates consumers on the REALTOR® difference and becomes an inherent call to action to work with a REALTOR®, who abides by the Code of Ethics, practices advocacy, and is backed by the nation’s largest professional trade association.
In 2020...
...consumers are encouraged to “Look for the R” when buying or selling a property in order to ensure they are working with a REALTOR®, who has the highest level of professionalism. View the new site at: https://www.nar.realtor/thats-who-we-r

How Does the Ad Campaign Benefit REALTORS®?
Your annual $35 investment in the national ad campaign has tremendous value and lets consumers know that:

- A REALTOR® is the only real estate professional who has vowed to treat their clients ethically
- A REALTOR® finds you a dream home and protects your right to it
- A REALTOR® negotiates the best price and uses the industry’s leading market data to do it.
- A REALTOR® knows your neighborhood, the neighbors, and volunteers to make it better.
- The REALTOR® Code of Ethics makes REALTORS® your advocate in one of the largest transactions you’ll ever make.
- A REALTOR® isn’t just a home or business search, it’s a human connection to the best property for you.
- A REALTOR® is supported by the nation’s largest professional trade organization, protecting your property and community long after the contracts are signed.
National Association of 
REALTORS® Good Neighbor 
Awards 
By Board Office

The National Association of REALTORS® Good 
Neighbor Awards recognize REALTORS® who 
make extraordinary commitments to improving 
the quality of life in their communities.

Five winners are announced each fall in REALTOR® 
Magazine. Winners are recognized annually at the 
REALTORS® Conference & Expo, and receive 
$10,000 grants for their charities. Winners also 
receive travel expenses to the conference and 
national and local media exposure for their 
community cause. In addition to the winners, five 
honorable mentions each receive a $2,500 grant.

Nominees are considered for the award based on 
their personal impact on the community through 
volunteer work. To be eligible, nominees must be 
NAR members in good standing.

For more details, call 800-874-6500 
or visit www.nar.realtor/gna.

Find Your NRDS ID Number 
By Board Office

You can quickly retrieve your NRDS ID from 
https://login.connect.realtor#/I/forgotmember 
In addition, your NRDS ID is shown on your NAR 
membership card—every member should 
have a card. If your membership card isn’t handy, 
you can also find your NRDS ID on the address 
label of your monthly copy of the REALTOR® 
magazine.

At the beginning of each year, the National 
Association of REALTORS® creates new 
membership cards which can be personalized to 
your liking.

Getting your card is simple:
1. Visit the Membership Card page. The URL 
is https://www.nar.realtor/membership-card.
2. Log-in with 
your nar.realtor username and password. For 
got your username or password? Look it up 
here, or call NAR’s Member Support at 800- 
874-6500 if you’re still having trouble.
3. Your designations and certifications are 
pulled directly from your NRDS records.