

March 19, 2008

Dear Editor:

As a REALTOR® and the 2008 president of the 22,000-member Massachusetts Association of REALTORS®, I feel compelled to respond to Binyamin Applebaum's March 16 article "The (Always) Sunny Side of the Street." Let me start out by saying yes, it is true; we believe. But what we believe is that there are opportunities in every market.

The facts cannot be denied; housing inventory is plentiful, more affordable than in recent times, and interest rates continue to remain near historic lows. This means that the market currently favors the buyer, and we're trying to help consumers recognize that.

What we can't do is predict the future and timing the market is difficult at best. If it's the right time to buy for you, it's the right time to buy (as Mr. Applebaum rightly suggests). However, if buyers, who would otherwise be buying now, get scared off because of opinions expressed in a major newspaper regardless of the facts, there's a problem.

The housing market is a key driver of the economy. Last year it contributed more than \$25.7 billion to the Massachusetts economy. Given our current economic state, it's prudent for consumers to continue to believe in homeownership as a valuable means of shelter and a great long-term investment. We believe that the overall economy will eventually get better and by pointing out the opportunities in the market we're doing our best to help that occur.

One final point, beyond Mr. Applebaum's opinions about the market, he also takes several swipes at the REALTOR® Association and individual REALTORS®. We simply cannot let that go. REALTORS® success depends on their reputation and the relationships they hold in their communities. This trust and professionalism is something REALTORS® take very seriously and for Mr. Applebaum to suggest otherwise is inaccurate.

Sincerely,

Susan M. Renfrew

President of the Massachusetts Association of REALTORS® and broker/co-owner of Renfrew Real Estate in Greenfield, MA.