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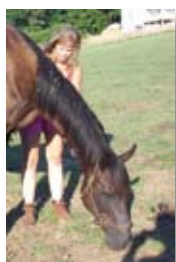


Points of

INTEREST

Working to Help Abandoned Pets

Increasing numbers of homeowners are abandoning their pets as well as their homes after foreclosure, hoping that a lender, real estate agent, or neighbor will find and feed them.



Karen Brauss and Major

“It’s obvious that at many shelters and rescue groups, surrenders are up, adoptions are down, and donations are down,” says Nancy Peterson, issues specialist at the Humane Society of the United States. “That’s a very difficult situation for the animals.”

Fortunately, many individuals in the mortgage banking industry have stepped up to help the animals left behind. One of them, Karen Brauss, a paralegal with The National Firm, LLC’s Zucker, Goldberg, & Ackerman LLC, began rescuing and rehabilitating horses five years ago but has seen a marked increase in abandoned horses in the past year.

“It’s getting worse,” she says. “Nearly every day there’s a message on my answering machine from somebody who is crying because she can’t afford to keep her horse.” Although based in New Jersey, Brauss’s nonprofit organization, Peaceful Mountain Horse Rescue, Inc., has rescued horses from as far away as North Dakota, providing them with food and shelter on her family’s five-acre farm until they can be adopted.

With word-of-mouth spreading quickly to people who can no longer afford to feed or house their horses, the organization has outgrown its space. Brauss is currently raising funds to purchase a larger farm with enough land to let her assist several more animals.

“We’re full right now so we have to refer people to the ASPCA until we can afford to relocate,” she says.

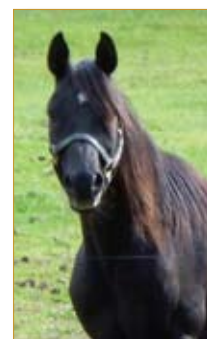
While Brauss focuses on horses, Cheryl Lang, founder of

No Paws Left Behind in Houston, works to help relocate house pets even before they are abandoned.

“The tipping point for me was a photo of three dogs locked in kennels and starving to death in a backyard in Arkansas,” she says. “I knew we couldn’t be looking at pictures like this for the next four years. It was too gruesome.”

Lang, who is also president of an asset management services company, encourages pet owners to contact her before abandoning the pet so she can help find a permanent or temporary home before they move out. She gathers all necessary information from the homeowner – the type of animal, whether it’s been spayed or neutered, its disposition, and a photo – before tapping into her online network of animal rescue advocates to find a temporary home until the owner is settled elsewhere.

To help foreclosed homeowners relocate to a rental that allows animals, Lang is building a national, online database of pet-friendly housing options. “I spent a three-day weekend trying to find a home for a pit bull in Southern California that would have been put down immediately if taken to a shelter,” she explains. “I knew we needed a different way to do this.”



Whisper

The Humane Society has also established a fund earmarked to help shelters struggling to feed the increasing number of animals. In the past year, it has given more than \$98,000 to 56 organizations or shelters across the country.

To learn more, volunteer, or donate, visit www.peacefulmountainhorerescue.org, www.nopawsleftbehind.org and www.humanesociety.org/foreclosurepets.

Industry Profile: Laura MacIntyre-Sosa Thrives in Entrepreneurial Environment

If Laura MacIntyre-Sosa wasn't so happily entrenched in her intense job as chief operating officer of Lender Processing Services (LPS) Desktop, she would probably own a business. But the high-energy, make-things-happen executive thrives in the entrepreneurial environment at software firm LPS, where she feels she is given the opportunity to make a difference.



"This is an amazing company," she says, adding, "You get to do things you'd never be able to do at other organizations. There is so much opportunity here."

In addition to being responsible for employee satisfaction and business strategy at the fast-paced business, MacIntyre-Sosa monitors market needs and makes sure LPS has the

document and process management products required by its mortgage industry processing clients. She spends a fair amount of time with clients, working to understand their current pain points and collaborating with them to find solutions or to identify cost-saving options. Some of what she learns can lead to product modifications.

"I'm a big proponent of change," she explains. "If I see something that's not working anymore, I get the management team together to address it. We're very quick to deploy new software technologies."

This often involves changing priorities companywide. "I spend a lot of time making sure priorities are defined and understood," she says. "This is what I lose sleep over."

MacIntyre-Sosa particularly enjoys mentoring employees and helping them develop rewarding careers. Known for her ability to identify talent in unexpected places, she once recruited her favorite breakfast bagel-maker because she knew the company would benefit from the woman's superior customer service skills. "She's now a department manager and I no longer get great service at the bagel shop," MacIntyre-Sosa laughs.

While her biggest challenge is "getting it all done and done well," MacIntyre-Sosa leaves the job behind when she goes home to her husband, a banking executive, and their four children, who range in age from 2 to 13. "I have to be able to separate the two and I'm grateful that my employer supports that," she says. While most

of her personal time revolves around her children, MacIntyre-Sosa admits she is a "big-time poker player," winning tournaments and playing every few weeks with a group of families.

She also sets aside time to give back, working with local charities, including Feed My Starving Children, and the industry group Women Executives in Banking. Her goals include volunteering more with nonprofits.

MacIntyre-Sosa's professional and personal responsibilities require her to be continually shifting gears, but she thrives on it. "I've never had a day when I've said I don't want to go to work. It's stressful but it's an amazing experience," she says, adding, "I'm teaching my children that you can be successful as a woman."

Take Advantage of Complimentary Training Sessions

The National Firm, LLC offers custom training sessions designed to meet the current and ever-changing educational needs of your organization. Training services concentrate on topics that are in demand, from title problems, reverse mortgages, bankruptcy reform, and mediation to definitions of high-risk and sub-prime mortgages. Let your client service representative know what you need; she will provide customized training at your convenience.

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All training programs feature question and answer sessions so that participants are assured of getting the specific information they need for their job or situation. To schedule a complimentary training session tailored to the needs of your staff, please contact Jann, Jodi, or Kathy.

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New Program Sells REO Property Quicker and for More Money

If your portfolio included REO properties, would you try to sell the properties sooner, generate the highest sales prices possible, and reduce or eliminate holding costs?

That's what Mary Heineke is asking Southern California lenders, and the answer is always, "Yes!"

Heineke, director of QualityFirst Home Marketing, a division of McCarthy Holthus Real Estate Corporation, runs a new program that uses temporary resident managers to create a "market to sell" look for REO homes so they sell quicker and for more money.

"Studies show that a well-decorated and maintained property sells for 10 to 20 percent higher than a vacant, unfurnished home," says Heineke. "We're making it possible for REO holders to market properties that are professionally decorated and maintained, all at no extra cost to them."

QualityFirst recruits and screens appropriate resident managers, who pay a discounted amount to live in an REO home in exchange for providing decorator-quality furnishings and accessories, paying the utilities, and maintaining the property. Resident managers, who are often professionals such as college professors, airline employees, or health care providers, understand that the goal is to sell the property in less than 90 days and are prepared to move with just two weeks notice.

Resident managers make it possible for QualityFirst to show the home to buyers at the highest standard for the property. (See related article on the right.)

"When buyers see a vacant home, they expect a bargain and they expect to take advantage of a seller who is desperate to sell. Our resident manager service eliminates that issue completely. It essentially levels the playing field for lenders," Heineke says.

Heineke, who has nearly 20 years of experience in the REO industry, managed a similar program during the 1990s which was highly successful.

"I know the risks of selling vacant properties and how to reduce or eliminate them," she says. "We expect organizations holding REO properties to fully embrace this opportunity. We're looking forward to a very successful year."

To learn more, visit http://www.qualityfirstrealestate.com/program_overview.php or contact Mary Heineke at mheineke@QualityFirstHomeManagement.com, 858-922-5371.



As these before and after photos illustrate, QualityFirst Home Marketing makes certain that REO properties are in "show to sell" condition.

McCarthy & Holthus Forms REO Real Estate Division

McCarthy & Holthus LLP has formed QualityFirst Real Estate Services, a San Diego-based full service real estate firm specializing in REO properties. Led by industry veteran Bill DeRidder, QualityFirst provides a broad array of real estate services including representing sellers and buyers, facilitating mortgage loans for purchase and refinance, providing marketing services for lenders and home managers, and managing properties. (See related article on the left.)

It is the parent company's depth and breadth of experience and service in the real estate industry, though, that gives the new firm its competitive advantage. Working in the title insurance industry and in the commercial and residential real estate lending and foreclosure arenas gives the firm a distinct advantage. In addition, access to McCarthy & Holthus' cutting-edge technology systems offers online transaction tracking and ordering; electronic delivery of products; and the paperless, real-time status clients need to track and retrieve transactions 24 hours a day.

To learn more about how QualityFirst Real Estate Services can meet your REO or other real estate needs, contact DeRidder at bderidder@McCarthyHolthus.com or 619-667-3395.



Fannie Mae Now Requires Additional Condo Insurance Policy *By Ronald R. Reitz, CPPA*

Fannie Mae's recent changes to its hazard insurance requirements for condominiums means that servicers will now need to track an additional hazard insurance policy.

Historically, when purchasing a condo, the buyer only needed to show proof of a Master or Association Insurance (HOA) policy. This policy typically insures the common areas of the property only and not the interiors of the units. Fannie Mae's Announcement 08-34 (<http://tinyurl.com/78j5b6>) changes this, however.

Fannie Mae now requires unit owners to purchase "walls-in coverage." Known in the insurance industry as an HO-6 policy, this covers the unit owner – and mortgagee – for damage that occurs to the interior of the unit. HO-6 policies have become more important as construction costs have steadily increased over the years, making it more expensive to replace flooring, window treatments, cabinetry, and other interior fixtures.

If the borrower fails to maintain this policy, servicers will need to force-place coverage on their behalf. If you haven't already done so, contact your force-placed carrier to discuss these new requirements and what they can offer you to ensure you are in compliance.

The only exception to the new HO-6 requirement would be for the borrower to prove that the Association Master

Policy has coverage for the interiors of the units. Since this will be likely in the minority of the cases, I can predict a dramatic increase in the sale of HO-6 policies.

This change in insurance requirements isn't surprising for those of us in the hazard claims recovery services field. For the past 15 years, I have seen thousands of vacant condos with damage. Usually, claims were not filed on those properties since most servicers did not require the borrower to obtain hazard insurance for the interiors of the units. In fact, in 1999 I wrote about this specific gap in coverage that caused exposure for servicers and investors. (Read the full article at <http://tinyurl.com/8856ef>.) I am sure the dramatic increase in foreclosures has resulted in many changes to the way hazard insurance is viewed, as Fannie Mae has most likely seen with increased losses to the interiors of its condo units.

Ronald R. Reitz is president of Quality Claims Management Corporation, which specializes in representing policyholders and mortgagees in identifying, adjusting and settling hazard insurance claims.



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