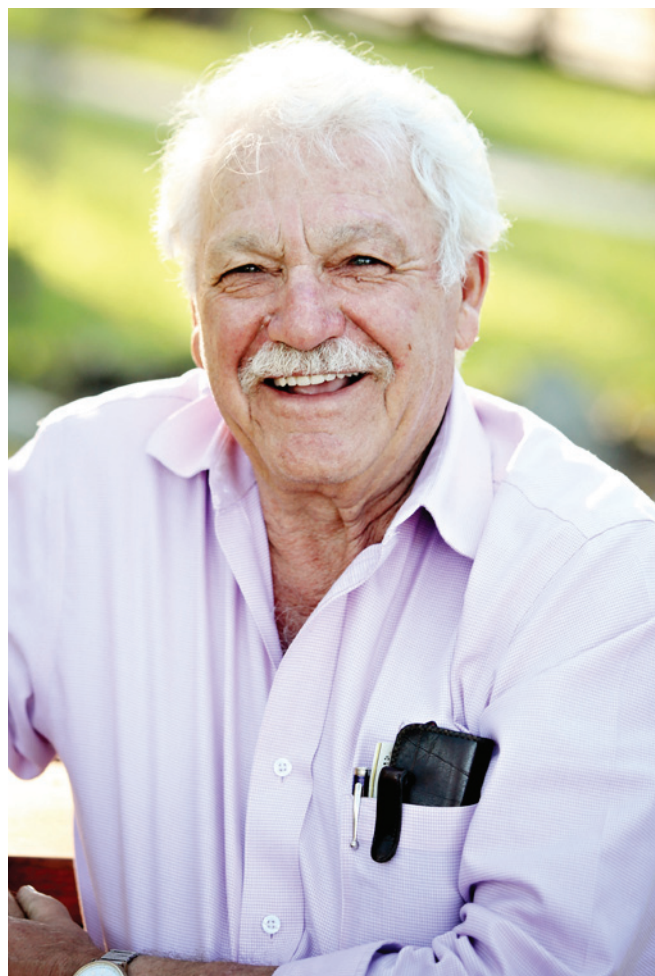


REAL ESTATE SECTION



Agent Profile | Coldwell Banker Mendo Realty

Realtor

Lee Persico

By Ree Slocum

There's something to be said about living and working in one place for most of one's life. Except for a three-year stint in LA when he was pursuing an education in commercial art, and a brief time in San Rafael after marrying his wife, Evelyn Wallace, Lee Persico has lived in Little Lake Valley for most of his 81 years. His hearty handshake and laid-back nature speak to a life lived close to the earth and one that's survived many changes in the town and valley that he calls home.

The family history in Little Lake Valley is long, starting with his grandparents arriving in Willits in the early 1900s. Persico's father and his siblings were born in the valley, and Persico and his siblings were also born here, as were Lee and Evelyn's children, making three generations of Persicos being delivered at Howard Hospital when the hospital still provided birthing services. The local Persico grandchildren have been born on the coast or Ukiah.

The family continues to run cattle on the home ranch with Lee, who spent his past Saturday roping calves, Evelyn and their son, Michael, running the day-to-day ranch business. Two of his daughters, Kathy and Liz, also live on the ranch and help with chores while son Ken lives in town. Their daughter Tracy resides in Sparks, Nevada with her husband and children.

Lee Persico, being a rather practical man, decided to become a real estate agent and, with his friend Jack Cox, opened the Jack Cox and Associates realty office in 1973. "I've always been in a business or direction that's something that people needed rather than being on the cutting edge of something and telling them they need it!" he said.

Persico continued with Cox through a few other real estate business transformations when they were independent agents. Later Cox joined the Coldwell Banker national franchise, and

Read the rest of
Persico | Over on Page RE5



Agent Profile | Coldwell Banker Mendo Realty

Realtor

Randa Craighead

By Maureen Moore

Just two years after getting her real estate licence, Willits' Randa Craighead is already enjoying her job as an agent, working with Coldwell Banker Mendo Realty.

Craighead, who married Dennis Craighead in 1993 watched her father-in-law Don Craighead enjoy the industry. He encouraged her, before his passing three years ago, to pursue her interest in the field, get her license, and work the market.

Don Craighead owned the Willits County Mall, where he held a real estate brokerage in addition to his Milbrae office, where he worked for many years before moving to the area.

Randa Craighead had been "following in my father's career," she said – being a teacher at Deep Valley Christian School and at the Willits Charter School. She also worked with the Willits Unified School District and as an aide at Baechtel Grove Middle School before receiving her BA and teaching credential from Sonoma State University and moving forward to a teaching career.

"Teaching was my dad's career," she laughed. "I wanted to try my father-in-law's career next. He always really seemed to enjoy real estate, and encouraged me to get into the industry. I remember him telling me if I wanted to learn about real estate, to talk to Lee Persico."

After Don Craighead's passing, Randa Craighead decided to move forward with the plan. She attended Mendocino College, taking real estate classes from Nash Gonzalez, and eventually signed on to Coldwell Banker Mendo Realty, where Persico also works.

Now, Craighead works with buyers, mainly. She noted how she enjoys helping clients through the process of purchasing a home.

Read the rest of
Craighead | Over on Page RE5

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Above: The Family Tree crew in front of the expanded Laytonville office.
Tanya and Greg Musgrave cut the ribbon at Family Tree's new office.

Family Tree Service, Inc. has a new office!

Construction was completed over eight months with local contractor Jay Fraser Construction. We were finally able to move in a few weeks ago in April. We expanded from our 682-square-foot office to occupy 1,500 square feet on the same property located at 41701 North Highway 101, just south of Laytonville.

Owner Greg Musgrave has been in business since 1989 and now employs 80 local community residents, which makes Family Tree Service one of the county's largest employers.

Family Tree Service works with the local community and PG&E to remove hazard trees and limbs that may create power outages or fires. We also offer residential services for fire abatement, storm cleanup or property enhancement. We have a licensed arborist on staff, accredited by the Tree Care Industry Association, and members of the International Society of Arborists. Our climbers are "utility line clearance certified" for safety. Our main area of focus is Mendocino, Lake, Humboldt, Sonoma and Napa counties, and we can be reached at 707-984-6629. Visit "Family Tree Service, Inc" on Facebook for photos and more info.

— submitted by Tanya Musgrave, Family Tree Service

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Above: The present location of Al's Redwood Room has also been the site of Dryden's Livery Stable, Little Lake Garage, as seen here, and Jack Lewis' Chevrolet dealership. Below: Al's Redwood Room has been in business since 1901. After several moves around town, it found its home at 207 South Main Street in 1970.



A 'Then & Now' Museum Series

Al's Redwood Room

What a storied place is Al's! It is the longest-lived business in town, continuously operating since 1901.

The earliest stories report that the current location was Dryden's Livery Stable in 1908 or so. Fitting, then, that in later years it served as the Little Lake Garage and as Jack Lewis' Chevrolet dealership.

The business serving Willits in that location now has migrated around town before finally ending up at 207 South Main Street. The Redwood Room bar started in 1901 at the Hotel Willits, fully paneled in old redwood, with a gorgeous historic Brunswick-back bar.

At some point in the late 1930s or early '40s, Al Greenberg bought the Redwood Room and added "Al's" to the sign at the southeast corner of the Hotel Willits. Greenberg moved his business to a nook at the Van Hotel in the early '50s. With Greenberg's big love of the community, his bar became a central scene for meetings of minds with spirits. During the 1940s and early '50s, many celebrities stopped in at Al's for a drink while in Willits to visit their old Hollywood pal, former actor Don Coleman, or while heading for a vacation in the redwoods at Benbow.

Thomas and Louise Geoghegan and James Jennings were the next owners of Al's, and they in turn sold the bar to Fritz and Juanita Hummel

in October 1964. Juanita Hummel already owned the Little Lake Chevrolet building, so in 1970 she turned it into the present site for Al's.

The business has changed hands twice more, and the present owners, Robin and Jim Tomes, purchased the business in July of 2003, adding Thai food to the American menu. The Tomeses also added windows to the west façade of the building and fully restored the historic neon sign.

For more information on this building and others located along Main Street, please check out "Main Street: Then & Now," a visually fascinating and historically informative exhibit on the history of Willits, with a focus on Main Street architecture, commerce and culture. Join the Mendocino County Museum and friends for a free opening celebration on Saturday, June 10, from 1 to 3 pm.

The exhibit will be on display through November at the Mendocino County Museum, 400 East Commercial Street. Check it out Wednesday through Sunday 10 am to 4:30 pm. Admission is \$4 per person; students are only \$1; kids 6 years old and under are free. More information on this exhibit can be found at www.MendocinoMuseum.org.

— submitted by
Mendocino County Museum

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Casting a good light

Exterior lighting improves the safety and appearance of your home

When drafting a to-do list for home improvements that can increase home value and appeal, several renovations tend to be atop homeowners' lists. While kitchen or bathroom remodels may be popular renovations, homeowners also should consider outdoor lighting schemes that can make homes safer and more alluring.

Outdoor lighting serves various purposes. Such lighting can draw attention to more impressive parts of a property. In addition, such lighting can improve security and deter criminals.

To get started, homeowners should first examine the exteriors of their homes and make note of existing lighting and where improvements can be made. If you're not sure where to begin, speak with an electrician or a landscape designer, each of whom can offer suggestions on lighting and which options are the best fit for your particular property.

Next, you'll want to consider efficiency and function. The U.S. Department of Energy suggests incorporating energy-efficient lighting, including energy-saving LED bulbs or fluorescent lights, into your plans. Timers and other automatic controls can prevent waste by turning lights on only when they are needed. Solar lights can be used as accent lights, further saving energy.

Beauty

When addressing aesthetics, think about the appeal of an accented landscape. Include lights to frame the front door and call attention to certain elements, such as decorative trees or water features. Use lights to light up deck stairways or to accent planters. Speak with a lighting professional about how to position lights to cover the most territory in the most attractive way possible.

Safety

Safety is an important consideration when improving a home. Lighting can help illuminate potential hazards or draw



An impressive display of exterior lighting.

attention to borders or property boundaries. Navigating in the dark can be treacherous, so put lights along pathways and near pools or spas. Be sure that lights will clearly mark other walkways around your home, such as those leading from doors to the yard or from the garage to where trash and recycling bins are kept. If a design element such as a bridge over a water feature or a particular ornamental tree or shrub is difficult to navigate in the dark, use lights to improve visibility.

Security

Added security is another reason to install more exterior lighting. Dark homes are attractive to burglars. Eliminate dark corners by lighting up areas where thieves may be able to gain access to your home. This includes areas near doorways and ground-level windows. Install motion-sensor lights in such areas so you are not wasting energy.

Lighting may not only deter human intruders, but also it can scare away animals. A raccoon, skunk or opossum may think twice about hanging around your home when your property is bathed in a spotlight.

Revamping exterior lighting elements can improve the safety and the look of a home – and increase its value on the real estate market.



383 South Main Street as it looks today.



Now and Then

383 South Main Street

Reprinted with permission from the 1988 book "The Architectural Heritage of Willits," by Nelson A. Streib and Susan Pritchard, commissioned by the City of Willits.

The building at 383 South Main Street is important because of the business for which it was built. It was actually the third bottling works in Willits, the second owned by Macy Leak, a very enterprising man who came to Willits near the turn of the century, and first operated a wood hauling business. He later added a threshing machine to his business and in 1907 began bottling soda. He built a wooden frame building there in 1907 and by 1916 his operations had outgrown that structure. He had Dan DeShiell, a prominent contractor, build the new larger building, at that time added ice manufacturing to his operation. Leak's

decision to build the ice plant marked the first time that ice was produced commercially in Willits.

The one story concrete rectangular flat building was built in 1916 to house an ice manufacturing, soda and beer bottling works. It is divided into three sections, and now houses a laundromat. The top of the decorative false front has lost the original concrete pedestals that decorated it. The front of the building is divided into sections by four plain concrete pillars that are slightly raised from the walls surface.



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BANKING	DEPOSIT	INVESTMENT	RETIREMENT
BANKRUPTCY	EQUITY	LENDING	STOCKS
BORROW	FINANCE	LIABILITY	TERM
CASH	FINANCING	MONEY	TRADING
CHECK	FORECLOSURE	MORTGAGE	TRUST
COMMODITY	FUND	NET WORTH	WITHDRAW

The rest of **Persico** | From Page RE1

for 25 years the business has been owned and operated by the same native Mendocino County partners, John Lazaro and, now, Cox's daughter, Kerri Vau, and is still working within the Coldwell Banker franchise. Persico has stayed with the company through the changes from the git-go.

Persico's perspective, gleaned from many years watching the cattle and real estate market trends, is quite simple: "Any type of business has its ups and downs. If it's the stock market, real estate business, cattle business, sheep business, wine business – it's cyclic. You have to realize it and save for it." He also mentioned that the market has finally gotten over all the foreclosures of the 2007-2008 crisis, and the local real estate market is doing well. Right now it's a seller's market.

There are new businesses looking at Willits, and some of them need employees who would move to the area. "The next problem is housing, because we have no subdivisions for housing for them," Persico stated. The county planning department and the planning commission are inundated with applications for different things to rezone. Because it's a long, slow process to rezone areas with other designations, it may not happen quickly enough for some potential businesses.

As far as marijuana's concerned, Persico was selling mountain land to "outlaw growers" from the beginning. Nobody thought much of it in those days. Right now he's seeing a lot of big money coming in to buy land and, with the new regulations, he's not sure where it will go.

For businesses in town that are struggling to survive right now, Persico sees it as the "bypass doldrums." Some are having harder times, especially the motels and restaurants. He likens it to what happened in Cloverdale, Ukiah and Petaluma. Those communities came together and created an attractive uniqueness. "We need better signage out there; it's very poor. We need direction for travelers to come off the highway to visit Willits. Once we get through this, we will survive," he stated confidently.

Like many, Persico feels fortunate to live where there are four great seasons and good air and water. The location is perfect for going to the coast, the city, Reno. He likes the small community the way it is. "There are very interesting people, quite a diversity of people, and that's healthy," he said.

An interesting factoid about Lee Persico, who's always been involved with and promoted Willits Frontier Days, is that he was wowing the crowds as a 2-year-old doing tricks riding his pony "Buck." Baby Lee and Buck were a sought-after act that played in many rodeos. When Lee was 3, his father took the boy and pony – with Buck's head sticking out the back window of the Studebaker – over the Golden Gate Bridge to the Treasure Island World's Fair, where they reportedly performed to an audience of 11,000. It won the young Lee a place in Ripley's Believe It or Not as "The Youngest Cowboy in the World." While he hasn't performed in more years than can be remembered, he continues to volunteer at Willits' historic Frontier Days event.

To contact Lee Persico at Coldwell Banker, dial 459-5790 or stop by the offices at 1460 South Main Street.

The rest of **Craighead** | From Page RE1

"It can be a very satisfying job," she said. "Recently, my son recommended me to a young couple. We worked together, and I was able to get them their first home. I can really see why my father-in-law really enjoyed working in real estate."

Despite her experience working with buyers, Craighead noted that she looks forward to working with some sellers, too.

"Right now, it's certainly a seller's market," she said. "The listings are sparse, and many move-in-ready homes in the \$250,000 to \$325,000 range are actually receiving multiple offers and offers above the list price, since there's just so few on the market right now."

Craighead noted that if anyone was on the fence about deciding to sell, now would be a good time, as interest rates are still low for buyers and there's not a ton of competition in that \$250,000 to \$325,000 range for sellers.

Some fixers and higher-end properties are also available on the market, but Craighead stressed the need for more good move-in-ready homes on the market "There's just not nearly as many as we need!" she said.

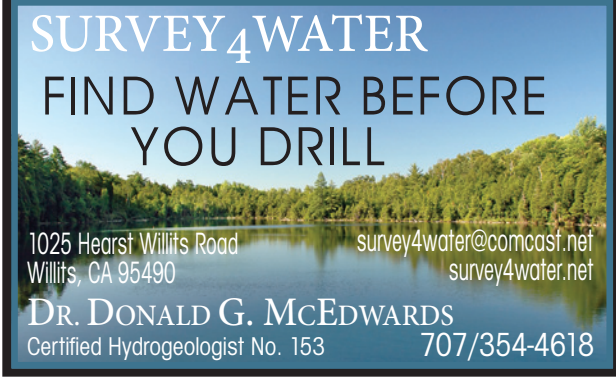
Getting buyers prequalified helps make expectations and a plan clear for client and agent alike, and Craighead noted she is happy to recommend several industry professionals to help with the lending process.

If anyone is interested in looking at properties, or interested in learning more about listing a property for sale, Craighead is available at the office at 841-7778 or randa.craighead@coldwellbanker.com.

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COLUMN | Numbers by Nick

Budget needs

Hey Willits friends and neighbors: A short while back, I covered your recommended budget breakdowns of 50 percent needs / 20 percent savings/ secure futures / 30 percent wants.

Today, we are covering the 50 percent.

When you itemize and organize your expenses – as you are only to allocate 50 percent of your income to your home – then you need to be crafty with the items you purchase for the house.

At first this will appear to be a challenge, but eventually you will find your new norm.

Home: Did you refinance your home while the mortgage rates were at all-time lows? If not, contact your lender and learn what it takes to secure a longer mortgage period, if you have an adjustable rate mortgage.

Home Insurance: Is your home insured for the appropriate value of replacement? If you have any questions, contact your insurer.

Auto Insurance: Is your home insurance bundled with your auto insurance to optimize your savings?

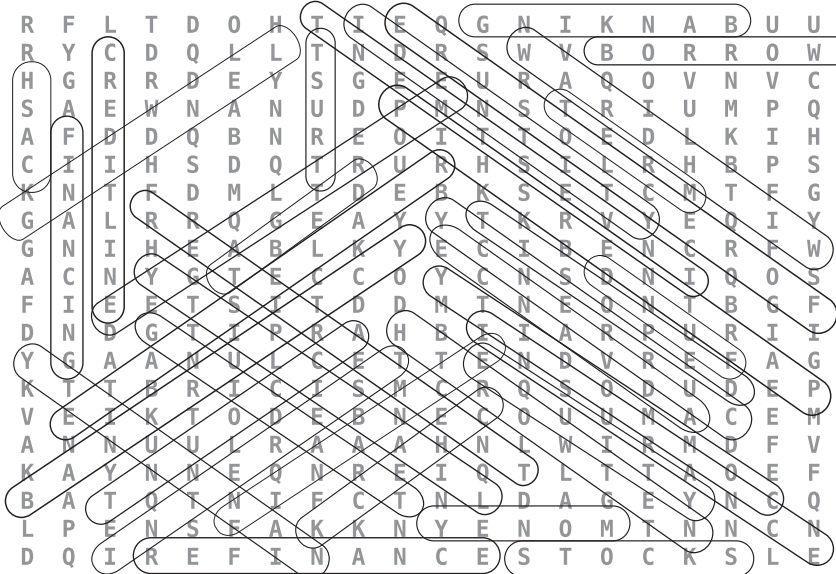
Auto Charges: Dig through your bank and or credit card statements for your recurring charges. Are there charges that you do not recognize? Are there any items that seem out of whack?

TV: Television allows us to "escape" our reality, and allows us to decompress. However, check your watching habits. Do you by chance have an enormous bundled package that includes premium channels? If your package contains premiums, but you do not find yourself utilizing those channels, then lower your plan.

Remember, the goal is to have 50 percent of your monthly income squeeze into your home expenses.

Coupons and Budget Shopping: Coupons are in essence found money, so be wise with coupons from manufacturers as well as in-store flyers to maximize your monthly savings.

Pack a Lunch: Remember to pack a



lunch to work – this will save you on your monthly expenses – and treat yourself once a week for lunch, versus each day. Preparing a lunch also includes shopping at the market to capture your ingredients.



Nicholas Casagrande
Columnist

Clothing: Clothing wears out, so when you purchase new clothes, be sure to drop off older items that still have use left to them to the Goodwill, and collect your receipt for taxes!

Renters: Be certain to obtain renter's insurance, and provide a copy to

your landlord.

Auto: Before you start your car to do a trip, be sure to list your trip in advance, and take the most economical routes to save you time and money. Not writing down each part your trip may have you forgetting a stop, then you will need to backtrack. As autos become more efficient with mpg, be sure you are optimizing your trips to make the most of the fuel tank.

Electricity: Be sure to be efficient with your electricity and appliance usage at home. For those homeowners who are seeking to knock down their electricity bill even more, there is solar. Check out this information from "Go Solar California" on tax credits for buying and installing solar systems: www.gosolarcalifornia.ca.gov/consumers/taxcredits.php.

Thank you and my best.

Nicholas Casagrande, EA, is an accountant and a financial advisor. His firm, NC Financial Group, is a wealth management firm serving individual clients as well as small-to-medium-sized businesses. Client work includes personal and corporate taxes, investment planning, insurance, and real estate. NC Financial Group's Willits office is located at 675 South Main Street; contact 855-240-6606 or nicholas@ncfinancialgroup.com for more information.



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What to expect from a real estate agent

In case you haven't noticed, the real estate market has changed recently. Prices are up, inventory is down, and buyers outnumber sellers. This makes it a seller's market. Buyers are in the market because rates are still at historic lows. Prices are still affordable, and the economy is looking stronger. If you are thinking of selling in the near future, consider starting now.

Whether you're thinking of buying or selling, the question is: Should you employ a real estate agent to help you? What do they do for you, exactly?

To help you figure this out, I thought I'd define a real estate agent's legal obligations, as well as the difference between a real estate agent and a Realtor. All Realtors are real estate agents, but not all agents are Realtors.

Licensed real estate agents have a fiduciary responsibility to deal honestly and in the best interest of the principal (you) – this is not just an ethical responsibility, but a legal one. Real estate agents must follow your instructions unless they are "patently frivolous." But as long as you are reasonable, your agent must represent you according to your wishes.

Realtors are real estate agents who've joined their local Realtor association. This membership also affiliates them with their state and national associations. So, in addition to being well-trained, Realtors adhere to a strict code of ethics and standards of practice, higher than those mandated by



Richard Selzer
Columnist

law. Membership in the associations also makes it easier for Realtors to stay up to date with the latest legal issues.

So now that you know all about Realtors, the question remains, should I hire a Realtor to help me buy or sell a house? I'd say yes, and here's why.

First, it is in a Realtor's best interest to help you meet your goal. Realtors only get paid if you get what you want – a completed transaction.

Second, people in the real estate industry (brokers and lenders with the knowledge to do the work themselves) hire Realtors because they understand the value of a good Realtor. It's kind of like when you find out your doctor goes to a specialist when he or she needs one. Why wouldn't you want to do the same?

On the selling side, a Realtor will assess your property to determine its market value and bring to light any issues that make it unusual (e.g., is it in a flood plain? Does it have historic value?). Realtors advertise your property locally, online, and via the Multiple Listing Service (MLS), reaching thousands of potential buyers. Realtors are also connected to other real estate professionals and can share information about your home via those relationships. And, Realtors don't make a dime unless your house sells. As a matter of fact, they spend time and money marketing your property on the prospect of collecting a fee when it sells.

On the buying side, Realtors can act as a buffer between you and a homeowner, so you don't tip your hand. In negotiations, he who speaks first loses. However, if Realtors communicate, they may act as independent parties, providing you with information without giving away your position. (This is true whether you're a buyer or seller.)

If you're a buyer, Realtors can save you a ton of time. As long as you are clear and specific about your needs, a Realtors can sift through all the properties for sale so you only see the ones of interest to you. Also, Realtors are likely to hear of properties coming on the market before the general public, putting you in a position to know sooner.

The idea of saving money with a For Sale By Owner (FSBO) isn't really accurate. From a seller's perspective, unless you're a marketing genius, your property just won't get the same exposure it would with a Realtor. And advertising can get expensive. Also, if you are not well-versed in real estate law, mistakes can also be very costly. Not surprisingly, most FSBO homes end up being listed with Realtors.

On the buyer's side, you do all the work and receive none of the benefits of an agent. Without a Realtor, you may not know what's for sale or what legal rights you have, what sellers should provide and/or pay for, or other legal issues. And real estate contracts have a lot of details. If you aren't familiar with them, you may agree to things you shouldn't.

Whether you are buying or selling a home, if you have a smart phone you can download a free app that will give you a lot of information about what's for sale. Text "RW" to 59559, and you'll be sent a link to an app that uses your location to identify all properties in the MLS (not just Realty World listings). It also offers recent sales so you can compare your property to others.

If you have questions about real estate or property management, please contact me at rselzer@selzerrealty.com or visit www.realtyworldselzer.com. If I use your suggestion in a column, I'll send you a \$5 gift card to Roland's Bakery. If you'd like to read previous articles, visit my blog at www.richardselzer.com.

Dick Selzer is a real estate broker who has been in the business for more than 40 years.

A list of local real estate agents, based in Willits and Laytonville

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List based on information from Bay Area Real Estate Information Services, Inc.

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