Work-life balance in real estate

Busy REALTORS® can find it challenging to carve out time for their personal lives. After all, the hours are often long and they work on days when the general public is relaxing or celebrating a holiday; there are quick turnarounds on offer deadlines; and the phone can ring at any time of day or night. The Edge newsletter talked to three Ontario REALTORS® to discover how they balance work and personal time.

**Peter Butler**, a Port Dover REALTOR® with six years of experience in the business, says he “totally believes it is possible to have work-life balance, even though real estate can be an always-on profession. It’s necessary to have balance, not only in your business life, but also in your personal life.”

For Butler, who turned to real estate after a military career, the key is planning. “As much as you plan and organize all aspects of your workday, you must also plan and organize your family time,” Butler says. “One is just as important as the other.”

Butler spends an hour each Sunday organizing his entire week, and family time goes into his calendar first. “I schedule family time first and everything else is scheduled around that,” he says. “Of course, any schedule is subject to change if emergencies come up.”

**Jay Lough Hayes**, a Peterborough REALTOR® with 30 years in the business, calls herself “a workaholic,” but still makes time for activities that are important to her. “I enjoy volunteering in my community, curling, singing and being creative,” she says. “At Christmas I run my own charity named “Santas for Peterborough Seniors,” so very little real estate work gets completed throughout December.

“My husband and I have a standing date night on Tuesday, which is cheap night at the movies; we quite often meet for dinner and a movie. I view leisure time as being just as important as work time, and I book leisure time off as an appointment.”

**Costas Kivelos**, a Toronto REALTOR® who left the construction industry seven years ago to work in real estate, says achieving work-life balance can be challenging, but “it’s all about time management and availability. The key is to be available to the clients at all times and make them feel as if they’re your only clients.”

Kivelos says doing this successfully comes with experience. Now that he has a wife and two young children, he has created a team of younger REALTORS® so that he has other professionals on whom he can rely to keep the business running smoothly.

“This approach is win-win,” says Kivelos. “The newer people are looking for a mentor and, in a year they can gain the experience it took me seven years to obtain. They get a share of the commission, depending on how much they assist me, and meanwhile it has
freed up a lot of my time. I can see my kids and have more time to myself and with my wife. I end up making more money because the overall volume of deals increases and the quality of service is improved – there’s no waiting."

Lough Hayes has teamed up with a broker, focusing on buyer clients, to make her own work-life balance easier to achieve. However, another weapon in her REALTOR® arsenal is the ability to say no. She recalls a situation when she should have said no, illustrating how important that skill can be.

“On Christmas morning, my client called around 10 a.m., wanting to show his wife the house, which was a Christmas present he had bought for her,” Lough Hayes says. “I said no immediately! … He went on and on about needing to fulfil his condition about his wife seeing the house … With all of my family’s gifts already opened and breakfast out of the way, I called the listing REALTOR® to ask for permission for a showing. She said I was nuts but gave me the okay.

“I met my clients at the house. Much to my surprise, this guy had gone to a craft store, bought every scrap of 12-inch wide red ribbon, and literally gift-wrapped the house. It was very thoughtful and eye-catching, to say the least. But when his wife walked in, not quite past the threshold, she looked at him and said ‘I hate it! Let’s go!’ Talk about a letdown! I returned home to glares from my own family for working on Christmas day. Meanwhile, this couple separated a few weeks later.”

Online technology offers another way to make the life of a REALTOR® easier and avoid wasting precious time, says Butler. “There are great tools out there to be used,” he says. “I use Google tools – you can add the calendar to your phone. I also use Evernote. I love paper and pencil, but I can take a photo of my notes and put it into Evernote, where I create notebooks for each listing.”

Kivelos can’t live without his smartphone. “My cellphone is my Holy Grail,” he says. “I need to be accessible 24/7. You also need an iPad or a laptop. When you’re meeting a client, a new listing might pop up, or you might see a home for sale as you are driving down the street and you need to document it.”

Even with all these strategies and tools at hand, burnout is still possible. “We all experience exhaustion at times,” says Butler. “Our systems aren’t perfect and in a busy spring market, it’s easier to become overwhelmed. We just have to remember to put our personal time into our schedules. As the author of The Wealthy Barber says, pay yourself first.”
Advice for achieving work-life balance

- Develop systems for everything, including listings and clients.
- Understand the difference between business and busy-ness.
- Work hard every day – but not necessarily for eight hours.
- When things get busy, learn to use the talents of those around you.
- Look at the big picture and the long term: Build relationships rather than relying on quick hits.
- Allow yourself to feel good about time off, because you’ve earned it. Sleep in late once in a while.
- Find a hobby and schedule time for it as an appointment.

*Story by Elaine Smith.*

*Sources: Peter Butler, Jay Lough Hayes, Costas Kivelos.*

Residential leasing issues: Join seminar

Residential leasing is a specific type of real estate that can bring challenges involving landlords and tenants. Learn more about residential leasing at an upcoming webinar offered by the Ontario Real Estate Association (OREA).

This live webinar is free to all OREA members. It is scheduled to take place on **Tuesday, November 15 at 1:00 p.m.** The session, *Residential leasing: Don’t go outside of the Act,* will feature special guest participant **Lou Radomsky,** a lawyer and the legal counsel for OREA Standard Forms. The webinar will be hosted by **Cassandra Agnew Walker,** senior manager, standard forms, at OREA.

“Residential leasing is completely different from residential sales,” says Agnew Walker. “With an increased number of people now renting residential properties across the province, it’s very important for REALTORS® to understand at least the basics of residential leasing, while being aware of the differences between residential and commercial leasing and the issues that their clients and customers may encounter.”

Tips and cautions related to residential leasing will be featured in the upcoming webinar. Participants will also have the opportunity to discuss the following:
• Complexities of lease agreements
• Essential differences between commercial and residential leasing
• Relevant issues for non-resident landlords
• Requirements for landlords to provide tenants a relationship brochure
• Paper trail, timing and delivery of notices to tenants
• Best practices and what not to do when listing or leasing residential properties.

Participating OREA members will have a chance to submit questions and share their own experiences. This webinar is just one in a series related to standard forms being offered this year. To join in, all you need is a computer with working speakers and internet access.

Like all webinars, the format for this topic will be interactive. You can submit questions, listen to panelists and watch slides related to the topic. If you can’t participate in the seminar on the date offered, you can watch a recorded version at a later date and time convenient to you.

OREA members can register in advance in order to obtain a login link for the webinar. On the day of the webinar, members can log in up to 30 minutes before the scheduled start time. Participation in this and other webinars will be on a first-come, first-served basis. For more details on all of these resources, log in to the Members’ section and click on Standard Forms in www.orea.com.

Story by Mary Ann Gratton.

The rise of heritage conservation districts

by Robert Hulley

One has to wonder if members of the provincial government in 1975 predicted the huge success that would result from the legislation they passed to create Heritage Conservation Districts (HCD) in Ontario.

Today there are 124 HCDs in existence, containing more than 22,300 properties -- with six more districts pending designation. An HCD is essentially a specific area that a municipality has designated in a policy statement bylaw. That designation is registered on the title of each affected property within the district. It includes guidelines meant to protect and provide stability to an area that is believed to have cultural heritage values worth preserving.

There are a several reasons for the dramatic increase in the number of these districts, not the least of which is that two academic studies have shown that, although properties
within HCD boundaries are relatively more expensive than those of neighbouring areas, the former tend to hold their value better, even in depressed markets.

But perhaps the most compelling reason for the growth can be found in the old adage, "Birds of a feather flock together". Neighbours in these areas share a love and respect for cultural heritage values. More often than not, a volunteer community association exists, much like a condominium board, but without any official powers. Members of the association meet regularly and they jealously guard the character and nature of the neighbourhood. Some of these areas even have their own community newsletters and promote community events like fairs, picnics and walking tours of the district.

Living in these districts, residents know that if a property is damaged by fire or natural causes, any infill or reconstruction must be done in keeping with the character and context of the neighbourhood. If reconstruction occurs, owners will follow guidelines on height, width and setbacks to ensure their property remains similar to that of their neighbours. They may even go so far as to choose suitable or complimentary materials and colours as well as maintaining the proportions of windows and entrances so they match those found on adjoining properties.

Despite an appreciation for older architectural styles and detailing, owners of heritage homes nevertheless want modern, stylish bathrooms and kitchens and contemporary heating, air conditioning and electrical systems. However, many of them design bedrooms, living and dining areas in period style with antique furnishings.

Commercial HCDs face some of the same restrictions for rebuilding, but these properties are generally located in older downtown commercial areas. They have become very popular as local tourist destinations as well as choice locations for fashion boutiques, antiques, art and specialty stores as well as for book and souvenir shops.

Another compelling reason to own a heritage property in an HCD is the willingness of an increasing number of municipalities to offer grants and tax incentives as well as other forms of financial support to home owners and businesses that may wish to improve these properties in keeping with the spirit and character of the area.

What does all of this tell us about HCDs? A great deal. First, it reminds us that, in terms of volume, the number of HCDs is limited compared to other properties on the real estate market overall. However, these districts constitute a growing segment of the market.

In addition, provincial governments are pushing towards higher urban densities. For these reasons, HCDs are becoming more highly sought after as residential sanctuaries in otherwise overdeveloped urban core areas. Owners of heritage properties in HCDs may feel that restrictions on expansion and change offer an appealing barrier against the kind of sprawl that affects other city neighbourhoods.
For REALTORS®, the HCD market is a relatively stable one, providing sustainability and possibilities for future trading activities. All in all, HCDs are a proven success and will likely continue to be so in the future.

Robert Hulley is an award-winning heritage conservationist, author, former REALTOR® and real estate counselor.

Let’s talk about forms: OREA reaches out

Working in real estate means handling many forms. The volume and complexity of the paper trail for listing and selling can sometimes make REALTORS® feel overwhelmed.

The Ontario Real Estate Association (OREA) has launched an initiative to provide an update on forms and offer discussions to clarify the use and purpose of standard forms. The Forms Update Outreach project began as a pilot two years ago, with presenters visiting REALTORS® in different communities and bringing updates, expertise, news and insights to help members understand annual revisions to forms and clauses and foster interactive discussions.

These presentations involved travel from Thunder Bay in the north to Windsor in the south and to Ottawa in the east. Thousands of REALTORS® across the province took the opportunity to attend a Forms Outreach session somewhere in Ontario. Last year, more than 60 different presentations were organized across the province to bring the forms experts out to you – OREA members.

The initiative was so successful that another 50 presentations have taken place so far in 2016, and the feedback from REALTORS® has been outstanding. The venues have been everything from real estate board offices and brokerages to community centres, hotel meeting rooms and public libraries.

“The OREA forms update sessions are great, and I highly recommend them to all real estate salespeople,” says Sheena Smith Curran, a real estate broker in Oakville. “Everyone who holds themselves out as a professional in this business needs to make sure their knowledge is as complete and up-to-date as possible. The forms information sessions are providing a key resource.”

“Forms are a very important part of our profession, and the outreach event I attended provided up-to-date information on how OREA forms affect our ability to perform our jobs,” says Stan Adams, a Cambridge REALTOR®. “The in-person nature of the local meeting allowed for interaction and a question-and-answer session that provided a better understanding of current forms and their usage.”

“There are never-ending changes to our business through legislation, market forces and new business models,” says Adams. “The face-to-face format of these events gives us
an interactive opportunity to discuss these changes, and that personal touch at local meetings is a great help.”

Annual revisions are a key feature of all sessions, when the latest changes to various forms and clauses are highlighted by presenters.

“Our goal is to provide OREA members with the opportunity to learn much more about forms so they become adept in dealing with them, which results in greater awareness among members, clients and customers,” says Cassandra Agnew Walker, senior manager, standard forms, and the primary presenter at the forms update outreach events. “At these local meetings, we talk about many items related to forms, new forms and clauses, and revisions to existing forms and clauses. We then extend the conversation to provide a review and refresher on revisions from previous years and on most forms in general.”

“Knowledge of forms content and forms updates is absolutely vital for our members actively working in real estate,” adds Agnew Walker. “Although our forms fulfill many REALTOR® needs and are legally intact, they will only have the most value if our members are aware of them and thoroughly understand and use them to ensure that their consumers understand what they may be involved in, and eventually what they are signing. We want to help members make educated choices when they use standard forms.”

Several of the sessions have been delivered jointly by OREA and the Real Estate Council of Ontario (RECO), the industry regulator, combining the OREA Forms Update with a RECO Issues Update. The dual presentations generated superb discussions among members, she said. “These joint sessions have enabled us to convey shared information and strengthen our combined messaging in a way that benefits all REALTORS®,” she adds. “We want REALTORS® to be comfortable with the forms that they use on a daily basis, to hear what’s new this year and to remind them of recent changes as well.”

Presenters were Cassandra Agnew Walker and lawyer Lou Radomsky, the outside legal counsel to OREA standard forms. The numerous joint OREA-RECO presentations, included John Burnet, manager of complaints, compliance and discipline at RECO. Together this trio of presenters has criss-crossed the province -- at the invitation of various boards and brokerages -- to provide up-to-the-minute info on forms and form revisions.

“Knowledge of forms and clauses is always going to enhance the business success of REALTORS®,” says Agnew Walker. “The OREA forms and clauses are templates, and members must make them work within their own trading activity as well as seeking assistance from their brokerage management or broker of record. We also ensure that members are provided with information on other resources that we provide to help our members do business better and comply with various legislative requirements or rules and regulations.”
To book a Forms Outreach session in your part of the province, contact Cassandra Agnew Walker, senior manager, standard forms, via email at cassandra@orea.com.

Other form-related resources available to OREA members are:

- **Forms Explained** – A summary of OREA real estate forms with straightforward summary explanations.

- **Web seminars** (webinars) – Educational sessions offered on an regular basis to address issues and questions about various forms. To date, eight webinars have been organized this year. If you couldn’t take part on the day the webinar took place, you can listen to a recording of the topic now posted to the OREA website. One more webinar is scheduled this year. On **Tuesday, Nov. 15 at 1:00 p.m.**, you can take part in the webinar called “Residential leasing: Don’t go outside of the Act.”

- **Web tutorials** – Short video explanations with narrated recordings that describe the details of various real estate standard forms. Screen shots and voiceover explanations assist members in understanding various parts of each form.

For more information on all of these resources, visit www.orea.com, log in to the Members’ section and click on Standard Forms.

*Story by Mary Ann Gratton.*

**RECO: Ad and listing agreement mislead sellers**

The following decision from RECO Discipline and Appeal Hearings has been condensed. All individual and corporate names have been changed.

**THE FACTS**

Chris and Pat wanted to sell their property. They were working with Sam, a real estate salesperson with Green Grass Realty, who listed their property for sale at a list price of $409,980. The listing agreement featured two handwritten notations.

The first notation stated that if Green Grass Realty purchases the property, the deposit will be a certified cheque of $20,000. As well, it stated that if Green Grass purchases the property or if Sam finds a buyer, the total commission will be two per cent. The other handwritten note indicated that if the property is not sold in 30 days, Green Grass Realty would buy the property at the highest price offered by the market.
Each of these notes was initialed by Sam and the sellers. No other terms or conditions regarding the promise to buy the property were documented in the listing agreement, which was for a period of three months.

Just over a month later, Chris and Pat complained to RECO. They alleged that they listed with Sam because of the promise that if their house did not sell in 30 days, Sam or Green Grass Realty would purchase it. The sellers said that after the 30 days had passed, they asked Sam when they’d receive a deposit from him. After several inquiries, Sam offered to purchase the house for $350,000. Chris and Pat did not think this was a fair price, believing the market price to be between $405,000 and $429,000.

Chris and Pat provided RECO with copies of Sam’s printed ads, which stated, “if your property is not sold in 30 days, we will buy it!” This text was accompanied by an asterisk which indicated that certain conditions may apply, but no conditions were listed.

In Sam’s response to RECO, he said that he had explained to Chris and Pat that the market price would be agreed upon between himself and the sellers and set by offers received within the first 30 days of listing the property. Sam said that the house would continue to be listed on MLS® until the closing date, which was a total of three months. Sam said that if a more attractive offer came along, Chris and Pat would have the option of accepting it. In the event that a lower offer was accepted, Sam would compensate the difference between that offer and the amount he guaranteed, ensuring no loss for the sellers.

Sam said two offers were received on the house. Just over a month-and-a-half after listing the house, the first offer was signed back but rejected by the buyers. About a week later a second offer was received and was also signed back. However, before the second offer was finalized, the first buyers returned with a new offer of $409,000 which was accepted by Chris and Pat.

Sam acknowledged that he had failed to document the details of the guarantee in writing and failed to get Chris and Pat’s acknowledgement. Green Grass Realty adjusted its portion on the commission to a $1,000 flat fee.

THE FINDINGS

The RECO panel determined that Sam acted unprofessionally by failing to offer to purchase Chris and Pat’s house as indicated on the listing agreement and in Sam’s advertising. Sam also failed to put in writing, the terms, conditions and limitations of the guaranteed sale arrangements and failed to get the sellers’ acknowledgement in writing.

The panel ruled that Sam breached the following sections of the REBBA 2002 Code of Ethics: (3) Fairness, honesty, etc.; (4) Best interests; (5) Conscientious and competent service, etc.; (27 (1) (b) Written and legible agreements; (38) Error, misrepresentation, fraud etc.; and (39) Unprofessional conduct, etc.
THE PENALTY

Sam was fined $10,000 payable to RECO. The full decision can be viewed on the RECO web site at [www.reco.on.ca](http://www.reco.on.ca). Look under “Complaints and Enforcement” and then under “Regulatory activities and decisions” and scroll down to “Discipline and appeals decisions.” Scroll down and click on “Search by year.” Select 2014 then “Search.” The case is dated 2014/11/27.

Call for candidates – OREA

Interested in running for a position on OREA’s 2017 Board of Directors? The following positions are up for election: four Provincial Directors (made up of one each from the Western, Eastern, Northern and Central Ontario Areas), and two Directors-at-Large. Submit your candidacy forms to OREA’s Chief Executive Officer, care of Lanjun Wang, CPA, CA, Partner, Clarke Henning LLP, Chartered Accountants, 10 Bay Street, Suite 801, Toronto, Ontario, M5J 2R8. Applications must be received by no later than December 15, 2016. Full details (certain restrictions apply to the various positions) and candidacy forms are available from your real estate board or right here: OREA Elections 2017. [https://www.orea.com/Members/OREA-Elections-2017](https://www.orea.com/Members/OREA-Elections-2017). You will be prompted to log in.

Call for candidates – Foundation

Interested in running for a position on the Ontario REALTORS Care® Foundation’s 2017 Board of Directors? The following positions are up for election: three REALTOR® Directors (made up of one each from the Western, Eastern, and Northern Ontario Areas), and one Public Director. Submit your candidacy forms to the Secretary-Treasurer of the Ontario REALTORS Care® Foundation care of Lanjun Wang, CPA, CA, Partner, Clarke Henning LLP, Chartered Accountants 10 Bay Street, Suite 801, Toronto, Ontario M5J 2R8. Applications must be received by no later than December 15, 2016. Full details (certain restrictions apply to the various positions) and candidacy forms are available from your real estate board or online at [www.realtorscareontario.ca](http://www.realtorscareontario.ca).

Legal Beat: Easement dispute prompts court cases

by Merv Burgard, Q.C.

This case focuses on access to waterfront property and the legal concept of an easement of necessity.

An older couple owned a large parcel of land on a lake in rural Ontario. The property initially housed an inn and sports club, along with the couple’s home. The couple later decided to sever the residential section and give a large piece of the home lot to their daughter and son-in-law.
When the severance was created, the older couple were, in legal terms, the grantors, while the next generation were the grantees. At the time of severance, the older couple did not reserve a right of way/easement to the local road, because they preferred to access the home property through the inn land. After the husband died, his wife continued to operate the inn with her daughter, but financial difficulties ensued and the inn land (Part 1) was later purchased by a company under a Power of Sale.

The home property (Part 2) also became a financial challenge for the remaining owners, who were in default in two mortgages. Both lenders wanted to sell the home lot. However, that Part 2 property lacked access to the roadway, although it had waterfront access and could be reached by boat.

The bank (one of the lenders) brought proceedings to obtain an easement over abutting lands. The bank argued that the logistics of accessing the land required an *easement of necessity* – a legal term for a right of way given to a grantee (someone who is given land with no access except over other lands owned by the grantor). An easement of necessity can occur when a land owner splits his property so that one of the remaining parcels is landlocked, except by access across the other parcel.

The bank argued that the waterfront access was difficult and inconvenient. The trial judge agreed with the bank, based on a surveyor’s opinion and the configuration of the land. The judge decided the matter based on a Nova Scotia case that whether that easement was available was a matter of “practical necessity”.

On appeal, the Ontario Court of Appeal disagreed with the trial judge’s position on the basis that the test of the need for such an easement is one of strict necessity. The argument against the bank was that a convenience or practicality is not the same as a necessity. Although water access to the second lot was less convenient and more challenging, that reality does not automatically render land access a necessity.

“There was no evidence that water access was not possible at the time of the grant,” the appeal judge ruled, overturning the trial judge’s decision. At its highest, the evidence established that water access “does not offer a viable, or practical, means of access to and egress from Part 2, as the application judge put it, and this is not sufficient to establish an *easement of necessity*.” The appeal judge rejected the bank’s argument and denied an easement of necessity.

*Toronto Dominion Bank v Wise 2016 ONCA 629 (CanLII)*

MERV’S COMMENTS

The surveyor reported the presence of a very steep shoreline from the water’s edge to a plateau where it rises steeply to another plateau. “Water access up the very steep slope to the building would be impractical,” the report stated. The house sits on one of the highest points of land on the lake.
Buyers of a property like this one may have to negotiate an easement over abutting lands and/or build an “impractical” and expensive set of stairs from the lake. To access the property, they may have to come by water from public access boat launches.

Showing this property may require some innovative ideas from the buyer’s REALTOR®, such as access to the land by boat or float plane. Real estate professionals may want to suggest sturdy hiking boots for all interested parties.

REALTORS® from other areas outside of rural regions such as this one would be wise to refer their buyers to local REALTORS® who are aware of specific issues of access and related challenges in a given area. And no, this is not something that I made up for my Real Estate Law course.

Merv Burgard, Q.C.

OREA welcomes Tim Hudak as new CEO

After 21 years of distinguished public service in the Ontario Legislature, Tim Hudak will be joining the Ontario Real Estate Association (OREA) as Chief Executive Officer, effective December 2, with a transition period beginning October 15.

“I am tremendously excited about this new opportunity,” said Hudak. “I feel honoured to lead a talented, dedicated team charged with delivering products and services to Ontario REALTORS®. In my travels, I have seen first-hand the leadership roles that REALTORS® take on in every community and how much charitable work OREA members do for local causes.”

Hudak said he is embracing this new challenge because of OREAs sense of mission: helping more men and women experience the excitement and rewards of home ownership. A home is the biggest investment that most people make in their lifetime.

“I know I changed as a man when I bought my first home,” Hudak said. “A home is so much more than four walls – it’s a place of our own where we can truly be ourselves, raise our families and celebrate life’s most important milestones.”

Hudak joins OREA from Queen’s Park, where he served as Leader of the Progressive Conservative Party of Ontario, Opposition Leader, and a Member of Provincial Parliament, representing the people of Niagara for 21 years. He served in three Cabinet portfolios, as Minister of Northern Development and Mines; Minister of Tourism, Culture and Recreation; and Minister of Consumer and Business Services. In the latter role, he worked closely with OREA to write the Real Estate and Business Brokers Act, 2002, and to create the Real Estate Council of Ontario (RECO). As leader of the Official Opposition from 2009 to 2014, Hudak oversaw 80 staff members and managed a multi-million- dollar budget.
“On behalf of the board of directors of OREA, I am pleased to announce that Tim Hudak will join us as our new Chief Executive Officer,” said Ray Ferris, President of OREA. “Tim brings more than 20 years of public service and executive management experience to us. Throughout his time at Queen’s Park, he has been a strong advocate for Ontario home owners and for issues that our association supports. Tim’s leadership will be a great asset to Ontario REALTORS® and home owners.”

“OREA has had a very long, positive working relationship with Tim, collaborating on a number of issues of importance to Ontario REALTORS®,” Ferris added. “These include electronic signatures on real estate transactions, the creation of a marijuana grow-op registry, and stopping the spread of the municipal land transfer tax.”

Hudak has a Master of Arts degree in Economics from the University of Washington and a Bachelor of Arts degree in Economics from the University of Western Ontario. He is married to Deb Hutton and together they have two daughters, Miller and Maitland. Hudak succeeds Edward Barisa, who served as CEO of the association for the past 16 years before announcing his retirement, to take effect at the beginning of December 2016.

**Ed Barisa retires as CEO of OREA**

*After 16 years as Chief Executive Officer of the Ontario Real Estate Association, Ed Barisa has announced his retirement. His last day will be Dec. 1. The REALTOR® EDGE newsletter spoke with him as he reflected on his years at the helm of OREA.*

**Q:** What have been some of your favorite things about working at OREA?

**A:** The great staff we have assembled at OREA. We work hard but we also try to have some fun along the way and I’ve truly enjoyed working with talented colleagues from so many diverse backgrounds and fields. OREA is truly a microcosm of Toronto. The same can be said of the many REALTORS® whom I have met over the years. As well, several of our past OREA presidents have become good friends of mine. It’s all about the people, and I have developed many friendships that I hope will continue after my retirement.

**Q:** What do you feel are some of the highlights of your years at OREA?

**A:** One thing I’m particularly proud of is the fact that we have kept OREA’s finances in order. It is a large and sound financial operation that has continued to remain on solid financial footing.

I’m also pleased about the expansion and renovation of the original building. We went from a space that had curtains flapping in the wind, leaky windows and no insulation to a building that has since been LEED certified -- a building that is not only professional looking but environment friendly that our staff, members and students can be proud to enter.
Q: How would you describe your approach as CEO?

A: It’s been a collaborative effort devoted to solving problems. I’m not a micro manager and I have always aimed to be informal and approachable in the office. Everyone calls me Ed. I believe that the way to earn respect is by respecting other people. I’ve always tried to treat people with respect, whether they are staff in the Call Centre or receptionists or the President of OREA. They are all people doing different jobs.

Q: What do you feel are some of your biggest accomplishments at OREA?

A: I’ve been pleased to negotiate several contracts with the Real Estate Council of Ontario. I’m also proud of the fact that OREA is one of very few associations with a leadership development program, one that has been purchased by an organization as prestigious as the National Association of REALTORS® (NAR®) in the United States. I’m also proud to have hired some really excellent senior managers. Leaving OREA with a healthy financial reserve and keeping membership dues at the lowest level of any provincial real estate association are also points of pride.

Q: What have been some of the greatest challenges?

A: What I’ve found tough is something I describe as OREA’s “cognitive bifurcation”. In other words, the fact is that we actually serve two masters: boards or associations as well as individual members. This is a challenge for OREA. Our real estate boards and associations have ranged in size from 40,000 members to 55 members over the years, and we must also serve individual REALTORS®. This dichotomy has resulted in varying levels of service, which has been a challenge in meeting all needs. OREA’s upcoming governance review will be looking at this and other issues to explore ways to meet these challenges down the road.

Q: Are there any things you would do differently in retrospect?

A: Absolutely. Mistakes are our greatest teacher. I have made my share of mistakes over 16 years, but fortunately none of them have been disastrous because the association is still around and I’m still around!

Q: What motivates you or gets you up in the morning?

A: Each day I looked forward to doing something interesting, and working in collaboration with smart people. That has been a real charge for me, and a great pleasure.

Q: Are there any other comments you would like to make, and if so, what are they?

A: I would like to thank my wife, Joe-ann, for her love and support. Without her, I would not have had the success I enjoyed at OREA. She has been a great advisor and helped
keep me sane when moments of insanity threatened to overcome me! I’d also like to thank Dinaz Garda, Manager of Executive Office Operations, for her guidance and support, and for letting me know where I needed to be and what I needed to have with me when I got there.

Q: What are your plans after retirement?

A: I have promised Joe-ann some quality time for travel. We are fortunate to have visited some 65 countries to date, and we’d like to reach the "century club". I have served on various boards, both voluntary and paid, and I would like to continue applying my learnings in some capacity that way. I have a couple of consulting opportunities that I would like to explore to keep the brain ticking over. I enjoy spending time with Joe-ann, and so having some time without deadlines, meetings, weekend travel, and evening business dinners is looking very good right now.

Q: Do you have any parting words or advice to share?

A: There are two quotes that I’d like to share. The first is from Albert Einstein:

“Great spirits have always encountered violent opposition from mediocre minds.”

The second quote is from Oscar Wilde, and was allegedly displayed on a sign that Einstein kept on his desk:

“A cynic is someone who knows the price of everything but the value of nothing.”

I believe that both of these ideas will be important for future leaders, staff and members of OREA.

In memoriam: Keith Teetzel

The Ontario Real Estate Association (OREA) mourns the passing of Keith Teetzel, who served as Executive Director of the association for 35 years, from 1959 to 1994. He died on Oct. 15, 2016, at the age of 84. He is survived by his wife Joyce Teetzel and two brothers, William Bruce Teetzel and Carl David Teetzel (Donna) of St. Thomas. Donations may be made to the memory of Keith Teetzel for Brain Research Fund at Baycrest Centre. A service was held on Thursday, Oct. 27 at Elgin Mills Funeral Centre.

The REALTOR® EDGE newsletter is produced 11 times a year by the Ontario Real Estate Association. The newsletter aims to provide practical and useful news and information about the real estate industry to members of the association. The opinions expressed in the newsletter are not necessarily those of the publisher. We welcome submissions from the real estate community, including letters to the editor, opinion pieces, events and news. The newsletter reserves the right to edit, based on space restrictions and/or suitability, and/or to refuse submitted material for inclusion in the newsletter without reason. All
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