

WELCOME HOME

Magazine

GREATER KALAMAZOO HOME IDEA GUIDE & LIFESTYLE MAGAZINE **COMPLIMENTARY**

WINTER 2019



ADDING KISMET TO A SUCCESSFUL RENOVATION

Kalamazoo/Battle Creek International Airport

WORKING WITH A REALTOR®

SNUG ROOMS

You'll run out of rooms
before you run out of options.



Andersen® windows come in styles, shapes and sizes to fit any purpose and every personality. With natural wood interiors, low-maintenance exteriors and a host of elegant options, it's no wonder professional builders and remodelers choose Andersen windows more often than any other brand.



We are celebrating over 50 years of experience in designing window and door projects and helping our customers discover their own personal styles. Stop by any of our 7 locations and speak with one of our experts.

Dowagiac (269) 782-7788 • Kalamazoo (269) 372-0340
Niles (269) 684-4050 • Portage (269) 323-0660
St. Joseph (269) 429-1707 • Sturgis (269) 651-5388
South Haven (269) 639-7788

www.hannapel.com



andersenwindows.com

Great Things Local®

Welcome Home • Winter 2019 • 3



Feature Home

(ON THE COVER)

16

When Kristine and Scott Gibson searched for an architect, designer and builder to help update their home they reconnected with Valentina Velkova, of ADIDA. The end result was a home that the Gibsons fell in love with again.



7

Old-Fashioned Pancakes



9

Are you ready for a Snug Room



12

Kalamazoo/Battle Creek International Airport



26

Working with a Realtor®



28

Winter Driving Tips from Sheriff Fuller

PUBLISHER

O'Keefe Publishing, Inc.

EDITOR

John O'Keefe

ACCOUNTING MANAGER

Donna O'Keefe

ADVERTISING

John O'Keefe

johno@jbprinting.com

269-547-0333

269-349-9601 (JB Printing)

CONTRIBUTING WRITERS

Zinta Aistars

Barbara Fisher

Linda Hoard

Brittany Tomaselli

PRODUCTION

O'Keefe Publishing, Inc.

PRINTING & MAILING by JB PRINTING CO.*

Terri Bennett, Nic Caswell,

Jerry Elkins, John Fahl,

Mike Fahl, Randy Fischer,

Brian Fulbright, Carl Gillespie,

Shannon Long, Mike Majors,

Bert Meinema, Randy Viers

* JB Printing is an O'Keefe Publishing company,
and is the first printing company to be designated as
a Clean Corporate Citizen by the Michigan DEQ

Welcome Home Magazine© is published quarterly

Welcome Home Magazine

3111 Lake Street, Kalamazoo, Michigan 49048

Phone 269-547-0333 / 269-349-9601

okeefepublishing@sbcglobal.net

www.welcomehomekzoo.com

Publisher is not responsible for unsolicited manuscripts or photos, and they will not be returned to sender unless accompanied by return postage.

Copyright©. All Rights Reserved - No part of this publication may be reproduced without written permission from the publisher.

Errors: The Publisher will not be responsible beyond the charges for the advertisement itself, for errors, misprints or omissions.

Welcome Home Magazine reserves the right to edit or reject advertising which may be objectionable by law or considered undesirable by the Publisher.

Information in this magazine on products and projects is from sources believed by the publisher to be authoritative. The publisher, however, cannot assume responsibility for damages, losses or injuries resulting from the use of any of these products or involvement in any of these projects. Before undertaking any project, you should be certain that it is suitable to your skills. Consult with professionals, if necessary, and observe safety precautions. Before using any product, you should study and understand the manufacturer's instructions.

Welcome Home Magazine is owned and published by O'Keefe Publishing.



Printed by JB Printing
on American made
Paper



Welcome Home!

With each issue of Welcome Home Magazine we enjoy Michigan's four unique seasons. Our Winter issue focuses on not just the holidays, but Michigan winters as well. When you come in from your favorite winter activity you can put your feet up and enjoy reading a local magazine.

In every issue of Welcome Home we highlight a fabulous local home. In this issue we feature a remodeled home. See how the Gibsons, in collaboration with Valentina Velkova, fell in love with their home again.

A regular feature in Welcome Home is our Recipe. In this issue we feature Old-Fashioned Pancakes. Waking up to the aroma of pancakes is a sure way to get everyone to the kitchen to enjoy a breakfast favorite, and possibly some family time.

Something not well known in America is the Snug Room. With a spacious family room it may feel that you are sitting out in the open. A snug room brings everything in close and cozy, to make you feel snug.

Though we enjoy our winter season, sometimes we may find that enough is enough. When it is time to get away from the cold and snow the Kalamazoo/Battle Creek International Airport makes a short escape very convenient.

Buying and/or selling a home is one of the most important decisions most of us will make. Two local realtors help explain how a real estate professional can ease some of the confusion and stress.

And back to the subject of winter, we can't forget about winter driving. Sheriff Fuller provides some tips to help us cope, and navigate the possible treacherous road conditions.

We hope you enjoy this issue of Welcome Home magazine and encourage you to patronize our local businesses and professionals.

*Enjoy,
John*





Helping to keep
your home
comfortable!

**\$25 OFF
ANY REPAIR**
When you mention this ad

Try Us and See for
Yourself Why Most of
Your Neighbors
Already Use Us!

Heating & Cooling
Kalamazoo &
Van Buren
Counties
since 2004

THE FURNACE GUY INC.
HEATING & COOLING

(269) 544-0904

www.thefurnaceguyinc.com

**THE QUALITY YOU DESIRE
THE PEOPLE YOU TRUST**



Austen, Jordan and Branden
DeHaan with their father,
DRS founder, Robert DeHaan

KITCHENS | BATHS | ROOM ADDITIONS | LOWER LEVELS

We listen and we deliver. Let us put our 38 years of remodeling expertise to work for you. Confidence and trust...are just a couple of the things we build well.

(269) 343-3757    

DeHaanRemodeling.com



DEHAAN
REMODELING
SPECIALISTS, INC.

KITCHEN BATH VANITIES FAUCETS FIXTURES LIGHTING HARDWARE ACCESSORIES

25% OFF your order

Certain manufacturers excluded. Not valid on prior or existing orders. Discount taken from manufacturers list price.


Grand Rapids
1090 36th Street SE
Grand Rapids, MI 49508


Holland
783 Chicago Drive
Holland, MI 49423

Kalamazoo
5231 East ML Avenue
Kalamazoo, MI 49048

Traverse City
1969 South Airport Road
Traverse City, MI 49686

Wixom
29949 Beck Road
Wixom, MI 48393





infusion
KITCHEN & BATH SHOWROOMS by ETNA SUPPLY

Where Your Imagination... Is Our Inspiration®

www.infusionshowrooms.com



Old-Fashioned Pancakes

Photography and recipe by Linda Hoard

I've been making these pancakes for breakfast since my grown kids were little. In fact, the easiest way to get them out of bed in the morning was to have them cooking on the griddle, sending their delicious aroma upstairs to their rooms. When my youngest daughter was home from college and wanted to sleep in, she admitted she would have happily gotten up early if she had known I was making these pancakes!

Ingredients:

4 cups flour
1/2 cup sugar
7 1/2 teaspoons baking powder
1 teaspoon salt
6 eggs, slightly beaten
5 cups milk
1 1/2 teaspoons vanilla
1/2 cup melted butter

Preheat electric griddle to 350, or heat a lightly greased frying pan.

Directions:

Stir first 4 ingredients together. In another bowl, combine eggs, milk, and vanilla and stir into dry ingredients, beating until dry ingredients are just moistened. Stir in melted butter.

For each pancake, pour 1/4 cup of batter onto the lightly buttered griddle or frying pan. Flip the pancakes over when they are full of bubbles and the edges are cooked.

Variations:

Blueberry Pancakes: Omit vanilla and add 3 cups washed fresh blueberries and 2 teaspoons grated lemon peel into the batter.

Chocolate Chip Pancakes. Add 2 cups semi-sweet chocolate chips to the batter.

NIEBOER
heating & cooling



Turn to the experts



Ask about
Carrier and
Consumers Energy
rebates
available on
select models

620 Commerce Lane in Parchment
(269) 381-7430 • www.nieboerheating.com

Nieboer Heating & Cooling provides Furnaces, Air Conditioners;
Heat Pumps both air-to air and Ground water-source; Air
Cleaners, Humidifiers, Boilers, Water heaters, Zoning; Radiant
heat; Ductless systems; Service Agreements



Nieboer Heating & Cooling
Member since 1993



Todd Modderman

MODDERMAN
BUILDERS, LLC

**NEW LOTS
AVAILABLE**

New Homes • Remodeling
Commercial

269.353.5738

todd@moddermanbuilders.com
www.moddermanbuilders.com

**Built ...
for a Lifetime
of Relaxation**



**All pools built
locally by
Vlietstra
Brothers**

**Vlietstra
Bros POOLS AND SPAS**
Established 1969

269-349-7779

4266 Ravine Road
Kalamazoo, MI 49006
www.vlietstrabros.com



Winter Hours Mon. - Fri. 9:00 am - 4:00 pm, Sat. by appointment



Are you ready for a Snug Room?

What in the world is a Snug Room? As the name implies, it is a room that is fairly small, or snug. Snug Rooms are fairly common in the United Kingdom, but it may be an idea that fits your lifestyle. A Snug Room would be a comfortable place to relax where you could curl up with a good book, or publication like Welcome Home Magazine. Or just a place to dream the afternoon away. A typical snug room might have wood paneling with warm colors. A fireplace or woodburning stove can increase the cosiness level. You can customize it to reflect "your happy place". A nature theme might be your thing, or possibly the Caribbean is more your style. The possibilities are endless.



Great Things Local®



Naturally exceeding expectations

Pennings & Sons has been building character into homes for over 40 years. We are dedicated to helping people love where they live. We offer superior services for designing, remodeling, building, and maintaining your home. Call us today to find out what we can do for you!

(269) 372-1930 | penningsandsons.com

PENNINGS & SONS
BUILDING CHARACTER INTO HOMES



**CORK LANE
DECORATING CENTER**
A COMPLETE DECORATING CENTER

Paints • Wall Coverings • Draperies • Carpeting • Blinds • Tile • Wood • Furniture • Fabrics • Decorating Accents

342-6894 • 1101 E. Cork St. • www.corklanedecorating.com



90 Years: Kalamazoo/Battle Creek International Airport

By Barbara Fisher

Photos courtesy of the Kalamazoo/Battle Creek International Airport

The Kalamazoo/Battle Creek International Airport has the distinction of being the first licensed municipal airport in Michigan. Who knew?

A BIT OF HISTORY

In 1924 a group of local leaders began a campaign to establish a local airport. The campaign was transformed into action in 1926 when the City of Kalamazoo paid \$98,125 for a 396 acre estate at Portage and Kilgore Roads (Indian Fields). Regular airmail service was established in 1928. In 1929 it was licensed as the first municipal airport in Michigan and renamed Lindbergh Field. The first terminal was built in 1943 and became known as the Kalamazoo Municipal Airport. A new terminal was built in 1958. An airport traffic control tower and an instrument landing system were added in subsequent years and the primary runway was extended. Regional air traffic control and the installation of a radar facility followed.

In 1984, the City of Kalamazoo transferred ownership of the airport to the County of Kalamazoo. Then known as the Kalamazoo County Airport, the name was changed again in 1989 to Kalamazoo/Battle Creek International (AZO in airport code). The County instituted additional updates which more than doubled the annual number of passengers over the next four years.

PRESENT DAY

Today Kalamazoo/Battle Creek International has three major carriers: Delta, United and American Airlines. Amanda Woodin, the interim director of the Kalamazoo/Battle Creek International Airport from June 2019 through January 2020, shared "our goal is to provide a variety of safe, reliable commercial air services for our customers and to adapt and expand to meet customer needs." Woodin noted one of the challenges of the airport director is to maintain carriers as well

as to expand services and flights. She notes there are not sufficient aircraft to meet service needs plus there is a shortage of pilots. Wooden cites the pilot shortage as a combination of the costs and time involved with becoming a pilot coupled with more pilots retiring than entering the profession.

AZO AMENITIES

Kalamazoo/Battle Creek International offers a number of amenities that make negotiating the airport more straightforward and less stressful than might be the case at other airports. Woodin noted this is especially true for persons who are not frequent flyers. If you've ever dropped someone off or picked someone up at the airport, you know that the process is fairly uncomplicated.

Because of the airport's footprint, short- and long-term parking is close to the terminal and reasonably priced. Woodin went on to say there are factors beyond ticket prices to take into consideration when evaluating the costs of flying. To that end, the AZO website offers an easy to use cost calculator (the tab is on the home page) that allows individuals to compare costs between Kalamazoo/Battle Creek International, Detroit Metro, Gerald R. Ford International in Grand Rapids and Chicago's O'Hare. Flying out of Kalamazoo can be a time saver and reduce the possibility of encountering delays in using ground transportation to a more distant airport.

Woodin notes the airport has "friendly and helpful TSA agents which leads to less stressful interactions in negotiating the airport." The Kalamazoo/Battle Creek International terminal layout is straightforward and agents do not have to contend with the volume of passengers and flights found in other locations so they are able to accommodate passenger foibles when they crop up at inopportune moments. For instance, the person who overslept and tore to the airport only to find the checkpoint was closed and their flight was boarding. TSA agents were able to complete checkpoint security and the passenger made their flight. Likely this would not have been the outcome at a larger airport where parking, gates and the size of the terminal would not have



been conducive to a happy ending. It is not uncommon for someone to be dropped off and leave something behind in the car, for instance vital medications. TSA agents have been able to comply with security protocols and reunite the passenger and their medications prior to boarding.

Tailwind Kalamazoo offers a restaurant, bar, gift shop and news services in the boarding area. They open at 4:30 AM and close after the departure of the last flight.

Visitors will find free Wi-Fi and convenient device charging stations.



WHAT'S GETTING READY TO TAXI?

Kalamazoo/Battle Creek International has three runways; only one of which is long enough to accommodate major commercial traffic. "Airlines are moving toward larger aircraft and airports must adapt in order to stay competitive", says Woodin. A Federal grant is facilitating a comprehensive feasibility study to extend the commercial runway by 1,000 feet. Four areas of study are targeted including environmental/community impacts and preliminary design. Wooden explains that extending the runway can alleviate weight restrictions and/or limitations as a result of extreme weather. Likely winter weather is what comes to mind when thinking about extreme weather, but it also encompasses heat. Briefly, hotter air (extreme heat) is less dense. This means there is less air beneath the wings for liftoff and a longer runway is needed to take off. During winter, the AZO crew clears ice, snow and contaminants around the clock to ensure flights that are able to land or depart can do so. Woodin noted that during last year's snowy polar vortex the airport remained open; however, it was impacted by other airports delaying or cancelling flights. "Ultimately, even if the airport remains open, it is the pilot's call on whether they fly", says Woodin.

The Kalamazoo-based Kalamazoo/Battle Creek International Airport may be smaller than its commercial competitors; but it just may be the airport that can best suit your flying needs.



CHECK AZO BEFORE YOU GO.

**KALAMAZOO | BATTLE CREEK
INTERNATIONAL AIRPORT**

SEEKING A NEW LOOK THIS WINTER?

OUR DESIGNERS WILL WORK WITH YOU ON ROOM LAYOUT, COLORS AND PATTERNS. WHETHER YOU'RE LOOKING FOR WINDOW FASHIONS OR HOME FURNISHINGS, WE CAN HELP! CALL OR VISIT US TODAY.

Flair
INTERIORS
427 W. CORK STREET
372-0110
SHOPATFLAIR.COM

Furniture ■ Window Fashions ■ Accessories

J.B. PRINTING

PRINT COPY DESIGN BIND MAIL



You guys have really helped us out. We really appreciate the work and effort your crew puts in.

Mark

We really appreciate the quick service.

Carol



The mailing was perfect and we could have not have asked for a better election cycle.

Shelby

3111 Lake Street • Kalamazoo, Michigan 49048 • (269) 349-9601 • www.JBPRINTING.com

Great Things Local®

Welcome Home • Winter 2019 • 15



Adding Kismet to a Successful Renovation

By Zinta Aistars

Feature Photography by Jim Schuon Photography

When the two physicians moved into their Mattawan dream home in 1998, they were looking for the right home to raise a family.

Kristine Gibson, MD, is assistant dean for clinical applications at Western Michigan University and assistant professor in the University's department of pediatric and adolescent medicine. She also practices medicine at the WMed Pediatrics Clinic.

Scott Gibson, MD, is an emergency medicine specialist, at Southwest Michigan Emergency Services, serving Bronson Methodist Hospital.

At the time of the move, the couple were expecting an addition of twins to their family of three.

"We loved the neighborhood," Kristine says. "The house is set on one-and-a-half acres on a cul de sac, woods in back, in a great community. It was the perfect place to raise our children."

A bit more than a couple decades later, those children have grown and are now in college. The doctors are empty-nesters, but their love for their home persists—even as they realized they were ready to make some changes.

"It was time," Kristine says. "With the kids grown and gone, we had a better idea of our budget after paying for their college. The house had become dated, and we had a list of wants."

SERENDIPITY OF RECOMMENDATION

With that list of wants in mind, Scott Gibson headed to the Home Builders Association to request a recommendation for someone to help them realize their ideas for the house. The Gibsons needed an architect, a designer, and a builder.



Valentina Velkova
ADIDA Inc.

Custom Residential Design:

- Additions
- Remodeling
- Lakefront Homes
- New Construction

BBB A+ RATING

Best of houzz 2017 SERVICE

Best of houzz 2018 SERVICE

Best of houzz 2019 SERVICE

Best of houzz Service Award winner 3 years in a row!

ADIDA Inc.

Architectural Design • Interior Design • Art

houzz **f** **AdidaInc.com**
269.599.6050
AdidaInc@hotmail.com

NAHB HOME BUILDERS ASSOCIATION OF WESTERN MICHIGAN

NAHB NATIONAL ASSOCIATION OF HOME BUILDERS

Creative solutions expressly for you with ease.

"Scott came home and handed me a business card," Kristine laughs. "And I said—I know her! I know Valentina!"

The business card belonged to Valentina Velkova, president and owner of ADIDA, Inc. in Portage. Velkova is also an accomplished architect and designer, earning her master's in architecture in Bulgaria.

As it turned out, Kristine had cared for Velkova's children in her pediatric clinic.

The Gibsons knew right away that Velkova and ADIDA—an acronym that stands for Architectural Design, Interior Design & Art—was the right pick for them. If the two women already knew each other from the pediatric angle, they were about to become fast friends over a team effort to remodel the Gibson home.

IT BEGAN WITH A HOME VISIT BY VELKOVA.

"I don't do a project for myself," Velkova says. "I do it for my clients. It is where they will live, and I want to meet their goals and desires for their home."

Velkova began by asking the Gibsons a series of questions—and, taking notes, listening closely to their answers. What needed to change? What did the Gibsons want to keep the same? What were the issues of the house as it aged? What were their priorities? What was comfortable for their budget?

"I respected immensely that Val listened a lot to all we had to say," Kristine says. "She listened and then created several options for us to consider before moving ahead."

"I'm old school," Velkova says. "I start with hand sketches, no computers, and then give my clients more than one idea to consider. I gave the Gibsons three sketches to look at."

MAKING THE OLD NEW AGAIN

The project would include a major remodel of the kitchen, living room, mud room, dining room and foyer. Furnishings would be reupholstered, and finishes updated. A wall would come down between the kitchen and living area to open up the space and bring in more natural light.

The kitchen layout was not functional, Velkova says. "If you took milk out of the fridge to take to the table, you would have to walk all the way around the island first to reach the dining nook. So I moved the refrigerator next to the dining area and put a double oven in that corner instead."

csgk.org

CATHOLIC SCHOOLS
of Greater Kalamazoo

*Enlightened Minds,
Enduring Faith*

St. Augustine Cathedral School
Contact us at:
(269)349-1945
stakzoo.org

St. Monica Catholic School
Contact us at:
(269)345-2444
stmonicakzoo.org

Hackett Catholic Prep
Contact us at:
(269)381-2646
hackettcatholicprep.org









Velkova also added hickory cabinets from Kalamazoo Custom Kitchen and Bath, granite counter tops, and black stainless-steel appliances around a large new island with seating. Kristine Gibson chose finishes alongside her. The two enjoyed “shopping sprees” as partners, visiting showrooms in Kalamazoo and Grand Rapids to make their choices.

“It was great fun,” Kristine says. “We found we have similar styles.”

Other vital team members were builder Mike Rohrstaff of Rohrstaff Renovations and Rom Palarz, structural engineer and principal of Nehil-Sivak Structural Engineers.

For the fireplace in the living area, Velkova removed the dated green marble tiles and replaced them with rustic stones. Windows to either side of the fireplace that had been an ongoing problem with broken seals were replaced with more modern and energy-efficient tall windows, adding light and a modern look to the room. Hardwood flooring and trim finished the renovated rooms. Rugs and furniture were color-coordinated with the finishes. Light fixtures and a new front door added the final touch.

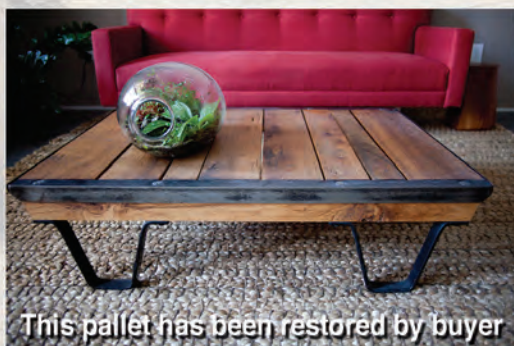
“Kris had many photos that they had taken on trips overseas,” Velkova says. “I asked her to choose favorites, and we made a series of the framed photos for the wall.”

Every detail in place, the Gibsons have fallen in love with their home all over again. In fact, they hope to bring Velkova back for another phase of renovations in coming months—this time taking on the master bedroom and en suite upstairs.

“It’s been such a joy working with the Gibsons,” Velkova says. “It felt like serendipity, our coming together for this project.”

“It was kismet,” Kristine echoes. “We had a great working relationship. Good cooperation between client, designer, and builder—that’s an important piece of a successful renovation.”

ANTIQUE INDUSTRIAL PALLETS MAKE A GREAT COFFEE TABLE



Early 20th century factory steel stringer pallet with wide wood planks. **Unrestored.**



\$125.00 Each Many to choose from.
 Used at JB Printing to store paper until recently
johno@jbprinting.com (269) 547-0333







Working with a Realtor®

By Brittany Tomaselli
House photos courtesy of Roberts Development Group

PBuying and/or selling a home is one of the most important decisions we ever make. Without a doubt, it can also be a confusing and overwhelming process, especially if you are a first time home-buyer. In fact, a 2018 study conducted by Homes.com found that out of 2,000 Americans surveyed, a full 40% would describe buying a new home as being the most stressful experience of their lives. Additionally, about one in three homebuyers surveyed said that they were reduced to tears at some point during their experience. So why is buying and/or selling a home so stressful? According to Cathy Gasper, Associate Broker with Evenboer Walton Realtors®, it's the complexity of the process combined with its necessary uncertainty that play a large role. "There are so many moving parts," Cathy says, "as much as you're prepared, the not-knowing is always very stressful." Whether you're the buyer or the seller, there's little you can do to control how the transaction progresses. Both buyers and sellers lack control over the transaction's timeline, and unless you're experienced in real estate, it's unlikely that you'll approach the process feeling confident.

The good news is that this process doesn't necessarily have to be anxiety ridden. Even with so many unknowable components, finding a good Realtor can make a huge difference in your experience. As Pam Roberts, Realtor® with Berkshire Hathaway HomeServices says, "Both parties feel the weight and pressure of conducting what is usually the largest monetary transaction of their lives," she says, "as Realtors, we

strive to make the process of buying and selling smooth and enjoyable, with the least amount of stress as possible."

THE VALUE OF WORKING WITH A REALTOR®

The first factor to be aware of (which many people are not), is that there is actually a difference between a real estate agent and a Realtor. While both are capable of helping you through the buying and selling process, the difference is that a Realtor





rdg
roberts
DEVELOPMENT GROUP

4099 Oakharbor
Kalamazoo, MI 49009

(269) 207-2836

steve@robertsbuilders.com

Visit us on-line at:
robertsbuilders.com

Homes
BUILT
custom....

Your lifestyle is unique. Shouldn't your home be, too?

It starts with a personal meeting to discuss your lifestyle and needs. We work with you from the design process through to the finished home. Our team takes pride in every project to create a look and feel just for you. The end result is a unique, high quality home.

Ask any RDG customer about their home and they'll likely mention the detailed finish work - from premium paints to carefully installed trim. But look underneath and you'll see that we're perfectionists long before the finishing phases. From drywall to duct work and plumbing to flooring, everything about an RDG home resonates high-quality, professional craftsmanship.

is a member of a professional association, the NAR (National Association of Realtors), which holds them accountable to a code of ethics. Cathy Gasper says that the most important component of this ethical code is that "we have to treat all parties honestly and be fair." Both real estate agents and Realtors are licensed to assist buying and selling properties, however, Realtors are duty bound to uphold the highest of professional standards.

But does working with a Realtor really give you that much of an upper hand? In recent years, we've seen a lot of housing information such as market comparisons and neighborhood statistics made more public and easier to access online. As a result, many people may be tempted to try to navigate the process on their own. However, deciding to do everything by yourself could end up costing you. A huge part of the role a Realtor plays in both buying and selling a home is negotiation. "The internet can't replace the one-on-one," says Cathy Gasper, "It can't replace the negotiation factor." When it comes to real estate negotiation, there is no one who has more experience than a seasoned agent or broker. Whether buying or selling, there's always a lot at stake. It's certainly wise to make sure you have someone with experience in your corner.

At the very least, if you decide to take on everything on your own, you are likely to find out the hard way just how much work a Realtor puts in. "When you hire a Realtor," says Pam Roberts, "you are getting an expert to guide you through dozens of forms, reports, disclosures, etc.." They sift through a great deal of information and read all the fine print. Not to mention, as Pam points out, websites aren't necessarily up to date or reliable. The MLS (Multiple Listing Service) is the only system that updates in real time, she says, and it's only available to Realtors. It's an important tool that allows them to create the most accurate comparative market analysis for both buyers and sellers. With this information and their research, you can feel confident about your listing price or offer.

A Realtor plays a key role in every part of a real estate transaction. For a buyer, a Realtor will have done plenty of research on potential homes. They find out the history of the home, and make sure that you receive as much information on the home as possible, including any reports or disclosures that

SOLD

BERKSHIRE HATHAWAY
HomeServices

Pam Roberts
REALTOR®
Michigan Real Estate

Pam Roberts
Cell 269.270.7313 Office 269.488.0221
pamroberts@bhhsmi.com

**Call Me Today for
A Free Market Analysis
of your Home!**

will help you make an informed decision. Realtors can also help decide what is right for you. As Cathy Gasper notes, "Often buyers don't have a clue what they want. They think they do, but often it morphs into something else." A good Realtor will help buyers pinpoint what it really is that they are looking for. "Staging is big," Cathy says, "We can help them see past what is there to see how they would really use the space."

For a seller, a Realtor can be equally as vital. For starters, they handle all the marketing and develop a strategy for your home. They schedule showings, get your home maximum exposure, handle staging, host open houses, and identify any challenges your home might exhibit early on so that they can nip them in the bud. There are also many more technical aspects to selling a home and it's easy for important details to be overlooked if you're not careful. Realtors "work diligently to make sure that all terms of the purchase agreement are met," Pam Roberts explains, "and that we comply with the laws, rules and regulations of the state." Real estate transactions involve large sums of money, and so come with a lot of liability. Having a Realtor take the lead for you will help protect your money and your assets.

Beyond the technical aspects of the process, a good Realtor can also provide you with an invaluable source of wisdom and support. They don't just want you to sell or buy a home, they want to make sure you are fully satisfied with the outcome. When you work with a Realtor, "you'll receive objective information, negotiation knowledge, ethical treatment and a shoulder to lean on during emotional moments," says Pam Roberts. Having someone who both cares about the weight of your decisions and also remains objective can be an invaluable asset for getting you to that finish line.





Be Safe - Winter Driving Tips

By Barbara Fisher

We haven't had much of a typical Michigan winter yet but there's still plenty of time for that to change. It's not too late to take in a few tips for negotiating wintry roads and who better to offer them than Kalamazoo County Sheriff Richard (Rick) C. Fuller.

Sheriff Fuller recently reminisced about the 193 car pile-up 5 years ago on I-94 between Kalamazoo and Battle Creek, near Climax. You remember the one. It started about 10:00 in the morning on Friday, January 9. One person lost their life, people were injured, vehicles were burned beyond recognition, vehicles were smashed, drivers had to be removed from the scene by bus, the east and west-bound lanes were closed and didn't reopen for two days, 40,000 pounds of fireworks exploded for hours, hazardous fluids had to be removed from a tanker. Persons living in the vicinity were asked to evacuate while others were asked to shelter in place. It was a nightmare for all concerned: for fire fighters, law enforcement, emergency medical personnel, drivers, passengers, wrecker drivers, nearby residents, insurance companies, for anyone hoping to use I-94 on Friday or Saturday. WWMT reported that 76 semi-trucks and 117

passenger cars were included. While white-out conditions and frigid temperatures were a factor, it was broadly reported that driver error was the primary cause of the pile-up and 63 drivers received tickets for driving too fast for the conditions. The Michigan State Police reminded drivers to slow down and keep their distance from the car in front of them.

Sheriff Fuller explained the fundamental purpose of driving, "getting from Point A to Point B without hurting yourself or anyone else." He notes there would be fewer traffic crashes and fatalities if drivers slowed down.

Attentive driving is a must in all situations but is particularly crucial when driving in bad weather. Sheriff Fuller provided a number of tips to keep us safe. He says "we all know these things; we just need to do them."

- Drive with both hands on the wheel.
- Drive with eyes forward.
- Drive without interfacing with devices.
- Tires can flatten out when it's very cold and may not react as soundly when a



Richard C. Fuller III
 Sheriff
 Kalamazoo County Sheriff's Office

driver first starts out after a long cold night. The cold impacts tire pressure; make a practice of checking the pressure.

- Are fluids like oil, antifreeze and windshield washing fluid full? Is there enough gas in the car? It's no secret that



cars run better (and extend the life of the vehicle) when they're maintained. A maintained vehicle is also more likely to keep you warm while you await help in the event of a slide off, crash or otherwise become disabled.

- Drive with windows cleared. Drivers can't see if windows are fogged, covered in ice, sleet or snow. The driver behind you doesn't need a sheet of snow flying at them on the highway because the 6 inches of snow on your roof and back window takes flight. Replace windshield wipers that no longer clear the windshield adequately.
- If you have a garage, use it. Consider using one of the quick removal windshield covers to keep the windshield clear of snow or ice while at work or when there is no covered area under which to park.
- In the event you are stranded or crash, Sheriff Fuller says "stay inside the vehicle. Call 9-1-1 before calling family, the boss or friends". In instances when it is not safe to remain inside the vehicle, exit and head to a location that is out of harm's way. Sheriff Fuller went on to remind us that setting out in frigid temperatures or deep snow is unwise. Blood vessels constrict when it's cold, the heart beats faster and taxes the heart, even in individuals who are fit. Every year we read about people having a heart attack while exerting themselves in the cold. Don't be one of them.
- Be prepared for the unexpected. Keep something warm in the vehicle (like a blanket), water and a flashlight that works (remember that battery life is impacted by cold temperatures). Have a plan in case a wrecker is needed. Keep a card in your car and a number stored in your cell phone if you have wrecker service as part of a roadside assistance plan. Consider how you might pay for any service; most wrecker services expect payment at the time of service. It should go without saying that when heading out in the winter even if Point B is a drive-through because you need coffee right now, attire should include more than slippers and whatever you were wearing in the house. Dress for the weather. Expect the unexpected. Be prepared.
- Have a travel plan. Let family or friends know what it is so you will be missed if something happens between Point A and Point B.
- If disabled, use your vehicle's 4-way flashers.
- Consider purchasing non-combustible flares, many of which use LED lighting.
- Keep in mind that "all-wheel or 4-wheel drive is not all-wheel stop." Drivers can't out drive their equipment," says Sheriff Fuller.

Sheriff Fuller spoke about keeping Kalamazoo County safe. That law enforcement, fire safety and emergency medical services are all part of the team. That the team needs the help of the broader community; that keeping people safe involves looking out for one another. Respect the slow down and pull over law along roadways. Let's everyone do their part to make sure everyone gets home safe.

Both hands on the wheel. Eyes forward. Leave devices alone. Be attentive. Be safe today and every day.



Custom Window Treatments

All Styles & Brands

Free} in-home consultation
& installation



Recieve 10%
off when you
mention this ad



BY JAN GUIGUE
Expressions

style your windows, love your home

269.383.9979

jguigue@charter.net

www.expressionsbyjan.com

INDEX OF ADVERTISERS

Abode Building Center	31
ADIDA, Inc.	18
Cork Lane Decorating Center	11
DeHaan Remodeling Specialists	6
Expressions by Jan	30
Flair Interiors	15
The Furnace Guy	6
Hannapel Home Center	3
Home Builders Association	2
Infusion by Etna	6
JB Printing	15
Industrial Pallets	22
Kalamazoo/Battle Creek Int. Airport	14
Linda Hoard Photography	22
Metzger's Heating & Cooling	30
Migala Carpet One	32
Modderman Builders, LLC	8
Nieboer Heating & Cooling	8
Pam Roberts - Berkshire Hathaway	26
Pennings & Sons	10
Roberts Development Group	26
Vlietstra Bros. Pools & Spas	8

SATISFACTION GUARANTEED, WHATEVER IT TAKES.



What's the difference in choosing a Bryant® Factory Authorized Dealer? We say it's 100%. Because that's the satisfaction guarantee you always get in writing when you choose the best. From offering big savings to handling the smallest details, it's all about you and your needs. Put them to the test. Hold them to our promise. Bryant Factory Authorized Dealers are with you all the way. **Whatever it takes.™**

METZGER'S
HEATING & COOLING

Quality Service Since 1903

269-385-3562

www.metzgers.biz



Abode Building Center

YOUR COMPLETE DESTINATION FOR HOME REMODELING & DESIGN



KITCHEN AND BATH CABINETRY AND COUNTERTOPS

Visit Our Showroom at
8308 Shaver Road - Just South of Centre in Portage

269.329.1800
www.abodebuilding.com

CABINETRY | COUNTERTOPS | WINDOWS | DOORS | GARAGE DOORS & MORE!



LIVE BEAUTIFULLY

MIGALA  **CARPET ONE®** **FLOOR & HOME**

migalacarpetone.com | rugs.shop

PORTAGE SHOWROOM

8646 Shaver Road, Portage, MI 49024
P 269.327.3071

KALAMAZOO SHOWROOM

6400 Gull Road, Kalamazoo, MI 49048
P 269.342.0109