

Lobbying for Local Agents?



My wife and I walked into the HANFRA awards ceremony late, but that was by accident. The speaker, who turned out to be the President of the New York State Association of Realtors (NYSAR), was stumbling through this and that on how NYSAR supports the needs of HANFRA members. Every table was full in a majestic room that contained the unspoiled relics of a previous error from the whaling days of Sag Harbor's great past. The pictures of vessels on the walls, sailing to port, must have been dated to the 1800s or earlier. The American Hotel was the perfect choice for this dinner honoring the great accolades of our region's leading real estate professionals.

During the night, we learned of the names of the who's who in attendance. From Senior Managing Directors of Real Estate Brokerage Houses to Local Entrepreneurial Owners, you could say that we were impressed. The honorees included a sale of nearly \$20,000,000, a successful victory through every zoning obstacle imaginable and a conservation campaign that is preserving the region. Speakers included our community's finest array of local politicians and market changers, who all paid homage to their State Association and local stars. Yet, there was a subtle undertone to the night, which I missed at first, but upon reflection, stared me right in the face; we were in Peconic County and things are a little different out here.

I remember hearing the President of NYSAR pining for increased support from Twin-Fork members by claiming to champion the cause of the locals. He proclaimed victory in blocking pending legislation called, "Real estate licensee scope of practice", that would have had real estate agent's restricted to working in their own county of residence or office location. He even attempted to rile the troops in preparing to block the legislation again in the coming year. This must have been his planned highpoint of the speech. You see, NYSAR understood the plight that we East Enders felt in the sticks of Long Island. Think of the benefits to his lobbying. There would remain no restriction on us from selling in Nassau, Kings, Queens, or New York Counties. How lucky we were that we could moonlight where we did not have a vested interest in the neighborhoods, the Village boundary lines, or School Districts. Forget having a working knowledge of the local zoning laws. It did not matter because we were salespeople protected to make a buck by our State Association.

To those who do not know me, my law firm owns a Real Estate School that teaches throughout Long Island, so I do know a thing or two about the differences between real estate agents in different regions. To say the least, HANFRA members have always stood out to me as being exceptional. You see, we teach a class away from the East End and the students only want their credits and to leave early, not all of them, but enough to notice. Yet, when we teach in the Twin Forks, the professionals come early, ask thought-out questions, leave late and email follow-up thoughts. This is a community that does not moonlight. This is a community of professionals that strive to be the best. These licensees would not be stopped from working in another County because a law restricted them therefrom. Instead, they would not work there because they knew it would undermine their reputation for being the best because they would not know the operative facts essential for their jobs. Mind you, they already work in the best place on earth.

Upon reflection, the President should have done his homework because he was in the mouth of his opposition. You see, Mr. President, on the East End we are not a community that strives to be elsewhere. We do not look at other communities and say to ourselves that we should open up a new location selling mall-front condos there. Instead, we like it right here, on the East End, in Peconic County Paradise. In contrast, those mall folk real estate agents probably do thank NYSAR for its victory. They want to come out to the East End and sell our mansions. And you know what? We would invite them to do that, but we would prefer they complied with the requirements of the proposed legislation by opening up a local office first and as a consequence, they would learn about our great community, its whaling history and why not only this law should be passed, but also why Peconic should become a separately recognized County protected thereunder.

So, HANFRA members, stay tuned to your New York State Assembly's bill search, which can be found at: <http://assembly.state.ny.us/leg/> and when the legislation is proposed anew contact your assemblyman and let your voice be heard.

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