

# Open houses can sell your home

When it comes to selling your home, an open house can be your best marketing tool. Most people shopping for a new home want to get the feel of several neighbourhoods before they even begin working with a realtor. Open houses will attract these buyers. And if they like what they see, they may come back to negotiate a deal.

If you are selling your home, an open house is an important part of the marketing plan your realtor will develop for you. In real estate, there are generally two kinds of open houses: one is solely for realtors. This open house is usually held when your home is first listed and gives other realtors an opportunity to inspect your home with their buyers in mind. If any realtors think there is a possible match, they will act quickly.

An open house for realtors also eliminates the many single inspections that might otherwise take place. And the professional opinions you receive may help you make changes to your home that will increase its appeal to prospective buyers.

The second kind of open house is an advertised one for potential buyers. These are usually held on weekend afternoons over a period of time. Most of us are familiar with the roadside signs. The dates and times are often listed in local newspapers.

### Leave your home

Your realtor will usually recommend you stay away from your home during an open house. Let your realtor take care of all the details and act on your behalf. Your presence could make prospective buyers uncomfortable. They may feel intimidated and rush their visit.

Your home will not get the thorough viewing it deserves if buyers feel uncomfortable opening closets and cupboards and talking about any concerns they have.

House pets can also be a major distraction to some buyers—and a concern to the seller if, for example, your prized indoor Persian feline sneaks out the back door. Ask your realtor if you should remove any pets from the property during an open house.

### Take precautions

Because you will be opening your home to the public, your realtor will offer suggestions on precautions you can take to make it a satisfying experience for all involved.

Start by removing or locking away any valuables, particularly small articles that can be easily removed such as jewelry, camera equipment, money, compact discs, valuable coins or other collections.

As an added precaution, your realtor should ask all visitors to sign in and leave

their name, address and telephone number. They should also make every effort to accompany all visitors.

Your home should not resemble an obstacle course. Repair any unsightly cracks or holes in your walkway or steps that could be a safety hazard. Don't leave toys strewn around the front or back yards. Not only do these things detract from your home's appeal, but they could prove to be hazardous.

Inside your home, remove any wires or furniture pieces people might trip over. Ensure that stairs and floors aren't slippery and that all spaces are well-lighted. In winter or on rainy days, provide a place for shoes and coats near the entrance. Also, avoid cooking foods before an open house that leave strong odours which may be unpleasant to some visitors.

### Plan ahead

Plan ahead by asking your realtor to prepare an information sheet that includes one or more photos of your property, as well as a list of key features and advantages. These can be placed at the entrance for viewers to take with them and to refer to as they walk through your home. Prospective buyers often use these sheets when comparing different homes.

### Clean and repair

To create a favourable and lasting impression with potential buyers, your home must be in topnotch condition. Your realtor will discuss your home's best features with you and provide helpful tips on things you might do to help it sell more quickly.

Begin by cleaning and repairing everything that needs to be cleaned or repaired. A little paint and other minor tune-ups can go a long way to making your home look more appealing. Outside, keep your lawn and hedges trimmed and tidy, and remove all clutter. Inside, make your rooms, closets and cupboards look roomier and more inviting by removing all clutter. Fix any electrical or heating system problems. But don't lose sleep over whether to fix that cracked tile on the kitchen floor. Some buyers will have their own ideas about how to fix these problems.

### Depersonalize your home

Your home reflects who you are, your taste and your style. Sometimes this can distract a buyer from seeing the home itself. Remove anything that a buyer might find too difficult to imagine in their home.

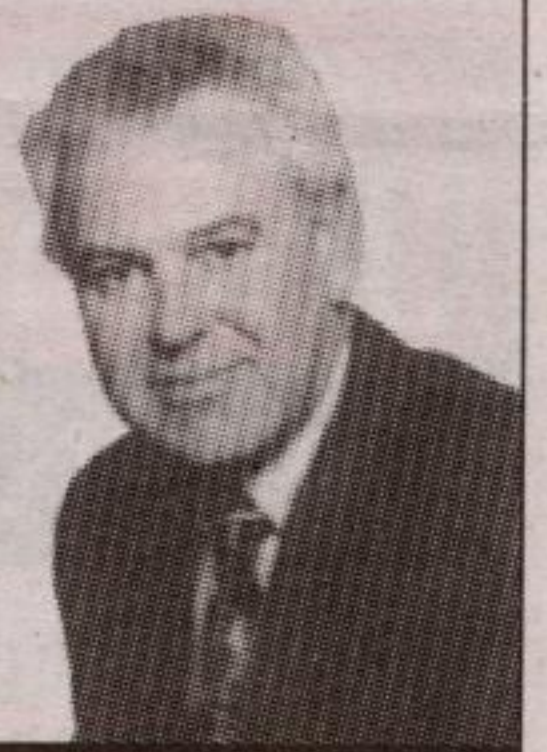
It may sound like a lot of effort, but with the help of a realtor an open house can be just the ticket you need to sell your home quickly and move on to your next dream home.

—Ontario Real Estate Association

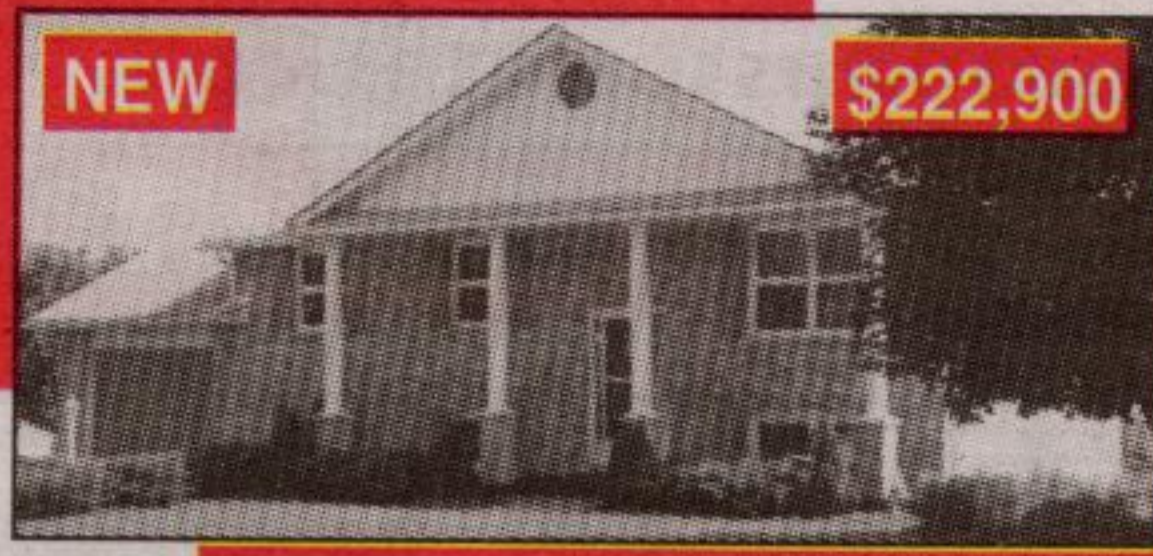
**Alan McPhedran, \*Sales Rep.**

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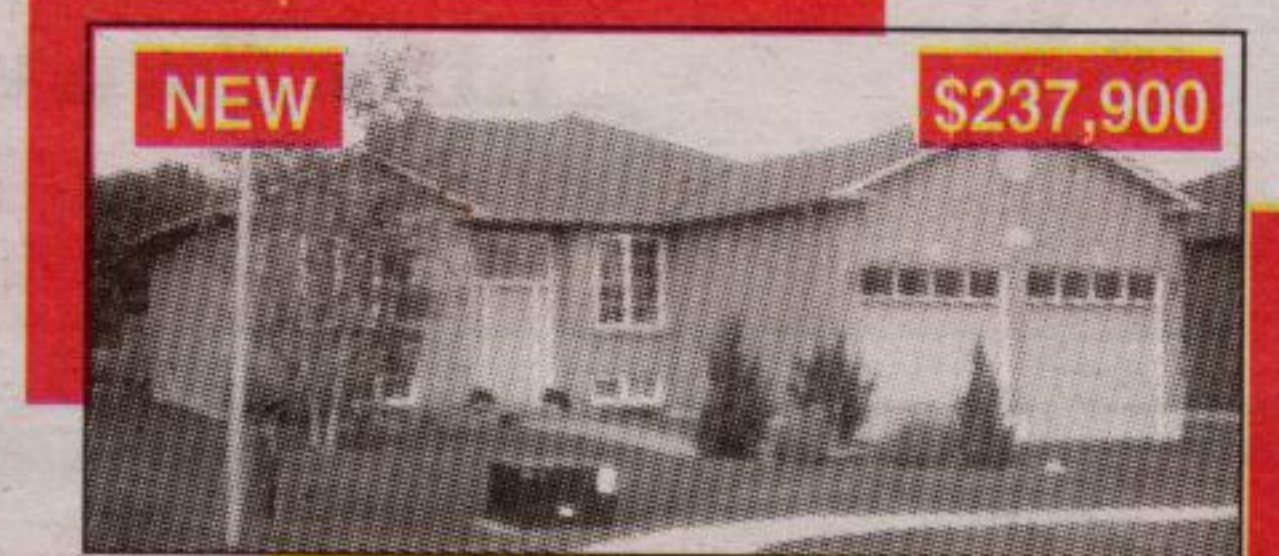
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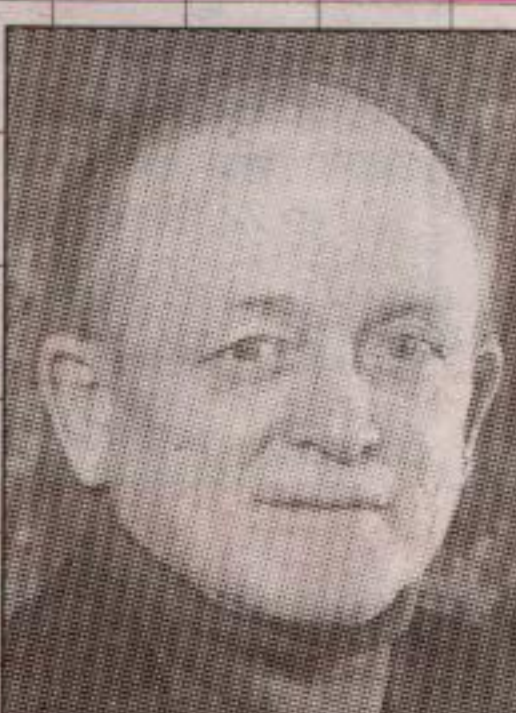


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**Priced at \$274,900.**



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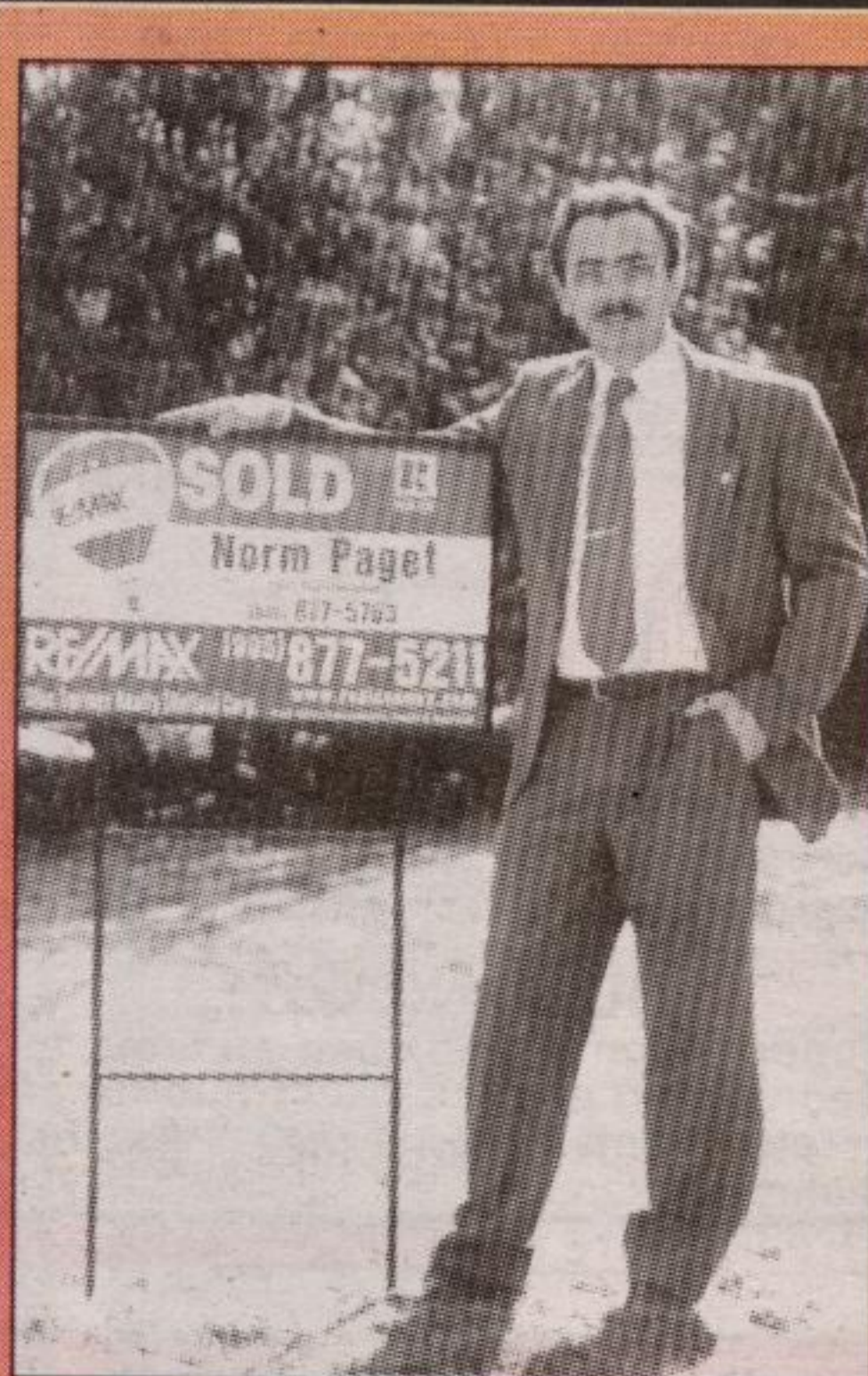
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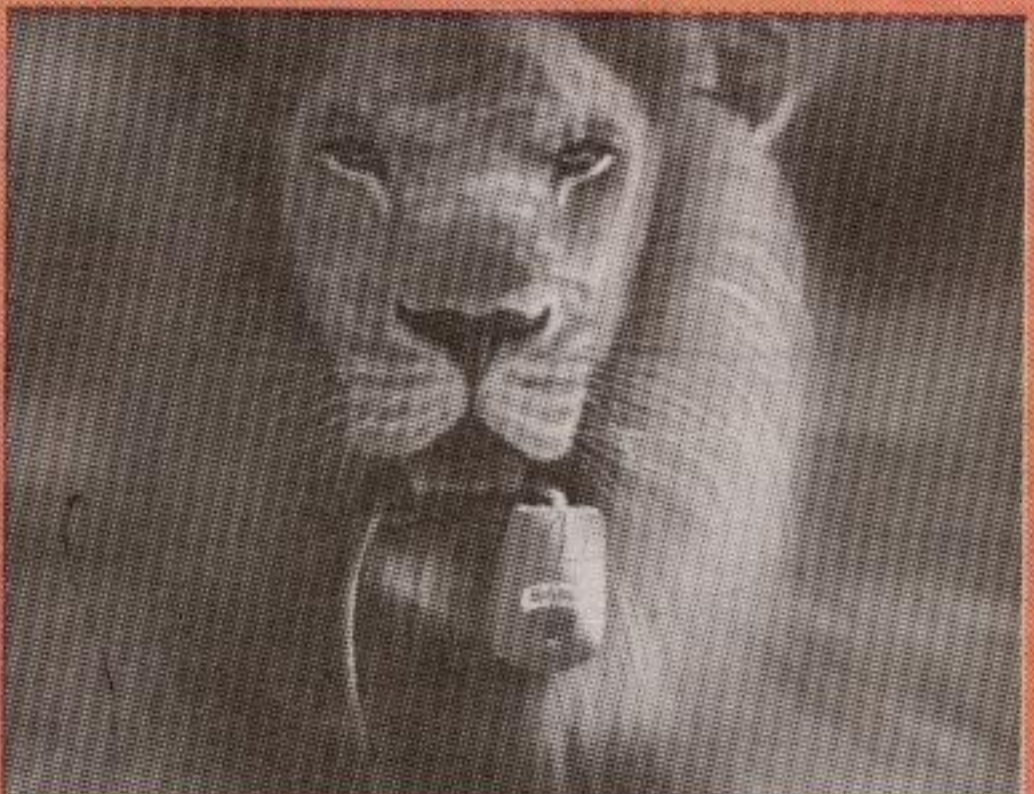
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