

April is National Fair Housing Month – Part 2

The Way It Was: Fair Housing Month Retrospective

By Jo Becker, Education/Outreach Specialist, Fair Housing Council of Oregon

Fair Housing Month, which falls in April, commemorates the anniversary of the passage of the Fair Housing Act . This year it also marks our 20th anniversary of serving Oregon and SW Washington as the Fair Housing Council. April is a good time to reflect on what life was like before these rights were passed and to think about why civil rights activists and policy leaders pushed for their passage.

There was a time in Oregon's history that it was actually illegal for African Americans and mixed-race individuals to be present in this state. Let's be clear, slavery wasn't legal here, but "those people" were not welcome to be here either. There was a time when African-Americans and Asians knew "sundown laws" were common and rushed through jurisdictions to assure they weren't caught in certain towns after dark and risk being exposed to the threat of whippings by a county official.

There was also a time when Oregon was declared the most discriminatory state north of the Mason-Dixon Line; we boasted thousands of Ku Klux Klan (KKK) members targeting minorities, immigrants and Catholics.

Is housing discrimination still a problem today? Unfortunately, yes! The KKK has largely disappeared. However, other white supremacist groups have not. Cross burnings in our area are rare, yet there have been two reports of cross burnings in just the last couple of years. We have also seen

an alarming number of hate crimes and harassment based on religion, national origin, disability and sexual orientation. And, who hasn't heard about the white supremacist group that recently visited John Day and was looking to purchase real estate there in order to make the town its new training and headquarters location?

Our Fair Housing Hotline also receives more than 3,000 calls annually. We have had instances of housing providers giving false information in order to keep out "certain people." We've recently seen cases where landlords have required applicants to attend church and provide verification of such from their pastors. Not too many years ago there was also a home on the market in Gresham with a sign in the window that read, "Whites Only." Historically (and reaffirmed by recent, local testing), equally qualified testers are sometimes quoted different prices or offered different levels of service when the only distinction between them is a protected class status such as race, national origin, familial status, or sexual orientation. All of these instances prove that housing discrimination exists.

Please use this April as an excuse to get educated about Oregon and Washington's troubled past, and also about civil rights and fair housing movements on the national level. Please learn the reality of the situation today—how far we've come and how far we have yet to go. Furthermore, get involved, speak out and make a difference!

Visit <http://fhco.org> to learn more about fair housing and the FHCO. You can also take a quick Quiz to test your fair housing knowledge and find Easy Ways to Get Involved—each linked to our entry page.

This article brought to you by the Fair Housing Council; a nonprofit serving the state of Oregon and SW Washington. Learn more and/or sign up for our free, periodic newsletter at <http://fhco.org>.

Qs about your rights and responsibilities under fair housing laws?

Visit <http://fhco.org> or call 1-800-424-3247 Ext. 2.

Qs about this article? Do you want to schedule an in-office fair housing training program or speaker for corporate or association functions?

Contact Jo Becker at jbecker@FHCO.org or 503-453-4016.

Have property to promote?

Advertise vacancies or for-sales free across the Portland/Vancouver market at: <http://housingconnections.org>

Supra Lockbox Activity – Updated Through Week of March 29 – April 4

Activity down during Easter weekend

When comparing the week of March 29 – April 4 with the week prior, the number of times an RMLS™ subscriber opened a Supra lockbox decreased 19.5% in Washington and decreased 12.1% in Oregon.



Click the chart for a larger view

Archive

View an archive of the Supra lockbox statistical reports on

Flickr.

April is National Fair Housing Month – Part 1

Fair Housing History

By Jo Becker, Education/Outreach Specialist, Fair Housing Council of Oregon

In April 1968, shortly after the assassination of Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr., Congress passed the federal Fair Housing Act to combat housing discrimination. It was the most controversial piece of civil rights legislation and the most difficult to pass. Twenty years later, the Fair Housing Amendments Act followed, further strengthening the law and adding additional protected classes. These federal laws protect everyone from discrimination in housing based on race, color, national origin, religion, gender, familial status and disability.

The state of Oregon passed similar legislation and has extended it to include protection against discrimination based on marital status, sexual orientation and source of income. Similarly, the state of Washington has extended it to protect marital status, sexual orientation and honorably discharged veterans/military status. Some cities and counties have added additional protections; visit http://fhco.org/pdfs/matrix_ore.pdf or http://fhco.org/pdfs/matrix_wash.pdf for more info.

April marks the anniversary of the enactment of federal fair

housing law protections and is celebrated as National Fair Housing Month.

As a former Realtor®, I know that complying with fair housing laws can be challenging. It may seem confusing and frustrating. I've heard the analogy of the irritation one can feel waiting for a red light to turn green, late at night, with no other cars in sight. In that moment, you are annoyed. You might ask yourself, "What is the rationale?" or "Why do I have to stop at this light?" But try to imagine what life would be like without those traffic signals or without those rules. Imagine the harm and devastation that can (and often does) occur when we ignore the rules our society has mandated. In those instances, it makes no difference if the act was accidental or unintentional; the harm is done before you even know it.

As an agent, I knew that I could have all good intentions and do everything right and yet one complaint to HUD could threaten my very livelihood. I knew and understood that. Yet, that's not unique to fair housing. The same threat holds true from a complaint to the real estate agency and, let's face it, anyone can sue anyone else for anything at any time. Yes, there are frivolous claims and suits, but the laws were enacted for a reason, and that is to address real and intolerable injustices facing our society. I encourage you to find out more so that you can learn the reasons behind the causes and justification for fair housing laws and to help protect yourself in your daily practice. Please visit <http://www.fhco.org> to learn more.

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Supra Lockbox Activity – Updated Through March 28

Washington down, Oregon slightly up

When comparing the week of March 22-28 with the week prior, the number of times an RMLS™ subscriber opened a Supra lockbox decreased 4.4% in Washington and increased 0.6% in Oregon.

  *Click the chart for a larger view*

Archive

View an archive of the Supra lockbox statistical reports on Flickr.

April Real Estate Events & Education

This April, take advantage of free RMLSweb training

Here's a quick rundown of upcoming real estate events & education for April in Oregon & Southern Washington. If you have an event that is not listed here, please let us know by commenting below. For future events, please send an e-mail to communications (at) rmls (dot) com.

Featured RMLS™ Events:

– **April 1:** 2010 RMLS™ Trade Fair – 10:00 a.m. to 4:00 p.m. – Oregon Convention Center

Events around the Region:

– **April 1-2:** The Roseburg Realtors® Exchange Group presents the Southern Oregon Commercial Real Estate Marketing Conference.

– **April 10-11 & 17-18:** Home Builders Association of Metropolitan Portland presents The Ultimate Open House New Homes Tour.

– **April 12:** Portland Metropolitan Association of Realtors® (PMAR) hosts Create Your Dream Team!

– **April 13:** Earth Advantage® presents “What’s Green Building?” class.

– **April 16:** Grants Pass Association of Realtors® hosts annual Realtor® Of The Year luncheon.

– **April 16:** East Metro Association of Realtors® hosts Citizen Of The Year Banquet.

- **April 22:** Portland Metropolitan Association of Realtors® (PMAR) presents At Home With Diversity educational event.
- **April 22-23:** Home Builders Association of Metropolitan Portland presents EcoVative Building Conference and Expo.
- **April 23:** Fair Housing Council of Oregon presents its 20th Anniversary Event.
- **April 28:** Women’s Council of Realtors® Portland Chapter hosts a Fashion Show.

Also, if you’re an RMLS™ subscriber, we have lots of **FREE** opportunities for continuing education credit at a location near you; click the link for your area to view the April Training Calendar:

- Coos County
- Eastern Oregon
- Eugene
- Florence
- Gresham
- Hood River
- Portland
- Roseburg
- Salem
- Vancouver

**New Fields and Feature
Options Coming Soon to the**

Listing Input Forms

RMLS™ will no longer be printing contracts or input forms

At RMLS™, we take your feedback very seriously. Every year the Realtors on our Forms Committee review your suggestions regarding changes to the listing contracts and input forms and make recommendations to the Board of Directors. This year they have identified several changes to the forms that will be in effect April 28, including several new feature options and a new field for Energy Efficiency.

In addition, the committee and the Board of Directors carefully reviewed the declining usage of the printed input forms and decided that in order to be more responsive to the real estate market in the future, we will only be publishing the input forms electronically from now on. Printed input forms will no longer be for sale starting on April 15. The electronic forms are available in several formats on RMLSweb:

- Printable blank PDFs that you can fill in by hand. (If you use this method, you may want to purchase NCR paper from your local office supply store or EMAR so you don't have to fill them out twice.)
- e-Forms that can be filled in on your computer and printed out.
- Print listing agreements from Listing Load.

If you prefer to have them professionally printed yourself, please email frontdesk@rmls.com for a copyright permission letter.

There will be no changes to the contracts or addendum forms at this time. However, we will not be reprinting them in the future. Starting April 15, you may purchase the printed contract pages and addendum forms at a special 2-for-1 rate while supplies last.

More information about the specific field and feature changes will be available shortly. Stay tuned!

Supra Lockbox Activity – Updated Through March 21

Minimal changes from previous week

When comparing the week of March 15-21 with the week prior, the number of times an RMLS™ subscriber opened a Supra lockbox increased 1.0% in Washington and decreased 0.4% in Oregon.



Click the chart for a larger view

Archive

View an archive of the Supra lockbox statistical reports on Flickr.

New Search Options on RMLS.com

Consumers can now search for open houses



RMLS™ has added the following new search options on RMLS.com.

There is now the ability to search for properties in Oregon only, Washington only or both states combined. The ability to search for upcoming open houses for Residential, Multifamily and Farm properties has also been added.

Supra Lockbox Activity – Updated Through Week of March 8-14

Up in Washington and Down in Oregon

When comparing the week of March 8-14 with the week prior, the number of times an RMLS™ subscriber opened a Supra lockbox increased 1.8% in Washington and decreased 1.8% in Oregon.



Click the chart for a larger view

Archive

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Fall down the rabbit hole and

land at this year's annual 2010 RMLS™ Trade Fair – April 1

Don't be late for a very important date



RMLS™ is hosting its annual Trade Fair at the Oregon Convention Center.

The theme, "Realtors in Wonderland," is inspired by the classic tale, Alice in Wonderland. Visit exhibitors with cutting edge technology benefiting your business, get credit hours and enter to win door prizes.

April 1, 2010

10AM-4PM

Oregon Convention Center

FREE ADMISSION

Classes Available:

PMAR presents "Peering Out of the Hole" (Credit Hours for OR Agents Only)

Back by popular demand...John Mitchell presents a 2010 Economic and Real Estate Forecast.

CCAR presents "Transition Course" (Credit Hours for WA Agents Only)

This course explains the real estate license laws that are effective as of July 1, 2010 for **Washington agents only** and how this will affect real estate firms.

HomeQuest presents "Building your HUB"

An overview of using social media to create a central HUB to run your business around.