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welcome to the **TOP!**

▶ publisher's note
By Jeff Bliler

Quarter 1 is one of my favorite times of the year! Why, you may ask? Well, because it means a new top 300 for 2023! **Congratulations** if you are receiving this magazine. If you have received the magazine you find yourself in the Top 300 REALTORS® in Michiana for the year 2023. There is a section called "The Real Update" in the back that explains who we are and what we do. However, once you read all the stories each month, you will have a pretty good idea of what we are all about.

Every year, we reset the distribution to run for 12 months and be sent **for free** to the Top 300 Greater Michiana real estate agents from the year before. This is based on closed volume. For 2023, the cutoff was right around \$5.5 million in closed volume for the year 2022. If you are receiving this, give yourself a pat on the back! That was a great year for you last year, despite all of the craziness that each of you had to navigate over the last couple of years.

My challenge for you this year is to enjoy the process and the journey, even when times get busy or hard. The journey is what shapes us to become the best versions of ourselves. Too often, we are in machine mode and forget to slow down and enjoy the ride.

There will be plenty of time to hustle and get after it, but each month as you receive your copy of *Michiana Real Producers*, take a minute to reflect on the month before and learn about a few of your peers and our **preferred partners** who make this platform **free** for you as a top agent.

We have an amazing time growing this product and service, but this is just the beginning. After eight years, Real Producers is now in over 125 markets across the country and rapidly growing. If you have REALTOR® friends in different parts of the country, ask them if they have Real Producers yet in their market. There's a good chance that they do, and if they are receiving the publication on a monthly basis themselves, congratulate them and say, "Welcome to the top!"

Enjoy!



Jeff & Sarah Bliler
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FAQ

ALL ABOUT MICHIANA REAL PRODUCERS



Real Producers magazine started in Indianapolis in 2015 and is now in over 120 markets across the nation and continues to spread rapidly.

Q: WHO RECEIVES Real Producers MAGAZINES?

A: The top 300 real estate agents in the Michiana area (St Joseph, Elkhart, Kosciusko and Marshall Counties in Indiana along with Berrien, Cass and Van Buren Counties in Michigan) and our Preferred Partners.

Q: WHAT IS THE GOAL OF THIS MAGAZINE?

A: We believe that we are better together. When we surround ourselves with other successful, like-minded people, we grow to new heights. *Real Producers* is a platform that brings together the most elite individuals in Springfield real estate.

We take the top 300 real estate agents and RP-vetted businesses in every market, and we build an exclusive community around that group. We share their stories, successes, market trends, and upcoming events — really, anything that will connect, inform and inspire, we put in our monthly publication.

Q: DOES Real Producers HAVE EVENTS?

A: Yes! We will have specific networking events throughout the year.

Q: WHAT IS THE PROCESS FOR BEING FEATURED IN THIS MAGAZINE?

A: It's really simple. You have to be on the top 300 list, and we take nominations seriously. You can nominate other real estate agents, businesses, brokers, owners or even yourself! Office leaders can also nominate real estate agents. We will consider anyone brought to our attention who is in the top

300 because we don't know everyone's story, so we need your help to learn about them. We cannot guarantee a feature, but we encourage you to meet with one of our team members, support *Real Producers* and attend our private events to increase your chances.

Q: WHAT DOES IT COST A REAL ESTATE AGENT/TEAM TO BE FEATURED?

A: Zero, zilch, zippo, nada, nil. It costs nothing, my friends, so nominate away! We are not a pay-to-play model. We share **real** stories of Real Producers.

Q: WHO ARE THE RP-VETTED BUSINESSES?

A: They are one of the best businesses in Springfield in their category, and you can find them listed in our index! We don't just find these businesses off the street, nor do we work with all businesses that approach us. Many of the top agents have recommended every single business you see in this publication. We won't even meet with a business that has not been vetted by one of you and "stamped for approval," in a sense. Our team will further vet every business to make sure they are a good fit and bring value to our community. Our goal is to create a powerhouse network, not only for the best real estate agents in the area but the best businesses so we can grow stronger together.

Q: HOW CAN I RECOMMEND A BUSINESS?

A: If you want to recommend a business that works with top real estate agents, please email or message us!

Email: jeff.bliler@realproducersmag.com

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» what a great party!

By Photos by Megan Williamson Photography

Michiana Real Producers 2023 Christmas Celebration



Our first annual *Michiana Real Producers* Christmas Celebration was so much fun! We thank all of you, Realtors and Partners for coming out to help us celebrate all the things we are so grateful for this last year.

Sarah and I are looking forward to more great events this year, and to getting to know all of you better.

Didn't make it out to an MRP event in 2023? Don't worry! Bigger and better events are in the works for 2024 as we continue to work hard to build relationships and community around the Michiana real estate industry.

Here's to a great 2024 for all of us! Cheers!

-Jeff & Sarah Bliler



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▶ partner spotlight
from michiana title

Joanne Schemahorn & Gary Griner

PIONEERING SOLUTIONS TO CLOSE

By Jess Wellar
Photos By Megan Williamson Photography

What do you do when you can't find a title company to close your most complicated deals? Joanne Schemahorn and Gary Griner decided to take matters into their well-qualified hands and start their own title business.

Founded in March 2021, Michiana Title has quickly become the buzz among the Michiana investment and real estate community. As co-owners, Joanne and Gary say their fledgling success in the title business is rooted in a passion for problem-solving, but it's not just about closing complex deals; they truly relish transforming the customer experience.

Filling a Niche

Joanne and Gary's venture into the title industry wasn't born out of a long-term plan, but rather a response to a glaring need. Gary, a practicing attorney since 2000, had been representing title companies and real estate clients, witnessing their repeated frustration with the existing system. Joanne, with a finance and commercial banking background and owner of a successful chain of retail stores, found herself stepping into the world of real estate investment in 2020.

"Gary was a friend of mine and we did some investing together," Joanne recalls. "Some of the deals we were involved in were tricky, and we were having a hard time finding title companies that were comfortable closing them.

"Real estate investing involves complicated alternative financing options," she continues. "So our first thought was to open up a business so we could close ourselves. We were comfortable with this option since Gary is an attorney that did the work himself."

The intention was simple: start small, handling their transactions and a few of Gary's clients. However, the local investor community's rapid adoption catapulted Michiana Title into a bustling business, leading to an unexpected but welcome expansion.

"Word spread through the investor and Realtor community very fast, and they started using us," Joanne explains. "Once we started closing a lot of investor deals, we became involved with local Realtors as the

investors sold their properties to single-family home owners.

"I had been repping title companies and had a lot of real estate clients that were frustrated with the real estate title companies here," Gary notes. "Still, I was surprised by the success; we thought it would be a small thing that we just did for ourselves ... but all of a sudden, it was taking off."

A Fast, Friendly Approach

In an industry where all title companies offer essentially the same product, Michiana Title has found success through creative problem solving, great customer service, and efficiency.



“

WE TRY TO BE FAST, FRIENDLY, AND HELPFUL. WE TRY TO FIND SOLUTIONS, INSTEAD OF REFUSING TO CLOSE A DEAL.

-GARY



“We try to be fast, friendly, and helpful. We try to find solutions, instead of refusing to close a deal,” emphasizes Gary.

The company prides itself on a range of customer-centric offerings, including remote closings, rapid turnarounds (averaging two business days for title commitments), a team of six approachable employees, and flexibility in availability — even beyond regular hours.

“Besides always being available, we’re also less expensive than the competition,” Gary points out. “Our company’s small, efficient team has a low overhead, and a commitment to staying technologically current contributes to cost-effectiveness and swift services.”

Building Great Relationships

Having grown steadily, Michiana Title currently serves all of northern Indiana and southern Michigan, with plans for gradual expansion. In a profession witnessing constant evolution, Joanne and Gary are committed to adapting and growing with the industry’s changing dynamics.

Beyond solving complicated deals, the duo both say they are fulfilled by meeting new people and helping them realize their dreams. The joy lies in establishing lasting relationships, as well as the unexpected conversations that unfold at the title office. Their clientele, including savvy investors and excited first-time homebuyers, receives not just a transaction, but an experience marked by personalized attention.

“

WE ALSO LOVE TO WORK WITH OUR LOCAL HEROES.

-JOANNE



“We also love to work with our local heroes and offer discounts for veterans, active duty military, teachers, police and fire, and nurses,” Joanne adds. “Sometimes our clients just come into our office to chat, and that’s enjoyable as well.”

Beyond the Office

Outside the demands of title services, Joanne enjoys travel with her daughter, especially to a small lake in Michigan during the summer. Gary, on the other hand, finds joy in his hobby farm, working with animals, and is gearing up for a European cruise next year with his wife and four children.

As they look to foster new relationships with Realtors, Joanne and Gary echo a sentiment familiar to their industry — people often turn to them when something has gone wrong. In these challenging moments, Joanne notes, that is when Michiana Title truly shines as a helpful, proactive partner.

Gary leaves Realtors with an assurance and an invitation: “Give us a try, and we will work hard to earn your business.”



To learn more about how Michiana Title can help you close, contact Joanne or Gary today at 574-607-7610, or visit: www.michianatitle.com

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MEGAN SHULTZ



▶▶ rising star

Photos By
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How many years have you been a realtor?

6 years, but have been surrounded by the industry my entire life. It is a generational defect in the Shultz family.

What is your career volume as a realtor?

\$19M

What was your total volume last year?

\$7,449,650

When did you start your career in real estate?

I started in July of 2017 at the age of 27. Pregnant with twins and thought I was just going to have the “easy” job of being the assistant to my Mom’s assistant at the time. Here we are, just a few years later, and the roles have switched.

What did you do before you became a realtor?

Drugs! Totally kidding. I was a lab technician at an oral fluid drug testing firm and worked in dictation at a local occupational medicine practice. I originally went to school for fine art. Both are a far cry from the profession I have fallen in love with.

What are you passionate about right now in your business?

My business is client driven and I want to continue to build a brand for myself based on trust, honesty, integrity and knowledge. I have ambitious goals and big shoes to fill. I want to strive to provide the same legacy that Pam, Bob and my Grandpa Shultz have provided our community since 1946.



What has been the most rewarding part of your business?

The most rewarding part of my business is undoubtedly the friendships I have made. The stories I have been a part of are so incredibly fulfilling. The privilege and trust of helping people buy or sell their biggest investment is an absolute honor to me. I want to help eliminate the stress and make this as positive of a transaction as possible. The best compliment I ever received from a seller was when they told me they wish they were still in the market to buy, just so we could continue to work together. Talk about a great ego boost!

What was your biggest challenge as a realtor?

The work life balance will always be a struggle. I love my family, I love my clients, but we have been in a market where things have been “drop everything and go.” I don’t ever want my family to ever think I missed out because of work and I don’t ever want a client to feel they were not a priority.



How does real estate fit into your dreams and goals?

I love that I am able to build a brand that is authentically me. This is a limitless job and I am here for the long haul. I love to work, I love to learn and in real estate things are always changing. It keeps me on my toes. I know if I work hard, I can earn well and there are no limits in sight to keep me from reaching the top. I never wanted to follow in the family business, now here we are, the 3rd generation in a line of builders and Realtors. Pam paved the way and was the first female President of the Elkhart Board of Realtors. My calling is clear now, I was meant for this

profession. I want to be able to make waves for my clients and fellow agents, just like they did. I want my girls to grow up seeing that their mom never wavered with who she was. That I can be both an incredible mother and relentless in my work.

What's your favorite part of being a realtor?

The parties! Who doesn't love a bunch of overworked and high functioning alcoholics. In honesty - it would be all of the connections and friendships I have made through the business.



“
**THE MOST
REWARDING PART
OF MY BUSINESS
IS UNDOUBTEDLY
THE FRIENDSHIPS
I HAVE MADE.**”



Define success

Success can mean so many things to so many different people. To me success is a decision, a journey, and not a destination. I choose to work hard, to adapt to change, and continue to learn so I can better serve the people in my community. As long as I love what I am doing, I will continue to be successful.

Tell us about your family.

My husband, Jesse, and I just celebrated our 7 year anniversary along with our 2 goofy and beautiful twin girls, Morgan (5) and Reagan (5). Of course we can't forget Baxter the wonder dog.



Favorite books?

I would be nose deep in a book if I had enough free time. However, those books might not be the most profound. I will admit I am the self-help book queen. Always striving to find an answer or to better myself and the way I think.

Are there any charities or organizations you support?

- Our family largely supports anti-bullying and suicide prevention organizations such as: Rio's Rainbow and To Write Love On Her Arms. I was diagnosed with MS in 2019 and help support research through the National MS Society.

What are your hobbies and interests outside of the business?

You can usually find me on the beach, happily entrenched in a book, at a concert or getting up to some silly shenanigans with my family.

Given your status and expertise, what is some advice you would give the up and coming top producer?

Be unapologetically yourself in everything that you do. I was nervous getting started in a business where I didn't quite fit the stereotype (if there is one). I am free to be my own brand and no one cares about my tattoos or strong language as long as I do my job well and keep my clients interests at heart. And DANG, do I do it well.

In closing, is there anything else you would like to communicate using this Michiana Real Producer platform?

I just want to say thank you for being nominated as a rising star. What an amazing platform to share a bit of myself and my passion for real estate. Thank you to all of my clients, their referrals and the trust people have given me over the years. I will continue to remind myself to not take myself very seriously, but always take my job and responsibility as a Realtor seriously.



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