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ON THE RISE
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OCTOBER 2024

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▶ publisher's note

you're invited!

We're three months in, and by now you've probably become familiar with the magazine and our mission to connect, elevate, and inspire the top-producing REALTORS® of Northern Arizona. It's been an honor to listen to our top agents' stories over coffee dates and zoom chats, and you can always rely on us to deliver this high-quality publication each month.

At Northern Arizona Real Producers, we aim to create a platform that unites our region. We believe that *nothing* beats relationship-based business, and we identified a need for such a platform in the Prescott Area, Sedona, the Verde Valley, and Flagstaff. In addition to receiving 12 issues of our publication annually, our community will host exclusive access to a variety of social and educational events across the region.

We are thrilled to unveil the specifics of our October launch events and extend a warm invitation for you to join us at both the local event and the one further from you. By attending both events, you will have the chance to expand your network and cultivate referral relationships beyond your usual sphere.

One of our Real Producer agents shared her thoughts on the upcoming events and the emergence of our platform below.

"I am so excited that Real Producers is coming to our small town! We are mighty in real estate and this opportunity shows

that this is being recognized. The events that Real Producers hosts provide huge value, these agents are the top of the top and you know the saying — you are only as successful as the people you surround yourself with! I already love working with you all, now we have another outlet to celebrate one another!"

Heather Wherley — Better Homes and Gardens Real Estate
BloomTree Realty Prescott

DETAILS ON LAUNCH PARTIES!

Prescott Area

Tuesday, October 15th
12 pm - 2 pm
Founding Fathers, Prescott

Sedona/Verde Valley/Flagstaff

Tuesday, October 29th
2 pm - 4 pm
Bella Vita Ristorante, Sedona

Please watch your email in the coming days for more info and a link to rsvp

Your fan and friend



Jenni Vega
Owner/Publisher
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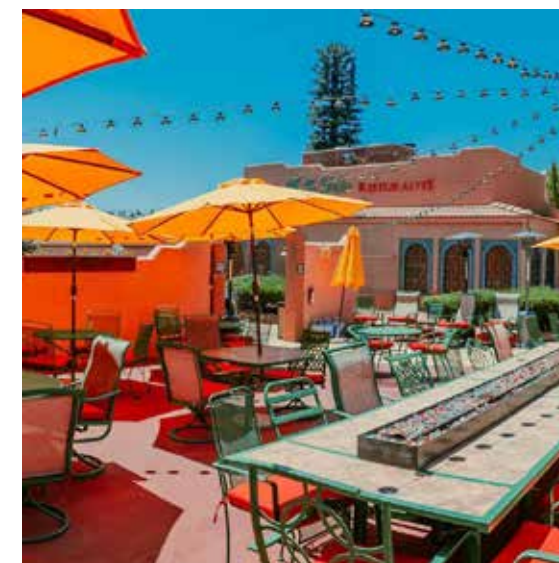
PRESCOTT AREA

Tuesday October 15th, 12-2
Founding Fathers
Taco Tuesday (gourmet style)

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Tuesday October 29th, 2-4
Bella Vita Ristorante Sedona
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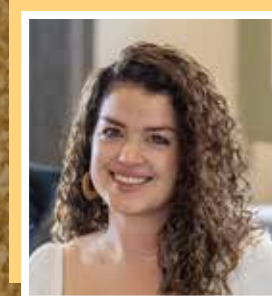
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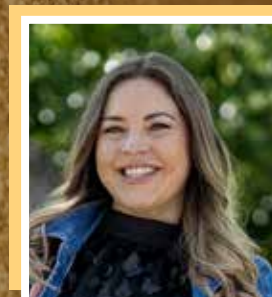
Justin Bemis
Coldwell Banker Northland
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Erin Carmona
Realty One Group Mountain Desert
“The plus side is...”
Every challenge that comes my way, I try to turn that into a learning experience, whether it’s positive or negative, what’s the plus side of this?



Danae Rubke
CadyBrooke Staging and Design
“Darkness cannot drive out darkness; only light can do that. Hate cannot drive out hate; only love can do that.”
— Martin Luther King Jr.



Kayla Stazenski
Realty Executives Arizona Territory
“Be the one who nurtures and builds. Be the one who has an understanding and a forgiving heart one who looks for the best in people. Leave people better than you found them.”
— Marvin J. Ashton

▶▶ partner spotlight

By Brandon Jerrell
Photos by Kimberly Marsh Photography

Danae Rubke

CadyBrooke Staging and Design

Evoking Emotion



HOME STAGING IS AN ART FORM THAT NOT EVERYBODY CAN DO. IT TAKES INNATE TALENT TO ENVISION THE POSSIBILITIES AND THEN MAKE THEM A REALITY. DANAЕ RUBKE, OWNER OF CADYBROOKE STAGING AND DESIGN, EMBODIES THIS INNATE TALENT.

“We are really good at helping people imagine what it can be for them. That’s our goal: we want to tell a story, we want them to feel, and we want to evoke emotion.”

An Open Market

Danae has lived in Prescott for nearly 30 years. She got her real estate license in 2015 as a single mom trying to provide for her kids

while still having time to be with them. It was during these early sales that she began to discover her knack for home staging.

“Some of them had wood paneling old kitchens, and I was thinking ‘If they just threw down an area rug and maybe put a few pieces of art on the wall and a fake tree in the corner...’ I would walk into the home and just imagine it immediately.”

As she was on these house tours, she learned that stagers in the area were nearly absent. “All the stagers shut down in 2008 and 2009 when everything crashed and went out of

many pieces of décor ranging from furniture to art to little knickknacks.”

With a couple of open houses scheduled, she decided to take a shot with something small and see what she could do with as many of her stored items as she could fit into her Prius. With the splash of color added, the reactions she received were much better than the previous open house at the same listing. “I said, ‘Now I want you to imagine you were to take down this wall right here, and then you were to open this up. You could make

business,” she was told by her early clients. “I was like, ‘Oh, that’s a bummer,’ because that would be such a cool thing to do.”

Passion for Design

Danae worked at Pier 1 Imports at 16, where she first discovered her love for design. At 17, she became one of the top salespersons in the region, with many repeat clients coming back for more. Her insights into design were apparent from the very beginning. Working and shopping there over the years, she collected

this room... and then you could do this really colorful, this and that...’ And that’s where it all kind of started.”

Soon after, CadyBrooke Staging and Design was born in 2017 as a side hustle. Named after her family, “CadyBrooke” is a combination of Danae’s oldest two daughters’ names. CadyBrooke has since grown into a business and brand that she is very proud of.

Top Staging to Top Sales

CadyBrooke offers a variety of small design jobs all reimagining the client's current space. For stagings, they offer both vacant and occupied stagings. "We do anywhere from bringing in all the furniture to using what you have on hand. So, if you have to live in your home while we have it on the market or while the agent has it on the market, then we take your art and your furniture and we will make recommendations about what stays and what goes."

Danae also shares how they will help the client pack and minimize. "We help you minimize so that a buyer can view themselves or still picture themselves in the home while you're currently living in it." She explains that

although having a house personalized to you is ideal while you are living there, it can make it difficult for a buyer to see the house as potentially their own during the buying and selling process. "You're already moving, so you need to pack up — let us help you do that."

"We pride ourselves in being able to go into a client's home and assess what they really need and then give them suggestions based on that," she shares. In addition to the beauty aspect of staging, Danae also explains how proper staging can also cause the buyer to see the property as it could be rather than as it is.

"We're good at getting them to see all the positives, and by putting furniture in a home, people aren't so focused on dirty



Bathroom - Before



Bathroom - After



Kitchen - Before



Kitchen - After



baseboards or scratches on the floor. When you give them something pretty to look at, they're able to look past a lot of the negatives."

From seller feedback, Danae shares that sales rarely go below the asking price when a home is staged. "It makes the listing agent look so much better. They are putting out high-quality listings and they take the time to do it. They're an agent that takes pride in their work and that does all of the steps before the listing — doesn't just take a listing and throw it on the market."

Family Motivation

Danae's family is the major motivator of her life. As already stated, "CadyBrooke" is named after her two oldest daughters, Cadence and Brooklyn. In total, Danae has five children, the aforementioned two eldest daughters, followed by her son, Hollis, her daughter, Lennon, and her 6-month-old son, Tanner.

When asked what she does with her spare time, Danae (somewhat) jokingly replied "What spare time?" Although much of

her time is occupied being a mother, wife, business owner, and friend, she admits that when she does have a moment to herself, she loves to get outdoors. As a summarized list, "I like traveling, camping, karaoke, and good food."

business. Next time you are looking to sell a home, make sure to consider CadyBrooke Staging and Design.

Website:
www.CadyBrooke.com



It is no surprise that Danae Rubke's insight and knack for staging have flourished into a successful



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Justin Bemis

WINNING THE DAY

cover story

By Brandon Jerrell
Photos by KG Photography

Many REALTORS® claim that everything they do is for the client, but they often fail to acknowledge that it is just as important to be honest with yourself as it is to be honest with the client.

Justin Bemis, REALTOR® and lead of the Justin Bemis Real Estate Team with Coldwell Banker Northland, is intimately aware of this truth. Justin knows that the more he puts towards bettering himself and his team, the more he and his team can put towards the client.

“I want to win the day, and I want the people around me to feel the same.”

Seizing Every Opportunity

Justin and his family are originally from the Pacific Northwest and moved to Flagstaff in 2009. “I started in the car business as a detail guy. I don’t even know what my title was — detail, not even a manager.” He explains how his duties were limited to just washing the cars that came through. “The guys would sell them, they’d bring them back to me and I’d wash them, run them through the machine, vacuum them, and get them ready. Mostly all were new cars at the time.”

It was from that position that he would see “the guys come back in their nice

clothes.” Tired of just washing the cars, he decided that he could sell cars as well. He was given an opportunity and through that opportunity, he demonstrated his ability to work hard and take care of the client. From there, he quickly moved up to sales management, finance manager, and ultimately was offered a general manager opportunity.

However, despite his success in the car industry, Justin decided it was not for him. “It wasn’t interesting anymore and it just kind of got boring at the end of the day.”

Eye for Marketing

In his last few years in the car industry, Justin would sell cars to real estate agents, and during this time he was actively looking for opportunities. Seeing how the agents would behave while negotiating over a car gave Justin insights into the life of a REALTOR®. “I’ve always had an interest in real estate and homes... There’s just a lot of opportunity in real estate and I’ve always had that buzz, but I never really knew exactly what it was about.”

Justin shares that he has always had an eye for marketing. Growing up, he used snowboarding as somewhat of a career making videos with sponsors. “There was always this eye for creativity and doing it.” He explains how this feeling of independence over his creativity has always been a driving factor — a driving factor that did not exist in the car industry.

From there he decided to make the pivot to real estate. “It’s just do it or don’t,” he states. “The only thing I would change if I could go back is that I just would’ve done it earlier.”

Making the Pivot

Justin shares that there are a lot of similarities between real estate and the car business, but also a lot of differences. “You’ve got all these different departments running the show in the car industry,” he



explains. “They say in real estate that 25 people touch the average transaction. I don’t think it was as much as that in the car business, but it opened the doors to understand that. It’s a big load to carry, but if a lot of people do it, it makes it light.”

Both industries are still about sales at their core. To this, Justin explains how the real estate industry allows him to stay one step ahead. “Obviously, you get excited about it and let the client do the rest, but you’re more managing the file and the traction throughout.” He adds that real estate tends to be a little demanding regarding client interaction. “In real estate, they’re like, ‘You got to have thick skin,’ and I’m like, ‘You think that’s thick skin?’ Man, go to the car business for ten years and you’ll come out a chameleon.”

Despite the challenges, Justin is more than happy with the change. “At times, it gets a little hectic and stressful. I tend to say yes to too much and bite off more than I can chew, but I always end up finding a solution and working through it. That’s what always pushes me to do better and to be a better agent, dad, and person.”



Justin, Carly'e, Grandma Beckie (Justin's mom) and baby Taj at Barks and Brews in Flagstaff where JBRE was a sponsor!



Carly'e and Justin on vacation in Mexico

Winning the Day

Justin shares that the most fulfilling part of his work is being around the team that he has created and their clients. “Typically, our day-to-day activities are enjoyable. We come into the office and huddle up on what we have working, what the plans and goals are, what we are doing this weekend, and what trips we have planned. It’s typically a pretty positive environment where it doesn’t really feel like work. I think, to me, that is the most enjoyable part of the job — going and doing something that we all collectively enjoy doing together.”

This is also how he ultimately defines success: “Just trying to create a happy environment where you can enjoy the people you’re around, create a positive impact on their lives, and be able to do things that you’ve always wanted to do.”

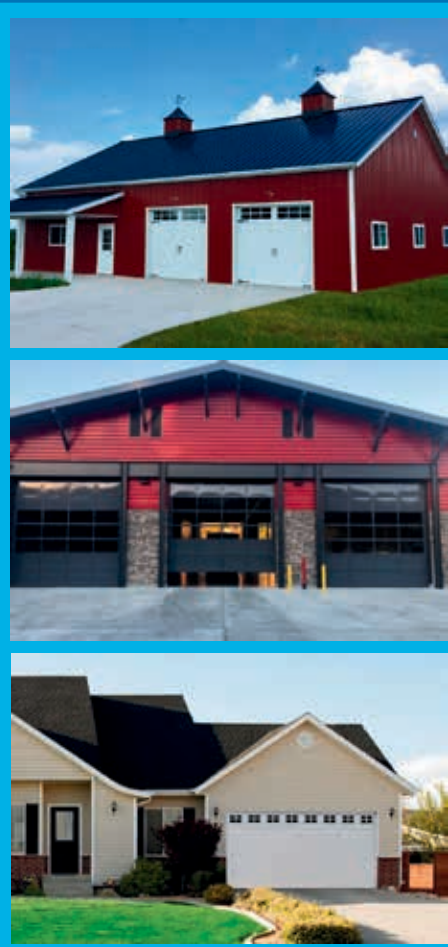
With that, it is no surprise that Justin Bemis has found immense success. Different days bring different challenges, but at the end of the day, Justin just wants to win that day for himself and everyone around him.

“Just do your best every single day... just do better than yesterday if you can, and try not to stress.”

Website: JustinBemis.com

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“THE PLUS SIDE IS...”

ERIN CARMONA

on the rise

By Brandon Jerrell
Photos by Kimberly Marsh
Photography



Hardships come in many shapes and sizes. When they come, it is easy to let them dominate, but it takes strength to push them back. But even then, it takes courage to accept these hardships not as they are, but as what they can offer.

Erin Carmona with Realty One Group Mountain Desert lives her life not by the negatives, but by every positive she can find. “The Plus Side Is” is her personal motto. “I carry it around like my mental Swiss army knife. Every challenge that comes my way, I look for the learning experience, the take-away and the wisdom gained from challenges”

Prescott Charm

Erin is initially from New Jersey but spent most of her formative years in the Valley of the Sun. Coming to Prescott from Phoenix, she is very much aware of the uniqueness that Prescott offers that big metropolitans simply can't.

“It's like Cheers where everybody knows your name,” she shares. “I frequent this little coffee shop and I walk in and the owner greets me, ‘Hi, Erin.’ I go to another restaurant where I ask for a waitress specifically because she knows my name... it's a different sense of community.”

She shares that when she first moved to Prescott, there was a time when she needed an electrician, but when she tried to schedule, “Only in Prescott, the whole team drew an elk tag.” It is moments like this, despite their potential inconvenience, that add to the charm of Prescott and much of Northern Arizona.

Now, although she is still discovering new charms that Prescott has to offer, she has become very knowledgeable of the area. “There's a different feel. I love the history here, and I love that there are so many things to do. We're a very active community, and I love introducing people to Prescott.”



Opportunity

Erin has been interested in real estate for many years now. She initially went to school seeking her real estate license in 2015. However, 2015 was just not a good time in her life to get into real estate in full. “I was a single mom and my daughter was just entering high school. She was super involved in activities and I wanted to focus on her while she finished high school.”

She explains that she had a job — “actually two at the time” — and that it was just not the best time for her to become an entrepreneur. However, she still kept up to date with the market and everything real estate because she knew that she would one day have the opportunity.

That opportunity, for better or for worse, came in 2020 with COVID-19. Up to that point, Erin worked for a marketing agency and marketed specifically for dental and medical practices. “Then, when COVID happened, I was an independent contractor, so I lost my gig.”

As she does with all hardships that come her way, she seeks and takes hold of the positive. She restudied and retook the test and within six weeks had her real estate license.

Honesty Focused

Since getting her real estate license in July 2020, Erin has been serving the Prescott area with excellence and dedication. “I know this is going to sound super cliché, but for me, it really isn’t about my production or my volume. For me, it’s about how well I am serving my client.”

As a professional real estate advisor, she focuses greatly on customer satisfaction rather



“My grandson was born eight weeks premature and spent 49 days in the NICU. He almost died on several occasions, and in that time, I closed three transactions that I could not have done without the support of my team,” she shares. “So, I would say one of the things I’m most proud of is moving to a new town where I knew no one in a relationship-based career, and only three years later, I had a community of people that came to support me in so many ways and made sure that work got done.”

Erin’s daughter graduated from NAU in May, and she will be pursuing a Master’s program at GCU in January.

It is no surprise that Erin Carmona has always found “the plus side.” Through her honesty and compassion, she gives her clients what is truly best for them and never compromises on that.

than any kind of comparison of numbers. “I learned a long time ago that comparison is the thief of joy,” she shares.

She explains that the most fulfilling aspect of her work is not just helping clients navigate the business side of the transaction, but navigating the emotional side as well. “At the end of the day, every agent in this association has access to the same tools I do. I don’t have anything proprietary when it comes to tools, so the relationship a client has with their agent should be one of complete trust.”

She shared that her go-to closing at a listing appointment or buyer consultation is, “And if I’m not the one you feel the most comfortable with — if you don’t feel like we’ve clicked — that’s okay. I’m not going to take that personally. I want you to be able to feel confident in your transaction and feel comfortable to talk to your agent about anything.”

She acknowledges that she won’t win every transaction with that approach, but she is more than okay with that. “At the end of that transaction, I want to be able to shake their hand, give them a hug, and call them my friend.”

Erin firmly believes the best compliment you can get as a REALTOR® is a referral.

Faith and Family Driven

Erin’s drive is rooted in her faith, her family, and her team. “My family is a huge motivation for me. When I moved up here, I was engaged. My daughter was a junior in college at NAU on a full-ride scholarship when God gave her a baby. Circumstances not ideal, she wanted to keep the baby and finish college. My fiancé was not on board with me supporting her in that journey so, in three weeks, I packed up everything I owned and moved out. The choice was easy and I knew God would provide for us — He always has.”



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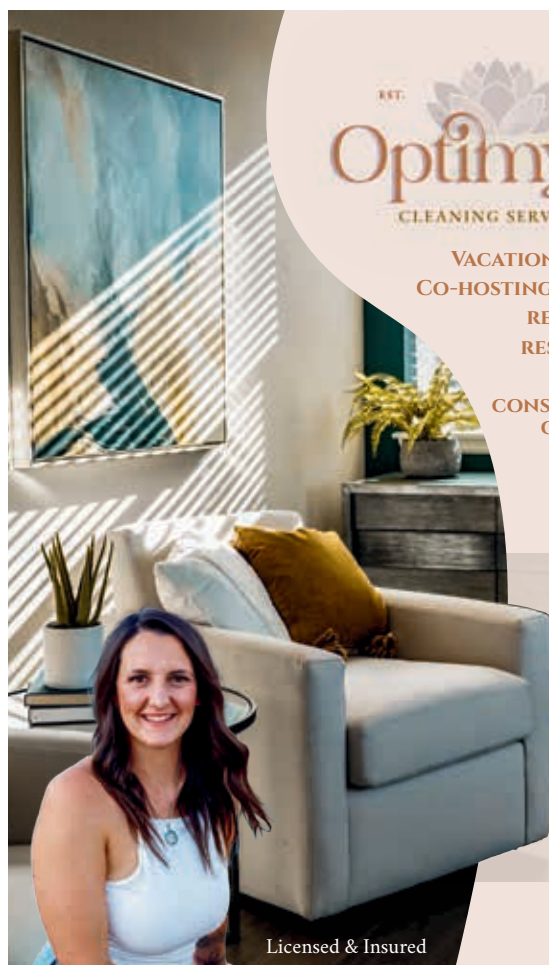


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ADAPT OR DIE

- Changes in Real Estate are Inevitable



In the world of real estate today, success is about so much more than lead generation, market knowledge, and negotiations. It's about mindset. The new policies that recently went into effect have changed how we need to operate from a technical aspect, this is true. But if we fail to change our mindset to go along with the new operations, we are likely to fail.

As an industry, we're always evolving. I've been in the real estate business since 2002, and trust me when I say I've seen lots of changes to how business is done over the years. The idea to "adapt or die" has always been relevant to us as agents, but I think we're feeling it now more than ever.

Where are you fitting in with our new environment?

Have you been able to shift your perspective and embrace the changes? Or are you stuck in a rut of anxiety, negative thinking, or simply remaining unadaptable?

If you lead with the mentality that it's not about you, but about your client, it's a lot easier to adapt to the changes. Complaining about the lawsuits, pining away for how things used to be, or focusing on how to skirt the new regulations aren't helpful for you, your clients, or your fellow agents.

Right now, there are agents who are out there doing a great job representing their buyers and sellers by adapting to the changes and educating their clients to do the same. And there are agents who are self-sabotaging by doing all they can do to resist adapting. Either is a valid option on how to respond to change, but only one of these options will allow you to soar through this and come out stronger in the long run.

So, what are few ways to keep a client-first mentality and adapt your business in a positive way in light of our new reality?

Embrace the Changes. I know, I know. Many of you are ready to check out and stop reading right there. But stay with me!

According to motivational speaker and author John C. Maxwell, "change is inevitable. Progress is optional." This resonates with me as a reminder that change is going to happen. And if we think about it long enough, we'll realize that most change that happens in our industry isn't one that we as individual agents have control over. So adapting is what we DO. It's a must for survival in real estate.

I get it, though. This change feels bigger than most. So, will you choose progress in the midst of the changes? Or will you choose to resist the changes. If you resist, you're choosing not to adapt. And when you choose not to adapt, you risk the death of your real estate career.

See the changes as an opportunity, not an obstacle. If you educate yourself on the changes, you can stand out in the industry

right now. My team and I have chosen to lean on educating potential buyers and sellers right now. We're being proactive and reaching out to everyone in our database to ask the right questions and then provide the right answers. We're not hiding behind the scenes hoping that the public learns what they need to know from the news, social media, or other resources that could be full of misinformation. We want to be the point of contact for all things real estate - changes included.

Keep the client first, and the rest will follow. If you're struggling with a negative mindset on all of the changes, ask yourself if that mindset is actually helping your clients or not.

Just like a dog can sense fear, your client can sense if your comfortable with the new way of doing business or not. If you are projecting a discomfort to your

client, it conveys a lack of confidence. And even if you have well-founded convictions that the changes aren't what's best for the industry or for the client, does that even matter? In the end of the day, the client looks to you to guide them through the stressful process of buying or selling real estate. If you are projecting an attitude of uncertainty, fear, or frustration about the changes, they aren't going to see you as the wise advisor they need during this time.

Work with other agents, not against them. Finally, I want to encourage you to come from a place of encouragement with one another as well as your clients. Since the changes have occurred, most of my negotiations with other agents have been positive. But there is the occasional agent who's either not up to speed yet or who is resisting the changes. In that case, I've seen agents yell, get nasty, and just plain refuse to work with another agent because they don't think they're handling things right.

If that is the case, the person who suffers the most is the client. Let's remember that we are all in this together. Having a positive attitude goes a long way to get the deal put together.

In the end, embracing change and adapting will help you stand out as a true real estate expert to your clients and your peers.



Jacki is the founding agent for Team Three 23 with Realty ONE Group Mountain Desert, a team who has consistently been in the top 1% of Realty ONE Group agents Nationwide since 2019. She is also a Certified Coach, leading the Agent Success Program for her brokerage and runs coaching accountability programs for agents Nationwide.

Jacki Semerau Tait
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Finding Happiness

“I think success is directly tied to happiness, and success looks different for everybody. When you start achieving your personal goals, business goals, or even if you’re not even halfway there but you’re

on your way, I think you can call yourself successful in that exact time.”

These are the wise words of Kayla Stazenski, REALTOR® with Realty Executives Arizona Territory and president-elect 2024 of the Prescott

Area Association of REALTORS® (PAAR). Kayla consistently gives back to her community in and out of real estate.

Prescottian

As a sixth-generation Prescottian, Kayla was raised with the innate knowledge of the ins and outs of what Prescott has to offer. As a young girl, she was always into rodeo even earning a full-ride scholarship out of high school which she turned down. She then went to beauty school which, in retrospect, never reflected her interests. “I went to beauty school which was crazy because I was a giant tomboy. Then, as soon as I got out of beauty school, I was like, ‘What am I doing? I have no interest in any of this.’”

As the daughter of a general contractor, Kayla has always been fascinated by the relationship between people and their homes. Kayla’s father, who has been a general contractor in Prescott for 45 years, suggested that she get a real estate license to help her pay for college.

“The first day I showed up, I wrote two contracts and did not return to school after that... I loved it, and I’ve been doing just real estate ever since.”

Connection

Kayla finds the most fulfilling part of being a REALTOR® is seeing just how excited clients get during the process. “Everything is just so new and exciting for them and I love getting to be a part of that... I really connect with my clients on a personal level.”



► inspirational agent

By Brandon Jerrell
Photos by Kimberly Marsh Photography

KAYLA STAZENSKI

She has always placed the client before the money, finding that the more she focuses on the client, the more commission she gets from it anyway. “Especially when you just really connect with people and help them. Even before I was in leadership, I was always trying to get with other agents and volunteering to help them.”

Kayla has been active in real estate leadership pretty much since 2019. She sat on the PAAR board of directors and had been since 2020. She is now the 2024 president-elect and will be the 2025 president.

“It’s been amazing. Even the training that they put the president-elect through has been really incredible. I think it has helped me in a lot of the other boards I serve on and other things in the community.”

Purpose

Although having a smooth jump straight into real estate, Kayla’s journey has not been smooth sailing. “The biggest obstacle of my life was dealing with infertility, and then realizing that I can’t have kids. I’ve wanted to be a mom since I was in eighth grade.”

“I think when people have children, you’re creating these amazing things that are going to be a contribution to society one day. That’s kind of your job — raising these little humans and making them great people to contribute to society one day. When you don’t have children, I really struggled for a long time of finding ‘What’s my purpose then?’ and ‘How do I still give back without being a parent?’”

She shares how heavily she dislikes the taboo nature of the discussion of infertility in today’s society. “It creates this horrible, lonely feeling,” she expresses. Because of this, Kayla pushes for this topic to be more openly discussed so that those affected by it have a system of support. Whenever possible, she does what she can to reach out and help those who otherwise get no acknowledgment.

After trying for seven years and ultimately getting a hysterectomy, she and her now ex-husband tried fostering children for a year and a half. Unfortunately, with her divorce roughly eight years ago, Kayla would have needed to go through the approval process of becoming a foster parent once again, now as a single foster parent. With her commitment to her career and other aspects of her life, she believed that it was for the best to not pursue that route at the time.



“I throw myself into work and into my community. I donate a lot of my time and volunteer to a lot of things that are centered around children and the community. I don’t think I’ll ever completely get over my biggest hurdle in life or my biggest struggle, but it’s constantly evolving and I think that as it evolves, I become a more whole, better person.”

Community

Kayla gives a lot of herself back to her community. “I volunteer for the Arizona Crisis Team (ACT) — that’s my big one. I’ve been with them for a little over three years now. We get called out by first responders when anyone’s in a moment of trauma or crisis and we

sit with them and offer practical and emotional support. We’re on call, 24 hours a day, 365 days a year. I do night shifts, and I do four to eight shifts a month.”

Kayla was also on the CASA For Kids Foundation board for a few years, but she still loves to participate in fundraisers as well as other events.

August, Kayla got married to her husband Paul. Together, they are raising a 14-year-old son and a 16-year-old daughter. Kayla shares that they are thinking about fostering high-school-age children in the future.

With how much she gives back to the world around her, it is no surprise that Kayla Stazenski has found her happiness.

Websites: [RealtyExecutives.com/agents/Kayla-Stazenski](https://www.RealtyExecutives.com/agents/Kayla-Stazenski)

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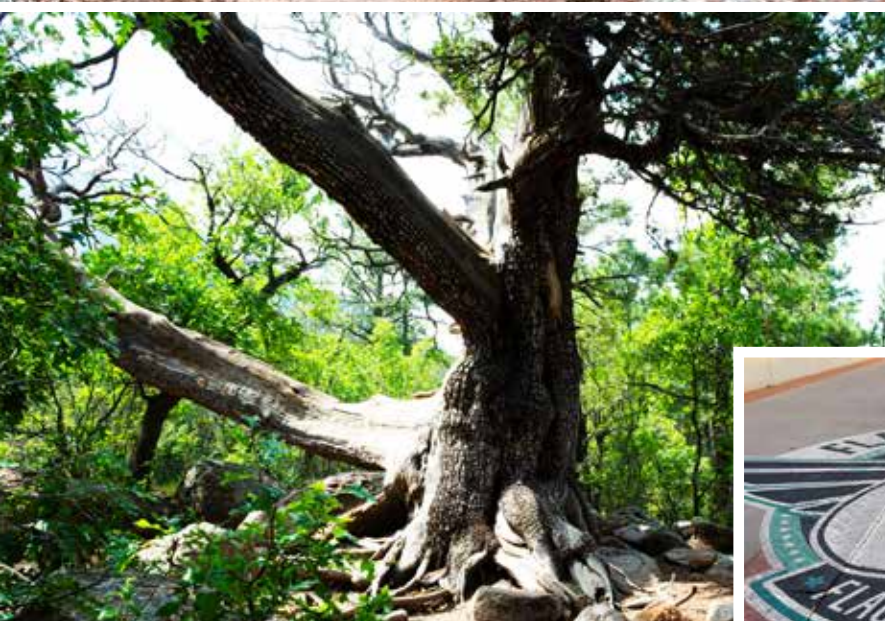
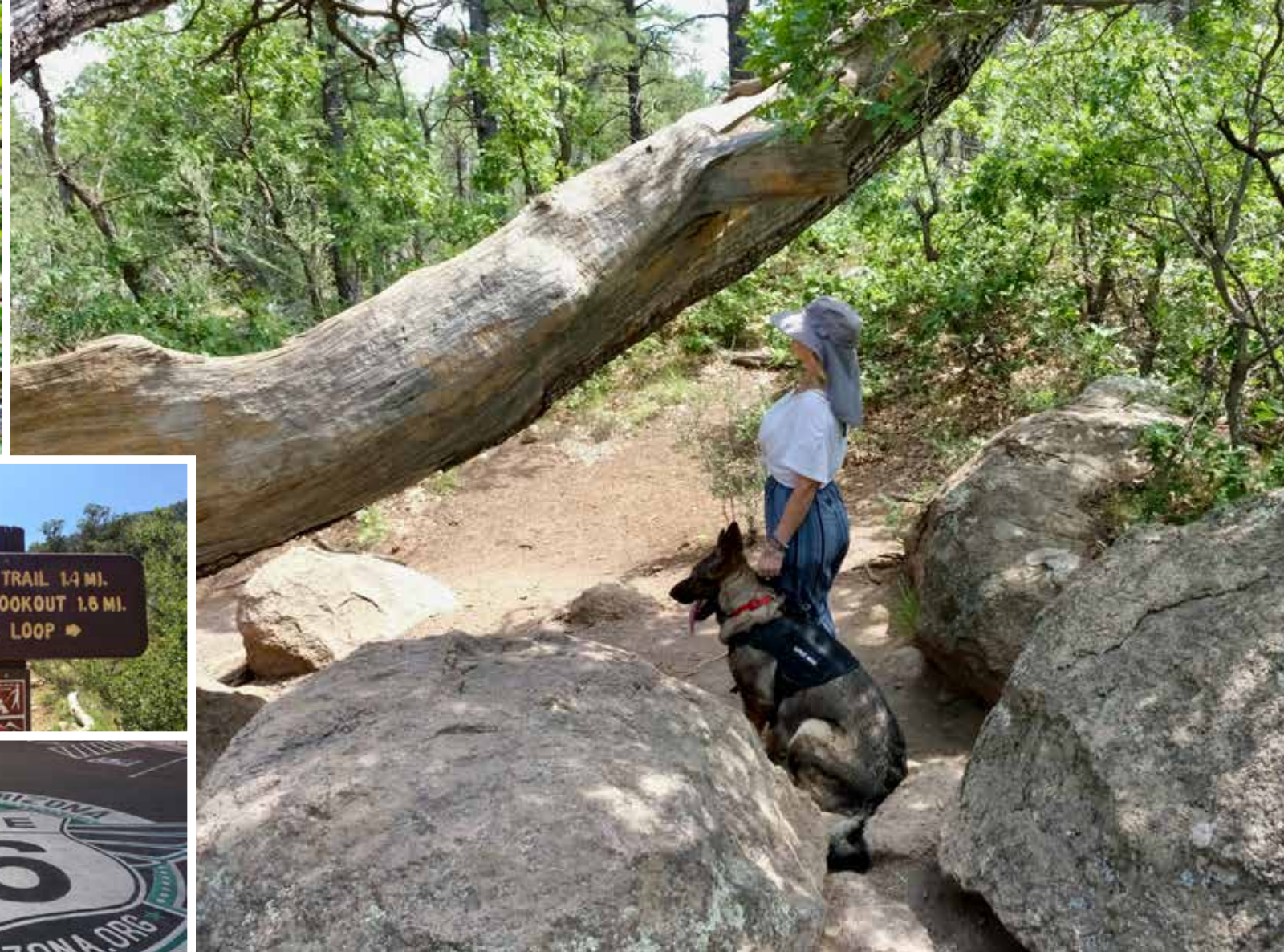


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THE **tenacious reviews**
By Kimberly "Tenacious T" Tocco

WHISPERING JUNIPERS ON A WARM SUMMER DAY

With over 100 days in a row of over 100 degrees, activities outside become very limited! Driving my truck along Route 66 through my favorite part of town, I take assessment of what we brought with us today for our morning hike. Lola, my Frisbee obsessed, 105lbs germen Shepard, has had enough of me trying to put her head to the side of the window. "Lola! Come

on now! Let's calm down.", I cautioned her as she hung her big furry head out the window. The one thing I wanted to do this weekend was walk around with my dog. As the Valley hits the middle of Summer, the outdoor activities and hiking are found in the Northern part of the State of Arizona due to the extreme heat. So, if you want to enjoy the grass, trees, old fashion

games and a picnic, you will want to head up North. Today I am going with my dog and a frisbee and we headed for Fatman's Loop. The Fatman's Loop trail is a great hiking route that takes you on a climb over a historical lava flow, offering stunning views of Flagstaff and the surrounding areas.

Along the way, you'll get to see ancient alligator junipers that lean over the trail, some of which are over 900 years old! As you approach the top of the hill, the trail passes over a 500,000-year-old lava flow that has cooled into interesting boulders and blocks, which are perfect for kids to scramble and explore. Located just off old Route 66, Fatman's loop is considered a moderate 2.5-mile hike. The beauty about these modified designated entry points is you have plenty of signs and directions to make the most of your time. As it is warm this time of year, I decide to go halfway up

Fatman's and conserve water and energy. 169 trails are said to be found in this little ski town along Route 66. Flagstaff is truly an opportunity for the "mom and pop" shop or entrepreneur who has the freedom to work from home. Along with the obvious UofA draw, Flagstaff has Spring Break, NAU Football Camps, horse shows and so much more. A handful of years ago, the city refurbished all the hiking access trails to mark clear and concise paths. Lola is excited to get on the trail and there are several people spaced along the different paths. There are many beautiful rock formations caused by the old lava flow yet it's these magnificent

world to melt away under the shade of a Juniper tree along the trail, to remember the silence. Walk with your head up, look around you, the color of the leaves, the birds up in the trees, the breeze as it blows past your cheek. This is good old fashion therapy, the sun, the breeze, the view and these wise giant trees. I pick one out a bit further up the trail, sitting down at its base I close my eyes and allow. The quickest way to balance the mind to get outside and ground yourself. This is taking off shoes, sitting or standing on the ground and just being quiet. Peppered across this hillside area there are plenty of trails to rest your soul, kept up and clean, locals and visitors alike seem to pitch in to keep it that way. Having rested on the old Juniper Tree, I call to Lola for us to finish the trail. Fire red, citrus orange, variations of color spread across the sky as I look down from Fatman's trail and watch the sun set. In this very moment, petting my pup's head, sipping on fresh spring water on top of a mountain...all is right in the world.

trees that draw my attention. The air is clear, and birds sing as they jump from branch to branch. Along the trail, mixed with different pines and bush is the famous "Giant Alligator Juniper," this massive anomaly of nature is estimated to be over 2,000 years old. It's one of the longest-standing trees not only in Arizona but the entire country as well. I started to walk a bit slower, admiring the quiet of the moment. Such characters in these trees, they did indeed look like alligators. As we continued up the trail that quickly ascends, I could not help but feel the need to lean up against one of those beautiful giants and have a chat. Leaning against the base of one of the big ones, I closed my eyes and took assessment.

We forget to take the time to sit and do nothing.

We skip the part where silence is the goal.

We forgot how loud the trees are if you just listen.

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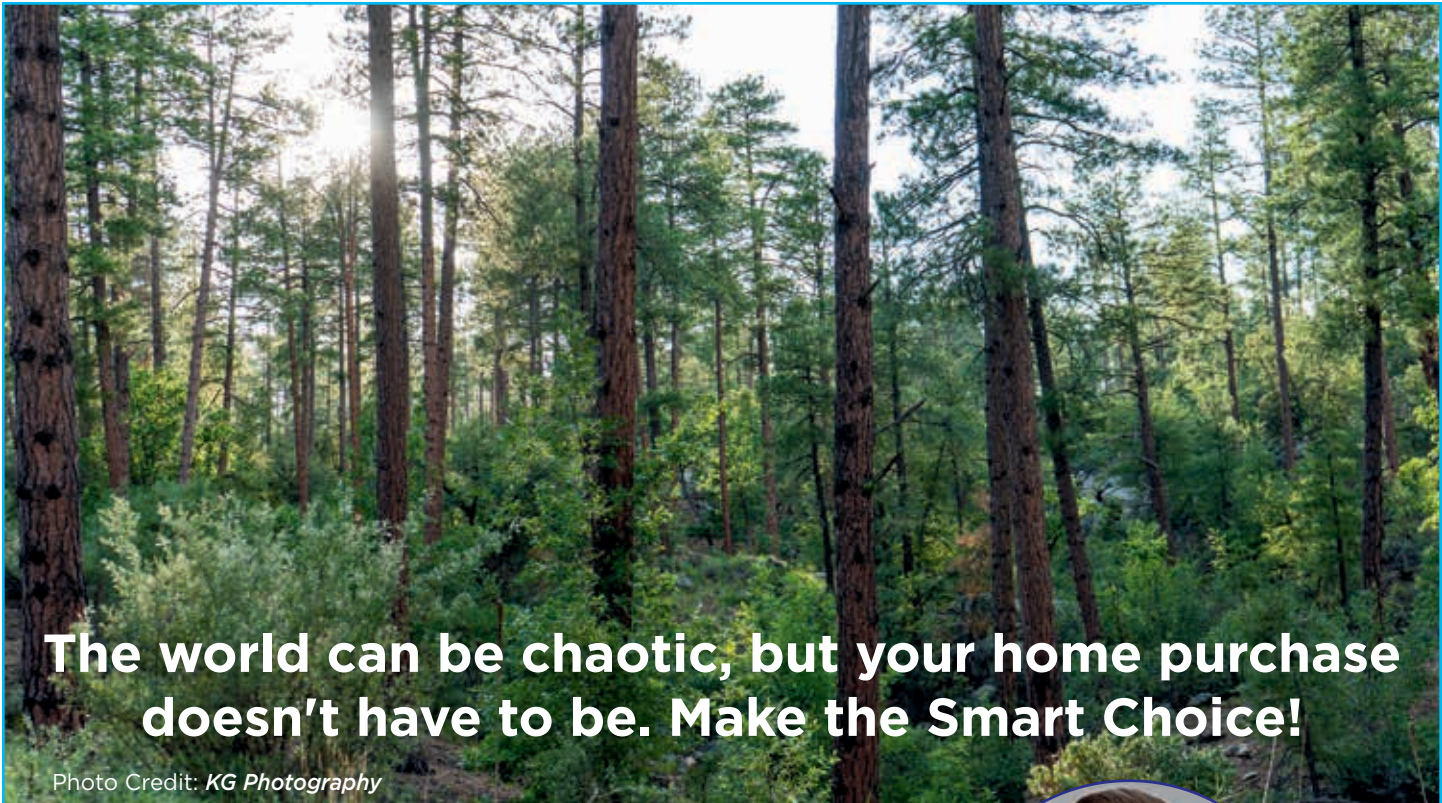
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