

Real estate: Buyers bark, and sellers bite

Homebuyers and home sellers are dogs. Not really, of course. Dogs walk on four legs, are covered with fur and, for the most part, have a pleasant disposition. I have always loved dogs, having shared most of my life with the canine genus.

And, as you might guess, I love buyers and sellers as well, having shared even more of my life with that group. I have found that my knowledge of dogs and their behavior has been beneficial in the arena of residential real estate.

For example, there is a dog in our neighborhood that my wife, Beth, and I see on our walks through the hamlet. As we approach his yard, he is quite territorial and barks wildly with the hair on his back raised and fangs flashing. He is in his own yard and prefers that we stay away. It's his and he knows it. By the way, we are protected by an invisible fence.

(This paragraph is a bit stream of consciousness and I apologize. But, do you ever wonder what George Washington or even John Adams would think if they were able to appear in the current era? What if George Washington picked up a newspaper and read a column from a supposedly sane writer that stated

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that he and his wife were protected from an angry beast by an "invisible fence." Thomas Jefferson and Ben Franklin would be amazed.)

OK, back to the dogs. One day last week, I looked outside and the formerly ferocious dog was nervously sniffing about our porch. I opened the door to greet him and attempt to bond with him, but when he saw me, he literally tucked his tail between his legs and ran like a coward into the night.

Buyers exhibit this behavior as they look houses. When they first begin their searches, they are sheepish as they approach the homes they are viewing. "Is it all right if I open this closet?" "Will they mind?" "I don't want to impose." Then they sniff around the house in the same manner our neighborhood dog investigated the scents surrounding our porch.

At this point, the buyers are nervous and intimidated by the process.

Many times, a buyer is timid in the process even when making an offer. "I don't want to offend them. It is their house."

The owner of the home is in the front yard barking that the offer had better be a good one. And, upon examination of the offer, the fangs protrude and the hair begins to rise.

However, once the offer is accepted and the buyers return to review their new home, it is like the dog in his own yard. They take psychological ownership and burst into the home with their chests entering the room several seconds before the rest of their bodies arrive. They start slinging open every door, even the refrigerator, perhaps gnawing on a T-bone they may have found.

Then, here comes the inspector. This is like a veterinarian making a house call. Both buyers and sellers alike are terrified. By the time the inspector leaves, both sides feel as if they have been checked for worms.

Richard Courtney is the principal broker with Fridrich and Clark Realty and can be reached via his Web site, www.RichardCourtney.com. His current canine roommates are Pete and Seamus.