

# Living on a Lake: Fishhawk Lake Real Estate-Attending the Inspection, Valuable Lessons

By Gayle Rich-Boxman

I always attend my home inspections. There's a fountain of information in those! I've had inspectors say, "Well, all the agents do is sit in their cars and talk on the phone"--not me! Not only do I want to be shown what's wrong, but learn from an expert so that I can be better informed for the next client!

I have learned about carpenter ants, venting issues, electrical mishaps, flashing, dry rot, and much much more. It offers me the chance to better understand our area, so when I'm taking a buyer out to look at property and they happen to see a small dead critter on the

floor (aka carpenter ant, but NEVER a termite!) I can explain it away and ease their worries....for heaven's sake, we live in the WOODS with trees surrounding us! I can also recommend seasonal pest exterminators. I had a recent buyer swear he saw a termite, but I stood my ground, because I've been going to inspections for seven and a half years now and we just don't HAVE termites out in our neck of the woods. Wood boring beetles, maybe, but not a termite in sight!

Inspectors and inspections can make or break a deal for everyone. This is another reason why I attend all of my inspections. If I have to explain to a seller why the buyer wants a credit at closing or why this monumental issue has to be repaired, replaced or WHATEVER, I know what I'm talking about! Let's face it, these dings on an inspection report can be minor but SEEM like they're not. If there is a large list and I as the agent know what I'm talking about, I can allay some fears, give some guidance as to what to ask to have done, or what to get a credit for, or what to just do themselves LATER to keep the deal going. I am adamant that the future owner be there as well. There has only been one instance where the future owner was out-of-state and was not able to fly back, so I attended it for her as well as for myself.

Another suggestion I make, is to share the inspection report with the seller if the buyer is asking for credit for repairs or wants something taken care of by the seller. It's a courtesy, but

the notes made by the inspector (along with photos) can give solid credence to the repairs or replacement of items that are being negotiated after the initially accepted offer. Having an inspection can also offer the buyer the opportunity to negotiate a lower price than initially offered.



On one of my first really BIG deals several years ago, I had to find a structural engineer ASAP after the inspector showed concerns on the remodel job where the whole front of the cabin was now floor-to-ceiling windows. It took an act of God to find one that could come out in a timely manner and not cost an absolute fortune. PLUS, I had to locate the contractor, have him come out and take an area down to the studs to show that it was structurally sound. I actually found a structural engineer through the Astoria Chamber of Commerce (I was desperate and running out of time, so I got creative) who came out on a Sunday

and didn't cost an arm and a leg, unlike the guys in Portland. The good news? It was fine and years later, I now have that same home listed by the people who bought it through me. So, I can also use that valuable information this time around.

I utilize a local inspector, and neighbor, The House Inspector (Dave McLean, owner) who always gives my buyers a break because he also owns property at Fishhawk Lake. Being our neighbor has proven to be quite advantageous. He can squeeze in inspections fairly quickly and since he himself bought a home there that was a fixer, he knows about permits and pests and he immediately makes my buyers feel comfortable with his easy-going manner and the fact that he can speak from experience of buying property at Fishhawk Lake that was less-than-perfect. I have also called The House Inspector myself if we have needed an approximate price for something that's broken to be repaired/replaced and he is often in the vicinity and can help immediately.

No matter HOW the deal has been written, I ALWAYS suggest having an inspection if it's a home. This is some of the best money a buyer can spend to learn about the inner workings of the property you are purchasing. Go in with eyes wide open. That way there are no nasty surprises down the road after ownership. Because as I tell my buyers, "There are no perfect partners, and there are no perfect homes!"

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