

At your service

Concierge helps homebuyers deal with extra details

Just moved here from out of town and need a babysitter? Margit Klein can get one for you. Need your roof fixed or a fence built? Call Margit Klein. New in town and looking for a soccer league to put your kids in? You guessed it. Call Margit Klein.

Klein runs the concierge program at Coldwell Banker Peter Benninger Realty in Kitchener. It's a twist on the service found in upscale apartment buildings and hotels where concierges keep an eye on the premises and assist guests with dinner reservations, spa appointments or tickets to the latest musical.

Coldwell Banker's concierge service was launched six years ago by broker Peter Benninger. "It was his dream to have a full-time service available so clients could think about buying and selling (a home) and not have to worry about all the other details,"

says Klein.

She took over the service 18 months ago after her work organizing meals for a Habitat for Humanity building crew caught the attention of Gord Mephram, Coldwell's operations manager. "I was good at approaching companies and getting things done," she says.

Klein started in real estate in 1980 and joined Coldwell Banker as a sales rep about five years ago. "Because I'm licensed (as an agent), I understand what agents and clients need," she says. Her services range from the mundane to the unusual. Mundane includes putting together lists and tasks of all the things associated with a



Margit Klein

move, such as contacting utilities, moving companies, home inspectors and junk removers. Unusual might include contacting a company about a client's leaky basement or figuring out how many hours of sun that new apartment gets a day.

Klein does her best to keep in touch with firms providing home-related services. "I constantly network seven days a week." In March, she organized a home show at Benninger's Riverbend Drive building featuring more than 30 companies.

There's no extra charge for Klein's assistance. "It's a value-added service," she says. The hope is potential clients will remember Benninger when they need an agent.

One of the popular myths about concierges, especially at upscale hotels, is that they can achieve the impossible or respond to any request, no matter how difficult. In physician-scarce Waterloo Region, Klein says she can find a doctor for a new resident. "I call in favours from all over town," she says with a knowing look.

But tickets for the first night of Oktoberfest at Concordia Club? Can't be done, Klein says, shaking her head. **R**

Chuck Howitt



Old world
craftsmanship
by Stickley

Unrivalled in natural beauty
& design

Stickley | Gibbard
Hancock & Moore | Hooker Furniture
Maitland-Smith | Chapman Lamps
Bevan Funnell

Charterhall
Furniture

1373 Victoria Street North
Kitchener 519-744-9590
www.charterhallfurniture.com
1-800-265-0300