

# Home for Sale? Watch the Birdie!

By Madeleine Franco

The process of selling your home is likely to bring a variety of visitors, some of whom may be sorely unwanted.

I know that the topic of selling your “bird-friendly” home has come up on the internet in the pet-interest groups before, but the rules, and hence the logistics, have changed somewhat recently. Allow me to tell you what I have learned while trying to sell a home these past several months.

Animal rights activists are using listings and FOR SALE or FOR RENT signs as the perfect opportunity to gain access to your home and invade your privacy. This has happened twice to me recently, once resulting in a visit by Animal Services, which I passed with flying colors.

Be especially wary of “neighbors” who have walked past your house on a number of occasions and want to tour your home; be doubly wary of those who have asked about your animals or birds. So often, it’s in the details. I take such inquiries very seriously, and you should, too, whether you own one bird or several, or dozens. Apparently, animal rights activists will stop at nothing, even fraud, to check up on you. Blinded by a self-righteous pursuit of their perfect world without pets, they have absolutely no respect for the sacred concept of quiet enjoyment or pursuit of happiness as they trample your human rights. Ah, I used to be paranoid, but now I am convinced!

If you plan to sell your home or offer it for rent soon or any time in the future, here are some useful tips:

1. Have a small travel cage for each and every pet...cat, bird, dog, rodent, reptile, any and all your pets.
2. Show your home by appointment only within a tight time frame and with your broker present. Allow NO ADMITTANCE to casual lookers who just happen to drop by.
3. Set aside a locked, off-limits space in your home. I have a guest house, and a large basement walk-in closet. If you use a closet, put an indication of the total square footage and a description and/or schematic drawing of the space on the locked closet door, which has a separate key from the general-access house key.
4. Brief your broker that you have a NO-ACCESS space and tell him/her why. Make it clear that such space is made available only to serious, qualified buyers on a



second visit. Should a second visit ensue, you can then put your birds in their travel cages in the garage, covered with a tarp. Use a space heater if necessary.

5. Arrange to have your birds out of sight in their travel cages in the inaccessible space. Conduct a few practice drills if necessary to accustom your birds to being in their travel cages peacefully. Such drills are not a bad idea in any event. The birds’ regular cages, if visible, should be absolutely clean when people come to see the house; water especially should be dazzling clean (water bottles help). Let them talk about your clean, unoccupied cages.
6. Be at the house, inconspicuous but alert, and essentially uninvolved, when people walk through. Many real estate agents don’t favor this, but that’s mostly their problem; bottom line...it’s your home!
7. If questions come up about your birds, that’s where alert comes in. Field questions politely.
8. If visitors persist, it’s quite appropriate to ask them if they’re interested in seeing your house or discussing your birds. If the latter, you can let them know that you’re not inclined to small talk about your birds on this occasion, as it would be a waste of the broker’s time. Suggest that if they’re really curious and are considering bird ownership, they might want to consider joining the local bird club. Don’t worry...they probably won’t join. Such people generally have a far greater interest in causing you to spend your time, effort and money than they have in spending their own.
9. Allow NO PHOTOS and make that clear to your broker. Photos are another nifty trick. If they want to take

photos, ask them to put their cell phone or camera away as you remind them that they can go to the Internet and view the home tour.

10. If you have a dog or cat, clean your yard of pet waste and/or change the litter. Better yet, put the litter tray out of sight. Kennel your four-legged animal(s) for the duration of the visit.

People who would defraud a real estate agent to gain access to your home for their political agenda waste your time and a broker's time, and they invade your space. They are extremely judgmental and will often judge by the number of animals they see, regardless of conditions. If they don't see any animals, they certainly will have a tougher time making claims. And, if they see only clean, unoccupied cages, that can go a long way toward deflating their sanctimonious posture.

I wish you success if you're trying to sell your home. Of course, the market is lackluster at best, but the curiosity-seekers seem to be out in force. Just remember, you're a lot smarter than a lot of people, and it's not a big challenge to outsmart the average cultist. Also, while we remain strong proponents of animal welfare, we must remember at least two truths...



“Animal rights is mental illness masquerading as philosophy.”

— Walt Hutchens, Timbreblue Whippets, moderator  
www.pet-law.com

and

“All that is necessary for evil to triumph is that good men do nothing.”

—Edmund Burke,  
Irish orator, philosopher and politician (1729–1797)

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