

# Realtor commission can be costly,yet priceless

Though the temptation to sell one's house without the use of an agent may be strong, an industry professional says people rarely save the amount they would normally spend on commission.

"There really are no benefits to doing it yourself," said Immaculate Conception, Towson, parishioner Mary Wodka, a realtor with Long & Foster Real Estate Inc. in Phoenix. "It takes longer to sell the house, you usually don't get the best price, you don't have the access of the multiple listings and there is a mountain of red tape you have to go through."

Real estate companies are able to put a property on a multiple listing within 24 hours, exposing it to 20,000 realtors in Maryland. They also pre-screen potential buyers before allowing them to tour a home to make sure they have the financial wherewithal to finalize a deal, said the Baldwin resident.

"About 90 percent of homeowners who try to sell their house by themselves end up giving up and going with a real estate agent," Ms. Wodka said. "So, why go through the aggravation?"

People who attempt to sell their homes by themselves have to advertise the property themselves, write up the contracts, and hire an attorney to make sure the wording is correct and to make sure they are legally protected in the sale, Ms. Wodka said.

Though real estate companies take a percentage of the finalized sale - an amount that is negotiated before the two parties proceed - that price is usually money well spent after all of the numbers are crunched, she said.

An agent knows how to get top dollar for a property, and the agent's job is to protect the client in all negotiations, Ms. Wodka said.

"It's their duty to be your advocate," she said. "You want someone to be representing you."

It might have been easier for one to sell one's own property two years ago when the market was red hot and buyers were paying top dollar for houses within hours of the listing, Ms. Wodka said.

However, houses are currently sitting on the market a lot longer, and without the proper exposure it can be extremely difficult to move a property, she said.

"Real estate agents can also provide sellers with a good dose of reality," Ms. Wodka said. "There is a lot entailed in selling a house, and we provide the seller with a lot of market analysis. A house is never worth more than a buyer is willing to pay for it, and a lot of people who try to sell their home on their own ask the wrong price."

The house may remain on the market for a long stretch of time if the seller asks too much, and the seller will not see the profits to which the seller is entitled when asking too little, she said.