

Couple invites you to earn their home

Park City house up for grabs through an art contest

by Andrew Kirk, OF THE RECORD STAFF

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This Park City home is up for winning. Contest entry is \$100. Photo submitted by Khelly and Jerry Agee

All over town Realtors and property owners are getting creative to sell homes. At some point, it just doesn't make sense to keep lowering the price so people are trying other methods. Khelly and Jerry Agee may have the distinction of trying the most creative method around. Their strategy is not new, but it is risky and definitely "out of the box."

The Agees are holding an art contest. The entry fee is \$100 and if enough entries are received, a judging panel will name a winner who can have the Agees Park City home, or \$500,000. If everything goes according to plan, the couple will gross \$2 million. Out of that money several large prizes will be given to runner ups, at least \$50,000 to \$100,000 will be given to charity, and the Agees will walk away with the same amount of money they would have netted from the house in a good market.

If the requisite number of entries is not received, all entrants will be refunded, the Agees will be out legal and marketing expenses, and the home will go back on the market the traditional way. The Agees have their fingers crossed, however, because they have big hopes for their cut of the money. Khelly was recently diagnosed with breast cancer, and has chosen alternative treatments not covered by their insurance. Also, the couple has long had aspirations to start a not-for-profit foundation called The DO! Tank that will match do-gooders with great ideas to experts who can help them get things done. "It's definitely out of the box, but that's where we play all the time," Khelly said. "For us, it's not that big of a deal."

They understand that some people may laugh, roll their eyes or even be suspicious of their contest, but they've experienced that before. Some years ago the couple got interested in Stevia, a plant that has been used by South American natives for years as a natural sweetener. They grew it on their front porch and introduced all their family and friends to it. Now, major soft-drink manufacturers are working on Stevia-sweetened beverages for mass consumption.

It's not their first time taking a creative leap with real estate either. The Agees had a home they needed to sell quickly, and a few friends did as well. Jerry organized a five-day auction. Ads were placed in newspapers on a Wednesday, and by Sunday all of them had buyers for their homes. They were going for fast that time, and succeeded. They're going for a good profit margin with the contest, and have full confidence they'll succeed.

To learn more about the contest visit www.200storyhome.com. It's called The 200 Story Home Contest because Jerry also hopes to compile the best 200 entries into a book for sale. The theme of the contest is "Home," so he anticipates getting a lot of great work submitted about what homes mean to people.

Entries can be any form of art or expression of creativity that corresponds to the theme. The reason it's an art contest is because the winner must be chosen based on skill, not chance. The best-known house contest is a raffle done every year by the Santa Barbara Contemporary Arts Forum. Entrants buy a ticket and the winner gets a mansion in Santa Barbara or \$1 million. It's a great fundraiser for the forum, the Agees explained. Raffles are illegal in Utah, so it needed to be a contest. There are dozens of similar contests all over the country that offer homes, businesses or services as prizes for essays. Khelly didn't like how exclusive that form is, so her contest is about art. An artist herself, she decorated one of the small dogs for the ongoing fundraiser for Park City nonprofit groups. "It was such a wonderful process to be really engaged in creating something for display, for contribution, and to have a deadline," she said.

Making their contest about fine art seemed natural and logical, she added. They also welcome people who bake cakes, groom shrubs, sculpt or scrapbook. Instead of submitting the piece of art, just submit a photograph, she said. The rules are clearly posted on the website and everything has been organized by an attorney who specializes in sweepstakes, Khelly said. The judging will be impartial and entry is permitted to anyone. "If you just buy a lottery ticket, maybe you'll be lucky. At least with this you get to tell a story: Whatever home means to you in whatever is your medium," she said.