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Realtor proves thinking small can bring big results, big bucks: Dottie Arehart carves niche in Alexandria's Park Fairfax.

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Dottie Arehart carves niche in Alexandria's Park Fairfax

It's not exactly Buckingham palace, but make no mistake. At the Park Fairfax development in Alexandria, **real estate** agent Dottie Arehart is queen of all she surveys.

An agent with the RE/MAX Horizons office on Seminary Road, Arehart lists or sells about 30 percent of all units sold in the sprawling complex, built in the 1940s to house Pentagon workers.

"I'm there every single weekend holding open houses -- nobody can complete," said Arehart, who accepts only Park Fairfax listings, and tracks the **real estate** activity at the complex on a daily basis. Each sale, purchase, price fluctuation and contract is meticulously written down in Arehart's log book. Of the 35 houses she sold in 1990, 25 were in Park Fairfax, and in 1990 she sold \$5 million worth of **real estate**.

"I'm always amazed when they don't choose me," she said. "It frustrates me. I think what did I do wrong? Why did they choose that agent?"

Like many agents working in the slumping market of the late 1980s, Arehart sought new strategies for making it in the highly competitive **real estate** market.

A **real estate** training course convinced her to carve out a niche that would give her dominance in a particular market.

For Arehart, who lives in Fairlington, nearby Park Fairfax was a natural choice. She had lived there herself as a young wife and mother in the 1960s.

"I think people like that I have lived there," she said. "I grew up five minutes from here and I know this area and these homes really well."

Arehart, whose calendars, ice scrapers, forget-me-not flower seeds, and ads in the community newsletter are familiar sights to Park Fairfax residents, said she spends about \$500 a month marketing to Park Fairfax residents. Last