



Love for Sale



eHarmony founder Dr. Neil Clark Warren surprises real estate observers by putting his 29-acre, **\$6.8 million** waterfront estate in Kennebunkport, across from President Bush's Walker's Point, on the market.



BY COLIN W. SARGENT

Sorry, 260 OCEAN AVENUE, KENNEBUNKPORT, he's just not that into you. You know how things like this go. The perfect owner is out there for you somewhere; it's just time to move on.

At the height of his groundbreaking internet dating site's popularity, eHarmony founder **Dr. NEIL CLARK WARREN**, 78, commissioned a sprawling mansion here as a family residence and business retreat. Nicknamed "Lake of the Woods," it's just a few sloshy steps across a cattailed fen with direct views of Walker's Point.

Screened by trees, this 9,900-square foot palace, with its endless glass atrium and outbuildings, is a 21st-century Arts & Crafts pavilion worthy of a world's fair.

Its completion date in 2007 came with a computer match of nightmarish proportions: outrage in many quarters that eHarmony respectfully declined to bring homosexual couples together as part of their business.

For example, there was "Notes of Discord for eHarmony," a 2007 posting by OmniNerd.com: "eHarmony, the selective online marriage-oriented matchmaking website founded by Dr. Neil Clark Warren, has come under fire for its refusal to offer matchmaking services to homosexuals. Linda Carlson, a lesbian from the San Francisco area, brought suit against the company based on her Feb 2007 attempt to use the website. Her lawyers posit that more will join the lawsuit making it into a class action matter. Todd Schneider, Carlson's lawyer, argues that homosexuals 'have the right and desire to meet other people with whom they can fall in love.' eHarmony has always had a strong link to the Christian community and many have attributed its success to its promotion through James Dobson's Focus on the Family organization."

Responding to court-directed demands, eHarmony created a separate site, Compatible Partners, for gay and lesbian clients in 2009.

All of which is relevant to the sale of this exquisite property in 2012, listed by

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John Saint-Amour of LandVest, because it isn't every day that a controversial billionaire lists an ocean home for \$6.8 million. It's axiomatic for prospective buyers to ask, "What's the situation?"

And what a situation it is.

Dr. Warren's home has "over 1,800 feet of water frontage with wonderful wildlife [not including Secret Service agents across Ocean Avenue]," according to LandVest's listing documents.

The "gated entrance" has "a long and winding driveway, edged with granite cobblestones."

The house itself has every amenity, with "a spacious first level master suite in addition to four family bedroom suites." The "impressive great room [has a] massive stone fireplace and 30-foot vaulted ceiling."

Other goodies include a tennis court, a "two-level flagstone terrace and infinity pool with spa for outdoor entertaining," and a "professionally created putting green and croquet court."

Let's slip into the kitchen for some crab salad on toast points. This "large and airy room" has accent lighting, beamed ceilings, granite counters...[a] large center island with wooden counter," and a "KitchenAid refrigerator, GE Profile microwave, KitchenAid trash compactor, KitchenAid two-drawer dishwasher, Wolf (propane) six-burner stove with griddle grill, two gas ovens, hood with water faucet, [and] heat lamps."

According to a 2010 report on Seacoast-online.com, the Kennebunkport town assessor lists only eight properties assessed for a value higher than the \$4.5-million figure for this estate, among them The Colony Hotel and the Nonantum Resort.

Stretched out in your living room at 260 Ocean Avenue (with "mammoth stone fireplace with granite mantel and hearth, 22-foot,



nine-inch-tall granite arched wall of glass with three sets of double glass doors" sweeping out to the "swimming pool and terrace," only one home in view would be valued above yours, keeping you from being top dog: Walker's Point (assessed at \$8.4 million).

Now what on earth would it take to get that one?

Taxes for Lake of the Woods are \$28,339. ■

Aerial photograph of Warren estate is courtesy of Dave Cleaveland, Maine Imaging, (207) 380-6343, maineimaging.com

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