



# Real Estate News You Can Use

*Brought to you by Brett Roderman*

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## 4 Tips to Simplify Holiday Decorating ... A Gift to Yourself

Decorating your house for the holidays is supposed to be fun, but sometimes the admin around it can become a chore. Here are four ideas to streamline and simplify your decorating this year.

**Use decorations you can keep out beyond New Year's.** It can feel very laborious spending a day festooning your house knowing you'll be taking them the decorations down again in a couple of weeks. How about replacing your felt Santas or Christmas baubles with less holiday-specific decorations, such as garlands of pine cones, acorns and evergreens that can stay for the whole winter season.

**Bring in the flowers!** Substituting flowers for the tinsel will not only give your house a beautiful facelift, it'll also help you cut down on the clutter once the holidays are over. No more boxes filling the attic, just some stems to add to your compost.

**Don't put things out for the sake of it.** Let's be honest: some decorations are beautiful, while others can seem tacky, generic or a little boring. Don't feel you have to put out as much as possible just because it's what everyone else does. Only choose the things you truly love having around the place or things that you genuinely find beautiful.

**Resist the urge to buy new decorations if you don't truly need them.** Chances are you already have plenty left over from previous years that will have been kept for a reason! Bring the festive spirit to the house by making use of what you already have.

## Holiday Traditions Make You Cringe? Make Your Own

When the holiday season rolls around, do you ever find yourself getting fed up with wheeling out the same traditions year after year? Do you awkwardly partake in certain activities simply because they're "the done thing" rather than anyone actually enjoying them? If this sounds like you, here are three simple ideas for changing it up this year, keeping the festivities completely fresh!

**Consider which traditions you actually enjoy and which ones you don't.** If you know you're no good at preparing a turkey or holiday decorating is not your forte, don't feel you have to force yourself to do it just because it's what you're used to. Drop the tradition and replace it with something you and the family will love.

**Customize your holiday dinner.** There's always something on the plate certain family members can't stand, whether it's Susan who hates stuffing or anti-parsnip Peter. Instead, why not ask each member of the family to choose a food to add to the menu instead and not limit it to "holiday foods"? You may end up creating a masterpiece.

**Substitute gifts for new experiences.** Sometimes you find the perfect gifts that'll blow your loved ones' minds. Other times, you can find yourself totally stuck for ideas, especially if you have family members who don't want for much. If that's the case, think about instead taking them to try something new and exciting, whether it's a night at the theater, a ride on a steam train or a day of go-karting.

## Thinking of Buying a Home? Get My Free Guide



Buying a home is a complex process with many factors to consider.

Prepare for the decisions you'll need to make along the way by requesting my free report, "10 Easy Steps to Buying a Home."

Reach out to 404-229-7600 and I'll send it right out to you.



## Have a Happier Holiday Season with a Minimalist Approach

The holiday season is a time for cheer and merriment, but it can come with a number of less desirable side effects, such as the clutter that enters your house, the conundrum of how to manage your time or the stress of making sure everything is shipshape. Here are a few tips for taking a more minimalist approach this year and maximizing your comfort and enjoyment.

**Don't commit to things you don't want to do.** Ask yourself if you will actually enjoy or benefit from partaking in something or whether you're only doing it because it's "tradition."

**Cut down on the decorations.** It's easy to go overboard with decorating for the season, meaning you end up with a house that feels more cluttered than festive and encumber yourself with a huge time commitment in getting them up and taking them down. Only put up the things you really love to have out.

**Don't spend money just because you feel like you have to.** During the festive season, advertisers do their best to make us feel like we're missing out by not purchasing their festive items or latest gadgets. Don't spend on things you don't need just because it's that time of year.

**Refrain from comparing your festivities with anyone else's.** The grass is always greener on the other side. Don't laden yourself with unnecessary stress or FOMO by trying to convince yourself other people are having a better time than you.

**Don't feel obliged to send holiday cards.** You'll save time, money and the environment. You can find much more meaning in having a simple phone call or video chat with your loved ones rather than a generic greeting on paper.

## How Can I Make the Most of Open Houses?

Open houses can provide you with many opportunities to make your new-home hunt more fruitful. You can learn about the sellers, the neighborhood and the details of the home. Full advantage of visiting an open house is achieved if you can time your visit when there are very few lookers roaming through the house. In a hot market, an open house may be the only time to see a property.

Walking through a home will help determine what amenities you can afford at a certain price. You can make market comparisons by visiting several open houses.

Be tuned in to the conversations of other visitors, and you will benefit from the insight of others about the home and the neighborhood. If you can get one-on-one time with the listing agent, find out all you can about the seller and the motivation behind selling the house. Get to know a prospective neighborhood by taking a walk through it. You will be able to see the pride of ownership, learn the traffic patterns and find out more from meeting some of the neighbors.

## Thank you for your referrals!

I succeed when people like you refer me to your friends, neighbors and loved ones. It's the best kind of feedback I can receive.

So thanks for continuing to pass this newsletter on to people you care about.

## Gourmet Hot Chocolate

Step up your game this holiday season with this rich and creamy hot chocolate.

Serves 4

1/2 cup heavy cream  
1 1/2 cups whole milk  
2 tablespoons powdered sugar  
1/2 teaspoon espresso powder  
1/2 teaspoon cinnamon  
8 oz. 72% dark chocolate, chopped  
Whipped cream  
4 cinnamon sticks to garnish

Add heavy cream, whole milk, powdered sugar and espresso powder to a 1.5-quart saucepan. Whisk over medium heat until hot. Do not allow to boil.

Around edges, small bubbles will appear. Mixture may begin to steam.

Turn heat to low and stir in chocolate until melted completely.

Divide among four mugs. Top each with whipped cream and a cinnamon stick.

Serve.

Note: Milk chocolate may be used instead of dark chocolate.



# Homeowners Are Staying Longer in Their Homes

In recent years, the National Association of Realtors' historical data has revealed that homeowners are staying in their homes an average of nine years, as compared to four to five years just 13 years ago. There are several reasons for this dramatic change.

When home prices took a big dive in the mid-2000s, many owners were forced to stay in place because of little to no equity in their homes. This pushed the five-year average tenancy up.

The length of homeownership among younger families, who typically relocate about every five years, has not caught up with older generations, who live considerably longer in their homes.

The size of homes has been increasing for the last 40 years, and in conjunction with that, family household sizes have been getting smaller. As a result, the need to keep moving up to larger homes has greatly diminished. Many find that after several years of owning the same home, their needs are still satisfied.

Today, some homeowners are not anxious to give up a comfortable loan balance with a good interest rate after having benefited from good appreciation and historically low interest rates. Staying where they are is more appealing. Other homeowners who may have an interest in selling may be dissuaded by the lack of supply of homes to buy and not being able to find a replacement residence.

Today's credit standards are tighter, making qualifying for a mortgage more difficult for some of those who do wish to sell and buy another home. When homeowners are less likely to qualify for a new mortgage, they are more likely to have to stay where they are, contributing to the average length of homeownership in the market.

Many factors contribute to choosing to stay in a home or not. If you are considering buying or selling a home, call or email us today, and we can help you navigate each of them so you can make the decisions that are best for you.



## Quick Quiz

For an answer, email me at [br@brettroderman.com](mailto:br@brettroderman.com) or call 404-229-7600.

*It takes around 70,000 crocus flowers to make one pound of saffron. True or false?*

# Worth Reading



## Playlist: Retro Holiday

### *Find Your Delight*

Every year, on every radio station and in every shopping mall, restaurant or bar, we usually hear the same few holiday songs being trotted out. Sometimes it brings festive nostalgia, while other times it can drive you mad. Thankfully, Find Your Delight has compiled a playlist of more "vintage" Christmas hits, lesser-known versions of the classics and under-the-radar anthems to help usher in the festivities. More: <https://tinyurl.com/worth1221a>



## 11 Tips for a Sustainable Holiday Season

### EarthHero

As we move into an age of growing public consciousness surrounding the environment and the need for sustainability, many of us are wondering how we can do our bit to cut down on the energy and waste generated by the holiday season. EarthHero is on hand to share some ideas for how to have more sustainable holidays this year, including ideas for green gifts and energy-efficient decorations. More: <https://tinyurl.com/worth1221b>

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## We can't make this stuff up!

A Pokémon-branded Oreo cookie has sold for \$15,000 on eBay. A collaboration between the two companies has sent fans and collectors into a frenzy to unearth the rarest cookies featuring the classic Pokémon character Mew.

A woman from California found a 4.38-carat raw diamond lying around in an Arkansas state park located near the site of an old diamond mine. Park officials allowed her to keep the treasure for herself.

Scientists in Egypt have discovered the fossil of an ancient whale with four legs. The freaky creature is believed to represent a midpoint in whales' transition back into the sea and has been named "Phiomictetus Anubis" after the Egyptian god Anubis.

Attendees at the game between University of Miami and Appalachian State rescued a cat falling from the stadium's upper deck using an American flag. The feline football fan had become stuck clinging to a wire at the edge of the balcony.

## Wondering What's Happening in Your Neighborhood?

How has the price of your home changed in today's market? How much are other homes in your neighborhood selling for?

These are all critical questions that shouldn't be overlooked when thinking about buying or selling your home. Whether you're curious about prices in your area, whether it's an excellent time to sell, or just need an expert to answer your questions, I can give you the tools and offer guidance through the entire buying or selling process.

Let me know how I can help by simply giving my office a call at 404-229-7600 to set up a time to connect.

### **Contact me today:**

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