



Real Estate News You Can Use

Brought to you by Brett Roderman

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House-Hunting Etiquette: Questions You're Afraid to Ask

Permission to view someone's home for sale comes with some rules of etiquette.

Even if you are visiting an open house, you need to be aware of things that you may normally take for granted.

Preparing ahead will help alleviate confrontation or the need to ask these questions when you are in someone else's home.

1. Is it okay to consume snacks or drinks? Unless you are prepared to clean up or pay for a spillage accident, have your refreshments before you enter a home. If a seller has left cookies out for the showing, feel free to take one and eat it in the kitchen.
2. Can I use the bathroom? If it's urgent, ask for permission. You never know if the water has been shut off. Schedule stops to take care of your personal needs before visiting.
3. Is looking into closets acceptable? Look all you want, but don't disturb what you see.
4. What about taking photos? Before you click the camera, first ask if it's okay. This is especially important if you intend to post your photos publicly and the seller has personal effects that they don't want promoted.
5. Can I sit on the furniture? This is not a good idea unless you have a physical need to do so. Ask for permission if you need to sit for health reasons.

Call or email us with any of your burning house-hunting questions. We are always here to help and make sure you have a pleasant experience.

Restoring the Oceans Is Possible and Here's How

The worrying collapse of the earth's ecosystems due to human activity, disease or climate change is something that is becoming ever more widely documented in recent years. Thankfully, a team of marine biologists and concerned volunteers have shown that hope can be found where there may have been none with an inspiring 20-year project to physically rebuild a barren ocean ecosystem, resulting in a lush revival of a previously depleted marine environment.

Environmental sciences professor Karen McGlathery and others oversaw the world's largest seagrass restoration project in Virginia's coastal waters, turning previously cloudy, sediment-filled bays into underwater forests teeming with life. Over two decades, the team scattered eelgrass seeds from a moving boat across the bays of Spider Crab, Cobb, Hog Island and South, eventually sowing an incredible 75 million seeds.

Nine thousand acres of green seagrass now blanket the bays, and the tangible benefits for the entire ecosystem are there to see. The seas are now awash with crustaceans, fish, scallops and more calling the seagrass home as well as clearer, purer water caused by the sediment and microplastic waste being locked in place by the underwater greenery.

The project's success doesn't stop there, with the mammoth task being hailed as a game changer in the way conservation efforts are considered for the future. Restoration efforts elsewhere are taking inspiration from Virginia, such as the UK's largest seagrass regeneration project, which is using the Virginia team's blueprint for their own conservation efforts in the bays of Pembrokeshire, Wales.

Are You a First-Time Buyer? Get My Free Guide



Buying your first home is a big step, and one that is likely to impact your financial future for years to come.

Make it easier by requesting my free guide, "How First-Timers Can Make a Wise Buy."

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



Restore and Rejuvenate with These Self-Care Rituals

The holiday season is upon us, and with it can often come an overwhelming amount of stress and anxiety. The large family gatherings, the travel, the weeks of preparation and the sometimes endless list of gifts, cards and foodstuffs we have to remember to pick up can all become a bit much if we don't practice self-care in between. Here are five self-care rituals that will prove priceless if you find the festivities starting to get on top of you.

Set some boundaries. With so many tasks and people vying for your attention, it's okay to say no to some things to protect your mental wellbeing. You don't have to be available to everyone at all times.

Schedule regular time-outs. Allowing yourself a short period a couple of times a day in which you temporarily let go of your troubles and electronic devices can work wonders for a healthy mind. Switch off your phone and take a walk in the park, meditate or read a book.

Have a nice hot bath. Few things are as physically and mentally relaxing as a nice bubble bath. Warm water on the skin has a physically calming effect on both the mind and body, while adding in some essential oils and nourishing soaps leaves you feeling totally rejuvenated.

Keep a gratitude journal. Regularly making a note of things you feel grateful for in life helps you develop an all-around positive mental attitude, keeping the joyous things at the front of your mind rather than the anxieties that try to seep in.

Stretch or practice yoga regularly. A surprising amount of our mental woes can begin as physical ones, whether it's an achy back making you grumpy or a stiff neck grinding your gears. Practicing yoga, Pilates or even just simple stretches on the regular can help eliminate those troubles, making you feel happy, energized and able to do more with your body as well as your mind.

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.

Vegetable Tian

Serves 6

1/2 medium onion, finely chopped
4 cloves garlic, minced
1 6-oz. can of tomato paste
4 tablespoons olive oil
1/2 teaspoon dried thyme
3/4 cup water
1 medium baking potato, very thinly sliced
3 Roma tomatoes, very thinly sliced
1 zucchini, very thinly sliced
1 yellow summer squash, very thinly sliced
Salt and pepper to taste
Optional: 1/4 cup shredded cheese

Preheat oven to 375°F. Spray 12-inch round baking dish with cooking spray.

In a small bowl, combine onion, garlic, tomato paste, 1 tablespoon olive oil, 1/4 tablespoon thyme and water. Spread into bottom of dish. Arrange alternating vertical slices of potato, tomato, zucchini and squash, starting at outer edge of the dish, working concentrically towards center. Drizzle with remaining olive oil, sprinkle with rest of thyme. Season with salt and pepper to taste. Cover with foil.

Bake until tender about 45 minutes. Optional: after 30 minutes, sprinkle with cheese and bake uncovered for last 15 minutes.



What Needs to Be Done to Prepare for Closing?

The most important part of purchasing a home is closing day, when the official transfer of ownership takes place. If you are prepared, it should go smoothly when executing the paperwork, paying any required fees and ultimately getting the keys to your new home. Your real estate agent will be your best source of what you need to bring to the closing. Plan on having your ID, evidence of homeowner's insurance and your closing cost funds. If you are not sure about anything, ask your agent or make a call to the closing office.

One missing document means a failed or postponed closing, so review your closing documents ahead of time. Confirm the closing fees before you arrive, and have any questions for your lender answered. Prior to the closing meeting, review the seller's responsibilities and make sure they have been satisfied. Your agent can provide you with the final completion documentation for any seller obligations. If you pay attention to these details and all is in order, you should be able to walk away with keys in hand.

6 Home Maintenance Myths You Should Know About

Proper home maintenance is an important part of home ownership. Being aware of the following myths about keeping up a home will help you avoid unexpected expenses in the future.

Solid-surface countertops are indestructible. Be nice to your countertops because they can easily be cosmetically damaged. Stone counters can be stained, and household cleaners will take away the luster over time. Direct heat from pots and pans can discolor countertops, and soft stones can be etched by acidic materials.

The test button on a smoke detector assures the detector is doing its job. The test button does not tell you if the smoke sensor is working, so always test it with smoke from a blown-out candle or match.

Short lawns mean less mowing. Keeping your lawn one to three inches long will allow it to retain more water while keeping it strong enough to withstand weeds and pests.

Energy is conserved if the AC is turned off when you leave. The reality is you will consume more energy if the AC has to work overtime to cool your home when it's hot. Depending on the season, move the thermostat five degrees up or down when your home is vacant. Consider a programmable thermostat.

No gutter maintenance is needed with gutter guards. While guards are designed to keep out leaves, smaller debris such as seeds or pine straw can still get through. You will have less maintenance with a once- or twice-a-year moderate cleanout.

Permits for renovation aren't necessary. Building codes and the permit process are in place to protect you by ensuring properly completed work. Insurance will better cover your losses if your work has been permitted.

Call or email us any time to go over these and other home maintenance myths so you can get even more enjoyment out of home ownership.



Quick Quiz

For an answer, email me at br@brettroderman.com or call 404-229-7600.

When was direct dial telephone service first available coast-to-coast?

Worth Reading



17 Products That'll Save You Some Time and Energy

The Skimm

The Skimm has compiled a handy list of items you never realized you needed but will wonder how you ever lived without. From a jar opener that tackles the most stubborn of lids to bands that hold your bedsheets in place as you toss and turn at night or anti-fog spray for when your mask steams up your glasses, take a peek to see what you've been missing.

<https://tinyurl.com/worth1121a>



The Science behind "I'm Sorry": Why to Say It and How

Craig Dowden

Quiet Revolution

Sometimes it seems to be the hardest word, but did you know that there is now scientific research into the effects and results of saying "I'm sorry"? Craig Dowden outlines the fascinating findings at Quiet Revolution as well as how to offer an apology in the most positive way.

<https://tinyurl.com/worth1121c>

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We can't make this stuff up!

Residents of Upper Marlboro, Maryland, were left baffled after witnessing three zebras casually grazing in their neighborhood. The animals escaped from a private farm at some point in August and have now been corralled into a field to feed.

Someone claiming to be a time traveler from the year 2714 has been posting mysterious updates on TikTok warning us of upcoming global events. Among their messages are predictions of hurricanes, alien invasions and ... talking chimpanzees.

A store clerk's mistake when printing lottery tickets has led to a Maryland man winning \$100,000. The cashier accidentally printed two tickets instead of one, so the man decided to buy them both.

Two British rail enthusiasts have tied the knot on a moving train. After a champagne reception at London Euston station, the train-mad couple held their wedding on a West Coast Main Line service from London to Glasgow in a carriage decorated with flowers.

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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