



*... because  
your move  
matters!*



**Sheila Dowell**

Broker-Associate

***Distinctive Homes ~***

***Distinctive Lifestyles***

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# Sheila Dowell's “Home News”

*News To Help You Save  
Time, Money and Have Some Fun!*

*From the Desk of Sheila Dowell ...*

Everything about our Residential Real Estate Market was strong in December, 2019, so my assumption at the beginning of this year was that it would continue into the New Year. We are now in February and that trend is continuing. According to Realtor.com, the month of February has had in recent years, the most listing views of the entire year! With sub-4% mortgage rates, low unemployment, and higher wages, industry insiders are expecting a bustling 1st Quarter+ real estate season. According to Nicolas Bedo, an economic data analyst for realtor.com@: “Realtor.com@ data shows that views per listing used to ramp up into spring, but now competition starts high in January and stays high. What used to be a lopsided bias for April is now a feverish search starting in January, staying consistently competitive across the first four months of the year as hopeful home buyers look for just the right home.”

Recapping 2019, sales of homes priced at \$700,000 or less increased as an average with only the homes over that declining (general statement since waterfront, golf course, and single story homes did well even above that price point). Months of inventory in The Woodlands- homes with pools- were at 5 months or less most of year. Homes without pools tended to be at 6 months of inventory. Check my website blog for Monthly Inventory Levels for The Woodlands and Magnolia.

For resale homes, updates have become more important to having a quick sale: interior paint, flooring (especially carpet), bathroom and kitchen fixtures, solid surfaces in the kitchen have become more important as many of our homes in The Woodlands- excepting Creekside- are beginning to approach 12+ years. And, decluttering is a mandate...less is definitely better as buyers try to envision your home “with their stuff in it”!

If you are considering a sale in 2020, call me today so we can make a plan. Most of the homes I list take 4-6 weeks to get ready once we have that plan. Don't forget that I include staging with my homes. I have proved that it has added value to every home I have listed/sold!

*~ Sheila*



## “Master Chef-in-Training”

Michael is Sheila's husband of 30+years. His hobbies include ballroom dancing (Still Dancing!), gourmet cooking - especially baking, and -just added- GOLF! We played golf 15 years ago (Michael, the natural athlete and Sheila... not so), so the return to this sport has been a bit slow. Fortunately, we aren't thinking of competing with this sport!

It's February and we are still “Eating Light”. Sheila pulled out one of her favorite fish recipes: only 15 minutes for both prep AND cooking!

### *Pecan Crusted Dijon Tilapia* (serves 4)

#### Ingredients

- 2 4 tilapia filets (approximately 1 lb total)
- ½ c mayonnaise (no low fat)
- ¼ Dijon mustard
- 1 tsp butter (or Pam spray as needed)
- ¼ c finely chopped pecans

Spread butter on metal baking pan before placing the filets on it. Combine mayonnaise and mustard and spread on top of filets. Sprinkle with pecans.

Bake @ 375 degrees for about 10 minutes unless filets are extra large. Add 2-3 additional minutes if that is the case. ❖

## A HOME: WOMEN VS MEN PREFERENCES

Meyers Research in Costa Mesa, Calif., conducted a survey analyzing the buying preferences of 33,000 home shoppers, including both men and women with a variety of locations and price points. They found that the influence of the female buyer segment goes further than expected. At the top of their wish lists, women want a super-sized pantry, a tub in her bathroom, a first-floor office, and a front porch. The survey results are also helpful in understanding how female preferences compare to those of their male peers. 7 points are especially relevant:

**Why they buy.** Among women's top motivations for purchasing a home are family, safety, price, and schools. For men, the prime factor is prestige, but they also care about fitness and family, according to the survey. Single women are more willing to commit to buying than men because they view a home as a wise investment and a way to spend their monthly living expenses wisely, especially since interest rates are low. Women also see homeownership as a way to help lock in their financial security. Single men, however, are less willing to commit to buying since they're more transient and are more likely to move for a job or relationship.

**The importance of location, size, and convenience.** Overall, both women and men prefer a suburban location, though men are more willing to

*Thanks to All my Clients for their Referrals!*

**There are SO many people to say “Thank You” to this time!**

Thank you and Good By to Old Friends and Special Clients: Mike and Phaedra Dugan. We met 20 years ago when Mike's job as a Continental Pilot moved him and his family to The Woodlands. Mike's recent retirement took everyone back to Alabama, where Moms and Dads and Brothers and Sisters all “welcomed them Home”. Their townhome was the last tie to Texas. SOLD and CLOSED!

Thank you to Cecile Hanus, local real estate investor now “reaping the benefits” of her multiple purchases. Now that she has retired, the additional income from her free and clear rentals “makes the difference”. This tenant asked for a 2 year lease-perfect!

Thank you again, Randall and Susan Butcher, for referring your son and daughter-in-law to me. Buying a 1st home means looking at ALL your choices, - single story vs 2 story, close to shopping and schools, room for a future pool. And- of course- the space to “grow into” over the next 10 years!

**After 25 years of being in Full Time Real Estate Sales, I still get excited when I am asked to help someone with the biggest investment they will probably ever make!**

consider city or rural living. A male buyer is also more willing to drive longer distances to his job. When it comes to a home's size, women prefer smaller—under 2,500 square feet—with more functional design. For men, a bigger home is preferred because they believe it's more likely to guarantee a “better” lifestyle.

**What matters more: indoors versus outdoors.** A female buyer loves the interior of her home—it's one of the prime motivations for her to buy, according to the survey. She seeks a place to socialize with others and alleviate stress. And if it has a large walk-in closet, all the better!! While the female buyer cares about outdoor space—and likes the idea of a front porch—it's an area she's willing to compromise on for greater intimacy and affordability, according to the survey. A male buyer, however, typically favors the outdoors for socializing and barbecuing. He's also looking for a larger garage and a media room.

**Design influences.** Countless images on sites like Pinterest and Houzz have opened home shoppers' eyes to a variety of housing aesthetics. When it comes to favorite looks, both women and men lean toward the modern touch, according to the survey, but his modern is more modern than hers. Women veer more toward casual contemporary and modern farmhouse styles. She's more willing to consider attached housing and multilevel than he is. The interior design of a home matters greatly to both, and builders have taken note by focusing more attention on interior choices. Regardless of gender, white remains the top color choice—almost twice as much as other choices.

**Making changes.** The ability to personalize the interior of a home so that rooms reflect the owner's taste matters more to women than to men. Female buyers favor having utility space, an upgraded kitchen with quartz countertops, a bathroom with a tub, guest space to accommodate parents or visitors, and a smart-home hub with remote access to everything from the front door and security systems to appliances. Male buyers prefer keeping costs down and making upgrades later, but when they do personalize, they want wine storage and granite countertops over quartz, the survey found.

**The pet factor.** 81% of potential buyers said that animal-related considerations will play a role in deciding their next living situation. But the Meyers Research survey found that women, more than men, want to have pets and treat them like family members by giving them a dedicated space in their home with a pet door, bed, and area to wash them.

**Bells and whistles.** Extra touches in a house or amenities in a community are sometimes the tipping point for a sale. Women care about having a safe place for package deliveries more than men. “This Amazon phenomenon continues to grow,” Carmichael said. Men care more about being able to work out and enjoy healthy living while also have a place to disconnect when they get home. In their community, female and male buyers seek a resort-style pool, fitness center (she likes workout classes; he prefers to exercise independently), and Wi-Fi. A nearby sports park is a preference favored by men. ❖

*Excerpted from an article written by Barbara Ballinger, a freelance writer for Realtor.com Magazine*

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| <input type="checkbox"/> I'm interested in buying a home.         | <input type="checkbox"/> I have a question for you.            |  |  |
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## HOUSTON REAL ESTATE MARKET

With all the national buzz surrounding Texas real estate markets like Dallas and San Antonio, you might overlook Houston. If so, you might want to look again: The “Bayou City” offers real estate investors outstanding value and accessibility to a major U.S. housing market. Additionally, for young professionals and families, moving to Houston is a no-brainer. The area’s low cost of living, job growth, affordability and amenities provide a place to call home for the long haul. We did a little research into why the Houston market is performing so well and where it might be headed. Here’s what we found.

Houston is outpacing nearly every other major U.S. city when it comes to new employment opportunities. During the last year, the Houston metro area—including suburbs The Woodlands and Sugar Land—ranked #3 in job creation behind New York and Dallas. During the year prior, it added the largest number of jobs on record since the Labor Department started gathering this series of data in 1990.

Additionally,

- Houston currently employs 3.1 million people.
- In 2019, Houston’s unemployment rate dropped to its lowest number in 10 years.
- Inc.com ranked Houston #11 in its “35 Fast Growing Cities With the Most Job Opportunities.”
- The U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics ranks Houston #3 in manufacturing employment growth

Houston’s hot jobs market is not only reinforcing an already stable and healthy economy, it’s also bringing lots of new residents to the area — especially a key demographic of young, educated professionals. The Millennial generation — roughly aged 23 to 38 — accounts for the bulk of America’s workforce and Texas’ most populous city leads the nation in Millennial immigration.

Thousands of young people move here every year whether for work, low taxes or any number of reasons. This city also offers plenty of the “experiences” they value along with incredible versatility. Houston is one of those rare places that provides the energy, entertainment and excitement of an urban metropolis along with relaxed, family-friendly suburbs—a dynamic habitat for every stage of life. ❖



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