



*... because  
your move  
matters!*



**Sheila Dowell**

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***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 ...*

Our Markets are moving SO quickly that sending you “current information” via a bi-monthly newsletter may not be enough.

I am including “Big Picture” data here, but if you want more details-mortgage, sales, even interior and exterior design!!- please go to my blog at [www.sheiladowell.com/blog](http://www.sheiladowell.com/blog). I post every week.

One of the biggest questions I am getting now is: What will the real estate market be like in the 4th Quarter, 2020 and in the 1st Quarter 2021?

Regarding price, all the economists I follow are saying “we anticipate seeing the national index show annual price growth in the mid-high 4% range for the rest of the year.” So....prices will continue to rise modestly through 2020....even in our pandemic.

New home sales continue to surge every month. According to Matthew Gardner, one of the economists I follow, we have seen the strongest pace of new homes sales growth we've had since 2006/2007 and that's nationwide! Homebuyers continue to seek out a move-in ready home — and are less likely to take on renovation projects — than they were in recent years. So...new homes and updated/remodeled homes are most likely to sell quickly.

In 2020, January and February, inventory levels were at an all-time low. Mortgage rates were under 4%. Seller saw their homes go under contract in record time assuming they were “priced with/or a little over the market”. ALL created a remarkable 1st quarter!

I personally expect something similar in in the first half of 2021. Availability of a valid and available vaccine will influence our markets- especially in the 1st quarter. But I still expect low inventory levels and low mortgage rates to continue to promote sales and price growth in the 1st half of the year.

Considering a sale or purchase in 2020 or 2021? Selling OR buying a home is a big decision at the best of times. This year, however, with all its turbulence and uncertainty, many people are understandably nervous about the process. Most of that anxiety is simply the result of not having enough information or the information you personally want and need.

If you're thinking of selling for example, you might be wondering: How does it work these days? How do buyers see my home? How long will my property take to sell? How much will it likely sell for? What if I have some repairs or some remodeling that should be done? How do I accomplish all this?

The more good information you have, the less nervous you'll be. In fact, when you have all your questions answered and you know what to expect, you'll feel better about creating a plan and a timeline...whether selling OR buying! So, don't let unanswered questions hold you back. Give me a call. I'd be happy to fill you in on what's happening in the market, answer your questions, and spend ALL the necessary time creating that plan. I never take a short cut...this is important to both of us!

Late NEWS FLASH: I have coordinated with my contractors and designer/stager to help my sellers remodel/repair items/rooms in their homes BEFORE they go Active onto the market for sale. These renovations have ranged \$3500-7500 typically. The Seller paid for these prior to listing. Several of us @ Keller Williams are interviewing a company that does remodeling of this size and more (some of their jobs exceed \$50k+) and the payment to them is made @ the closing. There are some requirements, but for major, expensive remodeling prior to listing, we are excited about the opportunity for our sellers! Please don't hesitate to ask me for more information if you are considering a sale in 2021.

*~ 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!

October is one of our favorite months... the Cooking becomes FUN from here through the end of the year!

Witch Finger Cookies have become a staple at our home... Sheila LOVES the red nails. Thanks again to Giada De Laurentiis.

### Witch Finger Cookies

#### Ingredients

- vegetable oil cooking spray
- 2 c all-purpose white flour
- ½ t fine salt
- ½ c (1 stick) unsalted butter, room temperature
- 1 c sugar
- 1 large egg, room temperature
- 1 tsp pure vanilla extract
- 28 large sliced almonds
- ½ c raspberry jam

1. Place an oven rack in the center of the oven. Preheat the oven to 325 degrees F. Spray a rimmed baking sheet with vegetable oil cooking spray or line with a silicone baking mat. Set aside.

2. In a medium bowl, whisk together the flour, baking powder and salt. Set aside.

3. In the bowl of a stand mixer fitted with the paddle attachment, beat the butter and sugar together until light and fluffy, scraping down the sides of the bowl with a spatula as needed, about 2 to 3 minutes. Beat in the egg and vanilla until smooth. Gradually beat in the flour mixture until a dough forms.

4. Using about 1 1/2 tablespoons of dough at a time, roll the dough between your palms into 5-inch-long fingers about 1/2-inch thick. Firmly press a sliced almond into the end of each finger to make fingernails. Make several horizontal cuts, about 1/4 inch deep and 1/2 inch long, in the center of each finger to make knuckles. Press the dough on either side of the cuts to shape the knuckles. Arrange the fingers on the prepared baking sheet and bake until light golden, 16 to 18 minutes. Transfer the fingers to a wire rack and cool completely.

5. In a small saucepan, heat the jam over low heat until warm-about 2 minutes. Dip the blunt ends of the fingers in the warm jam and arrange on platter.

6. MAKES 24 fingers!

Questions or to share YOUR success, email me at [mrddowell@gmail.com](mailto:mrddowell@gmail.com) . ❖

## COMING SOON:

Single story Patio Home in The Woodlands... under \$300,000

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[www.SheilaDowell.com](http://www.SheilaDowell.com)

for more details through the end of 2020.

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!

*Thanks to All my Clients for their Referrals!*

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

The Village Of Creekside in The Woodlands has been VERY active this year. It provides our Buyers with some of our newest construction and has homes from the mid \$200s to the \$millions! I had 2 beautiful listings there recently and both sold quickly.

55 Sagamore Bend...\$300,000..under contract in 4 days and closed at Full Price! Thanks to Bob and Cindy Dimitroff for believing in my marketing plan: fixing the few items that were not working...2 new windows, master shower door...and doing the touch-up painting that every 8 year old home needs. The front door was reconditioned..important to every listing, since that is the 1st/2nd item the Buyers see. My Stager, Teri Leuck, did a phenomenal job of “making it look like home.”

126 N Heritage Mill Circle...\$314,500. This home had multiple offers, so the sellers were able to select what they considered to be the Stronger Financial Buyers. This was also important since the sellers were “going home to Europe” and the husband left before the home was sold. Thank you to Thilo Voss and Michelle Flores for calling me back. I helped them buy the home 5 years previously!

Other Neighborhoods:

One of my long-term investors had a rental home come up in August...typically not the best month for leasing. However, single story homes with 4 bedrooms and 3 full baths are hard to find! Positioned as a “multi-generational” possibility, it garnered more showings than we could have expected!

## Tap Into Your 5 Senses to Create More Peace at Home

*Excerpted from Laura Gaskill, Houzz Contributor: “my favorite pieces to write center around the emotional aspects of home and savoring life's simple pleasures.”*

**1. Touch:** The sense of touch makes a wonderful antidote to a modern life often filled with screens and visual information. When we feel something wonderful — whether it's the sensation of slipping into a hot bath on a cold night or of padding the smooth wooden floorboards of the den with bare feet — it grounds us in the present moment.

**2. See:** We're bombarded by visuals all day (and much of the night) thanks to the constant companionship of our screens, but how often do we really see what's in front of our eyes? Making a point to STOP, Slow Down, and really look is a luxury, yet it takes only a few moments. Drinking in the view from a favorite window, noticing the clouds overhead or looking at a loved one is good for our eyes and hearts.

**3. Hear:** Sounds can affect our mood perhaps more than any other sense. When you find yourself feeling blue, overwhelmed or tired, try putting on a piece of music that you love. The music we choose to play in our home becomes part of the atmosphere as much as the lighting and fabrics we use. Other ideas include: hang chimes or bells where the breeze can rattle through them or install a small fountain inside or on your patio and enjoy the sounds of bubbling water.

**4. Smell:** Smell is quite possibly our oldest sense and is the most closely tied to memory. If you want to call up a time in your past, the easiest way is to track down a scent that you associate with that time, and it will all come flooding back — for me, the smell of biscuits fresh from the oven brings me right back to my childhood and my Mother cooking dinner for that night. You can use scent in your home to invigorate yourself, relax, unwind or find comfort. Try these: put scented geraniums (my Mother's Favorite flower!) or herbs on a windowsill and run your hands through them to release the fragrance when you walk by.

**5. Taste:** So often we feel rushed at mealtimes, wolfing down our food without really tasting it. But taking the time to sit down and relish each bite is worth it. Savoring our food, even a simple snack like sliced apple and a cup of tea, is healthier and leaves us feeling not only more full, but also more deeply nourished than when we hurry. Some ways to experience the sense of taste at home: add slices of fresh lemon or sprigs of mint to the water you keep at your desk while you work or go for quality over quantity — a small wedge of really good cheese (for Michael, a rich Cheddar or Edam, for me a quality Havarti or Gorgonzola) or a square or 2! of rich dark chocolate — and savor each morsel. ❖

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## *YOLO: You Only Live Once!*

Demand for second homes in drive-to destinations is surging. Nationwide, these convenient locations are benefiting from a rise in the YOLO (you only live once) mindset as people across the country look to get away and enjoy life as safely as possible during the pandemic. Developers and builders are taking advantage of the boom by understanding second-home buyer preferences and a renewed focus on lifestyle in their communities.

Record Breaking Demand for 2nd Home destinations locally: Sales at Long Cove, an upscale masterplan on Cedar Creek Lake south of Dallas reached an all-time highs during the Summer.

Family refuge in less than four hours. Most second-home buyers, particularly those with school-age children, prefer to drive less than four hours. They desire a getaway to "invest in family," as well as a place of refuge for the future.

Stays of weeks and months-not just weekends. The new "primary" home means longer stays. Because parents can work remotely and children can learn remotely, homeowners now measure second-home stays in weeks and months, rather than days. This use pattern flips the traditional weekend second-home model on its head. Now, households may stay at their second home for most of the time and travel back to their primary home on occasion. Elements such as high-speed internet, home offices, and learning spaces for children have become just as important in second homes as primary homes.

Buyers want to move in soon, which means a priority on a finished home. Today's buyers are less interested in purchasing a homesite and spending years designing and building a custom home. Resort developers across the country tell us buyers prefer finished product so they can experience their second-home lifestyles right away.

Households who may have otherwise waited have decided now is the time to buy, often using funds that would otherwise be allocated to more traditional vacation travel. Today's buyers are showing more interest in lifestyle and use than rental potential and future appreciation. ❖



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