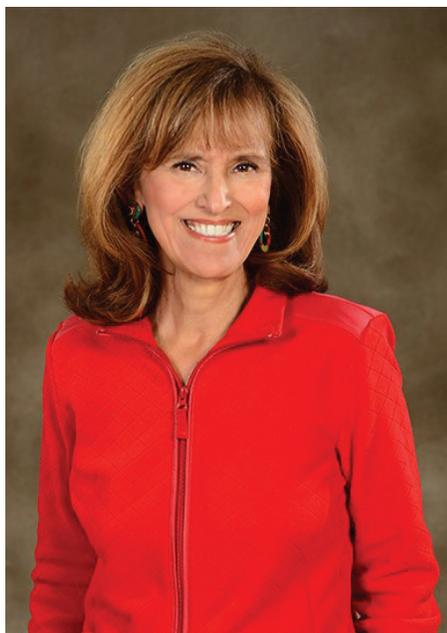


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Sheila Dowell

Broker-Associate

Full Service Real Estate
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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...

New Home Build Update: To protect themselves from having to absorb ongoing price increases, more builders are adding escalation clauses to their sales or construction contracts. The price and availability of building materials have been cited as one of the top challenges that homebuilders face at a time when the real estate industry is calling for more housing inventory to meet surging buyer demand. 47% of builders said they were adding the price escalation clause according to the most recent NAHB Housing Market Index survey.

Builders in some communities are pausing the sale of "to-be-built" homes and are selling Showcase Homes only. Taylor Morrison/Darling Homes has decided to do that in The Woodlands. Their April statement: "We build Showcase Homes by drawing upon our most popular floor plans and exterior/interior finishes, meaning they are beautiful options to consider. We know this change may be disappointing to customers who wanted to build their own, but this decision did not come lightly. Markets adopting this selling model are the ones with especially high demand, which amplified our need to maintain a steady pace to meet the extreme need for housing."

Additionally, Darling Homes is now using a Highest and Best Offer strategy. From them: "Modeled after the resale housing market, this process gives interested buyers the opportunity to bid on their desired home. The bidder with the most competitive offer will receive the 1st opportunity to enter into a new purchase agreement. Keep in mind that 'highest and best' doesn't exclusively mean highest in price. Other factors may include: whether the bidder is financing or paying cash, anticipated down payment, whether the offer is contingent on selling an existing home, current market conditions, timing of submission and the price of selected options, floor plans and elevations." In the event that a home does not appraise when financing the purchase, option and earnest money will not be refunded.

Regarding the Resale Market, inventory levels are still low. However, a consensus of experts believes that the frenzied rush to buy will ease as we go through 2021. They look for Homebuying Seasons to return, with a surge of buyers in Spring and Summer months and things cooling down towards Winter. Single story homes will command a premium as new home builders will focus on maximizing square footage and minimizing lot sizes.

A quick "reality check": the housing market will not be on fire like it is today forever. Rates will not stay this low and neither will inventory. The last downturn in real estate for our North Houston Market began in 2007. When did it "start back up again"? I noticed it in 2013, with everyone acknowledging it by 2015. Having been a full-time Broker-Associate for 25 years, I've seen several of these shifts and the false sense of "it's going to be great forever!" and the wait-and-see mentality it encourages. It's why I always tell those who are waiting to sell, "don't wait if you have made the decision to move". It's better to act when you can, not when you have to.

Using a Seasoned Realtor when buying new OR resale is more important now than ever!

~ Sheila



"Master Chef in-Training"

March brought with it a BIG change in my cooking. I was put onto a lower salt diet that has changed my cooking forever! Sheila and I like to eat at home (a good thing now!) and so we decided to modify some of our favorite recipes. Because it's almost Summertime and we like to use Potato Salad as an accompaniment to many meals, this was one of our 1st. Try it... you'll be pleasantly surprised...and – of course- if you wish, you can always add some regular salt just before serving.

As we go through the next few newsletters, you will see some of my recommendations for salt substitutes...NOT No-Salt or no salt used, but substitutes you can use that truly add flavor. Our favorite is one that Sheila found at HEB Creekside: M Salt. It's a blend of Kosher Certified Sea Salt, Garlic Salt and Black Pepper. (visit www.MichiganSalted.com). Because it is so full-flavored, a little goes a long way!

Michael's "Lower Salt" Potato Salad

Ingredients

- ¾ lb of whole red potatoes this is perfect for 2-3 persons... can be eaten @ 2 or 3 meals)
- 3 T mayonnaise
- 3.5 T plain Greek yogurt
- 1 tsp of dill pickle juice
- ½ tsp yellow mustard
- ¼ tsp Dijon Mustard
- ¾ c chopped fresh celery - diced
- ½-¾ c green onions - diced
- 2 boiled eggs, peeled and cut into chunks
- 1/8 tsp M Salt

If needed, regular salt to be added by YOU!

Bring a large pot of water to a boil. Add the washed potatoes, making sure they are covered by the water, and cook for 20-30 minutes or until cooked through. Drain and set aside to cool. When the potatoes are cool enough to handle, remove the peels. Cut the potatoes into small cubes (I don't measure!) and allow to cool completely.

In a small bowl, make the dressing by whisking together the mayonnaise, yogurt, mustards, and pickle juice. Stir in the green onion, celery and M Salt. Add the dressing to the cooled potatoes and stir until just combined. Add the eggs to the salad and stir gently until the eggs are incorporated throughout.

What wine to add to a Summer Dinner of HBs and Potato Salad?



Sheila suggests a Pine Ridge Chenin Blanc-Viognier (also know as CB-V) from Napa Valley, Ca. Widely available (HEB and Total Wines both carry it), expect to pay \$12-13/bottle. Crisp and fruity, this white blend boasts a bouquet of honeysuckle and orange blossoms along with tastes of green apple, lemon, and grapefruit. It is one of Michael's favorites!

MY CLIENTS WANT YOU TO CALL THEM PERSONALLY!

Thinking of Moving in 2021? These recent clients have asked me to share their feedback with you. Don't hesitate to ask me for their contact information if you or someone you know is hiring a realtor. ALL of the clients below used me to both Buy and Sell!

Phaedra and Michael Dugan: We used you several times as we moved around The Woodlands. We will give you rave reviews. You are worth every bit of the 3% Standard Listing Fee that realtors in Texas charge!

Kelly and Michael Strachan: Once again, a VERY BIG thanks for all your advice because without it we surely could not have gotten what we had hoped for: a quick sale @ OUR FULL PRICE !

Susan Powers: I call you "The Guru of Real Estate". When someone asks me who I can recommend, I always give them YOUR name. If they don't use you, I tell them they are making a BIG mistake!

Robert Dimitroff: You are truly an outstanding asset to anyone who is buying/selling a home. You go "beyond the average". I was especially appreciative of the fact that you worked with the appraiser for the home we listed with you to make sure they got the extensive information on recent sales that they simply do not have the time to collect! Do not hesitate to have any future client call me!

Vendor Spotlight:

My Vendor list has contractors on it that you may want to use. Every person there has worked for us personally. Want a copy? Email me @ sheila@sheiladowell.com.

This month I am featuring Teri Leuck, Interior Designer/ Accredited Home Stager.

Her website: <https://www.ddhomestaging.com>



With 30+ years of hands-on design experience in Houston/ Montgomery County, Teri is a critical part of my Home Selling Team. Her warehouse overflows with furniture, art and accessories that she uses for Staging. Her goal: emphasize a home's assets, minimize its less desirable facets, make everything look big, light, bright, and open in the photographs buyers see online before spending time on a personal visit. Staging-savvy designers like Teri work wonders with dark rooms, spaces that are too small/large, furniture that's out-of-scale for the setting, strange floor plans, poor color choices, dowdy design features. I believe in this value to the seller SO much, that I pay for it! See her work in the picture above.

- | | | | |
|---|--|--|--|
| <input type="checkbox"/> A free market evaluation of my property. | <input type="checkbox"/> Now | <input type="checkbox"/> In three months | <input type="checkbox"/> In six months |
| <input type="checkbox"/> I'm interested in buying a home. | <input type="checkbox"/> I have a question for you. | | |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Purchasing investment property. | <input type="checkbox"/> Enter me in this month's drawing for: | | |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Giving you a referral. | \$100 drawing for Tommy Bahamas in The Woodlands (5/31/21) | | |

Name _____ Address _____

City _____ State _____ Zip _____ Telephone _____ / _____

E-mail _____



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Some Short Notes

Michael and I have always appreciated Art and love every piece we've added! His Style: Art Nouveau, mine Art Deco, ours Scandifornian—a mix of Mid Century Modern and California "Relaxed Modern"! Like thousands of others last year, we decided to add a few items during the Pandemic. Michael focused on Wall hung Art and Water feature pieces. I decided to upgrade bedding, bath and shower items. What a joy it was to find www.Society6.com. Each Purchase Pays an Artist! Their Mantra: DESIGNED BY ARTISTS, MADE BY US, JUST FOR YOU. One-of-a kind pieces that are very fairly priced.

<http://www.gladeculturalcenter.com/eventvenue> Located in The Woodlands @2000 Woodlands Parkway 77380, this Art Exhibits, Concerts (Classical to Jazz), Themed Dinners, Special Events, Center is one-of-a-Kind! They feature a get-together social wine tasting on Friday evenings, also. View their event venues tab here. Outdoor seating is available, too.

<https://www.iamflowerchild.com/locations/houston-tx-the-woodlands/> The Flower Child Restaurant located @1900 Lake Woodlands Drive, Suite 100, 77380. Honestly, I wouldn't have selected this small, recently-opened place to take my sister to lunch, but she was "staying on her diet"... gluten-free... and I remembered it was close to home. They have a large patio with socially distanced tables and very friendly staff. Their mission statement resonated with us, too: "We're on a simple, soul-satisfying mission to spread positively delicious vibes and healthy food in The Woodlands. Whether you're craving a taste of our bowls, grains, greens and wraps or looking to refresh with our flavored lemonades, kombucha or organic wine and beer, we're here to take you to a happy place. We make every last bite on the Flower Child menu from scratch, using farm-fresh ingredients from close to home. That's our promise to you, whether you're vegan, paleo, gluten-free or just hungry."

Designing for Pleasure:

Appeal to the senses at home. Homes that look, feel and smell good, foster mental and physical well-being.

Sally Augustin, Houzz contributor and owner of Design With Science

Once a space's function is understood, what it will look like is often the sole factor driving its design — and that's limiting. When we're awake, all of our sensory systems are operating full tilt, picking up information that influences our emotional experience. What things feel like against our skin, sound like, even smell like makes a big difference in whether a space enhances our well-being or falls flat. A philosophy of design called biophilic makes sure we don't push any of our senses to the side and guides the development of spaces that make us feel good - mentally and physically.

Get a two-for-one punch with candles. Smell is very important to experience - so is movement. Candles deliver on both with a pleasant scent and a flickering appearance.

Switch up your upholstery. When buying furniture, try out all different kinds of materials. Leather has a particular feel and smell- one that is very different from that of a soft, gently textured fabric, such as velvet. Adding a piece of leather furniture affects the nearby smellscape as significantly as it does the vista.

Add a water feature. Incorporating moving water has a dramatic influence on the experience of being there. The most relaxing fountains make the burbling sound of a brook or stream. They also change the temperature and humidity of the nearby air, creating a tactile experience. Notice the picture of the fountain we purchased. Water travels down the piece, landing in a pool at the bottom, creating a visual and calming sound.



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