

News You Can Use

...prepared exclusively for my Preferred Clients

Eliminate Stress From Your Christmas Gatherings

If the idea of spending time with family and friends over the holidays fills you with a sense of foreboding, you're not alone. Despite how much we might miss seeing loved ones throughout the year, family get-togethers are frequently sources of additional holiday-related stress. Fortunately, there is a better way...here are three ways to help you make Christmas more memorable; while at the same time cutting out a lot of the mayhem.

Simplicity

Try to keep the 'kiss' rule in mind when planning your Christmas gatherings. Whether you're hosting a small Christmas Eve gathering of appies and cocktails or the full-fledged family reunion over turkey dinner on Christmas Day, emphasize the simple pleasures. Perfection is not a requirement for friends and family to enjoy your holiday hospitality. The simple pleasures of food, family, friends, and fun are always in style and will ensure Christmas is memorable – without the stress.

Engage Others

Write an email, set up a Facebook page, or use an online evite site to help coordinate meals, travel arrangements, entertainment, and other essential holiday tasks. Recruit family and friends to bring a favourite dish, photo albums, camera, music, and other traditions to help celebrate. This simple step will help with time management and ensure everyone is up to date on any last-minute changes. It also encourages active participation by all. Don't forget to post pictures online after the big event.

Rentals

Sometimes the easiest way to deal with large gatherings is to lease or rent equipment, space, or even lodgings. Whether you need a couple of extra tables or an entire lodge to create your fabulous family get-together, leasing can be a quick and convenient way to get that much needed extra space.

Making Good Real Estate Buy/ Sell Decisions

When it comes to buying and selling real estate, matters of the heart tend to hurt more than help the negotiation process. We all know what emotion does to our bargaining position, right? The following tips will help you manage the emotional ties that bind buyers and sellers to bad decisions in real estate transactions.

Use A REALTOR® REALTORS® do more than just show homes to buyers. They provide impartial and objective opinions about the condition of a property, pricing, location, resale potential, market conditions, and comparable real estate on the market.

Establish Priorities Then stick to them! Every stakeholder in the buying and selling process should have a priority list that includes clearly defined needs and wants. Creating such a list helps you stay organized and on track; and reduces your risk of becoming emotionally entangled in a bidding war or falling in love with unnecessary yet expensive features that won't add to the functionality of the home. Ask your REALTOR® to help you focus on the main needs on your priority list and move to the wants later.

Get A Second Opinion Ask a friend or family member for his or her opinion – but be prepared to listen to constructive criticism and remember, your REALTOR® is still the expert. Appraisers, inspectors, and lawyers are also important sources of valuable information and advice.

Document If permissible, take plenty of photographs when touring the home you think is "the one" so you can share them with others. Sellers should provide their REALTOR® with as many facts and features of the property as possible and ensure they're included in the marketing plan for their home.

December Trivia

- The Ford Motor Company introduces the first moving assembly line – December 1, 1913.
- The province of Newfoundland is renamed Newfoundland and Labrador – December 6, 2001.
- NASA launches "Relay 1", the first active repeater communications satellite – December 14, 1962.
- Thailand joins the United Nations – December 17, 1946.
- BBC World Service begins broadcasting as the BBC Empire Service – December 19, 1932.
- The transistor is first demonstrated at Bell Laboratories – December 23, 1947.
- The first successful trial run of the system that will become the World Wide Web is completed – December 25, 1990.
- The European Exchange Rate Mechanism freezes the values of the legacy currencies in the 'Eurozone' and establishes the value of the Euro – December 31, 1998.

Smile! Great Christmas Photos Ahead

Here are some tips to commemorate this year's Christmas celebration with picture-perfect photos that everyone will enjoy.

Quick Clicks Rather than risk the dreaded forced smiles and stiff poses, simply keep clicking; capture the moment when you can. Some of the best pictures are those taken before or after the main event.

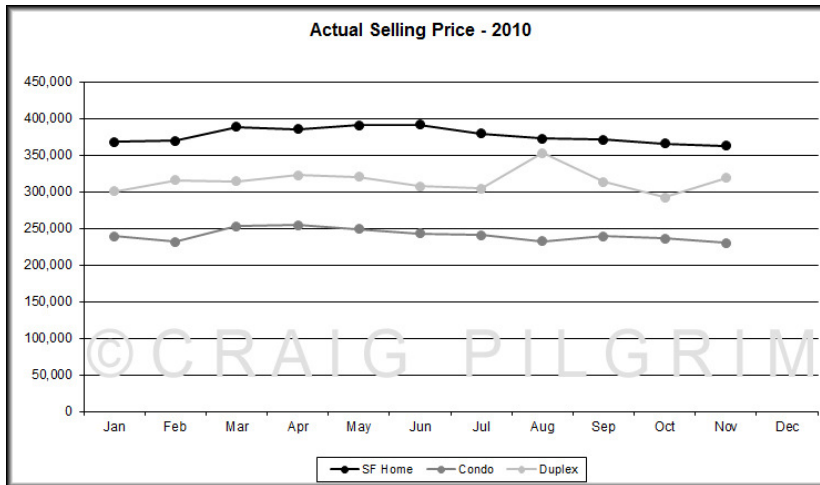
Solids Rule Ask guests to wear solid colours. Plaids, paisleys, and other heavy designs tend to detract from – rather than enhance – a photo.

Lighten Up Good lighting can make or break your photo-op. Early mornings or late afternoons create a warm glow for outdoor shots, while candles or seasonal lights add interest and warmth to indoor settings.

Move Around Static photos tend to look boring. Mix it up and keep your eyes open for those fun moments when people don't realize they're being photographed; it's the stuff of memories.

Multiple Shooters Most holiday celebrations have a lead photographer, but impromptu shots add to the fun and tell the rest of the story. Share your camera with others (if you dare) to create an atmosphere of fun and discovery.

Year-to-Date Average Sale Prices At-a-Glance



HIGHLIGHTS: Average single-family home price down 0.83% over October | Average condo price down 2.67% over October | Average duplex/ rowhouse price up 9.1% over October | Average days-on-market down 1 day to 59 days versus October. *** Visit Cominghome Real Estate for more detailed analysis. ***

What About Fido & Kitty?

Picture This

You've made the decision to sell your home and accordingly have taken the best first step and hired a professional REALTOR® to assist you. Great!

Too bad the REALTOR® you've chosen to represent you suffers from an attention-to-detail deficit or simply lacks sufficient concern for the safety and security of your home, your belongings, and your pets.

What Am I Getting At?

Time-and-again I take my Clients out to see properties listed for sale in and around Edmonton. All homes we visit are listed with REALTORS® and are on MLS®.

Without fail, four of every five homes we visit will have pets – yet only one of the listings will make mention of pets in the home.

Why Am I Bringing This Up?

It is important to consider how you will handle showings when you have pets in

your home. Can your cat(s) survive an afternoon in the snow and sub-zero temperatures? Did you expect your large dog(s) to become protective of their home and bite/ knockdown the prospective buyers' two-year old daughter?

What Can You Do?

Communicate with your REALTOR®. Make sure the professional you've hired is aware of your pets and that you have discussed (in detail) how to accommodate showings if your pets are to be home.

Don't be afraid to ask your REALTOR® for advice on what to do with your pets during showings and seek your REALTOR®'s opinion on the pros and cons of each scenario – that's why you hired a REALTOR®.

You've hired a professional – make sure they perform like one!

On A Personal Note

We seem to be taking in as much of Christmas as we can this year! With our son approaching 18-months, events that didn't appeal to us in the past seem to be on our agenda; because of him. Most recently we took in the Snowflake Festival in downtown St. Albert and we plan to head to the Devonian Botanic Gardens for "Luminaria" this weekend.

Worth Quoting

"A Christmas Wish"

What do I want for Christmas?
Nothing to buy, nothing to sell.
Family gatherings. Laughter. Music.
Multitudes of happy children, warm and fed.
An end to the current war, and to all wars.
Water in the well, food on the table.
Companionship for the lonely.
Solitude for those in search of calm.
Understanding for the prisoner.
Compassion for those who judge.
Strength for the belittled.
Comfort for the torn.

I want what everyone wants,
But believes can never happen.
Truth instead of lies.
Generosity instead of greed.
Knowledge instead of fear.
Modesty instead of arrogance.
An open heart, an open mind.
To follow Life where it leads,
With gratitude for hard times
And what they teach,
And, when good times come,
To pass them on for others to enjoy.

But if these things are too much to ask,
If I am silly or have somehow missed the point,
There is still one thing I would like to see.
A giant teddy bear for the wide-eyed world.

Merry Christmas - William Michaelian

Thanks for Your Continued Referrals!

It's been said that **referrals** are the end product or a mirror of business performance as perceived by new and/ or existing customers. It is in our nature to **recommend** those products or services that please us; and bash those that don't.

What to do? If you've been pleased with the advice, service, and expertise I've provided for you; don't be shy. **Share your experiences** (and my contact information) with your friends, family, and neighbours...it's the best kind of feedback I can receive.



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Support Our Troops...

...it's the least we can do!