



NMLS# 422932

News To Move You Forward

Brought to you by Jill Scheppler, Bob McManus & Angie Domine

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Is Your Family History Preserved for Posterity?

It used to be that family histories, stories, and traditions got passed down orally from the older generation to the younger generation, to be continually preserved and shared.

Nowadays, in a world where life moves fast and almost everything happens online, that kind of oral storytelling happens less and less. But without it, the memories of our elders will disappear when they pass.

The solution: combine that storytelling with the power of technology to record those stories and make them permanent. Here's how.

Get your elders on board. This could be your parent, grandparent, or even a neighbor whose stories you enjoy. Explain to them that you love hearing their life's tales and want to record them so that you'll never forget.

Choose your equipment. If your storyteller agrees, set up a camera or smartphone on a tripod so that you can capture their voice and their physical presence. If they're nervous, stick with a recorder or app that does the same.

Use prompts. You'll want to provide some direction to help inspire your storyteller. This could take the form of a stack of family snapshots, heirlooms, or a list of interview-style questions. (Where did you grow up? Tell me about your wedding day.)

Turn the recordings into a keepsake. This could mean editing your footage into a family movie, interspersed with photos and clips. Or you could create a scrapbook that includes transcriptions of your recordings, along with a USB key that can be popped into a computer to play the audio file.

Want to Sell Your Home Fast? Get My Free Guide



Buying a home is a complex process with many factors to consider.

Prepare for the decisions you'll need to make along the way by requesting my free report, "10 Easy Steps to Buying a Home."

Just call me at 715-387-1122 and I'll send it right out to you.

5 Things You Need to Know about Your Future Neighborhood

Are you currently on the home hunt? You probably have a list of needs and wants. Have you included anything about the neighborhood?

In addition to bedrooms, baths, and interior upgrades, it's a good rule of thumb to ask a few questions about the potential neighborhood you may want to call home.

When you're thinking about buying, here are some questions you can ask to help determine if the neighborhood will be a good fit for you.

1. Is the area well-maintained? Take a walk around the block. Drive through the neighborhood. Are properties well-maintained? Are roads in good condition? The appearance of the lawns, homes, and public spaces can reveal a lot about the area.

2. Are there any rules and regulations you need to be aware of before you commit? Do you mind if your renovations and landscaping are restricted by homeowner association bylaws? Find out if the neighborhood has any rules and regulations, and what they are.

3. What is the reputation of the school district? Even if you don't have children, the school district's status can affect property values. Get the scoop on the district's rankings in academics and financial stability.

4. What's the crime rate? Oftentimes you can find maps provided by the city that show what crimes occur in the area and how often. The FBI may also have reports available for the area. Do a little research to make sure you'll feel safe in your new home.

5. What amenities are nearby? For some homebuyers, access to public transportation is important. Others want to live near parks, shops, or restaurants. Find out what amenities the area offers to ensure that you choose a neighborhood that suits your lifestyle.

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3 Real Estate Myths Television Has Taught Us

Jim and Suzy Homebuyer just found their dream property for \$50K and fixed it up in three weeks.

Stories like this have skewed viewers' expectations of real estate reality. Shows about home buying and renovation projects can be fun to watch, but we may not realize that they often don't depict the realities of buying, selling, and owning a home.

Here are three common myths popularized by today's TV lineup.

"Three homes will do."

On TV, a couple looks at three homes and is able to find the property of their dreams. This isn't how things work in the real world. The number of homes buyers must look at before finding the right one for them differs in each situation. It's not uncommon to look at 20 homes. It may even work out that you look at just one (but it's not likely).

"I can afford that."

Shows that depict real estate purchases and renovations rarely reflect prices that

are realistic for viewers. We may witness a bargain deal on TV and assume we could get something similar.

The fact is, markets vary greatly. The price of a home or a remodel in the area where the show is filmed may be completely different from what we can expect in our home town – either much higher or much lower.

"This will be a cinch."

While some DIY projects can be completed quickly, the amount of time most renovations take is longer than TV would have you believe. Homeowners shouldn't expect to dive into a basement remodel on Friday and wake up Monday morning with the project behind them. Even if you hire professionals, they may encounter unexpected delays or simply need more time to do the renovation right.

If you're considering buying, selling, or renovating, the more information you have, the better prepared you can be. Contact me for some professional input – I'm happy to help.

Ask the Agent: This Month's Question

What can make my offer stronger?

To get the best response from a seller, you want to put your best foot forward.

This starts with a preapproval. Before you make an offer on a home (and before you even begin to look at homes), you should meet with a lender and get preapproved for a loan. Having this preapproval in hand to submit with an offer lets the sellers know you are a serious buyer who can afford their home. I have lenders that I work with regularly if you ever need a referral.

And, of course, price is important. In a hot market, you may be competing with multiple offers and need to come in at full price. In other situations, you may have more negotiating power. Your real estate agent will help determine a reasonable offer. We provide valuable insight to help you make the best offer.

Flexibility and a willingness to close whenever is most convenient to them are also nice perks that could put the cherry on top for the seller.

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