

# TX DREAM HOME NEWS & Musings



## Have You Visited My Website?

I try to supply information needed for both Buyers and Sellers here. Check my Property Search as well!

[YourTexasDream.com](http://YourTexasDream.com)



## Xmas, a Respectable Abbreviation

Whether or not you celebrate Christmas, you may still be curious where the term 'Xmas' comes from as shorthand to refer to Christmas. Here's a brief explanation.

Rather than being a rough abbreviation, the history of the word Xmas is actually more respectable than you might think.

The abbreviation predates by centuries its use today. It was first used in the mid-1500s. X is the Greek letter "chi," the initial letter in the word Χριστός. And Χριστός translates as "Christ."

X as a representation (rather than abbreviation) of the word "Christ" is known as a Christogram. In the same vein, the terms Xpian and Xtian have been used in place of the word "Christian."



## Home Ownership Oddities around the World

**Switzerland** has the lowest level of home ownership in the world, partially due (according to a 2010 study, "Why Do the Swiss Rent?" by Steven C. Bourassa) to an odd policy of taxing owners based on the rent they could charge themselves if they were renting their own homes.

In **France**, inheritance laws were originally created to keep properties within bloodlines. That means if a widower wants to sell her home, she must get her kids' permission.

In **Ireland**, there is no shared commission between real estate agencies, so buyers must pay their own agents for help finding a home, or they must negotiate directly with the listing agents.

In **China**, when a city expands, the government offers compensation to home owners. But if owners refuse

to move, rebuilding of the area continues, simply surrounding the leftover homes, which are dubbed "nail houses" because they're like a nail that refuses to be hammered down (see image above).

In **North Korea**, buying and selling a home is illegal. But according to Reuters, many people secretly buy their homes in private markets using US dollars or Chinese yuan. Buyers and sellers then bribe housing officials to approve the agreement by falsifying paperwork. The regime tolerates this, because officials are involved as well.

In some **US states**, hauntings and the presence of ghosts is a "material fact" that must be disclosed by sellers, but in many of the same states, there is no requirement to disclose a death on the property.

## Relocating? Get a Referral to a Great Agent!

I belong to a nationwide network of real estate professionals who specialize in helping people relocate. Let me know your future location and approximate time frame for moving, and I'll send you some agent names. [hilarymeader@outlook.com](mailto:hilarymeader@outlook.com) or 214-585-9383.

## The Truest Gifts...

What ancient philosopher first said *"The meaning of life is to find your gift; the purpose of life is to give it away"*?

According to the website The Quote Investigator ([quoteinvestigator.com](http://quoteinvestigator.com)), the saying has great philosophical significance, but the specific quote is fairly recent. Here's what they found:

Far from being the quote of a famous philosopher or writer, such as William Shakespeare or Thomas Aquinas, the earliest mention of the specific quote comes from 1993 in a book titled *"Finding Your Strength in Difficult Times: A Book of Meditations"* by David Viscott.

The author was a psychiatrist who hosted a radio talk show in the 1980s and 1990s during which he provided counseling to callers. Viscott's statement was composed of three parts instead of two:

*The purpose of life is to discover your gift.*

*The work of life is to develop it.*

*The meaning of life is to give your gift away.*



But the sentiment is far from new. The Quote Investigator cites an 1843 essay by Ralph Waldo Emerson, titled "Gifts." In the essay, Emerson argued that a gift is only worthwhile if it is integrally related to the gift-giver:

*Rings and jewels are not gifts, but apologies for gifts. The only gift is a portion of thyself. Thou must bleed for me. Therefore the poet brings his poem; the shepherd, his lamb; the farmer, corn; the miner, a stone; the painter, his picture; the girl, a handkerchief of her own sewing.*

Something to keep in mind as we strive for balance in this hectic holiday season.

## December Quiz Question

*How many Ladies Dancing did your true love send to you?*

## Mini Procrastination Hacks

There is evidence for something called the Zeigarnik Effect, which is an intrusive cognitive "need" to complete a task once it has been started. The uncomfortable cognitive struggle is only terminated once a person returns to the task. Now you know why you feel distracted when you procrastinate; it literally causes a physiological drag on your consciousness.

If you tend to procrastinate, here are two often cited "hacks" for getting on with it:

- **Start using a timer.** If you avoid tasks like cleaning the house, set the timer on your stove or phone for 10 or 15 minutes, then make an agreement with yourself to clean like mad for just those minutes. The timer has a way of making the task more bearable because it has an end point.
- **Use the *Just 5* technique.** If you avoid boring, difficult, or icky tasks, commit to doing just 5...just 5 push-ups, 5 dishes, 5 minutes, 5 clothes folded, etc. By committing to just 5, you start your task without feeling like you're going to be stuck with it for a long time. Once you get started, it's likely you'll continue.



adjective  
**English**  
noun verb

## The Double Positive

A linguistics professor was lecturing his class.

"In English," he said, "a double negative forms a positive. However, in some languages, such as Russian, a double negative remains a negative. But there isn't a single language, not one, in which a double positive can express a negative."

A voice from the back of the room retorted, "Yeah, right."

## Thank You!

**Welcome** new clients and **Thank You** to friends who've trusted me to work with you, your friends, family and coworkers. Special thanks to...

**The Collins**

**The Riveras**

I hope you will feel comfortable introducing me to the people you care about, too!



## Put Rising Rates Into Perspective for Buyers

Source: "[Higher Mortgage Rates Scuttle Some Sales](#)," CNBC (Nov. 21, 2016)

"Rising mortgage rates have sparked concerns that they could stall some home buyers who were already under financial constraints.

The 30-year fixed-rate mortgage averaged its highest level in more than a year last Friday. **Rates rose from 3.5 percent to 4.125 percent** in less than a week, CNBC reports.

"It's kind of sad, because you're helping out a first-time buyer who is in need of these low rates and doesn't have the personal liquidity to offset if the rates rise," one lender in New York told CNBC. He says that he has two clients struggling with the higher rates. "One is on the bubble, but one is almost a dead deal." Still, it's important to keep perspective: Mortgage rates remain historically low.

...There is plenty of indication that **mortgage rates will edge higher in the coming weeks**. The Federal Reserve is expected to raise its lending rate in December. While mortgage rates don't follow that rate precisely, rates could move higher as investors sell out of the 10-year Treasury bond market and head into the stock market..."

## Financial Emergency Prep

We store water, food, and other supplies in case of a physical emergency. But many of us lack preparation for a more likely kind of emergency—financial need. Here's a checklist to help you review your financial contingency plans:

**Is Your Life Insured?** If you don't have life insurance, consider how much your family would need to live on if you passed away. Include things like housing and education costs. Even if you can't afford the full amount of life insurance you need, having some is better than none for your family.

**Adequate Home Insurance Coverage.** You may never need home owner's or renter's insurance, but you can't afford to not have it if it's needed.

**Financial Effects of Natural Disasters.** Be prepared to deal with the kinds of disasters that are most likely in your region: earthquakes, tornados, fires, etc. In addition, have a money plan so you can access cash for gas, food, etc. Remember that stores and ATMs will not be able to take ATM or credit cards if power goes out.

**Minimum Back-Up Budget.** Losing a job is becoming so common these days. Figure out how much you would need to live on if you cut out all luxuries, and just had your most necessary expenses covered. Identify how you would earn that minimum budget if needed.

**Rainy Day Fund.** Savings can be difficult, even in higher income brackets. But the some of the oldest financial advice is as true today as it ever was: Put as much money as you can into savings until you have 6 months of living expenses saved up. Then don't touch it.

### FREE REPORT

## 5 Ways to Reduce the Stress of Selling Your Home

According to some studies, selling a home can be as stressful as getting a divorce or going through bankruptcy.

You can't eliminate stress when selling, but you can minimize it by taking the steps described in this report. **Ask me for a copy and share it with a friend:**

[HilaryMeader@Outlook.com](mailto:HilaryMeader@Outlook.com)  
**214-585-9383**

## Good, Clean Funnies

- I wanted to grow my own food, but I couldn't find any bacon seeds.
- I can't believe I forgot to go to the gym today. That's 7 years in a row now.
- I've got no home, no control, and I can't see any escape. It's past time for me to get a new keyboard.
- **Why don't we ever see elephants hiding in trees?** Because they're really, really good at it.
- It is so cold outside, I saw a politician with his hands in his own pockets.
- **Why did the physics teacher break up with the biology teacher?** There was no chemistry.
- **What is blue and smells like red paint?** Blue paint.

# North Collin County Market News

**Anna**—The resale (Not New builds) Residential housing market is staying quite steady in both numbers sold and steady, slow increase in prices. Since 2015 there has been a 10-13% median price rise in the Anna subdivisions overall. New Builds are taking the focus.

**Melissa**—Resale in Melissa show prices steadily climbing on homes built before 2012, and staying well above the average overall Listing prices for our area with a 19-23% median price increase from last year.

**McKinney**—Resale prices peaked in July 2015, but are holding steady with fluctuating increases and a higher inventory than last year available for sale.

**Interest rates have started an upward path. Best to get a rate locked in now if you're planning a home purchase soon!**

Anna	SubDivision	# Sold	Median Price	DaysOnMkt	% of Listed Price
	Oak Hollow	48	\$ 178,500.00	14	100%
	West Crossing	20	\$ 217,750.00	13	100%
	The Falls	40	\$ 194,650.00	11	100%
	Creekside	27	\$ 177,190.00	5	100+%
Melissa	SubDivision	# Sold	Median Price	DaysOnMkt	% of Listed Price
	Liberty	41	\$ 298,000.00	27	100%
	Hunters Ridge	28	\$ 187,000.00	8	100%
	Hunters Creek	21	\$ 205,000.00	20	100%
	Trails Of Melissa	16	\$ 240,500.00	13	99.80%
	Villages Of Melissa	10	\$ 233,750.00	12	98.70%
<i>Based on 2Beds/2Bath, less than an acre, Year built 2011 or older, sold between 12/12/2015-12/12/2016</i>					

## Real Estate Q & A

### “We’ve outgrown our home. Should we sell it or keep it?”

One reason we encourage young people to buy a home is to have equity they can use to buy up later. But there are reasons to consider not selling that first home, and instead keeping it as a rental. If you or someone you know is thinking of moving up, here are some possible reasons to hold onto that starter.

1). By keeping your home as a rental, you start building a real estate portfolio without having to come up with an additional 20% down payment to buy a separate investment. 2). If you have a lease in place before you buy your next home, your mortgage broker may be able to count a portion of the lease as income. 3). You could get a depreciation tax benefit; but check with your accountant, as laws vary widely by location. 4). Knowing a home inside and out makes it a better rental than one you buy on the open market.

Of course, if your starter is in an area that has low rental demand, you may have more vacancies or lower rents. Also, if you need your equity for a down payment to afford your next property, you may need to sell.

*I'm available to help you weigh the options!*

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