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Diane Bartsch

## REAL ESTATE REPORT

### DECORATING WITH

# Star Spangled Manners

by Broderick Perkins

Independence Day brings out the decorator in us.

The 4th of July, the holiday celebrating the day the United States officially took independence from Great Britain, is the fifth most important holiday for decorating.

The red, green and glitter of Christmas makes that holiday tops in all-around decorating spending — \$6.4 billion a year, but when it comes to outdoor displays alone, the red, white and blue decor of the 4th gets the salute — to the tune of \$640 million a year — according to Unity Marketing's "Holiday Decorating Report."

The study of consumers' holiday decorating and related spending behavior, says 40 percent of American households will show their patriotic spirit on the 4th of July.

"While the focus of their decorating will be outside, just over 10 percent of the 4th of July decorators also show their colors inside the home as well," says Pam Danziger, president of Unity Marketing.

Danziger says decorating the home stimulates a mood of celebration, according to nearly three-fourths of the 1,000 active seasonal decorators surveyed.

"Decorating our homes for a holiday gives us an emotional boost. That is why more and more people are taking time out of their busy schedules to hang flags and

banners, string lights and make centerpieces to get them into the mood for a party," Danziger explains.

The tragic events of 911 has also heightened patriotic sentiments.

While the survey said consumers largely shop discount department stores for ribbons, bows and banners, the American flag is the centerpiece of most households' decorating efforts.

Unfortunately, even those who regularly pledge allegiance by flying the flag don't always unfurl Old Glory using correct flag etiquette. The proper star spangled manners are included in United States Code, Title 36, Chapter 10. The federal code, which covers all patriotic behavior, contains rules for the flag which were rendered largely unenforceable by a U.S. Supreme Court decision and stands more as a manual for handling and displaying the flag.

True patriots, however, still consider it sacrilege to disrespect the flag.

While Title 36, Chapter 10 offers the complete guide, here are a few pointers for households flying the flag on the 4th of July.

**Fly the flag outside only from sunrise to sunset, unless it is illuminated for night time display, as is the case in many celebrations that end with a fireworks display.**

**If it rains, you must use an all-weather flag. Most produced today for home use are all-weather flags.**

**Do not fly another flag above the U.S. flag, or if the other flag is on the same level, do not fly another flag to the right of the U.S. flag.**

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Fly the flag with the “union” (the blue field of white stars) at the peak of the staff (unless the flag is at half staff) when flying the flag from a staff projecting horizontally or at an angle from the window sill, balcony, or front of a building.

When you suspend a flag over a sidewalk from a rope extending from a house to a pole at the edge of the sidewalk, hoist the flag, union first, from the building.

When you display the flag over the middle of the street, suspend it vertically with the union to the north in an east and west street, to the east in a north and south street.

When you display a flag horizontally or vertically against a wall or in a window, place the union uppermost and to the flag’s own right, or to the observer’s left.

Never allow the flag to touch anything beneath it, including the ground, the floor, water or other items.

Never carry the flag flat or horizontally, but always aloft and free.

Never use a flag as wearing apparel, bedding, drapery, ceiling covering or decorative element. It should never be festooned, drawn back, nor up, in folds, but always allowed to fall free.

Protect the flag from display, use or storage that will cause it to be easily torn, soiled or damaged.

Never place things on the flag or attach marks, insignias, letters, words, figures, designs, pictures, or drawings.

Don’t use the flag as a receptacle for receiving, holding, carrying, or delivering anything.

Aged flags no longer fit for flying should be destroyed in a dignified way, preferable by safely burning it.

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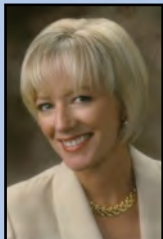
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