Every year, licensed real estate agents are required to take a 3-hour update class approved by the Colorado Real Estate Commission. Although it is recommended that agents take this class early in the year, we agents tend to procrastinate and take the course in the fall — or as late as mid-December.

The trouble is that the primary content of the annual update course is an explanation of the contracts which became mandatory on January 1st.

Meanwhile, next year’s mandatory forms are released each September, and agents can take an optional CE class (as I did) as early as October teaching next year’s forms — while many of our colleagues are taking the mandatory course which is still teaching the outdated forms!

Instead we have the current situation where this year’s contracts and forms are taught until New Year’s Eve, while other classes are teaching the new contracts which will become mandatory on January 1st.

Marcia Waters, the excellent Director of the Division of Real Estate, told me last week that such a change is not contemplated by the Commission at this time, although she would like to see all licensees take the class during the first half of the year.

We agents really do need to know the contents of the mandatory update class early in the year, but we are also human, so expect us to continue our procrastinating ways and not learn what we need to know until it is nearly obsolete.

**Mercury in Retrograde?**

A very curious thing is happening. So many transactions are problematic these days. Clients — ours and those on the other side of transactions, as well as their agents — are suddenly being weirdly difficult. Not all, mind you, but more than usual. I should add, however, that I have also experienced some of the easiest and most wonderful transaction experiences in the past few weeks. But those other transactions — wow!

I asked my colleagues if they have observed this strangeness, and they agreed — it is a little weird.

One agent hesitated and said, somewhat sheepishly, “You may not relate to this, but Mercury is in retrograde.”

A child of the Sixties (like her) I do know something about astrology, but the remark still came as a surprise.

When I got home, I mentioned that exchange with my wife, but before I could repeat what that agent told me, Rita said, “Oh yes, Mercury is in retrograde.” Good news: The current retrograde ends on Nov. 10th...

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**Wood Shake Roofs Pose Big Problem for Sellers & Buyers**

Until the mid-1990’s, it was common for high end homes to be built with wood shake roofs. Indeed, the county assessor’s website still notes whether a home has a wood shake roof, although I doubt their software still assigns extra value to the home based on that fact.

The tables have really turned, and now a wood shake roof is a real problem. The insurance companies now depreciate a wood shake roof — but not other roofs — when a claim is made. If your shake roof is destroyed in a hail storm, the insurer will not pay to replace the roof. Instead they will give you its depreciated value. If the roof is 15 to 20 years old — which it probably is by now — that value could be zero or nearly zero. And yet you were paying extra for coverage!

I advise sellers to replace their wood shake roof before listing their home, and when I'm representing a buyer, I advise him or her to insist on replacement of the roof in any offer we write.

Replacement with a composition shingle roof can cost $10,000 to $15,000 or more.