

EARLY FALL 2011

I realize it has been awhile since I have sent a newsletter. I wish I could say that I was on a great vacation or some fabulous trip to better the world, but alas, it has been a little bit of apathy and dealing with family issues.

For any of you that have had to deal with aging parents, you will most likely understand the dilemma. For the baby boomers, this is a huge problem and has a collateral effect on all aspects of life. In my particular case, my father did not make any advanced plans for his estate (nominal) or prepare an advanced care directive. I cannot urge you enough to make sure that you and your parents take care of this. It is an act of love.

Secondly, as the population ages, many of our senior citizens have not been immune to using their homes as 'piggy banks'. Yesterday's news, but as an older person, there are usually fewer options available to recover the losses. Many home owners in their 80's are facing short sales too. What a shift in thinking from just a decade or two ago.

Experts agree that we are looking at a flat economy and real estate market for the next few years. While the national news is rather gloomy, and for that matter California economic news, Marin County still manages to defy the odds. I am enclosing the Marin County Year to Year (July 2010-2011) comparison report. It shows Marin County down about 11 % however we had a slew of sales in August that boosted that number. As with all these reports, depending on the source, the results can vary depending on the specific data that is culled to create the report. CNN says one thing, Bloomberg another, and Case Shiller yet another. It is my job to help interpret this data, and the tighter the market gets the murkier the data.

And, while most of are tightening our belts, US personal Savings reached their highest level in more than 15 years in 2010. We saved at a rate of 6.9 % last year compared to 0% in 2005-2007. Interesting that when we have less we save more. I have noticed that many of my clients research every purchase, know their options, and what things should cost, thus enabling a consumer to make confident purchasing decisions. Negotiating is expected, and talking to the right person can pay off in spades. Whether it be a product, service or a property.

A property tax adjustment seems to be one of the first steps to take now if you have been assessed with what you perceive as a high property valuation. With lower home values, lower taxes should follow. To ascertain the right property valuation, takes a bit of skill and if any of you need my assistance, let me know how I can help.

Happy Fall

All my best.

