



# In the Loop Realty Newsletter

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## ***MERRY CHRISTMAS & HAPPY CHANUKAH!***

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### ***HOLIDAY SPIRIT-***

It seems we just got done taking down the Christmas trees and storing the Menorahs .

It's amazing how people can misinterpret or misunderstand the symbol of certain traditions which pervade our country. Chanukah is the Jewish Festival of Lights at which time the Menorah or Hanukkiya is placed in a place of prominence and on 8 successive evenings a candle of the Menorah is lit accompanied by the chant of an appropriate blessing. But there are actually 9 lights on the Menorah. The center candle is reserved for the *shamash* which is the servant light and is lit first and then used to light the other candles each evening. The holiday celebrates the religious, national and cultural freedom won by the Maccabees for their people. As a non-Jew, I think it is a beautiful holiday and have celebrated it with friends. Yeah, it's a great country in which we live. We can practice any religion we want and share the beauty of another's.

Unfortunately, there are still religions in our country

which under their breaths or in open practice don't tolerate other religious beliefs or believe that unless you believe in their practice you will be shunned by God upon your passing.

Some religions actually believe that a Christmas tree is a symbol of paganism and to have one in your home is a sacrilege.

Odd, I never remember worshipping in front of our Christmas tree.

So, what is Holiday Spirit? It should be the time in which we all regardless of religion share in the beauty of this time of year. It's a time to reflect and grow from the experiences of the year. By far this year is providing so many from so many walks of life and economic strata to re-think their spiritual, ethical and financial ways.

Emotional, spiritual and financial support is being sought and provided from our government and from our loved ones and friends. We're in this together and we will

survive.

### ***HOUSING MARKET-***

Read the Times and Wall Street Journal and listen to Bloomberg and you begin looking for a sharp knife. And, they are right and they are wrong. Sensationalism is doing more to drive the economy downward than any other factor. Does this remind you of the "sky is falling, the sky is falling"? It should because the same insane reasoning behind that story is what is driving the economy today or not driving it, if you please. The public is so scared that it won't buy anything. If you don't buy, we don't need people to produce or sell or deliver, etc. Months ago, I reminded you of Eisenhower's position early on in his first term as president. He said, "Buy something, anything. Just buy." What comes first the chicken or the egg? Hell, I don't know, but I do know that there is a downward spiral of our economy and the public isn't sure if it should buy or hold.

This past week, the appraisers who do a lot of mortgage lending appraisals have reported that they are now very busy. Apparently, the mortgage rates have reached a point to open the gates for those that have been standing on the sidelines and have the credit and available cash to take advantage of the low priced housing market. Yes, there are many who are refinancing because of the low rates. That's great too. Just their mortgaging creates work for title companies, surveyors, mortgage people, attorneys, etc..

Should they have some cash from their new mortgage they may do some remodeling which will create work for those in construction. Consolidation of banks will create some work for construction people also, as they re-tool  
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for new operations. By the way, did you know that foreclosures were actually down for November? Yes, there are some moratoriums in place and that's great. The government is looking for ways to bolster the housing market by stalling or setting off foreclosures. The detriment of a foreclosure is tantamount to failure and furthers financial catastrophe.

**UPSIDE DOWN OR UNDERWATER-** According to Zillow there are now over 15 million homeowners with mortgage balances greater than the value of their homes. The number is massive to us all but just what is it to homeownership in the US? Well based on 2001 figures that equates to about 12.6 %. However, with the housing boom since 2001 that numbers is down somewhat. But it gives you an idea. In presentation, as sensationally reported, it's tantamount to a complete housing collapse. But it's not. Many of those who are "upside down" don't intend to move and are making their payments. So, the loss is purely academic with no actually economic impact. Once again, the media found a means to ruin everyone's day by announcing this horrendous scenario.

**BUY—SELL-DO NOTHING-** This past week I spoke with a woman who is the caretaker for her father and aunt. Due to a construction problem with her father's house, she is facing moving him and her aunt to another house. A very pleasant upbeat lady, her attitude is "I know house prices are down, but that means they're down for the new living quarters I'll be considering for them." She's right. The perception that property owners today are selling for less than their property is worth are wrong. They're selling them for what they are valued now. If one must sell, presuming they are

upside down. They will buy equal or better housing for a price commensurate for their new dwelling and there is no loss. So, it's a fair trade. You get less and you pay less. There is parity when it comes to housing on a given day. And, please remember what goes up must come down, as we've experienced over the past 18 months and the reverse is just as true. So, if no need to sell, don't. If you're "upside down" but can afford your mortgage, just sit tight and it'll be just fine in 2 or 3 years.

**TIME SHARES-** This is always a great topic. When you speak to people who have time shares they become very defensive. Right? Because they know they made a mistake. Time Shares are for those who are quite assured that they won't have an interruption in income or financial position. When you are in the times we recently experienced many people had that euphoric feeling and bought time shares. In bad times, many jeopardize other family or business needs because the time share represents their financial position and real estate savvy. To have to lose it is an indication of failure and likely even more importantly, a ding on their ego. I recall speaking with a very successful attorney who had a time-share near or at Disney World. When I asked him what he thought about having done that 8 years prior, he was counting the next 7 years of a 15 year term. His kids got tired of the same old thing each year and the hassle of switching for whatever weeks and the costs of doing that were just not worth it. If you want to go to Disney, go and stay on the property or nearby. Afford what you can at any given time and don't incur any on going debt for your earned R & R.

**EVERYONE NEEDS A LAUGH-** There are a good number of attorney jokes... nearly as many as blonde ones. There's a reason. Because the general consensus is they are parasites. NO!!!! Stop! I do not believe that. I have a great number of close friends who are attorneys. (Yup, that's the standard answer for a cover up). But I'm telling you the truth. The ones I know are terrific men and women who truly are honorable and damned bright.

That being said, here are some courtroom questioning that will make you smile.

A= Attorney..... W= Witness

A Your youngest son, the 21 year old. How old is he?

A Were you present when your picture was taken?

A How was your 1st marriage terminated?

W By Death

A And by whose death?

W Take a wild guess!

A How many of your autopsies have been performed on dead people?

W Counselor, think about that question before I answer!

A What gear were you in at the time of impact?

W Gucci sweats and Reeboks

*Ladies and gentlemen. Have a safe and beautiful holiday season. May you find peace and love in your celebrations.*