



**OBSERVATIONS FROM THE DESK OF
ALICE OLDFORD**
(908) 310-1335 aoldford@yahoo.com
Www.alice.oldford.com



Need a referral? Please give me a call.

**In the Spring, I have counted 136 kinds of weather
in 24 hours.**

Mark Twain

Annual Hot Home Buying Season

Supply and demand kicks in now. My experience in Florida is would be purchasers browse the inventory early in the season and make a buying decision end of the season. It's time for sellers to spruce up, reduce clutter and repair. Consult your Realtor early on in the process. Do your own walk through to see what needs attention. Your roof can be a selling feature or a show stopper. The typical lifetime of a roof is 15—17 years. Do what needs to be done and price according to the market. If you are a buyer, be aware inventory is low and prices are rising, a seller's market. Target your search area and get a mortgage pre-approval. Consult your Realtor early in the process, then be prepared to move quickly, exceed the asking price and be flexible.



Online Mortgages + Access to Credit Scores

More lenders, currently including Wells Fargo and Guaranteed Rate, now provide digital portals for borrowers to apply for a loan, submit documentation and track the process online.



FICO scores — lenders want to know, not to mention credit card and insurance companies, even utility companies. Do you know your score? FICO estimates that only half of Americans know. Big banks and credit card companies are increasingly offering their customers free access to their FICO score. An attorney with National Consumer Law Center says “This is a piece of information that grades you and judges your ability to borrow, and because it is so crucial, you should be entitled to have it.”

Buyer Compromises

Although a wish list is important, buyers may find compromise in price, location, size/style/upgrades critical to their success in finding a home.

- **Location.** Is the commute reasonable?
- **Yard size.** Do you need room for a swing set, or is a pool a must have?
- **Architecture.** How critical are aesthetics?

Single Women a Growing Market Force

Single women are the second largest segment of homebuyers behind married couples, accounting for 15% of all homebuyers.

Home Flipping a Hot Trend in Florida



According to Realty Trac, “As confidence in the housing recovery spreads, more real estate investors and would-be investors, including smaller investors, are hopping on the home flipping bandwagon.” Miami had the most homes flipped last year in the US.

Where are the nation's second homes?

Arizona is No. 1, but six counties in Florida rank in the top ten. East Coast — Palm Beach, Broward and Miami-Dade Counties. West Coast — Pinellas, Lee and Collier Counties. You will find lots of company so come on down.

Signs of a Bad Moving Company

Buyers beware if:



1. The price is significantly lower than competitors. Be wary of non-binding estimates. The quote may be lower at first, but some folks discover a much higher price on moving day.
2. The required deposit is high. \$100 is reasonable. If a mover asks for 25% or more, don't pay it.
3. There is very little information about the company. Ask for Department of Transportation registration number.

Not a Housing Bubble



Although homes prices are rising 3 to 4 times faster than wages and credit conditions are loosening, Lawrence Yun, chief economist for the National Association of Realtors, says we are not duplicating conditions as in the recent housing bubble.

- * Mortgage credit approval scores today range from 740 to 750 rather than 710 to 720 as in the housing crisis.
- * No doc requirements for subprime mortgages are nearly non existent.
- * Limited inventory. Yun contends a limited inventory is mostly behind the latest home-price increases.

According to Yun, “We are not in a housing market bubble in terms of an inevitable impending home price crash.”

★
HAPPY
PASSOVER