



**OBSERVATIONS FROM THE DESK OF
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Need a referral? Please give me a call.



Your success and happiness lies in you. Resolve to keep happy, and your joy and you shall form an invincible host against difficulties.

Helen Keller

A golden window?

Are you nearing retirement and looking to bolster your nest egg? 2017 offers a great opportunity to sell your large home and downsize. There is strong demand for the larger home. That said, expect lots of competition for a smaller, less expensive replacement. Do check out the marketplace before you jump in. Limited inventory will continue to pose a challenge in 2017.



Focus on Seniors

In the coming decade the senior population is expected to explode as baby boomers retire. In Florida by 2030 the estimated number of people 65 and over will have increased about 80% since the 2010 census. Wow. That represents an opportunity for business owners servicing the senior population—health care providers, restaurants, cleaning services and lawn maintenance. Retirees are ready to relax.

Interest rate projections

Mortgage rates have been on the rise since the election reflecting a stronger US economic outlook and expectations of higher inflation. Pre-election the consensus of economists was for two Fed rate increases in 2017. Now they are leaning toward 3 or 4 increases. Jonathan Smoke, realtor.com’s chief economist, advises “If you intend to buy in 2017 and finance the purchase with a mortgage, acting sooner rather than later will cost you less.”



Lakefront living in Lake Placid Florida

Comes with a cute cottage + 2 car garage for \$99,900

Fix and Flip?

A leap of faith and a vision. Here are some guidelines:

- Don't bite off more than you can chew. Do you have the skills or will you have to hire the work done? What is your budget for fixing?
- Overlook cosmetics. Check out the bones and architectural integrity.
- Seek expert advice. It may actually save you money.
- Save money by doing some work yourself. Stick to the basics.
- Recognize that not everything must be completely redone. Sometimes a coat of paint is all that's needed to transform a space.
- Consider what a buyer wants. You want a buyer to envision moving right in.

Good luck with the project.

Coming Soon —Smaller, cheaper drones

Drones were a popular gift item this season.

If you're in the market, check out the Mavic produced by No. 1 drone manufacturer DJI. This is its first "personal" drone. DJI touts it as small enough to "toss in a bag" and easy to fly controller with a smartphone app, which can stream live video to Facebook.

FAA rules apply requiring consumers to register their drones, and in some cases, get licensed by the FAA for commercial use.



Solar Energy in Florida



As many of you know the proposed constitutional amendment regarding solar energy was defeated in November. It seems to me, particularly in the sunshine state, it makes sense to embrace solar power. Ray Johnson, president of Florida Solar One contends "The industry is evolving almost as rapidly as cell phones these days. Solar panels are priced at an all-time low and are now 500% cheaper than they were 8 years ago." The Federal government extended a 30% tax credit for solar installations through 2019.

That said, there are challenges that need to be addressed, including the cost of ownership of solar systems. Stay tuned.