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It's odd how the Pacific Northwest Coast has a "tail of the dog" pattern in real estate sales...you know: last down & last up.

The real estate market in many other regions in North America is showing a strong recovery. This began in 2012, unexpectedly & strongly. Yes, it began in entry level residential, but it has now segued into the upper tier priced residential options in many areas.

Yes, the buyer is still in control in the upper level pricings category...not so much in the entry level residential segment. In some regions, there are multiple offer situations, price solidity & even price uptick, as inventory thins. Pricing is always driven by supply & demand. As sales remove upper tier priced properties from the market, we will see price solidity there, too.

What is driving the demand? Perhaps a recognition that the value of cash is negligible? Hard assets can become a vehicle to preserve capital.

Along with that, there is a sense that our long accepted world is imploding...change is the mantra of our post-Internet time...perhaps a purchase in a discretionary/resort based/secondary home environment might be seen as a safe haven investment?

On the Pacific Northwest Coast, outside of the city/primary residence markets (Vancouver & core Victoria), it's been a very slow uptick...the secondary home/discretionary marketplace follows its own rhythm. It has been very flat for past 5 to 6 years. So important to look down the highway & not in the rear-view mirror. Shift happens fast!

While undeveloped land, commercial/business options, & very high-end residential properties remain fairly flat, there are whispers of uptick.

It may be that this Fall Market will be the end of the buyers market pattern in our kind of coastal market. This secondary home/discretionary marketplace includes all Gulf Islands, all of Vancouver Island outside of core Victoria, & the Sunshine Coast. These regions are about choice...not necessity.

However, a seeking of a safe haven is a powerful motivator to action (action has been lacking in the past 5 to 6 years, in all secondary home markets...Spain, Aspen, Salt Spring Island, Palm Desert, Hawaii, Turkey, Tahoe, etc...now, potential buyers appear to be seeking out those slightly apart enclave areas...a pleasing lifestyle but not visibly so)...hmmm...describes Salt Spring & the Gulf Islands very well!

I have often thought of the Gulf Islands, including Salt Spring Island, as the castle...the moat is the sea...the drawbridge is the ferry access. All the amenities/services required for a pleasing 21st Century lifestyle, with that yesteryear apartness, are all certainly available on Salt Spring Island.

Plus, a temperate climate that encourages vineyards, olive groves, orchards, that 10k locavore experience...one can be self-sufficient here.

It is, post-Internet, an international buyer profile on the Gulf Islands/on Salt Spring Island. Time is a component in all sales. Time to discover, time to ponder & to compare, time to choose. It can take one to three years to sell any Gulf Island property, in a "normal" market...in a suppressed market, perhaps five to seven years. No one "has to" buy a Salt Spring Island or Gulf Islands property...it's always by choice & so is beyond market statistics, in a way. Days on market are irrelevant in a discretionary region...price reductions to generate action don't work...a buyer has to feel the confidence that it's time to act. In a downmarket economy, discretionary purchases can be put on hold. That pretty well describes the past 5 years!

There are cycles in all markets, and we may be heading into year 9 of a 10 year cycle. We should experience a market uptick in pricings, then, quite naturally, & of a significant nature, as sales build.

On top of that, we have the societal shifts wrought by the Internet, and we also have the continuing repercussions of the economic meltdowns of late 2008. Preservation of capital is on everyone's mind. Physical safety is a concern. Is it possible to be slightly apart & also to be self-sufficient?

All of this uncertainty may be the key driver back to real estate investments in secondary home markets...a flight to safety, both physical & economic.

Call me about the advantages to an investment in Salt Spring & Gulf Islands & Vancouver Island properties (Vancouver Island is perhaps just the largest of the Gulf Islands). I look forward to sharing statistics with you, & to discussing the slow forward momentum in real estate sales in this particular coastal marketplace.

How may I help you to discover your special property on Salt Spring Island and the Gulf Islands?

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