

Thanksgiving's Here, and We at Golden Real Estate Are Thankful

Some weeks I struggle to come up with a topic for this column, but not so this week. Allow me to share some of the ways in which our broker associates, my wife and I are all thankful.

First, Rita and I are so thankful to be Americans. In school I studied many languages — French, Russian, Latin, Greek, German and Japanese — and I have traveled extensively around the world, although not so much recently. I attended my sister's wedding in Sweden, attended "citizen diplomacy" conferences in the Soviet Union, and visited Beijing right after the 1989 Tiananmen massacre (and twice since).

I have visited and marveled at Japan and its culture more than once. I visited the Russian port of Vladivostok (the terminus of the Trans-Siberian Railway) on the 50th anniversary of the end of World War II in the Pacific. I remember noting that pay phones there were free because Russian coins were essentially worthless due to inflation, and that most of the cars on the road were right-hand drive Toyotas and Nissans purchased used from nearby Japan.

Rita and I particularly like France and Italy and long to return there again soon. We enjoyed a week in London following a two-week Atlantic crossing on Cunard's Queen Victoria with stops in Bermuda and the Canary Islands. When and if I retire from real estate, we look forward to more international travel.

Every trip is great, but we are

always happy to be back in America and especially in Colorado. We are, as I said, thankful most of all to be Americans — and Coloradans.

Part of being an American is the opportunity to participate in our capitalist free enterprise system. I've always been an entrepreneur. I like to say that, except for my stints at the Washington Post and the New York Post, every paycheck I've ever received was signed by me. I remember when I visited the Soviet Union in 1978 learning that Russians could be self employed but only the state could have employees. I realized then that the freedom of enterprise was the core freedom I value most.

Nearly every real estate agent is self-employed, even if they work for a brokerage. I suspect that 95% or more of all Realtors are independent contractors (1099 workers) responsible for their own taxes and expenses (phones, cars, computers, software, etc.) and receive no benefits of any kind. The dropout rate among new agents is as high as 90% and those who make it five or more years have demonstrated a fortitude that deserves respect. I am thankful for Golden Real Estate's seven top-producing, highly-experienced broker associates *whose cell numbers I am pleased to list below.*

Next I am thankful for the readers and other members of the public who recognize that we are professionals, not just entrepreneurs, and that we earn what we charge by providing an invaluable service for one of life's most significant finan-

cial transactions. Not everyone sees our value or respects what we provide, so we thank you.

Not every licensed real estate agent is a Realtor — that is, a member of the Realtor association. Everyone who joins a Realtor brokerage like ours must join the Realtor association and pay Realtor dues, which run about \$500 per year. But there are non-Realtor brokerages such as HomeSmart Cherry Creek Properties, Redefy, and Trelora Colorado, whose agents don't pay Realtor dues and don't have to abide by the Realtor Code of Ethics. I'm thankful for all those firms, like ours, that have chosen to be Realtor brokerages.

Why? Because the National Association of Realtors (NAR) lobbies for *your* property rights, not just the interests of its members. For example, when the Trump administration tried to dilute the capital gains exemption for home owners (\$250,000 single and \$500,000 married), it was NAR which lobbied successfully against that change. I could cite countless other examples where NAR's lobbying efforts have benefited home owners *and* all those agents who don't pay NAR dues. To me it's a matter of professional and corporate responsibility to support NAR with our dues. So, yes, I am thankful for NAR, even when I gripe about dues increases!

Like everyone in our profession, I have individual clients — buyers and sellers — for whose friendship and patronage I am grateful. You know who you are! You have not only granted me the opportunity to be of service, but you have allowed me to learn new things from every transaction. Perhaps you have introduced me to a new service provider such as an estate sales company, a roofer or plumber, or just a great new restaurant! As I have said many times, judge us agents not by our years in the business but by the number of transactions we have

completed, because that's our most valuable continuing education program.

I'm also thankful for my colleagues from other brokerages. Real estate is different from many other professions because of the tradition of "cooperation and compensation" embodied in our shared multi-list service, aka "MLS." Some people compare us to car salesmen, but consider the following scenario: You go to a Ford dealership and describe what you're looking for. The salesman realizes that the right vehicle for you is not a Ford but another brand, so he shows you other cars on his computer and then takes you to those dealerships for a test drive, knowing that he can write the purchase contract and get paid for selling you another dealer's car just as he can get paid for selling a car from his own dealership. That's how real estate works, made possible by the MLS.

You'd be impressed to see how agents share the keys to their success with each other. I recall once when I made a presentation at a Realtor meeting on how to shoot and edit video tours of listings, happy to have others do videos for their listings, even though video tours are a point of differentiation for us at Golden Real Estate.

So I'm thankful for how the real estate business works and for the many Realtors whom I consider friends, not just competitors. If I or one of my Golden Real Estate broker associates is not the perfect agent for a given buyer or seller, I don't hesitate to recommend one of them.

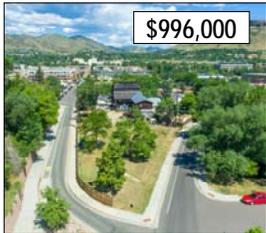
Lastly, I'm thankful for the Denver Post and four Jefferson County weekly newspapers which publish this column. Remember, you can also receive it by email, so just send me an email with your request. Several years of prior columns are online at JimSmithColumns.com.

REAL ESTATE TODAY



By JIM SMITH, Realtor®

Development Opportunity in Downtown Golden



\$996,000

This 0.46-acre parcel at **623 14th Street** in downtown Golden is a great development opportunity, whether or not you scrape the historic 2-story, 1,940-sq.-ft. building on the corner (barely visible through the trees in this aerial photograph). There are 2 lots to this listing — a rectangular lot with that 1867 building (zoned commercial), and a triangular lot behind it. The vacant lot has a wind turbine and an electric vehicle charging station on it. This property has a storied history in the development of renewable energy and would make a great renewable energy sustainability plaza, but the buyer is free to develop it as he sees fit. What is required is to maintain access via easement to the garage and carport of the adjoining property. Visit www.HistoricGoldenHome.com to view a narrated video tour and drone video, then call **Jim Smith** at **303-525-1851** for more details and to arrange a private showing.



Celebrating Over 12 Years' Service at 17695 S. Golden Road, Golden 80401 Like us on Facebook and Instagram. See our listings at www.GREListings.com

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