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## Celebrate Songkran

### Ring In the New Year ... Thai Style!

Around the world, different cultures ring in the new year in their own unique ways. The first day of the new year is traditionally a day of celebration and ritual. Thailand is no exception. The Southeast Asian country celebrates the arrival of the new year on April 13 with a three-day-long festival known as Songkran.

Songkran is a celebration of transformation. The word Songkran stems from the Sanskrit word *samkrānti*, which translates to "astrological passage." It conveys the idea of change and rejuvenation — and the Songkran festival is all about rejuvenation.

Throughout Thailand, you'll find countless celebrations. Some people mark the occasion by making trips to their local temples to offer food to the Buddhist monks. Others pour water over statues of Buddha. Many of the country's younger people pour water over the hands of their elders as a sign of respect and reverence. After all, elders are highly valued in Thailand.

No matter where you go in Thailand, you'll find one very common theme among the different celebrations: water. The holiday has come to be known for its *huge* water fights. In the cities, entire streets and blocks are

closed off so massive crowds of people can gather to spray one another with water. Revelers load up on water balloons, gather their water guns, or reach for their trusty buckets.

While all of this splashing around may seem like rambunctious fun, it has a much deeper meaning for the Thai people. Water represents a cleansing of bad luck and sins. It's a purification for the soul and a way for people to renew themselves for the year to come.

You'll find other drier traditions associated with Songkran as well. Cities around the country hold parades with floats and light displays. Many of the parades culminate in the crowning of a Miss Songkran. In central Thailand, people clean their homes in a ritual similar to spring cleaning in the U.S., and in southern Thailand, people put work aside for relaxations — all while they avoid spending money during the holiday.



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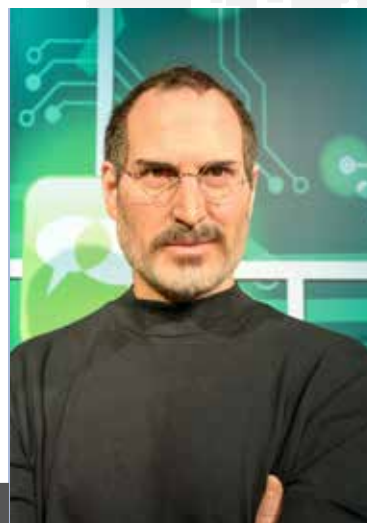
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## .REAL ESTATE INSIDER.

APRIL 2017

POWERFUL REAL ESTATE TIPS & STRATEGIES YOU CAN USE

### Admitting A Mistake Is Just Admitting You're Smarter Now



"Sometimes when you innovate, you make mistakes. It is best to admit them quickly, and get on with improving your other innovations."

— Steve Jobs

## I'm Starting A New Real Estate Fund!

Stay Tuned For Details

We're all human, and therefore fallible. Nevertheless, people are exceedingly reluctant to admit to making mistakes. Pride and fear of looking bad or losing face often prevent us from admitting our screw-ups, even though the most successful among us have usually experienced more failures than everybody else. Henry Ford famously said that "failure is the opportunity to begin again, more intelligently."

Glossing over mistakes or making excuses for errors we've made is self-destructive. When we run from or try to hide the mistakes we've made, deep down it undermines our personal confidence, which is the foundation upon which success is built. Most people focus way too much time trying to promote their strengths and not nearly enough time trying to understand how and why they fail. The truth is that you can't get better and improve unless you acknowledge your failures and shortcomings. You also can't be an effective leader unless you hold yourself accountable first, which necessitates owning up to personal blunders. Poor decisions teach us valuable lessons and give us perspective. When we admit a mistake, it may seem like we're taking a step backward, but in reality, all we're really doing is admitting that we're smarter and wiser.

Onward and upward!

#### Want to Learn My Most Profitable Real Estate Investing Techniques?

If you're coachable, open to instruction, and will take what I share and put it into action immediately, complete the application by visiting [tinyurl.com/glcoachingapplication](http://tinyurl.com/glcoachingapplication).

After you complete the application, here's what will happen:

I will personally review your application to make sure you're a good fit for one of my programs.

If your application passes, then either I or someone from my office will call or email you to set up a one-on-one interview and strategy session with me.

*Gerald Lucas*

GERALD LUCAS  
Real Estate Expert & Best-Selling Author



# Singing the Tax Season Blues

## Put Your Time to Better Use



Tax time, in all its stressful, costly glory, is here. You're either just now scrambling to collect all that pesky paperwork scattered throughout drawers, emails, and envelopes, or you've already done that, you've filed, and you're coolly surveying the commotion of your peers. Either way, taxes aren't exactly a fun way to pass the time.

Apparently, though, that doesn't stop us all from spending a huge amount of time on them each year. According to The Motley Fool, the average American non-business filer spends *eight hours* filing their taxes.

That's three hours of record keeping, three hours of filling out forms, and one hour of tax planning.

Unless you're an accountant — or one of those strange people who just likes numbers — that's way too much time spent checking boxes, comparing this form to that form, and digging through stacks of papers. So, how do we shrink those agonizing eight hours down to a more reasonable time frame next year?

The most vital tip to save time on your taxes is probably obvious, but it's worth stressing: Organize your documents in advance. The best way to waste a huge swathe of time is to sort through shoeboxes crammed with receipts. Not! Instead, sort receipts as you get them. It doesn't have to be this big elaborate organizational framework, either. Separate your receipts into labelled

envelopes that say "charity" or "business deductions." Separate other, similar types of documents into groups or folders. Get strict about keeping *all* tax documents you get in one location. Mark them on a checklist so you know exactly which papers you have already, and which forms you still need.

By the way, are you still filing by hand? You may want to step into the 21st century and try out an electronic filing program, like TurboTax. Sure it costs money, but when you consider that less than 1 percent of electronic returns have errors, compared to 20 percent of paper returns, you can see it's clearly worth it. Not only that, but these reputable e-filing services have libraries of all the documents you need, with clear instructions on how to fill them in — something that could save you a good chunk of time.

## ASK GERALD a Real Estate Question

**Q:** Gerald, I'm trying to stay on top of the real estate market. How do I know when prices will start moving in the other direction?

— Stan, Utica, NY

**A:** Good question, Stan. You are correct to monitor your local real estate market so you can stay ahead of the game and ahead of your competition. I'm going to give you three indicators that telegraph a possible inflection point resulting in real estate price changes:

1. Housing Inventory Levels. Home sale activity is the best leading indicator of real estate price trends. This is because buyers create the demand for housing that is directly linked with price movement. Housing inventory levels (number of months required to sell the homes for sale in a market)

2. Building Permits. Real estate construction plays such a big role in our overall economy, and because homebuilders have to be keenly aware of housing demand, building permits are an important indicator to track as a way to determine real estate price changes. When building permits go up, prices tend to go up, and vice versa.

3. Mortgage Loan Defaults. These occur when a homeowner doesn't make a mortgage payment for a certain period of time — typically 3–4 months depending on where you are in the U.S. Normally, when mortgage loan defaults are increasing, real estate prices tend to decline, and vice versa.

demonstrate relative supply and demand. Six months of inventory tends to be a tipping point — less than six months of inventory suggests prices will rise, and above six months of housing inventory suggests that prices may fall.

For more real estate tips and information, visit my blog at [geraldlucas.com](http://geraldlucas.com).



## Virtual Reality Is Really Here What VR in 2017 Looks Like

One of the biggest tech stories to come out of 2016 was the emergence of virtual reality technology. Microsoft took the tech world by storm when it announced a line of VR headsets with built-in tracking sensors, starting at the remarkably affordable price of \$299.

The coolest part about this particular virtual reality option is its "six degrees of freedom" tracking. In many cases, virtual reality is just the 360-degree panorama. But with six degrees of freedom, the tracking system can also see when you're moving through space! That's the main difference between the pricey VR options like Oculus Rift and the cheap entries.

These headsets are designed to work with a Windows 10 computer, which makes this technology accessible to millions of potential users who may not have a specialized platform like a game console.

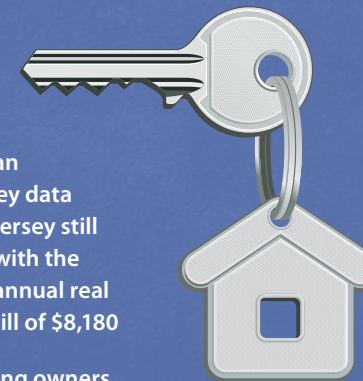
Competition is heating up among the major players in virtual reality, which is great for consumers and tech enthusiasts. Along with virtual reality, augmented reality is continuing to develop, and these technologies are predicted to make up a combined \$150 billion market by 2020. Not only will AR and VR transform entertainment, but they'll also have a dramatic effect on fields like health care, education, sports, and tourism.



Expect to see virtual reality truly enter the mainstream this year. Looking back, 2016 was the first year where virtual reality systems were widely available for consumers to purchase, as well as for developers and content creators to work with. If virtual reality is today's television revolution, we've just hit the era of full color.

Get ready to experience the sights in faraway places, socialize in a virtual space, play immersive games, complete job training in private, and so much more!

## Real Estate Insights



- The 2015 American Community Survey data shows that New Jersey still leads the nation with the highest average annual real estate tax (RET) bill of \$8,180
- Apartment building owners are recently facing higher rates on loans
- N.J. Airbnb hosts earned over \$50 million in 2016
- U.S. apartment rents rose 3.8 percent in 2016, a significant drop from the recent high of 5.6 percent year-over-year growth in 2015



1. Get at least three different contractor estimates on any real estate renovation projects you are considering taking on. Make sure each estimate is for exactly the same scope of work so you can make an apples-to-apples comparison.
2. Pay for property renovation projects by the job, not by the hour. When you pay by the hour, it normally takes more time and costs you more money.
3. Buy property that is consistent with other property in the neighborhood. It's smarter to buy the cheapest rather than the most expensive house in an acceptable neighborhood — this increases the odds that your property value will increase and often makes it easier for you to sell.
4. Put money aside for property maintenance. Two pricey items to focus on for property maintenance are your roof and your heating and cooling systems.