

*“Christmas is not a time nor a season, but a state of mind.”*  
- Calvin Coolidge

## Contents

Market Update

Term of the Month

Christmas Hosting Tips

December Events

The Pros & Cons of Buying a Home in an HOA

North Idaho Trivia

Where Am I? Photo Contest

Merry Christmas! For the next three weeks, the days will be getting shorter. Here in North Idaho, the sun sets before 4pm. It can be hard. We humans thrive in the light. But there’s cause for rejoicing as “The light shines in the darkness and the darkness has not overcome it.” (John 1:5). BANG! Come the winter solstice, the light will return, and the days will grow longer. Regardless of the historical accuracy of the date Christ was born, it is fitting that we celebrate it around this time for it was the day that His Light came into the world.

Christmas is a time of hope, peace, joy, and love and I wish you all of it however you choose to celebrate this season with family and friends.



“The Nativity”  
Gari Melchers (1891)

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**THE INCOMPLETE GUIDE  
TO BUYING AND  
SELLING YOUR HOME**



Mark Griswold, ABR, SRS, CNE

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## Market Update

With the election now behind us and the beginning of the Trump administration coming, economist have begun looking toward what the market will be like in 2025.

At a national Realtor gathering last week, chief NAR economist Lawrence Yun stated that, while the last two years have been tough, the worst may be over. He expects more home sales and lower interest rates. However, the change will be gradual and moderate with rates probably falling by only around half a percent to the low-6s.

With job numbers and stock market gains improving, people are ready to act. He projects the number of existing home sales to rise by 9% and new home sales by 11% and a housing price increase of up to 2%, which is less than the historical yearly average, but not the “bubble bursting” that some have been thinking will happen since at least 2019.

The Fed also made its second rate cut of the year last week and is anticipated to make an additional four cuts in 2025. While mortgage rates aren’t directly tied to the Federal Funds Rate, they are impacted by it.

Policy-wise, if Trump’s “Department of Government Efficiency” can cut government spending even a fraction of what he is call for, that could positively affect the budget deficit and, in turn, the economy. A reduction in housing regulations and energy costs could also positively impact the market.

Locally, statistics for November show the median sales price in Kootenai County up 0.2% year over year to \$526,066 and units sold increased by 11.8%. Inventory is up 5.8% year over year but down 10.8% from October. There are currently 905 active residential listing and average days on market are 95, up 6.7% from last year.

If you want an estimate of what your home is worth, contact me today.

## Real Estate Term of the Month

**Easement** - The right to the use of, or access to, land owned by another. The most common type of easement is for utilities, granting a utility company the right to maintain its infrastructure like water or electrical lines that might run through your property. Other types of easements may grant a neighbor the right to a driveway through your property. A neighbor may even have the rights to the air above your house so as to prevent you from blocking his view.

## Christmas Hosting Tips

Are you hosting a Christmas party or out of town guests and want to ensure it doesn't turn into a Griswold Family Christmas? Here are some tips for a stress-free (or at least stress reduced) event.

- Cook ahead. If this season is full of back-to-back potlucks, evenings filled with caroling, or just the day to day grind of coming home from work tired, prepping meals beforehand will save you time when you're down to the wire.
- Leave a welcome note. If you're hosting out of town guests and want to make sure they're able to function on their own to some extent, leave instructions on how to work the TV, Wi-Fi password, and suggestions on local activities for when you're not available to play tour guide.
- Hack a guest room. If you don't have a designated guest bedroom, you can turn the family room or office into something inviting by investing in a good inflatable mattress and a folding screen to create privacy. Then clean up any clutter and set out something they can use as a nightstand. Remind younger children not to bother guests who may be sleeping in.
- Want to class things up for the dinner feast but not break the bank? You can still skip the paper plates and napkins. Consider renting plates and other necessities. It's cheaper than you think, and they'll even take care of the washing. You might also consider checking out thrift stores and going for an eclectic mismatched them.
- Host your holiday party at a local coffee shop. They are typically closed in the evening but may host your event and cater it with some simple yet festive appetizers. This saves you the stress of cleaning up your home both before and after.
- Don't stress and don't be afraid to ask for help! This is supposed to be a time of joy and friendship. True friends won't care that your home and dinner table don't look like the cover of House Beautiful. They'll just be glad to see you.

## December Events

**Scouts Troop 3 Tree Lot** – If you haven't picked out your Christmas tree yet, there's still time. My son's Troop is selling trees now through the weekend before Christmas in the northeast parking lot of Silver Lake Mall. All profits fund Troop activities like summer camp and other supplies. Open 4-7 during the week and 10-7 on weekends.

**CDA on Ice** – Celebrate the season with ice skating in McEuen Park. The ice rink rents skates, sells refreshments, has igloos and is available for private parties. November 15 to January 20. Tickets available at [cdaonice.com](http://cdaonice.com).

**Journey to the North Pole Cruises** – Marvel at the lights display along the world's longest floating boardwalk before setting sail for the North Pole where Santa will show off his jet-powered sleigh and read out the names of those on his "nice list". November 15 to January 1. Tickets available at [cdacruises.com/journey-to-the-north-pole](http://cdacruises.com/journey-to-the-north-pole).

**Eagle Watching Cruises** – Watch bald eagles as they feed on salmon and perch in the trees surrounding Lake Coeur d'Alene. Cruises November 23 to January 5. Tickets available at [cdacruises.com/eagle-watching](http://cdacruises.com/eagle-watching).

**Elf on the Shelf Scavenger Hunt** – Santa's Elves will be hiding out in several shops around Downtown Coeur d'Alene. Keep your eyes peeled while shopping every weekend between November 29 and December 22 and you could win a prize! More information at [cdadowntown.com/cda-events/elf-on-a-shelf](http://cdadowntown.com/cda-events/elf-on-a-shelf).

**New Year's Grand Celebration** – Come ring in the 2025 in downtown Coeur d'Alene with a fireworks show at midnight!

**11<sup>th</sup> Day of Christmas Party** – I'm hosting an 11<sup>th</sup> Day of Christmas (January 4) Party. Email me for location.



## The Pros & Cons of Buying a Home in an HOA

There is a plethora of HOAs in the Coeur d'Alene area due to the slew of planned developments that have occurred here in the last 30 years and especially in the last ten. Most of these HOAs are fairly minimal when it comes to their dues (typically about \$300-\$350 per year) and their Covenants, Conditions & Restrictions (CC&Rs), which typically only restrict you from painting your home certain colors, from parking an RV or boat in your driveway for more than a few days at a time, and making sure your front yard doesn't look like a jungle. The HOA dues typically pay for things like common area maintenance (watering and mowing community green spaces). All these things can help maintain the feel of the neighborhood and your property value. Still, they're not for everyone and there have been some pretty egregious horror stories of HOA boards running amok. Here are some things to consider when buying a home in an HOA.

### Pros:

- CC&Rs mean that the overall look of a neighborhood will be maintained. We all remember that house that had a few cars in various states of repair sitting out front along with a bunch of trash, or several animals that turned the yard into a dirty mess. That bothers a lot of people and even if it doesn't bother you, when it comes time to resell your home, the price will be impacted by what's around it.
- Some HOAs will provide lawn care and snow removal from your sidewalk and even your driveway. These come with higher dues, but they can be worth it if it's something you can't or don't want to take care of.
- North Idaho is pretty safe, but some people like the added security that some HOAs inside a gated community provide.

### Cons:

- HOA fees, like property taxes here in Idaho, aren't static. My dues have risen about \$50 a year since buying four years ago. It's not a lot but it's something to be aware of. [Continue reading on the website...](#)

## North Idaho Trivia

Idaho is officially known as the Gem State and the state gem is the star garnet, which is only found in Garnet Creek, North Idaho and in India.



## Where am I?

Be the first to email me with the correct answer and win a gift card to Lyfe Coffee (or the establishment of your choice). Hint: It's not the tallest Christmas tree in America, but it's definitely up there.



*The greatest compliment you can give is referring me to those you know who are looking to buy or sell a home.*

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