

A photograph of Tom Brezsny, a man with grey hair, wearing a white button-down shirt and blue jeans, sitting on concrete steps. He is smiling and has his hand near his face.

Tom Brezsny's

Real Estate of Mind

Provoking thought since 1990

Phew! Looks like I survived another dark night of the soul, wrestling with my inner demons through all the frightful triple witching hours. As always, those of us living here on the reservation in Santa Cruz, embrace Halloween with a particular passion.

I put my game face on just before dark and headed out to the big real estate Halloween party that most people don't even know about. ***Think Burning Man – but just for Realtors.*** It always ends at midnight when they crank up the David Byrne song and torch a giant effigy of a suburban tract house.

It started sixteen years ago, in the dark days of the **Great Recession**, when fear was running rampant and it really felt like real estate was going to hell. I'll never forget that first one... It was held on a spooky dystopian cul-de-sac filled with foreclosures, boarded-up windows and darkened doorways that looked like the missing teeth and vacant stares of hollowed-out pumpkins.

Cobwebs hung like spanish moss from For Sale signs tilted at odd angles. Buzzards circled homes in default – marking them as easy prey for all the scary land sharks prowling the neighborhood. Crazy conga lines of buyers were snaking through the streets while loan brokers in *Irrational Exuberance* (Alan Greenspan) masks were handing out Nestle “Credit” Crunch Bars and Real Estate “Bubble” Gum.

Someone disguised as *Naked Greed* was streaking through the crowd chased by another character dressed in a skimpy *Real Estate Rally Thong*. There were *Monster Houses* milling around and a roaming chorus of fearful gremlins whispering negative thoughts into people's ears with high-pitched, banshee-like voices.

I saw a couple of *Blind Appraisers* searching for comps, groups of *Swarming Termites*, sellers dressed up like *Statues of St Joseph* and Underwriters morphing into Undertakers declaring that the word “mortgage” originates from the French word for “*death tax*.”

Prophets of Doom and Gloom roamed the cul-de-sac chased by *Zombie Buyers*, while a growing *Legion of Unsolds* hid inside their houses. The *American Dream was dressed in a black robe, carrying a scythe* while *The Grinch That Stole the Economy* lugged a bag full of *Credit Default Swaps* and someone else was dressed like a Doctor trying to find *the market's pulse!*

A few people came as *Toxic Assets* and the *Gordon Gekko* mask made a big comeback. Freddie Kruger also put in a guest appearance touting his new movie - “*Nightmare on Main Street*” but he was almost eclipsed by a giant swathe of darkness called the *Shadow Inventory*.

Wow. What a party. Say what you want about real estate...**we do fear well.** There are always plenty of lost souls out there wandering around with grave faces on. Gives me goosebumps just to think about it!