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REAL ESTATE - Home prices have appreciated +41.7% over the last 5 years (12/31/10 to 12/31/15) in the Pacific states, double the +22.9% growth experienced nationwide (source: Federal Housing Finance Agency).

MAESTRO - Former Fed Chairman Alan Greenspan turns 90 years old next Sunday (3/06/16). He studied the clarinet at the Juilliard School of Music in NYC for 2 years in the 1940s (source: Biography.com).

CLOSE - Denny Hamlin finished a half-foot in front of Martin Truex to win the Daytona 500 on Sunday 2/21/16, i.e., a winning margin of 6 inches in a 500-mile race. Hamlin is part of the Joe Gibbs Racing Team. Gibbs was the victorious coach in Super Bowls # 17, # 22 and # 26, all with the Washington Redskins (source: NASCAR).

For some time, “the luck of the Irish” has been associated with March 17th and four-leaf clovers. Most children have spent a sunny afternoon searching for that one special clover, perhaps to press between the pages of a favorite book and wish upon their whole lives through. But it’s not an easy task, given that there are about 10,000 three-leaf clovers for every natural four-leaf one!

So just how did the four-leaf clover become synonymous with Irish luck? Four-leaf clovers were apparently considered charms by the Celts, whose tribes occupied much of Europe as well as Ireland. The Celtic priests, or Druids, declared the four-leaf clover to be strong against dangerous spirits. These days, the leaves of a four-leaf clover are often said to stand for faith, hope, love ... and luck!

What is the difference between a clover and a shamrock? Well, it is the three-leaved “shamrock,” not “clover,” that’s an unofficial, though widely used, emblem of Ireland ... and of Boston, Massachusetts! But when you learn that Irish *seamróg* just means ‘young clover,’ the difference begins to seem just a choice of words.

In an 1893 paper, Irish botanist Nathaniel Colgan decided on the “true” shamrock, after growing samples sent to him from many Irish counties, especially those where Gaelic was still lively. Based on the majority of specimens, he picked *Trifolium repens*, the white or Dutch clover. (The Latin means ‘creeping three-leaf’.) However, that’s just one of several different plants now sold as “shamrocks” – and a lot of them grow better indoors than Colgan’s choice does.

Of course, you don’t have to be Irish to kick up your heels on St. Patrick’s Day, and you don’t need a four-leaf clover to be lucky. So please accept my wishes for good luck and a great day!



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