

# Don's Senior's News

Brought to you by: Don Zahnle  
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## Big Bang, Woolly Mammoths, and Warren Buffet: That's 2015

Wonder what 2015 holds? Well, wonder no longer. Future Timeline has done it for us. The website Future Timeline is part speculation, part exhaustive research. Its developers and contributors have analyzed everything from current trends to advances in medical care and technology, to the political and economic environment.

So what does Future Timeline say about 2015? Sadly, the global economic recovery will remain slow for at least four years to come; but happily, innovation continues. For example, a Swiss aircraft already in testing will become the first solar-powered, fixed-wing craft to circumnavigate the world, a journey that will take up to five months. Oh, and it's piloted.

Then there's the first self-regulating artificial heart; the release of Windows 10; and an explosion of LED lighting. 3D printing is coming to a home or office near you, and researchers will finally develop a better battery to satisfy our device-hungry society, an idea lent extra credence by last fall's purchase of Duracell by Warren Buffet's company, Berkshire Hathaway.

In 2015, physicists will try to reproduce the Big Bang (said to be the reason our universe exists) by running the Large Hadron Collider/the Big Bang machine at twice it's usual "speed."

And scientists will look to clone the woolly mammoth, now that there is sufficient blood and bone from a recently discovered skeleton of the Ice Age creature. His closest relative, the Asian elephant, awaits the development with enthusiasm. And there's lots more. Check out the future yourself. Or float an idea at <http://tinyurl.com/An-interesting-year>.

## Are You Searching for a New Home on line?

Now you can search Metro Atlanta listings in real time just as real estate agents do.

Due to recent changes in multiple listing service rules, I can now set you up with an account where you can search for properties just as I do. No more stale and out of date data like you get on the internet from web sites like Realtor.com, and Trulia.com.

Call or [email](mailto:donzahnle@gmail.com) me today to have me set up an account for you. It is **FREE** and takes only minutes for me to set it up.

## You Can Compete (and Maybe Win) vs. an All-Cash Offer

Depending on location and market dynamics, cash buyers (those not requiring a mortgage) currently account for a third of all home purchases, according to CoreLogic, a firm that tracks real-estate trends.

As a buyer who needs a mortgage to purchase a home, it will be tough for you to compete against an all-cash offer, particularly in a market where multiple offers abound. From a seller's perspective, an all-cash offer eliminates both hassle and risk, as do offers without appraisal or financial conditions, which, in a hot real estate market, can also reduce your chances of success. There are, however, some ways to make your offer more competitive. For example:

- Try to avoid multiple-offer situations
- Ask your agent to help you find off-market properties
- Consider waiving the financing contingency clause, which allows you to cancel the contract if you don't receive loan approval, or if an appraisal comes in below expected value
- Increase your down payment

According to a recent article in the *Wall Street Journal*, securing a pre-underwriting letter may make your offer more attractive. Unlike a pre-approval letter, this one has teeth. It contains deep income and asset documentation, which sellers like to see, as it means you are a serious buyer, plus it may move you through the approval process more quickly.

Many cash buyers are overly confident and therefore submit unrealistic, low-ball offers. So, while cash is worth a 2 percent to 3 percent discount, sellers annoyed by the low bid might just accept yours instead.

# Coincidences: Are They Other Worldly, or Just about Math?

Did Presidents Lincoln and Kennedy have an other-worldly connection, or was it all coincidence? The *Oxford English Dictionary* defines coincidence as “a remarkable concurrence of events or circumstances without apparent causal connection.” Well, how about this one described recently on CBS’ *Sunday Morning* program:

Lincoln and Kennedy were elected exactly 100 years apart and killed by men born 100 years apart. Lincoln died in Ford’s theatre; Kennedy rode to his death in a Ford Lincoln. Both Presidents were followed by Johnsons, born 100 years apart. CBS reporter Susan Spencer asked author SQuire [sic] Rushnell whether there “was something more to coincidence than just coincidence.”

Rushnell believes there is. He calls them Godwinks, “one of those little

coincidences that makes you say: ... ‘I wonder; is that coincidence evidence of divine origin?’” Not so, says science writer Matt Hutson: “There’s some research to suggest that a feeling of destiny can be good for you mentally . . . but . . . it’s not reality.” He says coincidences occur thanks to “the Law of Truly Large Numbers.”

That Law was explained in a recent *Forbes* article in which John Navin interviewed Professor David Hand, mathematician and author: “The law of truly large numbers . . . says that given enough opportunities, any strange thing is likely to happen. For example, if we go on tossing a coin long enough, we can essentially guarantee that at some point we’ll get 10 heads in a row.”

Incidentally, Lincoln’s secretary was named Kennedy, and Kennedy’s secretary was Evelyn Lincoln.

## Quick Quiz

Each month I’ll give you a new question.

Just email me at [donzahnle@gmail.com](mailto:donzahnle@gmail.com) for the answer.

What Romanian president banned Scrabble because he considered it a “subversive evil?”

## Why Not Pass Me to a Friend?

If you’ve enjoyed this newsletter and found its information useful, please pass it to a neighbor, friend or co-worker.

And if you have any comments about it, don’t forget to give me a call or send me an email!

## Are You Wondering How Much Your Home Is Worth?

Do you want to know how the price of your home has changed in today’s market? Do you want to know for how much other homes in your neighborhood are selling?

If you’re wondering what’s happening to prices in your area, or you’re thinking about selling your house, I can help.

Either call 404-939-1309 or [email](mailto:donzahnle@gmail.com) me for a no-obligation, professional evaluation.

I won’t pressure you into listing with me or waste your time. [Read about how I feel about pressure!](#) I’ll just give you the honest facts about your home and its value.

I’ll also give you the “inside scoop” on what’s happening in the housing market near where you live!

Call me at 404-939-1309 or email me at [donzahnle@gmail.com](mailto:donzahnle@gmail.com) and we will arrange a time to get together.

## Worth Reading

### 13 popular kitchen storage ideas and what they cost

By Karen Egly-Thompson  
*Houzz.com*

Few spaces create more joy – and frustration – than your kitchen. Ironic . . . as you spend so much time there. Organizing pots, pans, serving dishes, spices, utensils, and cookbooks can turn any domestic diva into a devil. But there’s hope. This article lists 13 items to keep the heart of your home organized.

**More:** <http://tinyurl.com/Love-your-kitchen>

### Sloths can be spotless, too

By Suzanne De Vita  
*RisMedia.com*

Have you resolved to clean better this year? The writer includes tricks to help you clean without expending much energy. Examples: Clean the shower with shower gel while you’re in it, or make the bed while you’re lying there. De Vita’s humorous piece reminds you you’re not alone in trying to avoid household chores. **More:** <http://tinyurl.com/Hate-cleaning>

### 7 major lighting trends for 2015

By Editors  
*Decorator’s Wisdom.com*

This year, bring light to your home with the latest lighting trends. Highlight a traditional home (or add an eclectic twist to a modern one) with a newly hot mini-chandelier. Functional wireless lighting is in demand for home security systems, and LED lighting goes everywhere now, even outdoors. Here’s an idea that’s long overdue: cabinet and drawer lighting to make it easy to find things in dark corners. Oh, and copper fixtures are in. **More:** <http://tinyurl.com/Light-up-2015>

# How to Find the Mortgage That's Right for most Seniors

The mortgage world can be confusing, and it pays to educate yourself about the pros and cons of different types of mortgages.

Are reverse mortgages a good idea for seniors?

Fixed-rate mortgages offer rate and payment security, although they can be costlier than adjustable-rate mortgages (ARMs). So, while the low initial cost of ARMs may be tempting to home buyers, they do carry a degree of uncertainty. Consider the following:

- A **15-year, fixed-rate mortgage** typically has a lower interest rate than the 30-year fixed. Borrowers pay off the loan more

quickly, and they also build equity faster. This appeals to buyers of less expensive homes and those looking to refinance without extending the loan out another 30 years.

- An **ARM** adjusts periodically after a specified time (typically one year or five years) based on a mortgage index, such as Libor. If rates go down, payments are reduced, but if rates increase, payments increase. An ARM can be a good deal if you do not plan to remain in your home for long, providing you have the financial flexibility to cover higher payments if rates increase.

interest-only mortgages, balloon mortgages (which have a low rate for a period of time before the loan balance comes due), and assumable mortgages, which can be transferred from a homeowner to a buyer, so a new mortgage isn't required. This can be a selling feature.

You'll want to choose a loan that minimizes your total cost (based on interest rate and upfront fees) over the time you expect to own the home, assuming the payment is affordable and you are comfortable with the risk you're taking on.

Other types of mortgages include

## Which Type of Spender Are You?

Our personalities influence every aspect of our lives. Our spending personalities (the different ways we go about spending money) also have an effect – on our wallets. Here are three common spending personalities, compiled by [dailyfinance.com](http://dailyfinance.com).

**Shop-til-you-drop:** Shopping is a hobby from which you derive pleasure and thrills. Distract yourself with real hobbies and employ your shopping savvy for times when you really need it, such as when finding the perfect gift.

**The impulse buyer:** You're instantly drawn to an item and feel compelled to buy it. Don't buy what you don't need, by asking yourself whether you must have it now or whether you can wait . . . after all, you may find it for less later!

**The convenience buyer:** This is all about making your life easier. You buy lunch every day instead of making it, and shop at the high-end grocery store just because it's closest. A little extra effort can mean big savings, and you may even find flyer shopping and coupon-clipping become adventures in saving.

## This Month's Smile: Knock-Knock Jokes

Adult or kid, few people can resist good (and not so good) knock-knock jokes. Start the new year off right with these groaners.

**Knock Knock! Who's there? Lettuce. Lettuce who? Lettuce in, we're freezing!**

There's probably an eager little kid waiting to "get you" with these two:

**Knock Knock! Who's there? Doris.**

**Doris who? Doris locked, that's why I knocked.**

**Knock Knock! Who's there? Cowsgo. Cowsgo who? No they don't; cowsgo moo.**

Finally, if you're on the receiving end of these jokes, this may, but probably won't, work: **Knock knock! Who's there? Dewey. Dewey who? Dewey have to keep telling these dumb jokes?**

## Ask the Agent: This Month's Question

*What should we look out for when buying an older home?*

Age may be just a number for individuals, but is this true when you're considering buying an older home? In fact, your 1900s dream home may be a headache in waiting. You'll need to consider if it's insurable in its current condition, and whether you can even get a mortgage on an older home that's seen better days.

Many older homes don't meet today's strict health and safety guidelines. In the past, it was the norm to use lead-based paint, and older homes are likely have older wiring and pipes, ill-fitting windows, and asbestos insulation. All may require expensive fixes.

Ensure you have a trusted home inspector to suss out potential problems with your older home; he or she can save you future headaches and heartaches, as well as time and money. Older homes can be true diamonds in the rough, but do your due diligence before you buy.

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**Sudoku instructions:** Complete the 9 × 9 grid so that each row, each column and each of the nine 3 × 3 boxes contains the digits 1 through 9. Contact me for the solution!

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Thanks for reading! If you would like to tell me what you think about this newsletter, or if you're thinking of buying or selling real estate, please get in touch.

To discontinue receiving this Newsletter just reply to this email with "REMOVE" in the subject line.

### Recipe: Marinated Mushrooms for Antipasto

Serves 6

1 pound cremini mushrooms, halved or quartered if larger

3 tablespoons white wine vinegar

1 shallot, minced

¼ teaspoon nutmeg, optional

1 teaspoon dried tarragon (or 1 tablespoon fresh)

½ cup extra virgin olive oil

#### Directions

Boil 2 quarts of generously salted water. Add mushrooms and continue to boil for five minutes, or until tender.

Drain and transfer to a bowl. Add vinegar, the minced shallot, nutmeg, salt, pepper, tarragon, and oil to the mushrooms.

Toss to coat and marinate in the refrigerator for several hours or overnight.

Serve at room temperature with olives, prosciutto, roasted red peppers, cheese, and crusty bread . . . and a glass of something festive.

Happy New Year!

