

# Don's Senior's News

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## Maybe Your Dryer Is Trying to Tell You Something

These days more and more ordinary items are being fitted with chips and sensors to connect to the Internet of Things. While online connectivity offers convenience and great benefits to companies and consumers, it carries significant risk as well.

Common objects such as mobile phones, locks, home security monitors, and medical devices can easily be hacked. Cameras can be activated to spy on private conversations or confidential meetings. And there have been numerous and widespread reports of personal data being compromised by scammers, and intellectual property being pirated by criminals.

According to the *Bloomberg View*, *Wired* journalist Andy Greenberg was shocked at what happened when he agreed to let two hackers have at an Internet-connected Jeep he was driving. The hackers were able to take control of the Jeep from 10 miles away, wreaking havoc with the radio, the wipers, and the air conditioning before shutting down the transmission.

In today's interconnected world, manufacturers and consumers both need to broaden their approach to safety to include cybersecurity as more than simply an afterthought. Yet most manufacturers have little experience with digital security, and few people know how to properly protect themselves from malicious hacking. The problem is exacerbated by the fact that appliances such as stoves and refrigerators, while designed to last, do not typically get software updates. Without regular updates, your "smart" fridge may become, well, stupid. To avoid frozen milk and damp clothes, ask questions when purchasing and installing "smart" devices. And listen. Your dryer may be trying to tell you something.

## Are You Watching the Housing Market in Your Area with Plans of Selling in the near Future?

### Are you considering downsizing, moving up or moving closer to work?

Have me set up an automatic notification of the home sales in the housing market area around your home. It is easy for me to do, and there is no cost or obligation. Just email me your address with a message to set you up for notification of home sales in your area.

Call or [email](mailto:donzahnle@gmail.com) me today.

## Is It Curtains for the Open-Concept Lifestyle?

For years, it's seemed as though open-concept living was the design principle of choice. Kitchens, dining rooms, and living rooms were prized for their lack of dividing doors and walls. Now, however, the dominance of the open-concept lifestyle is in question, according to architects and designers quoted in a November 2015 article in *Dezeen*, an international design magazine.

UK architect David Mikhail told *Dezeen* that he first noticed the shift while working on an affordable housing scheme. Residents were offered a choice between an open-plan living space and inserting a wall between their living and dining rooms.

"Much to our surprise, they all chose to put the wall in," Mikhail said.

According to Mikhail, many designed homes include a mix of spaces, such that large living areas now comfortably coexist with nooks and crannies, reflecting a current desire for secluded spaces and privacy.

The trend to "flexible-plan living" may be a function of today's mobile technology. So-called broken-plan spaces allow each family member privacy for tablet and smartphone use, as well as individual areas to watch different TV programs at the same time.

While open-concept design still rules, other design publications have also noted a renewed interest in closed spaces. The *New York Times*, for example, reported that an increasing number of buyers preferred separate dining and living areas. And, in dissenting open kitchens, Houzz writer Vanessa Brunner suggests: "If you want to leave your smells and mess behind when serving meals, a closed layout could be for you." Point well made.

# Local Produce ... Coming Soon to a Neighborhood Near You?

Imagine craving an apple and walking a few steps to a neighboring apple orchard. Imagine always having immediate access to your favorite fruits and vegetables. Imagine watching your produce transition from seed to your table.

It's happening now across North America as thousands of locavores take the concept of locally grown food to the next level: "agrihoods" - planned communities where homes are built around a functioning farm - are mushrooming across North America.

There are currently around 200 agrihoods in the United States, including the 160-acre Agritopia in Phoenix, the 1,000-acre Serenbe in Georgia, and The Cannery, a 100-acre project located near Davis, California, that opened in August 2015. And in Canada, an agrihood of 129 homes is currently being built near Vancouver, B.C. In most cases, homes in

the agrihood are high end; at The Cannery, they range from the mid-\$400,000s to more than \$1 million.

"The foodie generation has come of age," says Ed McMahon, a resident fellow at the Urban Land Institute in Washington, in Bloomberg News. "The mainstream development community has come to think of these as a pretty good way to build a low-cost amenity that people seem to like and that also adds authenticity."

Agrihoods develop a sense of community, proponents say, as they tend to host neighborhood food-related events, such as wine tastings and pop-up restaurants featuring agrihood produce. They also provide an unbeatable experience. As one agrihood resident told the Los Angeles Times: "To get your hands dirty with growth ... I think it's good for the soul."

## Quick Quiz

Each month I'll give you a new question.

Just email me at donzahnle@gmail.com for the answer.

Einstein was said to have called what "the most difficult thing to understand"?

## Thanks for All Your Referrals!

I succeed when people like you refer me to your friends, neighbors and loved ones. It's the best kind of feedback I can receive.

So thanks for continuing to pass this newsletter on to people you care about.

## 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? ? Stop looking at Zestimates and find out what your home is *really* worth.

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

Email me for [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.

Email me at [donzahnle@gmail.com](mailto:donzahnle@gmail.com) with "send me a Home Value Analysis" in the Subject line. I also need the property address. I'll get the report out to you in 24 hours.

## Worth Reading

### The Psychology of Decorating: Five Ways We Experience a Room

By *Mikkie Mills*  
[rismedia.com](http://rismedia.com)

Good decorating can contribute to positive emotions. Mills offers practical ways to create a positive atmosphere in your home: Make sure furniture fits a room and is appropriately arranged. Choose pleasant-looking artwork. Smell is highly associated with memories; to make a good impression, think home baking. Liven up underused corners with potted plants. And enjoy your home. Others will sense it. **More:** <http://tinyurl.com/March-remodels1>

### The Hidden Problems in Old Houses

By *Matt Clawson*  
[houzz.com](http://houzz.com)

Updating an older home is problematic, so read this before you remodel. Some potential problems endemic to older homes can be spotted easily. For example, if doors and windows aren't latching properly, you may have problems with your foundation. Others are more subtle. Consider consulting architects, builders, and structural engineers before tackling a significant rebuild. **More:** <http://tinyurl.com/March-remodels2>

### Home Improvement Etiquette

By *Staff*  
[Thebathoutlet.com](http://Thebathoutlet.com)

This infographic offers insight into contractor/client interaction. A survey of 400 people raised issues such as tipping, making conversation, and worker breaks. It seems most people are OK with workers who wear shoes in the house, and, strangely, about half were comfortable leaving valuables out when people are working in the home, maybe because more than half say they don't leave their homes while workers are there.

# Solo Home Buyers Face Unique Challenges

Recent reports have noted a marked increase in the number of female home buyers across the United States. In fact, it's not only young couples and families who are eagerly entering the real estate game; young, single women are buying in droves.

The most recent available data from the National Association of Realtors (NAR) notes that single women have been purchasing homes at almost twice the frequency of their male counterparts.

"More women than men think buying a home is a good financial investment," Jessica Lautz, NAR's manager of member and consumer survey research, told Reuters. "Many of them are thinking of the pure desire to own a home and to settle and make roots."

That said, single females don't differ significantly from their male counterparts in the challenges they're facing. There are two things both need to bear in mind when taking the plunge:

**Affordability.** A couple or family may have two incomes to contribute to a down payment and subsequent mortgage payments. If you're making a big purchase on your own, knowing what you can comfortably afford becomes all the more crucial.

Despite what your mortgage approval says, make sure that you'll be able to make payments without feeling stretched. And remember to factor in the costs of upkeep, repairs, and unforeseen circumstances; unexpected emergencies could cost you thousands

of dollars - a cost that you'll bear entirely on your own.

**Protection.** Just because you purchased your home on your own doesn't mean you'll always live in it alone. It's important to remember that your home is probably your biggest investment, and you need to protect it. That may mean signing a prenuptial contract or another type of agreement in case you and a partner divorce/break up.

**Insurance.** Last, but certainly not least, be sure to properly insure your home against a wide variety of potential hazards. That includes purchasing homeowners, life, and, depending on the circumstances, disability insurance.

## Looking for a Great Gift for a Grandchild?

### The Good Old Backpack Goes High Tech

OK, so we all know what a backpack is: a cloth or leather sack with over-the-shoulder straps that you carry on your back. Traditionally, it carried provisions when you hiked, extra clothes when you traveled, and books when you headed for the library. But that is so yesterday. These days, whether it's a personal power source or a svelte sound system, backpacks have gone high tech.

In a recent *New York Times* article, Eric A. Taub wrote, "With people juggling multiple digital devices that constantly need charging, backpack manufacturers have sensed a market opportunity. Some new backpacks are specifically designed not only to protect our smartphones, tablets, laptops, headphones, and game players, but also to recharge them and track their whereabouts."

Some of the latest backpacks feature a battery that can recharge several smartphones or tablets at once, apps to monitor battery status, and an incorporated warning system should you walk away without yours. Backpack sharers can buy a customizable unit that accommodates each user's charging idiosyncrasies. And if the plain old backpack needs to go upscale, one company produces a model that transforms into a briefcase or messenger bag. Oh, and for environmentalists, there's a solar-powered backpack too!

## This Month's Smile - Grand Kids on Spring

Kids often have an interesting slant on seasonal changes. Here's their take on spring and all the season has to offer, courtesy of *Kidfo.ca*:

What is the shortest month? May. It has only three letters.

Can February March? No, but April May.

When does it rain money? When there's change in the weather.

During which season can you jump on your trampoline? Springtime.

What does a cloud wear under her raincoat? Thunderwear.

What do you call a grizzly bear caught in the rain? A drizzly bear.

What bow can't be tied? A rainbow.

What goes up when the rain comes down? An umbrella.

## Ask the Agent: This Month's Question

### What are some new ways to update the outside areas of my property?

Adding outdoor living spaces and focusing on easy maintenance can update your backyard appeal, and you can enhance curb appeal with some inexpensive options to give your house and yard a modern look for less:

**Add outdoor living features.** You can add everything from a full outdoor kitchen to a bar cart on wheels, depending on your space and budget. At a minimum, devote some space to outdoor entertaining.

**Remove high-maintenance elements.** Consider taking out fussy plants, or replacing large swaths of grass with a patio or river stones.

**Update your house numbers.** Trade brass numbers for something more modern. Etsy has any number of great alternatives.

**Paint your front door.** Fresh paint in a trendy color instantly refreshes your curb appeal. Visit a local paint store with photos of the front of your home for new ideas.

To search for listings online click [here](#)

[www.DonZahnle.com](http://www.DonZahnle.com)

	3					8		
		1	8	7	4			
			9				1	2
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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.

## Turkey Sausage and Pea Linguine

**Serves 4**

2 tablespoons olive oil  
 1 pound turkey sausage, casings removed  
 1 pound fresh linguine  
 3 tablespoons butter  
 10 ounces fresh peas  
 1 tablespoon minced fresh tarragon  
 Parmesan cheese

### Directions

Bring a large pot of heavily salted water to a boil.

Add olive oil to a large skillet. Add turkey and cook at high heat while breaking up any large clumps.

Season with salt and pepper and continue cooking until lightly browned and cooked through.

Cook fresh pasta in boiling water for 2–3 minutes or until al dente.

Reserving  $\frac{3}{4}$  cup of the cooking water, drain the pasta. Add cooked pasta to the turkey along with the butter,  $\frac{2}{3}$  cup of the reserved cooking water, and peas. Combine all ingredients until heated through. If too thick, add a tablespoon at a time of the reserved cooking liquid.

Add the tarragon and grated fresh Parmesan right before serving.

