

# Don's Home News

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## Do We Actually Need 600 Facebook Friends?

Nowadays, it's the easiest thing in the world to send a message via Facebook, instead of resorting to the so-very-old-school face-to-face interactions of the past. But is the ease created by Facebook and other social media eroding what it means to be a real friend?

Our real friends, it seems, can only number 150 people, give or take. More than that and our brains simply can't handle it, according to research by Oxford University professor Robin Dunbar. These 150 or so people are those we can come to with problems and share our deepest feelings. The rest? They're probably what psychologists would call close acquaintances.

But you have 600 friends on Facebook or 1,000 followers on Twitter, you say. David Smallwood, a British addictions expert, suggests there may be a reason why you are trying to handle more friendships than your brain can manage: many Facebook users become hooked on adding friends, he says. Excessive friending may be just for show – an attempt to appear popular or successful.

And how many of them could you actually go to with a problem?

While social media is great at connecting long-lost college roommates, updating plans, or finding people with similar interests, it can't replace in-person friendships.

Prof Dunbar's research describes human touch – a crucial interaction – as worth far more than an online birthday wish. Social media messaging cannot replace the hands-on nature of true friendship. So, until technology can create virtual touch, you might be better off hanging out with your friends offline.

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## Are you thinking of Buying a Home? Discover the Critical Role of Today's Real Estate Agent.

Buying a home is a complex process with many factors to consider. The days when homebuyers spent the day riding around with a real estate agent are long gone. Homes are generally identified for inspection via the internet.

Since the mortgage meltdown, the agent's role in the transaction has changed from being a chauffeur to the Buyer's advocate compelled to protect the Buyer throughout the transaction; much like the role a lawyer plays defending a client in a lawsuit.

Contact me to discuss how I can help you through the paperwork nightmare created by the mortgage crises, protect your interests, and keep you from making expensive mistakes in your home purchase. Call 404-939-1309 or email [donzahnle@gmail.com](mailto:donzahnle@gmail.com) today.

## How to Buy Your Dream Home...Even if It's Not for Sale

Have you ever driven through a new neighborhood only to turn the corner, and there it is ... your dream home?

But, darnn your luck, this dream home isn't for sale. While the majority of us drive away, saddened, some people leave determined to make this home theirs – whether it's for sale now or not.

And often, with the help of a great agent, they'll do just that.

For real estate agents, it's a form of cold calling: The clients point out an unlisted home they love, and the agent plays matchmaker, contacting the homeowners to see if they're prepared to sell.

Some homeowners won't budge, but for others, there may be incentive to sell. They may have considered selling but haven't started the process. The house may have been on the market previously. Or, maybe the owner decides to jump at the opportunity.

If you are interested in a property that isn't for sale, call me! I will:

- Research both the property and its owner to develop information to establish the value of the property.
- If you decide you are serious about the property, I will contact the owner on your behalf and attempt to obtain a tour. If you are still interested, I will prepare a written offer and negotiate with the owner as your agent.
- Be aware that you will likely end up paying a premium for a house that isn't officially for sale.

Call me at 404-939-1309 to discuss a property that you have in mind.

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# Stranger Proofing Works: Just Ask This 10-Year-Old

It was many parents' worst nightmare. But it proved conclusively to these parents and others that "stranger-proofing" your child is so very worth it.

Some months back, a 10-year-old Canadian girl was approached at her elementary school by a man in a vehicle. The man explained he'd been sent by the girl's mother to pick her up, but failed to provide a code word the family had come up with together. She immediately ran back to her school.

Unfortunately, it's not an unusual story; according to the Department of Justice, some 2,000 children disappear a day in the US. This one had a happy ending, but most child abductions don't end as well.

Where this story differs is in the simple

rule most parents try to teach their children – don't talk to strangers. As it turns out, these parent's chose just the right approach. Here are some tips to help you raise the topic of "stranger danger," with your kids.

- Pick a code word to be a secret between you, your child and anyone who would pick them up if you're unavailable.
- Show your children safe places. Let them know where to turn if they're in trouble, and point out safe spots to play and safe roads to take.
- Ensure they carry your contact information on them at all times.
- Teach your kids to say "no." Let them know they won't be in trouble if they assert themselves to an adult.
- Encourage your children to play with others. There is safety in numbers.

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## Quick Quiz

Each month I'll give you a new question.

Just email me  
atdonzahnle@gmail.com for the answer.

**In the 1960s, in which American city was you supposed to wear flowers in your hair?**

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## 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!

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## 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.

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## Worth Reading

### The Saving Grace of Good Design

By Tom Brady

The New York Times

More: <http://tinyurl.com/ckhojzh>

Rectangles may make the world go round. As Tom Brady reports, the human eye most easily scans images that mimic the golden rectangle. Its five-by-eight dimensions can be seen in Mona Lisa's face, Notre Dame ... even the original iPod. But good design can do more than sell technology or enhance art. Check out the color green.

### Daily Rituals: Coffee

By Mason Currey

Slate.com

More: <http://tinyurl.com/d2jhe95>

Want to boost your creativity? Pour yourself a cup of java. Currey's list of daily rituals that inspire artists examines coffee use by creative types. The news isn't always good: Author and heavy coffee drinker Honoré de Balzac died at age 51 after a reported coffee habit of 50 cups a day. So, perhaps moderation is a better option. Or maybe tea.

### How Facebook Takes Your Emotional Temperature

By Rick Smolan

Bigthink.com

More: <http://tinyurl.com/coeduld>

Facebook makes people happy. And people make Facebook happy. The more data users provide, the more information advertisers can use to tailor their ads more effectively. But does that make the user the product, as suggested by Essayist Jonathan Harris? Harris sees Facebook as a drug that becomes addictive, and the addicted user becomes what advertisers buy. Smolan – a Big Data expert – sort of disagrees. How about you?

# *Buying or Remodeling: Advice is a Click Away*

North Americans love their toys, and we're turning to our devices for advice on everything from remodeling projects to home searches. According to a joint study by Google and the National Association of Realtors, real estate searches on Google.com have increased by 253 percent in the past four years.

"Increasingly, online technologies are driving offline behaviors," noted Patrick Grandinetti, head of real estate for Google, "and home buying is no exception."

## **Buyers screen homes on the Internet**

The study indicated that nine out of ten home buyers turned to the Internet during their home search. Although half launched their search online, they

quickly moved offline; 76 percent viewed or drove by a home they'd first seen on the Internet.

The real estate industry is very much on side. For players, it's all about providing buyers with new tools to access property and neighborhood information, and rather than discouraging personal interface between buyer and real estate agent, most purchasers still seek out agents for their experience and expertise; interestingly, almost one-third found their agent online.

## **"See" your planned renovation online**

It doesn't stop there. Recently, there's been a boom in remodeling projects, and, of course, there's an app for that. Homeowners contemplating a renovation have turned to the Internet for advice for

several years. But new approaches by sites such as Zillow Digs and Houzz are changing the dynamics. Both offer platforms for consumers, design professionals, product manufacturers, and architects to interact as part of a visually-focused online community. You can share photos of products or designs with your architect or contractor or "meet" with the designer online and book your re-build right then and there. As one consumer, whose remodeled kitchen was designed by an architect she met on Houzz, notes: "It's positively addictive."

Google's Grandinetti would likely agree. For him and other experts, it's just another example of online technology driving offline behavior.

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## **Don't Fear all Germs: Some Are Friends**

News alert. Not all germs are bad. In fact, we actually need some germs (microbes) to stay healthy. As a society, we fear bacteria. We douse ourselves in antimicrobials such as hand sanitizers. But our overzealousness may be harming rather than protecting us.

In our efforts to reduce some infections, we are increasing the likelihood of others. For example, *Helicobacter pylori* (*H. pylori*) is linked to ulcers and stomach cancer, but also plays a part in preventing overeating.

Quoted in a recent *New York Times* article, *H. pylori* – once a fixture in our stomachs – is now found in fewer than 10 percent of US kids, thanks mainly to antimicrobials. Now many of these children may be overeating – contributing to childhood obesity.

Suffering from chronic sinus problems? There's a germ for that. Atherosclerosis? You may be missing gut bacteria that produces antioxidants.

Unfortunately, there's no easy way to prevent killing off good bacteria. Science is working on it, but in the meantime you can stop over-using antibiotics – antimicrobials that are often misprescribed.

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## ***Ask the Agent: This Month's Question***

***What are some easy ways to enhance curb appeal?***

The exterior of your home can give prospective buyers a thumbs-up first impression of your home. This first impression is critical; research shows landscaping increases your home's value, so the more your outside is designed to appeal to buyers, the better.

However, it's still important to budget when renovating to sell: It won't be your home much longer, so don't overdo it. Buyers appreciate an exterior that looks cared-for and well-maintained, not flashy.

As always, paint is a good place to splurge; highlight your home's architectural features and make it clean and welcoming with an exterior paint job. Avoid trendy colors and stay with neutrals that suit your home's style. Enhance the entrance with new outdoor light fixtures, new hardware and planted urns.

These simple fixes will stop buyers in their tracks. And may even sell your home.

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## **Too Busy to Get Away? Play Tourist at Home**

OK. For whatever reason, you're just not going to be able to make that beach vacation or family road trip happen this year. But you can still get away. At home. There are many ways to make your time at home more like time away, writes blogger Jeremy Branham in Budget Travel Adventures.

Missing that Hawaiian luau? Throw your own. Decorate a room (or your deck) like Hawaii or anywhere else you've wanted to visit.

Short on time and inspiration? Look to your own neighborhood. Visit an ethnic restaurant. Check out your city's Chinatown or Little Italy.

Meet people like you do when you're away. Hit local museums and other safe places and chat up someone who looks interesting. You will never notice you didn't get away.

# NEWS YOU CAN USE

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

		3			1			
		4	6	5	3			7
			7				2	6
		1		3			6	
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**Sudoku instructions:** Complete the 9x9 grid so that each row, each column, and each of the nine 3x3 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: Arroz con Pollo for a Crowd

**Serves 10**

8 c chicken stock  
 6 chicken breasts  
 ¾ c vegetable oil  
 2 finely chopped onions  
 3 cloves minced garlic  
 3 c seeded, chopped tomatoes  
 2 grated carrots  
 2 tbl red wine vinegar  
 ½ c tomato paste  
 2 tsp achiote powder  
 2 tsp dried oregano  
 3 tsp salt  
 1 tsp pepper  
 5 c long grain white rice  
 1 c canned or cooked peas  
 ½ c stuffed olives  
 Chopped cilantro and lime wedges

Bring the stock and chicken breasts to a boil. Reduce heat and simmer for 10 minutes. Turn off heat and let sit for 10–15 minutes. Remove chicken and leave to cool. Add water to chicken stock to make 10 cups. Set aside. In a large pot, heat oil, garlic and onion until soft and translucent. Add next nine ingredients. Stir until blended. Add liquid. Bring to a boil over medium heat. Simmer until water evaporates. Cook at low heat, covered, for 25 minutes. Shred chicken. Add to rice. Stir in peas and olives. Sprinkle with cilantro. Serve with lime wedges.

