

Don's Home News

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Make the Most of Memorable Family Vacations

What's your best summer memory? Chances are, it took place during a family vacation, such as a road trip, a camping adventure, or a lazy summer at the lake. Summer has a way of drawing the family together. And making wonderful memories.

According to a study by projecttimeoff.com, family vacations are a surefire way to "create memories that last for decades." Take the 62% of adults polled for the study, who said their earliest memories came from family vacations taken when they were five to 10 years old. Forty-nine percent also said their memories of childhood family vacations were more vivid than memories of birthday parties (31%) or school events (34%).

Those memorable childhood holidays not only have a lasting impact into adulthood, but can also lead to intergenerational bonding, when parents describe their early summers to their children; most want to duplicate their experiences for their own kids. And they do: a large majority of the survey's younger respondents – some 77% – said their parents have shared stories with them about memorable childhood family vacations. Children have also seen videos and photos of the good times, and look forward to their own vacations with the same enthusiasm their parents had.

And not surprisingly, the survey found that 75% of parents polled said "the cost and time" of taking family trips "are justified because the memories created are 'priceless.'" So pack up the car and the kids and make summer 2016 a particularly memorable one. For the kids – and for you.

For timely information and helpful tips about home ownership, please check out my [Facebook Page: Don Zahnle, Realtor](#)

If you like what you see, please like my page while you are there.

Should You Invest in a Vacation Home This Fall?

Many people dream of owning a vacation home, but wonder if it's a good investment. According to the real estate gurus, it may well be.

According to many experts, fall is a great time to consider buying a vacation home, as prices are often lower in the off-season. And, while you may envision a summer hideaway or a perfect winter retreat for you and your family, you also could consider raising additional income by offering it as a three- or even four-season rental.

In a recent online article, the InvestorJunkie.com wrote: "We don't normally think of vacation properties as investments, but at certain times and under certain circumstances, they can be one of the best investments you can make."

RISMedia recently reported that, according to an annual survey of residential homebuyers by the National Association of Realtors: "Vacation home sales cooled off in 2015 but remained at the second-highest amount in nearly a decade." In addition, the median price of vacation homes increased in 2015.

As with any investment, there are risks; as InvestorJunkie notes, "Vacation property is luxury real estate, not the basic roof-over-your-head type. It's more discretionary than it is necessary, and that means the market for it can dry up much more quickly. When it does, prices can crash even when the general housing market is stable."

Nevertheless, CNBC contributor Shelly Schwartz says if you can afford it, do it. The title of her article is "The Time to Invest in a Second Home Is Now."

Are Leisure Pastimes Passé in Our Device-Focused Society?

With devices of all kinds to occupy our time, should we really care about leisure pursuits?

Actually, yes. Leisurely pastimes aren't really passé in the tech age; it's just that we're reinventing them to fit our busy, and wired, lives.

Take, for example, adult coloring books – currently one of the hottest pastimes among stressed-out adults. And board games are much beloved on family game nights as a break from screens.

The word “pastime” is derived from the French “passe-temps,” meaning to pass time. The Free Dictionary describes it as “an activity that occupies one’s spare (i.e., leisure) time pleasantly.” And it’s this search for pleasant activities that constitutes what Encyclopedia.com calls “one of the fundamental characteristics of leisure in modern society.”

Quick Quiz

Each month I'll give you a new question.

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

What does an onomastician study?

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.

But, of course, in the age of technology we've changed it up. Now, even business celebrates leisure. The terms “work” and “free time” may seem incompatible, but the increasingly popular concept of “bleisure” combines business travel with leisurely sightseeing trips. Many of us now lie on the beach with our phones at the ready and conduct virtual business meetings from just about anywhere.

Scientists get it, too. As Nature.com points out: “There is plenty of evidence that scientific research and leisure pursuits can coexist.” After all, Einstein played a great violin, and Nobel prizewinners are apparently more likely than members of the public to passionately indulge in long-standing hobbies. In the final analysis, we may be witnessing a leisure revolution. And it's all good, because we'll be a better society for it.

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 and we will arrange a time to get together.

Worth Reading

In the Future, We Will Photograph Everything and Look at Nothing

By Om Malik
The New Yorker

As Malik says, “We are all taking too many photos and spending very little time looking at them.” While current software that allows a “photographer” to edit on the go is alluring, it also may feel like a luxury we humans have control over that machines have already begun to take over from us.

More: <http://tinyurl.com/July-reads-1>

The Enormous Power of the Unconscious Brain

By Chris Baraniuk
BBC.com

This power is calling into question the value of the conscious brain. Baraniuk suggests that by constant repetition of an action, anything can become nonconscious (automatic). As for our conscious brain, “is it always just the last guy to get the news?” asks neuroscientist David Eagleman in Baraniuk's piece.

More: <http://tinyurl.com/July-reads-2>

More Than Half of What Americans Eat Is “Ultra-Processed”

By Julie Beck
The Atlantic

Another study confirms it: North Americans eat too much ultra-processed food. Ultra-processed foods are those with substances added, often to create sensory experiences similar to natural food, or to mask deficiencies. They're also very high in added sugar, and that's problematic. Dietary guidelines recommend that fewer than 10% of calories should come from added sugar. People with diets high in ultra-processed foods average much more. **More:**

<http://tinyurl.com/July-reads-3>

5 Ways to Boost Your Home's OQ for Less

When getting a home ready to sell, most homeowners focus on interior upgrades and fixes. But what's on the outside counts, too.

Lawns, walkways, patios, gardens, doors, and windows all play a role in the livability of a home – and its salability as well.

Thinking of selling soon? Here are five ways to boost your home's Outside Quotient (OQ), courtesy of a Williams Ski & Patio infographic:

For an investment that could range from \$300 to \$1,000, you can undo the damage wrought by weather, weeds, and all those other nasties that invade your lawn (not to mention the dog and your kids).

Re-sod and give your outdoors a whole new look. Isn't that worth the investment?

You could consider a less expensive alternative to make your outside sparkle: power wash your deck and wash your outdoor furniture for an investment of between \$50 and \$100, and some elbow grease.

Don't forget the front entrance to your home; boost your curb appeal and add some color and design with planters featuring seasonal greenery.

During summer you can pop in some color inexpensively by adding a pot of annuals or two from your local garden center.

July is hot just about everywhere, so don't forget to water your additions regularly. Cost: \$20 to \$200 depending on the size and type of planters.

While you're at it, check the driveway. Cracks and holes can deter future buyers and are just plain ugly. For \$50 to \$200, a new topcoat of driveway sealer will do the trick ... unless it's REALLY bad.

For front or back yards, fill in holes in the vegetation with mature plants.

It's a bit more expensive, depending on the kinds and number of plants you need, but it will give your outdoors the look of a much more pricey landscape job for much less. And that OQ? Awesome!

Here's the Latest Buzz on Bumblebees

Buzzing bees can be a nuisance in summer. But bees are responsible for pollinating fruits and vegetables, meaning they're a crucial part of our food production process. And they're currently under stress, thanks to the loss of habitat and pollution.

Biologists have long understood why bee pollination is important. But how bees pollinate has been something of a mystery.

That's changing. Researchers at the University of Stirling in Scotland recently released a study confirming what scientists suspected: that the innate ability to pollinate increases over time. Equally important, the study found that bumblebees make different noises when they're pollinating than they do when they're flying.

Why is this important? Bees attach themselves to a flower's anthers. When the bees buzz, the flowers vibrate. Those vibrations release pollen. Different characteristics of the buzzing noise determine how much pollen will be released.

That determines the amount of fruits and vegetables pollinated. And this can show up in our supermarkets in reduced supply and higher prices. So, love – don't swat – those bees.

It's a Dog's World, Thanks to Home Tech

It's not only humans who benefit from the boom in home technology. As a recent article from RISMedia suggests, pets are reaping the rewards, too.

Smart thermostats allow homeowners to monitor temperature in each room and adjust for weather conditions from their smartphones or tablets. This can be a lifesaver for pets, who often suffer when owners are away and temperatures dip or rise drastically.

Owners also can control remotely when their pet's food will be dispensed, and even be notified if supplies are running low.

And for owners who have to leave their dogs alone for the day, there are "smart doggy doors" that use radio frequencies to communicate with a tag on the dog's collar and let puppy in and out.

These days, it truly is a dog's world!

Ask the Agent: This Month's Question

I live in a condo complex. How can I feel secure in my new home?

The good news is, you don't need to hire Biff the bouncer from the nightclub downtown. Instead try these simple tips:

Lock 'em out: It can be tempting to leave your entrance unlocked while getting the mail or visiting a neighbor. Take a few extra seconds to lock up behind you. Check to make sure the door in your apartment condo (as well as the garage door) closes behind you. In townhouses, don't hide your key. As convenient as it is for you, it's convenient for burglars too.

Light 'em up: Common areas such as entrances, hallways, and walkways should be well lit. If you notice any burned-out bulbs, contact your building manager right away.

Shut 'em down: If your building requires buzz-in, make sure everyone uses it. It may feel rude, but don't hold doors to let in strangers. If they belong there, they will either have a key or know someone who will buzz them in.

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

www.DonZahnle.com

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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.

Grilled Chicken Skewers with Tamarind Marinade

(Can't find tamarind? See * below)

Serves 4

¼ cup tamarind concentrate
 2 teaspoons minced garlic
 3 tablespoons light brown sugar
 ½ tablespoon salt
 1 tablespoon vegetable oil
 1½ pounds chicken tenderloins
 Wooden skewers

Whisk tamarind, garlic, sugar, salt, and oil in a shallow dish until sugar is dissolved. Add chicken and toss to coat all pieces. Cover and refrigerate for at least 3 hours or overnight.

Soak wooden skewers in water for at least 30 minutes before using and preheat grill to medium high. Thread 1-2 chicken tenderloins onto each skewer. Place them on the grill for about 5 minutes on each side or until internal temperature reaches 160 degrees.

Using tongs, remove from the grill and allow to rest for 5 minutes before serving.

*Tamarind can be found in most Asian grocery stores, or mix equal parts of lime juice and additional light brown sugar as a substitute.

