

Don's Home News

Brought to you by: Don Zahnle, SRES, ABR
<mailto:donzahnle@gmail.com>

A Cheeky Way to Spoil That Perfect Summer Beach Read

If you love to read, a beach holiday is the perfect time and place for indulging in a good book.

Whether it's a plot-driven page-turner, a touching memoir, or a tale of romance and intrigue that entices you, according to Jenni Avins in *Quartz*, "Vacation not only primes us for the pleasure of reading, it can also make the experience more beneficial."

On a sunny day at the water's edge, book in hand, you can shut out the clamor and stress of everyday life and lose yourself in the words on the page. If relaxation is your goal, a book and a beach offer the ideal mix.

Matthew Kassel disagrees, in a tongue-in-cheek sort of way. In an article in the *Observer*, he contends that reading is an overly strenuous beach activity, what with the sun in your eyes and the breeze blowing the pages and all that. And then there are those distracting waves breaking the silence and relentlessly lapping at the shore. It's all too much for the serious reader, he suggests.

In fact, in reality, serious readers think of a beach as the ultimate escape and believe a good book can add to it immeasurably.

So forget Kassel. Plant your umbrella, choose a restful position on the sand or cushioned cot, and immerse yourself in a lovely read. Then, says Avins, "Layer on the calming monotony of crashing waves, and you've got literary magic." It's perfectly soothing to the mind, body, and spirit.

Unless, of course, you don't like sand between the pages.

For timely information and helpful tips about home ownership, please check out my Facebook page at: www.facebook.com/donzahnlerealtor

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

Cities or Suburbia—Which Is Winning the Population Race?

Common wisdom holds that there's an urban revival in America's cities, but the census shows otherwise: Americans are moving to the suburbs in record numbers.

As economist Jed Kolko points out in *FiveThirtyEight.com*, "That revival is real, but it has mostly been for rich, educated people in particular hyperurban neighborhoods rather than a broad-based return to city living."

Is it the fresh air? The rolling green lawns? The bigger-square-foot bang for your buck? Nobody seems to know exactly why the swing to the suburbs is on the rise, especially when better-paying jobs are in the city. But the trend is gathering steam.

Perhaps the wish to improve life balance is influencing the trend. Then, too, it's possible that retiring boomers seek calm after their years of working in the eye of the storm.

But that doesn't account for all of it.

Ask young parents, and they'll tell you that while moving to the suburbs means giving up the kinetic energy of city life, raising kids in the city creates all kinds of stresses they'd happily avoid. Add to that the appeal of better schools, more space, and better air, and, even without great restaurants, the scales begin to tip.

Indeed, it looks like a number of millennials may soon be joining their elders—after they pay off their student loans.

As an article in *Fortune* notes, "Survey data shows that more millennials would like to be living in the suburbs than actually are."

Could we soon be talking about the myth of urban revival?

Take Me Out to the Ballgame: Summer's Fave Game Is Back

How did a stick, a ball, and a diamond capture the hearts of millions? For those who line the bleachers in big and small towns across North America, baseball's not just a game; it's everyone's summer lifestyle.

Baseball in North America traces its roots back to the late 18th century, when the first reference to the game was made in a Massachusetts law about playing it too close to the town meetinghouse. Since those early days, baseball has seen many changes that shaped it into the sport we love today.

It hailed from two similar British sports: rounders and cricket, which eventually found their way across the pond and were played in schoolyards and college campuses in the 1800s. In the fall of 1845, the New York Knickerbockers Baseball Club was born. Knicks player Alexander Cartwright established the

rules that form the basis for today's game, including the use of a diamond-shaped field and the three-strike rule. Cartwright has been established as baseball's true father, overturning a widely held, but deemed untrue, legend that a man named Abner Doubleday founded it.

Once the game was standardized by the Knickerbockers, other clubs were established. Baseball's popularity continued to grow, and eventually leagues formed. The baseball itself also underwent standardization, eventually morphing into the five-ounce, nine-inch sphere with 108 red stitches that we see in pitchers' hands today.

The sport continues to enthrall us. And best of all, nearly everyone is able to sing along when they hear, "Take me out to the ball game..."

Quick Quiz

Each month I'll give you a new question. Just email me at donzahnle@gmail.com for the answer.

What color shirt does James Taylor wear on the cover of his Sweet Baby James album?

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?

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 or text me at 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

I Gave Up TV, Then Qualified for Olympic Marathon Trials and Got My PhD

By Teal Burrell

The Washington Post

Science suggests that TV may be making us miserable. And though many people want to give it up, few do. Burrell did, and she realized important personal goals. Now she's back watching, but in "small doses," and with purpose. More: <https://tinyurl.com/Hacks-that-work1>.

30 Cleaning Hacks That Will Clean Your Car Better (and Faster) Than You Ever Have

By Staff

actively.com

Just returned from the family summer road trip? Chances are your car looks like it—it's grungy. But don't head to the nearest detailer; if you can clean your home (and yourself), you can clean your car, using the same products. Two examples: foam paintbrushes are great for cleaning hard-to-reach places, such as vents, and toothpaste cuts headlight grime. More: <https://tinyurl.com/Hacks-that-work2>.

You Can Train Yourself to Be Frugal—and It's Pretty Painless

By Kristin Wong

lifehacker.com

Redesign your lifestyle to meet your financial goals. Here are some hacks to reduce spending on hot-button areas. Wong, for example, spends too much money meeting friends in restaurants. Instead, consider hosting your friends for potlucks at home or start a walking group rather than getting together for coffee. "You have to do what works for you, based on your own lifestyle and savings goals." More: <https://tinyurl.com/Hacks-that-work3>.

Landscape for Summer Outdoor Fun and Profit

It's hard to put a value on landscaping projects. A study by realestate.com indicates the return on investment for landscaping and/or man-made garden architecture can be as high as 150%, while others suggest a more reasonable 15% to 20%.

The bottom line, however, is that everyone wants a front yard with curb appeal and a secondary living space in the back. And while it may increase the value of your home, it also improves your quality of life. Particularly for those in cooler climates, summer is short, and a landscaped outdoors can be, well, priceless.

That said, landscaping can prove a very costly proposition indeed. The generally recommended figure for a landscaping

budget is 10% of your home's value, although that varies according to your local area. The majority of projects reported in a study of landscaping by houzz.com cost from \$1,000 to \$5,000 for minor planting or mulching, and \$50,000 or more for "complete overhauls."

Remember, time is also money, and even small projects can take longer than you think. According to the Houzz survey, smaller projects averaged approximately three months of planning and three months of work to complete. Having spent time and money on landscaping, there are ways to reduce future costs:

- Lawn care alone can cost upwards of \$100 a month, so do

as much of the maintenance as possible yourself.

- Construct decks, stairs, and pergolas of maintenance-free materials such as composite decking.
- Artificial grass can be a big expense up front, but it saves on maintenance (mainly the cost of water) in the long run.
- Consider using recycled bricks instead of expensive rocks in your landscaping plan.
- Perennials are a great choice, as they reduce the need to buy new plants every year.
- Edible gardens can be lovely as well as a good source of delicious vegetables and herbs.

"Dandelion" Is Out; "YInMn" Blue Is In

Yup, the "Dandelion" crayon, "that soft-yellow hue with light hints of orange ... perfect for coloring in bright shining suns," according to strategist.com, has been discontinued by Crayola. Reaction to the company's announcement was not positive; columnists and Facebook users at large lamented the loss of Dandelion.

The popular color was introduced in 1990, and Crayola announced its demise at the end of March, along with a teaser that its replacement in the iconic 24-crayon box will be a shade of blue.

As a section of *New York* magazine devoted to shopping with profit in mind, *Strategist* advises hoarding Dandelion crayons while supplies last, comparing its future potential value with that of the long-gone Monopoly thimble piece. Sadly, by the time you read this, it may be too late. The crayon manufacturer recently revealed its replacement—a new blue pigment discovered in 2009 by chemists at Oregon State University. Initially named "YInMn" blue for its chemical makeup, the company has announced a contest to give it a more user-friendly name, with a winner to be named this summer. The newest crayon is expected to be on shelves in time for the Christmas shopping season.

Sadly, Wearables Can't Lose Weight for You

A recent clinical trial, focused on the impact of wearable tech on weight loss, returned some results that may not go over well with fans of the devices.

The IDEA study took place at the University of Pittsburgh between 2010 and 2012, and involved 470 participants between the ages of 18 and 35. All followed a low-calorie eating plan, were encouraged to boost their physical activity, and received counseling and

encouragement. Six months in, half of the group were given wearable tech devices that measured their activity.

The results? The wearables' users lost less weight than those who didn't use the technology.

So while wearable tech might be a fun way to track your health, it turns out it can't do the heavy lifting for you—at least not yet.

Ask the Agent: This Month's Question

How do I know if downsizing is right for me?

Downsizing has costs and rewards. You may have to give up things, but you'll gain something as well. If you're considering moving to an urban environment from the suburbs, you might miss your neighborhood, your neighbors, and your big workroom and garden. If you're purchasing a condo or townhome, you may have to pay HOA fees, and you'll likely sacrifice some privacy.

On the other hand, you'll probably save on utilities and maintenance costs. You can start fresh and redecorate just the way you want. And you'll find you're now able to take advantage of city life and enjoy the benefits of being close to all the urban amenities.

Plan ahead. You'll probably still want to host family celebrations. So think well-organized kitchen and sufficient entertaining space. Most importantly, keep an open mind. This may be the best move you've ever made.

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Don Zahnle, ABR,
SRES, C-CREC, CSP

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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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Summer Berry Pavlova

Serves 8

Whites of 4 large eggs
 ½ teaspoon white vinegar
 ¾ cup plus 2 tablespoons sugar
 1 tablespoon cornstarch
 ¾ teaspoon vanilla extract
 1 cup heavy cream
 2 cups mixed berries

Directions

Preheat oven to 350 degrees.

Combine egg whites, salt, and vinegar, and beat on high speed until stiff peaks form. Combine ¾ cup of sugar and the cornstarch, and gradually beat into egg whites. Add vanilla, and beat again until firm and glossy.

Spoon the meringue in 8 big dollops onto a lined baking sheet. Spread each into a circle, creating a little indent in the middle.

Bake for 10 minutes, lower heat to 200 degrees, and bake for another hour with the oven door slightly open.

Remove from oven and cool. Whip cream and remaining sugar together, and then fold in the berries. Spoon whipped cream into each meringue, and top with more berries or mint leaves.

Don's Home News is brought to you free by:

Don Zahnle, ABR, SRES, C-CREC, CSP

Atlanta Communities

3113 Roswell Rd. Suite 101

Marietta, GA 30062

404-939-1309

donzahnle@gmail.com

www.AtlantaHomesOnline.com

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.

