

# Don's Home News

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## Strange but True: There's a Positive Side to Spitefulness

When someone's waiting for your parking spot, do you dawdle? If neighbors complain about your loud music, do you turn up the volume? These are the sort of questions psychology professor David Marcus of Washington State University addresses in his recently developed Spitefulness Scale. It seems that spite is a vastly understudied human emotion, and he's out to change that.

But why? Spite isn't nice at all. The dictionary defines it as the malicious, petty, or mean-spirited desire to offend, humiliate, or harm. In fact, some people willingly sacrifice their own self-interest just to punish others. Society spurns it, but it happens, and according to Marcus' research, younger people are more spiteful than older ones, and men are more spiteful than women.

Is there a hidden side to spite? As Patrick Forber of Tufts University noted in a recent article in the *New York Times*: "It could be that Nietzsche was right about punishment ... that it originated as spite and only later was turned into a mechanism for maintaining fairness and justice."

Keith Jensen of Manchester University studies the psychological rationale for spite, and suggests that, "harm, and the threat of it, can be powerful inducements for cooperation." Then he adds: "... functionally spiteful acts might not be maladaptive." Instead they might be "an important part of human cooperation ..."

So, if you're the one who turns up the music, or drags your heels (tires?) leaving your parking space, take heart. You just may be helping build a better world.

## Are you missing the hot deals in your online searches for listings?

Most Buyers don't realize that even the top public sites take up to five days to publish new listings, and most never report when a property goes under contract. In today's hot real estate market, serious Buyer's must have listing information immediately in order to have a chance at the hottest new listings.

If you are serious about your home search, I can help save you time and frustration. Email me today at [donzahnle@gmail.com](mailto:donzahnle@gmail.com) with "Help me with my home search" in the subject line and I will set you up with the tools to access the multiple listing service in real time just like I do. I can also notify you of hot new listings within minutes of them being entered in the multiple listing services. Stop wasting time. Contact me today at [donzahnle@gmail.com](mailto:donzahnle@gmail.com).

## Three Easy Ways to Create Great Winter Curb Appeal

Selling a home during winter can be difficult. Wherever you live, the usual curb appeal tactics – a lush garden and water features – may not feel right as the holiday season approaches. But there still are ways to spruce up your exterior with seasonal flair. Here are a few:

**Work with the green around you:** Thanks to evergreens, your front yard can look beautiful no matter what the season. These versatile plants come in a range of sizes, shapes, and colors, and complement every exterior house style.

For example, plant mature cedar hedges or boxwood around the perimeter, and add porch appeal with potted evergreens beside your front door. Stick in branches of berries or artificial fruit for color, and, in southern climes, "borrow" some tropicals from the garden for a splash of color against the green in your pots.

Take inspiration from holiday décor. Buy a mini-Christmas tree and pot, and decorate it. Cover the pot with burlap, and put it by your front door.

**Brighten those dark days:** Days are shorter in winter, so keep things bright. Employ clear floodlights to showcase your home's architecture, or install driveway and walkway lights leading prospective buyers directly up the path to their new home.

**Add some bling:** Sparkle is always in style! Buy a silver, copper, or gold wreath to match your exterior, and add shiny garden globes to a lackluster garden. Keep it simple and elegant. And, oh yes, please hold the inflatable Santa and prancing reindeer until after the house is sold.

# Thanksgiving Trivia to Get You Through the Holidays

Your Thanksgivings may read like a Dickens novel: "It was the best of times, it was the worst of times." Sadly, to enjoy your much-anticipated turkey dinner, you actually have to chat to relatives you see only once a year. If you can't think of anything to say to these relative strangers, or if you're already dreading playing 20 Questions about your personal life, you could take the age-old approach of making polite small talk.

Or you can start a new tradition. This year, instead of fielding questions such as, "Who are you dating this year?" or "How much money are you making?" why not play Thanksgiving trivia?

For example: Did you know that, as noted in a *National Geographic* article by Brian Handwerk, turkey doesn't actually make you sleepy? The real

culprits, according to scientists, are all those extras (gravy, anyone) in the calorie-laden Thanksgiving meal. Handwerk also adds that pumpkin pie wasn't even part of the tradition till 1654.

Then there's this shocker: The first Thanksgiving may not even have taken place in Plymouth, MA, in 1621. There are numerous records of earlier colonial Thanksgivings, including an English one that took place in 1619, and others by groups of Spanish colonists that took place in 1541, 1565, and again in 1598.

For better or worse, you should also know that some of these early Thanksgivings actually lasted for three days. You might not be tired of turkey after three days, but you're almost sure to be tired of relatives by then.

## Quick Quiz

Each month I'll give you a new question.

Just email me at <mailto:donzahnle@gmail.com> for the answer.

What is a year in Jupiter-time?

## 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

### No Time to Think

By Kate Murphy  
*The New York Times*

What does Google know that we don't? The company offers its employees mindfulness meditation courses not only as a stress-buster, but also to boost their creativity. It seems being alone with our thoughts can inspire creativity. But many people today have an overwhelming fear of being alone. On our own, we may replay negative thoughts.

Avoiding these problems can lead to more problems. So read this, and think about it. Alone. **More:** <http://tinyurl.com/Nov-Reads>

### 11 Ways to Create More Time to Think

By Paul B. Brown  
*Forbes*

Thinking breeds creativity, but it can be hard to find time to think. These tried-and-true ways range from scheduling times just to think (pick mornings), to organizing yourself for tomorrow before bedding down. Some ideas aren't always easy: Brown suggests we turn off our cellphones for long periods of time and replace Facebook updates with thinking.

**More:** <http://tinyurl.com/Nov-Reads-2>.

### The Holy Trinity of Inactivity ...

By Thorin Klosowski  
*Lifehacker*

Perhaps we should start listing "procrastination" as a strength, not a weakness, according to author Frank Partnoy, who suggests procrastination is necessary to make decisions. This article compiles other counterintuitive ideas about thinking. More tidbits? Boredom can be a filter for determining what is truly important, and distraction can help you focus.

**More:** <http://tinyurl.com/Nov-Reads-3>

# School Districts Matter to Buyers and Sellers

It's axiomatic in the real estate industry that homes in good school districts are more desirable and fetch higher prices than similar homes in lower-tiered school districts. Indeed, buyers are willing to sacrifice or compromise on many attributes and amenities to own a property in a good school district.

## It does matter

These findings in a recent Realtor.com survey of nearly 1,000 prospective home buyers bear this out:

- More than 90 percent of respondents said school district boundaries were important in their search for a new home.
- One out of five stated that they would give up a bedroom or a garage to live in a better school district.

- One out of three said they would downsize to a smaller home if the schools were better.
- Twenty percent of respondents said they would pay 6–10 percent above their budget for a better school district.
- Ten percent would pay up to 20 percent over budget based on school quality.

**Solid investments:** The buying process should definitely include an analysis of the school district, whether you have kids or not. In addition to providing educational advantages, buying a home in a good school district is a sound financial investment. For families, buying into a good school district can save the cost of private school tuition.

But for empty-nesters, homes in top school districts tend to hold their resale value through market fluctuations, and school excellence is often a good indicator of community safety, stability, and overall quality.

Interestingly, some people without children would prefer not to live near a school but, of course, will still want to know where schools are in their preferred neighborhood. You can obtain information about test scores, excellence awards, teacher–student ratios, and other school quality factors online at sites such as [schooldigger.com](http://schooldigger.com) or [greatschools.org](http://greatschools.org). In addition, many state websites post school district report cards that enable you to compare and rank them.

## Your City at Night: Beautiful ... but Scary

You could think of it as an astronaut's guide to correcting light pollution – as compiled by non-astronauts.

Since 2003, International Space Station crews have been taking photographs of the earth at night giving us a glimpse of our cities from space. Until now, these images have been scattered around the Internet. But according to a recent article in the *Atlantic*, a group of volunteers has now put many of them together on a searchable database.

At Cities at Night ([www.citiesatnight.org](http://www.citiesatnight.org)), users can click on a map to find images of different cityscapes, as viewed from space. Envision your hometown beaming light into the universe (not a good thing). Many of the pictures are still unclassified, and viewers are asked to get involved by helping identify the cities in the photographs.

Cities at Night isn't just about viewing your home from space. It's about showing and learning about the effects of light pollution, which can cause health problems, disrupt ecosystems, and interfere with research into the hows and whys of our galaxy, among other things. Organizers hope to identify patterns in light pollution to motivate change.

## This Month's Smile: Burning Questions

Have you ever had a burning question and needed it answered now? It's usually a simple question that few people want – or need – answered. Except you.

Take, for example, the pronunciation of the condiment, Worcestershire sauce. Do you pronounce all the syllables, or is there another way? A right one? That's easy: According to the Oxford Dictionary, it's pronounced "wooster-sheer" sauce.

But what about all those other burning questions, such as: "Is there a foolproof way to cure hiccups?"

Fortunately, some of these hot queries can be answered by experts, providing you're a curious pre-teen. In Big Questions from Little People, children from four to 12 have some of their burning questions answered by a team of famous scientists. We all should be so lucky!

## Ask the Agent: This Month's Question

*How can I tell what the next hot neighborhood will be?*

You want to move into an up-and-coming neighborhood, but aren't sure what's a diamond in the rough and what's a headache waiting to happen?

A good local real estate agent will know all the up-and-coming areas. But you can also watch for these signs:

**Business is booming.** If on-trend restaurants, coffee houses, and high-end retailers are moving in, this area may be changing for the better.

**Major economic developments.** A neighborhood that boasts a new major employer is sending out good signals.

**Renovations.** If homes in a run-down area are being remodeled, it's likely the area has a bright future.

**Convenient location.** Areas within easy commuting distance of a main center are often targeted by buyers who are priced out of hot downtown neighborhoods.

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

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

1			5		2			
8	2		4					3
6				3				2
5	7	2					8	
		6				7		
	9					4	1	5
7				2				8
2					4		9	1
			8		5			7

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

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## Recipe: Leftover Turkey and Cranberry Sauce Sandwich

Serves 4

**Need some new ideas for post-Thanksgiving leftovers? This sandwich is easy and delicious.**

12 ounces leftover turkey slices (breast or dark meat)  
 1 cup leftover turkey or other stock  
 4 sweet bread rolls  
 4 heaping tablespoons cream cheese  
 4 tablespoons leftover cranberry sauce (or more to taste)

### Directions

Place the stock and turkey slices in a shallow pan and heat on low to warm through, turning once.

Meanwhile, cut rolls in half and warm in a toaster oven. Once warm, spread a heaping tablespoon of cream cheese on one side of the bread, followed by a tablespoon (or more to taste) of the cranberry sauce on the other half of the roll.

Lift the turkey slices out of the simmering stock and let excess liquid drip off, then add to the sandwich. Enjoy!

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