

# Don's Home News

Brought to you by: Don Zahnle  
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## Is Bypassing the Salt Good for Your Heart?

Some may still be rimming their margaritas with it, but just about everyone else is trying to reduce their salt intake.

After more than a century of warnings from the medical community, most of us get the fact that high levels of salt intake are linked to hypertension (high blood pressure), which, in turn, is linked to heart attacks, strokes and death.

Cut back on salt and reduce your risk of heart disease.

Seems logical.

However, not one study has conclusively demonstrated a direct causal relationship between salt and death from heart disease.

Even more confusing, some recent studies have gone so far as to suggest that the less sodium consumed, the greater the risk of dying from a heart attack. That's what was reported in a May 2011 issue of the Journal of the American Medical Association.

So should we go back to happily shaking salt on our whole wheat pasta?

Maybe it's a cop-out, but moderation may be the answer. Lightly seasoned good-for-us veggies certainly trump the plain-Jane version, and if something tastes better, we're more likely to consume it.

Then again, it may not be about salt at all.

So pass the homemade margaritas.

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## Thinking of Selling Your Home? Get My Free Guide

Did you know that you can make at least 3% more on the sale of your home if you stage it correctly? In many cases, you can make a lot more

Learn how to do it right by getting my free guide, "50 Essential Tips to Prepare Your Home for a Speedy, Top-Price Sale."

Just email me at [donzahnle@gmail.com](mailto:donzahnle@gmail.com) and I'll send it right out to you.

## How Your Bedroom Can Help Sell Your Home

A great master bedroom will help sell your home. But you don't have to spend a lot of money, time and effort trying to impress buyers. Following are 11 easy ways to spruce up your master for little money:

- De-clutter and de-personalize. Buyers want to see themselves in the master bedroom. Don't surround them with the trappings of your life.
- Clean, clean and clean some more.
- Make necessary repairs.
- Paint. You don't have to go for beige (or gray, which is the new beige), but emphasize the room's spaciousness with lighter colors. Don't forget the ceiling.
- Move some of the furniture out to add to an airy, uncluttered feel.
- Heavy drapes might be nice at night, but during the day they can feel confining. Take them down and buy inexpensive sheers. Add blinds for light control.
- Speaking of light, add more task and ambient lighting, and leave lights on to minimize shadows and illuminate dark corners.
- Buy a new duvet cover.
- Hang inexpensive artwork or a mirror and lose the family photos.
- Don't cover hardwood floors with carpeting or put furniture in front of a window with a view.
- Clean out the closets so buyers can see the space and decide if their clothes will fit.

# Why Your Memory Isn't What It Used to Be

Memory can play tricks on people. Maybe that's why many of us don't bother to commit addresses, friends' names and other bits of key information to memory. Instead, we rely on Google, Bing and sometimes even our spouse to do it for us.

According to scientists at Columbia University, the Internet has become our primary form of external memory. Studies done at Columbia found that participants who expected to have access to information in the future had a lower recall rate. However, they had high rates of remembering where to access that information. The conclusion: We don't need to remember things anymore. We just have to know where to find it.

Interestingly, when it comes to remembering, the Internet has some

competition, and that competition is your partner. According to studies conducted by Hollingshead and Brandon in 2003, couples who have been together for some time automatically "assign" the job of remembering, say, a second cousin's kid's name to one spouse, while the other might be "in charge" of remembering garbage days. Both are forms of something called transactive memory, meaning you rely on an external memory source to locate key information.

The danger is that you become so reliant on your computer or your spouse that a technological or relationship meltdown leaves you with no access to important information. So, let's hope our technology - and our relationships - never fail us.

## Worth Reading

### More Evidence That Exercise Is Key to Brain Health

By Karen Pallarito, *health.com*, in *Time Healthland*

Worried about cognitive decline? Get busy. Yes, exercise is important, but lab tests indicate that everyday activity, not just at-the-gym exercise, may help maintain brain health.

**More:** <http://tinyurl.com/44aff49>

### The End Is Always Nigh in the Human Mind

By Michael Shermer, *New Scientist*

Doomers and gloomers will have a field day with this opinion piece by Shermer, publisher of *Skeptic* magazine. Let's just say some cope with a senseless world by looking for redemption through an apocalypse.

**More:** <http://tinyurl.com/3wszald>

### Can a Playground Be Too Safe?

By John Tierney  
*The New York Times*

Those of us of a certain age know bumps and scrapes are part of growing up, but it's taken awhile for others to come around. New research shows that kids who have fallen off high playground equipment are less, not more, likely to fear heights later in life.

**More:** <http://tinyurl.com/3nu55xn>

### How to Live the Maximalist Life

By Peter G. James Sinclair  
*DumbLittleMan.com*

Many questions here: How to live the best, most productive life possible by becoming a maximalist (as opposed to a minimalist)? How to think, read and associate maximalist? And is the Dumb Little Man website aptly named?

**More:** <http://tinyurl.com/62ctfds>

## Quick Quiz

Each month I'll give you a new question.

Just email me at [donzahnle@gmail.com](mailto:donzahnle@gmail.com) for the answer.

This month's question is:

What color is an octopus's blood?

## 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!

## Wondering How Much Your Home Is Worth?

How has the price of your home changed in today's market? How much are other homes in your neighborhood selling for?

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.

# Market Analysis: It's More Than Picking a Price

So, you're selling your home.

To decide on the right selling price, your real estate agent will have used information available through the Real Estate Board's Multiple Listing Service (MLS) system to compare your home to others that have sold recently in your area.

Together you've gone through the comparables and opted for a price you're happy with.

You know that he or she will now start marketing your home through the MLS system and advertising it in newspapers and online.

Your real estate agent may also hold an open house and contact other agents to promote your home. But what you may

not know is that throughout this process, your agent is continuing to analyze the market to ensure that your home is still well-priced and will recommend adjustments if the situation changes.

Take a couple named Ann and Christopher. Their detached, three-bedroom home was similar to others in their neighborhood, but Ann and Christopher had renovated the entire upstairs to create a new master suite and built a deck accessed from the kitchen. It had more to offer than did neighboring homes. So when their agent, Michael, saw that the home across the street was selling for \$10,000 less than their home, he was quick to review details of that home, consult

with Ann and Christopher, and change the market tactic to emphasize the special features of their property.

When Michael received negative feedback during Christopher and Ann's open house, he told them and together they decided what to do about it. If there was a rumor of a new highway in the area or a new school to be built, Michael would know about it and could then consider the impact on his clients.

Michael's job as a real estate agent involved constantly monitoring the market factors and responding accordingly. The result was a quick, successful sale of Ann and Christopher's home.

## Halloween Treats From Across the Pond

Halloween food needn't be boring.

Why not turn to the customs and goodies of other countries to impress your guests this year?

The tradition of hiding little charms in fruitcake or other concoctions at this time of year hails from across the pond. Barmbrack, a light fruitcake from Ireland, has coins and even a ring baked in. The person who finds the ring will also find true love in the next year, according to tradition.

Perhaps a less appealing dish, also from Ireland, is Colcannon. This combination of mashed potatoes and cabbage conceals small coins. Children, in particular, should be warned not to bite down too hard or swallow their gift.

Roasted pumpkin seeds or anything with pumpkin is traditionally served at this time of year, so pumpkin muffins will be well-received.

And instead of candy apples, try British bonfire toffee made by caramelizing molasses with butter. The little witches and goblins will love it.

## Ask the Agent: This Month's Question

**How is your real estate agent paid?**

As a seller, you list your home through your agent's broker, and the agreed-upon commission goes directly to the broker. It's usually a percentage of the sale price but can be a flat fee.

Your real estate agent incurs all the expenses, which ultimately he or she will recoup through the commission.

Typically, your buyer will have an agent, and the commission will be split between that agent's broker and yours.

It's not always 50/50. Both the seller's and buyer's agents will receive their commissions from their respective brokers.

Their cut can vary.

Your agent might list and sell your home, in which case their broker receives all the commission.

The buyer typically isn't responsible for compensating the buyer's agent but might assume responsibility under some circumstances.

## Five Tech Tips for the Average Joe

The world of technology moves quickly. But what if the average Joe needs a little help? Following are five tech tips:

If you're bad at math, use Google. Just type your equation into the search bar and press enter. Use an asterisk (\*) for multiplying and a slash (/) for dividing.

If you're trying to email a file that is too big, use [yousendit.com](http://yousendit.com) to transfer it to your recipient. To paste something into

Microsoft Word without all the colors and boxes, click "Edit," then "Paste Special" and then "Unformatted Text."

You can use your Android phone or iPhone to scan and get information about those black-and-white QR codes on posters and advertisements.

Decrease the brightness of your laptop's screen when you disconnect.

# NEWS YOU CAN USE

Don  
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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'd 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.

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## Recipe: Stuffed Portabella Mushrooms

Serves 6 as a side dish

- 6 portabella mushrooms, insides carefully scooped out, chopped and set aside
- 1 tablespoon butter
- 1 zucchini, finely chopped
- 1 teaspoon chopped fresh thyme
- 1½ cups cooked rice or quinoa
- Salt and pepper, to taste
- ¼ cup finely chopped walnuts

Preheat oven to 350 degrees Fahrenheit. Gently rub scooped-out portabella mushrooms all over with a little sunflower oil and place on a lightly greased baking sheet, scooped-out side up. Melt butter in a frying pan over medium heat and sauté the chopped mushroom with the zucchini until soft and the mushrooms have released their water, and then add the thyme. Cook for a minute and then add the mixture to the rice or quinoa. Mix and season to taste with salt and pepper. Spoon about ¼ cup of the mixture into each portabella cap and sprinkle with ground walnuts. Bake for about 20 minutes.

