

Matt's Home News

News To Help You Save Time And Money

November 2015

The Happiest Bird In The World

A crow living in a forest was absolutely satisfied in life. Then one day he saw a swan. "That swan is so graceful and sleek," he thought. "He must be the happiest bird in the world."

He flew over and told the swan about his thoughts.

"Actually," the swan replied, "I was the happiest bird around until I saw a parrot with many colors. Then I realized that the parrot must be the happiest bird in creation."

The crow spotted a parrot in a tree and flew up to share the swan's words.

The parrot said, "I thought so, too, until I saw a peacock in the zoo with beautiful wings and dazzling colors. Everyone was admiring his bright plumage, and I thought he must be the happiest bird in the world."



The crow found the zoo and saw dozens of people peering at the peacock's beautiful colors. The crow was filled with jealousy.

From above the peacock's cage, the crow called down, "You are so beautiful! Every day thousands of people come to see you. You must feel very lucky."

The peacock looked up at the crow.

"Lucky? I am stuck in this zoo, where I can't fly and people just stare at me. You can fly wherever you please. You must be the happiest bird in the world!"

~Matt Haviland

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Insulating The Attic

November heralds the start of our cold season, and with it, a rise in energy costs. To significantly reduce heat loss and expenses, it pays to winterize the one place where most heat is lost: the attic. Here is a check list of items to focus on to keep the heat in:

- Weather strip and insulate the attic access door.
- Seal around the outside of the chimney.
- Seal around plumbing vents, both in the attic floor and in the roof.
- Cap off the top of interior walls in old houses where you can peer into the wall cavity from the attic.
- Insert fiberglass insulation around electrical wire penetrations at the top of interior walls.
- Staple a radiant barrier under the rafters or joists to reflect 97% of the radiant heat that strikes it.

November Quiz Question

Q: *What is a crudivore?*

October Question

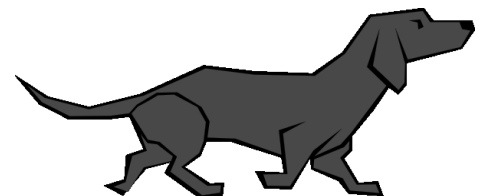
Q: *A small lily pad sits in the middle of a 60-meter pond. The lily pad doubles in size every day. In 48 days it has covered the pond. On what day will it have covered half the pond?*

A: *Day 47.*

Want Better Health? Try A Dog

A dog can be your best friend—and a benefit to your health. Here are some ways owning a dog can keep you hale and hearty in mind and body:

- **More exercise.** Just walking the dog gets you out of the house, but most dog owners do more than dash out for a few minutes once or twice a day. You'll take longer walks and get more exercise once you're outside with your pooch.
- **Better mental health.** Studies suggest that pet owners are less likely to suffer from depression and other mental health problems. The affection they get from their pets is one factor, along with the need to focus on their pets' welfare and be more active.
- **Illness prevention.** Dogs may have the ability to smell cancer in your body, detect low blood sugar, sense foods that their owners are allergic to (such as peanuts), and detect oncoming seizures. Some of these talents require specialized training; others may be somewhat instinctive.
- **Happier social life.** When you're out on walks and exercising with your dog, people naturally gravitate toward you to ask questions about your pet. Many people form meaningful friendships within their group of dog owners.



Self-Repairing Concrete

Concrete is completely inflexible, which means that natural ground shifts can cause hairline cracks to form in concrete structures over time. When water seeps into these cracks, the concrete weakens and eventually crumbles.



Dutch inventor, Henk Jonkers, has discovered a form of bacteria that, under the right conditions, produces a clingy limestone that grows to fill those hairline cracks.

To produce this self-repairing concrete, manufacturers store the bacteria in minuscule plastic bubbles along with calcium lactate, and then mix them into dry concrete. When the concrete cures, the plastic bubbles set. If water seeps into cracks in the cured concrete, the plastic shells melt, exposing the bacteria to water, which starts the growth of limestone.

Self-repairing concrete could significantly extend the life of vulnerable roads, bridges, staircases, and buildings.

Stay Cool In The Face Of Criticism

No one enjoys being criticized, but sometimes you've got to accept it productively. If you're facing criticism at work, here are some steps to think about:

- **Acknowledge.** Resist the urge to attack the other person, blame someone else, or ignore the criticism. Instead, take a breath, acknowledge a problem exists, and express your willingness to discuss it further: "I understand your concern," or "I can see that you're upset."
- **Inquire.** Ask for more information to show you're taking the criticism seriously and to ensure you fully understand their concerns. Listen with an open mind and be ready to learn from mistakes you may have made. Try to see it from their perspective, even if you feel they're not seeing it from yours.
- **Respond.** Give the other person a fair hearing first. Thank them for coming to you. Then take the next step that you feel is justified. You may want to investigate further, offer an apology, or—if you feel the criticism is unjustified—offer your perspective respectfully and calmly.



Stash Some Cash

Looking for ways to save a little money? Here are a few quick ideas that don't require much planning or effort:

- **Empty your pockets.** Stash all loose change in a jar or piggy bank, rather than spending it.
- **Use your coupons.** Remember to use coupons only for the things you would normally buy. Add up the difference and stash the savings away.
- **Stash a dollar a wash.** Whenever you do a load of laundry, put a dollar in a jar.
- **Pay yourself for a coffee.** Every day when you pour a cup of coffee at home or work, pay yourself a dollar.



Great Service Referrals

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Housing, Circa 2050

Today, the population of the world is about 7.3 billion. By 2050, the UN predicts it will be 9 billion. What does that mean for the future of housing?

One thing is for certain: New homes will not be built at nearly the same rate as our population growth. That means we will have to make smarter use of what we have, and rethink the space and resources we need.

For instance, consider household size. In the early 1900's, five-person households were normal. Today, one-person households are common. By 2050 there may be a shift to more shared housing, including granny flats and conversions of family homes into duplexes.

Homes in 2050 will probably not look much different on the outside than homes today, because the vast majority of houses that will exist in 2050 have already been built.

But on the inside, homes will become smarter and more sustainable. Homes already come with an array of sensors that automatically switch lights on and off, order our groceries, and even monitor our health. Many houses are already fully wireless.

A drive for resource efficiency could see water recycled within each home, integrated solar panels, ultra-thin insulation, and micro-generators.

One thing that won't change about housing...location, location, location will still be the dominating factor in real estate. The question is what locations will be important in 2050? New cities may spring up in the middle of nowhere, while other cities may undergo important changes in infrastructure.

Connect With Your Kids

One of the biggest challenges for today's time-pressed parents is sharing quality time with their kids. Fostering a true connection with kids doesn't always have to mean scaling back your work hours or stepping off the career fast track. Try these suggestions:

- **Hold weekly family meetings.** Use them to schedule everyone's activities for the week, from school meetings to fun family outings. Give your kids a say on decisions; it makes them realize that they're an integral part of the family.
- **Share their interests.** Yes, that means enduring their taste in music, movies, and games. One idea: Get them subscriptions to magazines associated with their hobbies or activities, and commit to reading and talking with them about at least one article/topic related to their world.
- **Share your work with them.** Bring them to your workplace. Show them what you do and how your work relates to the organization. When you have a particular success at work, celebrate it with your family. This teaches children the importance of work while helping them understand how it affects your life.
- **Volunteer with them.** If you have the time, choose one day each month to volunteer at a local shelter, charity, or organization. Working alongside your kids is a great way to model good work ethics while sharing experiences.

“Walked Into A Bar” Jokes

You might need a drink or two to appreciate these groaners:

- An amnesiac walks into a bar, approaches a beautiful woman, and says, “So, do I come here often?”
- A skunk walks into a bar and says, “Hey, where did everybody go?”
- A fish walks into a bar. The bartender says, “What do you want?” The fish gasps, “Water.”
- A termite walks into a bar and says, “Is the bar tender here?”
- A priest, a rabbi, and a minister walk into a bar. The bartender looks at them and says, “Is this some kind of joke?”



Lose Weight With One Step



Want to lose weight? Take this one important step: Step onto a scale every day. That may seem obvious, but it's also supported by the results of a study reported on the *Live Science* website.

In the study, researchers challenged 162 people to reduce their weight by 10% over a year. About half the participants were given scales and told to check and record their weight every morning. The other half was not given any advice.

Although few participants in either group achieved the goal of losing 10% of their weight, 29% of those given scales succeeded in losing at least 5%, but only 11% in the scale-free group lost as much. In addition, participants given scales managed to maintain their weight for a second year.

The researchers have theorized that checking weight once a day may help people pay more attention to what they eat, and reinforce positive weight-loss behaviors, like skipping dessert.

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See page 7

Predictions Of The Future From The Past

In 1660's London, chemist Robert Boyle helped found the Royal Society, the world's first scientific body dedicated to research. At that time, he created a 24-item "wish list" of predictions that he hoped the scientific community would one day make come true. 350 years later, it's interesting to notice how many of his wishes have come true. Here are just a few of the items from his list that could not be done in his day, but are common today:

- *"The prolongation of life."* (We take it for granted that our lives will last into the 70's and 80's or longer. In Boyle's day, a long life span was commonly up to the 50's or 60's.)
- *"The recovery of youth, or at least some of the marks of it, as new teeth."* (Our dentistry techniques were unimagined in Boyle's day.)
- *"The art of flying."*
- *"The art of continuing long underwater, and exercising functions freely there."* (As with SCUBA diving and submarines.)
- *"The acceleration of the production of things out of seed."* (As in genetic modification.)
- *"The practicable and certain way of finding longitudes."* (This had been a continual challenge for navigators, all the way up to the introduction of the GPS in 1995.)
- *"A perpetual light device."* (Electric lights were finally invented in 1879.)

MATT'S HOME NEWS

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- Please let me know the listing price and features of the home at the following address:
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Name: _____

Address: _____

City: _____ State/Province: _____ Zip/Postal: _____

Fake It 'til You Make It

Dear Friend,

A friend of mine once said that the way you become good at something in life is by faking your way through it the first few times, until you learn how to do it without faking. That makes sense. Even as adults, there are many first times...a first time you run a meeting at work, a first networking event, a first sale, a first party in your home, etc.

In many of life's public situations, you don't want to look new and green; it's embarrassing, and messing up could prove costly. Even if you explain that it's your first time and ask others to cut you a little slack, there are still plenty of first, second, third times that you'll just need to push on.

Fortunately, most people are willing to accord you with the authority you are taking on. If you're running the meeting, you are probably the right person to run the meeting. If you're making the sale, you're probably the person with the knowledge to help them make a decision. If you're at a networking event, you probably have something to contribute. And, nervous as you might be that no one will show up, if you throw the party just the way the experts say to do it, you'll probably have a great crowd.

People tend to expect that you belong in the role you are taking on at any given moment. Once you know that, you can be powerful in just about any new endeavor. If you don't let on—by apologizing, hiding out, or calling attention to your own mistakes—then they probably will never realize it either. If you step into the role you're taking on, almost as an actor, and pretend to be experienced at it, they'll go right along with you.

It may feel like you're faking it the first few times, but eventually you realize you're not faking it anymore, because you've made it!

Sincerely,



Matt Haviland
Your Real Estate Consultant For Life

P.S. If you have a great parable you'd like to share with me, please send it to me at Matt@SJHouses.com or call me at 609-338-3773

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