



On the Road Again: The Return of the RV Lifestyle

North Americans are traveling the highways and byways again. And doing it in style. After the halcyon days of RVing in the 70s, the industry declined. The 2008 financial crisis practically destroyed it, but now vehicles ranging from small trailers to high-end products (like the \$400,000 Winnebago camper “that looks like a fancy, spacious apartment,” according to an NPR report) are once again “on the road.”

As RV sales rep Renée Hinson told NPR: “Having seen the business since the ’70s forward, it’s back to like the ’70s. ... We’ve seen astounding growth.” Why the popularity? Seems there’s a new wave of RV fans: millennials.

Traditionally the largest group of RV enthusiasts has been retirees, staking out a place in the sun or just traveling the country. But according to the Recreational Vehicle Industry Association, the average age of an RV owner is now under 50. And Hinson says she’s selling campers to 30-year-olds “like never before.”

As a CBS News report from last summer says: “Images of millennials on RV road trips and outdoor adventures have filled social media all summer long, and #Camping posts on Instagram are now over 14 million.” As Allison Lago Leonard, general manager of the KOA campsite in Mystic, Connecticut, notes in the CBS article: “There’s 75 million campers out there, and one third, 38%, of us are millennials. So, I mean, we’re catching up and we’re catching on.”

Concludes CBS’s report: “... you can live just about anywhere. And for the millennials now driving RV sales, that’s the point.”



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“Surban” Lifestyle May Offer the Best of Two Worlds

Suburban lifestyle or city amenities? That’s the issue many millennials are facing, but now it seems that choice has become a lot easier: a new hybrid blends the best of suburban and urban living into one. Of course, it’s called “surban.”

According to Urban Dictionary, this concept involves “new or redeveloped suburban downtown areas comprised of elements of urban living while maintaining suburban affordability.”

From the ’90s on, we’ve lived in an “age of urbanization,” according to a recent article in RISMedia. As author Len Elder suggests, this “centered around the renewal of inner cities, development of mixed-use properties in urban areas, increased attention to mass transit, and a renewed focus on downtown condos.”

Recently, however, there’s been a renewed interest in suburban living. And for those with urban tastes, unable to afford city living and perhaps not quite ready for the true suburban lifestyle, surban offers the best of two worlds—a variety of housing types with nearby city-like amenities at affordable prices.

In fact, the surban trend is popping up all across America. As Elder notes: “The Urban Land Institute estimates that these areas will draw at least 80% of the coming wave of households and will attract the most families in the next 10 years.”

As “surbanite” KTGy explains in Urban Dictionary: “I love my new house in the surban area of Phoenix, located outside of the city but within our vibrant and walkable community that offers restaurants, transportation, entertainment, education, employment and recreation.”

KTGY can expect lots of company.



Cities Are Thinking Instagram: Is This Good, Bad, or Just a Fad?

Do you want to live in an “Instagram Playground”? According to a recent CityLab headline, it’s happening right now: “Your Entire City Is an Instagram Playground” But is this good or bad? You decide.

People have been posting on Instagram since 2010, but now there’s a twist: humans are sharing the frame with city signs, like the mega tourist attraction “I Amsterdam” sign, which became the city’s marketing slogan. Posted outside the Rijksmuseum (and now in several spots around town), the giant red and white sign has attracted millions of tourists, all toting cellphones and looking for the perfect angle for selfies.

Many others have followed, including Toronto, Canada, where big block letters shout “Toronto” in front of its iconic city hall. Brand experts describe it as a huge marketing success, drawing some 120 million social media impressions. Kids (and adults) love the letters, climbing on them, jumping off them, and crawling through them as if the sign were a giant jungle gym.

But, of course, there’s a downside. Notes Amsterdam website Dutchamsterdam.nl:



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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.

“... now that (according to a growing number of locals) Amsterdam is ‘overrun’ with tourists, many Amsterdammers believe the sign has worked too well, and has overstayed its welcome.” With it, apparently, came petty crime, vandalism, and crowded restaurants and attractions. As a result, the city’s marketing message is now targeted to corporations and organizations, not tourists.

The dilemma: anonymity or tourist overkill? Decide where you stand now. Big block letters may soon be on their way to a city near you.



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?

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Worth Reading

How to See a Memory

By Helen Shen

Nature.com

Find it hard to remember things?

Try describing what a memory looks like. Researchers have been studying the brain for years, trying to determine how and where in the brain memories form. Their goal is to find the “engram”: the physical trace of a single memory. Helen Shen reviews past and current memory research; memory-making may be more complex than we thought. **More:**

<https://tinyurl.com/April-reading1>

How Dirt Could Save Humanity from an Infectious Apocalypse

By Peter Andrey Smith

Wired.com

Enjoy gardening? Did you know the dirt between your fingers could help save your life? Sean Brady is a chemist who is determined to find undiscovered antibiotics in dirt. As diseases become increasingly resistant to antibiotics, many fear an “Infectious Apocalypse.” Brady doesn’t limit his search to gardens; he tests pretty much everywhere. His methods aren’t without detractors, however. This piece explains it all. **More:**

<https://tinyurl.com/April-reading2>

Benjamin Franklin Built His Character Around 13 Virtues ...

By Trent Hamm

From *The Simple Dollar*, reprinted in *Business Insider*

If Benjamin Franklin were alive today, he could have had a great career as a life coach. Franklin resolved to live his life by 13 core virtues, and created a system to track his progress. This article explains each virtue and gives tips on creating your own Franklin-styled improvement system. **More:**

<https://tinyurl.com/April-reading3>

Standing Strong: Paints That Reflect Our Reality

If you have the urge to remodel this spring, don't start tearing down walls. Consider updating with paint.

This year, you can find just the color to suit your mood; the very influential paint manufacturers have chosen palettes ranging from peaceful shades to vibrant colors.

Turn inward but stand strong

According to Martha Uniacke Breen in *The National Post*, paint colors reflect the way we see the world. "[This year] in both a décor and a psychological sense, it's hard to be neutral," Breen suggests. "There's both a turning inwards towards peace and refuge, and a sense of standing strong, even defiance."

For example, Benjamin Moore's color of the year for 2018 is a spicy red called "Caliente" ("Hot" in

Spanish), and red, generally, is showing up in everything from appliances to cars. But for the shy among us, Benjamin Moore offers a variation: deep rich pinks.

Dark colors are also on trend. Paint manufacturer PPG's Black Flame is best as a wall color; it highlights the room's architecture, furniture, and lighting. That said, dark colors can be unforgiving and may highlight those less-than-perfect walls.

Challenging "Ultra Violet"

Pantone has challenged décoristas with its 2018 color of the year, Ultra Violet. It has a tendency to take over, designers say, and so must be handled with care. Some are using softer shades (even extending to lavender), and others are pairing it with partners such as celadon green or camel. But be aware: this bold color should be used judiciously.

Another trend is bringing the outside in with colors such as Beauti-Tone's Green Peace. "It's peaceful and almost neutral, but it has attitude," says company representative Bev Bell.

Fortunately, the 2018 color palette is generally easy to use. Says Breen: "...all of these shades are amazingly versatile. They can be either dramatic or quietly enveloping, depending on what else you choose to put with them."



Find a Healthier Life in the Produce Aisles

North Americans typically eat far less than the 25 to 30 grams of recommended daily dietary fiber. And reasons for this abound. But it comes down to one thing: more people are eating at restaurants, taking out, and ordering in, meaning they're unlikely to purchase vegetables or fruits—the items containing the most dietary fiber.

As most of us know, high-fiber diets are good for us: they help us lose weight, reduce the risk of diabetes, and slow dementia. In fact, a recent study published in the journal *Neurology*, and reported by NPR, found that "healthy seniors who had daily helpings of leafy green vegetables—such as spinach, kale and collard greens—had a slower rate of cognitive decline, compared to those who tended to eat little or no greens."

Fiber also helps intestines break down bacteria, which, in addition to promoting gut health, can help prevent food allergies.

But still we hesitate. Incorporating more fiber doesn't have to be hard. Just spend the majority of your shopping dollars in the perimeter of your local grocery store; these showcase fresh fruits, whole-grain breads, and those great leafy vegetables ... which, incidentally, are delicious!

TLC Tips for Tidying Up Your Tech

Like our homes and cars, our tech devices need regular maintenance to perform better and last longer. Try these tips, courtesy of Gizmodo.com.

Organize your photos: There are zillions of photos and videos languishing on our phones and hard drives. Sort through them all, deleting repetitive selfies and making folders for keepers. Then order prints or even a photobook.

Clean and polish: According to WHOOSH!, a tech hygiene company, one in six smartphones has nasty bathroom germs. Disinfect your devices with a screen-cleaning product that also leaves them sparkling.

Free up space: Delete unused apps and old e-mails and texts to make room on your devices and help them run faster.

Ask the Agent: This Month's Question

What Can Sellers Do Before a Home Inspection?

Buyers want to know they're purchasing a property not only that they love, but that's safe and well-maintained. A home inspection is designed to reveal any potential problems with the property. So sellers should try to make the buyer's inspection as smooth as possible to avoid red flags that might scrap the purchase.

Clean, then tackle tasks you might overlook in your day-to-day life. Change the furnace filter. Replace light bulbs. If you haven't yet, replace smoke detector batteries. Review major home features for potential concerns. Check windows for cracks, and replace any damaged panes or screens. Check outlets and replace if needed. Remove any clutter around HVAC systems to provide easy access. Some inspectors are more thorough than others, and some buyers are pickier. Completing these steps proactively may bring you and your buyer to the closing table — faster and happier.

The Coco, Early Report

Coco, Early & Associates

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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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Orzo Salad with Spring Peas and Fresh Herbs

Serves 6

- 1 ¼ cups (8 oz.) uncooked orzo pasta
- 2 teaspoons lemon zest, reserved
- ½ cup fresh-squeezed lemon juice
- ¼ cup minced shallots
- 1 clove garlic, minced
- 1 teaspoon chopped fresh thyme
- 1 teaspoon Dijon mustard
- ½ teaspoon salt
- ½ teaspoon ground pepper
- 3 tablespoons extra virgin olive oil
- 2 cups fresh peas, cooked and cooled
- 1 cup mixed chopped fresh herbs (e.g., mint, chives, parsley)
- ½ cup sliced almonds, toasted

Prepare orzo according to package directions. Meanwhile, in a small bowl, whisk together the lemon juice, shallots, garlic, thyme, mustard, salt, and pepper. Continue whisking while gradually pouring in olive oil. Set aside.

Drain the orzo and place in a large bowl. Fold in the dressing and cool, then cover and chill for 1 to 48 hours.

Before serving, toss the orzo with the peas, herb mixture, zest, and almonds. Adjust seasoning with more salt, pepper, or lemon juice, if necessary.

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