

On The Horizon...



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Special points of interest:

- How to get really good at something, page 2.
- A house is not a home (do you know the difference), page 2.
- IRA advice, page 3.
- Two important things to remember during the tough economy, page 3.

March Madness

It starts with Selection Sunday (March 15, 2009) when you see basketball players throw their arms in the air and cheer for their selection. Players from the smallest schools cheer the loudest and for good reason.

At last, they have a chance to show the world they can compete with the big-names like North Carolina, Duke and UCLA. And when they battle the Goliaths, that's when March Madness is at its maddest.

Each of four regional groups has 16 teams ranked from 1 (the most awesome) to 16 (the most brave but least strong). Then number 1 plays 16, 15 plays

2 and so on in a three-week elimination march to the championship.

The best action is concentrated into the first four days, when 64 schools are whittled down to 16. One after another, CBS shows games in their entirety so not one shot is left out.

The games are also broadcast over the Internet, so fans at their computers can check their favorite team's progress. In many organizations, basketball pools let everyone decide which teams will win and who will be the champ. Usually, it's a lot of fun for a buck or two.



Game schedule for the NCAA Championship:

[March 17](#), Opening Round

[March 19-20](#), First Round

[March 21-22](#), Second Round

[March 26-27](#), Third Round

[March 28-29](#), Fourth Round

[April 4 and 6](#), Final Four games at Ford Field in Detroit, Mich.

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Come Visit New Orleans

French Quarter Festival, New Orleans, April 17-19

Come one, come all. Though New Orleans' French Quarter Festival attracts almost a half million people during its three-day run, there are so many events for individuals

and families that you won't be elbow-to-elbow with other visitors and revelers.

The festival focuses on all the things that make the French Quarter special. There are more than 100 events to choose from.

There are free concerts on 16 different stages. Activities include a parade, historic patio tours, and activities designed specifically for families and children.

Visit www.fqfi.org for a schedule.



News From Our Office....

2009 is moving by quickly. We will be launching a new website in March that focuses only on maritime issues and laws. It will have videos and lots of links to helpful sites including Coast Guard links and offshore related websites. We want to make it interesting and helpful .

Over the last two months we have resolved several cases. One client received a favorable settlement for an injury to his lower back that did not require surgery.

Another client was injured more seriously and we were able to obtain a settlement from the designer and builder of the offshore platform upon which his injury occurred. Our marine engineer determined that the defendant company did not follow all aspects of the contract to design and build the platform, thus allowing us to negotiate the settlement.

We have added a maritime quiz to our website at www.HurtOffshore.com where you can test your knowledge of

maritime law. And we give you the answers when you are done so you can see how well you did! Give it a try.

Like everyone else, we can't help but read how poorly the economy is doing. People are having real problems, but some of the best advice we read is to try to stay positive. Your house is not the same as your home. You alone get to decide your attitude...and it doesn't cost you anything.

Tell Your Children...

According to Geoff Colvin, senior editor at Fortune: "Talent is Overrated." In his new book by the same name, he says researchers see little evidence of talent in high-achieving individuals before they had intensive training.

The findings show up in every kind of endeavor and in business people, artists, sports figures and others. The researchers don't say talent doesn't exist or help, but that practice and diligent work are more important to success.

"Deliberate practice" designed to improve performance is the key. It in-

cludes continually stretching yourself just beyond your current capabilities. You have to identify the elements of your performance that need to be improved and work intensely on them and with repetition. That means using deep focus and concentration.

For deliberate practice to be effective, do what is difficult and painful.

In the beginning, and sometimes long after, you should have a teacher to guide you, says Colvin. Anyone who thinks he's outgrown

the benefits of a teacher's help should question that view. You need feedback.

It may seem that the most important things you can do to improve in your work are not fun. But if the activities that lead to greatness were enjoyable, everyone would do them. There would be no way to distinguish the best from the rest.

Bottom line: If you think you aren't highly talented in an area, you can still become great by learning and practicing deliberately.

You Can Say That Again...

Five words that resonate with power

Business Week's Frank Lutz says that in his research for a new book, he has discovered the most powerful words that business leaders use today.

The number one word is "consequences." There can be good consequences and bad ones, but the word instantly personalizes and dramatizes the potential result of an

action.

Next comes "impact." Lutz says it makes people pay attention and causes them to assume they can make a measurable difference. People want results. They aren't interested in hearing about efforts or solutions. They want to know how well they can execute.

"Reliability" increasingly has great resonance in business, especially with cus-

tomers. Whether it's a product or service, reliability is a factor in price. It adds value.

"Mission" and "commitment" should be part of your business vocabulary. The old words, pledges and promises, don't carry much weight. Leaders now have to put their credibility on the line to achieve a successful outcome.

IRA Rules

How to tap into an IRA at age 55 without penalty

If you want to retire early, but don't want to pay the 10 percent early withdrawal penalty on your IRA, here's how to do it.

You can apply for 72(t) distributions to avoid the penalty. Under that plan, you agree to make equal periodic withdrawals for five years or until you reach age 59 1/2, whichever comes later.

If your retirement savings are in a 401(k), you would have to roll them over into an IRA in order

to take advantage of the 72(t) options.

There are three methods for calculating the monthly distribution amounts that are approved by the Internal Revenue Service. Your tax professional will help you determine which plan to choose. Annual payments are set up for a 29.6 year life expectancy for 55-year-olds.

Prudential Insurance customer service department gives an example of the withdrawal for a 55-year-old who has \$250,000 in an IRA and wants to set up a 72(t). Under the Minimum Dis-

tribution Method, the monthly check would be about \$703, which would be the least you could take. Under the Amortization and Annuitization Methods, it would be about \$500 to \$600 a month more than that.

Distribution amounts also vary according to the interest rate used in the calculations, which was 4.3 percent in this example.



Realism And Optimism

Two must-haves during a recession

Al Neuharth, founder of USA Today, says the must-haves are realism and optimism. Having lived through many recessions and one depression, the 84-year-old has some sound advice.

* Realism means tightening your belt. Spend only what is necessary and funnel what you

can into the future.

* Optimism means investing now in everything worthwhile you can afford, such as new ideas and new products. Neuharth says the best time to market anything new is during a recession.

If you invest in the future, the best of times are ahead for you, he says.

“Realism means tightening your belt. Spend only what is necessary and funnel what you can into the future”

Kids Korner

Prayers

Everyone was seated around the table as the food was being served. When little Logan received his plate, he started eating right away.

"Logan, wait until we say our prayer," his mother reminded him.

"I don't have to," the little boy replied. "Of course you do," his mother insisted, "We say a prayer before eating at our house."

"That's at our house," Logan explained, "but this is Grandma's and she knows how to cook!"

Perfect hearing

An elderly gentleman had a serious hearing problem for a long time. He finally saw a doctor who fitted him with a device that gave him normal hearing. When the man returned in a month, the doctor said, "Your hearing is perfect. Your family must be pleased."

"Oh, I haven't told them yet," the gentleman replied. "I just sit around and listen to their conversations."

"I've changed my will three times!"



"What's the text abbreviation for 'yippee yippee yo, yippee yay, yippee yo kai aye?'"



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March Horoscope

ARIES: You now realize that some of your beliefs are not based on the reality of your life. Readjusting your thinking could have long-term benefits. Don't grieve it, just move forward.

TAURUS: Meditation will calm you and lead your thoughts in a more constructive direction. Remember that time is on your side. There is no need to make big changes in your life until you are ready.

GEMINI: The edge in a close associate's or loved one's voice should tell you that something you don't know is going on with that person. If you ask questions, you could discover what it is.

CANCER: You don't have to be Irish to be involved with St. Patrick's Day. You could wear something green to support camaraderie at work and show that you care about others' events.

LEO: Consider whether this might be the time to defer to someone else instead of trying to be in charge of the mat-

ter. Take an easier stance and actually hear what others have to say.

VIRGO: Let your playful personalities play a role in difficult situations. Sometimes humor relieves the stress of a situation. Be careful not to offend anyone or direct humor at an individual.

LIBRA: Lucky Libra is entering a time of good fortune. Matters of work, money and love are turning in your direction. But don't just ride the wave because you need to play a part in keeping good fortune flowing.

SCORPIO: Spring is a time of new life, and that includes new life for that idea that has been languishing in the back of your mind. Prepare and watch for the opportunity to show your stuff.

SAGITTARIUS: Relationships with friends are important to you. Encourage them with one-on-one time even if it's just on the telephone. Show that you care about them and they will care more about

you.

CAPRICORN: Financial pressures are taking their toll, but you will be able to work things out if you have a definite plan. Take charge and don't be influenced by others' spending habits.

AQUARIUS: When your workload is heavy, remember that you may not be able to do it all by yourself. Ask for advice from your boss or a trusted co-worker. Get help anywhere and anytime you can get it.

PISCES: Your creativity is at a high point now. Put it to work by taking a new view of every situation and problem. Let your ideas flow and leave the details for later. It could be the start of something big.