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Home is where you make it

by BRIAN LOCKHART

My ideal day is around 78°F, no humidity at all, sunny, with the odd puffy cloud passing across the sun just to change it up a bit.

On a day like that, you can enjoy just about any outdoor activity in comfort, without getting a bad sunburn, worrying about rain, or feeling unpleasant because the humid air has you sweating like a backyard sprinkler.

Days like that don't happen all that often.

Of course, the opposite is when you are knee-deep in snow and shovelling the driveway only to see the plow coming and you know that in another minute, the end of your driveway, where you just spent an hour with your shovel, will be filled in again ? back to the drawing board.

After this past year's winter, which seemed like it was never going to end, I started wondering what it would be like to just move to a sunny climate for the winter months. A lot of people do it.

The older I get, the less I appreciate winter.

The place where you choose to live is largely determined by where you were born. I know a lot of people who still live in their hometown.

Some people just feel comfortable with the place they grew up, while others just want to stay close to family.

Home is where you make it.

I recently watched a YouTube video about a small town, more like a hamlet, named Darwin that is located in the appropriately named Death Valley in California.

One resident said that during July and August, ?it actually is hotter than hell.?

During the summer months, the temperature routinely rises to 110°F and hotter. This is one place you really could cook your eggs by placing them on a rock.

You could almost feel the heat just by watching the video, and everything, and I mean everything, looks like it had been baked in an oven.

Nothing grows there. There are no plants, no trees, and no flowers. There are just rocks and dirt.

It is a major challenge to get to the next town just to get groceries.

There are no real stores, sports or recreation facilities, or restaurants.

The documentary asked several residents why they chose to live in such a godforsaken place.

One man said it was peaceful.

A young woman with a child pointed out the housing opportunities. She paid less than $20,000 for her house. It looked like a house

where $20,000 would be a big overpayment.

But people live there.

I saw another documentary on a family that lives off-grid in Alaska.

They have a log cabin with no running water. They have no neighbours.

I don't know why you would want to raise children in a place where they couldn't join a minor baseball league team, be part of a Girl Scout troop, or even meet other children for friendship.

I'll bet when those kids are old enough and learn of the outside world, the backwoods cabin will become a distant memory.

It is the type of place where having your truck break down in the dead of winter could mean a death sentence for the occupants.

But people live there.

I've seen photos of picturesque Italian villages perched precariously on cliffs overlooking the Mediterranean. From the air, the villages have a unique, if somewhat crowded, look.

I've heard people express a desire to live there, based on the photos.

It might be good for some people.

I always point out that you would have to sell your Mustang convertible because those houses don't have a garage. They don't even have a driveway. They don't have a yard, so forget the backyard barbecue or that in-ground pool you have always wanted.

The houses are several hundred years old. They are uncomfortable and lack modern amenities.

Good fences don't make good neighbours in these villages because no one has a fence. Your neighbour's house is attached to yours, either on the side, or possibly on top or below.

When I mention these living conditions, quite often people realize it isn't a place for them.

Living in a quaint village would get old really quickly.

But people live there.

Home is where you make it.

I have no real plans to move to a tropical climate, but spending a few weeks each year under a palm tree does sound nice.

Home is where you make it, so I guess I'll buy a snowblower and get used to it.