

Creative Living

Corinne Abatt editor/644-1100



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(C) TE

organizing Dorothy Lehmkuhl

Mastering art of storing paper

Q. One of my drawers is completely full of articles I've clipped. How can I organize them properly?

A. You remind me of the prolific author who snips and saves articles and ideas in a certain drawer until the drawer is full — then he writes another book. (Are you a writer?)

Before organizing, let's consider clipping itself, asking that all-important question: "What will happen if I don't save this article?" If the answer is "nothing," reconsider saving it. Do you actually refer back to the items you clip? If saving columns really is valuable, then snip immediately and conclude each reading session with filing the clippings properly right away.

Mastering the art of storing paper vertically instead of horizontally, create folders and think carefully about where to store them. If you clip frequently, place your filing cabinet where it will be handy to file, perhaps near your reading spot or desk. If your files are in a remote area the article may be left in a half-way spot, cluttering surfaces or getting lost in a stack before reaching its final destination.

Which folders to create will vary according to your needs. A single miscellaneous clippings file may suffice, or you may need to add subject folders such as health, children, gardening etc. If you maintain large quantities of columns (which I do not recommend) you could file by subject, alphabetically, with files marked A-G, H-M, etc., or A-one for A, one for B, etc. An extra folder for children might be filed behind the miscellaneous C folder.

While expensive, you could retain information ("Organizing" columns?) in photo albums with pages made of polypropylene (not PVC (vinyl)). Remember, though, this adds one more thing to your To Do List.

There is a danger of "information overload" by continually adding new items to your collection without discarding old ones. If you dispose of one or more old articles each time you add one, your files will remain current and manageable.

Better yet, consider pitching them and letting your public library do your work for you. They have vast numbers of periodicals on microfilm and microfiche available to help you easily find what you need. In fact, they may have more current and/or superior information to what you have saved.

If you have questions or comments, write Dorothy Lehmkuhl in care of this newspaper, 36251 Schooncraft Road, Livonia, 48150.

Higher density brings changes

The trend toward single family detached homes with higher density per acre has resulted in changes in home design, according to a housing expert.

Lawrence F. Treby of the Greenman Group Inc., based in Hollywood, Fla., told members of the Builders Association of Southeastern Michigan (BASM) at a recent BASM-sponsored housing seminar that the buyers of these higher density single family homes (8-10 homes per acre — "still want their privacy and adequate living space.")

Herbert Lawson, president of the Builders Association of Southeastern Michigan, says the trend toward building these homes is caused by "the demand for more living space at affordable prices."

Treby says as builders increase the number of homes per acre, they should pay more attention to "streetscapes" with emphasis on narrower streets, more green space and curving streets.

He says creative consideration should be given to how garbage is picked up, street lighting, subdivision entries, setbacks and rear yards.

"WHAT MUST BE avoided is the typical look of the subdivisions of 20 years ago when homes all looked the same," says Treby. "There should be tighter control by builders of home exteriors so each home has a distinctive look."

"The interiors of these single family high density homes need to make full use of all available space," says Treby, "including elimination of hallways to allow more space for larger rooms." Nine-foot ceilings are replacing eight-foot ones to give a feeling of spaciousness in small homes and larger windows are becoming more popular, he says.

According to Treby, kitchens and bathrooms have undergone the most dramatic changes in these homes. "Builders now offer kitchens fully loaded with appliances, and cabinet space utilizes European space concepts where each shelf has a specific function," he says.

"The eating spaces are larger and the kitchen utility areas are smaller, but more efficiently designed."

BATHROOMS IN SINGLE family high density homes, according to Treby, are becoming "larger and more self-indulgent," with spa's, TV's, Roman tubs and separate soak and tub-and-shower areas. "Bathrooms are becoming relaxation rooms," he says.



Albert Kahn Associates, Architects and Engineers/photo

Affordable housing: Dream or reality?

Affordable housing is like weather. Everybody talks about it but nobody does anything about it. Right? Or, if affordable housing exists, it does so a thousand miles from here. Right?

Wrong on both counts. Affordable housing is alive and well — flourishing, in fact — in one of the most desirable suburbs in this area — Farmington Hills. One of the reasons the Hickory Ridge condo complex isn't well known is that developer/builder James M. Burroughs hasn't spent much on marketing his project.

"A large marketing budget would be nice, but it would defeat the 'no frills' principle that keeps the purchase price affordable," Burroughs said. "We didn't cut corners, instead, we eliminated all of the whistles and balloons that normally are included in such a complex. No model. No fancy brochures. No advertising budget. No big sales staff."

LOCATED ON Middlebelt south of Ten Mile, Burroughs' condominiums have appealed to singles, young and old, first-time marrieds and retirees. People who found the purchase prices affordable.

According to the builder, 44 similar units in Plymouth Township were sold before construction

was completed in 1987. The prices ranged from \$44,900 (one bedroom) to \$61,900 (two bedrooms).

Prices for the 20 units, scheduled for completion later this year, have risen "not astronomically, but more than we would have liked," said Burroughs, who blamed the "cost of land, trades and materials" for the increases.

"A one-bedroom unit now sells for \$50,000 and the two-bedroom for \$64,000," he said.

BURROUGHS, WHO spent 10 years in the mortgage department of First Federal of Michigan and now heads a real estate appraisal firm, tracked housing costs for the last 10 years, he said.

Noting the trend for relatively expensive new construction, he decided to take on the challenge of new construction while holding costs down. "I've always believed there is a strong market for affordable housing, providing you maintain quality."

"The concept is simple. Eliminate things (frills) that only add to the purchase price and watch construction costs without sacrificing quality or basic features. Easy in principle, more difficult in practice," Burroughs said.

INDEED, BURROUGHS' condos have retained those features most sought by buyers, including a custom kitchen complete with dishwasher, continuous cleaning oven, hood fan, refrigerator and finished wood cabinets.

A utility/laundry room, formal dining room, bath with ceramic tile and single faucets, insulated glass windows and doorwall, energy efficient furnace and air conditioning are also included.

Details like safety plugs in bathroom, a smoke detector, underground wiring, individual carpets, a lawn sprinkling system and a patio or balcony are included with each unit.

Burroughs' marketing effort has been limited to a sign on the property, a "quickly printed" brochure and a classified ad that runs periodically in some of the local papers, he said.

"Affordable housing exists, but you have to look for it," Burroughs said.

'The concept is simple. Eliminate things (frills) that only add to the purchase price and watch construction costs without sacrificing quality or basic features.'

—James Burroughs

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