

Real Estate

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Love your house but hate to move? Try this



If you don't want to leave your old home behind when moving, take it along with you. All you have to do is strip the house of bricks and hire a mover to cart it to your new dream location. (Staff photo by Art Emanuel)

By SUZIE MARKS
Do you love your house too much to leave it? Do you find yourself repeating the words, "If I could just move my house to another area..."

Take heed, and don't be disillusioned. You can move your house around the Detroit metropolitan area at a cost much lower than purchasing a new home.

House moving is an alternative to new home buying that is becoming quite popular around the area. Mrs. Porter, wife of house mover J.D. Porter of Westland, said,

"It's a lot less money to move a house than to buy a new one," she added.

Roughly, a three bedroom ranch home with no basement would cost about \$3,500 to move from one location to another. Mrs. Porter said,

"We've moved houses as far as 60 miles, but now we have to charge for gas because it's so expensive," she explains. "We used to not have to."

Houses destined for relocation must be devoid of brick and Porter's moving is not responsible for rebricking them at their new locales. Basement must be left behind but other than those restrictions, most homes can be

moved, Mrs. Porter said. FOLLOWING A HOMEOWNER'S inquiry to relocate a house, Mr. Porter visits the home and gives the customer an estimate depending on house size and added features.

He then applies for a permit from the county road commissions, local highway departments, Detroit Edison and Michigan Bell Telephone.

"Edison and Michigan Bell do the power unhook and hook ups," Mrs. Porter added.

Forty-one house move requests were made to the Oakland County Road Commission in 1977. Jim Dunleavy, director of permits and special uses, reported.

"In order to get a permit, the mover has to meet certain criteria and apply for one," Dunleavy explained. "The route has to be checked out to make sure the width of the house and the width of the roads are satisfactory."

If certain routes are unable to accommodate a particular house, the road commission may propose an alternate route.

The mover is responsible for having insurance and bonding," he said. "There must also be acceptances from the utility companies where the house

is coming from and where it's being moved to."

"MOST HOMES can be moved. Sometimes they may need modification," Dunleavy explained. "Sometimes the roof of a house may have to be dropped or cut into a section."

When the house arrives at the new site, a brick mason may be required to rebrick the home. Jack Hart of Liedal and Hart masonry said a rebricking job costs \$3.25 per square foot.

"That includes labor, materials, installing, cleaning brick and hauling the materials away," Hart explained.

Mrs. Porter said it takes about three weeks from the time her husband first looks at the house until it reaches the new destination. The actual moving time doesn't take long, but the paper work does.

She said Porter's moves quite a few houses in the area because people have nice homes but just don't like their area any longer.

"We also do a lot of commercial buildings, too," she added.

What happens to the old site where that house once stood and its basement now rests?

"We just fill the hole with dirt," she answered.

Study contractor before modernizing

Whether you're contemplating adding an extra room, making an energy-saving improvement, modernizing a kitchen or bath or replacing other household essentials, the task of selecting a contractor can be difficult.

Your selection of a home improvement contractor can have far-reaching effects on your family's comfort, safety and pocketbook, says Maurice L. Richards Jr., executive vice president of the South Oakland County Board of Realtors, Inc.

Before selecting a contractor, you should first compile a list of the work needed, including any special material specifications or features you might want.

It's helpful to put the description in writing so conflicting or contradictory services and materials requested from each contractor can be easily spotted, Richards says.

However, be prepared to be flexible with your plans. Individual contractors may offer suggestions for modifications that could save you money. Suggestions may increase your overall costs, but provide additional space or services you really need, he said.

ONCE you establish your work specifications, the next task is finding a contractor. Talk with friends, relatives and neighbors who are satisfied with their home repair work, Richards suggests.

Your local Better Business Bureau is another source. The bureau will not

recommend one contractor over another but they can tell you if any complaints have been filed against a specific company.

Contact at least three contractors for cost estimates, Richards says. The estimates may vary greatly, depending on how the contractor plans to do the job, even when the planned work and materials are the same. If you find a great variation among bids, you may want to talk to additional contractors.

Often, labor charges—especially for plumbers and air conditioning workers—include travel time to and from the job as well as time on the job. Thus, the lowest bid could prove more costly because of distance traveled or higher hourly rates, he cautions.

Some contractors base their price estimates on a cost-plus bid system. This means you pay the contractor's costs plus a percentage profit. Thus, the profit increases as costs increase. Although this method gives a more accurate accounting of what is being spent for materials and labor, it offers no incentive for the contractor to keep costs down, Richards says.

Ultimately, the choice of a contractor has to be based on your evaluation of his dependability combined with the price and type of services he offers.

But, Richards says, starting out with a clear idea of the type of work you want done, you'll find this evaluation less difficult.

Home Showcase

Madison now open

Fred Capaldi has built more than 1,500 homes since he founded his company back in 1945.

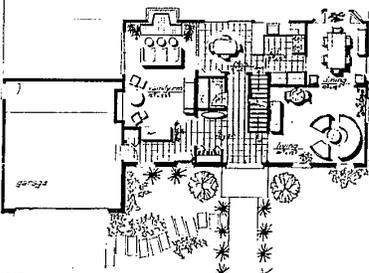
Today, one of Capaldi's latest models is the Madison, a two-story home with many innovative features. The central foyer is a reception area. Leading upstairs is a staircase with hand-crafted natural wood railings. A front hall, with windows overlooking the Venetian courtyard, leads to the two-car garage.

A spacious family room features a raised-hearth fireplace and built-in bar. The living and dining rooms provide space and elegance for more formal occasions.

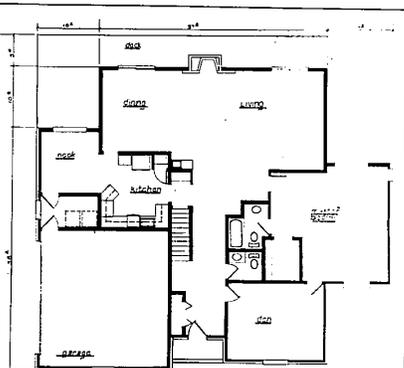
The step-saver design of the Madison kitchen, along with the ample counter space and built-in appliances, offer efficiency and ease in meal preparation.

The master bedroom suite has a sleep-lounge area and private bath. Three other bedrooms and full baths complete the second floor.

The Madison can be seen in Georgetown subdivision at Adams and Tierken roads in Rochester. Michael Furnari is the salesman for the project. For more details and show times, call him at 651-1488.



Capaldi's new home in the Rochester Georgetown subdivision, the Madison, features several innovative living arrangements.



One of the homes built by Allen in Farmington Square features a combination living-dining area and a den off the master bedroom.

Allen keeps building

Wendell Allen is one of the builders participating in the development of Farmington Square, at Nine Mile and Halstead roads in Farmington Hills.

Architects Coughlin & Schaff of Birmingham have designed a two-story home for him in the \$100,000 price range, including lot.

The plan features a large master bedroom with bath on the main floor. The contemporary openness of the new model combines a formal living room with a separate family room to form a large family living center. A lower level den could also be converted into a more formal room. The plan includes a full basement and side-entry two car garage.

Wendell builds custom homes both on lake and wooded lots and will duplicate any of his homes on any location.

His homes have been sold through Van's Realty in South Lyon and Green Oak Township areas. Goddard Realty in Milford and Commerce also handles his homes. For more details, call Van's at 437-8183 or Goddard at 694-4544.

\$650 broker offers alternative home sales service

By JUDITH BERNE

A new company, American Home Services, is out to complicate the real estate world.

The Southfield firm is offering itself as "the \$650 broker," assuming all administrative details and aiding homeowners in selling their own homes.

"What we don't do is physically transport a prospective buyer to your home," the company's 22-year-old president, Robert Blake of West Bloomfield, tells his clients.

Sellers who list with American Homes measure and provide a photograph of their home, its dimensions and outstanding features, utility bills, and tax statements. The company provides the sign.

Blake's staff sets up appointments with "qualified" buyers to go on their own to the home. "After all, who can explain your home's selling features better than you?" they say.

WE SPENT two years developing the concept," Blake reports. "We considered, shall we blow them (traditional realtors) off the map, but

decided to start off kind of calm. Let them accept us."

Blake is aiming initially at sales to people who would normally sell their home on their own "and people tired of paying out the commissions."

He hopes his concept will help lower real estate prices.

"We are consumer oriented," he says. "The greatest thing established realtors could do for us is have a class action suit against us. We're legal."

Most real estate companies charge six-seven per cent commission on a home. On a \$50,000 home, a seven per

cent broker will realize a \$3,500 commission.

American Home Services fee of \$650 remains flat unless the seller asks for added services. For example, it will cost an additional \$25 to have a home listed in the company's advertising.

Blake reports that the firm, which opened a month ago, now has seven licensed brokers for its 35 listings. He says calls have come in from various parts of the country asking for franchises.

He anticipates opening offices in West Bloomfield, Rochester and West-

land next month.

"I've always thought commissions were ridiculously high," Blake says. "It will start a trend. It's about time people had an alternative."

CONRAD JAKUBOWSKI, president of the Western Wayne Oakland Board of Realtors, denies that Blake's concept is "anything new." He reports Sears-Roebuck unsuccessfully tried the same thing some years ago.

"I don't feel they're a threat," Jakubowski said. "They seem to be primarily a company that offers legal services."

"The buying public demands more than just calling on the telephone," Jakubowski believes. "If they want to use a \$650 paper processing company, they'd be better off going to their own attorney."

"Very much a part of the salesman's job is to explain the amenities of a particular piece of property," he added. "We do not sell bricks and mortar. We sell a way of living."

"We're not competitors. It's just not the same service."

Grill brings outdoors indoors

By SUZIE MARKS

Steaks, hamburgers, ribs and chicken never seem to taste as zesty when cooked indoors as they do grilled on an outdoor barbecue.

However, thanks to Jenn-Air's convertible cooktop grill-range, outdoor cooking is brought into the kitchen. The same charcoal flavor can satisfy your palate without the mess of a conventional barbecue.

Jenn-Air ranges have a built-in powered ventilation system. It captures smoke, odors and spatters. An overhead hood is unnecessary, a distributor says, because the system vents down and out of the unit.

With the Jenn-Air range, cooktop cartridges are interchanged with the

grill. A conventional element or a white or black glass-ceramic cooktop replaces the grill area.

Here's how it works. Imagine starting with a conventional range top with four burners. Ready for a barbecue? Simply lift out the cooktop cartridge and plug in the grill accessory. It takes about 20 seconds.

The double top convertible range is the most popular, a spokesperson with Larry Trevarrow Inc., the Jenn-Air distributor in lower Michigan says. It has a full range-top grill, four interchangeable burners and retails for \$425.

Another popular choice is the drop-in model with a converted oven. With a switch of the seven selector from conventional to converted, a concealed

fan within the oven directs a power-driven stream of heated air over the bake and broil elements. The motion produces a constant flow of heated air within the oven. Meats can roast at lower temperatures in converted ovens.

FOR EXAMPLE, the company claims a 19-pound turkey can be prepared in four hours at 275 degrees in the converted oven. Cooking time would be 5½ to six hours at 325 degrees in an ordinary oven. Frozen meats can go directly from freezer to oven without thawing and cook in approximately the same time as thawed meats in ordinary ovens. This model sells for about \$850, the distributor says.

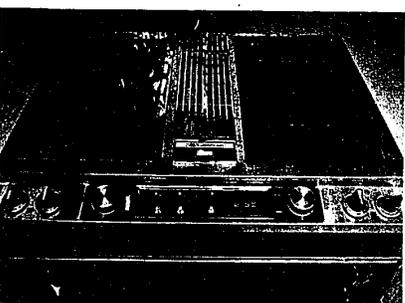
Many accessory tops are available

for the Jenn-Air. For diverse cooking, a rotisserie, shish kebab with skewers, griddle, french fryer or cutting board can be interchanged.

Cleaning the unit is done the same way as in a conventional burner. In addition, a grease bottle placed under the grill catches the grease from the barbecue. Stefan Greer, co-owner of Kitchen's by Lenore in Southfield adds,

Greer says his store sold about 150 units last year and are becoming popular. They fit into a standard 30-inch size wall space. Jenn-Air's versatility sells itself, Greer says.

"We sell them to every age group from 27 to 70," he adds.



Jenn-Air's new range features a black glass ceramic cooking top along with a barbecue grill that lets you capture outdoor flavor inside. (Staff photo by Gary Friedman)