

# Creative Living



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## Elegant homes are returning



organizing  
**Dorothy Lehmkuhl**

### Best foot forward

Q. My closet is overflowing because I have so many pairs of shoes. What's the best way to store them?

A. There is no one best storage solution because individuals' needs vary. The best approach is to have your closet professionally redesigned with specially built shoe storage. That can be costly, however, and is not a top priority expenditure for everyone.

Next best, haunt catalogs, housewares departments or conversion stores like Clutter Control of Farmington Hills for the myriad of organizers now available. Men's shoes can sit on extra open shelving or existing shelves or on racks attached to walls. Transparent shoe drawers stack for women's shoes. Bags with horizontal pigeon holes velcro to the rod. Vinyl bags with pockets hang on the backs of closet doors or from red hangers. Inexpensive cardboard holders holding nine pairs sit on existing shelves. Metal holders hang from closet doors or sit on the floor.

A rule of thumb is to keep shoes off the closet floor, partly because they are an invitation to end up in a pile. Also if the floor is not clear for easy cleaning, dust can collect there and fly up onto your clothes.

Some people prefer to retain shoes in their original boxes. Even if they are labeled on the outside, this works poorly because box sizes rarely match and getting shoes in and out is difficult. There is a solution, however.

To retain original shoe boxes, tear out one end of the box, and tear back the sides — but not the top — of one end of the lid. (The resulting lid "flap" retains box stability and helps deflect dust.) Then tape the lid to the box and stack them as usual. These utilize space well, keep your shoes relatively dust free and yet they can be seen, removed and replaced easily. While imperfect, this idea is very popular in my space utilization seminars.

If you still have too many pairs to fit in your closet, remove out-of-season shoes to a remote storage area. Refine further by keeping only your most frequently worn shoes in your closet and others in another bedroom, for instance. Or divide shoes by type, moving glittery party shoes to a remote spot, keeping flat casual shoes in one closet area and heels in another. Finally, if you are really desperate, ask yourself if shoes worn only once a year or so are worth harboring at all?



condo queries  
**Robert M. Melsner**

Q. I read your column and hope that you can give me some advice. My current situation is that I am feeling frustrated paying out all of this money for rent with no tax relief. I am a first-time buyer and I am wondering if you can recommend any books or do you have any suggestions to make the process easier concerning condominiums. I am also concerned about the geographic location in choosing the right area. Thanks very much for your help.

A. There is not yet a book to my knowledge which definitively helps condominium purchasers in regard to what it is like to live in a condominium but one is in the works and we will keep you advised as soon as it is printed. Suffice it to say that there are classes that are offered in real estate and condominium operation. Check with Wayne State University at 577-4665 for more information.

As to finding the geographical location and the price range in which you are interested, get a good broker who has had a lot of experience with condominiums to help you. Once you have found a prospective condominium, get an attorney who can check on the condominium association and/or a condominium developer and sit down with you and explain all of the details incident to the purchase of a condominium and its legal ramifications.

Q. Our management company says it has a lawyer on staff who can provide our association with legal advice. The company has also strongly recommended an attorney who it works with, although, I have heard the attorney has done legal work for one of the principals of the management company. One of the members of the board is an attorney who thinks this is not a good practice. What are your thoughts?

A. If, in fact, the management company is "pushing" an attorney, be sure to determine whether that attorney has any financial or legal interest in the management company. Find out if the attorney has performed any legal services for the management company, either in the past or at present. You should be looking for independent counsel who is strictly accountable to the association and no one else. You have a potential conflict of interest situation on the part of the attorney if, in fact he is serving two masters. You may also wish to question the propriety of the management company when such conduct is contemplated.

AP — A decade ago, just as the energy crisis influenced Americans to buy smaller, more efficient cars, it also had an impact on the housing market, causing developers to construct smaller, more efficient homes.

But today we are seeing a demand for larger, more spacious houses with greater elegance and a more creative use of space with sophisticated heating and ventilation systems.

Developers have just begun to see the impact of this trend in the demands of purchasers.

Many house buyers, for example, want larger bedrooms that serve as secondary living areas. And the post-war trend to reduce the height of ceilings has been reversed. Homeowners appreciate a minimum of 9-foot ceilings. They often soar to 20 feet, with dramatic window treatments.

Many homeowners will actually incorporate a mini living room into their bedroom, where one member of the family can read quietly and

retire from the rest of the house. Comfortable lounge chairs, side tables and small couches give bedrooms a new dimension. Some people even opt to have fireplaces as the focus of these bedroom and living areas.

TO COMPLEMENT THESE spacious rooms, home buyers frequently look for large, adjacent bathrooms, often subdivided into two areas so that more than one person can use the room at the same time.

In the large bathrooms, homeowners may also build whirlpool baths with separate showers and steam showers (an enclosed shower linked to a steam generator). This provides an almost self-sufficient mini health spa right in a bathroom.

Previously, bathrooms were small with minimal and restrictive light. Bathrooms are now being built with larger windows and skylights to provide a greater feeling of openness and light. In the same vein, enclosed sun decks are being built outside of the master bedrooms. These extended porches show even greater popu-

larity in the sun belt for obvious climatological reasons.

For the health conscious, homes will include small separate bay areas for exercise equipment and space for callisthenics and stretching.

In homes at one development at Port Liberty, Jersey City, N.J., this bay area is located in the master bedroom, near the shower, so that it can be used conveniently at any time. Port Liberty has a cross section of homes ranging from \$150,000 condominiums to \$900,000 family townhouses, built along a 2 1/4-mile network of man-made canals.

WALK-IN CLOSETS these days generally feature shelves designed for shoes and several hanging racks for sport coats and slacks and a variety of drawers. The closet becomes well organized, transformed into a storage and dressing area, and very much more, with a section that includes large mirrors for dressing.

Whatever market developers are dealing with, there appears to be an increasing expectation of luxury.

Areas for entertaining play an important role. Foyers — large, formal areas — are separated from the living room and dining room, decorated with tile and marble. This is a place to greet guests that reflects the overall theme of a home.

Kitchens are taking on a new flavor — very European in style and design. Appliances and cabinet work are getting sleeker and cleaner, with much more sophistication in the way they operate.

The typical American buyer will take to this with enthusiasm. Smooth closed range tops, built-in refrigerators, built-in microwaves, separate double ovens and a garbage disposal and compactor will be incorporated into more and more modern kitchens.

A wider range of counter materials will also be used, including natural and synthetic stones, as well as tile and stainless steel. They are durable and easy to live with, and new in appearance. Kitchens will become an area where style is as important as design.

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### New showing of old things

The University of Michigan-Dearborn fieldhouse arena will take on antique trappings this weekend for the Great Lakes Antique Show and Sale, from 11 a.m. to 9 p.m. Saturday and 11 a.m. to 6 p.m. Sunday. The show features 80 of the nation's foremost antique dealers from 25 states exhibiting for sale, in handsome room displays, 18th and 19th century antiques. Admission is \$5, good for both days. For more information, call 420-3237.

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