

Creative Living

Marie McGee editor/591-2300

Monday, September 11, 1989 OSE



(OJE)



organizing Dorothy Lehmkuhl

'Less Is Better' update

Q. What has become of your *Less Is Better* campaign to decrease third class mail? You printed several columns about it but then I haven't heard what happened.

A. I was pleased to receive about 300 letters supporting my campaign, along with some radio interviews. Thanks to everyone who wrote. About six opposing letters also came to me along with a few received by the editorial pages of the paper (fewer than I had expected.) Several people wrote suggestions for other ways to decrease bulk mail, which were also appreciated.

My ultimate goal is to convince the Postal Service that the public is weary of the overwhelming amount of bulk mail it receives and to induce advertisers to reduce their list duplications and refine their lists by removing names from their lists when requested. (Although many advertisers do a good job of this, many more do not.) After discussing this at length with postal officials and advertising specialists, I still believe the most effective way to achieve this would be to allow third class mail to be returnable at the sender's expense, just as first class mail is now.

I intend to proceed by waiting until the next Postal Commission Rate Hearing and sending all the

letters I receive to the Secretary of the Board of Governors of the U.S. Postal Service at that time. As yet unscheduled, that hearing will probably be held this winter and will be announced in advance through the media. I will also call for another letter writing campaign directly to the Board Secretary then, too.

Even if the Board of Governors and the Rate Commission are not convinced to change the rules, they will still receive the message. If an atmosphere of non-acceptance by the public is created and even some advertisers take heed, I would consider this campaign a success. I still feel that the public should not have to helplessly endure this waste and subtle form of perpetual harassment.

It is not too late to support this campaign. Although this is the last column I will write on the subject until the Rate Commission hearing, I will continue to accept letters until then. Just send a short note to "Less Is Better," P.O. Box 330, Franklin 48025. The more I receive, the more effective our message will be.

P.S. Don't worry — I won't be putting the names of those who wrote me on a mailing list! (You may now breathe a sigh of relief.)



condo queries Robert M. Meisner

Q. We are interested in buying a home and a condo, and I am wondering what protections you recommend be inserted in a purchase agreement that are frequently left out. Any suggestions, although we plan to use an attorney?

A: There are three contingencies which should be inserted in almost every purchase agreement if the buyer is to be reasonably protected. First is that the agreement is not binding until the purchaser has had a reasonable opportunity to have the home inspected. In a case of the condominium, keep in mind, of course, that you are not only buying your unit outright, but an undivided interest in the common elements of the condominium which may be in need of repair.

The second contingency involves the right of your attorney to review, and change and/or correct the terms of the agreement within a certain period of time, except after the purchase price. That is essential because once the agreement becomes binding, the attorney can do very little, if any, to change the terms or conditions of the deal. Finally, if you are obtaining a mortgage, obviously the deal should be contingent upon you obtaining a mortgage commitment within a reasonable period of time. There are also possible other contingencies which would be relevant, depending upon the circumstances of your purchase, including your ability to sell your existing home, etc. You are wise to consult an experienced real estate attorney if you contemplate such a purchase.

Q. We are extremely frustrated with our management company. It does not call us back when we inquire as to a needed problem and usually sends out a "funky" secretary disguised as a property manager. We have talked to the principal of the company, but he says that "property managers" are expensive and that he is not getting enough of a return from our project to justify a full-time property manager. What can we do since we are under contract with him for another seven months?

A: With the benefit of 20-20 hindsight, your management agreement should have contained a provision indicating the specific person from the management company who would be servicing your site and attending your meetings. This is a frequent provision which I insist be placed in management agreements when the board of directors is enlightened enough to contact us regarding the review of the most important contract the association will sign, that is, the management agreement.

In your case, I would advise the management agent that you are not getting adequate management, and that such conduct constitutes a default of the terms of the management agreement. Perhaps the managing agent will then see to it that you are given better service and/or more competent personnel. On the other hand, it is true that many times management companies are not able to afford to hire the quality property managers necessary to adequately service the Association's demands because many Associations are not willing to pay an adequate management fee. Again, you generally get what you pay for.

Q. I am being sued by an out-of-state condominium association, where I own a unit, for back due assessments in Florida. Can they get my assets here in Michigan if they get a judgment in Florida? I'm not worried about their lien on the condo since there is not any equity in the unit. Can you give me some advice?

A. Assuming that you are not wanted abroad on execution on executing on your unit in Florida, forcing a sale of it to satisfy its lien for non-payment of assessments, and assuming that the association gets a money judgment against you in Florida, it can sue on that money judgment here in Michigan, obtain a judgment and execute on any property that you own or have possession of here in Michigan.

That will, no doubt, cost the association a lot of money. It may be willing, therefore, to negotiate a compromise with you as to the amount owing, in order to avoid the necessity of at least two lawsuits and attendant legal fees. It will also take them, depending upon the amount owed, a considerable amount of time even to get a default judgment against you. Of course, if you can defend your position in either one of the cases, that will drag the thing out even longer, assuming that you have a reasonable basis to do so.

If there is no defense, however, you are probably best advised to try to settle with the association, assuming that you have no intent or need to deal with the association in the future.

Robert M. Meisner is a Birmingham attorney specializing in condominiums, real estate and corporate law. You are invited to submit topics which you would like to see discussed in this column, including questions about condominiums, by writing Robert M. Meisner, 30200 Telegraph Road, Suite 467, Birmingham 48010. This column provides general information and should not be construed as legal opinion.

New garden 'stars' waiting in wings

Four flowers, four vegetables and two bedding plant flowers have won 1990 All-America Selections Awards and will be ready for your next gardening season.

Each winner, according to AAS judges, exhibits improved qualities over the "closest variety currently on the market."

In the 57th AAS judging program, the bedding plant winners are Petunia F1 (First Generation) Polo Burgundy Star and Polo Salmon. Both reportedly performed exceptionally well in both greenhouse and garden trials.

The four flower winners are Achillea Summer Pastel, Celosia Pink Castle, Pansy Jolly Joker and Zinnia F1 Scarlet Splendor.

The four vegetable winners are Bean Derby, hot Pepper F1 Super Cayenne, Squash F1 Cream of the Crop and Squash F1 Sunbeam. AAS said all exhibits improved characteristics based on outdoor garden trials.

The four vegetable winners are Bean Derby, hot Pepper F1 Super Cayenne, Squash F1 Cream of the Crop and Squash F1 Sunbeam. AAS said all exhibits improved characteristics based on outdoor garden trials.

ACHILLEA MILLEFOLIUM plants reach a height of 3 to 4 feet, using a lot of space and probably requiring staking. But Achillea Summer Pastels are only 2 feet tall and use only 18 inches per plant.

The plants create a flowering hedge. They begin flowering in approximately 12 weeks from sowing

weeder's guide

Earl Aronson

seed. Color range is pink, apricot, beige, blue, red and white. Achillea, a perennial, is recommended for summer cut flowers. They like full sun.

Pansy Jolly Joker is a rich, velvety purple with orange faces. The flower faces are held upright on short stems. The compact plant needs only 8 inches of garden space and tolerates heat and weather well. Plant from seed or bedding plants. They are easy to maintain.

Celosia Pink Castle's pastel pink blends well with shades of blue, cream, coral or white annuals. The semi-dwarf reaches approximately 14 inches tall when mature. The 7-10-8-inch plants are surrounded by secondary plumes, which may be used for cut flowers.

It is tolerant of heat and drought, and may be grown from seed or as a bedding plant. For summer-long bloom, give it water and some fertilizer.

Zinnia Scarlet Splendor has big blooms — 4 to 5 inches — on a

scaled down plant occupying less garden space. The velvety, scarlet flowers are semi-ruffled. The mature plant reaches 2 feet in height, but no staking is needed.

Plant in full sun. Excellent for cut flowers. As the flowers are cut, new blooms are produced. The plant grows easily from seed directly in the garden or started indoors approximately four weeks before the last frost date.

PETUNIA POLO SALMON and Polo Burgundy Star are improved multifloras. The masses of blooms are smaller than on grandifloras. The plants tolerate heat, drought and summer storms. Polo Salmon and Burgundy Star do not need cutting back or deadheading to encourage continuous bloom.

Squash Cream of the Crop is the first creamy white acorn type to receive the AAS award. Its color makes it easier to find amid the green foliage. The 2-to-3-pound winter squash matures in approximately 85 days.

The interior is a creamy golden

color and has a nutty flavor. The squash has a bushy growth habit and stores well. Grow it from seed or bedding plants.

Squash Sun Drops has a new oval shape for North America. The summer squash matures in 50 to 55 days. Immature fruit may be harvested for a gourmet vegetable dish containing whole baby squash. The plant has a compact bush habit needing only 20 to 24 inches of space.

Pepper Super Cayenne is a decorative item suitable for container culture. The long, thin peppers are fiery hot and may be harvested while green, or left to mature red. They may be used fresh, or dried and stored.

Bean Derby, a green bush variety, is easy to grow from seed. Pods remain tender when up to 7 inches long. Pods mature in approximately 57 days. The tender quality is enhanced due to slow seed development. The upright plant is resistant to common bean mosaic.

(Earl Aronson is the Associated Press garden writer.)

Veneer plastic new wallboard option

WHAT WE know as drywall — or gypsum board or wallboard or any of its various synonyms — is used so frequently in residential construction these days that it sometimes seems to be the only choice for interior walls.

This has been going on for more than 40 years, ever since it replaced lath-and-plaster as the commonly used interior wall surface.

But there are alternatives. One, obviously, is lath-and-plaster. Still recognized as a high quality wall material, it lost out to drywall in housing because its installation expenses are much higher. Another alternative is what is called veneer plastic, essentially a cross between drywall and lath-and-plaster.

A veneer plastic wall is made by applying one or two thin coats of a high-strength, fast-drying plaster over a special gypsum board base. This base, known as blueboard, comes in standard drywall sizes and costs no more to install than basic gypsum board. Blueboard is either nailed or screwed to studs, the same as drywall.

THERE ARE DIFFERENT varieties of veneer plastic or, as it is known, plastic finish systems.

One provides an ultra-hard surface. Another, not quite as hard, is easier to apply. Rick Stalle, product manager for United States Gypsum Co., the leading plaster manufacturer in the United States, says plaster finishes can be installed faster than drywall and is harder and thinner than conventional plaster.

Because veneer plastic sets and dries very quickly, usually within 24 hours, the walls can be painted sooner. According to Stalle, it is virtually indistinguishable from conventional plaster walls. Additionally, such common drywall problems as joint shadowing and fastener pops are almost non-existent.

It can be troweled to achieve a variety of custom textured appearances. These finishes are being widely used in several major markets, most notably the Northeast and the Eastern seaboard. Acceptance in other areas of the country is growing rapidly.

In the two most common varieties of plastic finish systems — the one which provides an ultra-hard surface and the other which is not quite as hard but can be applied easier —

In jeopardy

Take a good look at the rattan furniture on your porch because you may not be able to replace it. The light, attractive, durable and moderately priced furniture comes from an endangered climbing cane plant.

Fabric slats

Window blinds with slats made of fabric are being marketed by Hunter Douglas Inc. The textured polymer slats are chemically treated to hold their shape.

on the house

Andy Lang

there are one and two-coat systems.

In the one-coat system, the plaster is troweled directly over the blueboard base. In the two-coat system, a plaster basecoat is first applied over the blueboard, followed by a plaster finish over the basecoat.

STALLE SAYS IT is not uncommon for a residential veneer plastic installation to be completed three or four days faster than a typical drywall installation. Completed costs, he says, are about the same.

For the moment, this type of wall system requires special plastering skills the average person does not have. Therefore, it's use is best left to a professional.

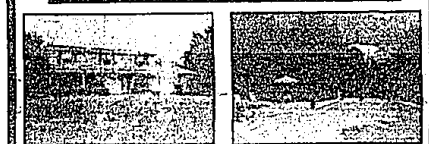
If you want any further information on veneer plastic, contact United States Gypsum Co., 101 S. Wacker Drive, Dept. 123-22, Chicago, Ill. 60606.

(Andy Lang is a writer for Associated Press. Do-it-yourselfers will find much helpful information on a variety of subjects in his handbook, "Practical Home Repairs," which can be obtained by sending \$3 to P.O. Box 1055, Brick, N.J. 08723.)



TENNIS ANYTIME

Great Beverly Hills location for this fine family home...plus backyard tennis court to keep your game in shape. Updated throughout with contemporary style. Spacious bedrooms, 2 1/2 baths, family room. Immediate possession. \$164,900 H-51980



SPECTACULAR POOL AREA

Hickory Grove area for this fine family colonial with lots of room. Formal dining room, family room with fireplace, large kitchen, screened porch with skylight and more. Acres. 45 foot pool with 12 foot deep end. Lots of amenities. \$229,900 H-51



GREAT TROY location for this lovely 3 bedroom, 2 1/2 bath ranch.

Professionally landscaped, private courtyard, new sprinkler system, central air, all 2 year old appliances included. \$199,000 H-51051

LARGE PRIVATE LOT with this immaculate home in a great family area.

Flexible floor plan, formal dining room, library/study or home office. 1540 square feet with excellent storage. \$159,900 H-52246

Mannett, Inc. Realtors
 2411 N. Maple Street, Suite 100, Birmingham, AL 35202
 (205) 951-1172
 Equal Housing Opportunity
 Equal Opportunity Housing Act

GRAND OPENING! NEW MODELS

COLONIAL ACRES Adult Communities

Come Share our dream, exclusive country living. For adults 55 and older. No resident children under the age of 17 years.

- 1 & 2 Bedroom Ranch Units
- Private Entries
- Clubhouse and Nature Area
- Sandy Beach or Pool
- Hotpoint Appliances
- Full Basements
- Optional Fireplace, Family Room and Walkout Basements

South Lyon COLONIAL ACRES
 From \$69,900 (313) 437-1159

Green Oak Two-RED CENTENNIAL FARM
 From \$73,900 (313) 437-6887

Williamston RED CEDAR
 From \$58,900 (517) 655-3446

MODELS OPEN: Mon.-Fri. 12-4 P.M./Sat. & Sun. 12-5 P.M. ALSO OPEN THURSDAYS/Red Cedar Closed Thurs.
CENTAUR CONTRACTORS, INC. • COLONIAL ACRES REALTY, INC.