

# HOUSECALLS



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## Finding the home that fits you perfectly

As families gather to celebrate Independence Day, this is a great time to talk about our living spaces the how 'fit for us' they are.

Now we aren't talking about decoration here, we are talking about usefulness. In this issue we look at the idea of 'rightsizing' our

lives in terms of moving from a too-large house to the just right house. You can also look at rightsizing in terms to moving to a larger house to accommodate your family. If you are considering rightsizing, don't hesitate to call us, we'll be the perfect fit for your home buying needs!

## SIMPLIFY

### Is it time to 'rightsize' your home?

**T**ired of maintaining a big house and yard? Got empty bedrooms, a huge family room and utility bills that make you feel robbed?

You're not alone. Today, mid-life couples and individuals of all ages are scaling back to more convenient living arrangements. That can mean fewer square feet, but an exciting new home design.

Of course, rightsizing means that some things will have to go. You'll have to think rightsize before you start packing up.

In order to visualize your "rightsized" life, visit some of the popular-sized homes designed for people with small families or homes and condos designed for people looking forward to retirement. When you understand the square footage involved and the room arrangements, you will have a better idea of what you can keep and what you should get rid of.

Sometimes you have to sell the program to yourself, especially if you and your spouse have spent decades making your current home beautiful. A person's identity, however, should not be tied to an oversized home that is difficult to maintain.

Rightsizing doesn't always mean going to a smaller place. It could mean going from two homes to one,



which creates a big need to cull possessions.

Or it can mean adding to a home in order to make room for parents or grandchildren. The important trend today is a shift to well-planned living quarters that suit a person's age, stage of life, and situation.

Discussing your wish to rightsize will help others accept it. Talk about it with your spouse, your grown children, and your parents, recommends Ciji Ware in her book *Right-sizing Your Life*.

Paring down a lifetime of possessions, and then furnishing a new home with things that have meaning, will not be not easy, but it must be done before moving into a more suitable place.

Depending on the size of your home, the process could take from a few weeks to a couple of years. If

rightsizing is in your future, better start now.

Whether you ultimately move or not, your home will be more organized and have less clutter. It will be liberating.

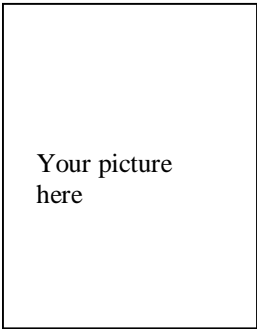
#### Inside:

*What should you leave?*

*What should you take with you?*

*Ask the expert: What about reverse mortgages?*

Reverse mortgages and falling home prices, see p. 2



Your picture here

Ask the Expert

Reverse Mortgages

Q Home prices are falling in my area, if I take a reverse mortgage, will I end up in financial trouble if the house is worth less than my loan?

A No. Most reverse mortgages (about 90 percent) are FHA-backed Home Equity Conversion Mortgages. They come with a FHA guarantee that protects both the lender and the borrower from falling home prices. So, if the balance of the loan is greater than the value of the property, the homeowner is fully protected. If the homeowner has opted for monthly checks for life, they will always get their monthly check, even after the loan balance exceeds the property value.

In fact, the lender or bank does not own any part of the home and cannot call in the loan as long as you want to live in the house, keep up the property, and pay the taxes.

Even your heirs

Summer Grills

Across

- 1. Bikini parts
- 5. Highlands hillside
- 9. Anger
- 10. Beef cut
- 11. Creole vegetable
- 12. Its quarter says "Birthplace of Aviation Pioneers"
- 13. Coasts
- 15. Cincy player
- 16. Office need
- 22. "God's Little \_\_\_"
- 23. Garage occupant
- 24. At the home of
- 25. A huge amount
- 26. Use a keyboard
- 27. Stomachs, for short

Down

- 1. Warner \_\_\_
- 2. Autumn tool
- 3. Indian tourist city
- 4. Summer cocktail with vodka, juices
- 5. Air a show
- 6. European coal area
- 7. In the thick of
- 8. Heroic poem
- 14. "\_\_\_ the fields we go"
- 16. Agreement
- 17. Hurting
- 18. Get ready, for short
- 19. Humdinger
- 20. Big-ticket \_\_\_
- 21. Captives

1	2	3	4		5	6	7	8
9					10			
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13				14				
			15					
16	17	18				19	20	21
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26					27			

The headline is a clue to the answer in the diagonal.

Trivia Teaser: Double Dee-Light

- 1. What is the name of Donald Duck's girlfriend? a-Dora, b-Daisy, c-Delinda, d-Daffy.
- 2. If you own a Dandie Dinmont, what breed of dog do you own? a-Wolfhound, b-Chihuahua, c-Spaniel, d-Terrier.
- 3. What British actor starred as the title veterinarian in the 1967 musical Dr. Dolittle? a-Rex Harrison, b-Edward Woodward, c-Trevor Howard, d-Clifford Evans.
- 4. What Alfred Hitchcock-

- directed movie shares its one-name title with a Duran Duran song? a-Rio, b-Notorious, c-Psycho, d-Frenzy.
- 5. What is the name of Dudley Do-Right's girlfriend? a-June, b-Betsy, c-Anne, d-Nell.
- 6. What film studio produced a series of successful movie musicals starring young Deanna Durbin? a-Universal, b-RKO, c-Columbia, d-MGM.
- 7. Who played the rebel-

lious Johnny Castle, the dance instructor, in the movie Dirty Dancing? a-Dean Cain, b-Sean Penn, c-Patrick Swayze, d-Richard Gere.

8. Weird Harold and Dumb Donald were characters on what TV cartoon series? a-CatDog, b-Fat Albert and the Cosby Kids, c-The Hair Bear Bunch, d-Mission: Magic.

Answers to Double D

1-b, Daisy; 2-d, Terrier; 3-a, Rex Harrison; 4-b, Notorious; 5-d, Nell; 6-a, Universal; 7-c, Patrick Swayze; 8-b, Fat Albert and the Cosby Kids

will not be forced to sell the home. They may keep it and, refinance to pay off the outstanding balance. In the vast majority of situations this balance will be much less than the house is worth.

So a reverse mortgage remains a great way for seniors who are house rich but cash poor to get money out of their house, while still living in it.

Any homeowner 62 or older can use a reverse mortgage to convert their home's equity into tax-free income. Instead of paying the lender every month, a homeowner gets a check from the lender. The loan is repaid when the homeowner dies or sells the house.

First-time home buyers need pre-purchase counseling

If you are going to buy your first home, and you are hoping to get FHA financing, you will have to participate in pre-purchase counseling.

The FHA's counseling program are targeted toward those home buyers who do not have a 12-month mortgage history on their credit report within the last three years.

Each state has a list of acceptable first time home buyer courses. You can find a list of HUD Approved Counseling agencies on the HUD Website at [www.hud.gov](http://www.hud.gov).

## Rightsizing: What you need, don't need and must have

If you're planning to buy a more suitable home, and you have to get rid of belongings, consider this:

**Furniture:** Think as home stagers think. These professionals rearrange a home so it will look attractive to buyers. They get rid of extra pieces from the living room and bedrooms to give the home a spacious look.

**Storage areas:** Give grown children their mementos, sports equipment, and toys. Get real about that stuff. You'll never use it, wear it or fix it.

**Photos, kids artwork:** Scan and put it on a CD. Do the same with old family photos. Give a copy of the CD to other family members so they can enjoy them.

**Collections:** Condense them down to items that you love and will save. Give the rest away or sell. Consider photographing and scrapbooking anything that you love but have to part with.

### **You must save....**

...Wills, titles, deeds, birth certificates and death certificates.

Also save your marriage license, divorce records, adoption records, naturalization records, living wills, insurance policies and Social Security and pension-plan proofs.



The 'Walk This Way' people decal by Elly Nelly comes in a pack of 29 graphics. The figures are 3.5 inches high. See more at [supermarkethq.com](http://supermarkethq.com).

## Peel-and-stick decals catch on as design fad

If you love a little playful decorating, but you also like to change your mind, look into the new rage of decal decorating.

Peel-and-stick art is showing up everywhere from living rooms to corporation offices.

New decal decorations include removable murals designed to cover whole walls, as well as playful stickers that add a touch of whimsy to a corner.

Urban Outfitters ([urbanoutfitters.com](http://urbanoutfitters.com)) features whole-wall, removable photos of street scenes.

The Danish company Ferm Living (ferm means clever in Danish) offers a variety of clever silhouette stickers of earthy scenes such as tree branches, birds and leaves. ([fermlivingshop.us](http://fermlivingshop.us))

Check [whatisblik.com](http://whatisblik.com) for a big collection of colorful wall graphics and eye catching chandelier silhouettes.

Themes for kids' rooms grow up with them, starting with farm animals and progressing to dinosaurs, and sports themes.

Remember that placing wall decals is a bit of a skill and while decals can be removed, many can't be repositioned. Decals should not be used on wallpaper, tile or paneling. They can be used on windows, floors and tables.

## HOME DESIGN: BRIGHT IDEA!

### Right size night light

If you are buying a smaller, more right sized home, consider this bright idea from designer Andrew Lang.

This 13.4 inch by 13.4 inch by 5.9 inch light not only provides enough light for night reading, it also gives you a place to store your book or magazine, glasses, and cell phone.

The \$220 NOD light takes a 30 watt circular fluorescent light. See it at [www.emmohome.com](http://www.emmohome.com)



## Architectural metal roofs can be stylish, durable, affordable

Many builders and home renovators are seeking alternatives to asphalt roofing. There is more interest in slate, clay tile, and wood shakes.

Architectural metal is one material that is becoming more popular. It costs about the same as asphalt and it has advantages over other roofing choices.

Slate and clay are very heavy and could require structural reinforcement of the home or building. Wood isn't durable and it's not fire-resistant. Further, these materials are very costly.

A recent survey by the National Association of Realtors projects that 30 percent of new homes will have metal roofs. Fiberglass-asphalt shingles are being used in about 44 percent of new homes. Slate roofs slipped to 5.1 percent, while clay tile roofs were projected to be used in 4.6 percent of new homes.

Metal roofs are considered to be more fireproof than asphalt shingles and last twice as long. They can withstand high winds. When treated with coatings and finishes, they keep homes cool in warm climates, which saves on utility bills.

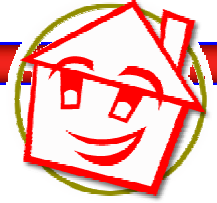
As concern increases about asphalt shingles filling landfills, more contractors are choosing metal roofs. They are long-lasting, may be made of recycled material, and are themselves recyclable.

Metal roofs do have some drawbacks. They are slippery, which makes it more difficult to work on them. And the sound of rain and hail is louder than on other roofs.

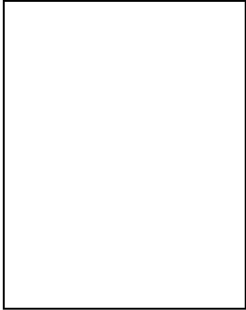
### Tough sell

This year credit card companies will mail 6.6 billion solicitations. Of these, 52 percent will solicit business on a zero percent interest teaser rate. On this vast number of mailers, the response will be less than one-third of 1 percent, according to Garrett, Watts & Co.





# JULY



Sun	Mon	Tue	Wed	Thu	Fri	Sat
July is Family Reunion Month		1 Halfway point of 2008	2	3	4 Independence	5 Pepsi NASCAR
6 Seafair Seattle	7	8	9	10	11	12 12&13—Corn Hill Arts Festival, Rochester, NY.
13 Three Rivers Festival, Ft Wayne, IN, to the 20th	14	15 MLB All-Star game	16 Ann Arbor Arts, Mich., to 19th	17 Jamboree, Morristown Ohio	18	
20 Cheyenne Frontier Days, 19-27	21	22	23	24	25	
27 Parents Day	28	29	30 Maine Lobster Festival to August 3	31		



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