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A SUPPLEMENT TO

THE **DAILY RECORD**

MARCH/APRIL 2007

LIBBY BERMAN



Dear clients and friends,

The coming days and weeks will be bringing some exciting changes.

I will be in the same wonderful Long and Foster office, but I will be working exclusively on my own. I am seeking the intimacy of a one on one partnership with my clients.

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Editor's Note

Home is truly where the heart is ...

As human beings, we spend countless months and years selecting, buying and perfecting our homes. As a result, Maryland boasts homes that are genuine works of art, as beautiful and personal as they are unique and variable. From the waterfront rowhome in downtown Baltimore to the sprawling farm house in rural Harford County, this state offers a wealth of inspiration — whether you are looking to buy, sell or just improve on what you already have.

Maryland's Distinctive Properties, a magazine published by The Daily Record, aims to honor these homes by addressing local trends in home décor, design, investment and technology. Every month, this publication will cover everything about the upscale Maryland home, from architecture and landscaping to selling and investing.

In each monthly issue, stories will go in-depth and ask pertinent questions regarding trends in interior design, cutting-edge home technology, seasonal gardening, home improvement and the outlook of the residential real estate market.

- What questions should I ask before hiring an architect?
- How can I use lighting to improve the interior look of my home?
- What are my options in home security?

- How can I turn my backyard into a landscaped oasis?
- What home improvement steps should be taken before I sell?
- When is a good time to buy a vacation home?

From time to time, we will invite industry professionals to write expert columns and weigh in with their comprehensive knowledge, connection with upcoming trends and occupational secrets. Whether it is a landscape architect, real estate agent, interior designer or home inspector, they will give you the knowledge you need to turn your property into one of ultimate distinction.

If you are a residential Realtor and would like to see your property featured in this magazine, or if you are interested in other advertising opportunities, please contact Associate Publisher Suzanne Fischer-Huettner, suzanne.huettner@mddailyrecord.com.

I always welcome feedback for Maryland Distinctive Properties and all of the special publications distributed by The Daily Record. You may contact me directly at 443-524-8155 or emily.arnold@mddailyrecord.com.

Emily Arnold
Special Publications Editor

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Historic properties offer a wealth of opportunity

A Baltimore couple saves architectural integrity of their historic landmark while slashing its property taxes



This Butcher's Hill home was originally built in 1890 and recently restored to its original splendor — with some modern updates.



The couple insisted on keeping the unique tin ceiling of the historic home.

BY KAREN NITKIN

Special to The Daily Record

Photography by Maximilian Franz

Roberta Faux and Travis Hardaway have restored two Butchers Hill residential properties two different ways. In one, they tore out the interior whole cloth and started from scratch. In the other, they worked to preserve the historic details of a former apothecary built in 1890.

The second job, they agreed, was much more difficult, but worth the added effort.

It would have been easier, for example, to remove the old stained glass over one interior door instead of scraping off the layers of paint to expose the green and orange glass underneath. It would have been easier to replace wooden side doors instead of restoring them, but their unique carvings would have been lost forever.

The couple purchased the home for \$120,000 in 2000 before moving to Baltimore from Colorado. Faux didn't even see it until they had moved, though she remembers thinking, "How much work could it really be?" She thought the renovations would take two years; they wound up taking six.

Meanwhile, Faux and Hardaway renovated and sold a different home across the street, which had been city-owned and vacant for years. "This house had a lot to save and that house had nothing," Hardaway said.

For the first six months of the apothecary renovations, Faux and Hardaway lived in one room, since most of the house was not habitable. "You couldn't walk through some of these rooms," Faux said. For two years, they lived on the top floors.

The brick corner property on East Baltimore Street had been built in 1890 and was designed, as was often the case, so the proprietor could live above their place of business. The store closed in the 1980s, and the owner lived upstairs until the mid-1990s, Faux said. More recently, a nephew had been using the space mostly as a workshop to finish furniture, she said.

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The spindles, trim and risers of these historic stairs were all taken apart, cleaned and put back together.

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Though the four-story home had terrific historic details, including a soda fountain with a marble countertop, alabaster pillars and Tiffany-style glass decorations, the place was a mess.

Over time, Faux and Hardaway kept what was good about the space and eliminated what was bad.

The enormous soda fountain and the tin ceiling remain; so does a long wall of shelving and storage space. The shelves now hold CDs and books. "It made a great storage system," Hardaway said. The drawers, once used to hold customer records, still have the original handles, some still with the original labels.

The centerpiece of the shelves, which stretch nearly to the ceiling, is a carved lion's head near the top. Hardaway said he and Faux simply painted the shelves instead of trying to remove the layers of paint already on them.

Dominating a sun-splashed corner near the front door is a Steiff Concert Grand piano. Hardaway, who teaches at the Peabody Institute, says he likes knowing that it was built in Baltimore.

Some old bottles, including one that says Economy Drug Store, are on display in glass cabinets indigenous to the site, remnants of an earlier time. "We get all our history from the bottles," said Hardaway, who noted that old Morgan and Millard checkbooks had also been discovered during the renovation.

Behind the soda fountain and up a few stairs, the room that was once used to mix potions is now a clean-lined, simply adorned office. A side door was restored, though it still bears scratches from what was probably once an enthusiastic dog. Missing glass in the doors was replaced. The stonework between the wooden door and an outside one, though chipped in places, was allowed to stay.

Behind the office, a sun porch, which had been added in the 1940s, has been completely renovated. Now the sunny room has slate tiles on the floor and a fountain in one corner, with a statue of Pan providing a steady trickle of water from his flute.

Faux said when they first moved in, the room was piled floor to ceiling with old magazines and other junk.



The room, called a “summer kitchen” by the previous owner, was completely knocked down and rebuilt on the same footprint, she said. “It was an unsafe structure,” Faux said.

A small courtyard in the back provides some green space for the family.

Wooden stairs lead to the third floor, home to a galley-style kitchen with granite countertops, modern appliances and zebra-wood cabinets. A dining room, a living room and a bathroom also share the floor.

Some historic details have been imported. A cabinet that is labeled as being a “sterilizer” seemed to fit the drug-store theme and now serves as the base of the bathroom sink. Victorian-era molding along the dining-room ceiling comes from another renovated property in Baltimore.

Other historic details have been moved, such as a wooden cabinet now used to house glassware and china in the dining room, and another positioned along the stairwell.

Most of the house has hardwood floors, which were covered by linoleum or layers of paint, or both. The floors in the dining room could be saved, Hardaway said, but elsewhere they had to be replaced. The couple found oak floors with plenty of knots, giving it enough character to match the older floors in feel if not in actual fact.

Stairs leading up to the fourth floor are another example of labor-intensive restoration. Hardaway said the spindles, trim and risers were all taken apart, cleaned and put back together. Still, about 20 spindles were missing. At first the couple looked into having matches made, but that would have been more money than they wanted to spend. Finally, they found some close-enough spindles in Virginia for \$4 each, Faux said.

The deeply colored, fat, wooden handrail would never be allowed today, said Hardaway, because it doesn't live up to current codes which require that a child can grip it.

Since the property is in a historic district, the couple was able to win tax credits for preserving the history of the place. But an additional benefit is simply keeping the history of the old place alive. “Some of the older neighbors come in and they remember buying stuff here,” Faux said.

The couple, who have a young daughter, Kathryn, are now selling the Baltimore Street home. They're moving to the former Bolton Hill Synagogue, which they are also renovating. “We like to do interesting projects,” Hardaway said. ❧



BEFORE



Roberta Faux and Travis Hardaway originally thought the renovations would only take two years.

AFTER



The updates wound up taking six.



A trend of a **different** color

Years in advance, this firm's color forecasters decide the fate of your fashion, auto and home hues

BY MARY MEDLAND

Special to The Daily Record

Photos courtesy of Color Marketing Group

Remember a few years ago when a number of new cars sported a color bearing a distinct similarity to the fiery hot Japanese horseradish found in sushi joints throughout the land? So much of a resemblance that more than one had vanity tags that read “WASABI”?

Most of us do not give a great deal of thought to the origins of whatever the hot color trend of the moment is — whether it is the color of our cars, clothing, household paint or appliances. However, behind the scenes the Northern Virginia-based Color Marketing Group is busy determining the colors that will soon be on the market.

“Our name is misleading for many people,” says Jaime Stephens, executive director of the Color Marketing Group. “People assume we are a marketing firm, but we are an organization of more than 1,000 color forecasters and marketers with members from all over the world.

“Twice a year we forecast color trends. The fashion industry is our smallest component ... we’re more focused on transportation, technology and consumer goods.”

Founded in 1962, the nonprofit group is, according to its Web site, “involved in the use of color as it applies to the profitable marketing of goods and services. CMG provides a forum for the exchange of noncompetitive information on all phases of color marketing; color trends and combinations; design influences; merchandising and sales; and education and industry contacts.”

Eileen Brown, an interior designer with EB Designs LLC, agrees that most consumers are unaware of the Color Marketing Group. “And what it does absolutely affects everything I do,” she says. “Much of what the Color Marketing Group is about is the psychology of what people want, not what they need. Bear in mind that originally all automobiles were black, but then racing cars were painted red to reflect the exuberance of the sport.”

However, not all interior designers believe they are especially influenced by the group. “We are really not affected, although our vendors are,” says Dan Proctor, an interior designer with Kirk Designs. “The bulk of what Kirk does is not about trends ... yes, we react and are influenced by our vendors, but the truth is that each time I sit down with a client, I’m looking to do what is best

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for the client, regardless of what is trendy.”

Considering the days when all cars were black, one might understandably ask, “What does it matter whether the tea kettle is stainless steel or bright red? The water will still come to a boil.”

“Research shows that more than 65 percent of a consumer’s purchasing decisions are based solely on color and packaging,” says Stephens. “We do a lot of test marketing in order to make sure that all industries are producing their products in the best colors.”

To that end, the Color Marketing Group hosts two international conferences a year, one in the fall and another in the spring. Typically the conferences are held in North America and draw about 400 members, although there is a summer European conference and an Asia-Pacific conference, the latter of which is held in Singapore.

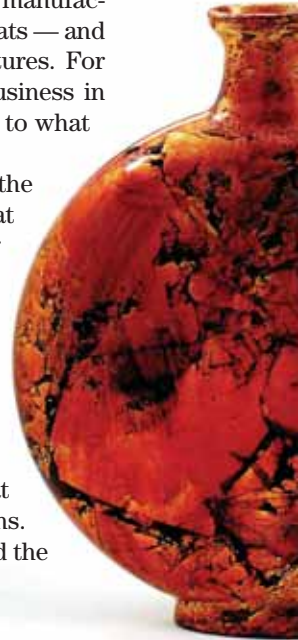
“We have focus groups with no more

than a dozen people each,” says Stephens. “Our members come to the table with information to determine what actually becomes a tangible product ... we end with a final palette of colors, which is known as a ‘color card.’”

“Those color cards will be different for the various industries — everything from those manufacturing roller skates, window blinds and boats — and will be geared toward differences in cultures. For example, our members who are doing business in Asia will give advice to U.S. companies as to what colors will work for those cultures.”

The colors that were determined in the fall of 2006 make it to the color cards that are distributed right after the December holidays: The resulting products will be on the market within the next year.

Perhaps not surprisingly, world events have an influence on our psyches and emotional response to color. The Sept. 11, 2001 attacks brought the word “cocooning” into everyone’s vocabulary. “No longer were colors as vibrant as what one found in nature,” notes Stephens. “However, these days that has changed and the



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colors are much more natural and reflect people's increased concern about the state of our environment ... this really is a huge trend."

What we put in our stomachs also influences colors — at least the way we describe them. "We do not call a color 'pale yellow,'" says Brown. "Instead it will be labeled something along the lines of 'butter,' or if it is a vibrant yellow it is more likely to be labeled 'lemon,' and when people get tired of lemon, they'll switch to 'citron.' A pale green is likely to be named 'apple green.'"

Deep purple will be referred to as "eggplant" or bright red "chili pepper." And when it comes to drinks, there is an abundance of latte, mocha and espresso from which to choose. "Coffee and coffeehouses are a huge trend in our society today," says Brown. "When people hear the word 'latte,' for instance, what they are really thinking about is not the color, but the mood that is evoked. I think people respond to food names because they are natural and earthy."

Brown adds that certain classic colors, such as the jewel tones of navy blue, dark green and gold, will always remain the same, but nonetheless even these are changed as designers make note of jewel tones that include more reds, as well as brighter spring-like greens.

Of course, even the Color Marketing Group does not always get things right. "We do not face a lot of out-and-out rebellion, although some colors have received less of a response than others, and some of our neon and fluorescent shades have been used inappropriately in the past," acknowledges Stephens. "And, yes, there are a lot of people who still hold us responsible for those hideous avocado refrigerators of the 1960s and 1970s." ❀



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RESIDENTIAL BROKERAGE

Q&A



Hollis Brown

Lucrative steps before selling: Q&A with Home Inspector Hollis Brown

BY CHRISTINE HANSEN
Special to The Daily Record

Hollis Brown is the owner and operator of ThoroSpec LLC, a home-inspection company covering Northern Baltimore through Richmond, Va. He has been a full-time inspector for 10

years and has performed over 4,000 inspections. Brown is a certified home inspector in Virginia, a state certified instructor, and a member of the American Society of Home Inspectors.

Recently, he agreed to a question-and-answer session with The Daily Record.

I want to talk to you about home inspection from the seller's perspective. What is most important to fix in a home before selling? What are the most common repairs?

Most real estate contracts, especially those written nowadays, have a clause that requires that the house's plumbing, electric and mechanical items be in proper working order. If you're going to be required to fix them anyway, why not fix them before you list? The house will show better and you get the benefit of the repairs while you occupy the house. People are tempted to invest money in "fixing it up," hoping to increase the value. This is usually not a wise investment.

Why is "fixing it up" a bad idea?

Many buyers plan to make major changes anyway once they take ownership, so improvements that the seller makes are often dollars taken off the table.

What steps can people take to make more money come selling time?

Get a good agent — someone with experience who knows the market and someone who is going to invest effort into marketing your home. Clean it up. If it's already in good shape, pressure wash the exterior, replace the carpet and apply a coat of paint. If

your house is run down, admit it. Sellers who try to hide things get themselves into trouble — especially in a seller's market, when people think they can hide the defects and pass them off.

"Get a good agent."

Hollis Brown

What are the top “hot spots” to repair/look for?

The answer to that goes to the question of what is important to the buyer. The buyer looks at the house twice: once before contract signing and once after, with an inspector. Things that are apparent, usually cosmetic, affect the buyer’s decision to sign.

Do you recommend home sellers have their home inspected prior to putting their house on the market? What are the advantages and disadvantages of doing this?

Many see the pre-listing inspection as a double-edged sword. Once it’s been inspected and there is documentation of the evidence, it’s difficult to disclaim. There are advantages, though — the house shows better and it potentially raises the price. If the house is in good condition, having an inspection report on the coffee table during the open house can make that point. If the house is in less than good condition, having an inspection report on the table can help quell the fear of the unknown. But it could also mean more money off the house.

Do you have any advice for sellers to help maximize their profit?

We are seeing a lot of staged houses these days. Sellers are going out of their way to make the house look good. Sellers should clean the house up, add a little nice furniture — but small furniture ... it makes a room look larger. I think it’s wise to make the house look good. It’s the expensive upgrades that don’t pay off. The buyer’s inspector is going to identify the systems that require replacement. If the seller makes it look good and understands that there may be some more expenses involved in finalizing the sale, he controls his costs and optimizes his potential to sell — for the right price. Also, the seller should be prepared to spend money after the inspection. The seller should consider negotiating money rather than repairs.

What are the dangers of selling “as is”?

The problem with selling “as is” depends. The buyer is going to invest in improvements. They may actually tear out some of the seller’s improvements. If the house is just a little run down, there are ways to make it look nice — cleaning, painting, flooring — without hiding any defects. The downside of selling an OK house “as is,” meaning not making any improvements, is that one doesn’t take advantage of the benefit of minor cost-effective improvements.

What should sellers and home buyers look for when selecting a home inspector?

In order to make an informed decision, a consumer needs information.

Until recently, membership in a nationally recognized professional organization meant something. The proliferation of wannabe organizations makes knowing who to trust problematic. A professional license often sets a minimal standard, making

it easier for the newbie to appear equal to an experienced professional. I recommend that consumers, buyers and sellers dig a little deeper when choosing a home inspector. They should ask the following questions:

Are they state issued? What professional memberships do they have? What certifications do they have? How many years have they been in the business? How many inspections have they performed? What services do they offer? ❧

“If your house is run down, admit it.”

Hollis Brown



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A flower garden of art and antiques

As an art historian, I am often asked to explain art history's floral symbolism. Some believe that floral iconography is some secret language, but floral imagery speaks volumes about art and antiques if you can do the translation.



Dr. Lori

For instance, in 19th-century British portraiture, it is not uncommon to see the sitter holding a forget-me-not. This is because the flower demonstrates the Victorian interest in honoring the deceased. The appearance of a forget-me-not flower tells the viewer that the sitter had passed away and the tiny blue flower instructs Victorian viewers to “forget-me-not” or to remember the deceased.

Reading roses

The flowers, mainly roses, featured on antiques of 18th-century France reference the events of that playful society. In the age of the Rococo during Louis XV's reign over France, the king and his many mistresses — including the famed Madame

de Pompadour — were engaged in the frivolity of outdoor parties, or fete galantes, and the pursuit of love. It follows that the rose, the abundant symbol of love, would be a common decorative motif carved into or stenciled onto antique French furnishings dating back to the 1700s.

Other flowers also signify various important aspects of modern society, as carnations suggest fidelity in marriage, lilies reference purity, and daisies symbolize innocence. Both antique quilts and oriental rugs, two wildly popular collecting categories, focus on the grandeur of the garden.



Postwar American tables were adorned dinnerware featuring hand painted tulip designs from pottery manufacturers like Blue Ridge.

Terrific tulips

One particular flower has grown synonymous with both the Dutch people and the history of 17th century

still-life painting and antiques collecting. The mildly fragrant tulip via its trumpet-formed blooms announces the arrival of spring. Dating back centuries and included in some of art history's most important still-life paintings, the tulip is the quintessential symbol of luxury, wealth and prosperity in the history of art and antiques.

Botanist Carolus Clusius brought the first tulip buds from Constantinople to Leiden in 1593. Originally used in medical research experiments, the flower sparked great economic interest at the time as sales of the high-priced onion-like bulbs spread throughout Europe.

Tulipomania, or the tulip

Pennsylvania Dutch fraktur, birth or marriage certificate, is a delicate painting on paper documenting family history.



craze, resulted as well-to-do Dutchmen developed a taste for tulips as a luxury item. Some socialites regarded the precious tulip bulbs as even too valuable to plant. Many saved the bulbs and displayed them on tables as part of a high-style centerpiece. By the 1630s, tulips had increased



A vintage advertising tin of the 1950s commands \$45 to \$65 at flea markets.

in popularity and in price with significant property exchanges taking place all in the pursuit of tulips.

Tulips were luxury items in art and antiques, too. The delicate flower was a status symbol reflecting a taste for the extravagant. They are the flower to look for if you are seeking a work of art or antique that may have once adorned a grand manor house or king's mansion.

Since the 17th century, the tulip has been the flower of the privileged. Dutch baroque artists such as Willem de Heem and Rachel Rauysch all painted floral still-lives featuring tulips for a new breed of art collectors. Today, international auctions command as much as six figures for these masterpieces. While images of tulips bring big money today, the flower said wealth in days gone by. Today, the favorite flower still helps promote Holland's tourist industry.

Tulipomania spread as the tulip motif can be found on many diverse antiques, including 1780s colonial blanket chests, mid-19th century embroidered samplers, William and Mary tavern tables, circa 1840s redware pottery, cast-iron doorstops, Pennsylvania Dutch frakturs and even Art Nouveau Tiffany lamps. The appearance of tulips in fine art and decorative art says high status and high style.

Postwar prosperity

By the 20th century, the tulip became a true symbol of American wealth. By

the late 1940s, the tulip was an obvious symbol of prosperity in the aftermath of World War II when Americans were rebuilding abroad and participating in the baby boom at home. Young American families embraced the American prosperity movement of the 1950s and selected tulips as a favorite

symbol. In the historic Levittowns, a new class of suburbanites added wrought iron tulip-shaped railings to new porches and decorated postwar kitchens with Blue Ridge dishes and advertising tins featuring the triumphant blossoms.

Today, even contemporary banks embrace the tulip. As a logo, the tulip is often chosen to represent financial institutions. The tulip subliminally indicates that a financial institution can bring results because the tulip reflects wealth. So, if you want to collect and prosper, look for the floral sign of luxury — the tulip. Happy spring!

Dr. Lori is a certified appraiser and museum curator with a Ph.D. in art history. Watch Dr. Lori appraise viewers' antiques on Comcast's "Money Matters Today" on Thursdays at 6 p.m. She can be contacted by visiting www.DrLoriV.com or calling 1-888-431-1010. The opinions expressed are Dr. Lori's and do not necessarily reflect those of The Daily Record.



Antique quilt in grandma's flower garden appliqué pattern dating to circa 1890-1930.

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Spring your closets from clutter





Custom closet systems can be applied to almost any room of the house — including the bedroom, kitchen, office and entertainment room — and they range in cost from a few hundred to several thousand dollars.

By CAROLYN OLEJNIK

Special to The Daily Record

Photography courtesy Closet and Storage Concepts

Spring is coming, and with it comes spring cleaning. So while the birds are chirping and the leaves are growing back on trees, we are stuck inside debating whether to keep that old, dusty recliner.

Have hope.

Thanks to the design and installation of custom closet systems, spring cleaning doesn't have to be as daunting as it used to be. Finding the perfect place to store the kids' game systems and keep your office files in an accessible location has never been easier.

"It's a very simple process," says Lisa Joy Sachs, a design manager of Closet and Storage Concepts located in Owings Mills. "We try to keep it as least complicated as possible."

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Sachs says that the most important aspect to the experience is the relationship between the designer and the client that develops as early as the first minute. "People's closets are the most private and intimate places in the home," Sachs says. "When you invite people over, you don't typically show them your closets."

"It's important to make that connection at the very first handshake or it might get awkward."

When a designer visits the home, he or she will take measurements to begin recommending home organization systems that best match the needs of the homeowner. Pending on the amount of space and the type of unit being added, typical construction time lasts from just one to a few days.

According to Sachs, if the region is a small space — up to 48 inches — the price may range from \$250 to \$800. By adding drawers and other accessories, the amount ranges from \$700 to \$1,100. And most large walk-in closets cost \$3,300 to \$28,000. Details like crown molding, custom colors, granite, the amount of drawers and other realms of the closet naturally increase the dollar value.

For the home office, a small system starts at under \$1,000. For a library office with high-end special molding, arched valences and built-in furniture file storage systems, the price can reach over \$11,000, with quartz and granite products becoming increasingly popular.

"As the country experiences a trend in people going into home-based businesses, the needs at home are more than just a desk these days," Sachs explains. "They want it to look a bit classier than the furniture you can find at an office store."

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center area, the average storage upgrade is \$2,500. Going above and beyond, imagine a home entertainment center with a 60-inch flat-screen television in the center with doors on the side that open up to a built-in walk-in closet.

Other custom-built innovations include pull-out units for storing bottles and cans, and a fun place for the kids to hang out while unpacking the groceries in the pantry. A desk area where the kids can use the laptop allow mom or dad to place food items on the other side without worrying about what the kids are getting into in the next room.

Of all the improvements that can be made, custom walk-in closets tend to be the most popular, with an average price of \$3,300.

“A lot of new home construction companies are making bigger closet areas in new homes,” Sachs says. “A lot of clients are opting to not include furniture in the bedroom anymore; instead they want a large area that they can walk and sit in rather than having to walk back and forth from the bathroom to the closet and so forth.”

Erin Holland, an office manager of Closet Creations LLC in Cockeysville, says that homeowners are opting to build substantial storage units to increase the home's resale value. As homeowners often contact Holland as their house is being built, she says that sometimes bedroom closets are as big as the width of the garage.

“People want their homes to have a different appeal than the house next door,” says Holland. ❧

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More and more homeowners are installing central vacuum units, which tend to be more convenient and efficient than their conventional counterparts.

BY KATHLEEN JOHNSTON JARBOE

Special to The Daily Record

Photos courtesy of ZLRIGNITION

With more powerful motors, new features and claims of cleaner air, central vacuums have been sucking up a growing spot in luxury homes.

According to figures by vacuum maker Beam Industries, just 15 percent of new luxury homes had the appliance in 2001. Last year, that portion had grown to 30 percent. And an estimated 15 percent of move-up homes — the second house a buyer purchases in their lifetime — now have the appliance as well.

The units use tubing in the walls to suck dirt and debris away to a container unit in the garage or utility room. Homeowners only need to attach a lightweight hose and brush at inlets throughout the house to activate the appliance. And since the motor is in another room, central vacuums can be much quieter than the traditional vacuum.

“People who have owned it once want it again,” said Larry Hartley, vice president of marketing at Webster City, Iowa-based Beam Industries.

The growth has come even as many installers and retailers must overcome a spotty history of performance.

“Probably the biggest objection I’ve heard is, ‘My grandmother had one and it never worked right,’” said Mickey Waskey, owner of CMW Company Inc. in Ellicott City, which installs and sells Beam central vacuums.

Vacuum experts blame performance problems on bad installations by plumbers, electricians and other handymen not trained in putting in central vacuums. When installed correctly, the units can last 20 to 30 years, they say.

“I wouldn’t want my roof put in by someone who does tile floors,” Waskey said.

Central vacuums
see page 25

The VacPan — an innovation on the traditional dustpan — remains the most popular attachment.



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“You could build a house with what people throw away.”

continued from page 23

have been around for close to 100 years. But the last 10 to 15 years have seen a wave of innovations that made the units more powerful and convenient.

New attachments include dusters that suck dust into the unit, dusters with lights, furnace-cleaning attachments and even a VacnSeal gadget that sucks air from resealable plastic bags to extend the shelf-life of foods. The most popular attachment is the VacPan — a wide, rectangular-shaped inlet at floor level aimed to replace the dustpan. Instead of sweeping dirt into the dustpan, homeowners sweep it into a foot-activated inlet that whisks debris to the central containment unit.

“[The VacPan] sells the entire system for some people,” Hartley said.

But retailers and installers say most individuals seek central vacuums out for their allergy-reducing capabilities.

A 2001 study found those allergic to house dust saw a significant reduction in their symptoms when using a central vacuum, according to a study funded by Beam Industries at the University of California, Davis School of Medicine.

Central vacuum manufacturers claim that since dirt is



sucked away to a containment unit in another room in the house, there is less re-release of dust and dirt than in traditional vacuum cleaners.

A 2004 edition of Consumer Reports validated those claims. But the same report also found that some traditional vacuum cleaners scored even better than central vacuum cleaners in emission tests.

Hartley blamed the ratings somewhat for the organization's bias toward less expensive products.

“They think that a central vacuum is high end, high price, and they think, ‘I don't really want to tell people that is the way to go because they can get an upright or canister vacuum for [less],’” he said.

The appliances, including installation for a standard number of inlets, start around \$1,500 for new homes, according to Justin Haver, who owns Superior Vacuums, a vacuum installation and repair business in Columbia. Haver said the cost to add a central vacuum to existing homes is usually about \$200 to \$300 more. ❧

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Maryland Distinctive Properties Calendar of Events

Friday, March 23-Sunday, March 25

2007 Annual Home Show

The **Home Builders Association of Western Maryland** is hosting the 2007 Annual Home Show at Allegany County Fairgrounds. The fairgrounds are off US Rt. 220 South, on 11490 Moss Avenue Extended in Cumberland. Hours for the show are Friday, 5:00-8:00, Saturday, 10:00-8:00, and Sunday 11:00-4:00. For more information, contact the Home Builders Association of Western Maryland at 301-722-4343 or e-mail hbuilder@atlanticbbn.net.

Wednesday, March 28

First Wednesday Breakfast Seminars

The **Sales & Marketing Council** of the Home Builders Association of Maryland presents the First Wednesday Breakfast Series sessions for 2007. Timely topics, dynamic speakers and networking opportunities highlight this program aimed at today's new home sales professional. The seminars will be held at the Hilton Pikesville from 8:30-10:30 a.m. The ticket price for these morning sessions is \$22 in advance or \$25 at door. Pre-registration is suggested. Contact: Vickie Bernstein at 410-265-7400 x 105 or e-mail vickie@homebuilders.org.

Wednesday, March 28

Distinguished Speaker Series

Come join the **Maryland Chapter American Society of Interior Designers** as they present "Color and Light — A Designer's Paintbox" and "Universal Design & Aging in Place...Designing User-Friendly Interiors that Enhance Aging in Place." The event runs from 9:00-3:00, and is being hosted by The Fretz Corp., 9204 Berger Road, Suite H, Columbia. Speakers include Deborah Burnett, an award-winning interior designer, and Wilma S. Hammet, president of DesignsWork 2. Cost: ASID Members \$160, nonmembers \$185, students \$80 (includes registration and meals). The series is sponsored by Dacor. For more information, contact Kim Schmulowitz at 410-744-1121 or kimasidmd@earthlink.net.

Thursday, April 5; Wednesday, April 25

2007 AIA Baltimore Spring Lecture Series

For decades, **AIA Baltimore** has sponsored the only local annual lecture series devoted to architecture and design. The series is open to the public. On the 5th, the guest lecturer is Walter J. Hood Jr. of Hood Design. On the 25th, the guest lecturer is Bernard Tschumi of Bernard Tschumi Architects. Starting time is 6:00 p.m., with a reception to follow each lecture. Lectures will be held at Falvey Hall at Brown Center, Maryland Institute College of Art, 1300 W. Mount Royal Avenue. Individual lecture tickets for nonmembers/members are \$13. Tickets for the whole series are \$40/\$35 for nonmembers/members. For more information, go to www.aialbalt.com and click on event links, or call 410-625-2585.

Wednesday, April 11

30th Annual MAME Awards

The 30th Annual MAME Awards event will be held at the Washington Hilton, 1919 Connecticut Avenue NW, Washington, D.C., from 7:00-midnight. This event is co-sponsored by the **Maryland-National Capital and Northern Virginia Building Industry Associations**. For more information, contact Kathy Rockinberg at 301-445-5406 or e-mail your inquiry to krockinberg@mncbia.org.

Thursday, April 19

Remodelor's Council Annual Spring Dinner

Come to this great networking opportunity and have an opportunity to earn three continuing education units. The **Remodelor's Council** dinner is being held at the BWI Hilton, beginning at 6:30 p.m., and will feature motivational speaker David Harper. Sponsors include Allied Building Products Corp., ChesapeakeHome Magazine, and Lansing Building Products. Nonmember/member ticket prices are \$85/\$70. For more information, contact Vickie Bernstein at 410-265-7400 x105 or vickie@homebuilders.org.

Friday, April 20

Career Day for Students

The **Maryland Chapter of the American Society of Interior Designers** is hosting a career day for students at Anne Arundel Community College, Cade Building, Room 219. The college is located at 101 College Parkway in Arnold. Career day will run from 10:00 am-3:00 pm. For more information, contact Kim Schmulowitz at 410-744-1121 or kimasidmd@earthlink.net.

Wednesday, April 25

2006 Maryland Awards of Excellence Ceremony

Join the **Home Builders Association of Maryland** at the 2006 Maryland Awards of Excellence ceremony, which recognizes local home builders who provide buyers with excellence in design, livability and value. The MAX ceremony will be held at the Baltimore Marriott Waterfront, with a cocktail party at 6:00 p.m., followed by dinner and the awards ceremony at 7:00 p.m. For more information, contact Trudie Finley at 410-265-7400 ext 112 or Trudie@HomeBuilders.org.

Friday, May 4

Awards of Excellence Gala

The **Frederick County Builders Association** will be announcing Awards of Excellence winners at Lynfield Event Complex, 10142 Hansonville Road. The gala will begin at 1:00 p.m. Tickets are available for \$75 through the FCBA office. Various levels of partnerships and advertising opportunities are available to promote your company among industry leaders. For information, contact the FCBA office at 301-663-3599.

Saturday, May 12

Annual Garden Mart

Sponsored by the Silver Spring Garden Club, the Annual Garden Mart will be held at **Brookside Gardens** in Montgomery County. The event will run from 9:00-3:00. Brookside is the county's incomparable, award-winning 50-acre public display garden situated within Wheaton Regional Park, at 1800 Glenallan Ave. For more information, call Brookside Gardens at 301-962-1400.

Wednesday, May 16

Bus Trip to Kips Bay In NYC

The **Maryland Chapter of the American Society of Interior Designers** is running a bus trip to New York City to see the 35th Annual Kips Bay Showhouse. The trip begins at 7:00 a.m. and ends at 11:00 p.m. This annual event brings together the most recognized designers in NYC, each of whom will decorate one room of a fabulous home in New York City. The proceeds will benefit the Kips Bay Boys & Girls Club of New York City. Cost: \$80.00 per person. Make checks out to Maryland Chapter ASID and mail to: Holly Frye, ASID, CID, 580-A Bellerive Road, Annapolis, Md. 21409. For more information, call 410-757-7425.

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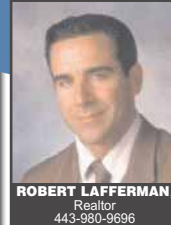
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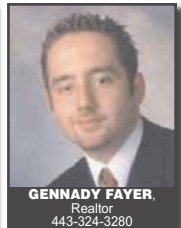
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