

Inside Clean

Scrub away the stress and toil this spring cleaning season.



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Shore Home

Shore Listings

See what that house down the street sold for or that parcel you've been eyeing for the dream home you will build some day. Look it up in our real estate transactions.

Inside

For their comfort

don't forget...



Fresh flowers in their space
A choice of pillow types
A comfy robe and slippers



An extra blanket
A good bedside reading light
Plenty of books or magazines



Water with a glass
Fresh towels
Shampoo in the shower
An extra toothbrush and tooth paste



And remember to ask, before their arrival, their breakfast preferences, and how they like their coffee (or tea) with or without milk.



This 'guest nest' attic had always been a, sort of, kind of, living quarters. And, it's a challenge. One has to walk the ridge-line not to knock yourself out before tucking into one of the two dormers.

Guest nest

Making visitors feel snug and cozy in dead of winter

By Jill Butler
Special to ShoreHome

There's a choice to be made when "rightsizing" – how much room and how many rooms to set aside for hosting guests. This is tricky. Having chosen to live in a small cottage without extra bedrooms and bathrooms, the guest situation caused me moments of pause.

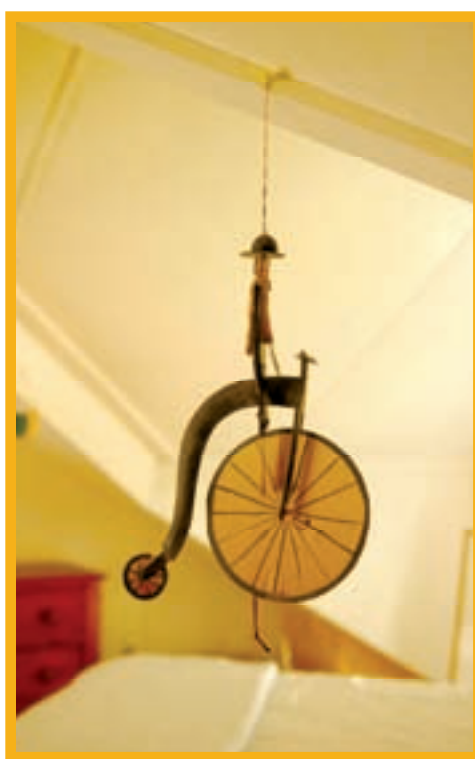
I did what I often suggest to friends: "sleep in your own guest quarters a few nights so you can see how it functions. Get a taste of what you're offering to your sleep-over invites."

I know my guest quarters well. Simultaneously moving in and renovating is never a great combo, but there was no other choice. I lived in what's now known as the attic 'guest nest' for a few months. I also know the nearest bathroom is downstairs, not exactly convenient.

I did rectify the single bath situation by adding a guest bath, albeit, downstairs. I simply was not of a mind to breakdown walls to get a bath upstairs for 10 nights a year. I did conclude the attic windows had to be replaced, air conditioning was a must and a separate heating zone would be efficient. I outfitted the space with a queen bed, and a single matted 'sofa.' I can accommodate three up, and if needed, one down on the porch.

This 'guest nest' attic had always been a, sort of, kind of, living quarters. And, it's a challenge. One has to walk the ridge-line not to knock yourself out before tucking into one of the two dormers. That navigated, it's cozy, friendly and the most cottagey feeling space of this cottage. I left the old blue and white vintage flowered and striped wallpaper that's now whitewashed and sufficiently faded. The floor boards are authentically worn. All that's missing is sand blowing in from the beach.

Clutter comes in all forms. The physical clutter of my world had gratefully and ruthlessly edited before moving to the cottage. It was the emotional clutter of too much media, specifically TV, that lingered. The TV had filled the void in a deteriorating relationship. We could pretend to be together in the same room without speaking, let alone communi-



cating, except via the third party TV. It hurts to think about it, but here it is. The TV cluttered and distracted the void and moved to the cottage with me. The spare bedroom on the first floor was destined to be the TV room until yoga and meditation inched its way in and the TV was relegated to the 'guest nest' - out of sight, out of mind. I experimented with this new location; creeping upstairs in the evenings for my fix. With time, I noticed I was downstairs more than up. The library at the bottom of the hill called out and I responded. Books became my friends again. I love to read but "somehow" never had the time.

My Comcast service at that time was costing about \$90 a month. I made a bold move and downgraded my service first by a few dollars, and then again, and again, and again, and again. I cut my costs as I watched less and less TV. As I made my way down the line of downgrades, I arrived at the minimum monthly charge of \$11. By then it was cheap with, basically, nothing to see. Guess that's why it's called Basic. I arrived at the most frightening moment when there was no

where to go except to STOP. To STOP! To disconnect the service, one has to return the cable box. The moment had arrived. I pulled the box out of its attic residence, threw it in the car, and drove it to Clinton. I marched bravely into Comcast and said, "Thanks, you can have this now, I'm done". The receptionist was a bit put back but I did not falter.

Hosting requires some preparation and consideration.

I like hosting a good friend that I can pamper in my way. My way includes: serving breakfast on a tray in front of the fire or on the porch; getting up (or intending to) before my guest to get the coffee going; and cutting fresh tarragon from the herb garden for my French-style scrambled eggs. It's the simple acts of kindness that we can offer. The one thing

I stretch to remember milk for the coffee for my guests. Who takes milk, who does not? As a back-up measure, I now stock dry milk, just in case it's vital to the cause. Heated, it seems to pass given the other choice of none at all.

Small spaces and jerry-rigged quarters invite coziness and playfulness for the unusual and unexpected. Summer camp (from when I was a kid) being my forever reference point, I can manage most any arrangement. Others may not. I remember having a rather fancy New York friend who used to come for the week between Christmas and New Years. She loved the 'guest nest' until she met her new fancy-man-friend and declared she'd never bring him to stay here. Well now! That caused pause. Can't please them all, all the time.

Gratefully, there's another side. Our Sisterhood was gathering and there was an overflow of those needing a "bed.". Having participated in workshops in all parts of the country, I've been hosted many times. So, I'm happy when an opportunity to reciprocate shows up. I recently offered to host Fran. As luck would have it, she had a bad ankle but being the warrior-woman she is, no mind. Up she went to the 'guest nest.'

What I like about this offering to host is the unexpected friendships that get created. How else might I have come to know Fran? Perhaps it's the Universe, the mastermind host, that knows who

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needs to meet whom. In the few hours left of the evening and around the getting up and getting going, there's time to share. Fran has now slept-over yet again. During the Valentines weekend, I went to Fran's gallery, the Courtyard Gallery in Mystic, and enjoyed seeing her world and to linger in her elegant and unex-

pected environs.

The attic guest nest, now clutterless and media free, continues to welcome the expected and unexpected visitors. There are books for all ages and interests, as well as titles to put one to sleep. Surprisingly, there haven't been any complaints about no TV, and everyone seems to

sleep well in this cozy and nurturing nest.

Editor's Note: Jill will appear at Weekend Kitchen, 6 North Main Street, Essex,

Saturday, March 29, 4 to 5:30 p.m. She will share stories of living in Paris and returning to the US, along with a glass of wine. For further information, call 860.767.1010.

For more from Jill and her new book, "Create the Space you Deserve," published by Globe Pequot Press (coming in August), visit her new blog, <http://JillButlermyblog.blogspot.com>



We are pleased to bring you this reprint of a recent commentary about the approach to economic recovery by Jim Welchert.

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Bolstering Home Sales is the Key to Economic Recovery - Part 1

"Now that the Fed has dramatically cut the federal funds rate and Congress is close to enacting an economic stimulus package, the nation's mood seems to be lifting. But can these latest 'fixes' be more than temporary if we fail to stimulate the single largest segment of the gross domestic product? I'm referring, of course, to housing, the powerful engine that accounted for 33 percent of all U.S. economic growth over the past several years.

Every home sale triggers a demand for goods and services that ripples through virtually every segment of the economy. Given housing's unique impact, it is my fervent hope that before our lawmakers in Washington redirect their focus, they will act to speed a genuine economic recovery through a federal tax credit or other incentive for home buyers.

The economic repercussions of a home sale begin almost immediately. In the interval from contract signing to closing, home buyers call upon a wide range of service suppliers that typically include home inspectors, termite/pest inspectors, mortgage lenders, appraisers, title companies, insurance companies and lawyers. When home inspections turn up problems, a handyman is employed to do fix-ups. On moving day, both parties in the transaction will need truck rentals or moving services. Even the state in which the home sale takes place benefits, as the state government receives income from the real estate transfer tax.

According to National Association of REALTORS® (NAR) Chief Economist Lawrence Yun, based on the income of service providers alone, the sale of a \$417,000 home generates \$37,000 in direct economic activity or approximately nine percent of the sale price. Multiply that by the billions of dollars in home sales each year, and the economic impact on these service providers alone is staggering.

Look at what happens after the new homeowner moves in. First-time buyers may go to a giant home center or local hardware store for new door locks, paint samples and maybe a power lawn mower. They may have carpets cleaned or replaced and hardwood floors refinished. They'll need blinds and window treatments and may splurge on new appliances, kitchen counter tops, furniture pieces and any number of other items.

Not surprisingly, trade-up buyers spend even more. It's not uncommon for trade-ups to do high-end kitchen and master bath renovations and spend thousands of dollars on adding a deck or upgrading landscaping. Moving into a larger home also requires more furniture and accessories."

James M. Welchert is President and Founder of Weichert Realtors®

Be sure to look for Part 2 of this insightful article in this space next week.

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A guest bath was added downstairs. Though to breakdown walls to get a bath upstairs for 10 nights a year was not so appealing.