#### Home Improvement

Page 1B The Commercial Review www.thecr.com

#### Birds and the 'Bushes

Erlenbush and Quakenbush have spent decades creating a Redkey santuary for their flying friends



#### By RAY COONEY

The Commercial Review Since Violet Erlenbush and Bert Quakenbush moved to their home at 33 Charles St. in

made a lot of improvements. The longtime partners essentially built their house around the trailer that existed when Erlenbush purchased the property. But their focus has gone

Redkey 30 years ago, they've

beyond their own living space. They've also created a sanctuary for birds, with feeders of all shapes and sizes lined up along the perimeter of the property and scattered all over their three-quarters of an acre. The goal is to leave something special behind for the children, grandchildren and the birds.

"To be able to leave a peaceful, loving garden to my kids," said Erlenbush. "All the hard labor will be (done) and we can just maintain.

See Birds pages 4 and 5

Birds are always welcome at the property Violet Erlenbush owns at 33 Charles St. in Redkey. She refills her feeders twice a day with a variety of items. downy Pictured, а woodpecker visits one of the feeders this week to get an afternoon snack.

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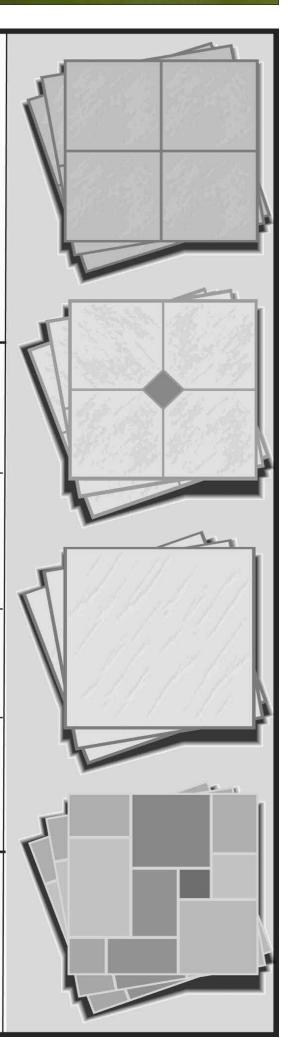
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#### Tradition is trending

#### No expert needed, '21 focus is versatility, comfort

You don't have to be a design professional or style expert to know what some of the biggest decorating trends are for this year. Chances are, you've probably already used one or two of them in your home without even realizing it. In previous years, a specific color, a popular pattern or a new technology may have dominated homes and social media feeds; we're still living with the aftershock of millennial pink and the resurgence of the Edison bulb.

In 2021, though, thanks in large part to a pandemic that has all of us spending more time at home, people are clamoring for versatility, comfort and a return to tradition. Think of these as anti-trend trends. And as someone who dislikes trends, I welcome the shift in the tide.

I spoke with several design experts about how the emphasis on comfortable, user-friendly spaces will affect home design in the coming year, and here's what they had to say.

#### Goodbye, single-use

At the top of the trend forecast for 2021 is the extinction of the single-use room. The pandemic has transformed our homes into a hub for everything we used to seek elsewhere: gym, movie theater, restaurant, office, classroom, vacation spot. Your dining room or guest room (if you are fortunate enough to have either) is probably doubling as an office, classroom or gym. And this is not a trend that seems to be short-lived.

"The big trend is being at home," says Todd Klein, a New York-based decorator. Klein, who has clients all over the world, has been swamped with requests to create multipurpose rooms and, importantly, spaces that can serve multiple generations. Klein says it's not uncommon for three genera- and armchairs that have a com-

\* \$949.99 Drver



A room designed by Sarah Bartholomew in the Washington neighborhood of Georgetown incorporates woven furniture. Pieces associated with the Palm Beach style of the '60s are starting to come back.

pod under one roof right now, so versatility has never been more important. Ground-floor family rooms have been transformed into spaces where an elderly parent can sleep, for example, and bedrooms have been rejiggered to house gym equipment and desk setups.

#### Go big and go comfy

Not surprisingly, comfort is also trending. Alessandra Wood, vice president of style for Modsy, an online interior design service, predicts that the old-school Pottery Barn vibe, which was popular in the 1990s — picture Monica and apartment Rachel's "Friends" will make a strong comeback.

She says to look for overstuffed furniture with softer curves. "Think sofas, sectionals tions to be living together as a fortable look and feel, some-

\* \$1049.99 Drver

thing that you could really curl wall-to-wall has never looked up on and binge-watch TV or or felt better." read a good book," she says.

#### The return of carpet

Tori Mellott, a longtime design editor and current style director at Schumacher, agrees that comfort is king for 2021. She predicts this will translate into a resurgence of people wanting wall-to-wall carpet.

'With everyone spending so much time at home, I think homeowners are desperate to maximize comfort and coziness in their space, and one way to do that is using wall-to-wall. It unifies a space and provides ultimate luxury underfoot," Mellott says. "Wall-to-wall got a bad rap years ago, because many manufacturers used subpar materials, but," she says, "there have been so many advancements in stain-resistant fibers and treatments that

#### Wood and naturals

Mellott also says that traditional furniture is rising in popularity. "Mid-century furniture has reached a fever pitch with consumers, and it's starting to feel tired and cold," she says. "The market is saturated with knockoffs, and that particular style doesn't feel special anymore."

What people want, Mellott says, is classic antique furniture. The pandemic "has unwillingly thrust us into a chaotic and manic state, and for right now, brown furniture feels solid, sturdy and stalwart," she says. "There is sometimes a comfort attached to something that has been passed down from generation to generation, something that has weathered many storms, so to speak.'

It's not just traditional wood er decorating trends."

furniture that's experiencing a renaissance. The preppy woven furniture associated with the Palm Beach style from the '60s is also back, in the form of pieces made from natural materials like cane, jute, wicker and rattan. This is in part thanks to designers including Amanda Lindroth, Celerie Kemble, Aerin Lauder and Sarah Bartholomew, all known for their beautiful, breezy, island-inspired rooms.

Rattan dining chairs or a woven reed coffee table can give a vacation-like feel to a room – a vibe that is very much needed. "Using natural items has a calming effect and gives rooms oodles of texture," Wood says. She also notes that the use of natural materials is in keeping with a rising interest in sustainability. "People are starting to think more and more about the environmental impact of home design, and many natural fibers are sustainably produced without leading to deforestation."

It is worth noting that interest in traditional elements started well before the pandemic; wicker, rattan and brown, classic furniture are all primary design elements of the "grandmillennial" style, a trend I wrote about in May. But the pandemic has given strength to the movement. Many people find comfort in the familiar elements of their grandparents' homes and want to replicate it in their own space. Wood predicts the granny style will be stronger than ever in 2021. She also says Victorian wallpapers and William Morris prints will enjoy a revival, and Victorian and neoclassical styles, which have been under the radar, will be popping up in homes.

But whatever the next revival is, it's clear that what is old is new again. As Mellott says: "From your grandmother's silver or china, to a chest of drawers that you picked up at a flea market, we are all looking for things that feel unwavering. We don't want anymore fair-weath-



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#### **Home Improvement**

#### **Birds**



Violet Erlenbush explained that the vast array of bird-related features on her property at 33 Charles St. in Redkey started on a whim. A neighbor had rocks that were being given away for free. So, she and her partner, Bert Quakenbush, gathered them up and created a bird bath and water feature (above) at what was at that time the south end of their property. (They have since purchased additional land from a neighbor.)

She said she likes all of the birds that come to visit her property, but that it's especially neat when the redheaded woodpeckers come along. (She also likes to see the red-tailed hawks that sometimes visit, though they tend to be problematic for the other birds.) Her grandson Knox Ward, a kindergartner who she picks up every day from Redkey Elementary School, said his favorites are the blue jays.

For a while, Erlenbush and Quakenbush had a tradition of planting a new tree each year. That's been a boon for Knox, who loves to explore his grandma's property. "There's a lot of room. And there's trees that I can pretty much climb, as you just saw," he said after descending from a nearby evergreen.







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## Pushed by pandemic

Stauglers fast-tracked plans because of crew's free time

**Bv BAILEY CLINE** 

The Commercial Review FORT RECOVERY Bert and Bill Staugler have lived in the same house for 35 years.

Recently, they decided to give it an upgrade. Fort Recovery Chamber of Commerce recognized the couple Sunday for having the "Most Improved Dwelling"

Ted Romer, one of the selection committee members, explained the award is one of the few from the chamber not chosen through nominations. It's generally chosen based on how the property or home has improved since the prior year.

The Stauglers originally intended to do some remodeling work in January 2020 on the side of their home at 501 First St. They hired Matt Hilty of Geneva and his crew to add a back room (now an extended bathroom with a shower) to their bedroom, which took roughly a month to complete.

They had planned to do more work in coming years on their home, such as upgrading to a two-car

COVID-19 pandemic, though, Hilty's crew ended up having more on their hands this year, Bill explained. Extra time in

Within the next year or two or three, we wanted to also redo the outside. We just thought, well heck, let's get it done.

-Bill Staugler

Hilty's schedule was just what the Stauglers needed to take their home renovation project to the next level.

"Within the next year or two or three, we wanted to also redo the outside," Bill said. "We just thought, well heck, let's get it done.

The crew started work again in June. It then came to a standstill for a few

"With COVID last year, Likely because of the we had to wait on some of our things like siding, garage doors, some of that stuff was delayed," Bert explained.

See Pushed page 7B

Bert and Bill Staugler had several additions made to their Fort Recovery home at 501 First St. last year. Pictured, the Stauglers stand below one of their new additions, an overhang constructed above their front door. The couple also added an overhang above an upstairs window.



The Commercial Review/Bailey Cline





The Commercial Review/Bailey Cline

Several additions were made to Bert and Bill Staugler's home in Fort Recovery last year, winning the couple the Chamber of Commerce "Most Improved Dwelling" award at Sunday's annual banquet. Most notably, the Stauglers added on to their backroom, upgraded to a two-car garage and constructed a backyard patio and raised garden.

#### **Pushed**

Continued from page 6B Around Hilty returned with the materials he needed to finish the job.

In addition to tearing down their one-car garage and replacing it with a two-car garage, the Stauglers also revamped the house's exterior look with new siding, added a wall to create an entryway to laundry room, installed windows in the front porch, poured a concrete patio and constructed a raised garden in the backyard.

When Hilty's crew was-

home, the Stauglers also existing rooms. (The September, worked on the "odds and ends" of the project such as re-wiring around the house — with the help of their sons, Curtis and Ryan, their daughter Lauren, and their daughterin-law Renee.

They also hired some local businesses to take care of the other specialty work. Faller Mechanical installed new plumbing and an HVAC system.

Bill and Bert Staugler had several different floor plans at first. They originally wanted to add another bedroom but later n't working on their decided to just extend job.'

home on First Street now boasts three bedrooms and  $2 \frac{1}{2}$  bathrooms.)

This year, they're focusing more on landscaping, such as tending to the garden — Bert said she'll likely sow perennials and planting more trees around the property. The couple plans to stay in their home for years to come.

"If you get a chance, take a drive by Bill and Bert's place," Romer told a crowd at the Chamber awards banquet Sunday. "They've done a great

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Washington Post staff writer Jura Koncius was determined not to be one of those people who didn't accomplish anything during the pandemic. So she got rid of 44 boxes of stuff by cleaning out her attic. She would tell her neighbor when she had left attic items on a bench in front of her home, and the neighbor's son could take what he wanted.

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#### Attic clean-out brought some relief

**By JURA KONCIUS** The Washington Post

I was determined not to be one of those people who didn't accomplish anything during the pandem-

So I got rid of 44 boxes of stuff. Like losing weight, it was hard work, but I did it slowly and mindfully. It feels really great to have that tower of boxes gone. And the process offered moments of pure joy and laughs during a really lousy time.

I frequently write articles about decluttering, Marie Kondo, Swedish death cleaning and professional organizers. A cheerleader for letting stuff go, I even started something called Declutter Sunday on Facebook, where friends posted an item they were jettisoning. But my overstuffed attic has been my dirty little secret.

I am not a slob. My little 1937 Colonial house is organized and neat. But the closets are small. Over the decades, masses of stuff came into the house.

Koncius

Jura

but very little left. Enter the attic, which became the dumping ground for all the excess.

Stuck at home in March like everyone else, I hatched a plan. My husband, who is very senti-mental and fond of keeping things, agreed that we needed to take action. (He initially suggested renting a pod and getting movers to bring every single item down, so we could then go through it at our leisure.) Each Saturday for 22 weeks, I went up to the attic, did a little organizing and ended up with two boxes or bags that we schlepped down to the guest room. We then had one week to either throw the items away or find them a new home. Nothing

was to go back in the attic. Each member of the family was allotted one large Rubbermaid tub labeled "ARCHIVES," where they could put anything they couldn't part with. No judgment.

My husband took care of his items, I handled mine. As for our 30-year-old son living in New York, I Face-Timed or Zoomed with him to go through his items one by one, getting a yea or nay for each item. (No, I didn't get rid of any books, sports trophies or collectibles without permission.) His excess stuff is now in the garage, awaiting more sorting by him after the pandemic is over.

In the midst of all this, I wondered: How did this dusty, cramped space accessible by a trap door and a treacherous stairway become such a shameful disgrace?

Like many baby boomers, we have lived in our house for a long time: 35 years

See Attic page 9B



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#### Attic

When we moved in, I put neatly labeled cardboard boxes up there, holding our high school mementos, college textbooks, unused wedding gifts and out-of-season clothes. As time went on, the space filled with countless shopping bags and bins full of items with no obvious home elsewhere in the house. A box (or two) of papers and mugs brought home on the last day of every job. Travel brochures and hotel bills from glorious trips. Heavily tarnished silver-plated tea sets from both sides of the fami-

As life got busy in a family with two working parents and a child with many activities, there never seemed to be enough time deal with excess, whether it was our fez collection or our Pez collection. So the contents of the attic multiplied. We added a place to hang Halloween costumes, party dresses, ski clothes and "just-incase" fashion. Although we owned only a handful of Christmas ornaments when we moved in as newlyweds, there is now a "holiday department" devoted to lights, crèches, gift bags and wrapping paper, and hundreds of Santas, snowmen and fragile glass baubles.

Then there are the 1990s collect-them-all millennial treasures: Beanie Babies, Star Wars action figures and McDonald's Happy Meal toys. There are bags of CDs and 1970s platform shoes. There are old filing cabinets stuffed with every tax return we've filed. (Yes, I know I've written many times that you don't have to keep them that long.) And there are bags of beautifully handwritten letters from dear friends and family surrounding events good and bad: our engagement, our wedding, the birth of our son, our 40th birthdays, our parents' deaths.

long to go through, while might turn up.) I mailed

Every few weeks, my sister came over in her mask, and we sat in the backyard cackling and crying over old letters, photos and assorted relics from our parents.

others had hundreds of pieces of paper in them. But we could spread out the work over seven days.

We had a lot of laughs over some of the mementos. Every few weeks, my sister came over in her mask, and we sat in the backyard cackling and crying over old letters, photos and assorted relics from our parents. We agonized over what to do with boxes of hand-embroidered napkins and tablecloths, many with notes from our mom pinned to them as to their provenance. Letters from my grandfather in his last days made me weep. My college roommate and I yakked late into the night about old letters we had sent each other in the '70s. (I'll bring the green nail polish, you bring the Doors album.) I took photos of a lot of these old items, then let them go. (No, I did not thank them for their service.) We put any family documents or family tree information in desk drawers downstairs, to be dealt with later.

It was joyful to pass items on to another generation. I alerted my neighbor that I had put a teddy bear or a drum or a Star Wars book on a bench in front of our house, and her son was welcome to come over and take his pick. I was delighted to mail an entire set of Harry Potter books (with our son's okay) to our great niece. A cousin in Florida got the hand-carved Noah's Ark and most of the animals. (My husband wrote a note apologizing that the camel and donkey mates Some boxes didn't take were missing. They still

my 1971 red, white and blue sheath prom dress bought at Loehmann's (I still had the price tag: \$89.99) to a dear friend's daughter, who thought it would be perfect for a New York cocktail

I immediately put deaccessioned books in my car, then, as I drove around, I deposited them into the tiny lending libraries that dot our neighborhood. I consigned a pink 1950s fullskirted dress I wore to my engagement party, a K-letter sweater, a pair of men's 1970s Lilly Pulitzer pants and a sable boa to a vintage

Some weekends, I dreaded going up those stairs. It's freezing in the winter and broiling in the summer. You can't stand up fully. There were days I was not inspired to sort through the receipts for my wedding reception or a tooth fairy door hanger that still had a baby tooth in it. But we kept to the schedule, no matter what.

I am grateful I had the time to relive a lot of these memories without a deadline. And I've given some thought to my legacy list, as Matt Paxton, host of PBS's "Legacy List with Matt Paxton," suggests. My list today would include my son's christening gown with his name and the date embroidered by my mother; my father's scrapbook of his journey from Lithuania to America after World War II; an album of my son's drawings; a framed original Yves Saint Laurent sketch given to by me by my mentor Nina Hyde, former fashion editor of The Washington Post; and

an Elsa Peretti doughnut bangle bracelet, a gift from my husband on my 40th birthday.

We aren't planning on moving anytime soon. But it's a relief to not have the weight of those 44 boxes sitting right above us each night as we go to sleep.

As it stands now, the attic is halfway emptied out. The reality is, we will have to store some things up there, including luggage, Christmas decorations and the three archive boxes. And yes, the Pezes and the fezzes. We took a break over summer and for the holidays. But it's time to get cracking. We just got our first dose of the Moderna vaccine, and the pandemic's days are numbered. We need to go back up there and stir up more memories. Then we'll move on to the basement.









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