

Elevators create new options to moving

BY TOM KELLY

Special to South Florida Home

Dave Dunlap, 85, doesn't need a big, comfortable luxury automobile. Many of his friends have them, but he's earmarked his money for something else. "I've already been through that stage in my life," said the former aerospace engineer

TOM KELLY

now retired. "I'd really rather have this elevator instead — and it costs about the same amount of money."

Or less. According to the National Association of Elevator Contractors, the basic residential elevator package starts at about \$20,000 and can be installed in a four-by-four-foot space previously designated as a closet. The association's typical clients are Baby Boomers who are getting older and want to plan for the

future. Some of the association's inquiries come from individuals wanting the flexibility of accommodating a parent who might be coming to live with their family. They also see the definite need for themselves.

Dunlap's story is also common. He retired from McDonnell Douglas Corp. and found the perfect retirement home in the climate he and his wife dearly enjoyed. The couple was "fairly certain" that their children had left the nest for good and decided their larger family home was no longer a requirement. They scaled down to a modest, two-story home on a hill with a territorial view.

"At the time, my wife and I were in relatively good physical condition and never dreamed our body parts would need or demand maintenance," Dunlap said. "However, in retrospect—and with hindsight always being 20/20—we now realize we should have opted for a one-story house instead of the two-story

model we bought."

The Dunlaps eventually realized that climbing the stairs to their second-floor bedroom had become more than exercise. Not only had the trek grown to be a constant effort but lugging up heavy pieces of furniture was out of the question.

"An accident waiting to happen," Dunlap said. "No doubt about it. With my bad leg, it was just a matter of time."

They considered purchasing a one-story home in the neighborhood. However, they were not attracted to the design of local homes in their price range and did not want to leave their friends and move to another area.

"It was also debilitating for us to think of packing and moving at our age," Dunlap said. "We realized we would be giving up our nearby shopping centers and hospital along with some of the best doctors in the area. It became apparent that starting all over at our age might be a huge mistake. If we had won the

Lotto, it might warrant a second thought."

The solution was a residential elevator that now serves as a people mover, freight elevator and dumb waiter. Dunlap did most of his research on the Internet and decided on a Canadian firm that would accept his own design. Unlike many residential units, the Dunlap elevator is away from visitor traffic patterns yet not tucked away in a back closet.

"I don't like walking into a home and immediately see a chair lift or elevator," Dunlap said. "I know some people like to display them, but I'm not one of them. Ours is open, not claustrophobic, but you have to be looking for it to see it."

Elevator suppliers say there is no typical unit. All offer several pre-engineered configurations plus the ability to customize endless combinations of configuration, fixtures and finishes. Most companies also supply detailed drawings to help architects and builders include one in plans for

a home remodel or custom new construction.

Some residential units can travel up to 50 feet (providing ample basement-to-top-story access) and service six different landings. All units usually have safety devices and electronic controls that monitor cab position, door latches and automatic lighting.

"A lot of people seem to think it's a good idea to move closer to your kids when you get older," Dunlap said. "Well, your kids move too. Once you get to a new area, get settled and meet some people, your son or daughter could be transferred."

"We thought about all of the moving possibilities. We decided it was best to stay here and make it comfortable for us and for the children when they come to visit. The elevator has made all of that possible."

Tom Kelly's novel "Hovering Above a Homicide" is now in print and E-book form.

A physical barrier will discourage pestering woodpeckers

BY JEFF RUGG

Creators Syndicate

For the past few years, woodpeckers have attacked my house. Sometimes they are hammering on the chimney. Other times they are drilling huge holes on the sides of the house and pulling out the insulation. I want to do something before they come back this year. Do you have any suggestions?

They are protected by federal law, so there are limits to what you can do. If you have ever listened to a woodpecker sing, you know why

they would rather play the drums. They use hollow-sounding trees, gutters and chimneys to communicate to other woodpeckers that that is their territory. They do not do much damage to metal chimneys, but they can damage wood. They seem to like cedar siding -- maybe because it is easy for them to cling to and some boards have hollow spots under them that make good sounds. The most annoying part of the drumming is that they usually do it first thing in the morning, long before people normally get up.

If you want to bother



A Greener View

with the work, you can encircle your chimney with wire mesh to prevent them from getting to the chimney. The drumming is normally done only during spring when they raise their young. They occasionally drum during other times, probably just because it feels so good.

There are many wood-boring beetles and insects that live in the cracks and crevices of trees. Many of them have moved over to wooden siding on homes, where they become pests. Woodpeckers listen for the sounds of the insects and then

drill small holes to reach them. They just see the siding as another location to find a meal. They are doing the homeowner a favor by eating the insects or at least making the homeowner aware of the potential problem. At the same time, they might also become part of the problem.

A reader once sent me a note with information. It said: "I used to live in Georgia, and each spring the carpenter bees, which look like bumble bees; but much bigger, would drill circular holes in my cedar home and place their larvae inside. Then, the woodpeckers would come by and tap, tap, tap to get at those larvae.

Our solution was to look for the holes, which are always perfectly round, spray in some insecticide and then plug them with dowel stock, which we sawed off flush."

Woodpeckers do make nests in tree trunks, but they usually chose decaying wood that is soft enough to excavate easily. If the siding has some soft wood, the woodpeckers may make a hole in it. The board may need to be replaced. Once past the siding board, the insulation is easy to pull out, and it makes a comfortable nesting location.

A physical barrier may need to be erected to stop the woodpeckers from reaching the siding.

Ribbons or strings tied across the area may make them not want to land there. The ribbons would be unsightly but only need to be hung for a month or two. Bird netting that stops birds from picking the fruit off fruit trees should be available at your local nursery. It can be stretched across the side of the house out a foot or two from the siding. The holes in the net should be small enough to prevent the birds from getting caught.

Changing the siding seems a bit extreme, but that may be the best solution in the long run.

Email questions to Jeff Rugg at info@greenerview.com.



Christopher Zoller, CRS
2017 Chairman of the Board
MIAMI Association of REALTORS®

Miami Realtors Showcase South Florida at Global Expo

The MIAMI Association of REALTORS® (MIAMI) promoted South Florida real estate at the world's largest property show, MIPIM, on March 14-17, in Cannes, France as part of the National Association of REALTORS® (NAR) expanded U.S. pavilion. MIAMI has exhibited with NAR at MIPIM for three consecutive years to increase awareness of U.S. markets.

MIAMI leaders touted Miami's rise as a world-class global city and worked to attract more commercial and residential investment for South Florida.

NAR hosts a U.S. pavilion to increase awareness of U.S. markets with commercial and luxury development potential. In addition to Miami, U.S. markets featured at the MIPIM U.S. pavilion include the states of Florida, Illinois, Missouri, Nevada, Rhode Island and Washington and the metro areas of San Diego, Scottsdale, Las Vegas, Reno and New York.

Five MIAMI leaders and three MIAMI executives represented MIAMI at the MIPIM exhibit. Participating MIAMI leaders are: Zoller of EWM Realty International; 2017 Chairman of the Board-Elect George C. Jilil of First Service Realty, Real Living; 2017 Commercial President José María "Chepe" Serrano of New Miami Realty Corp.; 2017 Commercial President-Elect Brian Sharpe of Sharpe Properties Group; and 2017 Residential President Christina Pappas of The Keyes Company.

MIAMI Chief Executive Officer Teresa King Kinney, MIAMI Senior Vice President of Public Relations & International Lynda Fernandez and MIAMI Vice President of Government Affairs and City of Doral Councilwoman Ana Maria Rodriguez participated.

MIAMI Highlighted Robust South Florida Real Estate Market Foreign buyers purchased \$6.2 billion of South Florida residential properties in 2016, up from \$6.1 billion a year ago, according to the 2016 Profile of International Home Buyers of MIAMI Association of REALTORS® (MIAMI) conducted by MIAMI and NAR.

Christopher Zoller, CRS
EWM Realty International
(305) 329-7779
Zoller.c@ewm.com

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BY EDITH LANK

Creators Syndicate



House Calls

Six siblings inherited a lake house in 1986. It has been enjoyed by all families for years. However, now there is a need for extensive improvements. No one wants to put the money into it, but no one wants to see it go for taxes.

Four of the six want to sell the house and get their inheritance. One wants to buy it and give everyone her share; she would do all improvements and then allow it to be used by the others for vacations.

But one sibling won't agree to sell his share. He verbally agreed to sell last September. Now he says he never said that.

Do you know what the options would be? Have you ever seen a situation where one sibling could be forced to sell? Everyone wants to see this resolved, and soon, as this has been going on for a couple of years.

When it comes to the sale of real estate, verbal agreements are not enforceable.

Any co-owner of real

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property has the right to go to court and request a forced sale. One lawyer told me, "It's like foreclosing on yourself." The property is sold at an all-cash public auction, which is not likely to yield full value. Doing that won't do much for family harmony.

In any event, it's time to consult a lawyer. Perhaps a letter from a lawyer mentioning the possibility would persuade your holdout to reconsider. Or, in the interest of a more peaceful solution, you might contact a professional mediator.

TIMESHARE AGAIN

In 1985, my wife and I were wooed by an Orlando timeshare developer. He said his company was opening its latest timeshare only 15 minutes from the new Disney World park. It would be a sure moneymaker; it could be easily rented and sold; and the company was opening a resale department.

Years later, my wife and I divorced. We shared the timeshare costs and vacation weeks. This worked reasonably well until now. We are getting up in age and don't travel anymore, and the costs are getting more difficult to pay each year. Plus, thinking ahead, we don't want this

millstone to pass to our children. (We have asked, and neither of them want it).

I see units offered for one dollar on E-bay and Craigslist, and even those aren't moving. I asked whether I could just deed it back to the developer and was told, "We'll get back to you" (they haven't).

Online I found a place to take it, but they want approximately \$4,000 upfront.

What is your advice? If we just stop paying, I suspect that will lead to a lawsuit. If we do nothing, this obligation will pass down to our children, a continued expense to them. There must be some escape here. Do we add "timeshares" to "death and taxes"?

First off, your heirs have the right to refuse an inheritance. Every state has its own paperwork for the process. I'm not sure what would become of the timeshare in that event, but for what it's worth, they would have that right.

A timeshare should be bought for enjoyment, which you had, not as an investment. If you live in a different state, consult your lawyer about what's likely to happen if you were to just stop paying the costs. If you live in Florida, talk with your lawyer anyhow.

You may want to take a look at the Timeshare Users Group website to see whether it has any advice.

MORE ON SMOKERS

I thought it unfortunate that a reader's "last word" on the subject of secondhand smoke was a suggestion that the dwellers simply change apartments with the first-floor smokers.

Any nonsmoker knows that the smokers' apartment will be deeply saturated with the odor. Floors, walls, cabinets -- everything! Friends of ours bought a house a couple years ago from longtime smokers, and after intense remediation the smell remained, albeit greatly reduced, for a good two years.

This next reader also pointed out what I had overlooked.

I read your column every week and enjoy it very much. Keep up the good work. But I do not agree with you and the reader who suggested that the dwellers swap condos. You called it the "simplest solution yet," but it wouldn't work.

The condo the smokers live in would be full of the smoke stink -- the walls, rugs, the whole interior. It would take a ton of repainting and cleaning to rid the condo of the smell. Swapping condos would be more work than letting a lawyer handle it.

Contact Edith Lank at www.askedith.com, at edith-lank@aol.com or at 240 Hemingway Dr., Rochester NY 14620.