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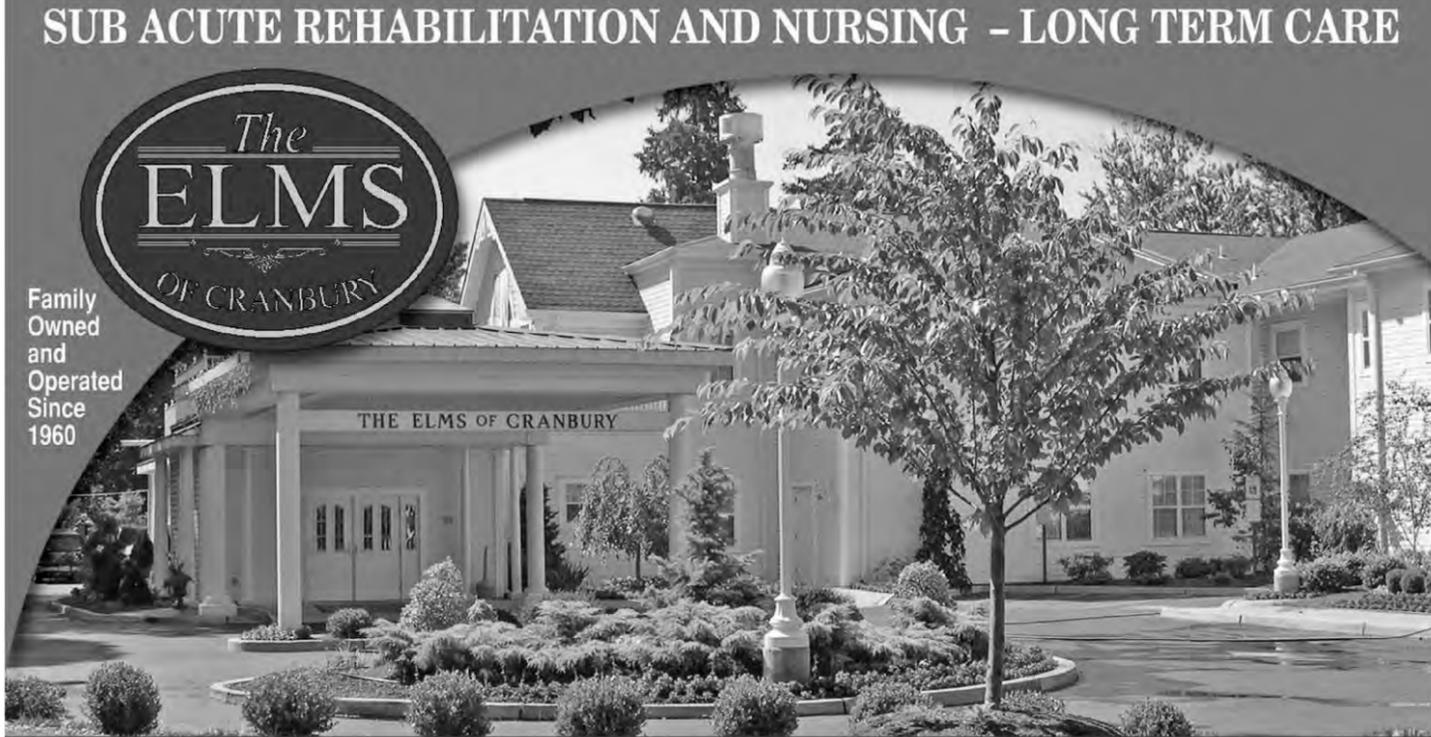
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Home Trends



Dining Room

By Cheryl Hand

**Re-Sale Re-Modeling
 Becoming a Home Trend**

More and more re-sale buyers are renovating the homes they purchase. Wendy and Howie Kracoff bought 15 Tamarack Road in 2018 for \$525,000. It is a Bayhill model with a loft and a basement; a home that would normally sell much higher than what they paid. This property had been on the market for some time and rented for two years. The former owners, artistic by nature, created a modern home with a Stainless Steel staircase and mantel, which dominated the décor of the house, along with a wide variety of colors in every room. When they lived in the house, it worked beautifully, but when their personal belongings left New Jersey with them, this popular model became difficult to sell.

Until the Kracoff's came along! Wendy, who is the proud owner of All About Windows and Walls, had a vision when she walked into this house. She knew she could make it her own and truly wanted a house that she could change. This one had a large open floor plan and bones in the right places. Howie went along with her urge for a project and now this home is a showcase. Being in the business, Wendy did have some experience with buying and flipping homes. Unfortu-

nately, their previous home in Manalapan had a devastating fire. They re-built giving her even more experience at renovating. I hope you can see from the pictures that her taste is impeccable and that Wendy literally transformed this home into a showcase valued much higher than their original purchase price. Wendy's company, All About Windows

and Walls, is listed in our preferred vendor list. If you are seeking some professional and neighborly advice, she'd love to hear from you.

Describing what the Kracoff's did to this home is not easy. They changed so much. The wide-plank Cali Bamboo floors run throughout. Custom molding is everywhere, but just the right amount. The archway in the entry, the column in the dining room, the wall up the staircase, which brings your eyes up to the coffered ceilings in the Great Room. The Great Room has a gas fireplace surrounded by the quartzite that is in the kitchen. The Dining Room is awesome and pictured here. Several rooms are faux painted to such perfection that you have to touch them to convince yourself it is not wallpaper. Her faux painter is Debbie Fassi of Fassi Designs and she is quite talented. The window treatments finish the rooms and Wendy did those herself.

The kitchen is the center of



Photos by Cheryl Hand



Great Room



Bar

attention. An oversized low center island is topped with quartzite and has a six-burner cooktop. The center island is covered in grey stacked stone, which matches the bar that she created when she opened the wall from the Great Room to the Kitchen eating area - in that eating area are built-in's along with a mounted TV. The working kitchen (pictured on the front page) has a full refrigerator and full freezer, a vented hood made from decorative molding and matching stacked stone. Wendy is particularly proud of her Baker's oven. The rooms blend together perfectly.

The Master Bedroom, which they saved for last, is expanded and of course, tastefully decorated. The Master Bath has an oversized shower, double sinks on one side, and a built-in vanity on the other side. The main guest bath has one-half of a clear glass shower insert and a strip of accent tile along with faux painted walls. They recently added a porcelain patio with built-in BBQ. The transformation on this home is unbelievable. With some creative thinking, a few good contacts and of course a good eye for color and design, you too, can re-create

(Continued on page 17)

Healing Ourselves Naturally

By Steve Soffer N.D. MH

The Choice of Freedom

The day of this writing is October 4. The president has been hospitalized with Covid 19 for two days now. He has been given very potent anti-Covid 19 drugs. This is a high dose of an experimental drug that is a cocktail of monoclonal antibodies and Remdesivir, which are both very potent medicines for serious Covid 19 complications. We all wish the President well and a speedy recovery. Regardless of our political affiliations, we want him to successfully recover. Mixed signals are coming out of the White House. His chief physician Dr. Sean Conley has minimized the severity, while his chief of staff Mark Meadows has been straight shooting with the public as to its possible serious complications.

These are most difficult of times to say the least. Thirty-three states are seeing dramatic increases in cases, many in the North Midwest, just like we saw in the South and Southwest months ago. Even in New York and New Jersey, cases are on the rise. Just today the mayor of New York City has closed schools in nine neighborhoods with rising Covid cases in Brooklyn and Queens. We really need to be smart about this. Florida just opened up the state completely including bars, restaurants, and gyms. All indoor facilities are completely open now with no restrictions whatsoever. How long that remains is anybody's guess. We are really dealing with the unknown here. The real question we are dealing with is the price we are willing to pay for our freedom. Freedom is such a powerful subject throughout human history. Libraries are filled with the histories of the struggle for freedom in nearly every culture and every era of human history. Much of that history is external. There are divides between groups, nations, philosophy and even religion versus science. What price are we willing to pay for our freedom?

New Hampshire's motto is "Live Free or Die." That is not my philosophy. If we really want to understand what freedom is all

Home Trends

(Continued from page 16)

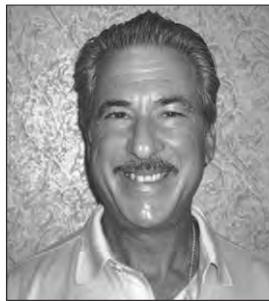
your home. If you don't have the imagination on your own, there are professionals to help, Wendy Kracoff being one of them.

Just as a quick mention, there is another home in the community that was purchased a few years back for \$560,000. Also a Bayhill with loft and basement. The purchaser knew when he bought the home he was going to re-make it and he did. It re-sold this year for \$806,000. I'd say that was a good investment. Both seller and buyer are happy. Any follow up questions or information you'd like to obtain from reading this article, don't hesitate to contact me. I tried something different – if you enjoyed it and you see me, please let me know.

Happy Thanksgiving to everyone – my wish is that you are surrounded by good food, family and friends. Stay Healthy – Wear Your Masks!

about, we need to start to look inside. True freedom is neither a gift our governors can bestow upon us nor is it one that weapons or ideology can protect. What we are seeing on the outside is but an expression of what is happening on the inside. In other words, freedom is a state of mind. When we look at freedom this way, our convictions turn attention to our deepest held beliefs about both ourselves and this most unsettled world we currently live in. Many of us equate freedom with a desire and ability to do whatever it is we choose. But, over the years, and especially now, looking at this more closely during Covid has taught me that true freedom is more closely related and associated with our relationship to responsibility.

The life of Nelson Mandela is a true example of this principle at work. While in jail, he demanded to be free in his mind and be responsible for his experience. So, we can look at freedom many different ways. Everything is how we look at it. Two different people seeing the



same situation through their eyes comprehend it differently. For example...a young couple moves into a new neighborhood, and at breakfast one morning, the wife notices that the neighbor's wash, which is hanging in the back yard, is not clean. She says to her husband, "Maybe they need to use better soap." This conversation happens several more times until one morning when the neighbor's wash is out looking clean and bright. The woman comments to her husband, "The neighbor must have changed her soap." He replies, "No, I got up early today and washed our windows." That is how life is. What we see when we are watching others is filtered through the clarity with which we look.

The Evolution of the Year 2020

By Kathy Sisler Soffer

Let's go back to New Year's Eve! A new decade...2020! When I was a little girl that was always so far away from my reality and here we were embarking on the adventure of a new decade. My birthday is mid-January and my son Mike came with my daughter-in-law Alex and my grandchildren, Elliot and Poppy. It was such a mild winter that on the twelfth, we were able to be outside in the backyard taking pictures and playing. The end of January was Poppy's first birthday so we went to Brooklyn and enjoyed an oh-so-sweet party with family and friends.

In 2019, two big tumors were discovered in our cat G. He had been given a month to live in April and here we were going into February with G still with us. We felt so blessed and hopeful and grateful to enjoy him. In February, I would see pictures coming out of China with everyone wearing a mask and I said to myself, "Wow. That must be so hard," and I felt compassion that illness had caused the Chinese people to have to wear them to prevent disease. Mid-February we had a nice gathering in the Clubhouse for Harmony In Motion with dancing and laughing and sharing and enjoying each other and being together in a fun way. On February 24, G passed away and we were numb at the loss of his furry presence.

March! My two sisters, one from Denver and the other from North Carolina, were coming to visit me from the tenth through the fourteenth and I was so excited. We are very close but geography has kept us apart physically. The weekend of March 7 and 8, I had to call my sisters and postpone our being together because there was this virus that people were catching at an alarming rate and for them to fly through Newark with international travelers as well made me feel vulnerable because of my

heart situation. I couldn't chance getting sick. Postponing our visit made me so sad. On March 9, we had Bingo in the Clubhouse, which was always fun although I didn't win anything. By then, it was becoming apparent that this virus was unusual and contagious and many people were getting sick. They named it Covid 19.

On March 12, the Clubhouse shut down and activity here at Regency stopped cold. This invisible virus was affecting people at an alarming rate. We were told to stay home and avoid even grocery stores, being encouraged to stock up and hunker down. In March, April, and May we would go at 6 a.m. for senior hours to get groceries and supplies. No toilet paper? No paper towels? Rations on frozen vegetables and milk? What was happening to our lives? Being home I did projects like cleaning out closets and cleaning the blinds and looking through old folders and my things I had collected through the years. The winter had been mild so we were able to take walks but by then, we were wearing masks and avoiding one another. No hugs or getting together nor visiting each other at our homes.

In June, July, and August we ventured out more as the local numbers for this virus had diminished...always with caution and hand sanitizers and being careful not to touch things and wearing masks with still very little social contact. The hardest part was not seeing my sons and grandchildren and not doing exercise or being able to play bocce. Before all this weird change, I had my routine. Teach canasta on Thursdays at the Clubhouse. Do my Dancefit exercise class with women who had become like a family of friends. I played bocce and even made the bocce team playing in the Senior Olympics. My bocce friends were also like a family. I sang in the chorus and regularly visited friend's homes for game night. Suddenly, all that was gone.

Here we are now into the au-

turn. It has been difficult for us all to adapt to this change of routine. There has been a chance to soul search and get to know ourselves better as we spent more time with ourselves. People have done puzzles and watched more TV than they ever thought they would. The world internalized and it took a daily inner strength to get through with good spirit and please, not to get sick. The weather is changing and getting colder. We must still be vigilant and careful and aware that it still is easy to get sick. Who knows what will be anymore? November, December, January...we just don't know what will be in our lives or if we will have the ability

to get together and share once again. I have begun writing personal cards to people to express and share memories with them or just tell them how much I care for them. We need to be creative and we need to be positive.

Life has changed for sure. Let us not take for granted the little things and become more aware of the wonderful person that lives within each one of us. Become friends with ourselves and know that when we come out again and laugh and dance and share, we will be different people...more grateful to enjoy and begin to appreciate more our lives here at Regency. That is my prayer for us all.

Board of Education To Appeal to Developers

By Doug Poye

During its regular monthly meeting in September the Monroe Township Board of Education approved a motion to appeal to the major developers (Toll Brothers, Lennar, JMS, and K. Hovnanian) in our township to provide financial donations to the district. Board President Steve Riback asked the Board to approve sending a letter inviting representatives of those companies to meet with members of the Board to discuss donating "the resources needed to help our school district meet our needs." In his letter Riback pointed out that the district has added more than 1000 students over the past seven years yet the amount of state aid remains at the same level as it was 12 years ago, \$873 per pupil. He also mentioned that in an effort to provide adequate classroom space for the increased growth the Board held two referenda but both were defeated. Additionally, Riback shared with the developers that the Applegarth Elementary School was built in 1936 and the cost of repairs and mandated upgrades would cost more than that of a new school. It should be mentioned that "impact fees" for developers are prohib-

itive thoughts and images can be our piece of bamboo that can center our attention and calm our wandering and concerning mind. With a strong focus on clear positive thinking, rather than the distractions of the virus, peace and calm can be ours. All we need to do is trust that same force that keeps our heart beating, our lungs breathing, the planets in motion and our lives unfolding without our ever thinking about it; divinely guided as it is intended to be with peace, integrity and love. This is a marathon, not a sprint. A long inning game and we are only in the early innings. Please remember, a journey of a thousand miles begins with a single step. Travel well. Steve welcomes questions and comments from free-thinking individuals.

"When one door closes, another opens; but we often look so long and so regretfully upon the closed door, that we do not see the one which is open for us." Alexander Graham Bell

"The greater part of happiness or misery depends on our dispositions, not our circumstances." Martha Washington

ited under state law.

In the discussion of Riback's motion by the members of the Board, Michele Arminio spoke of the "hundreds of millions of dollars" that the developers are making from the residential housing being added to Monroe. She pointed out that the Municipal Planning Board recently approved more than 900 housing units to be built at the southern end of Perrineville Road and that the developer stated that the project would be completed within the next five years. After unanimous approval of the Riback's motion, Peter Tufano made a motion that the letter be sent to the Mayor and Town Council for co-signing. He felt that such ac-



(Continued on page 18)