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Designer tricks for the do-it-your- selfer

Ever watch those TV design shows and wonder how to replicate the look in your own home?

It's easy to incorporate designer tricks into your space, no matter the style or existing decor. Focus on adding layers of color and texture, and notice how hues flow from room to room to create a cohesive design.

Choosing coordinating colors is easy when you have the right guide. For example, the new HGTV (R) HOME by Sherwin-Williams line of interior paints and supplies features eight designer-inspired color collections - each with 20 colors that work well together, no matter how many or how few are selected - along with expert design tips to help do-it-yourselfers create harmonious room-to-room color transitions.

Pull together a well-designed home by taking cues from the overall color palette to add decorative accessories. For example, a spicy orange vase on the dining room table can play off a bold accent wall in the kitchen.

Another popular designer technique is to turn flooring into a flexible decorating element. Try layering a vibrant area rug from the HGTV HOME Flooring by Shaw collection over a hard-surface floor or a neutral carpet



- it's easy to change as design preferences evolve.

For more design inspiration and decorating advice, visit sherwin-williams.com/hgtv-home or shawfloors.com/HGTV. (ARA)


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Tips to bring prospective buyers into your house

Selling your house may be a challenge in today's real estate market, but with a bit of elbow grease and some good planning tips, you can entice potential buyers to view your home, and hopefully make a viable offer.

Before you even list your house for sale, take a good look at the property and your home. Consider curb appeal. Freshen up your landscaping, pick up any equipment or toys lying around and update your lights so the home looks as welcoming during the evening as it does during the day.

Take a walk through your house, starting with the garage. If you have a lot of tools and equipment stored there, consider finding a new place to store everything, so potential buyers can really see the garage. Keep your tools handy, but still out of sight by tucking everything into the back of your truck under an Access Roll-Up cover, manufactured by Agri-Cover, Inc., a North Dakota truck accessory company. Made of heavy-duty, double coated vinyl, the truck bed cover installs quickly and easily with a clamp-on installation and is designed specifically to fit your truck. Since the roll-up cover is lockable, it will also protect



all your tools and equipment while traveling. When not in use, the cover can be rolled up behind the cab and never has to be removed.

Next move inside. As you walk through the rooms, look at the walls, flooring, ceilings, lights and furniture. Paint is inexpensive, and a fresh coat can quickly spruce up the look of a room. If the room appears overcrowded, consider storing a piece of furniture to help open up the space.

You may determine some remodeling or repair work is needed prior to listing your home. If you have holes in your drywall, or gutters that are clogged or broken, these are easy improvements that won't cost you a lot of money, but can help you sell your house faster. Transporting tall ladders to reach the gutters or large sheets of drywall isn't easy with just your pickup truck. But the Adarac Truck Bed Rack System will make this part of your home improvement project much easier. The truck bed rack sits neatly behind the cab,

and is capable of carrying a 500-pound load with ease. Eyelets secure your load so you don't lose it while going down the road.

Once you have your home looking good, do a little research to determine what list price you want to put on your home. Review prices for similar homes in your neighborhood and around your community. Pay to have your property assessed, especially if you do a couple of home improvement projects prior to the sale. And determine if you'd prefer to work with a real estate agent or try and sell the property yourself. There are benefits to both options, so research which might fit you better.

Your goal is to get your house sold, as quickly as possible and close to the price you're asking. The best way to accomplish this is to get as many people looking at your property as you can. So before you decide to list your house, try some of these tips to put your best house forward. (ARA)

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The smart way to go from renting to owning

If you've paid attention to any news media over the past few years, you know that the housing market has dropped off. For a home-buyer, that means a wider world of options and opportunities. However, it's vitally important to make smart decisions - as the markets have shown. Before you purchase a home, take these tips into consideration.

■ **Pay down your debt.** Before you even apply for a mortgage, it's important that you reduce your debt load. The smaller it is, the better for your debt-to-income ratio, which lenders use to determine how much they'll allow you to borrow.

■ **Check up on your credit.** Having good credit is another essential element in smart home buying - it can affect how lenders view you, and the terms of your mortgage. The better shape your credit is in, the better your potential to get the mortgage of your dreams.

■ **Make the biggest down payment possible.** The era of zero-down is over, and for good reason. A down payment - and a sizeable one - can help ease the strain of a mortgage in coming years. A minimum of 20 percent down is a good idea, and if you can do more, better.



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How to renew a room on a budget

No matter the size or style of your home, the decor you choose determines its atmosphere and reflects your own personality. Updating or changing your decor can give you a sense of satisfaction when completed. But re-designing your living space can also be slightly overwhelming. You may think you don't have the time or funds to redecorate, but there are several ways to rejuvenate your interior without spending a great deal of time or money.

■ Paint power

Creating or changing the feel of a room begins with the canvas of your home - the walls. For a dramatic change with minimal cost, give your walls a bright splash of color that complements the furniture and fabric in the room. Dutch Boy can help you find the perfect hue with its Color Simplicity tool, which allows you to apply different color combinations to various room images including kitchens, living rooms, bathrooms and bedrooms. Change the trim and accessory colors to get an even better idea of what your room will look like with a fresh coat of paint. Browse the expansive color library by family or collection, or choose from the 2011 Color Trends palette to experiment and find your perfect shade of paint.

■ Frame of mind

If you're like many, you have boxes upon boxes of photographs. But why keep them hidden? Look for fun or fancy frames to showcase those cherished memories and people, and place them on end tables or hang on your newly painted walls. If you have a large area of bare space, consider having an especially meaningful picture enlarged, matted and framed as a focal point of the room. With endless styles and sizes available, spread a variety of pictures throughout the room to create a personal and inviting atmosphere.

■ Throw in some style

Once you've decided on a color scheme for your room, spice things up with throw pillows in contrasting or complementary shades. Throw pillows are an easy and inexpensive way to add some personality to your space, so look for fabrics and styles that most appeal to your inner designer. You can mix and match solid and patterned fabrics in a variety of materials, and you might even buy different pillows for each season.

■ Seat recovery

That old armchair with the worn-out seat. The sofa with the huge dark stain. Dad's



hideous but oh-so cozy recliner. Comfort may have nothing to do with style, but you don't need to live with an eyesore for the sake of your seat. Reupholstering a chair or sofa is a much more cost-effective solution than purchasing new furniture, but it can take time and may not be feasible depending on the seat design. If you aren't confident in your upholstering skills, a slipcover is an instant solution that requires almost no time. Even if you're tight on time and cash, a few updates can make a dramatic difference in your home's overall appearance. Don't be afraid to tap into your inner design and make an individual statement that reflects your own unique taste and personality. (ARA)



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Secrets for a lush, eco-friendly lawn

Want a thick, green eco-friendly lawn and eye-catching landscape filled with beautiful trees, shrubs and flowerbeds?

Follow these tips from the pros:

■ **1. Take a test.** Since the pH level of your soil can determine the types of trees, shrubs and plants that will do well in your yard, buy a soil tester to find out the pH level of your soil.

■ **2. Take a walk and pull.** To avoid using harmful chemicals, pull existing weeds.

Before you start, soak the soil in the area of the garden you'll be weeding to ensure that all the roots come out to reduce re-growth.

■ **3. Lose the spots.** If your lawn is blotchy with ugly yellow spots use organic SpotGone! from NatraTurf to turn burned-looking patches and high traffic areas into lush green grass again.

■ **4. Go au natural and reduce water use.** A natural soil amendment like gypsum retains moisture over a longer period of time and decreases evaporation on top of the soil.

Look for a high quality pelletized gypsum



product like HydroSave Residential from NatraTurf.

■ **5. Just a little off the top.** Remember

to use an energy efficient mower when you cut your grass and keep your grass at two to three inches high. (ARA)

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Style and function: key elements of today's kitchen

Because the kitchen is the hub of the home, homeowners are always looking for ways to do more in this vital space, all while keeping it stylish. One of today's most popular trends in new and remodeled kitchens is the use of multiple kitchen faucets, which add extra functionality to the room. "Pot fillers, island faucets and even bar or convenience faucets all help to maximize the room," says Kevin McJoynt of Danze, a manufacturer of decorative plumbing faucets and fixtures. "But functionality isn't the only item homeowners are looking at. Ambiance, decor and style are also top priorities."

■ Pot fillers are located near your stove to provide you with a convenient way to fill a pot without having to carry it to the nearest sink.

■ Island faucets help avoid congestion at the main sink and are a great way to increase a kitchen's workflow. Because island sinks are frequently used for preparation, they are sometimes referred to as prep sinks.

■ Also referred to as a convenience sink or a beverage center, bar faucets are typically used for entertaining purposes and are often located on a secondary counter space in the kitchen or adjacent room. (ARA)







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When it's time for a new deck, details count

As a home improvement, when done right, adding a deck ranks near the top of the list, behind only kitchen and bath remodels, in return on investment for home improvement projects.

According to Mick Feduniec of Decksapes, LLC, the biggest difference he sees in the projects done by his Charlotte, N.C. business is that homeowners are requesting more add-ons, including different styles of outdoor lighting.

"Every customer is concerned about value. That translates to quality in the materials and the special touches that make a deck somewhere you want to hang out - day and night," Feduniec says.

Aurora Deck Lighting, which is one of the nation's leaders in the design and manufacture of deck lighting, says their business has remained steady even during the latest economic downturn, thanks to offerings featuring state-of-the-art LED bulbs.

"Customers want to get the most for their expenditure, and by adding lighting the result is more functional and attractive," says Jay Savignac of Aurora.

Easy installation means homeowners can add Aurora's deck lights themselves on existing



structures. To encourage that trend, the company packages some of its most versatile lighting styles in kits designed with the do-it-yourself

homeowner in mind.

For inspirational ideas for your new deck, visit www.auroradecklighting.com. (ARA)

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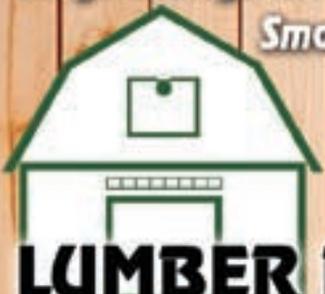
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On the go? Protect your home and family this summer season

More than half of the U.S. population is planning a vacation away from home this summer. The other half will spend it trying to keep their kids busy with camps, enrichment activities, sports lessons and more. With everyone running in different directions, keeping tabs on your kids - and your home - can be a challenge.

There are more than 2.15 million burglaries each year, more than 65 percent of which are residential break-ins, with the majority occurring in the peak vacation months of July and August, according to an Insurance Information Institute report. Nine out of 10 home break-ins could be prevented if homeowners would take simple steps to burglarproof their homes.

"There are many things families can do to protect their homes and keep an eye on their kids during the summer," says Protection 1 chief marketing officer and mother of two, Jamie



Haenggi. "One of the most effective ways to keep track of everything is to have a monitored security system installed," she says.

Security systems no longer simply alert authorities to break-ins and fire, smoke, or carbon monoxide, Haenggi says. "Today's systems offer home and business owners a tremendous amount of flexibility and options. For example, Protection 1's eSecure lets you see what's inside your home and arm and disarm your security system from your smartphone. You can also receive notifications when your kids leave or return home, giving you peace of mind during the summer months when your kids are constantly in and out."

Follow these tips to ready your home and keep it safe when you're away:

■ 1. Ask someone you know and trust to keep an eye on your house.

■ 2. Stop delivery of your mail and newspapers - or have a friend or neighbor pick them up for you.

■ 3. Keep bushes and shrubs near your home's entrance and walkway well-trimmed. Use timers on lights, televisions and radios to provide sound and illuminate the inside of your home.

■ 4. Keep shades up and blinds and curtains open to make it appear as if you're home.

■ 5. Keep the outside of your home well lit. Would-be thieves prefer not to be seen.

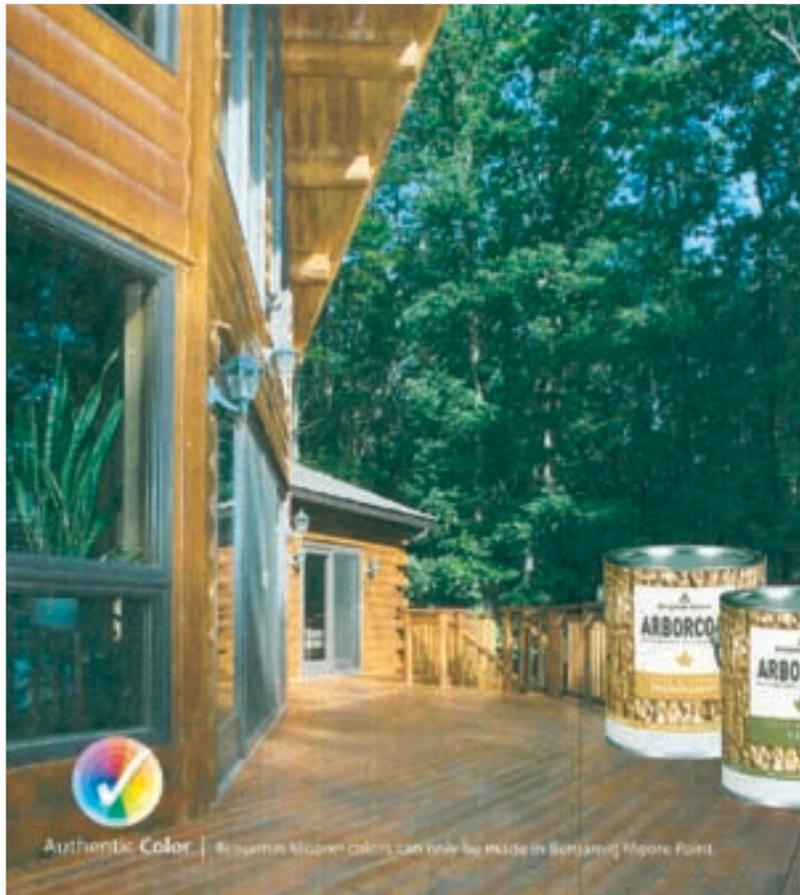
■ 6. Arrange to have your lawn maintained if you will be gone for more than a few days.

■ 7. Leave the air conditioner on. A silent compressor on a hot day is a good indication you aren't home.

■ 8. Turn down the ringer on your phone. A constantly ringing phone is a good sign no one is home.

■ 9. Before you leave, unplug everything except the refrigerator, freezer, and the lights and radios you have set on timers. Check to be sure the oven and stove, as well as small heat-generating appliances, such as hair dryers and curling irons, are turned off.

■ 10. Where possible, turn off the water to your sinks, toilets, dishwasher, washing machine and hot water heater. (ARA)



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Keep your home pet-friendly and fresh

Of course you love your pets, but let's face it: Sometimes they smell. And whether you are hosting guests or trying to sell your home, the last thing you want visitors to remember is an offensive odor. Luckily, there are a number of ways to eliminate those less-than-pleasant pet odors and let your home's personality shine.

■ Refreshing walls

Paint is one of the most dramatic and cost-effective ways to give your home's interior a new look, and now it can also give your home a new fresh scent. Dutch Boy's Refresh paint features odor-eliminating technology from Arm & Hammer. It reduces odors caused by pets and other sources, keeping your home smelling as good as it looks. Proven to reduce household smells, a coat of Refresh paint will prevent bad odors from lingering for months. By trapping and neutralizing odor molecules,



this paint doesn't cover up unappealing smells, but actually reduces them.

■ Clean with steam

Even if your pet isn't allowed on the furniture, your home furnishing fabrics are holding onto unpleasant scents. Though you may vacuum regularly, animal hair and dander are trapped in the fibers of your cushions, curtains, sofa and other decor. Using a steam cleaner is the best way to eliminate bad smells in upholstered furniture and other items that cannot be laundered.

Hire a professional service to treat the common areas in your home, or purchase a steam cleaner specifically designed for pet hair removal. Deep-clean common area fabrics several times each year, and to help maintain a fresh smell day to day, use an odor-neutralizing fabric spray regularly.

■ Hit the floor

The biggest source of your home's objectionable smell could be right under your feet. As anyone who has house-trained a pet knows, they don't always get it right, and sometimes those accidents go unnoticed and cause stains to inevitably set in. To remove odors of any age, scrub bare floors with white vinegar and water or an odor-neutralizing cleaner, and thoroughly wash carpets and rugs using an odor-neutralizing shampoo. You can also hire a professional to clean the carpets and provide extra deodorizing treatments. If stains or smells remain, you'll likely need to replace the carpet and padding. If this is the case, be sure to scrub the floor beneath before laying new carpet down.

■ Scented accessories

Tie a ribbon on your odor-free home with strategically placed candles and air fresheners. Choose classic scents that complement your decor, and use a variety throughout the home to avoid an overpowering result. Many candles and fresheners offer odor-neutralizing technology ensuring unfavorable smells are eliminated. Jars of potpourri or scented crystals add touches of personality to any room decor as well. No matter what types or the number of pets that share your home, these tips will help keep it smelling fresh all year round. (ARA)

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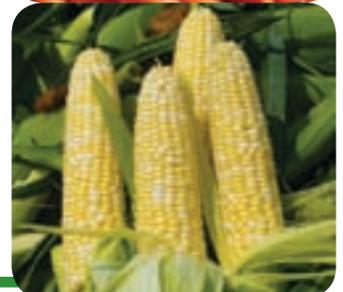
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Tips to save on home energy costs this summer

Summer's sizzling temperatures can make it difficult to keep your home comfortable, and even more difficult to keep up with the higher utility bills that often come with it. Yet even a few well-chosen improvements can make a big difference in home comfort and energy efficiency. Here are some ways to save on energy costs this season.

■ **Pre-set temperatures**

A programmable thermostat is a small upgrade with a big impact. Not only can you cool the house more efficiently, but you can pre-set indoor temperatures up and down throughout the day, every day of the week, to match your family's summer schedule. With proper use of pre-programmed settings, you can save up to approximately \$180 a year on energy costs, according to the U.S Department of Energy (DOE).

■ **Install efficient windows**

Outfitting your home with ENERGY STAR-qualified windows can reduce energy bills by about 7 to 24 percent compared to non-qualified windows.

■ **Cool more efficiently**

About half of a home's energy goes to heating and cooling, according to the DOE. You might consider a hybrid system, which flexibly



and affordably brings together two different fuel sources, such as a gas or oil furnace, and an electric heat pump. Hybrid systems are calibrated by your installing dealer to automatically switch between the most economical source of power for efficient cooling and heating year round.

For example, an American Standard Heating & Air Conditioning Platinum ZM Hybrid Comfort System (also known as the Heritage Hybrid (TM) Comfort System 4DCZ6) can

deliver up to 68 percent savings in heating and cooling costs over a comparable 10-year-old system.

■ **Seal air leaks**

Keep the hot summer air out of your home and the cooled air in. Seal ductwork and insulate the ducts in areas such as the attic, unfinished basement and garage. Make sure that vents and registers that meet floors, walls and ceilings in your home are well sealed.

■ **Reduce hot water use**

Lower your water heating costs by using and wasting less hot water in your home. You can significantly reduce hot water use by simply repairing leaks in fixtures such as faucets and showerheads. Installing a low-flow showerhead also helps.

■ **Everyday energy savers**

Even small changes in family routines can make a difference. Turn off computers and monitors when they are not in use. Wash only full loads of dishes and clothes. Turn the lights off when you leave a room. Heat meals in your microwave instead of the conventional oven - cooking will be simpler, more energy efficient, and you'll have more time to enjoy the summer, too. (ARA)

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Downsize in space, upgrade in quality of life

Smaller homes equal better quality of living these days. Many homeowners are downsizing the space they occupy, but are upgrading and customizing that space to make it better fit their lifestyle.

Most homeowners today prefer an energy-efficient home with lower utility bills, rather than a cheaper home without energy- and water-efficient features, according to a recent National Association of Home Builders' survey. One way to refresh your home, and make it sustainable is to upgrade your bathroom fixtures.

Comfort is still key in these downsized but upgraded bathrooms. And it can't get much better than a lavish shower. TOTO's Aimes Ceiling-Mount Showerhead with LED Lighting gives you this luxurious shower experience with water gently cascading down on you from the ceiling. But since the LED light doesn't require any electricity or batteries, you can enjoy the experience even more. Kinetic energy created by the moving water powers the candlelight-toned light, keeping the brightness gentle on your eyes and flattering to your skin.

But don't stop with just electrical savings in your bathroom. If you haven't replaced your toilet in several years, there's a very good



chance that it uses way more water per flush than needed. On average, toilets account for about 27 percent of a home's indoor water usage, making them the biggest water hogs.

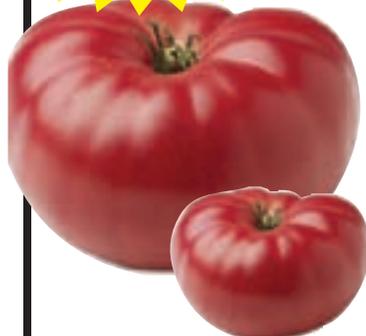
High-efficiency toilets can help your family significantly reduce your water consumption. TOTO's Carlyle II One-Piece High-Efficiency Toilet uses only 1.28 gallons of water per flush - and it's high performance, which means you only need to flush once to completely remove waste from the bowl. With an attractive design,

this is a great upgrade to your home, both in water efficiency and aesthetics.

While concentrating on making your bathroom more water-efficient, also take a look at your faucet. If it's been several years since you replaced your faucet, it's probably showing its age with metal corrosion or leaking. A leaky faucet with a slow drip can waste as much as five to 10 gallons per day; a fast drip results in 20 to 30 gallons of water down the drain daily.

Your water heater also may need updating. Tankless water heaters are 10 to 30 percent more energy efficient than conventional storage water heaters, according to National Geographic's "Is Your Home a 'Green' House?" Even new conventional models can reduce the amount of energy you spend heating water. And there are other devices you can install with your water pipes to help recirculate standing water in the pipes, so you don't waste water waiting for the hot water to finally arrive at the faucet. Quality is very important to homeowners these days, and developing a beautiful, energy-efficient bathroom - especially in today's downsized and upgraded spaces - is a growing trend among homeowners that's helping them improve their quality of life. (ARA)

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Replantable potted Balsam & Fraser Firs. We have had many requests for potted Christmas trees. Decorate at Christmas then plant outside shortly after that.

Create your own Christmas Tree Farm! We offer seedlings for sale.

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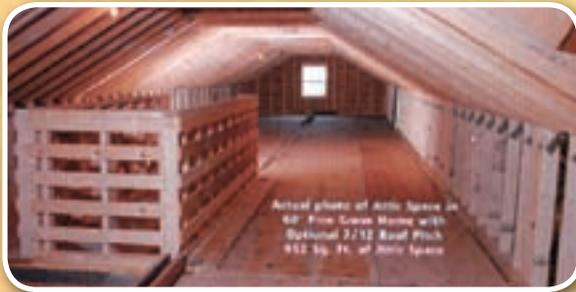
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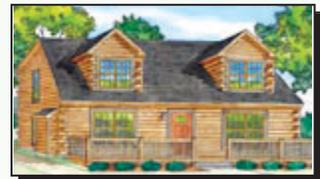
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BENNINGTON. Shades of Newhart - stately 1900's New Englander with 8 acres. Three outbuildings plus a garage. Shining hardwood floors, amazing built-ins, heated wrap-around porch and separate screen porch, 2 fireplaces, 4 bedrooms, front and back stairways, over 5000 square feet... too much to mention. #1643 **\$399,000**



ANTRIM: Large 5BR home with great master, spacious LR and DR. Large barn currently home to 2 horses. Rural setting with easy commute to Concord or Keene. #1723. **\$269,900**



DEERING: Just look at the 50 mile view--WOW! Not to mention the perennial garden, a 4 stall barn with electricity, water and phone lines. The open concept "Great-room" has kitchen, liv. rm and din. rm with cath. ceilings overlooking these spectacular views. Three bdms, 3 baths, fam. rm, 2 car gar., stream, pond on 15.5 acres. #1726 **\$349,000.**



HILLSBORO: Cute 2 BR cottage on over 3/4 acres. Outbuilding for workshop/storage. On a dead-end, public road. Access to 3 beaches, swimming, fi shing, and near to other recreation including hiking, golf in the summer. #1715 **\$69,900**



SALISBURY: Not many of these left, a camp on one acre with a fi replace, front porch and a brook on two sides. Nature abounds in the private setting with hunting, fishing or swimming just outside your door. #1722 **\$57,000**