

# 50 Questions Said Contentment Key In Buying of Home

By IRWIN FRANK  
SAN ANTONIO, Tex. (AP) — One million wives are going to look at one million husbands within the next year and say, "let's buy the house, dear."

If the husbands are smart they'll say, "first, let's ask 50 questions."  
The 50 questions are the key to Bill Smith's system of determining if the house at which you're looking is the house in which you'll be happy this year and 20 years from now.

After 27 years of study and observation of houses and people who live in them, C. W. Smith has compiled a book with the 50 questions and other pre-home-buying information in it called "Home Buyer's Handbook."

Smith, a 49-year-old housing expert, is director of the housing research foundation of the Southwest Research Institute, a non-profit organization here. The foundation aims to improve housing and living standards through scientific knowledge in design, technology, materials and economics. Smith says:

**Better Homes**  
"What it adds up to is building better houses at no extra cost. "If we know what to look for and what to demand of builders, we can get much better houses." Smith expects a builder to make a house livable and attractive and he expects a couple to reject second-class construction and design. For example:

**Light**  
"There's no reason why a light switch can't be put on the same level as a door knob so children can reach it. It doesn't cost a cent more to do this, yet it makes a home more desirable."

**A Little Thing Like a Closet Door**  
can make a house a better place — if the closet door folds out of the way instead of opening into a room taking up needed space. Smith says you can tell whether the house was well built by looking at the molding on the bedroom walls or the way the basement door fits.

**Hidden Things**  
"If the builder took pains with

## Inmate Finds Trial Error, Gets Release

NEW YORK (AP)—A prisoner who recently pored over the record of his 1954 trial and found an error in its procedure has won freedom after 2 1/2 years behind bars.  
George S. Molten, 31, was sentenced to prison for life after a jury convicted him of kidnapping and assaulting a bookmaker he had accused of wenching on a bet.

At some time during his long years in Green Haven Prison at Stormville, N.Y., Molten heard about "coram nobis"—a legal writ of error. So a year ago he got hold of a transcript of his trial and searched its 350 pages for error. Sure enough, he found one. The transcript showed an instance where the jury returned to the courtroom for some information at a time when he wasn't present.

Molten had the impression that a defendant always has to be present when a jury is in the courtroom. He wrote Kings County Court and asked a coram nobis hearing.

At the hearing yesterday Judge Nathan Sobel agreed a major legal error had been committed. He set aside Molten's life sentence.

Instead of ordering a new trial, the judge advised Molten to plead guilty to the same kidnapping charge, he was convicted on. On that plea the judge gave Molten 20 years. But since Molten has already served that time, he will go free.

## Former Highway Official Succumbs

REDMOND (AP)—Services will be held Monday for Maurice A. Lynch, former member of the Oregon Highway and Game commissions, who died here Saturday at the age of 78.

He was a member of the 32 Legislature, former city councilman, widely active in fraternal, civic and county affairs, and an ardent highway advocate. He came to Redmond in 1910 from Portland. The widow and two brothers survive.

the little things, you don't have to worry about the hidden things — they'll be first class."  
He is no fancier of a so-called picture window in the front of a house.  
"If a house has a large picture window facing the street or the west avoid it like the plague," he says. "Windows are meant to admit light, frame a view or permit ventilation. They are not meant to allow neighbors to see what's cooking on the stove or whether you wear a shirt in the house. They are also not meant to allow the setting sun to bake you in the summer, and they are not good if the only view you get from the window is passing trucks and parked cars."

**High Windows**  
He suggests that most windows should extend to the ceiling, where they will admit light and still give privacy. In bedrooms, the window sills should be at least four feet above the floor to permit flexible location of furnishings and to preserve privacy.

All these things make for better living without extra cost.

**Many living rooms are nothing but glorified hallways, he says. Think twice, he warns couples, before buying a house where all the foot traffic in the winter's snow and the summer's mud must walk in on your new light gray rug.**

No matter how small a family or a house, two different living areas should be provided. One should be an informal rumpus room where the television set would be located. The other, a living room, should provide a place where the older members of the family can entertain in more formal fashion.

While open kitchens are popular, Smith warns there are times when a wife will want to hide the dirty pots by closing off the kitchen from the living room. A kitchen should provide a view of the children's play area and the approach to the house.

**Adjustable Shades**  
Speaking of little things, as Smith does, he insists that closet shelves be adjustable. He inquires if the roof of the house is white to reflect the sun and if there are ventilating louvers to keep moisture out of the roof and help cool the house.

Before moving into a house and finding that the heating system doesn't heat and the cooling system doesn't cool, Smith suggests you check with people who live in homes built by the same contractor. Chances are if they're satisfied, you will be.

**What about the outside storage areas? Unless these are provided you are going to have to store sleds, Christmas tree ornaments and trunks in your closets. Basement storage space is likely to be too damp.**

And where are you going to put things inside the house? You do not want to have to carry the ironing board from the basement to the kitchen.

In these storage space for the card table, dust mops and the vacuum cleaner?  
**No Corner Lots**  
Smith shuns corner lots because these will also have more snow to shovel, more grass to cut and more useless lawn to water. Traffic will be heavier and the house likely will cost more, to say nothing of the taxes. You can get paving assessments on two streets, for example.

Give the house extra points if the lot has some trees on it, or if the land drains away from the house.

You'll be wise if you avoid a development where all the homes are alike, or are a hodge-podge of different style homes which don't blend. Make sure the neighbors keep up their homes and their lawns.

**Zoning Laws**  
Smith cautions about zoning regulations. Good zoning laws will make certain that a tavern won't spring up across the street, and that the house next door won't start taking boarders.

Watch the pattern of the streets, Smith adds. If streets are in a checkerboard pattern, it will be more dangerous and less interesting. Curved streets with T or V intersections help slow traffic. Long blocks make for fewer intersections. Short dead end streets are safer for children.

And make sure the windows in the house next door do not match the windows in your house. If they do, Smith says, the shades will have to be drawn most of the time.

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