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Homeowners should compromise

Houses need less frills

United Press International
CAMBRIDGE, Mass — A Massachusetts Institute of Technology housing specialist thinks homebuilders can take a hint from the automakers and begin offering smaller homes with less frills at lower cost.

Dr. Bernard J. Frieden, professor of city planning and former director of the MIT-Harvard Joint Center for Urban Studies, says Americans may be on the verge of lowering their standards in order to fulfill the American dream of home ownership.

"A compact home does not necessarily mean a home of lesser quality, but with fewer extras and smaller," he said. "I'm talking about a rollback to the kinds of houses that were built after World War II."

Up to now, Frieden said, young American families have been willing to sacrifice a great deal in order to get together that down payment to purchase their first home. "But there is a question of how much longer they can continue to sacrifice," Frieden said. Middle income Americans have been employing a number of strategies to cope with rising costs that have put a price tag of \$50,000 on typical new homes.

Husbands and wives both work; moonlighting is common to boost earnings. Couples take on mortgage payments amounting to a third or more of their income with the idea that increased wages will lessen the burden in the future. Some simply cut back drastically on all other expenses to scrape the money together, he said.

"But if home ownership costs con-

tinue to outpace income increases, fewer young families will manage to buy the first home they can later use as a basis for trading up," Frieden said. "Another downturn in the economy could wipe out jobs for secondary wage earners — thus blocking the pooled income solution — and possibly frustrate the expectations of higher future incomes that heavily mortgaged families have."

Difficult as it is, Frieden said, the American housing dream is dying hard. People have a hard time accepting the idea of a minimum home just as many find it difficult to adapt to a smaller car.

"Perhaps, as Detroit's experience

with compact cars suggests, many people want certain products to be luxurious even if they must make great sacrifices to buy them."

While it's pretty clear that most young families want to buy homes, and will make great sacrifices to buy them, Frieden said. Those sacrifices are becoming increasingly too much of a burden and young Americans are becoming frustrated at their inability to purchase a home.

However, he said, "with fewer children now the norm, families may decide they can get by with fewer rooms than the large homes built in the early 1970s provided. If so, they

should be able to buy newly built homes with fewer than seven rooms at a price saving."

Frieden said a "no frills" home "would have no fireplace, central air conditioning, no wall carpeting, more modest landscaping, smaller lots and fewer rooms. Most of these things could be added later. The immediate problem is getting that first home."

The American dream is ownership of a single-family home on its own lot. American's probably won't give up that dream, but they can accept a variation of it, Frieden thinks.

New edition book relates events in cowboys' work

A new edition of Cowhand: The Story of A Working Cowboy has been published by the Texas A&M University Press.

The book, initially released in 1948, was written by the late Fred Gipson, widely regarded as one of the Southwest's great storytellers.

Gipson tells what the job of a real cowboy was like, beginning about 1916. The story is told by recounting much of the life of Ed Alford — or "Fat," as he was known — who now lives in semi-retirement in Ozona.

Fat became a cowboy because he didn't like picking cotton. Short and,

even in his prime, potbellied, Fat was a far cry from being a typical cowhand by Hollywood standards, Gipson notes, but he could get the job done.

"He can rope a cow out of a brush patch so thick that a Hollywood cowboy couldn't crawl into it on his hands and knees," the author observes.

"He can break a horse for riding, doctor a wormy sheep, make a balky gasoline engine pump water for thirsty cattle, tail up a winter-poor cow, or punch a string of post holes across a rocky ridge.

"He can make out with public gear, sorry mounts, and skin grub, and still get the job done," Gipson continues. "He can do it in freezing weather or under a sun hot enough to raise blisters on a horse's heel. And all the time, under circumstances, he works with a thorough understanding that it's a livelihood that counts, not just a cowhand."

A&M accounts for 40 percent of research

Texas A&M University accounts for more than 40 percent of the research conducted by Texas public senior colleges and universities in 1976-77, according to the Coordinating Board, Texas College and University System.

A Coordinating Board report shows that Texas A&M's \$51.8 million — the most funded support for research in the South or Southwest — accounted for 41.3 percent of the \$125.6 million total for the state's public senior institutions.

The Coordinating Board tabulations showed research totaling \$41 million for the University of Texas at Austin, UT-Dallas, North Texas State, UT-El Paso, Prairie View A&M, UT-Arlington and UT-San Antonio.

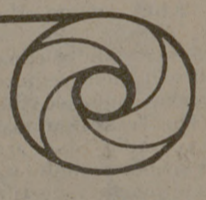
Texas A&M's total for the previous year, \$47 million, placed it 18th nationally on the basis of figures compiled by the National Science Foundation. The NSF has not yet released its comparative figures for 1976-77.

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