

Slimming down for spring

As many of you know, my dream is to own a home that is inspiring, efficient and around 300-500 square feet in size. It's not what some would call a "tiny" home, but it's still a very, very small home by most people's standards. While I appreciate the majestic, historic homes that line most of Rutland's streets, I like to enjoy a considerable amount of freedom in life and do not wish to be burdened with the financial responsibility that comes with owning a very large, older home.

I have been researching how to achieve my goal since last August, and, although I originally wanted to make a big impact by taking down a blighted house to build my petit

paradise, I've come to think that is quite a big job for little old me. I could do it, but I had to ask myself if I really wanted to. The answer was a resounding "No!"

So my focus shifted to finding an appropriate building lot. I recently found a property for sale that would be great for my project, and I'm hoping you'll send all your positive energy, fairy dust and rainbow magic in my direction. As with most things in life, there are obstacles to overcome.

But it's spring, and I'm feeling very optimistic, so I'm

downsizing my stuff in anticipation of my eventual transition to very, very small living. Although I'm not much of a packrat, it's easy to accumulate excess stuff.



Elsie
GILMORE
**Rutland
upRising**

The hard part is weeding out what to part with. My general rule is that if I don't use something for a very long time, I probably don't need it. I keep items that have multiple uses, are used frequently and/or are beautiful/artistic. In a perfect world, almost everything I own would fit into all three of those categories.

Once you've created a pile of stuff to part with, what are you going to do with it? There are many options that would not only get rid of your stuff but possibly also make you some money and/or help a local business or organization.

Some ideas:

- Have a lawn sale. You can keep the money or donate it to your favorite charity. You could even collect donations for the charity at the lawn sale.

- Take it to a consignment shop. In Rutland, that is generally only applicable to clothing. We've got

Camille's and Deja New. You can keep the money or donate it, plus the store gets their commission.

- Donate it to a thrift shop. Many items can be donated to thrift shops, some of which are associated with a charity. These include BROC's Good Cents shop, the Open Door Mission, and the Salvation Army thrift shop.

- Donate to the Rutland County Humane Society. Do you have old towels, bedding, blankets and comforters? They make great bedding for animals.

- Donate to the Rutland Historical Society. Do you have items that might be of historical significance? Donate them to the historical society so they can be enjoyed by many.

- Freecycle.com. This is an awesome way to pass on items that have no value to you, but that others might want or need. It's called SHARING!

- Craigslist.com. Have something that's worth something? Try listing it

on Craigslist. This is especially good for big items like bicycles, furniture, etc.

- eBay.com. When I have electronics, I often sell them on eBay. It's easy to see what the item is currently selling for on the service.

- Facebook. I sold a car just by posting it on my Facebook profile. People fought over it!

- Front Porch Forum. I've seen people list items for sale, but I'm not sure how effective it is. The bonus is that your item might stay in the neighborhood!

Getting rid of stuff is not always easy; it can be an emotional process. In many ways, we are taught that our "stuff" defines us. But it doesn't have to.

Be daring! Chances are you won't miss any of it and will feel lighter and freer going forward.

Elsie Gilmore is the founder of Urban Mayhem Project, the catalyst for the Rutland Uprising campaign (www.urbanmayhemproject.com).