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# Downsizing MADE EASIER

*If the mere thought gives you stress,  
these companies are here to help.*

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SATURDAY DAILY BREAK  
06.25.16  
THE VIRGINIAN-PILOT

# home + living

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SANDRA PENNECKE

Ann Armistead of Downsize Designs carefully wraps a client's collectible item in preparation for moving.

# THE BIG BUSINESS OF GOING SMALLER

By Sandra Pennecke | Correspondent

**IF THE THOUGHT OF DOWNSIZING** leaves you feeling overwhelmed, scared and uneasy, consider turning to businesses specifically designed to make the transition less stressful. What started out as a niche has quickly grown into a service in demand.

Ann Armistead decided to start her Virginia Beach-based business, Downsize Designs, after she helped her parents and in-laws make their moves into retirement communities years ago.

"I thought it was a great job idea," said Armistead, who was under the impression she'd come up with an original concept. "I went online and found 400 other businesses doing the same

thing nationally." Today, 1,200 businesses are affiliated with the National Association of Senior Move Managers.

Arrange, another South Hampton Roads-based small business aimed at helping others make that move, is co-owned by Lisa Dailey and Richard Lecours. The duo spent years working in retail management before they got involved in profes-

sional organizing. They started their business out of Suffolk in November 2014. Arrange is a play on the word "arrange," which Dailey said they downsized.

Armistead started her business in 2005. While the bulk of her business is with seniors, Armistead said she is able to move anyone and handle their designing needs, too.

The list of services both businesses offer is a lengthy one – all aimed at helping to make moving easier – and can be custom designed to meet each client's needs.

"We can be as full-service or as minimal as the client wants," Dailey said.

Downsizing tasks can

include everything from sorting and doing an inventory of belongings, deciding what to keep/purge and arranging for estate sales to shipping items to other locations and preparing the home for the real estate market.

Even moving day itself is made easier with the creation of a pre-planned move timetable and having a supervisor to manage the packing and unpacking, set up cleaning services and assist with change of address, utilities, mail forwarding and more.

"Moving is physically overwhelming, and people can feel trapped in their house until they unpack,"

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## how to contact

To reach **Downsize Designs**, call 757-553-6879 or at [info@downsizedesigns.com](mailto:info@downsizedesigns.com). Visit the website at [www.downsizedesigns.com](http://www.downsizedesigns.com).

To reach **Arrange**, call 757-567-4443 or at [www.arrange.org/contact-us](http://www.arrange.org/contact-us). Visit the website at [www.arrange.org](http://www.arrange.org).

## DOWNIZING

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Armistead said.

"I can get a 3,000-square-foot home settled in three days with pictures hanging, boxes unpacked and no trash," Dailey said. "They just show up ready to live."

Both companies help with the process, which includes picking and choosing what to keep and what to let go — which can often be an agonizing decision.

Jack and Ellen Davenport contacted Arange when they were moving her parents from their single-fam-

ily home in Portsmouth to a continuing-care apartment in Lake Prince Woods in Suffolk.

After 59 years in the same house, Davenport's parents had acquired a lifetime of belongings and collectibles.

"They were a tremendous help in every way you can imagine," said Jack Davenport, who had the experience of moving his mother to a retirement community himself. "It makes it immensely easier — physically, emotionally and artistically."

Armistead is no stranger to moving either; she and her husband moved 17 times during his naval career.

And just last year, after their son started at Virginia Tech and their nest became empty, they packed up and moved from their home of 13 years in Las Gaviotas to Virginia Beach.

"We downsized from 3,000 square feet to 2,000



SANDRA PENNECKE

Ann Armistead makes sure that a picture is level in the Rashkinds' home.

square feet with pretty little pain," Armistead said. "It gave me extra empathy after 10 years of telling everyone how to do it."

Suzette and Alan Rashkind turned to Armistead when they moved into a home in the Bishops Court community of Virginia Beach last year from a house they'd lived in for 37 years in Virginia Beach's Chesapeake Colony neighborhood.

Both 68 years old at the time, they wanted to move to a one-story house while they were still healthy and able.

But, the move itself was some-

thing they were not looking forward to.

"She made the move seamless, put everything in its place, and helped us to feel freer," said Suzette Rashkind. "She helped us decide which furniture would fit and where. All of our old furniture seemed new because she put it in different arrangements that we never would have thought of."

"This was the best money we spent besides my son's education," Rashkind said. "We didn't have to lift a finger."

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**MULTI-PROPERTY REAL ESTATE AUCTION**  
**Wed July 20th @ 2pm**  
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