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**Michael Ivankovich sits** with his book on an antique child's chair and in front of items for the next auction he is working on in his Buckingham home on Monday. Ivankovich's book, "Home Downsizing in 4 Easy Steps," was released in January and is a guide for those downsizing their lives and getting the most for the items they sell.

## Navigating a home downsizing

By **CRISSA SHOEMAKER DEBREE**  
STAFF WRITER

Michael Ivankovich knows how difficult it is to downsize a home.

It's a lengthy process — if done right, Ivankovich said, it can take a year or more — and can be emotional as homeowners decide which mementos to keep and which to discard.

Ivankovich, however, wants to make it a little easier.

The Buckingham resident and long-time auctioneer has founded Home Downsizing Consultants to offer "plain and simple" downsizing advice and help people get the most money for their things.

"You don't sell anything unless you know what it's worth," he said.

Ivankovich has been in the auction business for more than 20 years. He became known as an expert in Wallace Nutting photographs, and has written eight books about the photographer, artist and furniture maker best known for his hand-colored photographs.

Auctioneering isn't all about the fast-talking, "going once, twice, sold!" image that most people have in their heads, Ivankovich said.

"One day a week an auctioneer puts on a tie and gets in front of the audience," he said. "The rest of the week you're a moving man. There's a lot more work to the auction business than people realize."

A lot of the time is spent on the road,

### Michael Ivankovich's 4 steps to home downsizing:

- 1. Analyze the situation before you decide on anything.** "Downsizing means different things to different people," he said.
- 2. Get a valuation on what you're selling.** "Before you sell anything, know what it's worth. Sometimes it's less."
- 3. Investigate your selling options.** Some things are best sold at a flea market or specialty auction. Garage sales can sometimes be your worst choice, Ivankovich said.
- 4. Dispose of your stuff.** Sell it, give it away or throw it out.

meeting potential clients and trying to drum up things to sell for the next auction, he said.

It was on the road that Ivankovich honed the skills he uses as a home downsizing consultant.

"Nine out of 10 times I'd go into a house and people had no idea what they had," he said. "All too often people were getting cheated. I saw there was a need to represent the clients."

Ivankovich launched Home Downsizing Consultants on Jan. 1. He's also written a book called "Home Downsizing in Four Easy Steps" to help guide people through the process.

While Ivankovich is a licensed appraiser, his aren't official, written appraisals, he said. Instead, he does an "in-home personal evaluation," where he tells people what their things are worth

and then gives them options on how to sell them. None of the options, he said, is selling it to him.

"I don't buy," Ivankovich said. "If you're selling to the person telling you what your things are worth, it's like the fox guarding the chicken coop."

An evaluation costs \$195.

Ivankovich doesn't always recommend a live auction. Some things are better suited for eBay, he said, while others are destined for a garage sale or a specialty auction.

During his time as an auctioneer, Ivankovich said he's had some great surprises, like a 1939 woody wagon that sold for \$47,000, and a group of duck decoys that fetched \$37,000 — seven times what was expected.

"More often than not I'm the bearer of bad news," he said. "But I always find a treasure in a home."

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### Want to know more?

Contact Michael Ivankovich at 215-345-6094 or visit [www.homedownsizingconsultants.com](http://www.homedownsizingconsultants.com).

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Do you know anyone who's making a living as an entrepreneur of an interesting business or as an employee in an occupation he or she always had dreamed about? If so, e-mail [cshoemaker@phillyBurbs.com](mailto:cshoemaker@phillyBurbs.com) or call 215-345-3186.