

The



Club

Issue #12
OCTOBER
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An Elite Club Open To Anyone Interested In Making Their Homes Better And Having More Fun Doing It



My Thanks To You The Listeners!

Wow! The ratings came out in September for all of the radio stations in the Valley, and I am pleased to announce that The HomeFix Show did very well. My thanks goes out to you the listener, for tuning in every week and listening to the show. I truly do appreciate you being there.

I have often been asked how all this is determined. I think I understand most of it, and quite frankly not all of it, but here is the way it works as far as I know. There is a company called Arbitron and they are subscribed to by the radio stations that want to know how they are doing. They do this because if they have a greater audience than another station, they can adjust their advertising rates accordingly.

More listeners means that the station can charge more for a commercial on the air.

I too am interested in this data that Arbitron collects, somewhat for the same reasons, but also to provide the sponsors of the show information they can use to determine if the show is the right place for them and their product.

Arbitron calls people in the broadcast area on the phone and asks them if they would be willing to participate in a radio survey. The people that agree get a "diary" to keep track of who they listen to and when. These are sent in at the end of the "ratings period" and tabulated. Based on market data like total population and demographics, the respondent group is projected out over the total market and we on the air are provided with information on who is listening, how many people, their age, and how long they listen.

Of all the AM stations here, KBOI and the HomeFix Show were number one in our time slot for Adults 25 years old and up. Same in the 35+ and 45+ categories. Women 35+ and Men 45+ were strongest when broken down into gender. Most of you catch 51 minutes of the show, and of all the radios turned on Saturday morning at 9 AM, 7.4% of them are listening to HomeFix!

Again my thanks to you the listener for being part of the show and I hope you continue to listen for many years to come. Tell some of your friends about the show, maybe we can get that 7.4 number up a bit!

670
KBOI

**Away From Your Radio? Listen to
HomeFix LIVE at www.JoePrin.com
Saturday Mornings at 9 AM MST**



Meet The New Owners!



Sherman and Anne Leibow- The new owners of Custom Home Solutions in Meridian at their Contractor Open House in August.

Custom Home Solutions

Congratulations to Sherman and Anne Leibow and their new ownership of Custom Home Solutions. Most of you probably know this business under it's former name, Accessible Bathrooms and More. This is the showroom for the Best Bath Systems products made right here in Idaho!

If you have followed the HomeFix Show over they past 20 years, you know how much I like these products and the quality level they contain. Simply put, this is the best made product in its category I have ever seen and installed.

So, if you are thinking about a bathroom make-over, a remodel, building a new home, or perhaps a relative is moving in with you that needs a more accessible bathing experience, you must go to this showroom and take a look and what is available.

Speaking from personal experience, I have installed probably close to 50 of these tubs and showers over the years and I have always found the product to be built to the highest standards. Too many other brands of what you see out there are flimsy, thin, and just do not have a quality feel about them. Not these Best Bath units. When you visit the showroom, have them show you a cutaway section of the panels and notice how thick and reinforced they are. Because of this, grab bars and seats can be installed anywhere, any time.

The Grand opening was well attended by industry associates from throughout the valley. A great meal of Pulled Pork, BBQ'd Chicken, very colorful Coleslaw and creamy Potato Salad was prepared for us who came that evening. HUGE cookies were served and other deserts were available if you saved any room. As an added treat, Jay Multanen provided entertainment on his Bass.



Anne explains to a customer what barrier free showers are all about and why this particular unit is so versatile. Especially for remodeling situations.



Jay Multanen provided musical entertainment with his Bass solos covering all types of music. Jay is the Son of Gary Multanen, President and Owner of Fiberglass Systems and makers of the Best Bath Systems seen here.

One of the unique features of the products you can see at Custom Home Solutions is the ability to customize the finish colors. As you can see in some of the photos here, there are accented "tiles" on the wall panels of both showers and tubs. Being a hand made fiberglass product, you the customer can specify which tiles you want accented, and in which colors! If you are a BSU fan, you have to see the Blue and Orange accented bath tub walls on display at the showroom.

Get creative! I have had many of my customers take advantage of this customizing service and have made the entire bathroom come alive with just some simple color placements. Literally, there are hundreds of colors and patterns to choose from.



A 4 piece shower with barrier free curb, seat, and grab bars installed on accented walls

One very important thing to remember about replacing your shower or bath tub is that most of the "One Piece" molded products you see at the home centers are large and sometimes very heavy. Fitting a one piece unit through your doors, the hallways, up stairs, and into the bathroom is often impossible. All of the products at Custom Home Solutions are modular and designed for remodeling situations.



The Showroom was all decked out for the Open House in August. Every unit on display is fully installed so you can see what it will look like in your home.

A popular conversion right now is to remove a bathtub and replace it with a shower. Custom Home Solutions has several units made specifically for this opportunity. This is commonly done in homes where someone needs better accessibility and a safer bathing environment. Also on display at the showroom, but not pictured here, are the walk in bathtubs you might have seen or heard about. These however have several features only available from Best Bath and they come in two sizes.

Again, congratulations to Sherman and Anne and lets wish them success in their new venture.

The **Custom Home Solutions** showroom is located at **480 E Franklin Road** in Meridian. This is a couple of blocks East of Main street, on the North side of the road. They are open Monday through Friday and also on Saturdays. Call **888-7561** for any other information or to check showroom hours. You can also see more at www.bestbathshowroom.com

Product Review: Fortress Iron Railings



I was asked by a customer of mine to install a Fortress Handrail system on his newly rebuilt deck. He had already ordered the materials, and just needed me to put it all together for him. Up to this point, I had never installed this rail system before. In fact, it had been many years since I had done an iron railing at all. The recent projects I have had that

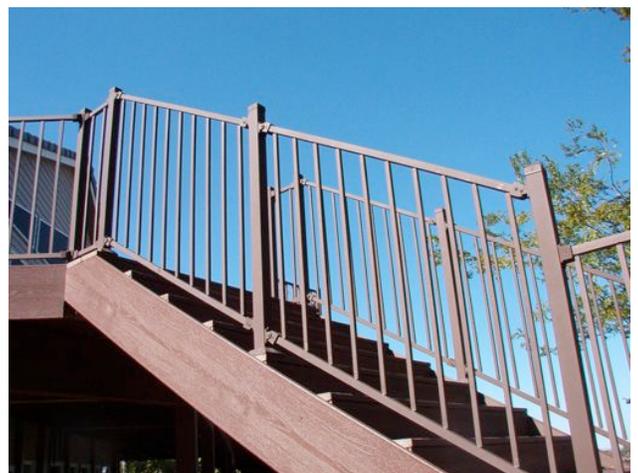
required metal railings were all subcontracted out to welding and fabrication shops that built them and installed them on site.

The distributor of the product here locally, Randy, from Boise Cascade, provided me with excellent advice and guidance on getting started. Like most products I get involved with, I also come up with some techniques of my own. More on that later.

What you see pictured are the Classic straight panel and adjustable panel or rake sections in Rustic Brown. We used 36" posts on the flat parts of the deck, and 44" posts trimmed to height on the stairs.

The homeowner wanted to help with the install, and his second set of hands proved very valuable and did speed things up. The install started with the straight sections as I thought this would be the best place to develop the sequencing. I started up against the house with the first post. Oh, by the way, all of the posts used here have a base plate on them with four holes for the fasteners to attach through. We screwed the post to the deck using 5/16 x 6" Torx Lags.

The first tip I would offer you is to construct a 1x2 stick of the length between the two rail mounting brackets on the posts. I measured down 1 1/4" from the top of the posts, drilled a 7/32" hole here and attached the first screw in the bracket. After the second and final screw, I used the 1x2 as a spacer to determine the location of the bottom bracket. It worked great, and once established, really speeded up the following posts.



The horizontal rail sections come in 6' sections; so for even spacing of posts, if you have to trim rail sections, make sure to take equal amounts off each end. And also be sure to use matching Fortress touch up spray paint on any fresh cuts before assembly.

After we got the system in place, we were able to install all of the flat surface rail sections in about 6 hours. The steps were next and things came to a grinding halt.



I may have made more out of it than I needed to, but I wanted to make sure that every stair section was evenly spaced as well as plumb. I found that a sheet of OSB clamped to a secured upper post and setting on the stair treads with a 2x2 as a spacer for the bottom rail of the Fortress rail worked perfect. It allowed for the next post to be positioned and clamped and then the section placed in front and marked for trimming. The Fortress angle brackets have a drain hole in them and if this line is extended across the mock up rail section with the

bracket held on to the post, this is where the rail should be cut. NOTE: It took me screwing up one section before I figured this out.

After marking, we would trim the rails, slip on the brackets, return it up against the OSB, clamp it in place, and mark the holes for drilling the posts. This also worked perfect. We would then attach the brackets to the upper fixed post, slip in the rail, attach the brackets to the loose post, slide it onto the rail, and then secure the post to the deck. This deck had 10 sections of stair rail on each of the two stair runs. 20 total and this took another 12 total hours.

To finish up, we trimmed the stair posts to the same height as the others and put on the caps and base collars.

Now, I am not sure if we did something wrong or this is just the way it is, but several of the stair sections, in order to center the rails in-between the posts, required that I notch the mounting brackets. I had to do this with a disc grinder while holding the bracket with vice grips. It all worked fine, but again I question if this is just the way it is, or did I do something wrong. Doesn't matter I guess, it looks great from all points of view.

All in all, this job was a lot of work and quite the learning experience. The end result is quite stunning and has already gathered up complements from the neighbors. **I would use this system again and again.** It is rock solid, firm, straight, true, and plumb. And should be for many years to come.

If this is your first attempt at Installing Fortress rails, I suggest you have: pencils and a tape measure, a couple of cordless drills, a recip saw with a metal blade, some 7/32" steel bits, a #1 screwdriver for the base trims, a #3 tip for the bracket screws, 4 quick clamps, two magnetic torpedo levels, a sheet of OSB, a 1x2, a 2x2, an angle grinder, a hand file, and a #30 Torx tip for the post lags. And some patience and willingness to take your time. Rush this project and it will suffer. How good it looks when done is a direct reflection on the time you spend on the details.

For more information, warranty info, and install instructions from the factory point of view, visit www.fortressiron.com

The Independent Newspaper Column- By Joe Prin For the October 2010 issue

OK all you valued readers to this here column; I have had enough of something and now that I have this months soapbox to stand on here goes. I have noticed something lately that is making me sick. Bad work done by unskilled and brain dead contractors.

I have been in to several homes recently that were “Fixed-up” by said un-named individuals mentioned above. These homes were properties that had gone on a Short Sale or Foreclosure. They were purchased by investors and put bluntly; they “Polished the Pig”.

Now I can see the investors’ point of view. Buy it cheap, take the risk, make it look as good as it can for as cheap as you can, and then sell it for as much as you can. This is not my problem. The issue I have is when the work that was done is just junk and being pawned off on unsuspecting buyers.

Here are the examples: House A- West Boise- I was called in to fix two pocket doors that were off the tracks. These were the typical 80’s vintage sheet metal tracks and undersized rollers. The door was also stuck in the pocket and would not move. Contractor #1 put in new hardwood floors. He didn’t cut the door off to fit the new height, just put the floor in around it and then found that you could not close the door because it hit the floor. He also couldn’t cut it now because it was stuck in the pocket. So he walked away. Contractor #2 installed the baseboards, shot in 2 ½” nails and pinned the door to the pocket frame. So he walked away. Contractor #3 while painting, couldn’t open the door either, painted the edge of it, and walked away. Come On People! What is the matter with you?

House B- Eagle Road- nice neighborhood- Contractor #4 replaced six interior doors before the blow and go paint job that this house got. None of these doors would close right; they rubbed on the jambs and stops. It took me 4 hours to make them fit.

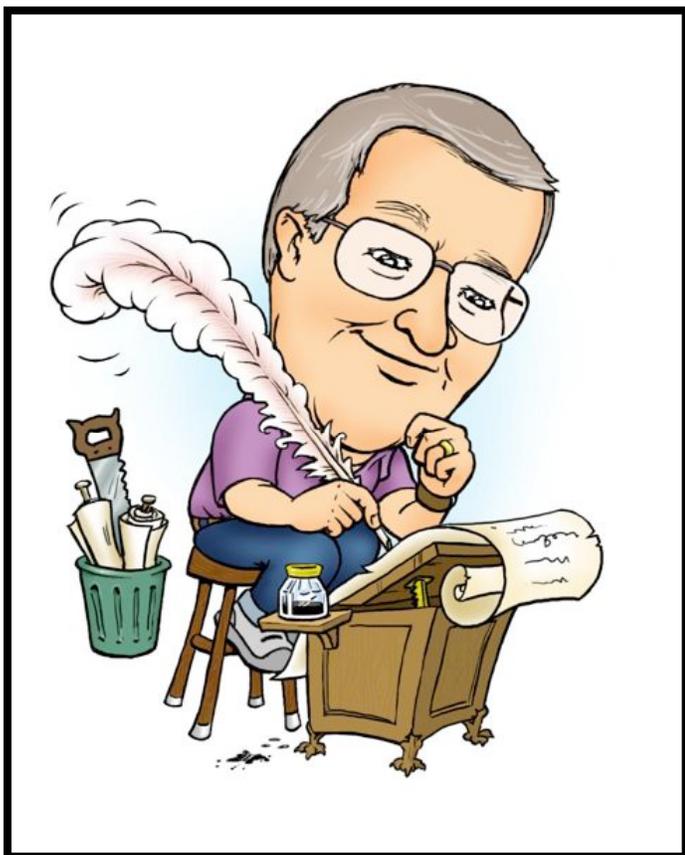
House C needed a new dishwasher. Trouble was that we couldn’t get the old one out. A new ceramic tile floor was installed to PTP (Polish the Pig), and Contractor #5 put down backer board over the old vinyl and just tiled up to the dishwasher kick plate. There was not enough adjustment on the legs to drop it and get

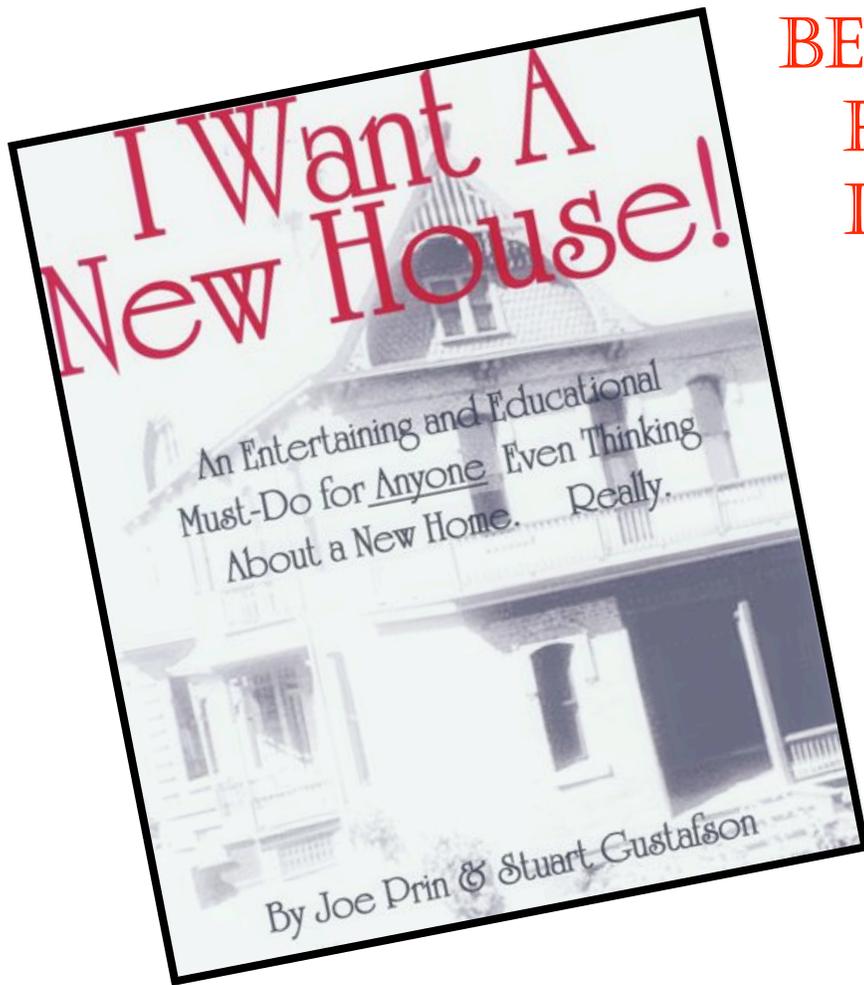
it out. Except with a recip-saw and a lot of cussing. These stories go on and on.

So, I say to you, again, my valued readers. Should you have the opportunity to buy a new home, and it has been remodeled, given a make over, or had the PTP treatment, and you are not sure what to look for, get another set of eyes on it. Check out the layers of a floor, open and close all of the doors, pull some outlets and switches and see what the wiring looks like, and check out the plumbing connections. Did I mention the silicone caulk I found around the drain fittings under a bathroom sink because all Contractor #6 (Not a Plumber) had was a 1 ½” bevel washer and not the 1 ¼” that was needed?)

Come On People! Those extra few minutes of quality work can’t cost that much more to provide.

Joe and Vicki Prin own Joe Prin Remodeling LLC, Idaho Registered Contractor #RCE-23530, and can be contacted at 573-1082 or by email- joe@joepin.com. Listen to the HomeFix Radio show hosted by Joe, Saturdays, 9-10 AM on 670 KBOI





BEING UPDATED! REMODELING IN PROGRESS

I found a very dangerous thing. Actually my Wife, Vicki found it. It is a website for people like me that can not leave well enough alone. www.blurb.com is the site. At Blurb, you can make picture books out of your family photos. And you can make books out of text documents.... So.... I played around with it for a while and it looks like I Want A New House will soon be available in a standard Novel size soft cover book! I have some more work to do, but will announce when it is formally available... Just in time for Christmas!

While making the format conversion it has given me a chance to review every word. I have also taken suggestions from many of you who have purchased the book and incorporated them (or deleted them) from the book. Nothing

drastic, just a bit of fine tuning. Thanks for the comments and input you have provided. It has helped make a better book and therefore helped others also. Stay tuned for more information. You can still order spiral bound original size copies or PDF File electronic versions at www.joeprin.com.

Window Replacements

If you have ever been thinking about replacing some or all of your windows and patio doors, now is the time. From what I am hearing, there are several price increases planned for the beginning of 2011. In the past these have been 2-8% so **NOW IS A GOOD TIME TO REPLACE YOUR WINDOWS!**

Second, the Federal tax credit is set to expire at the end of this year. For jobs booked and paid in the 2010 tax year, you can get a credit of up to 30% of the cost of your windows, up to a total of \$1500. This assumes you will be paying taxes, because in order to get a credit, you have to pay taxes. So again, **NOW IS A GOOD TIME TO REPLACE YOUR WINDOWS!**

And third, the weather. It is supposed to be a mild end of year, with a fairly brutal and wet start to 2011. To replace your windows, we have to work on the outside of your home and the better the weather, quite frankly, the better the job. We like to think that we do a good job all the

time but being realistic, it is a lot easier to work in good conditions. What am I about to say... **NOW IS A GOOD TIME TO REPLACE YOUR WINDOWS!**

And as a final thought, the sooner you replace your windows, the sooner you can realize the savings that the new ones can offer. People we have replaced windows for have told me they notice the difference in just a couple of days. The home is quieter, and not as drafty. Today's installation techniques are better and result in a more energy efficient component of your home than windows installed in the 70's and 80's. When you notice the comfort improvements, you will really notice the energy savings. Work is slower than normal this year, and lead times are not nearly as long as in years past. So....

**NOW IS A GOOD TIME TO
REPLACE YOUR WINDOWS!**

Quick Tips...

I probably do not have to remind you that it is getting colder out and the leaves are starting to fall. That means gutter cleaning time. While you “Have Your Mind In The Gutter”, check these issues...

☐ Look at the attachment points for your gutters. The big nails, if your system has these are called Spikes. The tubing the spikes pass through on the inside of the gutter are ferrules. Make sure the spikes are tight into the fascia board of your house. If not, pull them out, slide the ferrule over, and pound the spike back into fresh wood.

☐ Any corner joints, seams, or drop outlet fittings need to be sealed. If you have any leaks, clean the inside of the gutter with a brush and water. Blot dry. Then seal with Butyl Gutter and Lap Cement. It comes in a caulking gun tube and is very sticky and remains somewhat flexible. If it is cold outside when you do this, keep the Butyl in the house to keep it warm or you will not get it out of the tube.

☐ Not only clear the gutters, but make sure the downspouts are open and free flowing. Add extensions to the bottoms to divert the water at least 6’ from your house foundation.

While you are up on the roof, an overlooked item should be checked. The flashing around vent pipes is called a Roof Jack. These Jacks have a rubber collar that seals around the vent pipes. Over time, they get brittle and shrink. If water gets in here, it has a direct path to your ceilings and walls. Seal this with the same butyl material as the gutters, or use a black plastic roof cement.

Be sure to close your foundation vents now that the furnace is running. This will keep cold wind from getting to your pipes and floors. Open them again when you switch to air conditioning.

If you are lubricating your garage door opener for winter... What? You have never done this? Well, I suppose you should check to see first if yours is the type that even needs lubrication. Some don't. If it does, be sure to use a grease made for this purpose. Too thin and it will drip on your car and floor. Too thick and the opener might not work in the extreme cold. Most of the hardware stores and home centers sell a lubricant specifically made for door openers. Use this and you should be fine



Somebody help me out with this one. Was this really done on purpose? And to what end?

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