

The **HOMEFIX** Club!

Issue #9
May 2010

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

6 Years In The Making by Joe Prin

Some projects take a little longer than others to be completed. This is the case here with an Arbor I built in my garden.

About six years ago, the four columns you see here holding this thing up, were removed from a house on Quail Ridge. They were in the entry way inside the front door, holding up a big dished ceiling with a chandelier in the center. The new owner of this house wanted them gone as they were a bit over the top for the style of house as well as the owners taste. After getting them out, I bought them back from the owner, and put them in my barn for "Someday". As I said, that was 6 years ago.



Several times I tried to get rid of the 8' tall fiberglass columns. They also had the foam base collars and the plaster top scroll caps. 3 separate pieces for each column. We kept hanging on to them waiting for the right project.

It came along with our "New" old house, and a nice, big garden area with a walkway. "How about here?" I asked, and my wife Vicki said "Go for it. Just finish it if you start it" (Past history we won't get into.)

Cliff Sexton, my concrete guy, put in the footings while he was placing a slab in the barn you see in the background. To these bases, a wet post anchor was slipped in to hold 4x4 posts. We inserted the posts inside the hollow columns while they were down, tipped them up and attached them to the anchors. A centering plug was made to align the post inside the columns.

For the beams, I used a double 9 1/2" engineered joist, skinned with 3/8 OSB textured soffit panel and 3/4" Choicetrim top and bottom.

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The beams are 24' long with 66" connections between them. They are screwed to the top of the 4x4 posts which extend 3/4" beyond the top of the columns.

Therefore, the columns are actually taking no weight at all and are purely decorative.

Coming up with the design for the top slats took a while. I tried several patterns and didn't like the look of them. Then, the "Curl" popped into my head. The slats are cut from 104" 2x6 studs.

I probably should mention the painting. I coated every component, prior to assembly. I figured that this

would make things easier later and I am glad I did. I then caulked all seams with Big Stretch caulk. For the paint itself, I used Ace Royal Satin White from Evans Building Center in Eagle. All the lumber and hardware came from there too.

To attach the slats to the top of the beams, I drilled with a 5/16 auger bit through the edge of the 2x6. An 8" by 5/16" Torx lag was then used to go through the 2x6 and into the beam. It really clamped down hard and made things very rigid.

Now since this is a garden, we then hung a couple of ranch panels from "J" screws on the underside of one of the beams. If you don't know about ranch panels, they are 50" tall and 16' long and made from heavy wire, welded into a grid and can be used for fencing and pens. They are about \$23 each at D&B. I cut one in half with bolt cutters and suspended them from the screws and anchored the bottom with some rebar pegs.

Why the panels? Pickel Cukes! I have seen them grown vertically, rather than on the ground and they take great shape, stay clean, and look really cool! After harvest, I can remove the panels to clean them off.

This project took me around 46 hours of labor and outside of the columns, \$490 in other materials. It is one of those examples that if you do it for the love of doing it, you do not worry about the investment into it. However, if you were to have this built, and I had to start off with all new materials, this is a \$5000 project.

From HomeFix Club Member Spooky Jim

Two years ago I added a new room to our home, a family room adjacent to the living room. Now every time I walk across the floor, it squeaks. I had Liquid Nails on the floor joists before I screwed down the sub floor. I'm sure that I did everything properly, but I still hear the squeaking.

The other day when I was complaining, my wife informed me that the floor is not the problem, the squeaking is coming from my knees. Oh, Lordy-Lordy.

This has been my chuckle for the day.

Ours too Jim!

Be Listening to the HomeFix Show on Saturdays now through Fathers Day.



A VJ-1 Channel Lock V-Jaw Tongue and Groove Plier set will be given away on the air every show!



9AM on KBOI AM 670



Many of you have asked about the move of the HomeFix show to KBOI and how it was going. I can say that there is good things and not so good things.

The good thing is that the staff and management of KBOI couldn't be treating me any better. They are doing a fantastic job getting the show on the air each week. Tara, my in-studio engineer on the control board is learning my ways and doing great keeping me on time and the show on schedule.

The not so good thing is that I am having a real problem with only having a one hour show. For so many years, I have had two hours to work in my thoughts and comments. You the listeners have also made mention of this also that you would like to have more HomeFix time. I can tell you now that I and the station are working on it and hope to soon bring you news very soon.

One other thing is that the show is in big demand from advertisers. Now that HomeFix is on KBOI, other companies have been attracted to he show and want to be part of it. Because of the condensation to one hour, the sponsor inventory is sold out. A nice



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problem to have. I actually have a waiting list for people to get on the show! These companies are good solid businesses with good products and I hope to be able to bring them to you in the future.

And that disclaimer at the beginning of the show? Not my idea. That is the policy of Citadel Communications who owns KBOI and they do it for all of their independent programs. It is there to stay, so I guess we will just have to get used to it.

A message from Stanley Johnson at Heating Equipment Company.

Do you know what your heating/cooling system total efficiency is?

The true efficiency of your heating system is not the same efficiency number that is on the equipment label. According to energystar.gov “improper installation can reduce system efficiency by up to 30 percent – costing you more on your utility bills and shortening the equipment’s life.” I have personally observed a “90%” furnace only getting 63 ½% of the heat into the home. Why was this the situation? The ducting was installed too small, and the plumber had installed a drain line that flattened the main flex ducting in the crawl space.

Let me illustrate the affects of poor ducting: If you have a hose spicket connected to two garden hoses and you step on one of the hoses, the only place for the water to go is out the other hose. A fossil fuel furnace is connected to two outlets where heat is leaving the furnace; the flue piping and the ducting. If the ducting is restricted (a kink in the ducting, too small of ducting, dirty filter, dirty coil, registers closed, return air grille blocked, or a combination of the items listed), then the only place for the heat to go is out the flue piping. Ducting that is not sealed leaks into the crawl space or attic, which lowers the efficiency also.

When ducting is not proper the amount of Freon in the cooling system is not in proper adjustment, causing the cooling system to operate at a lower capacity and efficiency. Improper ducting affects your utility cost in the summer as well as in the winter. This is why Idaho Power requires a heating/cooling contractor to provide evidence they have installed a ducting system properly before they will issue a rebate to the property owner.

Very often in life the cheapest price is not the best value. Heating and air conditioning investments are no exception. When you pay for proper engineering and installation you will reap economic benefits. If you hire someone who guesses at the ducting design, they are guessing with your life savings and your monthly utility bill.



As with any mechanical equipment, a heating and cooling system that checked for proper calibration will be kept at the optimum efficiency, which is why Heating Equipment Company offers our customers an Energy Savings Agreement. This is a contract stating you wish us to come and service your heating and cooling system each year.

When you call Heating Equipment you can feel confident you have chosen professionals who truly understand the science of this business. We care about your comfort, your safety, and your budget.

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The Independent Newspaper Column

by Joe Prin for May, 2010



I have a real problem. And it is starting to bug me. My problem is that I can't let things go to waste. You know, just throw it away!

Now before you start thinking of the next episode of Hoarders on TV, I am not talking about this in that way. Believe me, I am trying to reduce what is around me, not add to it. What I mean is that I try to squeeze the last bit of life out of everything that crosses my path. I try to find a use for things so that they can provide something again even if for something other than the original intended purpose.

There is a joy to be experienced when you take something that was going to be, or had been discarded, and put it back into service. Give it a life, one more time.

The most direct way I have found for some things is to either sell them, and I usually use Craigslist, or give them away again on Craigslist or Freecycle (search Ada County Freecycle to learn more). Here I can unload a lot of the things that I tear out of peoples homes that I do not, or cannot donate to Second Chance Building Materials or Habitat's Re-Store. (Some more internet searching for you to do).

But beyond the obvious building materials and home related items that I come across due to my chosen occupation as a Remodeling Contractor, I tend to intersect with a lot of other junk through hobbies and I guess just keeping an eye out for interesting things.

I think I told you the story about my Daughters 1951 Chevy and the busted 216 straight 6 engine. Maybe not.... Anyway, we had to put in a new engine and we upgraded to a more modern 1960 235. So, there were a pile of 216 parts in my garage.

I gave away what I could after several months, and was ready to take the rest to the landfill. The truck was loaded. And I yanked out the 216 parts. There has to be a use for these! I just couldn't be responsible for burying them up on the side of the hill!

Then I remembered Art In The Park from last year and those sculptures those folks made out of metal bits and steel parts. Hmmm. The end result is this "Yard Art" bug, creature, sculpture, what have you.



So I guess there is an obvious line to be crossed as in most things. When does a person take it too far? When does it become wrong, or weird to try and reuse too much? You will have to answer this for yourself, but I bet it is something that you will take just a little further than those around you. You will take it, at whatever level in your life you have chosen, just beyond what they do, and that is what will make you different.

If you got a chuckle out of my motor bug, my mission has been accomplished. My weirdness put a smile on your face. That old Chevy is still putting smiles on peoples faces.

Energy Usage- Construct a Personal Energy Plan



Our political leaders have placed energy-issues front and center on the national stage. The economy has placed reducing expenses front and center in our private lives. Taking control of our personal energy use and employing energy efficiency measures whenever and wherever possible is the “sweet spot” that meets both objectives.

Just like constructing a budget begins with knowing where your dollars are spent, constructing a home energy plan begins with knowing how much energy you use.

- Start by gathering 12 months of usage history.
- Get this information from your past bills, from Idaho Power’s website, or by calling customer service at 388-2323.
- Concentrate on the amount of energy used rather than the dollar amount billed. The unit of measurement for electricity is kilowatt-hours or kWh.
- Idaho Power’s “average” home-owner uses about 1050 kWh/month -- includes all residential customers including those with gas, etc.

The key to building an effective individual energy plan is to understand your own usage patterns.

- First, determine your monthly base load (average kWh used during the lowest 3 months of the year). This is the average amount your family uses every month year-round to accomplish its basic daily tasks.
- Divide the monthly amount by 30 to get your daily base-load.
- As a rule of thumb, you can generalize that everything above the base load is due to heating and cooling or some other seasonal item (pool, hot tub, etc)

With this basic information in-hand, you can now begin to experiment with your behavior patterns and figure out how your actions and the equipment you own or operate affects your power bill.

Being aware of your base load and your typical daily and monthly averages also helps you identify potential problems quickly.

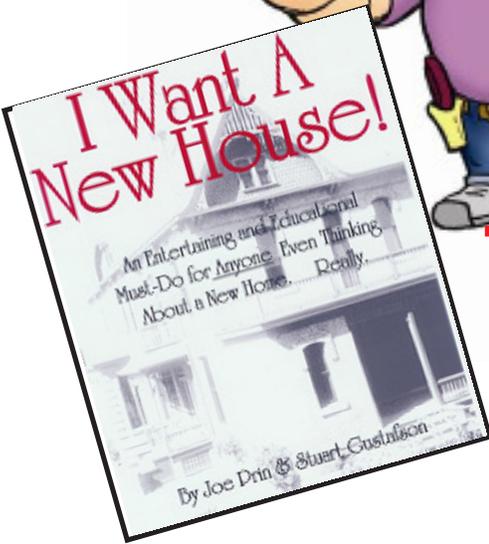
- Did you have more people in your home than normal?
- Does something need to be repaired?
- Have you added new electronic gadgets?
- Does the weather account for the difference, etc?

If you find that waiting until you get your next bill to receive feedback on your efforts gets frustrating, you can fix this by learning to your read meter. It’s easy to do and will provide a much tighter feedback loop for measuring the impact of your adjustments. You can find easy-to-follow instructions at idahopower.com.

Take charge of your energy use today by getting to know your own behavior patterns and enacting a plan to reduce your monthly bill and your overall energy use. Every little bit helps. You have the power to make a difference? You can do it!



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Now the book, "I Want A New House" by Joe Prin and Stuart Gustafson is now available as a PDF file! This book is for you or should be given to anybody you care about who is about to start their journey to their next house. New, old, in-between. First house, last house or somewhere in the middle, it doesn't matter. This book will help! PDF File will be emailed to you.

Quick Tips...

With the recent winds we have had, you should inspect your roof to make sure there are no loose or missing shingles.

If you are painting outside, try not to do it in direct sunlight. If paint dries too fast, it will not have as long of life and may show signs of chalking sooner.

Look for Grade 5 or 8 Nuts and Bolts for any of your outdoor power equipment you are repairing. These are harder, and will be safer for equipment that is subject to vibration or stress.

Check your gutters. All the seed pods from the trees are dropping, especially in the rains we have had, and are clogging gutters and downspouts. Avoid siding and sheetrock damage and give the gutters a good cleaning.

The locksets on your entry doors are probably very dry after the wet Winter. Metal can rust up, form a corrosive film, and wear out. If your locks and deadbolts are a bit sticky or the doors do not latch well, take them apart and lubricate with White Lithium Grease. It is available in a spray can and will cling well and last a long time. Inside the key slot, spritz a bit of Silicone spray to keep the lock pins moving freely.

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