

Who Has Your Keys?

If you have recently moved into your new home, somebody, somewhere probably has a set of keys to your house. The builder, a contractor, the Realtor, even the previous owners. So, it might be a good idea to either change your locks or at a minimum have them re-keyed. Might make you sleep better.

You can call a Locksmith and have it done on site, or you can take the locks (key cylinder side) off the door and take them to a Locksmith or hardware store selling your brand of lock.

Costs for a re-key are \$3 to \$5 depending on brand, more if the person doing it has to come to you.

If you choose to replace your locks, buy a quality product like Schlage or Kwikset Titan brands. Stay away from off brands or odd ball imports. They don't last and have very little security. Feel how heavy they are. Better locks are usually much heavier.

Low E Glass

A common question asked about windows is what does Low-E mean? It is pretty much standard now for windows to have some type of Low-E coating. (It used to be an option). A Low-E coating is virtually invisible. It is applied by the glass manufacturer to the inner side of the exterior piece of glass on a double pane window. The purpose is to allow winter sun into the house to help solar heat gain, while reflecting summer sun to keep cooling bills lower. How it does it I am not sure, but it works and is worth making sure your get.



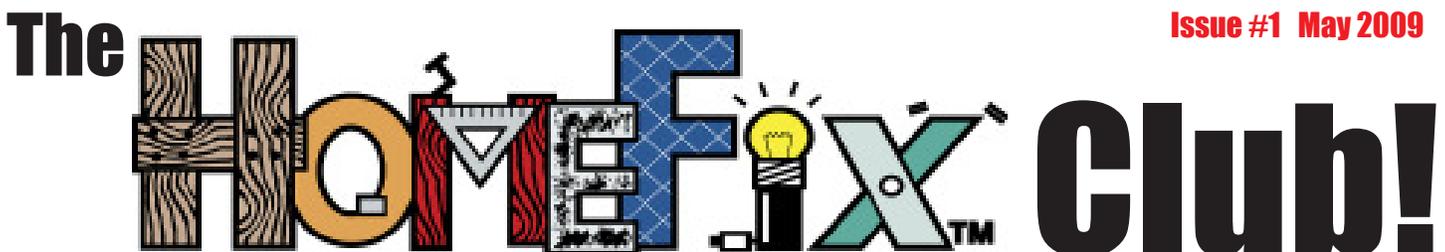
Final thoughts....

The Spring Project List is either a good thing or a bad thing. I suppose it depends on your point of view. Not that your list has too few of items on it already, but here are some things to work on:

-  Check all gutters for winter ice damage and loose spikes and fittings.
-  Do a quick crawl around under your house (If it has a crawl space to see if there is any water intrusion.
-  Lubricate garage door hinges, exterior door hinges, and door knobs.
-  Change furnace filters and change smoke alarm batteries.
-  Fill up the tank on the BBQ grill and give it a good cleaning.
-  Check exterior lights for burnt out bulbs.
-  Inspect fences behind bushes and trees before they leaf out.
-  Drain and flush out your water heater and change your water filter (If you have one).
-  Check for water damage around toilets, tubs, and showers.
-  Clean out your dryer vent.

Check out www.joeprin.com Today!

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Issue #1 May 2009

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

Eagle Independent Newspaper Column

- Published 4-15-2009

By Joe Prin

So, are you becoming more self sufficient? If not, perhaps it is time.

This probably sounds a bit weird coming from a guy who makes his living as a handyman and remodeling contractor (and author, and talk radio host, and marketing consultant, and....) but I am going to encourage you to really think about becoming more familiar with the working systems of your house. Become more self-sufficient.

I want you to know that when something goes bump in the night, or whistles, or pings, you not only know what it is, but you will know what to do about it.

Most people do not know how their house works. If you don't know what makes it work, you can't even think about fixing it when it breaks. Or what to tell someone who may fix it for you.

I can't cover it all here, but for example. Your water. Where does it come from? City supply? Well? Say you are on a city water supply. You should know where the meter is. This is the point that their water becomes your water and the measurement takes place of how much of theirs you use and pay for. It is also where the water can be shut off by authorized people. From there, where does the water enter your house? Do you have a shut off valve so you can shut down the supply of water if there is an emergency? If your home is on a crawl space, go down there and crawl around and see how the pipes are laid out. See where the water comes in, splits off, goes to the water heater and back through the rest of the house. See what kind of pipes or tubing you have and how it is put together. Look under your sinks and toilets. Check out those shut off valves and make sure they open and close. Can you flush out your water heater yourself? It can add years to the life of it and can even save you energy dollars.

Now your electricity. How does that get into your house? Overhead or underground? You should know where your meter is, again the point that theirs becomes yours, and where your circuit breaker box is located. You should also label each breaker in detail as to what it turns on and off. Ever flipped a breaker off? You should try it to know what it feels like and the sound it makes. Also so you can check and see when a breaker has "tripped". Those GFCI outlets with the test and reset buttons. Try one so you know how to reset it.

These are just two of the supply systems for your house. You should know how these work and what you can and should interact with. If you have no clue about these, there are many professionals who can assist you and give you a tutorial in your home as to how this stuff all works. Yes there are times when you should call in a pro to work on your house. But there are many times when you can, with the proper knowledge, experience, or advice, take on and successfully repair and maintain the infrastructure of your home.

Septic systems, heating and cooling, lawn irrigation, roofing, windows and doors, attics and ventilations, basements, gas, gutters, and concrete. All things you should know more about. Keep reading here, I'm sure I'll get to all of them soon.

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The American Recovery & Reinvestment Act: Energy Efficient Windows **\$1500 Tax Credit** Information

What is it?

In accordance with Section 1121 of The American Recovery and Reinvestment Act, homeowners will be provided with a tax credit equal to 30% of the material investment in *qualifying* energy efficient windows to a maximum of \$1500.

Do all windows qualify?

No. Under section 1121, qualifying exterior windows and doors shall achieve a U-factor of .30 or better and a Solar Heat gain Co-efficient of .30 or less. **It should be noted that most basic Low-E and Argon glass packages will not qualify**; even if they meet minimum energy standards.

Do ABC Windows Products qualify?

Absolutly. By utilizing our ABC Window Energy Saver glass package, your windows will exceed all qualifications for this program as well as all Energy Star standards. Contact your local ABC Window Consultant for details and about how you can get your windows now and pay in 2010. Call **939-4314** or visit www.abcwindow.com



\$1500 Tax Credit!

See Above

Did You See this?

On the joeprin.com website, you may have noticed the flashing "Deal Of The Day" in the upper right of the Home Page. I Thought I'd share something with you about this.

Tool King is a supplier of Factory Reconditioned Tools. They buy tools from all the leading manufacturers that have been returned to the factory for repair and then are resold. These tools usally have very little usage (if any) and were returned for one reason or another. For years, I have used several FR tools with no problems. And, to prove my interest in this, I just bought from Tool King a Makita Hammer Drill and Grinder combo kit. It came in and other than a few scratches on the drill, it looks new to me! The tool works fine and I got it 6 days after I ordered it. And for about Half of the new price.

In the interest of full disclosure, If you actually buy something from Tool King through my website, through what is called "Affiliate Marketing", I get a commission off of it. Check it out!



Quick Tip...

I have found that some of the best uses for products are other than what they were intended for. Take TYVEK House Wrap. That white stuff you see on the outside of new construction before the siding goes on? IT IS TOUGH. Virtually impossible to tear with your hands. You can cut it with a knife or scissors and I use it for wrapping, patterns, quick tarps, temporary covers and masking, I even busted up some glass on a sheet so I could wad it up and toss it safely in the trash.

Star Independent Newspaper Column - Published 3-15-2009

Long ago, when I started my remodeling business, I told my self that I would not compromise when it came to my tools. I would buy the best I could possibly afford and if I had to, I would wait till I could afford the best.

I can say now, some 15 years later, that I am very glad I took this approach. I recently took a few tools in to KC Tool Supply for repairs. I also ordered in a few parts myself on-line to fix a couple “non-internal” damages.

One of the tools handed over to the repair guy was a Bosch Hammer Drill. This was one of the tools Bosch provided me with for the TV show I used to be a part of on Idaho Public Television. Over the years, I have beaten this thing beyond whatever the engineer that designed it ever thought of. I heated it up so bad a couple of times that you could not even hold on to it. Then finally, blue smoke came out and the magic was gone. Repair Guy said to buy another one. “It’s beyond realistic repair”.

OK. I can live with that. It served me well. We did many, many jobs together. I gathered the bag of pieces of what used to be a hammer drill off the repair counter and left the shop sad, yet excited, that I could now search for it’s replacement.

My Bosch Router is a different story. I have probably routed several miles of edges and window cut outs with this tool. It has no intention of giving up just quite yet. However I have tried to kill it off twice. My tool trailer has bins for all my tools. On a big bump in the road, the router jumped out of the bin and hit the trailer floor hard enough to break the metal base plate and the hard plastic skid disc. I ordered the parts on line as I can handle this repair, and put them on. Good as new. Except that last week it jumped out and did the same thing!

Yes, I fixed the bin and ordered the parts. Again.

Taking a quick scan of my tool inventory, I counted about a third of the tools I have are still original, have been used hard, and have never had to be fixed. Another third have been repaired, some a couple of times. The final third are those tools that have such special uses that I doubt I will ever wear them out or have to make any repairs to them. They just don’t get used enough, but are sure nice to have when the job calls for it.

In my garage workshop is a DeWalt Radial Arm Saw that my Dad bought new in 1958. My dad never threw anything away and I have the receipt, owner’s manual, and even a set of plans he sent in for with a coupon when he bought the saw so you could build a workbench around it. He really took good care of this tool an it did a lot of work.

A Radial Arm Saw should however be called a “Remove Your Arm” Saw. It is so versatile, it is tempting to try and hurt yourself with it. Fun tool though. The point is that **quality lasts**. Quality is worth repairing. And nobody ever complains that they bought too good of a tool.

As summer projects get near, if you need new tools, **DON’T BUY CHEAP JUNK**. Invest in quality and it won’t let you down. That, and the fact that people get hurt trying to us an inferior tool for more than what it was designed for.

From our "What were they thinking?" Department ...



SAVE!

Be watching in places like this
in future Newsletters as HomeFix
advertisers make coupon offers
only to HomeFix Club members!

SAVE!

Busted!

Composite decking is a wonderful thing. Except when it fails. You have probably heard about this issue on the radio. Two companies have had issues that I have ran into. Louisiana Pacific (LP) had a product sold through Home Depot that has failed and Trex has had it's share of issues.



Both of these companies are doing what they can to take care of people with decks that are falling apart through their customer service and warranty departments.

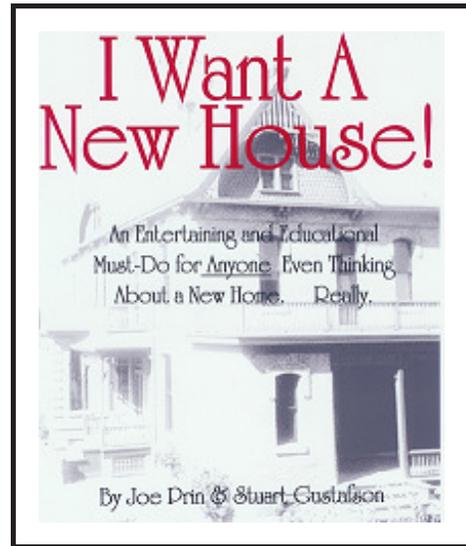
What is interesting is that not all decks are failing, and on an individual deck, not all of the boards are bad. It appears to be a manufacturing issue that only effected a percentage of the product. In any case, the manufacturers are replacing full decks even if only some of the boards have gone bad. Sometimes they cover materials and labor, sometimes just the materials. You may have to fight it out with them a bit to get what you want.

What I would like you to do is check out your deck if it is a composite material. If you think you may be having a problem showing up like in the photo above, get on the internet and contact the company right away. Be sure to have your documentation ready showing what you bought, when and from whom. If your deck was built by a contractor, get the info from him or her.

Most of these problems showed up in decks built in 2003, 2004 and a few from 2005. I have a Trex deck built in 1996 that still looks great and has no sign of giving up anytime soon.

The good news is that the problems have been corrected, and you should have full confidence in the products from here on out. I think the industry really learned a lesson. A very expensive lesson.

Check out www.joeprin.com Today!



The Book Is Ready!

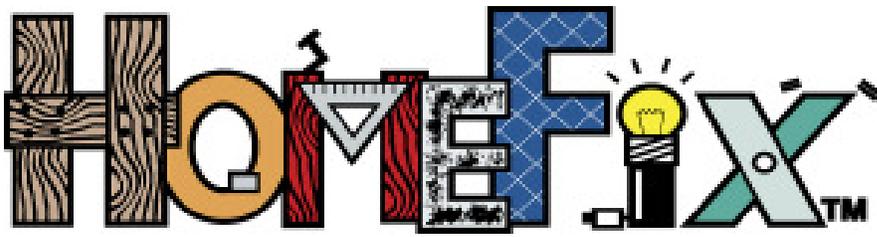
Thank you if you are one of the may that have purchased "I Want A New House". As you read through it, since you are the first, if you have a thought, question, or something that I can improve in future editions, please let me know. You can send your comments to joe@joeprin.com.



This month the good folks at Gorilla Glue sent me a couple of cases of sample size bottles of the classic version of Gorilla Glue, the new and improved quicker dry version, and White Gorilla Glue.

Giving stuff away on the radio show is.... well.... quite frankly a pain in the butt. I have to explain the rules, you have to call in, phone lines are limited, addresses have to be written down, things get lost, and half the time stuff does not go to those that can actually use the products, just to people that want to enter contests! So, since you belong to this elite club now, there is a better chance that you can put products like Gorilla Glue to good use. Watch your mail box. You never know what might show up. Next week I will post the names of this months winners so you can see that I actually do mail this stuff out!

The



Issue #1 May 2009

Club!

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

Welcome!

HI! And thank you for participating in the first ever issue of The HomeFix Club e-mail Newsletter. Allow me to introduce myself. I'm Joe Prin, Host of The HomeFix Radio Show, Co-Author of the new book with Stuart Gustafson, "I Want A New House", and Owner of Joe Prin Remodeling, LLC a full service remodeling and handyman service company. You can read more about all of this at www.joeprin.com. There, enough about me. Now about you.

You probably heard about this new club from the radio show. Thanks for signing up! This club is designed to take a few things HomeFix to the next level. In this and upcoming monthly issues, you will find columns from me as well as from industry experts and local professionals about things that can help you out with your home. There will be stories, coupons, announcements, **FREE PRODUCTS**, and information only shared here in this format. I would encourage you to tell your friends and family about this and have them also sign up.

I have been asked over the years several times to publish a newsletter. The timing has never been quite right. Now it is. The world around us has changed and so we must too.

The HomeFix Radio Show is supported by the companies and individuals you hear in the commercials during the show. My job is to help them build their business. My job for you is to provide you with trustworthy, honest people to help you with your lifestyle and your home. People you will enjoy having help you out and people you will recommend to others. Bringing the two of you together is what I hope to do better.

Lets see how it goes! Here is issue #1.



Spring Project?

Here is a Garden Arbor Gate that I recently built for a customer in South Boise. She found the plan for this at one of the box stores. We changed it a bit by building it out of a really good grade of Cedar that we sourced from Evans Building Center in Eagle. The plan called for pressure treated lumber but I felt that would have been a cosmetic mistake. The arbor is set in concrete and is 60" wide at the gate and just over 8' tall. The upsidedown "U" hoops are triple laminated 2x6 and 2x12. Quite a challenge to build, but as you can see, well worth the results. What an inviting entrance to the back yard for guests and family! Want to build one? It took \$1100 in materials and about 25 hours of work.
