

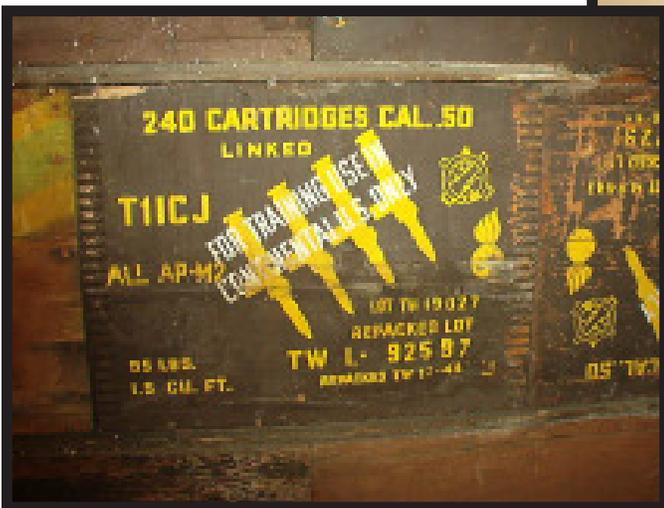
# The **HOMEFIX** Club!

Issue #6  
December 2009

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

## No, Surely You Jest?

Now this one you better take a good look at. And then look at it again. What you are seeing is the exterior wall of a house that has been stripped on the inside. However, where most builders would have used 2x4's or 2x6's to frame the house, this thrifty and somewhat resourceful person chose to build his house from Ammo Boxes!



I was called into this house to look at making a floor repair. This turned into a removal of the rim joist and the replacement of some of the sill plate. While doing this, the wall had to be opened up and this is what we found.

The entire exterior wall system of this house is "built" of stacked and nailed together ammunition boxes. Empty thank God. Hundreds of them! Like Leggo's! Arranged like bricks, they form the wall that plasterboard was hung from on the inside, and siding nailed to on the outside.

The story as I got it from the current owner, was that the original builder made daily trips to the Gowen Field dump during the war. Building materials were scarce, and money even harder to come by. So, there in the dump were empty ammo boxes tossed away and made available for salvage to anyone who wanted to take them.

This crafty constructor saw the opportunity to stack and nail the boxes together and make walls out of them. And he did!

Now, as much as I hate to admit it, it actually did make a pretty good house! The rim joist rotted away due to a bad sprinkler system and the floor joists fell into the crawl space. However, that corner of the building remained suspended, floating in the air, with zero sag or deflection. Who would have thought. Perhaps there is something here worth exploring as we look for alternative ways to build our homes in the future.

# A First Impression

An Eagle Entry Project by Joe Prin

The Challenge? Take a 1970's Tudor Style and create a grand entry without major structural surgery and a budget of less than \$10,000.

We started by having new stamped concrete installed in the full entry way and reinforced for the new posts. Sexton Enterprises did all of the concrete work. They also placed a new sidewalk around the front to the garage.

The roof was stripped and the framing put in place for a simple post and beam support structure with manufactured trusses from Valley Truss.



The structure was surfaced with cedar trim and details along with panel siding and soffit products. Recessed lighting was added as well as a hand built gable vent. After this photo, it was all painted and the roof installed.

Notice also that a new entry door system along with two detached sidelights were also placed into the opening at the front of the house.

With all the finish work done, and a new three color paint job on the full house (along with new siding that was added later) the look totally changed and the home now has an entry that invites guests to the home in style and with protection from the elements.



This project was brought in under budget by just a little and took 3 1/2 weeks to complete.

The landscaping has been restored and the lawn has healed. After some more time, the owner also replaced the wood shake roof with an architectural asphalt shingle and to see this "addition" to the home from the street, you would never know that it had not always been there. That is the goal of a good home improvement isn't it?

# Star-Eagle Independent Newspaper Column

by - Joe Prin (From the December Issues)

Doors seem to be one of the “mystery” elements of home construction. Pretty simple when you break them down. You have a door, a frame, and some trim. And the hardware. Not much else. However... A door that is not installed right is a constant source of frustration. So, either your doors are installed correctly, or they are not.

One of the most common calls I get is to fix a door that is not fitting right. Usually this shows up in a deadbolt or door knob that is not latching properly. The door may have worked fine for years, but now it is not.

The easy fix and dark side temptation is to grind away at the strike plate till the latch does fit. Or to chip out the jamb and raise the plates up a bit. Temporary at best. Let’s take a few more minutes of craftsmanship and fix the cause of the alignment problems.

Stand on the side of the door that you can see the hinges. There is only one side where they are visible. Look at the “reveal” at the top of the door and notice the gap at the top of the door to the bottom of the top door jamb. It should be even and the same distance all across the top. If there is a noticeable angle shape to the reveal, we just found the problem. And if there is, there is also another spot to confirm this. The side reveal. Not the hinge side, but the strike side reveal, or gap, should be even also. If it is tight at the top and open at the bottom. Same problem, same solution.

Open the door and look at the top hinge that is attached to the jamb. There will be either three or hopefully 4 screws attaching the hinge to the jamb. Remove the two screws most inward on the jamb. If the door was not hung right, these screws will be about an inch long. Replace these with some 2 ½” hardened deck screws and run them in tight. This will suck the hinge tight to the jamb and will pull the jamb over a bit to the wall framing.

Look at the reveals again and you should notice that they have become more even. And 90% of the time, your latches will now work again like they were meant to.

This all assumes that the door was hung plumb and square in the beginning. If your house has shifted, settled, or the door was not fit properly originally, more drastic surgery is required to solve the problems.

For really bad fits, I pull off the interior trim, pull off the exterior trim, and cut loose the door from the shims and fasteners holding it into the opening and start over.

The hinge side needs to be plumb in both directions. It may have to lift a bit off the floor to allow the head jamb to fit correctly. Use a shim under the jamb leg to do this. Get this side right and screw it in. Not nails, screws. Move over to the strike jamb and lift or lower to get the top reveal right and shim. Then, with the door in a closed position, align the jamb for the best fit to the door. Shim and screw it in. Replace the trim.

Your door should now fit right for many more years. Adjust your sweep or threshold to seal up the weather-stripping too.



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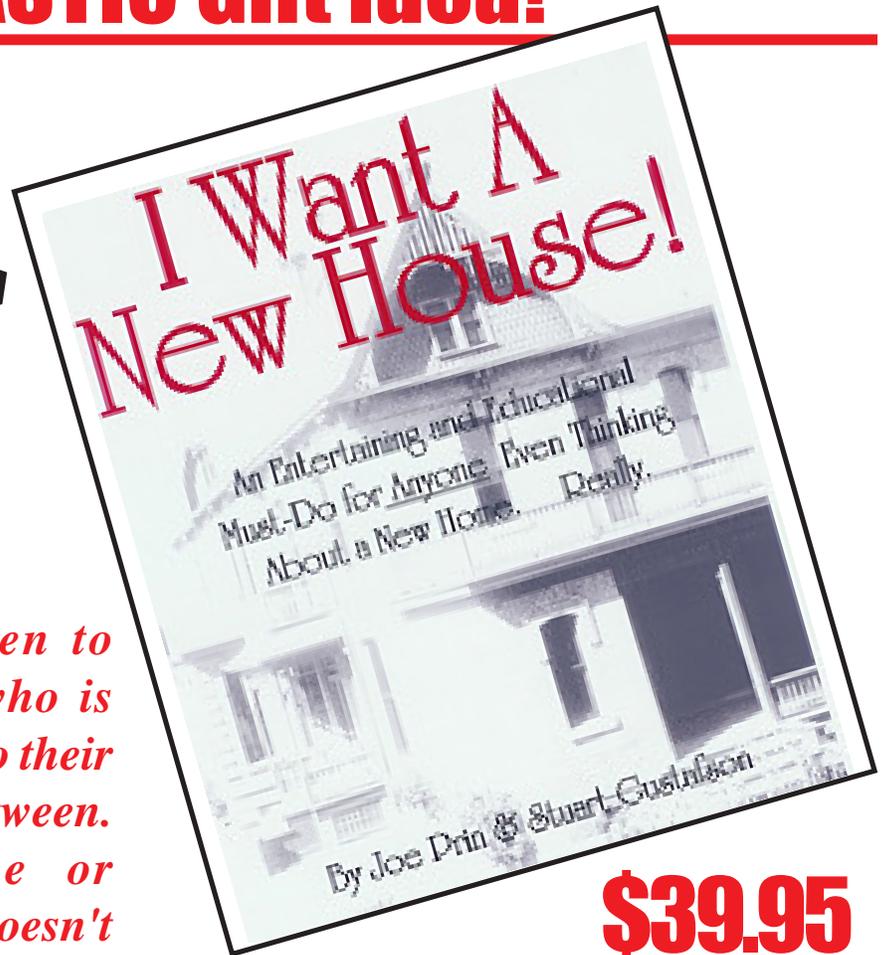
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**Lost in the translation?**



**I have no comment on this one.**

**Somebody's been McNaughty!**



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# These are supposed to be real headlines in newspapers

Man Kills Self Before Shooting Wife and Daughter

Something Went Wrong in Jet Crash, Expert Says

Police Begin Campaign to Run Down Jaywalkers

Panda Mating Fails; Veterinarian Takes Over

Miners Refuse to Work after Death

Juvenile Court to Try Shooting Defendant

War Dims Hope for Peace

If Strike Isn't Settled Quickly, It May Last Awhile

Cold Wave Linked to Temperatures

Enfield ( London ) Couple Slain; Police Suspect Homicide

Red Tape Holds Up New Bridges (Joe's favorite)

Man Struck By Lightning: Faces Battery Charge

New Study of Obesity Looks for Larger Test Group

Astronaut Takes Blame for Gas in Spacecraft

Kids Make Nutritious Snacks

Local High School Dropouts Cut in Half

Hospitals are Sued by 7 Foot Doctors

Typhoon Rips Through Cemetery; Hundreds Dead

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**Read Past columns  
from Joe as well as  
get past issues of the HomeFix  
Club Newsletter  
at [www.JoePrin.com](http://www.JoePrin.com) !**

## **Cell Phone Hidden Tech Fact or Fiction?**

From HomeFix Club Member Gabe

There are a few things that can be done in times of grave emergencies. Your mobile phone can actually be a life saver or an emergency tool for survival.

Check out the things that you can do with it.

### **EMERGENCY;**

The Emergency Number worldwide for Mobile is 112. If you find Yourself out of the coverage area of your mobile network and there is an Emergency, dial 112 and the mobile will search any existing network to Establish the emergency number for you, and interestingly, this number 112 can be dialed even if the keypad is locked.

### **KEYS LOCKED IN CAR;**

Have you locked your keys in the car? Does your car have remote keyless entry? This may come in handy someday. Good reason to own a cell phone: If you lock your keys In the car and the spare keys are at home, call someone at home on their cell phone from your cell phone. Hold your cell phone about a foot from your car door and have the person at your home press the unlock button, holding it near the mobile phone on their end. Your car will unlock. Saves someone from having to drive your keys to you. Distance is no object. You could be hundreds of miles away, and if you can reach someone who has the other 'remote' for your car, you can unlock the doors (or the trunk).

**Editor's Note: My friend Hal has tried this here in Eagle and he said it worked!**

### **BATTERY POWER;**

Imagine your cell battery is very low. To activate, press the keys \*3370#. Your cell phone will restart with this reserve and the instrument will show a 50% increase in battery. This reserve will get charged when you charge your cell phone next time.

### **STOLEN PHONE;**

How to disable a STOLEN mobile phone?

To check your Mobile phone's serial number, key in the following Digits on your phone: \*#06#. A 15-digit code will appear on the screen. This number is unique to your handset. Write it down and keep it somewhere safe.

When your phone gets stolen, you can phone your service provider and give them this code. They will then be able to block your handset so even if the thief changes the SIM card, your phone will be totally useless. You probably won't get your phone back, but at least you know that whoever stole it can't use/sell it either. If everybody does this, there would be no point in people stealing mobile phones.

**Editor's Note: I Did it. Great tip!**

### **FREE DIRECTORY ASSISTANCE**

Cell phone companies are charging us \$1.00 to \$1.75 or more for 411 information calls when they don't have to. Most of us do not carry a telephone directory in our vehicle, which makes this situation even more of a problem. When you need to use the 411 information option, simply dial: (800)FREE-411, or (800) 373-3411 without incurring any charge at all. Program this into your cell phone now. This is sponsored by McDonalds, Walmart, etc.

**Editor's Note: I gave it a try, there are a couple of "commercials" at the start and it is an automated system, but hey, for "Free" what the heck. I put this one on a speed dial.**





## Energy Efficient Holiday Gift Giving

It's that time of year when you wonder what gifts to give friends and family this holiday season. If you're shopping for electronics or possibly a new appliance, remember that not all products are created equal: some products use a significant amount of energy, while others use noticeably less.

ENERGY STAR® qualified products, are designed to use less energy so they help save money on your electricity bill. Consider these facts when making your purchase decisions:

- An estimated 10 to 15 percent of all electricity consumed in U.S. homes is attributed to home entertainment systems and home office equipment.

- The average desktop computer consumes 255 kWh of power per year, compared to 84 kWh for an energy efficient laptop computer.

- Roughly 275 million TVs currently in use consume over 50 billion kilowatts (kWh) of energy each year – or roughly enough electricity to power all of the homes in the State of New York for one entire year.

- A 40-inch plasma television uses approximately 441 kilowatt hours (kWh) of energy per year, while an LCD 40-inch television uses only 77 kWh.

8

- Look for the “Save More” sticker if you're in the market for a TV. These TVs are 30 percent more energy efficient than the standard ENERGY STAR specification.

Which would you rather have in your home?

As part of Idaho Power's Home Products program, you may receive a **financial incentive up to \$50** for specific ENERGY STAR qualified products.

To learn more, visit the [www.idahopower.com/energyefficiency](http://www.idahopower.com/energyefficiency).

## Gift Ideas for Guys- Joe's Opinion

-  Guys like toys. We always have and always will. You can't wear a toy. You can't get physically fit with a toy. Toys are to play with. You are never too old for toys.

-  Guys like sharp, dangerous things. Knives, Leatherman Tools, saw blades, chain saws. You can't go wrong giving a gift that could someday cause stitches or remove fingers.

-  If it is fuzzy or cute. Forget it. Bullet Proof, armored, heavy duty, indestructible, extra large, king size, or jumbo. If these describe it, you are probably on the right track.

-  Diamond Plate metal work anything is usually good. Anything.

-  If it has to be plugged in, you again are on the right track. If you can plug it in and hurt yourself with it, you have found the perfect gift.

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