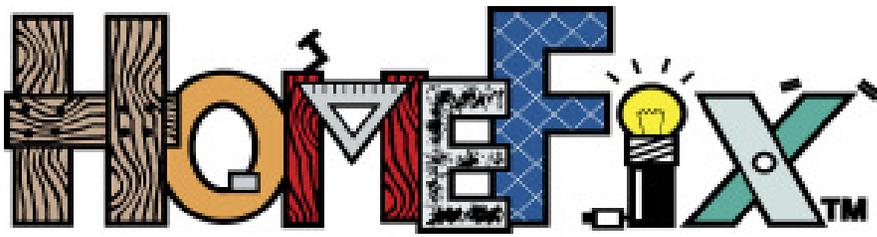


The



Issue #7
February 2010

Club!

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



When Contractors work on their Own Homes...

I have recently gone through “Office Trauma” and for those of you who have an office in your home for business or the family, you know what it feels like to have everything shut down for a few days. Not good.

My house is undergoing a full on remodel and being the remodeling contractor that I am, my customer’s projects come first. They pay the bills. Therefore, my personal remodel is important to me, but limited to the time and energy I have available. In other words, thanks to a lot of paying work, it is moving slow.

Over the past year, the house has had almost all of the old galvanized pipes replaced and upgraded to the red, white, and blue plastic pipe. New water heater, some new faucets, fixtures and toilets. We did a quick makeover and space enhancer on our master bath, which measures a total of 5 foot by 8 foot.

The old wood burning fireplace insert came out, the stone hearth was lowered 2 inches and a new Quadrafire pellet stove went in for winter. I also learned a lot as Heating Equipment Company installed a new Lennox heat pump and AC system. Which lead to all new ducting in the house. We have a two story mid 70’s home and the ducting soffit running through the center of the house on the main floor were really bugging me. It made the ceiling feel so low. HEC found a way to run the second floor ducting through the attic and thereby eliminating all the main floor soffit build downs. NICE! But a lot of sheetrock removal and replacement work is in my future.

Rooms are moving around too. We took a game room that was once a two-car garage that had been converted to living space and carved it up a bit, moved some door ways, built some new walls, upgraded the windows, revised the electrical to fit, and leveled the floors. One of these new spaces is the world headquarters for the Joe Prin Remodeling and HomeFix Broadcasting and Publishing Empire. It is 10’ x 10’. Not too big of an empire

For months, my office was a desk sitting out in the middle of the construction zone. Tarps, plastic, extension cords, and files in boxes. What a mess. I hate paperwork enough, and this made it worse. Trauma is the best word to describe it.

Today, the office is finished! The walls are textured, the rain-glass full view pocked door is letting light pass through from the new windows to the other side of the wall, and there is bright overhead lighting for night and morning work. All the fancy window and door trim is installed, painted, and a new tile floor is installed. I even repainted my ugly steel file cabinet to match the metals and fabrics on a new (used) desk/work station I picked up.

All has been moved in, plugged in, and organized. The boxes are gone. The tarps and plastic is gone. Work has a home now to start the year off fresh. It is good. It feels good to get this one room done. DONE. One down and nine or so more to go.

This is what happens when people email me things and I think they are funny. They fill space in newsletters...



A burglar broke into a house one night. He shined his flashlight around, looking for valuables when a voice in the dark said, 'Jesus knows you're here.'

He nearly jumped out of his skin, clicked his flashlight off, and froze. When he heard nothing more, after a bit, he shook his head and continued.

Just as he pulled the stereo out so he could disconnect the wires, clear as a bell he heard 'Jesus is watching you.'

Freaked out, he shined his light around frantically, looking for the source of the voice. Finally, in the corner of the room, his flashlight beam came to rest on a parrot.

'Did you say that?' he hissed at the parrot.

'Yep', the parrot confessed, then squawked, 'I'm just trying to warn you that he is watching you.'

The burglar relaxed. 'Warn me, huh? Who in the world are you?'

'Moses,' replied the bird.

'Moses?' the burglar laughed. 'What kind of people would name a bird Moses?'

'The kind of people that would name a Rottweiler Jesus.'

Check out www.joeprin.com Today!

They said what!?

I had a rose named after me and I was very flattered. But I was not pleased to read the description in the catalog: - 'No good in a bed, but fine against a wall.'
- Eleanor Roosevelt



Last week, I stated this woman was the ugliest woman I had ever seen. I have since been visited by her sister, and now wish to withdraw that statement.

- Mark Twain

The secret of a good sermon is to have a good beginning and a good ending; and to have the two as close together as possible.

- George Burns

Santa Claus has the right idea. Visit people only once a year.

- Victor Borge

By all means, marry. If you get a good wife, you'll become happy; if you get a bad one, you'll become a philosopher.

- Socrates

I was married by a judge. I should have asked for a jury.

- Groucho Marx

My wife has a slight impediment in her speech. Every now and then she stops to breathe.

- Jimmy Durante

I have never hated a man enough to give his diamonds back.

- Zsa Zsa Gabor

My luck is so bad that if I bought a cemetery, people would stop dying.

- Rodney Dangerfield

Too Bad I didn't have a coupon from one of my advertisers to put here. Maybe next issue Deadline 2-26-10



Idaho Power is partners with the Northwest Energy Efficiency Alliance (NEEA) in a campaign to promote televisions that are especially energy efficient.

Idaho Power and NEEA are promoting the TV as part of a consumer electronics campaign designed to help reduce household power use—the superefficient televisions are at least 30 percent more energy efficient than current ENERGY STAR® specifications require.

Shoppers can identify the superefficient televisions by a green SAVE MORE label. The labels also include the ENERGY STAR and Idaho Power’s logo.

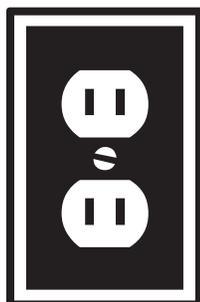
Participating retailers include Wal-Mart, Best Buy, Costco, Sears, and Kmart. Independent community retailers also will soon begin to participate in the energy efficient electronics campaign.

The Idaho Power and NEEA campaign comes as customers are becoming increasingly concerned about the energy their home electronics consume.

The average American home uses approximately 26 electronic devices; consumer electronics currently represents 15 percent of electricity demand worldwide, according to the International Energy Agency—they expect the percentage to triple over the next 20 years. Estimates from the Northwest Power and Conservation Council indicate television use in the Northwest accounts for nearly 3.7 billion kilowatt-hours of energy each year—the equivalent to the same amount of energy that is needed to power 282,442 average homes in Idaho.

A cash incentive is not available for these products.

For more information on which TVs qualify or details on products for your home that do qualify for a cash incentive, visit www.idahopower.com/homeproducts



YOU are the first to know

The  **HomeFix Club!**

BIG NEWS

A major change is about to occur on to HomeFix Radio Show. Something that will change the show forever. Want to know more? Be listening or Email me back.

Thanks to a Customer...

Who let me get a bit crazy with their project, the result is a cool gate made all of steel. The frame is 1" heavy wall square tubing, welded at the corners.

For all of the welding, I used my 110volt MIG welder that I picked up at the National Hardware Show in 1984. To the frame, grape vine stamped steel rod stock was bent and attached to simulate a planting.



**100%
Real
Steel!**

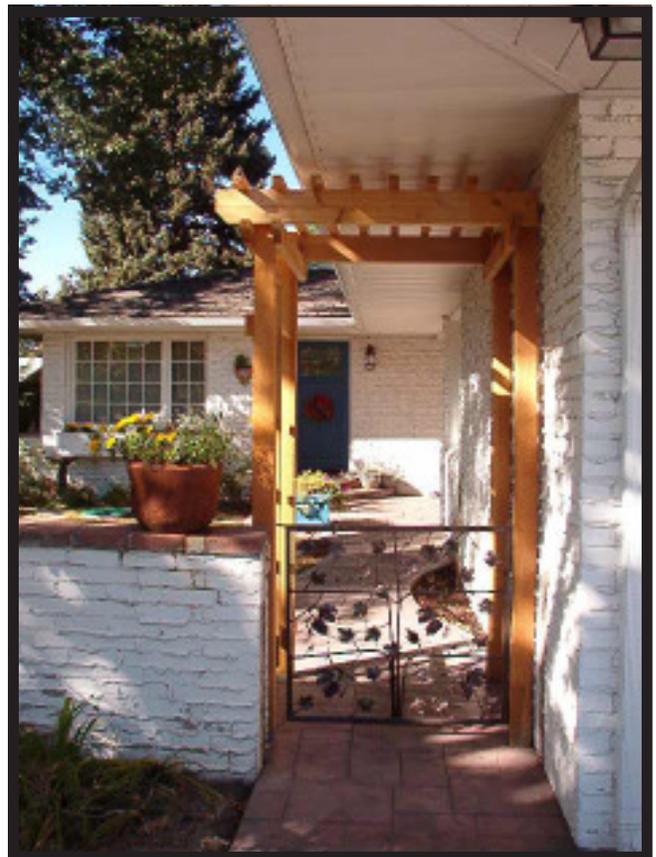


Then added to the frame were steel grape bundles, leaves, and those curly things that I forget the name of.

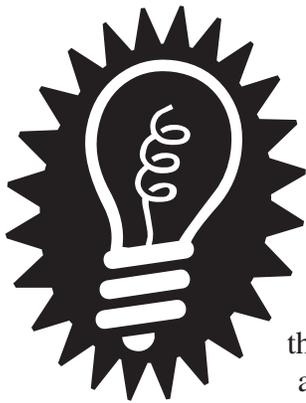
The decorative metal parts came from King Architectural Metals.
www.Kingmetals.com



Below is the finished gate prior to being painted. A combination of bronze and black was used to highlight the textures of the metals. A pair of hinges was welded to the frame as well as a latch bar. This thing is really sturdy and has a great feel and presence at the front of this customers home.



Here is the finished product installed into a new arbor frame that I also built. My thanks to Dennis and Dale for letting me build this for them and their home.



Just when you think it has all been invented...

BY GREG GARDNER
FREE PRESS BUSINESS WRITER

The entrepreneurial light bulb can go on at the oddest times, even in a bathroom.

In August 2006, David Dowling, owner of Yukon Building & Development, had just sold the last of 10 townhouses he built in Northville. The housing market was still strong, but he and a friend were supplementing his development business by doing repairs at apartments. "We constantly saw problems with loose toilet seats," said Dowling. "I went to Home Depot, Lowe's and every neighborhood hardware store in the area. The widget I thought I needed didn't exist."

David Dowling, a Northville developer, is now an inventor of a product called the Yukon Seat Grip. The product, which started as a problem-solving exercise, is manufactured completely in Michigan.

For whatever reason, the average toilet seat eventually will slide around the lip of the bowl because the hole in the porcelain is invariably larger than the threaded metal or nylon threaded bolt. So he developed a rubberized square washer that prevents the bolt from slipping, fastening the seat more firmly to the bowl. The washer, which has double-sided adhesives, is placed on the underside of where the seat attaches.

Dowling installed it in about 50 toilets in apartments and schools where he worked. After checking on them over the next two months, he noticed that the washers were still in place. There were no failures.

Hmmm, he thought. What began as a simple problem-solving exercise took on a life of its own.

With the help of his niece, Pam Meek, an accomplished sales representative, he approached about 40 small and midsize hardware stores and offered 10 washers each. If they didn't sell, Dowling said he'd take them back at no charge. If they did, he would charge \$1.67 each. With a retail price of \$2.99, that provided an ample margin to retailers.

The first batch sold out in a few weeks. Bed, Bath & Beyond contacted Dowling and asked to test what he now called the Yukon Seat Grip in 50 of its stores.

Why Yukon? It is the name of his building company. Since his youth, the Florida native has harbored a dream of someday living in the Yukon. Last winter, his stepson, Roger Silvestro, talked Dowling into shelling out \$10,000 for a tiny space at the International Hardware Show in Las Vegas, a sprawling trade show where about 3,500 others displayed their wares. On the show's final day, organizers handed out 20 "Retailers Choice Awards," and Dowling's one-inch-square washers won one of them.

This obviously is not rocket science, but these stamp-size rubber squares are helping get one Michigan developer through the post-bubble housing slump. All start-up capital, which he would not specify, for the Yukon Seat Grip LLC came from Dowling's pocket.

Equally impressive, Dowling has set up an all-Michigan supply chain. The rubber comes from a company in Alpena. The adhesives are added and the squares are stamped by a rubber and plastic die company in Monroe. A Troy graphic-design firm created the packaging, complete with a diagram and instructions in English, Spanish and French.

Last week, Centoco Plastics, the Windsor-based toilet seat maker, called and asked if Dowling would agree to package his washers with some of Centoco's seats in exchange for access to about 300 Wal-Mart stores in Canada. Talks are progressing.

5



This book 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!

\$39.95

Order "I Want A New House"
on-line at www.joeprin.com

Star-Eagle Independent Newspaper Column

By Joe Prin

I have shared with you from time to time “My World”. This is a place created by me, where things work the way I want them to. One past example you may have read about here is that in My World, slotted screws are outlawed. Stricken from the planet. They did not nor will not exist. There is no use for them in My World. All they do is cause stress and expand my explicative vocabulary.

This past week, another item has received a decree of banishment from My World. The proclamation will read that in My World, all windows will be the same size. 48” x 48”. Big enough to meet the egress requirements, but small enough that I can lift them. However, this is not the reason for standardization.

The reason is that with only one size of window in My World, there only has to be one size of mini-blind! Having just gone through the process of shortening three, 6’ wide blinds down to the proper length, I am thinking that all windows being the same size is not a bad idea.

The store makes it seem simple. I call them an Accomplice. The store just snips them off to the proper width in that chopper thing, and then says, “All you have to do is shorten the cords to make them the right length.” Sure. If it is that easy, why does the store not do it?

I bet there are mini blinds all over this valley with a stack of extra slats at the bottom because someone tried once to shorten them and gave up. Welcome to My World.

My fingers are just not agile enough. To fat and stiff. I suppose for someone that does a lot of these, or has tough little fingers, this is no big deal. But for us “Newb’s”, to steel my kid’s video game term, learning the tricks of this project can be very frustrating and with one wrong snip, very expensive.

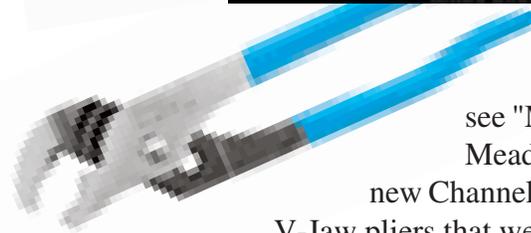
There is hope. We can all rest assured that this is not the only way to go about this. I have since

found that there is another type of these stores. One not set out to torture their customers. There are window covering stores that not only get you the right width, but also the length. And they bring them to your house and install them! Who would’a thought!

I know, these places have always been there. In fact, they were there first. We just have forgotten about the value of service while chasing a cheaper price.

Well, we get what we pay for and sometimes cheaper is not worth it. Mini-blinds are such a case.

Ok, an Amendment for My World is to be issued. In My World, windows can be different sizes, but mini-blinds must be installed by the store that sells them. That would work wouldn’t it?



It was good to see "Manufactured in Meadville PA" on the new ChannelLock 6.5"

V-Jaw pliers that were sent to me for evaluation by ChannelLock. You have to look high and low today to find tools still made with quality in the USA.

The pliers are of great design and allow for gripping pipe or nuts and bolts. I have had a pair (Why are they a pair when there is only one of them?) of really big ChannelLock's in my tool box for years and have subjected them to all kinds of abuse. I am sure these new V-Jaw's will be performing long into the future too. Be listening to the HomeFix show for your chance to win a pair of these pliers!

Webster Got It Wrong. These are more true...

DRILL PRESS:

A tall upright machine useful for suddenly snatching flat metal bar stock out of your hands so that it smacks you in the chest and flings your beer across the room, denting the freshly-painted project which you had carefully set in the corner where nothing could get to it.

WIRE WHEEL:

Cleans paint off bolts and then throws them somewhere under the workbench with the speed of light. Also removes fingerprints and hard-earned calluses from fingers in about the time it takes you to say, "Oh, S---!"

SKILL SAW:

A portable cutting tool used to make studs too short.

PLIERS:

Used to round off bolt heads. Sometimes used in the creation of blood-blisters.

BELT SANDER:

An electric sanding tool commonly used to convert minor touch-up jobs into major refinishing jobs.

HACKSAW:

One of a family of cutting tools built on the Ouija board principle... It transforms human energy into a crooked, unpredictable motion, and the more you attempt to influence its course, the more dismal your future becomes.

WISE-GRIPS:

Generally used after pliers to completely round off bolt heads. If nothing else is available, they can also be used to transfer intense welding heat to the palm of your hand.

OXYACETYLENE TORCH:

Used almost entirely for lighting various flammable objects in your shop on fire. Also handy for igniting the grease inside the wheel hub out of which you want to remove a bearing race..

TABLE SAW:

A large stationary power tool commonly used to launch wood projectiles for testing wall integrity.

HYDRAULIC FLOOR JACK:

Used for lowering an automobile to the ground after you have installed your new brake shoes, trapping the jack handle firmly under the bumper.

BAND SAW:

A large stationary power saw primarily used by most shops to cut good aluminum sheet into smaller pieces that more easily fit into the trash can after you cut on the inside of the line instead of the outside edge.

TWO-TON ENGINE HOIST:

A tool for testing the maximum tensile strength of everything you forgot to disconnect.

PHILLIPS SCREWDRIVER:

Normally used to stab the vacuum seals under lids or as the name implies, to strip out Phillips screw heads.

STRAIGHT SCREWDRIVER:

A tool for opening paint cans. Sometimes used to convert common slotted screws into non-removable screws and butchering your palms.

PRY BAR:

A tool used to crumple the sheetrock surrounding that trim you needed to remove.

HAMMER:

Originally employed as a weapon of war, the hammer nowadays is used as a kind of divining rod to locate the most expensive parts adjacent the object we are trying to hit.

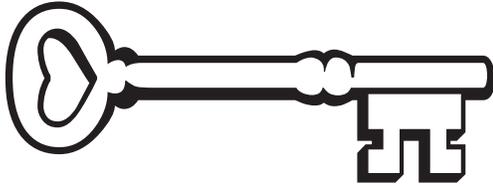
UTILITY KNIFE:

Used to open and slice through the contents of cardboard cartons delivered to your front door; works particularly well on contents such as seats, liquids in plastic bottles, collector magazines, refund checks, and rubber or plastic parts. Especially useful for slicing work clothes, but only while in use.

@#\$\$-ing TOOL:

Any handy tool that you grab and throw across the garage while yelling "@#\$\$" at the top of your lungs. It is also, most often, the next tool that you will need.

Final Thoughts... What Would Norm Do? By Joe Prin



WWND. No not a typo. It means What Would Norm Do? You know Norm, The New Yankee Workshop guy on PBS? The Master Craftsman with the infinite skill and killer workshop we all dream of.

I have jested that if Norm needed a piece of wood trim, he would go out behind the shop and fall a tree that he planted when he was 3 years old. He would then climb up a mountain and dig out some ore so that he could smelt the iron to make his own custom planer blades. The trim would be then stained with a finish that he brewed up in his own lab made from the skin of tropical fruit only found 100 feet up in the air in the canopy of an equatorial rainforest. That is what Norm would do. And it would all work. The first time. He's just that good.

I have often been in situations where there was an easy way and a hard way to get a home repair or improvement done. The easy way would work, but be of questionable long term quality and less than perfect fit or finish. The hard way may appear to be a lot to-do about nothing, but when complete will be the best end result possible with no doubt of durability or performance. WWND?

I have seen the work of a skilled craftsman that truly loved the job they were doing. It wasn't always the paycheck; it was the end result of what they were building. Pride. And it showed. On the other side were the workers I have seen that just drug themselves through the days work not really giving a darn about what they were doing or the person who would be impacted by their lack of interest. WWND?

You may find yourself in this situation from time to time and it may benefit you to ask yourself What Would Norm Do.

I find that the most rewarding shop, garage, or home repair time I have is when I can make a little more out of something than what it needed, but is what it really deserved. When I take my time, being extra careful, using the right tools and materials, the end result is the better for it. And I don't have to go back and fix it again later.

People today are fixing rather than replacing. They are becoming more self-sufficient as they learn to do things that they used to hire out. I think this is a good thing.

You should be spending more time in the hardware store and less time in the gym. Want a work out? Go replace a rotten fence post. Want to feel like you accomplished something today? Install new cabinet knobs. Looking for pride in a job well done? Paint a room. Taking on what some call work and viewing it as an opportunity to excel and leave things better than you found them is a better motivator and esteem builder than just about anything out there. Want to take it to the next level? Involve your kids in the project. Teach them. And ask them... "What would Norm Do?"



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