

The **HOMEFIX** Club!

Issue #11
AUGUST 2010

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

Do Not Go To An IKEA Store!



While in Portland on a vacation, my Family and I stopped into the IKEA store. Bad idea. Why? We got too many good ideas for our house!

We saw many things that we would like to incorporate into our remodeling plans like the Herb Garden box on the counter top in the kitchen seen above.

To make this happen, you would need to have a counter top that is deeper than what you probably have now, but by simply pulling the cabinet boxes forward 6 to 8 inches, and having deeper counter tops, you could do this. Our new kitchen plan calls for a lot of windows on the wall where our sink is. No upper cabinets at all. Just a couple of open shelves. All the wall cabinets will be behind us while standing at the sink on another wall.

If I build this idea into the kitchen, I think I'll make a copper or stainless liner to go into the box with a drain fitting and hoses at the bottom. I can pipe this into the sink drain for any water overflow.

Who Drew You?



I have been asked lately, quite a few times, by readers of this newsletter as to who drew the caricatures of me. They first started appearing in issue #3.

The drawings were created by Jeff Myers off of some photos that I sent to him. He used the photos for a reality guideline, but took all the creativity and talent from there forward. I think he did a great job!

Jeff is a local artist and was one of the illustrators for the "King Of The Hill" TV show. We crossed paths, got talking, and ta da! Currently, Jeff is working on securing a contract for a new TV series and I wish him well and all the luck in getting the new job. Jeff lives in Nampa, and if you need anything like this done for you or your business, let me know and I will put you in touch with him.

Not only was there a leak where the main line enters the well casing, but we found evidence of a repair from years back. This was a sign of bad things to come.



By Joe Prin

Well, well, well.

Those of you with a well supplying water to your home, read on. You will understand. Those of you getting your water from a City source, read on... and be glad. Sort of.

My new old house has a barn out back. We wanted to get water to the barn for our animals and so that my wife, Vicki, did not have to haul 5 gallon buckets out every morning. Simple enough right?

I called in Kirk Davis from 3-D Landscape to dig a trench (300+ feet) for a 1" line to a freeze proof hydrant and a supply for the automatic waterer.

While digging the trench, Kirk's guys found the usual tree roots and a few rocks but the big surprise was a 12" concrete pipe running through the back yard, down about 2 feet. We could not figure out what it was for, probably a left over from when this was farm ground many, many years ago. So they went under it.

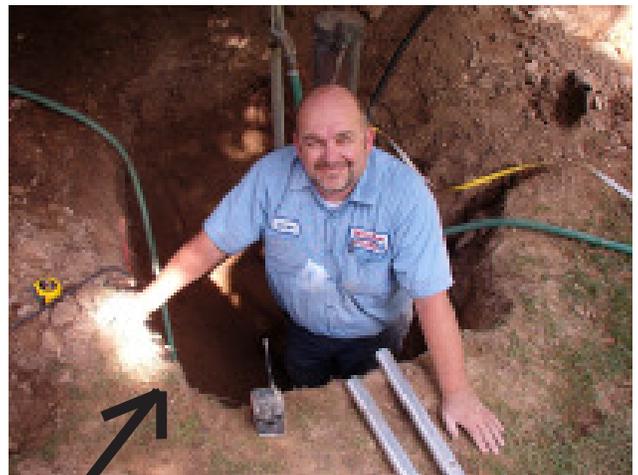
In the front yard is my well head. This is where the 3-D guys wanted to tie in the new line, as well as set me up with what I will need for next years sprinkler system project. So they started digging.

When they got to the main line, they, and with some excitement I might add, said "Hey, you know you got a leak down here?" (See photo in upper right) I wanted to say that yes I knew there was a leak, and for them not to disturb it, and that I actually like having my pipes leak. But my sarcasm was not called for in this situation.

"No, I didn't know about that one, but I did suspect a problem as my pump would randomly cycle throughout the day." I said. They quit for the day and I called Burgess Pump. Their diagnosis; call a Plumber. The pump part is fine. So I did and Shane at Master Rooter got my call and came out to take a look and advise. After his inspection and poking around he said that the pipes were in such bad shape

that no more repairs could be made. I would need to get a new main line installed from the well to the house.

Now I would like to make it clear that at the time that I heard this good news I was far, far away from my house. Good thing too, as I probably would have upset the neighbors with my colorful language.



This is Shane. I like Shane. Even though he made me dig a very large hole for him to work in.

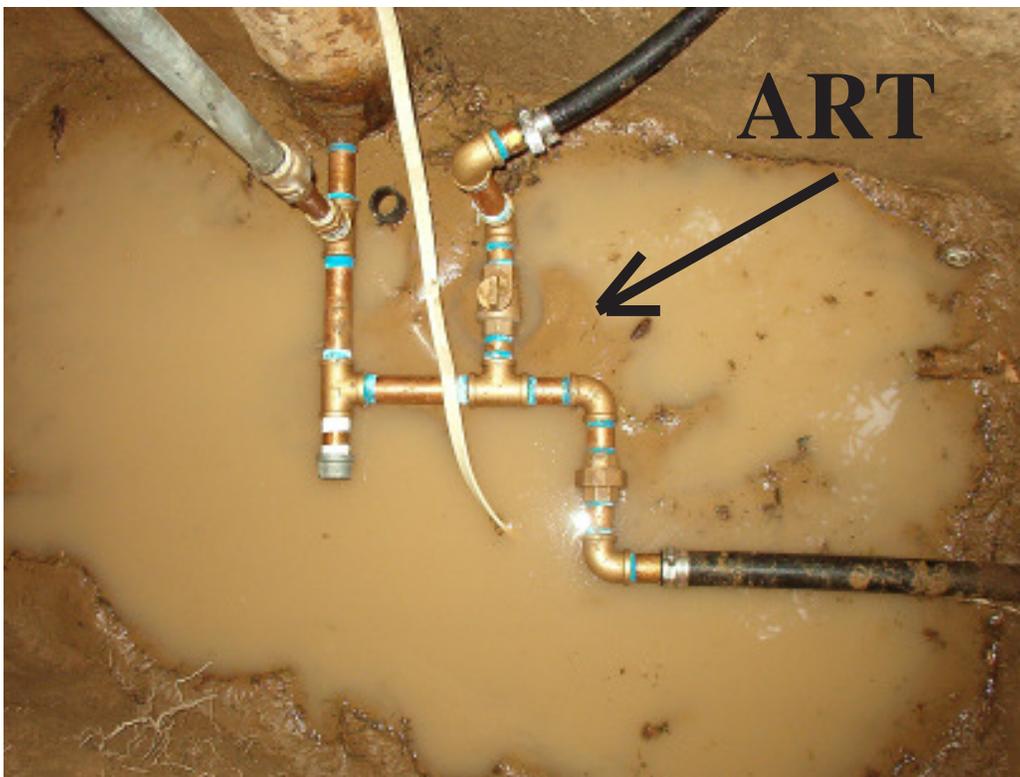
"OK, I guess I really knew this was coming." So Shane called in Charlie from Accubore to work his magic. Charlie proceeded, with great precision, to bore a hole through the soil about 4 feet down from the big hole to inside my crawlspace in the house. Here he attached a devise to the end of the drilling rods and pulled back through a new 1 1/4" water line as well as a new power line for the pump. The power line



was supposed to be a "just in case" thing and we were glad we did it as the original wire was hit by the drill and cut through. Bye-bye old wires.

After this all, Shane went back in the hole and created the work of art seen below.

Again I go back to the point about either you get all this or you don't. Anybody who has been through this is saying "Ooooh, that looks nice!" while the others are saying "So what?". What you see are ALL BRASS fittings. These should be good for another 100 years. You also see a very high quality valve for shutting off water to the barn. A valve that I should never have to dig up ever again.



Where the galvanized cap is will be the point of connection for the sprinkler system. Kirk will be coming off of this into a main valve and a drain valve and then up to a back flow prevention device. From here, the line goes back under ground and will enter the valve box for the sprinkler zones. I'd like to show you all of that but one, that stuff happens later and I need to get this newsletter out now.

What is a bit sad in a weird way is that all the pretty pipe work, all the drilling, the new wire, and the really nice hole I had to dig, will all disappear when I start filling it in. With dirt. Lots of dirt. What a shame. It is fun just to stand there and look at it.

Now here is the big thing I never would have expected. For all the time we have been in this house, outside of the pump cycling (Oh, by the way, Charlie actually suspected several more leaks in the old line as his drilling hit very wet soil in several places on the way to the house.) randomly throughout the day and night, there was a lot of pump noise heard in the house when it was running. It was enough to let you know that something was not right, but not enough that it couldn't be ignored if you tried real hard.

When we flipped the switch after all connections were made, I almost choked. Not for what I heard, but what I didn't. There was virtually no pump noise in the house at all. I had to double check and make sure it was running! All we can figure is that the old galvanized metal line was either transferring all the noise right into the house from the pump, or the pipe was just shuttering with water passing through a rusted and clogged line. I really don't care. All I know is that it (the noise) is gone and it is wonderful! I also have a heck of a lot more pressure at all of my faucets. Good work all! Thanks for your help, and I now look forward to covering up all your hard work.. For a long time to come. I hope.

The Independent Newspaper Column

by Joe Prin for August, 2010



Inspiration for me comes from the goofiest places. I can be looking at a bottle of Salsa on the kitchen counter top and all of a sudden the answer to a truss modification will pop into my head. There must have been something on that label that sent a pulse through my brain and unleashed that missing connection between problem and solution. Or maybe it was just the salsa itself.

The point being that it is the little things that can lead you to solutions. Not just in home remodeling and building, but in our lives in general.

I am reminded of the analogy of a marble rolling across an unlevelled floor. You can steer it by whacking it from side to side and waiting for it go get up to speed, or you can just nudge it as it rolls and it keeps going and gets to the end sooner anyway.

Inspiration is the nudge we all need to get us to the end. Where it comes from for you is up to you, but for me, it is often found in selective procrastination.

If I can put off forcing creativity for a while and just let it simmer, it seems I can usually come up with a solution, answer, idea or what have you that when I look at it from a distance I think "Wow, where did that come from. I wouldn't have came up with that yesterday."

Some of you might be saying, "Yeah Joe, I know what you mean. I work better under last minute pressure." No, I don't think we actually do. I think we have to put aside the issue for a while and even though our direct attention was not there, our head was hard at work while we were out. So, when we finally dive in... Boom. The ideas come.

The trick to this however is that you cannot specifically plan to selectively procrastinate. You can't schedule it, you can't assign it a date or time, or put it into your daily planner. If you do, you will zap out all the good karma and the inspiration will vaporize. Something about how the magic works. You have to fully intend to sit down and work on the problem or issue, and then say "Ah screw it, I'll deal with this later. I'm going fishing."

Then, when you least expect it, the inspiration will come. You won't be ready for it and it did not warn you it was coming. You will be in the wrong place at the wrong time but the idea will come. The thought, the inspiration, your solution.

Is it prayer? I guess it sort of is. Because, you have to remain humble in your perceived greatness. Don't get too cocky with this or again, the magic will disappear. You also have to be willing to listen to what you are being told.

People will often inspire me in a conversation. A bike ride around the block works now and then. Or just a song on the radio. I do not know why the inspiration comes, I am just thankful that it does.

Please excuse me, I just figured out how to get rid of that load bearing wall!

You know you
hate to do it.....
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Energy Efficiency and Showerheads



Did you know that low-flow showerheads not only save water but energy, too? Less hot water, translates to less energy needed to heat that water.

Nearly 1.2 trillion gallons of water are used for showering in the United States annually. Standard showerheads use 2.5 gallons of water per minute (gpm). Showerheads purchased before 1992, could use even more. But showerheads with the Environmental Protection Agency's (EPA) WaterSense label, use 2.0 gpm or less—that's a 20 percent savings or more! Like Energy Star, Water Sense is a government backed program. Products earning the Water Sense label must use at least 20% less water than standard models and must meet strict quality standards.

The average household could save more than 2,300 gallons per year by installing WaterSense labeled showerheads. Since these water savings will reduce demands on water heaters, households will also save energy. In fact, a household could save 300 kilowatt hours of electricity annually, enough to power its television use for about a year.

Evaluate What You Have

Not sure if its time to replace your showerhead? Here's a quick test to determine whether you should replace a showerhead:

1. Open the top of an empty half-gallon milk carton so the entire top forms a square.
2. Turn on the shower at the normal water pressure you use.
3. Hold the carton under the shower head. If it fills in less than 10 seconds, you will benefit from a low-flow shower head.

Be safe

Variations in plumbing design and improper installation of showerheads may cause fluctuations in water temperature which can lead to scalding. The EPA encourages consumers to follow manufacturer's instructions for installing showerheads and to work with a plumbing professional to ensure proper installation, setup and use of the products

Also evaluate the temperature of your water heater. The U.S. Consumer Product Safety Commission recommends setting your hot water heater to 120 degrees Fahrenheit to help protect yourself from scalding water .

Now is a great time to buy. Idaho Power is partnering with local retailers to bring down the price of low-flow showerheads. Visit www.idahopower.com/homeproducts for details.

To learn more about water conservation and water saving products, visit the EPA Water Sense program at www.epa.gov/watersense.



Ladder Work Safety

Ladder's Little Helper A Must-Have For Do-It-Yourself Home owners

Patented technology helps protect from dangerous slipping and falling ladders.

Warmer spring temperatures have “Honey-Do” lists growing exponentially across the country with tasks like gutter cleaning, window washing, home painting and roof repairs topping many lists. The common thread in all of these projects is the need for a ladder, a potentially hazardous tool if used improperly. While they have no electrical cords, gas engines, whirling blades or multiple moving parts, ladders send more than 222,000 people to emergency rooms each year.

A new device called Ladder's Little Helper is taking the risk out of home improvement projects requiring the use of a ladder with patented technology. Ladder's Little Helper wraps around the lip of a gutter to provide

a stable base to lean a ladder against. Rippled rubber on the underside and face of the device provides grip on both the gutter and ladder, while the raised sides prevent sideways movement.

Ladder's Little Helper's patented design fits 99 percent of gutters and ladders. Made of lightweight plastic, the device is simple to use – simply insert a pole into the bottom, place Ladder's Little Helper on your gutter and lean your ladder against the device for a safer work environment.

Ladder's Little Helper retails for \$39. For more information or to purchase a Ladder's Little Helper please visit www.ladderslittlehelper.com.

Ladder's Little Helper first enjoyed success in the Australian market. Bunnings, the largest hardware chain in Australia, has stocked Ladder's Little Helper since August 2009 and the company is now bringing this innovative product to the U.S. market. For more information, please visit www.ladderslittlehelper.com.



SIMPLE!

Joe's Quick Tips...



If you have to go into your attic, do it in the morning before it gets too hot. Temperatures in attics can reach 125 in the summer and while you might be in there for only a few minutes, it can do damage to you. If you think it is too hot, it probably is.

Along the same lines, you should not walk on a asphalt shingle roof of any kind in the heat of the day. Shingles soften up in the heat and can tear loose or the granules will scrub off and either way, you might be in for a wild ride!

If your washing machine is taking a long time to fill, it could have plugged up filter screens. In the fill hoses at the back of the washer, where they attach, there should be cone screens. These get clogged with sand and debris and can make filling the washer take longer than need be. One person told me that by cleaning the screens, the wash cycle was shortened by 8 minutes!

Paint thinner is a great all purpose solvent and can be used for much more than just cleaning up paint brushes. I use it for cleaning up any stains, scuffs, oil spills, grease, and gick that I run into in my workshop. I also use it for cleaning up parts and pieces as well as the occasional paint brush. But here is the tip... Don't throw it out after using it. Transfer the dirty thinner to another jug and let it sit. The impurities will settle to the bottom and with a bit of careful pouring, you can use the top part again and again. It does not loose its solvent power.

Next time you need to buy a garden hose, treat yourself to quality. Buy a 3/4" commercial quality hose. These rubber hoses are pretty much indestructible and have heavy metal ends. They roll up nice and treated with care, will last 20 to 30 years easily. They are not cheap, but where 3 other vinyl 5/8" hoses would come and go, these are a better value. Expect to pay about \$60 for a 50' hose.

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Give It Away!

The ultimate in recycling is when something can be used again for a long time. The Green crowd calls this Re-purposing. I probably drive my neighbors nuts because about every other weekend, I have a pile of stuff out at the end of my driveway with "FREE" on it. It bugs me to toss out good things, so if someone can use them, great! Sometimes this pile is building materials, garden supplies, furniture, or garage junk. It all seems to go. It is easier than putting it on Craigslist, and if someone more local can use it, all the better. Clean out, give it a try!

▼ California

The Governor of California is jogging with his dog along a nature trail. A coyote jumps out, bites the Governor and attacks his dog.

1. The Governor starts to intervene, but reflects upon the movie "Bambi", then realizes he should stop; the coyote is only doing what's natural.
- 2.. He calls Animal Control. Animal Control captures the coyote and bills the state \$200 for testing it for diseases and \$500 for relocating it.
3. He calls a veterinarian. The vet collects the dead dog and bills the state \$200 for testing it for disease.
4. The Governor goes to hospital and spends \$3,500 getting checked for disease from the coyote and for getting his bite wound bandaged.
5. The running trail is shut down for 6 months, while Fish & Game conducts their \$100,000 survey to make sure the area is free of dangerous animals.
6. The Governor next spends \$50,000 in state funds, implementing a "Coyote Awareness" program for residents of the area.
7. The State Legislature spends \$2 million to study how to better treat rabies and how to permanently eradicate the disease, throughout the world.
8. The Governor's security agent is fired for not somehow stopping the attack and for letting the Governor attempt to intervene.
9. Additional cost to State of California : \$75,000 to hire and train a new security agent with additional special training re: The Nature of Coyotes.
10. PETA protests the coyote's relocation and files suit against the state.

Idaho ▼

The Governor of Idaho is jogging, with his dog, along a nature trail. A coyote jumps out and attacks his dog.

1. The Governor shoots the coyote with his state-issued pistol and keeps jogging. The Governor has spent \$0.50 on a .45 ACP hollow-point cartridge.
2. Idaho birds eat the dead coyote.

And that is why California is broke.

More Tips...

 I have been out on a few roofs lately and the gutters on these houses have been packed with leaves and debris. IF you haven't cleaned yours out lately, I'd suggest you do so as we are expecting a very wet Fall this year.

 Just a reminder to never exceed the fixture rating for light bulbs. I changed out a fixture this past week and the wiring as well as the drywall behind this fixture was absolutely cooked. They were using a 100 Watt bulb in this 60 Watt fixture.

 Given the opportunity... Next time you have a Plumber at your house, have them add in that extra Hose Bib that you have been wanting. There should be one on each side of your house and usually there is just one front and back. They can go just about anywhere, and it will save dragging a lot of hoses. Ask for the Quarter Turn type valves.

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