

**Sprinklers Gaining  
Popularity**  
(See page 3)

# your HomeXpert

Simple ways to improve your home comfort, safety and value

Spring 2007

\$3.00

## MY WORD

### Refresh Yourself

By Steven Heidler & Mick Heidler



Hello Friend,

Something strange always happens to us around this time of year. We start to get just a little antsy. Maybe it's the fresh air, the warm sun after a cold winter, or just the sense that good things are on their way. Whatever the reason, Spring always fills us with renewed anticipation and promise.

There's so much to get done – and, as usual, never enough time. We're sure you feel the same way. That's why we want to give you one less thing to worry about.

Your plumbing system just worked hard through the winter with all of the extra usage that guests bring, and as the weather heats up, it will be working even harder. The last thing you need is a plumbing crisis – is there *ever* a good time for *that*? A preseason inspection can keep your system going at peak performance – and we'll take care of it for you.

Why? Because the opportunity to serve customers like you is part of what gives us Spring Fever. So

(Continued on page 4)

## MONEY WISE

### New Technology Turns Plumbing into Hi-Tech Savings

You probably don't think much about your plumbing. Until there's a problem, that is. But thinking ahead in terms of your plumbing needs isn't just good sense. It can save time, money, and even injury. Especially when plumbing technology is making leaps and bounds toward increased functionality and comfort.

#### Anti-scald Valves

Anti-scald valves prevent the "shower shock" caused by sudden extremes in water temperature – due to a toilet flushing or someone turning on the washing machine. That can keep you – and your family – from being one of the 200,000 Americans the Consumer Product Safety Commission says are injured each year by sudden water temperature changes.

#### Sensor Technology

This technology allows for more hygienic restroom conditions. Since it is unnecessary to

touch restroom fixtures, the spread of communicable diseases and germs is limited. Sensors keep water from flowing continuously, saving water and lowering utility costs.

#### Low-flush Toilets

In 1994 the government mandated the use of a maximum of 1.6 gallons of water per toilet flush. The intended water savings were not immediately rec-



ognized, however, because it often took 2 or more flushes to empty the bowl. This double flush dilemma has since been solved by new technology, cutting water usage by 50%. Since toilet-flushing accounts for about 25% of a home's water usage, the savings can be significant.

So take advantage of new plumbing technology to increase your savings and your comfort. And let us know how we can help.

## INSIDE...

- Boost Your Property Value
- Get Rid of Unwanted Guests
- All About Spring Cleaning

**Your Quik Call Comfort Hotline:**

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## Get Rid of Unwanted Houseguests

...at least the four-legged variety

Nothing says home like a houseful of family and friends. But there are some guests that, no matter how well intentioned they may be, just aren't welcome (I'm not talking about the in-laws!). They eat your food, diminish your property value, and can wreak havoc on your home systems.

Who are these beasts? The four-legged visitors that sneak in unawares, innocently looking for a free meal and a place to sleep. Namely, mice, rats, and squirrels, which account for 80% of all animal break-ins.

These vagrants can chew through wires, destroy property, and spread disease. So what can you do to stop them before a full-scale infestation has taken root?

- Identify points of entry and seal them. Garages, basements, drain pipes, gaps around utility lines – all of these represent areas of vulnerability for your home. Be sure that they are sealed up tightly.
- Eliminate water and food sources around your home. Store all food – including pet food – in airtight containers.
- Contact a pest control professional immediately if you suspect an animal infiltration. Rodents can carry viruses and even rabies.

## HOME WISE

### How to Add a Touch of Luxury to Your Home (and increase your property value!)

Bathrooms are among the most popular remodeling projects, second only to kitchens. The benefits include comfort, beauty, function and property value.

There are three general bathroom categories. First, the “economy” version seeks function over form, tending only to the basics of sink, toilet and bath. The other extreme, the “luxury” model, gives you the basic functions plus roominess, ambiance and amenities. Most bathrooms in between seek to balance function and style with cost and comfort.

You can take many steps to keep costs down. So, what should you do? And what should you not do? We've got some answers.

**Plan carefully.** Once construction begins, changes can be expensive. Also, decide on the features that are important to you and set aside the budget dollars to make that happen. Especially consider spending more for quality fixtures.

**Consider simple improvements.** Instead of replacing stained tubs and showers, consider

re-glazing them. Of course, one of the easiest ways to add to your bathroom's attractiveness is to buy a new shower curtain. Also, don't overlook new soap dishes, toilet-tissue holders and towel bars.

**Use soft lighting.** Bright, harsh lights can be a lot to face early in the morning – especially in the mirror. Minimize shadows with at least a two-bulb fixture.

**Don't try to cut corners** on structural, plumbing or electrical materials and installation. Get the best that your budget will allow. Durability and performance are key in these areas.

**Don't move plumbing fixtures.** It's expensive and may not be necessary. We can advise you on fixtures that work (and look) better in the same space.

**Don't move walls** – unless you must. Moving walls is expensive, but it can be worth it in the long run when your “luxurious” bath serves as a real motivation for future home buyers.

Let us help you with your remodel or upgrade. Just give us a call.

## HEARD BY OUR EDITORS

- Venetian blinds – which were actually invented in Japan – are known as ‘Persian blinds’ in Venice.
- If you head directly south from Detroit, the first foreign country you enter is Canada, not Mexico.
- While science has been traditionally identified as largely dominated by men, *women* were responsible for inventing Bulletproof vests, fire escapes, windshield wipers, and laser printers.
- More than half of the world's population – that's over 3 billion people – have never made or received a telephone call.
- The screwdriver was invented before the screw.

### How Necessary Is Spring Cleaning, Anyway?

Spring cleaning has become a ritual of transforming the home to match the changing outdoors. The urge to bring that same sense of refreshing inside grows stronger. And while cleaning may not be high on your hobby list, this small investment in home maintenance can help maintain your property value as well as keep things running smoothly year round.

An organized approach can make the process both more productive and enjoyable. So here's your quick list of Spring cleaning "musts":

#### Sort Through "Stuff"

There are always those things you can't bear to part with: clothes, books, old bicycles. The two year rule is a good measure for whether you need to keep it or toss it. That means if you haven't used it in the past two years, it's just taking up space. Take a deep breath, then let it go. Literally. You'll be making better use of your space as well as clearing the clutter.

#### Give your home comfort system a little affection

That means replacing filters in furnaces or air conditioners, and vacuuming and cleaning grates, coils and condensers. A Spring tune-up can also help prevent future breakdowns and repairs.

#### Clean rugs, carpets, and floors

Shampooing wall-to-wall carpeting and waxing bare floors not only extends the life of your

flooring, it impacts your health. Thorough cleaning can remove many allergens and pollutants that can affect your home's indoor air quality.

#### Check Your Safety Devices

Replace your smoke detector, carbon monoxide detector, and emergency flashlight batteries. This should be done every six months since batteries lose energy even when they are not in use. Test fire extinguishers to be sure they are functioning properly too.

#### Clean Windows, Shades, and Curtains

Remove and wash window treatments. Clean blinds to remove dust. White vinegar or ammonia solutions should be used to wash windows. If you also replace storm windows with screens, be sure to make any needed repairs before storing.

Spring gives us the chance to start fresh and take control of our lives, homes, and the year ahead. Make the most of the opportunity. It is, after all, an investment in yourself.

**Help maintain your property value as well as keep things running smoothly year round.**

#### "Quotable."

*I honestly think it is better to be a failure at something you love than to be a success at something you hate.*

– George Burns



### Put Out a Fire

Smoke alarms and fire extinguishers have been common household safety features for quite some time, but what about fire sprinkler systems?

Though they've mostly been the province of commercial buildings, increased use is now reaching residential areas. And with more than 400,000 residential fires leading to 3,000-plus deaths in a year's time, they're a timely addition to home safety.

According to the U.S. Fire Administration, homeowners who install sprinkler systems gain the advantages of a safer environment for their families, as well as protection for their home and possessions. Residential fire sprinklers can also lower insurance rates between 5 and 15%.

Unlike the bulky eyesores common to industrial venues, residential sprinklers are smaller, use less water and can be connected to the home water supply. Because they can be recessed or partially recessed and come in colors to match ceiling and walls, they won't stick out like sore thumbs among your other attractive home decor.

The cost of installation at time of construction is minimal – ranging somewhere around \$1,500 to \$2,000 for a 2,000-square-foot home. Yet it's also possible to install sprinkler systems in existing homes.

Though homeowners may have concerns about water damage, the U.S. Fire Administration points out that damage caused by sprinklered water is substantially less than damage from fire department hoses or an undetected fire.

## MY WORD (...from page 1)

go on, enjoy the rejuvenating effects of Spring and let us worry about your home comfort.

Spring is a time of renewal, and whether it's spending time outdoors or just enjoying the break from the winter doldrums, there's no time like the present for spending more time with family and friends.

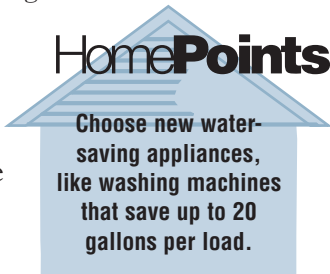
Wishing you the best and looking forward to visiting you in your home soon.

Sincerely,



Steven Heidler & Mick Heidler

P.S. We hope you'll enjoy the great home tips that come in this newsletter, but don't forget to check out the super offers you'll find on this page. If you aren't able to use them, feel free to pass them on to friends. After all, your friends are our friends, and we'd love to help them out too!



## Let us Repair What Your Husband Fixed.

We know how it is. All you have to do is jiggle this, juggle that... and voilà! It's worse than before. A question crosses your mind: "Now what do I do?" The answer is simple. Call one of our trained professionals.

We'll help you out of your plumbing mess as quickly as possible. And we might even maintain a little peace (or pride) in the process. (No extra charge!) Just give us a call.

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