

# The Handyman Herald

*News, views, & ideas from John of All Trades*

Summer 2007

Volume 3, Issue 1

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**We're here to help!**

### Our Contact Info:

Phone:  
**248.840.0045**

Tell us where you live, what you need done, and any symptoms of the problem. Or if you're looking for a quote on a larger project, let us know. We'll call you back ASAP.

E-mail us your questions @  
Help@JohnofAllTrades.com

## Remaining positive amidst tough times

Doom.

And Gloom.

And then some more Doom.

If we read the local papers or watch the local news, it can be quite depressing these days.

Good paying jobs seem to be leaving Michigan and heading everywhere but here. Times are tough. Employment options are minimal and people are hoping to hold on to any type of job they can find.

We see *For Sale* signs on every block. A month later, we might see the same houses still for sale -- and a few more too.

But enough about Doom and Gloom. Let's take a break from it for a few minutes. Let's count our blessings and look forward to the positives we

share together in our towns.

**Good News:** Eleven Mile is in the process of a landmark makeover. Cancel the need to replace the shock-absorbers on your car when it's completed.

**Good News:** With a grassroots uprising against development, it looks like Rackham Golf Course will remain exactly that -- a golf course.

**Good News:** Berkley's downtown continues to clean-up quite nicely. There are more unique shops, new restaurants and bars, and a great new look with the new streetlights and stop lights. It's fun to go for a walk in downtown Berkley.

**Good News:** What a collection of residents the Tuesday night concerts in Huntington Woods draws. It is a true gathering of neighbors and their children enjoying company, food and conversation on some pretty hot summer nights.

I could go on. While none of these may be worthy of front-page headlines, we do need to be reminded of

all the good things that happen in our community and the quality of life that we enjoy. We need to turn our negatives into positives. For example...

Were you looking for a larger house and didn't sell your home during the key summer season? Maybe it's time to re-engineer a different game plan. Love the street, love the neighbors, love the location, love the town... but need more room? How about an addition? How about the kitchen of your dreams? How about a basement remodel that effectively gives you a new family room from a place that had old golf clubs collecting dust?

Trust me, I'm no Norman Vincent Peale (who wrote *The Power of Postive Thinking*) but I'm always trying to find the positive in things. When we hear in the media about the tough times and witness our friends and family dealing with unemployment or moving out, it can drag us all down. Let's take a moment to rejoice in all that we have going for us as we

Continued on Page 2



# Your checklist to getting your house in order: How can we help?

People call the *John of All Trades* office all the time and ask the same question: "Can you \_\_\_\_\_?" Look through this list and perhaps we can help with some of your home needs. If you don't see something you were hoping to have done — fear not. Give us a call at 248.840.0045. There's a good chance we can help.

### Plumbing

- Sinks repaired or replaced
- Toilet repaired or replaced
- Sewer cleaning
- Pipe replacement (galvanized or copper)
- Installation of new bathroom in basement or upstairs
- Faucet Replacement
- Caulking toilets & tubs

### Masonry Work

- Brick Repair
- Porch Repair
- Chimney Repair
- Tuck pointing
- Repair or install concrete



### Outdoor Services

- Snow removal
- Landscaping
- Flower planting
- Full fertilizing programs
- Spring/Fall Cleanup
- Clean gutters
- Lawn Sprinklers
- Roofs (replaced or repaired)
- Gutter replacement or repair
- Nightscaping
- Roof de-icer installation
- Window replacement
- Siding
- Caulking
- Outdoor lighting
- Garage door installation
- Automatic garage door opener installation



### Carpentry Work

- Door installation
- Install moldings
- Install bathroom vanities
- Install kitchen cabinets
- Backsplashes
- Pergo or hardwood floors installation

**Yes, we have our Builder's License!**

### Finishing

- Painting
- Caulking
- Drywall
- Drywall repair
- Plaster repair
- Tile installation

### Electrical

- Back-up generator hook-ups
- Service Changeover (fuses to circuit breakers or replacing an old panel)
- Rewiring of your entire house
- Ceiling fans installed
- Space heaters installed
- Adding lights, circuits, or outlets
- Installing recess lighting/track lights
- Adding power in garage
- Troubleshooting electrical problems
- Troubleshooting phone problems
- Phone line repair
- Phone jack installation

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## Larabell (continued from Page 1)

fight through these tough times.

Now, please excuse me... my glass is still half-full (not half-empty) of water.



## QUESTIONS?

### ASK THE HANDYMAN — JOHN OF ALL TRADES

DO YOU HAVE A QUESTION THAT YOU'D LIKE *JOHN OF ALL TRADES* TO ADDRESS IN A FUTURE ISSUE? EMAIL US AT [HELP@JOHNOFALLTRADES.COM](mailto:HELP@JOHNOFALLTRADES.COM) AND ASK YOUR QUESTION.

WE'LL RESEARCH THE ANSWER AND HOPE TO PROVIDE TIPS TO FELLOW READERS IN AN UPCOMING EDITION OF OUR NEWSLETTER.

## The Do-It-Yourself Tip Page:

As you can see by the list of our services on Page 2, *John of All Trades* can assist you in many ways with your home improvement and maintenance needs. Whether its snow plowing, building a new deck, tiling your kitchen floor or installing a disposal, we hope you'll consider us for your home needs. At the same time, we like to think of this newsletter as informational and to provide you with useful tips in areas that you may prefer to do yourself. In this newsletter, we provide you with a couple such ideas.



### ***How to keep your patio furniture looking like new***

Keeping patio furniture clean and looking good is a chore worth the reward. To keep patio furniture looking the same (or almost the same) as the day you bought it requires a little bit of elbow grease but will keep your furniture looking as good on Labor Day this year as it did when you bought it a few years ago on Memorial Day weekend.

1. Ammonia may take the shiny finish off of the furniture. Instead, here's something you might not think of right away. Use some automotive paste wax to buff the shine back after first cleaning it with ammonia. If you've already cleaned your furniture for the spring, you still might want to consider this. Why? If your resin furniture is colored, the wax will protect it from fading over time in the sun.
2. Keeping a table-top clean outdoors seems like a continuous headache. You can clean up a Plexiglas table top with some full strength vinegar. Just spray it on, let it sit for a few minutes and then wipe it up.
3. Acrylic cushions are no problem either. Vacuum up dust and cobwebs. Then scrub them with a simple soap and water solution. Rinse them down and put them in the sun to dry.

### ***How to remove wallpaper***

1. Score the walls. This step will ensure the removal technique, penetrates the paper and loosens the glue. (It is worth the small investment to buy a scoring tool!)
2. There are a couple of methods and mixtures that work well for taking down the paper. The mixtures, either equal parts of white vinegar and hot water or a quarter cup liquid fabric softener to each gallon of hot water. The trick is to make the water really hot! Applicators? For the white vinegar, a spray bottle works the best. Saturate the wall and let it sit until you see the paper bubbling up and then peel the paper off using a wide putty knife to get under the paper. If you find it's sticking, just spray and scrape, spray and scrape as you go.
3. If you choose the fabric softener route, put the mixture in a big five-gallon bucket and put a paint grid over the side. Use a paint roller to spread the mixture over the walls, and then simply scrape the wallpaper off.
4. When the paper is removed, reapply the solutions to remove any paste residue. A window squeegee can make quick work of this job.



**John of All Trades**

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# Bathtub liners:

## *Are they the right choice for updating your bathroom?*

You've probably heard the old saying, "If it sounds too good to be true, then it probably is too good to be true."

In this issue, we focus on fixing up your bath area. We've had numerous calls asking what our opinion is on installing bath liners that you have probably read about and seen in many of the big box home improvement stores.

What's not to like about bath liners? If you have an older home, like many found in Huntington Woods and Berkley, you may have tiles that were hip and cool 50 years ago but now make you cringe. Here comes a bath liner, providing you with cover from what you deem as distasteful colors while hiding dirty grout or missing grout. This can all be accomplished with a quality plastic covering. It's more economical than any other fix and the installation process is relatively simple and quick (it can be done in a day).

You might be asking yourself, "Why doesn't everyone do this?"

Reference the above quote: "If it sounds too good to be true, then it probably is too good to be true." Like some come-on that you receive in the mail, let me provide you with the fine print about bath liners.

First off, in my humble opinion, bath liners represent one of the biggest pieces of junk on the market right now. It is hard to come up with one idea to justify it. Why do I have such a strong opinion?

Foremost, I think it is a quick fix. If you look at a bath liner, do you really think it looks as nice as tile? Of course, this is a personal preference but when I see a bath liner, it

appears to me that some looked for a quick-fix and slapped a cover over their problems.

A bath liner's life expectancy is not long. You can expect that it will last for five to ten years before you need to repeat the process over again. If you have tile in your bathroom whose color drives you crazy, you know its life expectancy is much longer (perhaps 50 years and counting). So, consider that your quick fix is not a long-term solution. As time goes by, you'll deal with the erosion of the plastic and a yellowing of the surface.

Consider what you are doing – you are fitting a piece of plastic around an existing tub. Especially with time, cracks in the seal can develop as the adhesive starts to wear away. Now, you have water seeping through there and beginning to form between the old bathtub and the liner. A "squishy" feel develops when used. The trapped water becomes stagnant, creating an environment for molds and unpleasant odors. There is no way to extract the trapped water.

Often though, the answer is "Yeah, but the cost is so much cheaper." In the short run, yes, the cost is relatively cheaper. However, whether you are looking at reselling your house (tile is preferred to a bath-liner) in the near future or looking to stay for a long time (consider the cost of replacing the liner every five to ten years), the costs analysis starts to tell a different story.

*John of All Trades* recommends a different thought – do it right the first time. We'll come into your bathroom with a sledgehammer in tow and knock out the tiles that saw their best days in the Eisenhower, Johnson, or Nixon administrations. We'll let you choose new tiles that



you'd like to install or place a vinyl on the walls. We'll do it for an economical price.

Realizing that the bathroom is a key (and necessary) room in your house, we'll try to be efficient in our use of time and have it completed ASAP.

While we don't reglaze bathtubs, that's a project that you might want to consider undertaking at the same time.

Perhaps there's a play on that above quote when dealing with a plastic bath liner – "If it looks cheap and it feels cheap – it probably *is* cheap." That certainly is true.

So, before you settle for an easy fix to your bathroom, think long term. We think you'll feel much happier when you see your bathroom re-done in new tiles that you believe will have an ageless and timeless quality to them.

## John of All Trades

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Visit us on the  
Internet @  
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