

# The Handyman Herald

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

Winter 2008

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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

## Act like you are selling, even if you are staying

As a home improvement person, I often receive phone calls and requests to work on a house because people are looking to move.

With the housing market we face, everyone needs a leg up on the competition and people are quick to locate flaws in their own presentation.

The conversation usually goes something like this: "We're looking to put our house on the market but before we do so, I was hoping you could come over and..."

You fill in the blank. For some people, it is one thing. For others, it is a complete laundry list. It might mean that the front steps are falling apart and need new concrete. It could mean that the electrical in the house needs to be updated. For others, it

means putting in a new countertop because the old one is simply unacceptable and even for a "fixer-upper," people would be turned away. Some need a room painted. Others need shag carpeting replaced and hardwood floors or tile laid.

All of this is done because people know that what they have now is not going to "cut it" with prospective buyers... or that it will increase their chances of selling... or the value they place into the project will increase the value of the home going out.

I agree with them. I'm happy to oblige and update their house.

Often times, as I finish the task, the owner will make the comment such as "I should have done this years ago."

This brings me to the point of this column: why not do it years ago – or if you can't go back in time -- why don't you do it now?

As we kickoff 2008, we've heard all about resolutions for the umpteenth time. But perhaps this is the year for

you to resolve the following:

*To act like you are moving, even if you are staying.*

Here's how...

Walk through your house. Determine what looks old. Determine what looks tired or in need of repair. Determine what someone would think stands out (in a negative connotation) if they were a prospective buyer. Act as if it was your job to buy your house all over again. Or, as a simpler starting point: "What bugs you about your house?"

Then, take action.

Here's the good news: if you have no plans to move, you've improved your own lifestyle and living situation.

Let's think about those front porch steps again. The person who needed those fixed before they listed their house had a problem for many years. They walked by it every day and winced at its look. Now, they fixed it so they can leave. They them-



**John Larabell**

# 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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## Bathrooms provide value

Considering a bathroom addition? Money Magazine reports that it is a good idea. "Adding a new bathroom will enhance your quality of life - and the value of your property - like few other home improvement projects will. Put in a master bath, and you won't have to take turns with the kids every morning. Install a powder room, and dinner guests won't have to traipse through your private terrain. While you can't count on recouping the cost of any upgrade right away in today's weak housing market, over the long term adding a bathroom can boost your home's value by some 20 percent, says Paul Emrath, an economist at the National Association of Home Builders."

## OUR RATES:

*Being upfront & honest goes a long way*

We don't like to play games with customers so they feel they were charged or treated unfairly. Thus, we're upfront and honest with our rates.

We charge \$30 for a Service Call (although see our coupon on Page 4 for a discount). We then charge \$40 per man hour. Materials are charged at the cost we pay plus 30%. You may purchase your own materials if you desire.

For a small project that would last less than 30 minutes, the minimum charge is \$50, including the service call fee.

# Staying or Going: Five ideas to improve your house

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. Here are five ideas that will greatly improve your home, its resale value or the ability to sell it. If you are not looking to move, these are five things that will build equity in your home while providing you with satisfaction and enjoyment. These tips are adapted from *Money* magazine.

## Idea #1:

### *Tile the floor to create an entryway that stands out.*



It's the first thing you, your guests, or a potential buyer notices when they walk in your house. Tile makes the house look worth something.

**Who should definitely do it?** If you have shag carpeting or linoleum, do this immediately.

**Consider:** Anything that looks like stone. Natural stone is timeless. Consider too that even the cheapest stone holds better value than the most expensive linoleum.

## Idea #3:

### *Add bookshelves to the family room*

Adding bookshelves can take a bland room and make it interesting. Consider a couple places to add a bookshelf:

- an odd nook that otherwise would seem like wasted space - say, under the stairwell or alongside the fireplace.
- if you need to add dimension and character to a room that lacks any architectural detailing.



**What sells best?** Hardwoods like oak (\$10 a linear foot) and mahogany (\$12) are sturdier and more appealing to buyers than cheaper fiberboard and particleboard (both \$15 per eight-foot piece). Fixed shelves are beloved by realtors and designers for their clean look. Read: no unsightly brackets.

**Consider:** natural woods or woods painted off-white or beige are best.

**Don't do this:** Forego adding shelves if your room is very small. They can make it appear too cozy.

## Idea #2:

### *Paint the Kitchen Cabinets*

The kitchen logs many hours of presence. Therefore, you should enjoy the way it looks. If you are selling your house, the appearance of the kitchen will go a long way to getting a final sale.

This idea is somewhat of a compromise. Let's say that your cabinets are old and shabby. Replacing them with brand new cabinets is expensive and may not fit your budget. If you are looking to sell right away, you will not recoup the money you placed into new cabinets with additional money on the price of your house. Thus, the suggestion is to improve the look of your existing cabinets by applying a coat of paint.

**Consider:** If you are staying for a long time in your home, the paint will eventually chip and wear. This suggestion is a cosmetic fix to more expensive ideas such as resurfacing or replacement.

**What looks best?:** Natural colors like white and brown.



## Idea #4:

### *Replace the Dining Room Overhead Fixture*

Potential buyers who entertain a lot will immediately notice a classy, good fixture. For many homeowners, the dining room fixture remains whatever was there when they bought the house. Definitely consider replacing if it is brass — this looks cheap. The right chandelier can set the tone and make a definite impression on the buyer.

**Consider:** What has universal appeal. Don't go for the Liberace look if your house is country-style. Also,

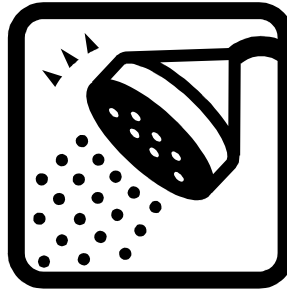
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## **Idea #5: Add Glass Shower Doors**

There's an old saying that if you are going to put money into a house, you might as well start with the rooms that have running water. Hence, adding glass shower doors in your bathroom passes this basic litmus test.

**Consider:** Do this if your room is very small. Having a curtain divides the room and makes it look smaller. Glass opens it up. Now, when people look at this room, they're not cut-off by the curtain. They believe the room has additional space.

**Also consider:** Frosted glass. This better hides the soap scum.



## **Idea #4: Lighting**

Continued from Page 3

beware of an oversize or undersize fixture, which can make the room seem out of proportion. Use your dining table as a judge: The chandelier's diameter should be 12 inches less than the table's width.



## **Act like you're leaving, even if you are staying right where you are**

Continued from Page 1

selves get no kinetic energy out of it – they receive no enjoyment. For years, those steps bothered them but the finished product will bring them no long-term joy. Considering we're talking about cement, they could have resolved to fix that problem five years earlier – enjoyed five years of not staring at an eyesore – and still listed the house this year for the same amount.

That's my point. Get enjoyment out of your house now instead of fixing it up simply to sell a house. Make the changes that you know you'll need to make down the

road, but can enjoy currently. Thus, in this issue of the *John of All Trades* Newsletter, we'll take a look at some projects we can help you with that will make your house better, and also enhance its resale value – whether that might be this year – or a decade or more from now.

It's a win-win for you... and your future buyer, whenever that may be.



## **Call us for professional painting services**

If you don't have the time, patience or talent (painting is more than simply applying paint to a wall), *John of All Trades* has a great professional painter on our staff. The winter and spring are great times to rid the doom and gloom by brightening up a room with fresh paint.

We're the best in the business and our prices are **fair** and **competitive**. Call 248.840.0045 for a free quote.

## **John of All Trades**

Phone: 248.840.0045

Email: [help@JohnofAllTrades.com](mailto:help@JohnofAllTrades.com)

**Visit us on the Internet**

@

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# **Service Call: \$10**

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