

Remodeler's Scratch Pad

News and Notes from the Around the House Crew

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<http://www.MyPowerCouple.com>

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Lowering Your Thermostat

I've seen several discussions lately about whether it actually saves any money to set your thermostat to a lower temperature. The argument typically includes arguments about how "hard" your furnace will work at different thermostat settings, the loss of stored heat in furniture, walls, etc., and a theory that it takes just as much fuel to raise the temperature again as it would have to maintain the temperature. I've spent considerable time thinking about the issue

and looking at the literature I could find on-line.

I believe that you never will lose money by setting your thermostat back and much of the time you will save something.

Your furnace does not operate like the accelerator in your automobile. When the thermostat decides that more heat is required, the furnace comes on "full throttle," generating as much heat as possible until the

thermostat tells it to stop.

To save money on your fuel bill, you need to reduce the amount of time your furnace runs as it uses the same amount of fuel for each minute it runs.

For a more complete discussion of the topic, see the longer version of this article at <http://www.MyPowerCouple.com/Writings/SetbackThermostat.pdf>.

How To Talk to a Person

If you are anxious to talk to a human being instead of working your way through a call center, visit <http://www.gethuman.com/us/>. It gives shortcuts for bypassing automated operators.

The Web site offers specific phone numbers and instructions on how to reach a person. It's updated weekly, but numbers can change without notice.

BEAUTY
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"No, we don't do any animal testing, but don't rule out a pop quiz once in a while."



If you never use a whole steel wool pad when you do the dishes and it just ends up rusting before you need it again. Cut them in half they'll go twice as far, plus you won't have to clean up that rusty mess.

Words of Wisdom From a Fellow Client

After reading the “Your Dishwasher: Use It Or Lose It” in the last issue of “Remodeler’s Scratch Pad,” K.M. writes:

“And here I thought my dishwasher was broken as it always had water in it!

Another good one for your newsletter is ‘never put pasta down the garbage disposal.’ Even if it is cooked, it will expand and block the pipes. I know ... cost me \$85. The plumber who got the \$ told me this one.”



Problems and Privileges of Being a ‘Leapling’

Leap Year babies born Feb. 29 always had the pleasure of slow aging. A 40-year-old could proudly claim to be 10.

But in the early 1990s they also had another problem: Computers did not believe them. While most databases now recognize Feb. 29 as a valid date, early versions did not. This made for quite a few miscues with drivers licenses and other legal documents.

To prevent confusion, doctors have often counseled mothers of children born Feb. 29 to pick either Feb 28 or March 1 as their child’s birth date.

Historically, women have been free to propose marriage to their love on Feb. 29. A postcard with a Feb. 29 cancellation is considered a collector’s item.



“Go outside and play, but stay out of the sandbox. You know what that does to your cell phone.”

Radon Testing

Radon is associated with an increased risk of lung cancer. It could be found in a basement or on the first floor of a home.

A home inspector can test for radon, but will charge more than the test you can do yourself. Test kits are

available at home improvement stores or they can be ordered at Web sites such as <http://www.radonzone.com> for about \$15.

Because radon rises from the earth, levels may can be brought down by sealing cracks in the foundation.

Crazy Eights Sudoku

		3	1	5		7		
7	4						8	
		8		9		3		
		2			4			
3	7			1			5	6
			3			2		
		5		2		4		
	8						3	1
		9		7	1	5		

Sudoku is gaining popularity all across Europe and the United States. Only logic and patience are required. No math is involved. Simply make sure that each 3x3 square region has a number 1 through 9 and that the number only occurs once. Each column and row of the large grid must have only one instance of the numbers 1 through 9.

Here's a tip for playing. We'll call the 3x3 squares "regions." With a highlighter, color in all the rows in

the large grid and all the columns in the larger grid that have a 8 in them. We chose 8 because there are several of them in the puzzle. Finished?

Now observe. In the middle top region, what is the only possible location for the 8?

This technique is called "scanning" and you usually do it with your eyes and not a marker.

The difficulty rating on this puzzle is easy.

Remembering Washington's Love for His Home

George Washington's heart was not on the battlefield or in the halls of government. His heart was at home. It was where he longed to be. Mount Vernon was his anchor, and the hope of getting back to it drove him ever onward. History tells us that when he was offered the first presidency of the United States, he had to be convinced to take it. He really wanted to go home.

In the end, Washington lived at Mt. Vernon for a total of 45 years.

First known as Little Hunting Creek Plantation, it was originally granted to Washington's great grandfather John Washington in 1674.

It eventually passed to Washington's brother, Lawrence, who renamed the property Mount Vernon after his commanding officer, Admiral Edward Vernon

of the British navy. George Washington inherited the property upon the death of Lawrence's widow in 1761.

Initially four rooms on the first floor and three bedrooms on the second, the building was first expanded by adding an extra story. Just before the Revolutionary War, the north and south wings were added.

"Ability is what you're capable of doing. Motivation determines what you do. Attitude tells how well you will do it."

- Lou Holtz

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When You're Late Again, Ask Yourself Why

If you often find yourself rushing to an appointment, and not getting there on time, you could be a victim of misconceptions and miscalculations.

Optimism is good, but not when determining how long it will take to drive through traffic and park your car. You have to allow a safety margin to account for unforeseen delays.

Most chronically late people consistently underestimate needed time by 25 percent to 30 percent, says Diana DeLonzor, author of *Never be Late Again*

News From the Crew...

Not long ago, we became a member of the National Association for the Remodeling Industry (NARI).

Our membership allows us to meet peers and subcontractors (like

(Post Madison).

At the University of California Haskayne School of Business, researcher Piers Steel says one cause is that people don't get motivated far enough ahead of their deadlines. Steel is the author of an article called "The Nature of Procrastination."

Psychologists once thought the tardy were late because of avoidance and anxiety. That proved not to be true because the same people were late arriving at events they enjoyed.

electricians) who are concerned about running their companies in a professional manner too.

We hope that any changes you may notice in our business will be positive ones

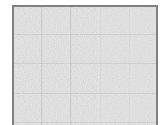
Tardiness is contagious. When others know you will be late for a meeting, they will be late too, wasting time for those who were punctual. Late people are more likely to change punctual people than the other way around.

Some offenders say being late makes them feel important because everyone has to wait for them. Usually, however, they lose respect.

Tardy people have their reasons, but the price can be high.

and will simply improve the level of customer service which we are providing.

To read more about NARI, visit them at <http://www.nari.org>.



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