

# Remodeler's Scratch Pad

News and Notes from the Around the House Crew

Copyright © 2008, Around the House. All Rights Reserved.

(978) 455-1806

<http://www.MyPowerCouple.com>

## Articles:

- Duct Cleaning
- What Home Buyers Want
- Flag Day Etiquette
- Replacement Windows
- Toilet Finder
- Why We Make Foolish and Irrational Decisions
- Geocaching: Treasure Hunting with your GPS

## Duct Cleaning

On occasion, we have been asked about the cleaning of heating (or air conditioning) ducts.

If some member of the household suffers from any sort of respiratory ailment, you should probably have your ducts cleaned preiodically.

Under normal circumstances, the dirt that collects in the ducts is common household dust. Other than a slight smell and a little more housecleaning at the start of the heating

(or cooling) season, there is usually nothing to be concerned about.

Rarely, however, moisture, rodents, or insects can infiltrate your ducts. This is unusual because the inside of your ducts is not really an inviting place for any sort of living creature and moisture would require a leak somewhere.

It has been debated whether cleaning ducts improves indoor air quality. There is no evidence that, done

properly, it reduces the quality, so, if it makes you sleep a little easier, there is no evidence that is a bad thing so long as it is done properly. Cleaning them improperly may damage the ducts or even release more dust and dirt into your home than if you had left them alone.

We recommend using a company that specializes in cleaning ducts.

## What Home Buyers Want

Researchers at Harvard University say affordability is moving up in importance with home buyers. They could be more interested in buying a home without a remodeled kitchen, for example, instead of paying significantly more for one with a kitchen that has all the bells and whistles.

When selling, paint where needed, clean and declutter rooms.



"Don't get me wrong, I like the hugs, but I could really use a kiss once in a while."



*If you've got damaged suspended ceiling tiles (the cellulose kind, not the vinyl covered Fiberglas kind), you can "paint" over the exposed grey colored material with white shoe polish and avoid having to replace the tile.*

## Flag Day Etiquette

On June 14th, you will see a great number of American flags displayed on homes throughout the country.

The flag should be displayed with the stars at the top, except when it is hung upside down

as a distress signal.

The flag should never touch anything beneath it.

If you are at an event where the flag is not displayed but the national anthem is played, all present

should face toward the music.

When the flag is displayed, all present should face the flag and salute, private citizens with their right hand on their hearts and military people with the conventional salute.

## Replacement Windows

New windows look nice, are easy to clean and should save on heating and cooling costs. Perhaps not as much as advertising claims.

To replace windows with "divided lights," get simulated divided lights that have grilles inside, outside and between the panes.

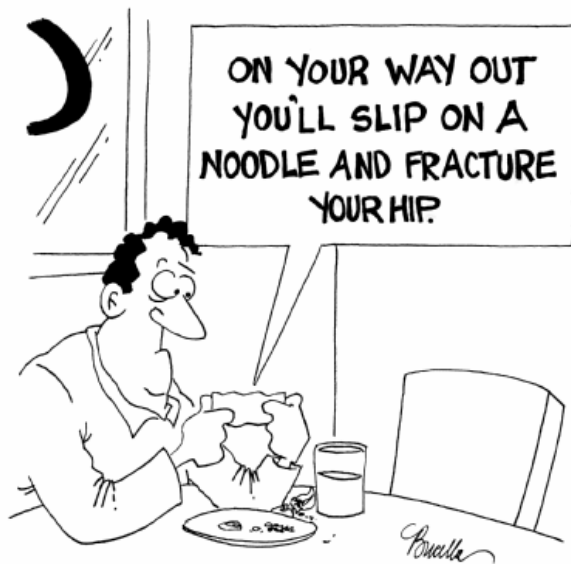
Save energy with windows that have argon gas between the panes and a coating that blocks heat from going through the glass.

The best window replacement includes removing the interior and exterior trim, then attaching a new window like the original windows were attached.

Most of the advertised replacement windows remove the glass

sections (sash) and install a window insert. But an insert doesn't fix the uninsulated spaces around the old windows where air may escape. Inserts may not eliminate drafts or save much energy if any.

Glass areas in inserts are also slightly smaller than those of the original window and can look like a retrofit.



Misfortune Cookie

## Toilet Finder

One San Francisco man was totally disgusted with public restrooms in certain cities. To help out his fellow travelers, he started Mizpee.com, a new Website that helps them find sanitary restrooms in

18 cities in the United States and Canada.

Using your cellphone's browser, select the city, then enter your location. You'll get directions on your cellphone.

Yearly visitor

Across

- 1. Hard plastic, for short
  - 4. "The King"
  - 9. DiCaprio, to fans
  - 10. Linen fabric
  - 11. Bruin legend Bobby
  - 12. Red fluorescent dye
  - 13. Items on belts
  - 15. Expressing a rate
  - 16. Baltimore's \_\_\_ Harbor
  - 18. All right
  - 20. A rate of payment for written material
  - 23. Spain's Gulf of \_\_\_
  - 25. Charge carrier
  - 26. Come to mind
  - 27. Chinese "way"
  - 28. Cancels, in printing
  - 29. 100%
- Down
- 1. Raindrop sound
  - 2. Designer Wang
  - 3. Welsh dog
  - 4. Causes to continue indefinitely

1	2	3		4	5	6	7	8
9				10				
11				12				
13			14			15		
		16				17		
18	19		20			21	22	
23		24				25		
26						27		
28						29		

- 5. Relax
- 6. \_\_\_ a \_\_\_, face to face
- 7. Hip bones
- 8. Emailed
- 14. Sign up
- 17. Indian side+dish
- 18. Wood sorrels
- 19. Go-\_\_\_
- 21. Hockey score
- 22. Carbon compound
- 24. Game piece

L	T	V		S	T	E	T	S
O	V	T		E	S	I	S	A
N	O	I		Z	I	C	A	D
E	G	E		N	L	I	K	O
		R		E	N	I		
T	A			R	S	E	G	A
N	I	S		O	E		R	O
L	E	I		L	O		L	E
S	I	V		E	L		C	P

The headline is a clue to the answer in the diagonal.

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

## Why We Make Foolish and Irrational Decisions

MIT professor Dan Ariely contends that irrational behavior is a part of human nature. His new book, *Predictably Irrational*, is a fascinating romp through the science of decision-making.

Want to know why a penny difference in price can prompt you to choose a different candy than the one you really want? Why people who would never steal money take office supplies? Or why a

woman can't decide on one of two suitors though one has demonstrated he is better.

Ariely says our understanding of economics is now based on the assumption that people behave rationally. It should be based on the natural irrationality of human beings.

In one experiment, people were asked to write down the last two digits of their Social

Security numbers. After they did, it was found that people with numbers ending in the highest digits (80-99) were willing to pay more for items like wine and chocolates than those with the lowest numbers (01-20).

Economists are using the new-found knowledge to design fixes for problems ranging from drug addiction, to under saving for retirement.

---

"The true measure of an individual is how he treats people who can do him absolutely no good."

- Ann Landers

## Around the House

PO Box 160  
North Billerica, MA 01862

PHONE:  
(978) 455-1806

E-MAIL:  
info@MyPowerCouple.com



We're on the Web!

See us at:

[www.MyPowerCouple.com](http://www.MyPowerCouple.com)

## Geocaching: Treasure Hunting with your GPS

The electronic age has brought a modern-day version of treasure hunting using a global positioning satellite receiver (GPS). It's called geocaching.

Usually a container is filled with trinkets and a logbook for finders to sign. The latitude and longitude of the cache are posted on the Internet and the hunt is on.

The most popular Website for locations is [geocaching.com](http://geocaching.com). You just enter your zip code or address information to find caches near you.

### *News From the Crew...*

This spring, we have learned of two places that can help us dispose of debris in a more environmentally friendly manner.

Framingham is home to Conigliaro Industries. They can recycle a very wide array of materials

When you find the cache, you sign the logbook and, if you wish, you take out a knickknack. When you remove a trinket, you are expected to replace it with a new treasure. It should be equal in value to the one taken. When trading, don't leave food or items that smell and may attract animals.

To play, you have to have a GPS. You download the latitude and longitude into your instrument. Experienced players suggest you input the coordinates directly into your computer and then

including mattresses and carpeting.

E.L. Harvey is a more conventional container company, but they handle the materials put in their dumpsters more responsibly than others.

Either provider's

into the GPS. Doing it manually could result in a mistake that will take you far afield.

The GPS can take you close to the cache. Then you have to search. Caches are hidden but clues can be piles of brush, rocks, leaves or other debris. It is always wise to check tree stumps, logs and hollow tree trunks.

Always protect the environment. Do not go geocaching on private or public lands without permission. Be careful not to trample vegetation or damage habitat. Play responsibly.

solution is generally more expensive than other container companies, but we are pleased to be able to offer a "greener" solution for our clients who are interested in helping to minimize their impact on the environment.

## Around the House

PO Box 160  
North Billerica, MA 01862