

# Remodeler's Scratch Pad

News and Notes from the Around the House Crew

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(978) 455-1806

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## Articles:

- New bathroom tile floor
- \$75 limit at the gas pump
- I found your camera
- Chicago Olympics?
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- Surviving Construction – Part 3
- Gas fireplace precautions

## New bathroom tile floor

The bathroom is the most-used room in the house. With high traffic and high moisture, the floor begins to show its age after ten or 15 years.

One good thing about replacing it is that the room is small. That means you can choose high-quality materials and not have a huge amount of money or a great deal of time invested.

Here's some advice from Lowe's, the home improvement store:

Tile comes in ceramic, porcelain, stone, and mosaic. Any of these choices will give you a great range of possibilities for color, style, and pattern.

Ceramic comes in many colors and shapes that make it easy to create patterns and features, such as a border or center medallion.

Porcelain is a denser tile and offers superior resistance to mold and stains. Stone-look porcelain looks very much like real stone.

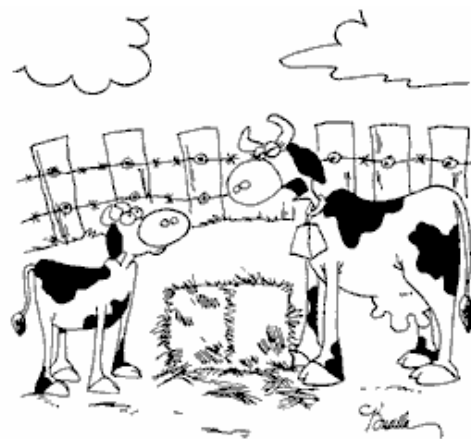
Natural Stone is available in marble, granite, limestone and slate. It's more expensive but has an outstanding appearance and comes in many colors.

When considering tile, leaf through design books and home magazines. Your personal preferences will narrow your choices.

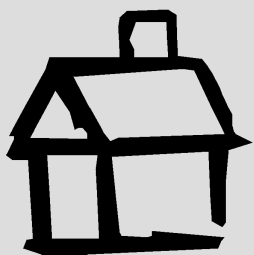
## \$75 limit at the gas pump

Most service stations now limit a charge to Visa and MasterCard to \$75. Don't blame the station operator. It's the card companies' new policy. They will not reimburse the station owner for more than \$75 if there is a fraudulent purchase of any size.

Customers who hit the \$75 limit and need more gas must start a new transaction at the pump. They can get the \$75 limit over again.



"It may not be a big deal now, but when your grandmother jumped over the moon, she did it without the help of any performance enhancing drugs."



The only allowable way to dry china in Oregon or Minneapolis is to allow it to air dry.

## I found your camera

The Internet to the rescue again. Many people lose their cameras each year. There is now a new way to reunite the owner and the photos, <http://www.ifoundyourcamera.net>.

If you find a camera, you can upload a couple of photos from it to the site in hopes that the owners (or someone they know) will see them and contact information can

be exchanged.

Even if you haven't lost your camera, you can browse the photos looking for people you know ... or at least to see what kind of people lose their camera!

## Chicago Olympics?

So far, Chicago has bested Baku, Azerbaijan; Doha, Qatar; and Prague in its bid to hold the 2016 Summer Olympic games there.

Remaining in the race with Chicago (7.0 points out of a possible 10) are Tokyo (8.4 points) Madrid (8.2 points), and Rio de Janeiro (6.5 points). (Doha tied with Chicago, but was eliminated because it planned to hold the Games in October because of the city's hot summers.)

The International Olympic Committee (IOC) rated the cities based on funding, sports venues, infrastructure and security on a scale of 1 to 10. Chicago lost points because its funding came from the private sector rather than the government.

The IOC will make its choice in October 2009. Chicago would hold the summer games along its lakefront.



"Today's specials are, 'Spam,' 'Cookies' or 'Spam with Cookies.'"

## Man's work life

In 1870, a man started work at 13 and worked every day until the day he died at age 43.

In the 1950s a man started work at age 17.6 and worked 50 years. He typically died a year before he could retire at age 68.5.

In 1973 a man started work at about 18.5

and is expected to work until the year 2018, when he will be about 64. He will live to an average age of 70.6.

In 2007 a man started work at 20. He will work 42.5 years and retire at age 62.5. He will live 15.5 more years and die at an average age of 78.

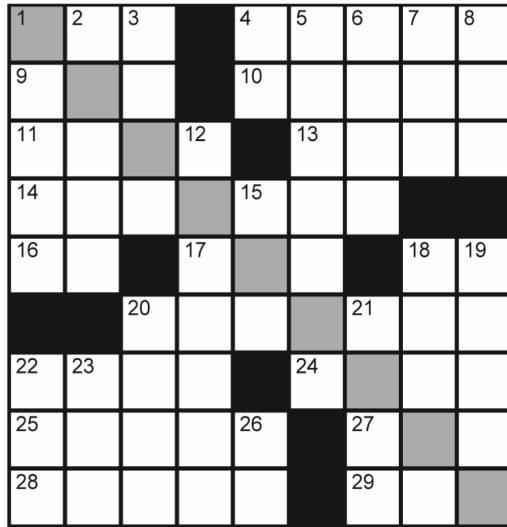
Latin Americans

Across

- 1. \_\_\_ and cheese
- 4. Elite military unit
- 9. Son of a son
- 10. Authority
- 11. Fling
- 13. Sleeveless garment
- 14. Plunked along
- 16. Hello
- 17. Sculler's need
- 18. Depart
- 20. Disentangle
- 22. From \_\_\_ to riches
- 24. Part of the earth's crust
- 25. Burning
- 27. Big TV maker
- 28. Wavelike design
- 29. "Absolutely!"

Down

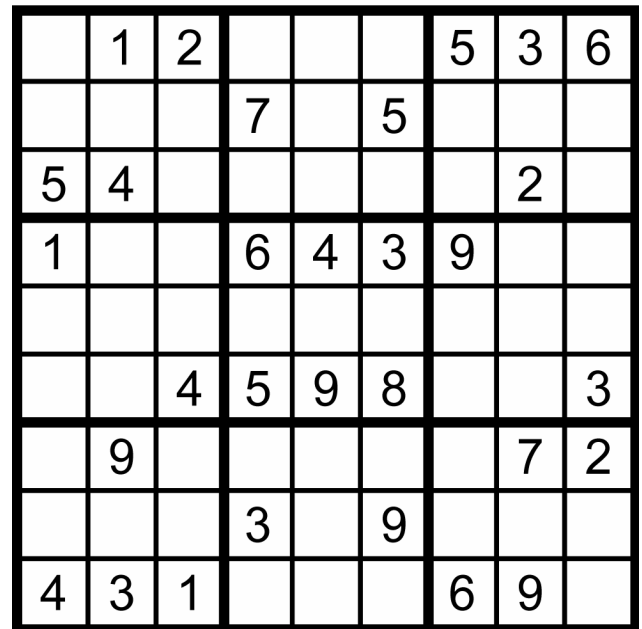
- 1. Thumb a ride
- 2. Garlicky mayonnaise
- 3. Japanese soup
- 4. \_\_\_ You Like It
- 5. Bars
- 6. Gave the once-over
- 7. Biblical beast
- 8. Bon \_\_\_
- 12. Patron



- 15. \_\_\_ de deux
- 18. Actress Kelly
- 19. Spanish jugs
- 20. \_\_\_ fruit
- 21. Breezy
- 22. Battering device
- 23. "Give it \_\_\_!"
- 26. \_\_\_ the people



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



## Surviving Construction – Part 3

Last month we touched on the subject of planning for your project. Communicating what you would like the final space to look like is essential to being satisfied with the completed project.

This month, we wanted to take a short moment to temper that idea a bit.

While it is in everyone's best interest to have the same image in mind while planning the project, it is wise to not go overboard in the

planning process. If you attempt line up some of the sub contractors for the project or begin to shop for materials, you may find yourself in an adversarial relationship with your GC (general contractor - the one taking overall responsibility for the project).

For example, let's say you've already picked out the exact tile for your bathroom.

You may get surprised when you find that your selection is more difficult to cut, install, grout, etc. Now you may begin to argue with the contractor about how the tile store told you how easy it was (remember, they aren't doing the work).

Perhaps you thought you'd do the demo yourself and can just put the debris out at the curb. This can put the GC in an awkward situation when applying for building permits.

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"A well-developed sense of humor is the pole that adds balance to your steps as you walk the tightrope of life."

- William A. Ward

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## Gas fireplace precautions

As the cool breezes of September and October begin, few people want to fire up an expensive heating system. Instead, they could take off the evening chill by using a fireplace.

Gas fireplaces are a modern choice for people who don't want the task of building a fire. A vented fireplace should be your first choice. You can install one, even if you don't have a chimney because they require only a small vent pipe.

Unvented gas fireplaces can go anywhere in a house, look nice, and

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

Some of you may already be aware that our business has a very large seasonal aspect to it.

We are currently entering the second of our busy times (the first is in the spring when

are safe, according to a study by Consumer Reports.

Whether vented or unvented, be cautious when buying and using a unit.

First, read the specified room dimensions carefully. The National Fuel Gas Code and many local codes call only for the fireplace to be sized so sufficient air is available for combustion. Or check with the Gas Research Institute.

Buy a certified package rather than a separate firebox and log set.

everyone comes out of hibernation and takes a look at how the winter has ravaged their home).

This is the time of year when we start to hear the phrase "before the snow flies."

Limit its use. Though occasional extended use poses little health risk, experts recommend using it only for a few hours at a time.

Use a CO alarm. All gas fireplaces tested by Consumer Reports showed no tendency for high carbon monoxide levels, but study authors still recommend a CO alarm .

Provide extra ventilation. Open the window when using an unvented fireplace because air pollution could build up after several hours of use.

If there is a project you were thinking of trying to fit in "before the snow flies," you may wish to move it up in priority as our schedule is filling fast.

