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technology
with good
old-fashioned
integrity”*

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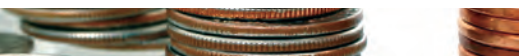
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PLUMBING • HEATING • AIR CONDITIONING

Smart and simple ways to enrich your home living

Fall 2009 \$3.00

Consumer **Watch**



Plumbing the Mysteries of Plumbing

“Can I do this myself?” many homeowners have asked before making a call to a service professional. Sometimes the answer is “yes.” A number of jobs are brains over brawn, after all, so if you know what you’re doing, you can probably do it just fine.

For example, replacing a flapper in the toilet is not a hard job to do. But if that doesn’t keep the toilet from running constantly, the next step is to replace the flush mechanism, which takes more time and more tools. And can be messy.

There can also be a direct correlation between the quality of a plumbing repair and your water bill, and then there’s potential for the do-it-yourself misfire – either of which can cost you more in the long run.

So, how do you know when to call a professional? Let’s look at several elements:

- **Time** – Time is money, so before you spend this precious commodity on a home repair,

ask yourself if you have the time to learn how to do it right, if you have time for frustrations that might occur, if you’ve got time to analyze the materials and tools needed, and if you’ve got time to purchase them from the store.

- **Tools** – Many home repairs take special tools. If you don’t have them, do you want to buy them? If so, will you use them often – or never again?
- **Technology** – The plumbing industry these days has introduced incredible technologies that homeowners can’t possibly duplicate. For example, does your drainpipe need cleaning? You don’t have to take a plumber’s word when you can see pictures yourself.

If you’ve got a plumbing problem and need our help, just give us a call. Whatever it is, you can sure bet, we’ve seen it before – and we’ve got the time, tools and technology to get right to work!

MyWord

Connections

By Ken Wonderly

Hello Friend,

That shift you notice in the weather is not your imagination; it’s your calendar. Yes, change is in the air. Of course, as I watch everything going on out there, I can’t help but think it’s not just the season that’s changing – but the whole world!

We sure are living in interesting times. Whether you’re Twittering or texting, friending folks on Facebook, or getting LinkedIn to MySpace, we’ve got lots of ways to talk about what’s on our minds. So what’s our two cents worth on some of the big issues of the day?

Let’s take healthcare. However the debate on policies and programs turn out, we’ve got our own connection to your family’s health and wellbeing, and issue number one is the quality of your indoor air. Heating systems that get cranked up after a long hibernation can be a breeding ground for contaminants, including deadly carbon monoxide. Give us a call for a pre-season check and let us help make sure your family keeps breathing safely.

What about the state of the economy? The “new normal” has us
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Your Quick Call Comfort Hotline:

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Four Tips to Save More Money Each Month

Just about everybody wants more money. More often than not, it's not money that's elusive, but the ability to save the money. While saving money can seem like pushing a boulder up a steep hill, it's not as hard as it sounds. Here are four quick ways to start saving more right now.

- 1) **Enroll in a retirement savings program:** Programs such as a 401(k) remove the money from a paycheck before taxes. In addition, many employers match 401(k) contributions up to a certain level, meaning you're benefiting from "free" money. But 401(k) programs aren't emergency funds, there are stiff penalties for removing the money early.
- 2) **Cook and prepare your own meals:** Instead of buying a muffin or bagel each morning, buy such items in bulk at the grocery store. Coffee drinkers can also save substantial amounts of money by brewing their own coffee at home and taking it to work in a travel mug. Especially



when you consider that a designer cup of java can cost upwards of \$4 a day.

- 3) **Drink lots of water:** While it might seem odd to suggest drinking lots of water as a means to save money, it actually makes more sense than it might seem. A notable symptom of dehydration is hunger, so people who do not drink enough water often feel hungry when they're likely just dehydrated. By drinking the recommended amount of water, you're avoiding spending money on those pricey mid-afternoon snacks.
- 4) **Avoid hidden fees:** Creditors and lenders make money hand over fist each month thanks to late payments or hidden fees. If your accounts have minimum balance requirements, know what the minimum is and make sure you have enough in the account to avoid the charges. Also, use only ATMs from your actual bank or you may be paying 2 different fees simply to access your own money.

4 Safety Tips to Protect Your Home From Burglary

According to reports by the FBI and studies by State Farm Insurance, a home is burglarized every 15 seconds. Even worse, many of these burglaries take place in broad daylight because this is when a home is most likely to be vacant. So while you're at work and your children are at school, your home could be a criminal's target.

Fortunately, break-ins are one of the most preventable crimes. Here are a few precautionary measures to keep your home and family safe:

- ❖ **Use automatic timers.** Timers can be set to turn lights, radios and televisions on and off at varying times of the day. Also use them when on vacation or away for an extended period of time to give burglars the impression that someone is home.

- ❖ **Illuminate the front and backyard areas.** Darkness is one of a burglar's best friends. Doorways and the rear of the house should be lit with cost-effective, low-voltage lighting to minimize dark spaces.



- ❖ **Trim trees and shrubs.** If overgrown, these areas serve as the perfect hiding places for burglars and allow them to work undetected.
- ❖ **Use window and door alarms.** Alarms vary in their degree of sophistication, ranging from a door alarm to silent alarms patched into the local police station. Burglars typically will leave when any alarm is sounded.

Water Damage Is a Concern for Homeowners

Unusual weather, be it excessive rain, hurricanes or tornadoes, can leave unsuspecting homeowners with problems they never imagined. All it takes is one storm to cause a host of problems that can put your home in jeopardy. And it's not a cheap predicament...

Water damage is something that costs homeowners *thousands* of dollars. Nearly 40% of all homeowners have reported they have experienced losses due to water damage. However, insurance plans may not cover all types of water damage, so it pays to be informed.

Flood Damage vs. Water Damage

How do you know if damage from the rising river in the yard or the rainwater that infiltrated your attic is covered by insurance? It may come down to the verbiage of insurance policies.

For example, a heavy thunderstorm that leaked through a faulty window and damaged walls and flooring would likely be covered by a homeowners policy.

On the flip side, flood insurance would be needed for any water damage that occurred from rising water. So if a river or even an area storm drain overflowed and your home was in the wake, it will probably be considered flood damage.

Preventing Water Damage

Water damage accounts for 25 percent of all insurance claims.

Water seepage into a home can cause a host of problems, including structural damage, mold, mildew, and the creation of an environment



conducive to certain insects or other pests. Your best defense? Regular inspections for damage:

- ◆ Homeowners with basement windows may want to consider window coverings that divert rainwater.
- ◆ Regularly clean out gutters and downspouts so that rainwater

can drain out and away from the home.

- ◆ Check to see if there are any areas on the property of pooling water. This could indicate a drainage issue and the grading of the property may need to be changed.
- ◆ Inspect the roof, windows and door surrounds for water entry points. Sealing potential infiltration points can prevent water damage.

- ◆ Use your nose. Even if you can't see water damage you may be able to smell it. The installation of a drain and sump pump system often remedies basement water problems.

Give us a call, and we can help you choose the solution that's right for your home.

DidYouKnow?

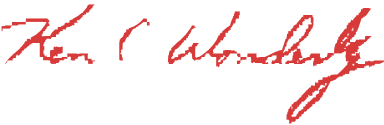
- According to scientific studies, a rat's performance in a maze can be improved by playing music written by Mozart.
- By federal law, for a noodle to actually be a noodle, it must have 5.5 percent egg solids in it; otherwise it cannot be called a noodle.
- Istanbul, Turkey is the only city in the world located on two continents.
- Great Britain was the first country to issue postage stamps in 1840.
- Post-It Notes, which are adhesive notes, were invented while looking for a way to improve the acrylate adhesive found in tapes.
- The right lung of a human is larger than the left one. This is because of the space and placement of the heart.

MyWord

continued from page 1

thinking that spending money we don't have on what we don't need is a thing of the past. What's even more important now is the high value placed on quality products and superior service from people you trust.

That's what you'll find with us, and we hope you'll call us when you need us. We saw quite a few of you this summer – on service calls to keep you cool, calm and collected. And we'll be here as the days turn colder, just waiting to see you again.



Ken Wonderly

P.S. Make sure to call and schedule your Fall tune-up before the cold season sets in. It will keep your system running more efficiently, keep your heating bills down, and help prevent an unwanted breakdown this winter.

HomePoints
Each cycle
of a washing
machine can
use up to 26.5
gallons of water.

Do You Really Want To Pay MORE for LESS?

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By becoming a member of our Maintenance Agreement program, you'll pay **LESS for MORE**. (That's better, isn't it?)

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Gundlach's at 661-327-3052

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tell you how much a new system or a quick repair can save you. (Sometimes, even the "fix" is free!)

So give us a quick call, before you really do heat and cool the entire neighborhood.

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