

Renovators Ltd.

A quarterly newsletter building industry knowledge.

Winter, 2005

Draft-Proof Your House

Seal up and save on energy bills.

by Lis King

Door sweeps are relatively easy to install and keep the cold air off the floor. No matter how baffling the energy situation is, homeowners are definitely seeing its results in skyrocketing energy bills.

It makes homeowners like Pat and Richard Wilhelm scramble to button up their 75-year-old house against both blustery winters and humidity-laden summers.

Candles and a Blow-Dryer

"We bought this house last year and though we've done a lot of remodeling, there are still many old windows as well as some of the vintage horsehair insulation that's so common around here," tells Pat. "So we run around with a candle and hairdryer to see where there are drafts. Not exactly high-tech, but it works. Richard moves the dryer around the outside frames of the windows and doors, and I follow with a candle on the inside. If the candle flickers or goes out, we need to weather strip or caulk." Pat finishes

Caulk and Weather Stripping

"That's no big deal. I do the caulking around the frames. I just buy tubes of the stuff in the same color as the trim, lay in a bead and smooth it with a finger. It's actually fun." Pat says with a grin.

"There's a wide variety of weather stripping products out there, but I



prefer thin spring metal weather strips because they're long-lasting and hardly visible when installed," Richard says. "They're cut to length with tin snips and tacked in place. After tacking, I lift the outer edge of the strip with a screwdriver for a better seal. I have also screwed in door sweeps to the inside bottom of our front and back doors to cover the gap by the floor, and I have insulated the attic access panel."

Energy and construction consultant R.C. Greene gives the Wilhelm family high marks for efforts, but he says they need to go further.

"Pat and Richard need to check the newer windows and doors for drafts as well," he says. "If the contractor used an oil or resin caulk, it may have pulled loose in as little as one year, depending

on expansion and contraction caused by weather extremes.

"They also need to caulk around foundation walls, pipe outlets, the clothes dryer vent and any other gaps on the outside of the house," he asserts. "Air infiltration from electric switch and plug outlets can be significant, too, so it's smart to insert draft blockers. They're inexpensive and readily available

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"... check the **newer windows** and doors for **drafts as well**. If the contractor used an **oil or resin caulk**, it may have **pulled loose** in as little as one year ..."

In the News

We are pleased to announce that beginning in January 2005 we will be offering **Dura-Supreme** and **Legacy Cabinetry**. These two cabinet manufacturers offer many different wood species, door styles, and finishes. We will be a dealer for these two fine cabinet lines and it will give us the opportunity to supply our customers with a great variety at all price points from a builders grade cabinet to an upscale semi-custom cabinet.

Sue Simon recently joined our team as the Administrative Support for the Renovators Ltd. office. In this role, Sue will be managing many office functions. She has worked in customer service for the last 4 years. Sue and her husband Nick have 3 daughters and one grandson.

Pamela Pelot has joined the Renovator Ltd. team as an Assistant Designer. Some of Pamela's responsibilities include construction and "as built" drawings and some design. Pamela formerly worked as an Architectural Intern for HGA. She is currently in her last semester at UW-Milwaukee, and will receive her Masters of Architecture.

KUDOS to you!

We take pride in the quality work and attention to detail we provide for you. Nothing shows us that you value this more than when you share our name with your family and friends. We want to take this opportunity to express our appreciation.

- **Michael and Judith Chybowski** thank you for referring **Paul and Lynne LaRosa**.
- **Pat and Ellen Coplan** thank you for referring **Eric and Ann Bachar**.
- **Ann and Eric Bachar** thank you for referring **Scott and Stephanie Nieberjohn**.
- **Ann and Eric Bachar** thank you for referring **Chris and Ninveh Neuman**.
- **Dave and Corinne Meyer** thank you for referring **Alan Pearson and Rosemary Borowski**.
- **Farrell & Sons** thank you for referring **Gordon Anderson**.
- **Gary Gohde** of Big Dog Plumbing thank you for referring **John and Beth Kuehn**.
- **John and Beth Kuehn** thank you for referring **Sloan and Gretta Watson**.

Preventing Water Pipe Freeze-Ups

by Tom Feiza

Let's say your kitchen sink is on an outside wall, and one cold, windy day the water supply to the sink becomes frozen. You should be concerned about the situation, because the next time the pipe may break, resulting in a repair bill plus potential water damage.

Start by carefully inspecting the area of the wood framing and foundation wall near the pipes. Look for holes that allow cold air to blow in and freeze a pipe.

Check the basement immediately below the sink. Do your inspection on a sunny day, and leave the basement lights off. Look for sunlight leaking through the basement wall, sill area, foundation overhangs, and lower edge of the house siding. Caulk and fill any gaps. Some may need to be filled from the outside.



You should be concerned about the situation, because the next time the pipe may break, resulting in a repair bill plus potential water damage.

Insulate the supply pipe with a plastic foam-type insulation. You will find this at most building supply centers. Trim the insulation for a tight fit and tape all joints.

If the problem persists, you may need to open kitchen cabinet doors during cold weather to allow for air circulation. You could also add a fan or small heater to help move and warm the air in the basement area near the pipes.

As a last resort during very cold weather, let the water run in a trickle at the sink. The water circulation will warm the pipe and prevent freezing.

Courtesy of Tom Feiza's book, Mr. Fix-It.

If this space is insulated, you'll need to remove the insulation to expose the wood framing for inspection. Next, make sure there is good insulation in the sill area above the foundation wall. Fill the area with tight fitting fiberglass. Pack all areas between the outside framing and the top of the basement wall.

"Draft Proof" continued from cover

at hardware stores and home centers. And don't forget to weather strip overhead doors of attached garages."

Other Recommendations for Lowering Costs

Greene has more simple and low-cost recommendations to help homeowners cut energy costs.

"In cold weather, set the thermostat at 68 degrees and leave it alone during the day," he says. "Overnight, lower setting by 5 to 10 degrees. And make sure the thermostat isn't affected by drafts that will give an incorrect reading. In hot weather, set it at 78 degrees

when you're home and lower it a bit for night.

"Develop energy-saving window habits, too. In the winter, open curtains or shades of east, south and west-facing windows on sunny days to let the sun heat the house. Close them at night to preserve heat. Keep the draperies closed all day on north-facing windows. Do just the opposite in summer.

"Turn the heat way down in rooms you don't use. And check with your utility company to see if they offer free home inspections and energy surveys."

Amazing Transformations!



Deciding they needed to expand their kitchen area, Eric and Ann Bachar came to Renovators Ltd. thanks to a referral from Pat and Ellen Coplan.

The original kitchen (upper right) was only 135 sq. ft. and didn't provide the functionality or space the Bachars needed for their growing family. Renovators Ltd. added a grade-level addition and combined the dining room and kitchen to create a new space that is 370 sq. ft. and is beautifully suited to the family's needs. The kitchen has a central island and dinette area. The Bachars

chose warm Dacora Harmony maple cabinets and Gemlock counter tops. A tile backsplash was added below the range hood and on the island. French patio doors were added, bringing in light and giving an added sense of space. A mud room just off the patio doors now provides a convenient place for easy clean-ups.

Renovators also redesigned the bathroom to make better use of the limited space (below). A tile-lined shower was added and is now nestled into the corner, enhancing its usefulness. Tile flooring was added, finishing off the project.



[after]

Tile backsplashes were added below range hood and island.



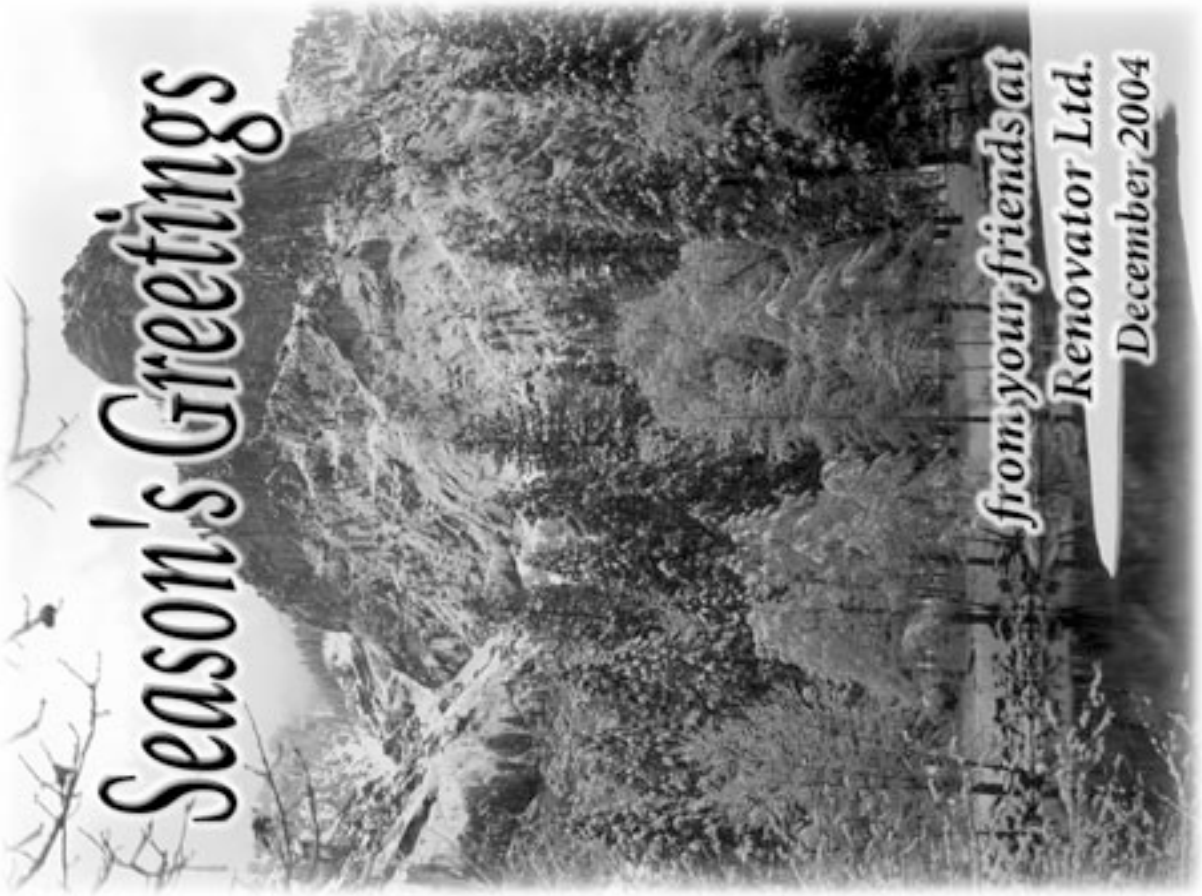
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French doors and a mud room were added.



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This newsletter is a forum to learn about new techniques, industry standards, methods and individual stories. If you have ideas, articles, photos, questions or a subject you would like to see published, for consideration please contact us at our office: RENOVATORS LTD. • 10521 West Forest Home, Suite 103 • Hales Corners, Wisconsin 53130 • Phone: 414-425-0456 • Email: info@renovatorstld.com

A quarterly newsletter to help inform our customers and build awareness and knowledge in the remodeling industry. We appreciate your business!

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