

# Renovators Ltd.

Spring, 2002

Making your dreams reality

## Got the remodeling bug? Building a relationship with your contractor

Spring is here and you have given a lot of thought to remodeling your home. Where do you start?

Begin with a good remodeling contractor. Never worked with one before? As a reasonable, understanding person whom anyone would be happy to work with, you feel this will be a piece of cake. If you've never been involved with remodeling your home, you'd be surprised what might happen.

### Realistic expectations

Everyone who begins the remodeling process has visions of the "dream home they'll have when it's completed. Few, however give much thought to the dust, dirt, noise, inconveniences, scheduling delays and slight problems that arise along the way. These elements are part and parcel of any remodeling job and every client needs to be realistic and accept the fact that this is normal when remodeling.

How inconvenient and unpleasant the process will be depends a lot on the working relationship we create right from the beginning. A good client-contractor relationship depends on several things:

- Be honest with us right from the beginning regarding your expectations. Clear communication is the foundation of a successful project.
- Be realistic about what you are looking for in the remodel and what you are willing to budget for the project. Many

homeowners enter a remodeling project with grandiose plans which need to be scaled down to meet their budget. We'll work with you to provide you with the best your money can afford. But remember, this is our livelihood. As with any profession, some profit margin must be factored into the price.

- Discuss the work schedule. If the schedule falls behind, feel free to ask why.
- Realize certain stages of remodeling may seem to go more quickly than others. For example, in stages when more tangible work is being done, such as walls be torn down or replaced, framing constructed, or appliance installation, you'll have a true sense of rapid progress. During other stages, progress is more hidden as in plumbing or electrical line installation. Don't worry, just because you can't see it easily doesn't mean that nothing is happening.
- Recognize your role in the remodeling process and allow us to perform our work. Your input regarding design, craftsmanship expected, etc. will be worked out before the contract is signed. Once work is underway, give us the freedom to execute the job effectively. This is not to say that if you see something going wrong you shouldn't

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**Clear communication is the foundation of a successful project.**



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# In the News

**Renovators Ltd.** took home **three awards** at the 13th Annual NARI Wisconsin Remodelers Awards. We were recognized for "Residential Kitchen" over \$60,000, "Residential Bath" over \$25,000, and "Entire House" over \$25,000 bringing the total awards to seven in NARI competitions in the past four years.

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**Rick Ripple** of **Renovators Ltd.** completed the Certified Lead Carpenter course through NARI CLC and took home the CLC Superstar Award.

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**Bryan Ward** recently joined Renovators Ltd. as an architectural designer and sales associate.



**Bryan Ward**

For the past five years, Bryan worked in his own architectural design firm with a diverse clientele. Over the last three years, Bryan and Renovators Ltd. developed a natural working relationship taking clients from the conception and design of their dream homes to the actual realization. This relationship worked so well for the clients, Bryan and Renovators Ltd that Bryan came on board as a full time team member.

Bryan's background includes awards in architectural design competitions, and the "Additions of the Year" Award in *Better Homes and Gardens* magazine. He has a degree in Architecture from UW-Milwaukee and has worked in the design and remodeling industry for over 18 years.

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## Spring-time checks— Getting the jump on home maintenance

April showers bring ... clogged gutters? Wait a minute. That's not how it goes. But, did you know that the harsh winds of winter can blow leaves and other debris from the ground onto your roof? And, with temperatures in the 50s and 60s, are you thinking about your central air yet? Spring is a great time to do maintenance checks around your home.

### What's in your gutters?

Downspouts and gutters make a great place for leaves and pinecones, bird nests, and other debris to collect. To keep this from happening at your house, we suggest removing your downspouts and flushing your gutters with a garden hose. Be careful to keep the ladder dry so it doesn't become slippery. Next, look into the downspouts. They usually have bends in them that trap pinecones and other debris. Downspouts can be cleared by using your garden hose as a snake and pushing the debris through them. Then simply re-attach the downspouts and you're done until fall.

### Tightening rain gutters

Most gutter manufacturers provide several methods of hanging gutters. During home construction, the quick and cheap method of hanging rain gutters involves nailing them to the fascia board with large spikes. Unfortunately, these large nails often become loose. You can replace them with large screw-nails called Gutter Screws from Fasten Master.

You could also replace the nails with a metal bar or strap hanger suited to a remodeling application. The hanger still fastens to the fascia, but several smaller nails are used. The strap stretches over the gutter, securing the outer edge.

### Central air maintenance made a breeze

For the most part, central air conditioning systems are very low maintenance.

However, spring is a good time to inspect your central air system to be sure problems don't crop up. For example, inspecting the unit to make sure that plants or other objects haven't obstructed air flow is important. Plants should be 12 inches from the side of the unit and 36 inches from the air discharge. Look below for more central air considerations.

A central air system is a big investment. If you have any doubt, have a professional service the unit and walk through the start-up with you.

When all is said and done, taking the initiative for early maintenance can smooth the way for a great spring and summer!

*Adapted with permission from Just Fix It- Do-It-Yourself Home Repair Tips by Tom Feiza.*

## Central air checks

- If you placed a plywood cover on the unit the previous autumn, remove it now.
- Check that the coils and fan are clean. If necessary, clean them with a hose and a soft brush. Make sure that the main power to the unit is still turned off when you do this.
- The outdoor temperature should be 65 degrees or higher for 24 hours before you operate the unit.
- Turn on the power to the unit at least 24 hours before operating the system. This gives the crankcase heater time to warm up the unit if needed. The heater warms the compressor crankcase, ensuring that oil is separated from refrigerant. When you turn the power on, make sure the thermostat control is set to keep the air conditioner off. Running the unit in cold weather can ruin the compressor.

# 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.

- **Eric Baula** thank you for referring **Gray and Debra Mitchem**.
- **Eric and Susan Hoaglund** thank you for referring **Steve and Ann Gorzek**.
- **Sue Pickering** thank you for referring **David Kohlmann**.
- **Bill and Joy Pickering** thank you for referring **John and Mary Chandler**.

## “Contractor relationship”

continued from cover

Speak up. However don't try to take on our role in the process.

- Avoid changes to the job scope if possible. They tend to upset the schedule which ultimately upsets you. If you do decide some changes are in order, settle the cost difference up front with the lead carpenter or salesperson so there is no misunderstanding.

Finally, remember that maintaining a good contractor-client relationship is a two-way street. Just as you would want others to respect your professional expertise, respect ours. At the same time, you can be sure we are committed to providing you with as painless a remodel as possible, with the final results you expect!

Adapted from *The Remodeler's Marketing Power Pak* by Linda W. Case and Victoria L. Downing

## Renovators Showcase

### Partners in a dream

#### Creating an award-winning kitchen

Dreams are easy; it's reality that's tough. When it comes to remodeling, turning a client's dream into reality can be difficult unless you're a contractor that can share that dream.

Angela and David had a dream for a one-of-a-kind kitchen in their red brick Wauwatosa colonial. It had to have a sense of history, reflect their family life and their personalities, and, above all, be functional. “Old-world charm with a contemporary twist,” Angela laughs. No small feat for any contractor.

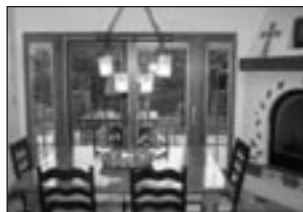
After meeting with a number of contractors, Angela and David met with Tony Rink and Rick Ripple, co-owners of Renovators Ltd., by way of referrals from friends. “As we talked about what we wanted, we could just tell they were already trying to figure out how it could be done. We know that they shared our vision for the space,” Angela said. The result was an award-winning kitchen for Renovators Ltd. and a masterful blend of dream and reality for the clients.

**“If they gave awards for great clients, David and Angela would certainly get one.”**

“This was not your typical high-end remodel,” Rink says. “The clients shared their budget, their vision and design drawings that they had.” Rink admits the project was such a success because of the clients. “If they gave awards for great clients, David and Angela would certainly get one.” The clients knew what they wanted and were extremely focused and involved in all aspects of the project.

The remodel took five months to complete. The experience was rewarding and enjoyable for both clients and contractors. “Renovators Ltd. did everything to realize our dream,” Angela says.

Cooperation between client and contractor brought this Wauwatosa “Old World contemporary” kitchen to life, with fanciful custom iron door pulls, routed cabinetry, ceramic decorated fireplace, earthenware tile stove backdrop, and 300-year-old tiles for the floor (below).



Adapted from *The Milwaukee Journal Sentinel* article by J.A. Berger.

# Home Improvement Tips

■ **Paper only please!** If your little “artist” has gotten creative using markers or crayons on the walls, you know how difficult it can be to get off. Relax. Here’s a sure-fire way to restore your walls with a few simple steps. First, wash the wall with strong detergent to remove most of the wax and stain. Then, seal the damaged areas with a shellac or oil-based primer/stain killer such as Bin or Kilz. This sealer will cover the stain, prevent bleed-through, and provide a good base for the final coat of paint. Then simply paint over the area.

■ **Popping problems.** With springtime comes drastic changes in temperature and humidity. This can sometimes cause nails to pop out of the drywall. To repair the pop, either pull the offending nail or drive it below the surface. Then secure the drywall with two drywall screws set a few inches away from the problem nail. The screws will hold much tighter than the original nail. Finally, spackle the area, prime and repaint.

## Brighten up with bump-outs!

Remodelers have long known that a small addition (“a bump-out”) that enlarges an existing room can be a value-conscious remodeling project. Often that bump-out brightens your home more than a large addition. Look around your home for cramped, dark areas that could be improved with a minimum-sized addition.

Have you considered adding a walk-in bay window to your dining room? You’ll be amazed at how this small change will open up and brighten the room. How about a deep window seat in your favorite room for a cozy reading nook? This can be designed to include hidden storage. Angled entrances can give you access to a little used section of the yard while allowing light to stream in. Have you been dreaming of a whirlpool in the bathroom? A bump-out would give you room for the new bath and an expanse of windows to add spaciousness.

Bump-outs may have a funny name but they can add space, light and interest to many rooms in your house. Call us today to discuss creative bump-out ideas for your home!

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