



Clyde L. Clem, III

President

Cornerstone Craftsmen, Inc.



Why should I think about remodeling or adding onto my home in this present economy?

Livability and Salability. Since home sales are more difficult now, we need to consider "recreating" portions of our homes to make them more suited to our family needs. At the same time, updating and making our spaces more useable will greatly enhance the salability in the future. Statistically speaking, we will enjoy a greater return on our investment in renovating than on most other investments. But the return is far greater than just monetary - it's lifestyle and enjoyment!



I have always heard that maintenance agreements are a waste of money. Why should I purchase one for my heating and air conditioning system?

For many items, a maintenance agreement could be a waste of dollars. However, your HVAC system is a major investment and some component of your system is at work 24/7. Actually, your home climate system has more working hours than your automobile which you maintain regularly. A properly maintained system is more efficient and comfortable, has fewer breakdowns, and will last longer. In fact, according to a study at LSU, a properly maintained system can save an average of \$50.00 per air conditioning month over a poorly maintained system.



Debbie Abernathy

E. Smith Heating and Air Conditioning, Inc.



Kellie Clem

Elegantly Simple Interiors



What is the most common mistake people make when trying to furnish their homes without a design professional?

The most common mistake I see when working with clients is the use of incorrectly scaled pieces. Either the elements (furniture, art, accessories) are too large or too small for the existing space. There is an immense difference in the perceived proportion of a sofa in a large furniture store versus how the sofa will actually fit in your room. To avoid the misuse of scale, I take measurements at the beginning of every project and draft a floor plan that can be used as a road map for selecting the appropriate furnishings.



When it comes to landscaping, what areas should I concentrate on for the greatest impact?

When talking about visual impact areas, I'd focus on two things. "Curb appeal" often gets the greatest return on investment and is often the most important consideration when you are thinking of selling a home. Also, privacy plantings usually involve eliminating unwanted views of a neighboring property. Not only does this help to create a more pleasing environment but, properly designed, this can greatly increase the feeling of space.



Evan Rogers

Owner
Scapes



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Q What about getting pet stains out?

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Shelly Browne
Owner
All-Star Chem Dry

Green Construction

Q

When is the best time to do a home improvement?

Most construction should be done during warmer months. However, roofing and windows can be done year round. Siding, up until freezing temperatures reached is our recommendation. In-door remodeling can be done year round.



Charlie Dallavalle
Owner, Painting Plus, Inc.

Q

How do I verify if a contractor is licensed and their company history?

I would recommend looking at the Georgia Secretary of State web site. You'll want to dig deep to get an idea of his or her business history. This means requesting -- and duly verifying -- proof that he or she is currently state licensed, paying employees legally and carrying workers' compensation, property damage and liability insurance. Membership with a reputable professional association is also a good sign. On a similar note, find out if the contractor's ever declared bankruptcy or if anyone's ever taken legal action against him or her.

Q

We have new siding and windows. Should we spray or hand brush paint?

Whenever you have new siding such as hardy board, cedar or pine, you must hand brush the first coat. This ensures that the porous surface is sealed. Spraying will not get paint into the grooves. Once you hand prime, then you can spray a heavy coat of paint and your job will last for years. Never spray windows and scrape them. The window is left unsealed and water will penetrate. Do your windows by hand brush.



Dan Parisi



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Local Nonprofit Makes Homes Safer in Cobb County

By Betsy Rhame-Minor



▲ Sean Nicholl

In a previous job, Marietta environmental engineer Sean Nicholl oversaw home repairs in Fulton County through a program funded by HUD. Later, after Nicholl had founded his own company in Marietta, he saw that people in his community had a similar need for help with home repairs and maintenance. One of the

things he enjoyed most was meeting the homeowners.

In 2007 he founded House Angels, an organization that makes homes safer for families experiencing hardships at no cost to the homeowners. House Angels is a 501(c)3 organization that relies heavily on volunteers for funding, labor and administration.

As an organization, House Angels takes on a corporate headquarters kind of role. It relies on chapters or area churches to serve their own geographical areas and provide the volunteers to complete the work. Currently two churches in Cobb County are chapters: Eagle Pointe

Church in Acworth and Mars Hill Community Church in Powder Springs. As more churches are added to the organization, more houses in a larger radius will be reached.

Nicholl has volunteers helping him on the organizational level, and so far he has participated in every work day since 2008. But, he can see how there may come a day where he can't be at every work site every Saturday.

"I'm focusing on trying to build the organization and getting churches going," he explained. "It's really starting to take off."

Each chapter works on between 4 and 12 home projects per year, and the range and scope of the projects vary greatly. The number of volunteers needed for a project does too, as some only need a person or two, such as fixing a front door lock. Other work days of roofing, landscaping, painting or a combination of projects have included up to 80 volunteers. No matter how many are involved, the volunteers get to know the homeowner that day.

"An amazing bond forms on that day [between the] client and volunteers," says Nicholl. "They are extraordinarily grateful."

For more information on forming a chapter or applying for home repairs, visit the House Angels website at <http://www.houseangels.org/>. ☒

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Staying on top of daily, monthly, and annual chores around your home is a big job. Maintenance and repair jobs are constants. To save time and money, plan for the seasonal needs of your home, yard, and garden. Here's a spring checklist to keep your home humming.

Home & Garden Checklist

- Get going on your spring cleaning. Pick one room to start in and make a list of what you want to do. Then begin working off each item on your list. Do this with each room, and just progress through the house.
- Take your vacuum and use the proper attachment to clean the exhaust fan in your bathroom. It will operate much more efficiently and that can help prevent mildew, mold and paint problems.
- Install a programmable thermostat. It takes less than 30 minutes to hook up but can save up to 20 percent in energy costs.
- As spring starts, check your basement for cracks or leaks. If you see moisture, call a professional to check it out. Many homeowner's insurance policies no longer cover fungus or mildew damage, so sealing basements is more important than ever.
- If you are going to have a garden, it is time to start planning what you want to plant and how much you need to purchase for seeds, bulbs and other supplies.
- Build arbors and trellises before transplanting or sowing seeds for vines and gourds
- Little air leaks add up to 10 percent or more on your energy bill. Plug them to keep the hot air outside where it belongs. Caulk cracks and weather-strip doors and windows. Don't like the look of caulk or weather stripping? Consider using a weather-resistant foam sealant. It resists moisture and can be sanded, painted and stained for a more appealing look.
- Carpet cleaning is a must for any home. All winter long, your windows and doors were mainly closed to keep out the cold. This prevented the fresh flow of air to air out your home's contents. Now that the weather is getting warmer, it's time to freshen up your carpets and rugs.
- Go from room to room in your home and toss at least one thing from each room. OR do even better and try to toss 5 items!
- Dust will accumulate inside your smoke detector, possibly causing it to give a false alarm. After checking the battery this month, take the top off and vacuum the inside. Also, batteries should be replaced once per year and the detector itself needs replacing about every 10 years.
- Daylight Savings Time begins Sunday, March 13. Spring forward by setting your clocks forward one hour. Ensure that all smoke detectors, carbon monoxide detectors, and fire extinguishers are in good working order. Replace batteries in appropriate devices as needed, or at least twice each year.
- Make room to store winter equipment and clothing by bringing out your spring and summer items.
- Do you clean out your coffeemaker regularly? Vinegar is a good way to clean it thoroughly and disinfect it as well.
- Dig out and remove rotted or damaged fence posts, mailbox posts and damaged shrubs from around your home. It is also a good time to remove winter worn branches from tree and shrubs.
- Time to sharpen up shears, hoes and shovels and then pump up the wheelbarrow tire in anticipation of tending to this year's garden and lawn. .
- Get into the spring of things with fresh flowers like potted pink tulips, yellow daffodils or purple irises. Even if the weather is still wintry outside, you are reminded of what will be growing in your own garden.
- Clean or replace filters on your air-conditioning system. Dirty filters cause the AC unit to work harder than necessary. You can save an estimated \$100 a year on energy costs by replacing filters every three months. Write the installation date on paper filters and, as a reminder, make a note on your calendar to do it again in October.
- Make sure your refrigerator door seals are airtight. Test them by closing the door over a dollar bill. If you can pull the bill out easily, the latch may need to be adjusted or the seal may need to be replaced. In addition, if you have a coil-back refrigerator, vacuum the coils at least twice each year. Your refrigerator will run more efficiently with clean coils. Also, stock up! A full refrigerator uses less energy than an empty one.
- The first day of Spring is March 20! Go outside and breathe in the new season. ✂

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Don't Miss the Spring Atlanta Home Show!

Mark your calendar for the 33rd Annual Spring Atlanta Home Show which will take place April 1-3 at the Cobb Galleria Centre. Visitors will experience the season's largest marketplace for home improvement products and services, featuring everything from flooring, window and door experts to home-cleaning products, lawn and garden specialists and everything in between. More than 350 exhibitors will be on hand to answer questions and give advice at this three-day event, and Tonya M. Williams, real estate expert on HGTV's *Designed to Sell* and *Bang for Your Buck!* will be presenting daily at 3pm. For more information and to purchase tickets, visit www.atlantahomeshow.com



4-H Hosting Annual Plant Sale

Cobb 4-H Club is having its annual plant sale and prepaid orders will be accepted until Wednesday, March 9. This year's assortment includes blackberries, blueberries, raspberries, Admiral Semmes azalea, crape myrtles, edgeworthia, hellebores, heuchere and Spring Bouquet Viburnum. The plant sale order form is available at cobbcounty.org/extension or by calling 770-528-4076. Plants can be picked up at Miller Park, 9 a.m.-3 p.m., Saturday, March 19. Cobb Extension also has free brochures describing proper care for these plants. A free seminar on growing and caring for blueberries, blackberries and raspberries will be presented 6:30 p.m., Thursday, March 3, at Cobb Water Lab, 663 South Cobb Drive, Marietta. For more information, call 770-528-4070.

Roswell Woman's Club Home Tour Presents The Providence Brownstones in Historic Roswell

Providence, a group of classic brownstone homes in Historic Roswell, will be the focus of The Roswell Woman's Club 2011 Showcase Home Tour. The club has selected three homes to be decorated in three distinct styles: modern, contemporary, and elegant casual. Located just off Roswell's historic Canton Street and within walking distance of the Canton Street shops and restaurants, developer Mike Walsh built Providence in a tranquil setting that is perfect for families with an active lifestyle. The 2011 Showcase Tour will be open March 10 through March 27, 2011, from 10 am to 6 pm, Wednesdays through Saturdays, and 1pm to 6 pm on Sundays. Ticket and tour information is available at www.roswellwomansclub.org.



Pope High School 11th Annual Spring Plant Sale

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