

President's Corner

To our valued customers:

I would like to take this opportunity to change course from the remodeling-related commentary usually found here and share some inspirational things I've collected over time.



- Nothing in the world can take the place of persistence. –*Calvin Coolidge*
 - Show me a good loser, and I'll show you a loser. –*Vince Lombardi*
 - SUCCESS - to laugh often and much; to win the respect of intelligent people and the affection of children; to earn the appreciation of honest critics and endure the betrayal of false friends; to appreciate beauty, to find the best in others; to leave the world a bit better, whether by a healthy child, a garden patch or a redeemed social condition; to know even one life has breathed easier because you have lived. This is to have succeeded. –*Ralph Waldo Emerson*
 - Be in a hurry, dress well, plan to spend lots of money, forgive everybody for everything, carry truth in your heart and show that you care. Have friends who talk ideas . Perceive the future, be a change agent and a finisher. Have faith in yourself. And remember - God hast made ye just a little bit less than God. –*Robert L. Montgomery*
 - The quality of a person's life is in direct proportion to their commitment to excellence. –*Vince Lombardi*
 - The people who get on in this world are the people who get up and look for the circumstances they want and, if they can't find them, make them. –*George Bernard Shaw*
 - Men who say it cannot be done should not interrupt those doing it. –*Chinese Proverb*
- May you all have a safe and pleasant summer season – until next time!

Sincerely,



Michael D. Miller, CR, CGR
President

Do-It-Yourself Decking

The average 12x24-foot deck can be installed in a couple of weekends by anyone – man or woman, young or old – with modest carpentry skills and a few friends. Plus, building an inviting deck area now gives you an entire season to enjoy it. But before you race to the local lumberyard, you'll need to attend to some details first!

Location, location, location! Most decks are attached to the rear or side of the house, often just off the kitchen or dining area. For small homes, this area makes the most sense because it extends your eating and entertaining area. Map out the area where you want the deck to stand considering such things as sun and shade, existing landscaping, and aesthetic value.

Size is also an issue. Keep your deck in proportion with your house. Some builders recommend that a deck be as large as the largest room in the house (typically the living room). Here's another tip: most decks are built in increments of 2 feet. That's because building materials are usually sold in even lengths of 8, 10, 12 feet, or longer. Check the cost per linear foot of the lumber you're considering; usually 12-foot boards are the most cost-effective. The cost per linear foot of a 12-foot board is likely to be several cents less than the cost of either an 8-foot or 16-foot board. When you're buying a lot of lumber, this cost savings can be significant, and it's the reason the average deck is 12x24 feet.

Once you've checked local building codes and identified the locations of any underground lines, you'll need to see to details like deck access points other than the house. You may need steps for yard access, or perhaps even a patio to form a transition between the deck and the yard. Naturally, you need to consider railings, built-in seating and even planter boxes before you begin construction.

Estimate the materials you'll require. Be aware that lumber actually has two sizes – its nominal size (such as 2x4) and its actual size (a 2x4 is actually 1-1/2x3-1/2 inches). When you're graphing out your deck, draw in the nominal size. When you're estimating your materials, think in actual size. For 2x4 decking, multiply the square footage by 3.2 to get linear foot size and divide that number by the length of boards you'll purchase, such as 8, 10, or 12 feet. For 2x6 boards, multiply square footage by 2 instead of 3.2. The result is the number of boards you'll need for decking.

Don't forget the lumber you'll need for joists. The heftier

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A JOB WELL DONE

After complete renovation, this ¾ basement bath is worthy of a place on the main level of its Highland home! Our customer chose to modernize with ceramic tile flooring, brass fixtures, and a drywall ceiling in place of their existing drop ceiling.

We reconfigured the shower area to provide a more spacious bathing area and create an air of openness in the room. The contemporary shower includes a Corian surround with built-in corner shelves, and the homeowner opted for the luxury of both a shower head and hand-held



unit. We enclosed the area with gold-framed, hammered-glass shower doors.

A StarMark oak vanity, marble vanity top and larger gold-framed wall mirror round out this up-to-date look.

Sincerely,

Scott A. Filler
Vice President



COOKING IN YOUR KITCHEN

Chicken Casserole

1 ½ lbs. boneless, skinless chicken breasts
1 bag frozen broccoli
2 c. shredded cheddar cheese
2 sleeves of saltine crackers

1 box chicken Rice-a-Roni
1 can cream of chicken soup
1 c. mayonnaise
½ c. butter or margarine

Boil chicken and cut into bite-size pieces or shred when cool. While chicken is boiling, prepare Rice-a-Roni according to the package instructions, and cook broccoli. Mix cream of chicken soup and mayonnaise together. Saute crackers in butter and set aside.

Spread Rice-a-Roni evenly in bottom of 13 X 9 glass casserole dish. Cover rice with ½ of the mayonnaise mixture. Layer broccoli on top of the mixture, followed by the chicken, spreading all ingredients evenly. Cover chicken with second half of mixture. Spread cheese on top and cover evenly with sauteed crackers.

Bake at 350 degrees until warmed through and cheese is bubbling.



Our Commitment To Customer Satisfaction Is The Key Ingredient Of Our Success



EMPLOYEE SPOTLIGHT



In this issue of *The Punch List* we're putting the spotlight on Apex employee Hal Warren who recently celebrated his one-year anniversary with us. His responsibilities here primarily involve the installation of Pella Windows.

Born on an Army base in Nuremberg, Germany, Hal relocated to the United States with his family around his first birthday. After graduating from Crown Point High School in 1983, Hal enlisted in the U.S. Marines. As a radio operator, his military service took him to such places as Honduras, where he helped to rebuild after fighting there. He's the father of two children, Cheryl, 14, and Dustin, 11, and currently resides in Hebron.

Hal has proven more than capable in the duties he's been asked to perform for us. If you're considering a window project yourself, you'll certainly be glad to have Hal's expertise at work for you!

FOUNDATIONS...

See everything.
Overlook a great deal.
Improve a little.

—POPE JOHN XXIII

DID YOU KNOW ?

The life cycle of the common housefly spans only 17 days. So, don't worry this summer if you keep missing him with your swatter – he'll be gone soon anyway!

ASK APEX

Reliable answers to your remodeling questions!

Q: We have two pieces of good wood furniture that are showing their age because their clear finish has become marred. What's the best method of stripping the finish? Lisa G.

A: First, determine if the finish is polyurethane by applying acetone, fingernail polish or a refinisher to the finish. If the chemical does not soften the finish, it is probably polyurethane and you'll need to use a **chemical stripper**. Brush on a thick coating of the stripper in a single pass of the brush. (Don't brush it out as you would paint.) Wait until the finish has bubbled up before trying to remove it. How long you wait will depend on the stripper you use; it can range from 10 minutes to 24 hours. Check the label. To prevent slower-acting strippers from drying out before they can work, cover the surface with plastic wrap. After the finish has bubbled up, use a plastic scraper to lift off the finish on flat surfaces and an old toothbrush for irregular surfaces. Clean the surface with mineral spirits or water as recommended by the stripper's manufacturer. When all the finish is removed, apply a neutralizer to stop the chemical reaction.

To remove clear finishes other than polyurethane without removing the stain or coloring, use a **chemical furniture refinisher**. Working a small area at a time, dip a steel wool pad into a small container of refinisher and rub the surface with light pressure and a circular motion. Rinse the pad in refinisher often. When the finish is removed, go over the entire surface with clean refinisher to remove residue lap marks. It is important here to check the label on your refinisher. Some chemicals react with steel wool and will stain the finish. Bronze wool or another applicator may be recommended.

TRADE SECRETS

Do-it-yourself tips for safe, professional results

- The recommended weight rating for a particular hanger assumes you'll be mounting the object to the wall. If you're hanging a picture or other object on a surface that moves (a door, for example) use a hanger rated for heavier loads;
- To minimize roller marks when painting, pre-dampen your roller with water and shake out. Keep paint from building up on the roller ends. Spread paint in a zigzag motion starting with an upward stroke to avoid splatters and, without lifting the roller, fill in with parallel strokes;
- You can clean outdoor wicker furniture simply by hosing it off. If it's really dirty, use a sponge, mild soap, and cold water. Allow to dry, and apply paste wax to keep it shiny and water resistant;
- If your toilet begins to overflow, remove the tank lid and push the flush valve closed. It covers the tennis ball-sized opening in the bottom of the tank. All you have left to do after that is unclog the toilet; and finally,
- If you didn't drain the gasoline from your lawn mower before storing it for the winter, do so now and refill it before you use it. Gasoline loses strength after 30 days. The chemical composition of it changes and it can harm your engine. Empty the gas in a well-vented area and dispose of it properly.



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Inside The Numbers



Gross vehicle weight of new Apex dump truck:	23,000 lbs.
Number of Pella Window jobs completed by Apex in 2001:	122
Number of national magazines that have recognized/written about Apex:	3
Copies of new Apex brochure printed:	3,000
Number of new kitchen displays in the Apex showroom:	2
Number of jobs done by Apex in the Southlake Mall Food Court:	1

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the lumber you use, the longer the joists can span between supports, based on how close the joists are to each other. For instance, 2x6 joists spaced 24 inches apart can run 6 feet between supports; 2x10s can span 10 feet when spaced 24 inches apart. Heftier lumber will cost more, but it can cut construction time and save on hardware costs. A good book about deck building can further clarify this concept. Most codes require that decks support at least 40 pounds per square foot. To achieve that, if you’re using 2x4 decking, your joists should be placed 24 inches apart. If you purchase wider deck boards, such as 2x6s, you can plan 36 inches between joists.

Decks consume nails by the pound. For every 40 square feet of deck, plan at least 1 pound of 16d common nails for joists and 2 pounds galvanized spiral nails, which stay down better than regular nails, for decking. Buy a few extra pounds for insurance. If you’re not planning to seal your deck, use wood screws instead of nails; they’ll cost considerably more, but will hold down the boards better should the wood begin to warp over the years.

With proper planning and the appropriate tools, constructing a simple deck is within an average homeowner’s capabilities. Putting extra effort into these preliminary steps will save time, money and a lot of aggravation. Remember, however, that if you just don’t feel up to the challenge of doing the work yourself, or you’re dreaming of an elaborate, multilevel deck with all the trimmings, APEX can help. Contact us to come out and give you an estimate, or stop in our showroom for more information!