



■ HOME MAINTENANCE

Keeping up with the ages

By ALLISON EVANS
PRESS ASSISTANT EDITOR

The tie that binds Janet Loyd Kemper and Cherie Threlkeld Henshaw is made of hand-hewn logs. They're part of Kemper's childhood home and now provide the fabric of a home where Henshaw and her husband, Mark, live. These Crittenden County logs are full of nearly 200 years worth of fascinating stories.

"If these walls ever talk, I'm not gonna miss it, because there will be some good stories," Henshaw said, while sharing a laugh with Kemper.

Henshaw purchased the home in 2001 from Bill Loyd's estate. She put it on the market after nine years, but it never sold.

"It wasn't meant for me to sell, and I'm so glad it didn't sell," she said. "A lot of people looked at it, but the fact that it only has two bedrooms and one bathroom was a drawback, but it's fine for Mark and me."

"Nothing has ever felt like home more than this house."

Hand-etched into a stone on the brick front porch is 1839. That stone was taken from the foundation of one of five structures Bill Loyd bought in Crittenden and Livingston counties in the late 1940s. He used logs from those old places to create the two-bedroom house. The year carved into stone for posterity apparently signals the time period when one of the original structures was built. It was later torn down and moved to Marion by Loyd as part of a re-assembled cabin just inside the Marion city limit not far from Food Giant on U.S. 60 East.

Bill and Martha Ann Loyd were married in 1948. He built the cabin for their family home.

The front door—which was actually a barn door Loyd bought with the log structures—opens into the living room where the eye is immediately drawn to a massive stone fireplace surrounded by exposed logs. Visible from both the interior and exterior is a stone chimney, with the fireplace hearth created with a massive solid stone taken from the foundation of one of the original structures. The Henshaws still use the wood-burning fireplace.

All four of the Loyd's children—Tommy, Libby, Janet and Paul—grew up in the log home on

Sturgis Road until they started families of their own.

It's in the house that Henshaw and Kemper built a friendship that is 40 years strong.

The two were Rocket cheerleaders in high school, they played softball together in their 20s and Henshaw set Kemper up on a blind date with her now-husband Dale.

Given the women's lasting relationship, it brings a peace of mind for Kemper as she's able to revisit her childhood home and share a glass of lemonade with a longtime friend.

"We wanted it to go to someone who would love it and take care of it. It's nice to see it like this," Kemper said. "And Cherie has done a very good job, because it is a lot of work taking care of the logs and replacing the chinking."

"My mom loved antiques and Cherie does too. Cherie's taste and mama's taste all fit."

A few of the original antique pictures, fixtures and pieces of furniture have been in the house since it was first built, including a wardrobe in one of the bedrooms and a wall-mounted wrought iron light fixture in the original kitchen.

Henshaw has collected most of the primitives at local estate sales and at antique stores in Marion, Hazel and Sturgis.

No additions or modifications have been made to the house since it was raised other than the kitchen the Loyds added very soon after the house was complete. Seems they quickly learned there was not enough room to cook for and feed a family of six in the original space, so they added a larger kitchen on the west end of the house.

It's a good thing, because Kemper remembers that the house was seldom occupied by just her and her immediate family.

For a few years, Martha Ann operated a kindergarten class in the large family room at the back of the house. She also operated a bed and breakfast before the term became commonplace in Marion, Kemper fondly recalls.

"That's what my brother Tommy said at her funeral, that she operated a bed and breakfast before it was fashionable," she said.

There were always teenagers here," Kemper said. "Some of the football players who lived in Union or Webster counties would stay here through the week so they could play football, and go home on the weekends."

Henshaw painted the kitchen cabinets, had a new custom wood

countertop installed, and aside from replacing the windows and refinishing the hardwood floors, she's made very few changes to the house.

When necessary, she has employed Amish craftsmen to replace deteriorating logs on the exterior of the home, which she painted Old World Grey in 2009.



(Clockwise from top) Cherie Henshaw (left) and Janet Kemper have a 40-year friendship that began in this house where Kemper grew up and Henshaw now lives. White chinking and nearly 200-year-old logs provide a dramatic backdrop for the beautiful stone fireplace, which is the centerpiece of the main living room. 7-Up Biscuits and a choice of apple preserves or strawberry butter are ready to be served from Henshaw's dining room table, which she purchased from the Bill Stallion estate. The antique spinning wheel was purchased from Wheeler Antiques in Marion. Southern Living cookbooks fill the open cabinet above the window, and hand-crafted wooden countertops carry the home's primitive theme into the kitchen. Finally, the red and white checkerboard floor and red dishes on the breakfast bar in the home's original kitchen brighten the room, which Martha Loyd quickly learned was too small for her growing family. A new, larger kitchen was soon added to the west end of the log home.

■ LAWN & GARDEN

More homeowners having soil tested for lawns, gardens...free

By JASON TRAVIS
PRESS STAFF WRITER

Collecting soil test samples has proven invaluable to farmers planting row crops. It's also become important for homeowners who want to enhance their homes and landscapes with flower beds, trees and shrubs.

Both spring and fall are busy times of the year for taking soil samples. As staff support at the University of Kentucky Cooperative Extension Service in Crittenden County, Becky Zahrtre said before planting row crops or adding plants to a landscape, the Extension office encourages individuals to have their soil tested to determine what types of nutrients are needed in the planting area.

A good, representative soil sam-

ple is important in making fertilizer recommendations. The depth of soil to be tested depends on the sample area. Tilled areas differ from lawns and turf grasses.

Individuals wishing to test soil samples may visit the Extension office and complete forms determining how the soil to be tested will be used—agricultural, home lawn and garden or commercial horticulture. Soil probes are free for checkout and soil sample bags are available for collection and identification.

"We see several people who come year after year, especially if they have a lot of fields. This year I've seen a lot more people that are gardening have soil tests done compared to last year," Zahrtre said. "It's incredibly ben-

eficial to know what you need to put in your soil. It doesn't matter if you're planning on planting something new or if you're trying to maintain something you already have. It's both time-saving and money-saving."

As the planting season gets under way, spring tends to be the busiest time for the collection of soil test samples.

"Right now, the soil test results take typically one to two weeks to get back," Zahrtre said. "When someone brings us a soil test sample, it goes into a computer system. Once that information is placed in the system, we send the soil to the lab in Princeton. The lab will then perform the tests and e-mail our office the results."

Once the results are received by the Extension office, the information can be mailed to individuals, they can be contacted or they may come by the office to retrieve the results. While the tests are performed at the Princeton lab, Zahrtre said the local Extension Service recommends that individuals bring the samples to the office in Marion because the information has to be put in the computer system.

"It will delay the process if you take samples to the Princeton lab, because they have to call and get certain information. It's just best to bring it here to your local Extension office. It just makes the process go a lot faster," she said.

Crittenden County Extension

Service allows individuals up to 12 soil tests per calendar year, free of charge. Any soil test above that number will cost \$5 per test. Any additional tests beyond the basic soil test require a fee. The Extension Service has a list of different tests available and their pricing.

Zahrtre said the Extension office's Facebook page is a great resource to keep producers and the general public updated on the many services offered through the Cooperative Extension Service.

"To keep up-to-date on any information that is occurring locally within our office, whether it's through the ag department, 4-H or family and consumer sciences department, you can search us on Facebook at Crit-

tenden County Extension Service and 'Like' us on there," she said. "Anytime we post, it will show up on your wall on Facebook. It's a great way to keep up-to-date on all the information we have coming through our office."

"So if you have questions about performing a soil test, or if you have questions about any of our home-maker clubs, 4-H groups, or any projects that are coming up with the ag department, you can always message us on Facebook or e-mail or call the office," Zahrtre said.

The Extension Office is located on U.S. 60, just east of Marion. Business hours are 8 a.m.—4:30 p.m. weekdays. The office is closed 12–1 p.m. For more information call 965-5236.

LAWN & GARDEN

Save time on lawn care

STATEPOINT MEDIA SERVICES

If it feels as though your entire weekends are spent mowing, trimming and watering your lawn, there are steps you can take to speed up your lawn care routine.

Automate

How many times have you forgotten to water your lawn—or worse yet, over-watered it? You can eliminate the guesswork (and the grunt work of dragging hoses around your yard) by installing an automatic sprinkler and drip irrigation system that is based on your specific landscape, characteristics and geographical region.

A well-designed system ensures peak efficiency, which means you're only watering your lawn when necessary. This is great for your grass and plants—and for your pocketbook.

New technologies are making it even easier to optimize a watering plan for your lawn, as they can be controlled from the comfort of your computer or from a handheld remote you can take into your backyard. For example, the Irritrol PCV Control system is a software system that allows you to set up an irrigation calendar for different areas of your property. This smart technology can even connect to the Internet and retrieve the day's weather for your zip code, and change watering time and frequency accordingly. Homeowners can visit www.irritrol.com to learn more.

Maintain your equipment

Keeping your mower properly maintained will save you time all season long. For walking mowers, a good maintenance routine is as follows:

- Carefully check blades for sharpness.

- Make sure the cutting deck is clear of clippings. Cooking spray on the underside of the deck will make a new mower easier to clean.

- Check pull cords to ensure they aren't frayed.

- Check that attachments are connected and working properly.

- If you use your mower infrequently, fill the tank with a fuel stabilizer.

- Periodically change the oil and perform air filter maintenance.

Less is more

It's tempting to cut the grass as frequently as do your neighbors. But where mowing is concerned, less is more. You can prevent weeds from taking over your lawn by letting your grass grow out a bit, as longer grass supports a deeper root system. If you cut more than one-third of the grass length, you will have clumps of clippings that lie on top of the lawn, slower decomposition, and a less attractive, bristly appearing lawn.

Keeping grass longer also allows it greater surface area to carry out photosynthesis, which results in healthier plants. In addition, taller grass grows slower than shorter grass. You can use this fact to eliminate up to 20 percent of the mowing you do annually, an average savings of about eight hours a year, not to mention the savings of gasoline and wear on equipment.

When you do cut the grass, be sure you're using great time saving equipment. A model with great maneuverability will give you greater control around landscaping and obstacles.

With all that time saved working on your lawn, you'll have more time to kick back, relax and simply enjoy your lawn instead.



STATEPOINT MEDIA SERVICES
New technology allows users to control their irrigation and lighting from the comfort of their computer.

GREEN IMPROVEMENTS

Eco-friendly improvements at home can be affordable

STATEPOINT MEDIA SERVICES

Homeowners take on projects to improve their homes for a variety of reasons. Some may do so to make a home more functional, while others may do so to improve their home's resale value.

Some homeowners take on a home improvement project to make their homes more eco-friendly. Such projects are often mistakenly assumed to be costly undertakings, but there are several cost-effective ways to make a home more eco-friendly.

- Upgrade your appliances. A home improvement project does not have to require the use of a hammer and nails or the hiring of a contractor. A simple home improvement project like upgrading older appliances, including the washer and dryer, to newer, more efficient models can give a home a fresh look while reducing energy consumption. That reduction in energy consumption is a byproduct of the stricter standards placed on manufacturers who must adhere to guidelines to produce products that are more energy-efficient. For example, the Natural Resources Defense Council notes that today's energy-efficient refrigerators will use less than half the energy of models made as recently as 15 years ago.

- Add more insulation. Adding more insulation or replacing older insulation used to be an especially laborious process. However, in many instances insulation can now be added or upgraded to a home without any major reconstruction or demolition, reducing the cost of the project considerably. Adding more insulation to a home can reduce energy consumption in the winter, when the home will feel warmer and allow you to keep the thermostat at a more reasonable number.

- Install high-efficiency water fixtures. Few people think about how much water they consume over the course of a typical day, but the figures might be eye-opening to those who hope to adopt a more eco-friendly

lifestyle. According to the U.S. Geological Survey's Water Science School, it's generally accepted that the average person uses between 80 and 100 gallons of water each day. Showers seem to be especially wasteful, as older shower heads might be using as much as 5 gallons per minute, or 50 gallons of water during a 10-minute shower.

Older fixtures that consume such massive amounts of water can be easily and affordably replaced with newer, more efficient fixtures. Today's high-efficiency low-flow showerheads can provide a strong shower stream while reducing water consumption. Such showerheads are also less taxing on your water heater, reducing your energy consumption as a result. Homeowners can also install high-efficiency toilets that use as little as 1.3 gallons of water per flush (compared to older models that consumed as many as 5 gallons per flush). The Environmental Protection Agency estimates that installing water-efficient fixtures and appliances would save more than 3 trillion gallons of water and more than \$18 billion annually.

- Install a programmable thermostat. Programmable thermostats present another affordable way to improve a home and benefit the environment. Some of today's programmable thermostats can record personal preferences and usage and determine the best course of action for heating and cooling your home. Temperatures can be adjusted room-by-room, and the programmable thermostat allows homeowners to control their heating and cooling while they're out of the house, ensuring they're not paying to heat or cool an empty house and wasting energy in doing so.

Home improvement projects don't have to be a grand undertaking, particularly when a homeowner's goal is to make a home more eco-friendly. A few minor and affordable changes may be all it takes to improve a home and benefit the environment at the same time.

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■ INTERIOR IMPROVEMENTS

Bold colors bring home alive

METRO AD SERVICES
Paint is one of the least expensive and most versatile means to changing the look of a room. According to the experts from "This Old House," 60 percent of the colors of a home that visitors perceive come from the paint on the walls. Choosing a color scheme can be challenging, which is why so many people stick with neutrals like beige and white. For those who are ready to add a spark of color, there are a few guidelines to consider.

Color theory is a science and there are rules of using color that are taught as early as a child's first foray into art class. We know there are primary, secondary and complementary colors on the color wheel. Even novice home decorators can do well with color if they use the color wheel as their guideline.

According to HGTV, color should flow throughout a house. Every room need not be painted the same color. However, colors should be complementary enough that they flow into one another. Don't paint one room in child's basic primary colors, while painting other rooms in jewel tones and pastels. Stick with one theme and carry it through the house.

Once you have decided to use a bold color, first find your color inspiration. Color combinations that appear in nature are more readily accepted by people, so look for an item in nature, such as a seashell or a



METRO AD SERVICES
Paint can be a simple, inexpensive way to change not only the look of a room, but the entire home.

flowering plant that you can base your color choices on. Others pull inspiration from a particular design item. For instance, maybe an area rug strikes your fancy. Use colors that appear in the rug in the room.

Keep in mind that using bold color doesn't mean you have to paint every wall from ceiling to floor in that color. Rather, if you're just starting out with bold colors, select one wall to serve as an accent wall. Use that wall as your bold canvas and paint it with your chosen hue.

Some people like to experiment with a more flashy color in a smaller space. If you're nervous about beginning in the living room or kitchen, how about trying out bold color in a smaller space, such as a powder room? A more intimate space might

seem less overwhelming when painted in a bold color. Go for a deep purple or another jeweled tone. However, try to avoid greens in the bathroom, as they may reflect off of the mirror and cast a hue onto your face that makes you look unwell. Pinks and peaches will shed a rosy glow.

If you will be incorporating complementary colors into the room, use the paint color swatch as your guide. Most paint manufacturers use three or four different shades on one sample card. When selecting a complementary shade, be sure to pick from the same tone on the card. That means if you're choosing the darkest of color #1 from a card, you'll want to choose the darkest from color #2.

Another idea is to leave walls neutral and use bold color on design accents. For example, designers at marthastewart.com recommend painting the inside of niches, shelves or cabinets with glass doors in bright tones and the outside white to create an eye-catching space without going overboard. Put a bold color on moulding or use an appliance or a fixture in a bright color as your splash of boldness.

Remember to have balance. If you will be painting an entire room in a bold color, think about having the other decor items in neutral colors. Sofas and rugs should be neutral colors, or consider toning down a vibrant color with the use of white molding or baseboards.

All it may take is a little inspiration to get started on fun, inviting color schemes in the home. Furniture store Raymour & Flanigan offers a handy design tool for incorporating different colors into a space. Find ideas at www.raymourflanigan.com/Design-Center/Color-Story.aspx.

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■ AT THE MOVIES

Home projects on film

METRO AD SERVICES
There are so many people who are anxious to get knee-deep in home improvement projects. Still others are more than happy to leave the work to a professional and sit back and enjoy the results. Those who choose to hire a contractor can certainly get their fill of home improvement projects by watching films where homes or renovations are central to the plot.

1. "Money Pit": No list would be complete without including this movie starring Tom Hanks and Shelley Long, who attempt to renovate a mansion only to be met with disaster after disaster.

2. "The Notebook": Nicholas Sparks' novel turned into this unforgettable, romantic film is a love story at its core. However, the renovation of a Victorian home in the Carolinas is also central to the story and makes

for amazing imagery.

3. "Poltergeist": This movie showcases what can go wrong when a home takes on a life of its own as malevolent ghosts take over.

4. "Under the Tuscan Sun": While renovating a home might be considered interesting, doing so in the remote beauty of the Italian countryside makes for a much more visually appealing film.

5. "House of Sand and Fog": A woman is evicted from her home after it is wrongly repossessed and auctioned. Together with a sheriff's deputy the woman begins harassing the new owners of the home in an attempt to get back her residence.

6. "Field of Dreams": Although it is not the house that is getting a makeover, but rather the fields behind this impressive farmhouse, viewers can be mesmerized by the magic that ensues afterward.

■ BATHROOM

Walk-in offers modern look

METRO AD SERVICES
More and more homeowners embracing a relatively new way to shower. Walk-in showers are doorless structures designed to give the shower an open look.

Walk-in showers appear larger than more traditional showers, and those that do take up more space do so to prevent water from spraying around the room. Though walk-in showers do not have doors, they do employ a glass partition to keep water in.

Walk-in showers often give a bathroom a more modern look, but their role is more than aesthetic. In fact, many seniors find it is easier to get in and out of a walk-in shower, something that could reduce their risk of falling and suffering an injury.

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■ OUTDOOR MAINTENANCE

Is your air conditioner ready for springtime?

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When the weather heats up, your heating, ventilation and air conditioning (HVAC) system quickly becomes a most valuable player in your home life and stays that way for several months. However, the U.S. Census Bureau estimates that more than 3 million HVAC systems fail each year. Do you know if it's time to maintain, repair or replace your air conditioning system?

"Air conditioning is a big investment in your home. Learning what maintenance steps you can take on your own and what questions to ask your air conditioning contractor, can save you time, money and keep you comfortable this season," says Frank Landwehr, Vice President of Emerson Climate Technologies, a major provider of equipment used in heating, ventilation, air conditioning and refrigeration systems.

Remember, not all maintenance needs to be outsourced. Here are some preventive tasks to take that can extend the life of air conditioning equipment:

- Change air filters: A general rule is to change indoor ductwork filters every three months or at the beginning of every heating and cooling season. Ensure the filter is sized correctly, fitting snugly.
- Keep the outdoor unit clean: Keep coils free of debris by hosing off with light pressure. Any bushes or shrubs should be trimmed back away from the unit.
- Let air flow: Maintain a reliable airflow to reduce moisture buildup which can lead to mold. Keep vents open. Similarly, keep internal doors open inside your home to maintain air flow.
- Clean duct grills: Annually, clean the vents and grills at the opening of each duct in every room by lifting the grill out of the floor, wiping with a rag or vacuuming to remove dust and debris.
- Keep condensate drain open: A stopped up condensate line can lead to expensive water damage. Keep the drain line clean and the drain tube open and clear to prevent backup.

Good maintenance will only get



STATEPOINT MEDIA SERVICES

When the weather heats up with spring, the air-conditioning becomes a most valuable player at your home

you so far. Eventually, your equipment will need to be replaced. Landwehr offers these tips for when that time comes:

- Hire wisely: Even the best equipment won't provide comfort if it's not sized and installed properly. Hire only a certified A/C technician you trust. Also, remember that not all contractors will carry the brand you want. Determine what features and comfort level you want so you can identify a contractor that can fill your need.
- Educate yourself: You can make smarter investment decisions if you're speaking the same language as your contractor and they understand what you want. You can hone your A/C knowledge online at fact-based, objective resources like www.AC-HeatingConnect.com.
- Save money: A few features can go a long way toward maximizing energy efficiency, saving you money in the long run. Use a programmable thermostat to avoid wasting money on cooling costs when no one is home. Also, consider a high efficiency air conditioner with a Seasonal Energy Efficiency Ratio (SEER) rating of above 16.

This season, keep your cool. Take the time to maintain, repair and replace your A/C equipment when necessary.

■ INTERIOR IMPROVEMENTS

Increase your storage space

METRO AD SERVICES

What homeowner has not lamented that they have many more belongings than they have storage space? In some homes, particularly in older homes, closet space and other areas to store items may be lacking. Apartment dwellers often find they're lacking in storage space as well. But savvy homeowners can find both permanent and temporary solutions to their home storage problems.

One of the easiest ways to create storage space is to simply remove some belongings from the residence. Go through closets around the house and pick through the attic and/or garage to see if there are any items that can be discarded or donated. Items that are broken can be discarded, while those things that still have utility can be donated or sold.

The next step is to maximize the space of your existing closets. Many closets are equipped with just a shelf and a clothing rack, greatly limiting the storage potential. Investing in a closet organization system is one way to transform a poorly utilized space. These systems can be purchased, often inexpensively, from a

home improvement center. Compiled of modular racks and shelving, the positioning can be customized depending on the size of the closet. Oftentimes, the addition of shelving or another rack for hanging clothes can solve some storage issues. These closet systems also are ideal for renters because they can be installed with minimal damage and be removed when a lease expires.

Homeowners may have to think vertically to solve storage solutions. Wall space may be abundant in a home where closets are not. Therefore, shelving and cabinets can be places to keep items neatly off the floor. A series of shelves can be installed next to a washing machine to keep laundry supplies organized. In children's rooms, build bookcases the height of the room so children can store frequently used reading material and toys on the lower levels, and adults can put collectibles and mementos near the top. Hang hooks to hold hats and robes. Whenever possible, look to store items on the walls where they will keep clutter off the floor.

Storage can even be created in the bathroom, where the space over

the toilet can be used to hang a cabinet to store hand towels and other toiletries if the space under the sink has already been claimed.

Many apartment dwellers recognize the advantage of having items that serve double-duty in their living spaces. For example, a convertible sofa can be used for sitting and then turn into a bed for overnight guests. Ottomans that have a storage compartment can house anything from throw blankets to magazines. An armoire may house the television but also have a pull-out shelf that can hold a laptop computer.

In the kitchen, move food items out of cabinetry and into a "pantry" you create elsewhere in the house, such as a laundry room or garage. This frees up more room for pots and pans. Cabinets that have pull-out shelving help maximize tight recesses of cabinets and keep things organized and in sight. For those with limited cabinets, pots and pans can be hung from a pot rack suspended in the kitchen.

Even when there is a small amount of storage space, individuals can find clever ways to neatly store items.

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■ OUTDOOR IMPROVEMENTS

Various materials can be used to pave a driveway

STATEPOINT MEDIA SERVICES

When renovating a home, many homeowners look to increase the home's curb appeal. "Curb appeal" is a term used to describe how the home's exterior appears to buyers the moment they pull up to the curb. A home that impresses prospective buyers before they even go inside is said to have a strong curb appeal, and that curb appeal can add significant value to a home.

Homeowners looking to improve the curb appeal of their home can do so in a variety of ways. One often overlooked yet effective way to make a home's exterior more appealing is to revamp the driveway. Driveways may not be high on a homeowner's renovation totem pole, but a cracked or unsightly driveway can give prospective buyers the impression that a home has not been properly taken care of. When addressing a driveway, homeowners have a host of paving materials at their disposal.

Asphalt

Asphalt is an affordable paving material, which likely plays a role in its popularity among homeowners. Asphalt is also easy to install and requires little maintenance, two additional benefits to homeowners who don't have much time to install or look after their driveway. Asphalt is

made from a combination of concrete, gravel and tar, and though it's easy and affordable to install, asphalt, as any kid can tell you, can get awfully hot under the summer sun. Asphalt can also crack rather easily, so homeowners must weigh its immediate affordability against the likelihood that perhaps it will need to be replaced sooner than other materials.

Brick

Brick is among the more expensive paving materials, as brick is a labor-intensive material to install. But brick allows homeowners to create distinctive patterns that can add quite a bit to a home's curb appeal. Once installed, brick driveways don't require much maintenance, though cracked bricks will need to be replaced.

Cobblestone

Cobblestone can be very pleasing to the eye, but that aesthetic appeal won't come cheap. Among the more expensive paving materials, cobblestone can also be a handful to maintain, as weeds can penetrate the cobblestones rather easily. Loose or missing stones can be unsightly and will need to be replaced.

Many homeowners who love the look of cobblestone choose to use it along walkways or on their patios, as



STATEPOINT MEDIA SERVICES

A well-maintained driveway can add to a home's curb appeal.

these areas won't require as much materials, saving both money and the time it takes to maintain the cobblestones.

Concrete

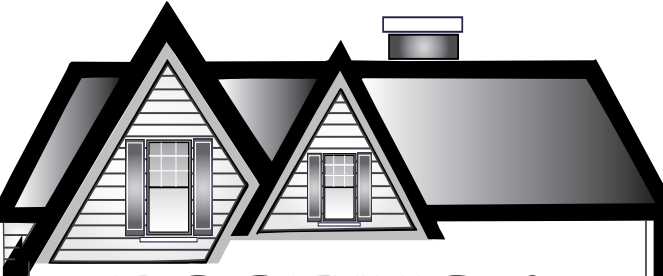
Concrete is perhaps the ideal paving material for the homeowner who wants to express his or her individuality. That's because concrete driveways can be laid in a variety of colors and designs, adding a touch of personality in a place many homeowners likely thought such expression was impossible.

Though affordable, concrete can fall victim to the elements, as extremely cold temperatures can cause

the concrete to shift and ultimately crack. Concrete pavers can remedy this problem, though that will add to the overall cost of the project.

Gravel

A gravel driveway can give a home a historical look that few of today's homes can boast. Gravel is an affordable material that requires little maintenance, though weeds can grow through gravel and must be removed to maintain the driveway's appeal. Washout is a concern for some who want a gravel driveway, but edging the driveway with a material like timber or bluestone can prevent the gravel from washing away.



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■ OUTDOOR IMPROVEMENTS

It's the law: Call 811 before you dig

KENTUCKY PRESS NEWS SERVICE

The Commonwealth just concluded "Safe Digging Month."

"Kentucky has worked hard to improve awareness of the call-before-you-dig requirements in state law," Gov. Steve Beshear said in a news release. "But we still have far too many incidents of excavators hitting buried utility lines."

By designating last month as Safe Digging Month, the governor said he hoped to promote and increase the use of the 811 statewide toll-free telephone number to request marking of buried utility lines.

Kentucky Public Service Commission Chairman David Armstrong said that digging into buried lines is more than just a problem for utility companies. "We have seen how such

incidents can cause substantial damage to property and, in the case of electric and gas lines, severe injury or death," he said. "Damaged lines also threaten public health and safety by interrupting vital services such as electricity, water or telephone."

Despite efforts to promote the use of the 811 service, dig-ins continue to disrupt utility service, Armstrong said. For example, in February a cut telephone cable interrupted service to nearly 1,000 Campbell County customers, he said.

"Losing your telephone landline can compromise access to enhanced 911 emergency service," Armstrong said. "That is much more than just an inconvenience if someone needs medical, fire or police assistance."

Beshear noted that April marked the sixth anniversary of the Federal Communication Commission's designation of 811 as the nationwide call-before-you-dig number.

Excavation activities that damage buried lines increase in the spring.

The 811 number was adopted as an easy-to-remember number to call to have utilities located prior to excavation. It replaced toll-free numbers that were unique to each state.

In 2008, Kentucky enacted a statute that expanded enforcement of laws requiring underground utility lines to be located and marked prior to most excavation or demolition activity. Tim Vaughn, regulatory affairs director of Kentucky 811, the state's call-before-you-dig center, said that protecting buried utility lines re-

quires constantly reinforcing the message to call before you dig.

The greatest risk to underground natural gas pipelines is accidental damage during excavation. Even minor damage such as a gouge, scrape, dent, or crease to a pipeline or its coating may cause a leak or failure. If you suspect a gas leak, leave the area immediately and call Atmos Energy at (866.) 22.8667 or call 911.

Kentucky 811 is a voluntary organization with more than 340 members, including most of Kentucky's largest utility service providers. A call to Kentucky 811 will result in location of underground facilities owned by its members.

Kentucky 811 is available 24 hours a day, seven days a week.

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■ SPRING CLEANING

Garage Organization 101

METRO AD SERVICES

Garages are coveted by homeowners across the country, offering a space to park a car and protect it from the elements. But many people do not park a car in their garage, only to find the garage become a home to clutter.

Garages tend to become the official catch-all of a home. When an item cannot be crammed into a hiding space elsewhere, it often ends up dumped into the garage, where it joins the long list of other abandoned items. It can be easy to let garages become a wasteland because everything put inside a garage is behind a closed door. That mess can quickly build up, and reclaiming your garage requires energy, time, organization, and a plan.

Organizing a garage will take some time. An entire weekend or two consecutive days may be necessary depending on the level of disarray. Taking everything out of the garage and going through the sorting process may take the most time. When sorting, separate any broken items, which can immediately be put at the curb for trash pick-up. Examine things that you have not used in some time. If you haven't missed it, there's a good chance that you can discard the item or donate it. Create separate piles for donations and trash.

Move the items that will be kept into a separate pile. After all of the trash and donations are removed from the premises, then you can look at what is remaining and begin planning out a more organized storage system.

There may be things in the "keep" pile that are simply out of place in the garage and may be better stored elsewhere. Think about which items can be moved to a basement or attic because of their infrequency of use, such as holiday decorations, suitcases, and collectibles. You may prefer to move lawn and garden items out of the garage and into a shed in the backyard.

After completing the sorting



METRO AD SERVICES

Even a home that looks neat from the outside may be housing a disorganized mess behind the garage door.

process, look at the garage as a blank space and measure out the room that you have. This will provide an empty canvas as a starting off point. To maximize the amount of space you have as a work area or a place to park your car, invest in as many tools as possible to utilize vertical space. Shelving, hooks and cabinetry will take things off of the floor, while storage units with doors can hide items that lack aesthetic appeal. Rolling tool caddies and cabinets can keep all tools neat and in organized drawers so you're never hunting and pecking for a tool again. A cabinet that has a lock and key can be utilized for dangerous chemicals that need to be kept out of the hands of children and away from pets. Think about how the garage will appear from the curb when the door is raised and create a design that will

be functional and neat.

Take the opportunity while the garage is empty to give walls and floors a fresh coat of paint and improve the lighting in the garage. A brighter garage makes for a better work station.

For those who can use a little extra help, there are professional garage organization companies that can come in and install custom cabinetry and work surfaces. This is an option if you desire a high-end garage.

When putting items back into the garage, label where everything is stored until you become accustomed to the new organization. This way you'll be able to find everything easily.

Organizing a garage can be tedious, but the reward is ultimately worth the effort.

■ HEALTH & SAFETY

Keep safety in mind when pressure washing your home

METRO AD SERVICES

Exposure to the elements can take its toll on the exterior of a home. Dirt, mold and mildew can compromise the look of a home and yard, which is why many people begin the spring season by dusting off the pressure-washing machine and making resolutions to strip the dirt off of siding, furniture and patios. However, serious injuries can result if a pressure washer is used improperly. Getting schooled in pressure-washer safety is essential to preventing a trip to the emergency room.

It can be easy to underestimate the power of a pressure washer. An electric-powered machine may generate up to 1,000 pounds per square inch (psi) of water pressure. Gas-powered machines are even more dynamic, offering pressure up to 4,000 psi. That force coupled with wet surfaces can easily cause falls, slips and abrasions. Pressure washers may even cause blindness when

chemical cleaners are used in conjunction with the pressure washer.

It is advisable to leave pressure washing to a professional. However, for homeowners who do choose to try this cleaning method, safety precautions are essential.

- Dress properly by donning rubber-soled shoes to prevent slips on wet surfaces.
- Wear protective eyewear to shield the eyes from any projectiles or injury from the water spray itself.
- Wear sturdy gloves with grips so you can have a firm hold on the nozzle while cleaning.
- Be sure to read all of the safety precautions and operation instructions in the manual prior to operating the pressure washer. Do not use a washer if the instruction manual is missing.
- Remove any debris surrounding the area you will be cleaning. This may include sticks, rocks, toys, and any other items that can be blown around with the pressure washer

spray.

- Use a safety harness if you will be using a pressure washer while on a ladder or elevated surface.
- To lessen the chance of high-pressure injection (HPI), which is when water and other debris penetrates the skin resulting in deep-tissue damage, broaden the spray on the nozzle so it isn't piercing like a needle. HPI can cause infections so great that they may require amputation.
- Use an extension cord that is water-resistant and acceptable for outdoor use. Ensure there are no breaks in the cord to minimize the chance for electrocution.
- Avoid hot water and steam pressure washers to eliminate the chance for burns.

Thousands of people are estimated to be hospitalized due to pressure-washer injuries. Many of these injuries can be prevented simply by heeding safety precautions and following the rules of operation.

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■ ENERGY

Energy-saving equals cash

NEWS RELEASE
With most New Year's resolutions already history, it's never too late to resolve saving energy. On that note, Kentucky Utilities Co. (KU) offers five tips to for energy-saving over the course of the year. They are:
■ Perform a home energy analysis: KU offers two types: online and on-site. The online home energy analysis takes about 10 minutes and provides a customized report that includes recommendations on how to save energy. Or, sign up for an on-site home energy analysis and a certified

technician will assess your home's energy efficiency. Financial incentives are also available to eligible customers who take action to make their homes more energy efficient as a result of an on-site analysis.
■ Recycle that old, inefficient fridge or freezer: The fastest and easiest way to drop some (household) weight is to recycle that old, inefficient fridge or freezer hanging out in your garage or basement. Make an appointment, and KU will pick-up, haul away and properly recycle your working energy hog. In return, you'll

receive \$30 per recycled appliance within six to eight weeks.
■ Apply for a home energy rebate: KU offers monetary rewards ranging from \$50 to \$300 to help residential electric customers offset the purchasing costs of certain ENERGY STAR qualified appliances, high-efficiency HVAC systems and qualified window film.
■ Enroll in Demand Conservation: Get paid to help KU better manage peak summer energy demand. Even though it's winter, the utilities can still install a device on your

home's central air conditioning unit or heat pump. In return, the utilities will credit your monthly utility bill, June through September:
■ Check your HVAC system's air filter: Check your HVAC system's air filter monthly and replace as necessary, according to the manufacturer's recommendations. A dirty filter will slow air flow, making your system work harder to keep you warm in winter.
Visit lge-ku.com/savingenergy to learn more and to sign up for all the energy-saving programs listed.

■ ENERGY

Propane celebrates anniversary in 2013

NEWS RELEASE
Propane, the most common liquefied petroleum gas (LP-gas), is one of the nation's most versatile sources of energy and supplies about 4 percent of our total energy needs.
Propane exists as a liquid and a gas. At atmospheric pressure and temperatures above 44 degrees, it is a non-toxic, colorless and odorless gas. Just as with natural gas, an identifying odor is added so it can be readily detected. When contained in an approved cylinder or tank, propane exists as a liquid and vapor. The vapor is released from the container as a clean-burning fuel gas. Propane is 270 times more compact as a liquid than as a gas, making it economical to store and transport as a liquid.

clothes, barbecuing, lighting, and relaxing in front of the gas fireplace. According to the 1997 Residential Energy Consumption Survey report published by the U.S. Department of Energy's Energy Information Administration (EIA):
■ 8.1 million households use propane, and 4.6 percent of these homes use propane as their main heating source.
■ Of the nation's 6.3 million mobile/manufactured homes, 16 percent use propane as the main heating fuel.

tive colors for both safety and appearance.

History
In 1910, a Pittsburgh motor car owner walked into chemist Dr. Walter Snelling's office, complaining that the gallon of gasoline he had purchased was half a gallon by the time he got home. Consumers were being cheated, he said, because the gasoline was evaporating at a rapid and expensive rate, and he asked Dr. Snelling to investigate. Dr. Snelling took up the challenge. Using coils from an old hot-water heater and other miscellaneous pieces of laboratory equipment, he built a still that could separate the gasoline into its liquid and gaseous components and discovered that the evaporating gases were propane, butane and other hydrocarbons.
People soon discovered the value of this wonderful new fuel. By 1912, the first propane gas stove was cooking food in the home. The first

propane-powered vehicle ran in 1913, and, by 1915, propane was being used in torches to cut through metal. By 1920, propane was marketed for flame cutting and cooking applications. In 1927, total sales of propane in the United States exceeded 1 million gallons.
By the 1930s, the Compressed Gas Association (CGA) established and proposed a set of recommendations to the National Fire Protection Association (NFPA). In 1932, the first pamphlet of standards was adopted for publication. Known as the Liquefied Petroleum Gas Code, or NPFA 58, this standard is still in use today, having been adopted by most states as the basis for their regulations.
After World War II, as the nation's population grew and its economy expanded, annual sales of propane gas increased to more than 15 billion gallons. Today, propane gas is an \$8 billion industry in the United States alone and is still growing.

■ ENERGY

Credits for energy-efficient homes in America return

By MARY BETH BRECKENRIDGE
AKRON BEACON JOURNAL
Federal tax credits for energy-efficient home improvements are back.
Reinstatement of the popular credits was a little-noticed part of the American Taxpayer Relief Act, the last-minute legislation that kept America from tumbling over the fiscal cliff at the start of the year.
The law allows homeowners to claim tax credits of varying amounts on improvements such as insulation, energy-smart windows and highly efficient furnaces.
And there's more good news: Congress made those credits retroactive, meaning improvements made in both 2012 and 2013 will qualify.

main air circulating fan.
■ \$150 for a natural gas, propane or oil furnace or hot water boiler with an annual fuel utilization efficiency rate (AFUE) of 95 percent or greater.
■ \$300 for an electric heat pump water heater with an energy factor of at least 2.0.
■ \$300 for a highly efficient electric heat pump.
■ \$300 for a highly efficient central air conditioner.
■ \$300 for a natural gas, propane or oil water heater with an energy factor of at least 0.82 or a thermal efficiency of at least 90 percent.
■ \$300 for a biomass stove.

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The measure was applauded by energy-efficiency advocates.
"Obviously we think it's a really great move to help consumers afford (improvements) and encourage them to think about making these energy-efficiency investments in their homes," said Ronnie Kweiler, a spokesperson for the Alliance to Save Energy, a Washington energy-efficiency lobby.
She noted the law also contains incentives for appliance manufacturers to produce efficient clothes washers, dishwashers and refrigerators, and for home builders to construct energy-efficient homes.
Taken together, those incentives are "all really great to help make energy efficiency play a bigger role in the economy overall — and save consumers money," she said. "It's really a win-win all around."
John Hartmann agreed. He's a co-owner of Blind & Sons, a Barborton company that does heating, cooling, plumbing and electrical work.

"For consumers, this is great news," Hartmann said in a news release. The legislation rewards consumers who bought highly efficient heating and cooling equipment in 2012 and gives others an incentive to do the same in 2013, he said.
The legislation essentially turns back the clock to 2011, when the last batch of credits was in force. It erased the old expiration date on those credits and set a new deadline of Dec. 31, 2013.
The program still has a cap of \$500 in total credits. That limit goes all the way back to 2006, when the very first credits became available, Kweiler said. That means if you've already claimed \$500 in credits for energy-efficiency improvements, you're not eligible for more.
Specifically, these credits are available:
■ 10 percent of the cost of insulation materials and systems, not including installation.
10 percent of the cost of qualifying exterior doors, windows and skylights, not including installation. (Credits for windows and skylights are capped at \$200.)
■ 10 percent of the cost of metal and asphalt roofs specially designed to keep buildings cooler, not including installation.
■ \$50 for a furnace fan called a

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■ INTERIOR MAINTENANCE

Carpeting needs upkeep

METRO AD SERVICES
Much like paint, carpeting can quickly transform the look of a room. Carpeting can be a durable flooring material, but it will need upkeep to look its best.
Carpeting that will be in high-traffic areas, such as halls and entryways, may require the most TLC. Routine vacuuming is necessary to dislodge dust and dirt particles. But at some point a more thorough cleaning may be necessary.

Vacuuming
Frequent vacuuming will prolong the life of the carpet by preventing a buildup of particles inside of the carpet fiber that can eventually cause friction and sever carpet fibers. Use of a crevice tool and other attachments can enable cleaning in the corners where the carpet meets baseboards and moldings. When vacuuming larger rooms, divide the room into separate areas and tackle each area separately before moving on to another portion of the room.
Take time when vacuuming carpet. Plush carpets will trap dirt more easily than a thinner or less dense carpet, so more passes of the vacuum might be necessary. Overlap strokes in a crisscross pattern to get at dirt at different angles.

Pet hair and vacuumed particles of food can create odor inside of the vacuum bag. Therefore, think about adding baking soda or an odor-relieving product designed to be used when vacuuming.

Treating spills
Spills are one thing that homeowners in carpeted homes may fear. If not addressed quickly, liquid or food may permanently damage a carpet. It is advisable to manage a spill as soon as it happens to reduce the likelihood that it will contribute to a permanent stain. Carefully blot up the spill until much of the offending item is removed before adding any type of cleaning agent. Test the cleaning product in an inconspicuous area prior to using it on the spill to ensure it will not damage or discolor the carpet.
Work from the outside of the stain and move inward to keep the stain from spreading outward. Use a plush, white towel to blot up any remaining moisture and spill. The towel also will help to fluff up the pile of the carpet.

Remove shoes
Dirt and germs can be tracked into the house on the bottom of shoes. Eventually this material can be deposited on carpets, which then becomes lodged inside the fibers. To reduce the amount of dirt tracked in, make it a rule to take off shoes upon entering the house. If pets are the culprits of tracked-in dirt, keep a towel by the door and wipe the animal's paws before allowing it to roam through the house.

Steam clean to refresh
If you don't already own a steam-cleaner, they can be rented for a fraction of the cost of buying one. Together with steam, a cleaning solution is usually part of the procedure. The steam and cleaning product will loosen and dissolve dirt and then the dirty remains will be sucked up into a receptacle to be emptied. Steam cleaning is one of the easiest methods of thoroughly cleaning carpeting and reviving it to look as good as new. Many homeowners are quite surprised to see how much dirt can be removed from the carpet by using a steam-cleaner.

Intermittent use of a steam spot cleaner can help keep high-traffic areas of the home and stairs clean or treat a persistent stain that doesn't respond to hand cleaning.
Use area rugs
There is a misconception that area rugs are used in lieu of carpeting, but both can be used together. An area rug may be placed near an entryway to catch dirt from shoes before it is tracked elsewhere in the house. Area rugs can be used under a dining table where the frequent pulling out and pushing in of chairs may wear down carpeting.

Eliminate static
Static electricity can plague people who live in homes with carpeting, especially during cool, dry weather. Placing a dryer sheet on the bottom of a dry sponge mop and then running it over the carpet can alleviate static. This will help prevent those annoying shocks or even damage to electronic equipment from static shocks.
Carpeting is something that can make a statement in a home. When maintained, it can look beautiful for years to come.



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■ INTERIOR REMODELING


Basement remodel dos, don'ts

METRO AD SERVICES
Remodeling a basement is a popular home improvement project. A finished basement makes the space more functional and, when done correctly, can add a considerable amount of living space to a home.
Finishing a basement pays dividends in additional space in a home that doesn't require the same level of investment as putting an addition on the house. Also, the groundwork for a finished room is already there, as most basements are already set up with a poured concrete floor and some walls, usually cinder blocks. Some electrical components, plumbing and the creature comforts of drywall and a more inviting floor might be all that's necessary to finish a basement. The process can be labor-intensive, and many people prefer to leave it to a professional contractor. Whatever finishing method is chosen, homeowners should follow proper procedures when doing the work.
■ Do start with a detailed plan. Measure out the basement and mark any items that cannot be moved, such as a furnace, water heater or pipes. Create a design board that showcases the materials you plan to use on the project. Think about ways you plan to arrange furniture and con-

sider all of the possible uses for the room. Will it be a home theater? Will someone be sleeping down there? Each scenario will require certain amenities and safety requirements.
■ Don't plan to finish the entire basement. Doing so will leave you without a storage or utility area where you house holiday decorations, tools, luggage and similar items.
■ Do get the scoop on building codes. Knowing what the municipality allows in basement remodeling will help you to customize a plan that is functional, safe and legal. No one wants to be slapped with fines for failing to follow the rules. Plus, failure to meet building codes could mean the work that has been done must be torn out and redone. It pays to follow the chain of command and secure permits while having all work inspected.
■ Don't overlook adequate lighting in your refinishing plan. A basement is likely one area of the house that has limited natural light pouring in. With traditionally small windows, or no windows at all, a basement needs ample lighting in its design scheme. This may include a combination of overhead and task lighting. Ample lighting will help the room feel like part of the house and not just a

forgotten storage area.
■ Do take into consideration moisture issues in the basement. Many basements are plagued by moisture issues ranging from water seepage to condensation forming on walls. These situations may vary depending on the weather throughout the year. Certain materials may need to be used to mitigate water issues before finishing can take place. The installation of water-barrier systems, drainage, sump pumps, or encapsulation products could drive up the cost of a basement renovation. It is essential to have a professional assess the basement water issues prior to starting any finishing work.
■ Don't simply cover up potential hazards, such as mold or mildew. Have them treated instead. Otherwise, you could have a breeding ground behind drywall that could lead to unsafe conditions in the home.
■ Do have a radon test. Radon is a hidden killer that can cause lung cancer. Because it occurs naturally in the soil and water surrounding a home and is impossible to detect without a specialized test, many people are unaware of the presence of radon until it is too late. Radon may be more concentrated in the base-


ment, where the foundation is touching the soil. Therefore, rule out radon before considering renovation of a basement area.
■ Don't limit furniture choices to one type. You may need to be flexible in your furniture choices, even selecting modular pieces, like sectionals, because entryways to basements may have small doorways or obstructions that make adding furniture more challenging.
■ Do keep the possibility of flooding in the back of your head. Homes that are near waterways or at low elevation may be at risk of flooding. Basements are especially susceptible to flood damage. Therefore, think about the practicality of finishing a basement if you are prone to flooding. If you decide to move ahead, take certain precautionary measures, such as keeping electrical wiring up higher and using a more water-resistant flooring material, like tile or vinyl. House important electronics and items on shelves so they are not at ground-level.
Finishing a basement is a job that can add a lot of usable space to a home. Go about the project in the right way to keep within budget and have a room that is safe and functional.



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■ ROOFING

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METRO AD SERVICES
A new roof can be one of the more expensive repairs for homeowners. But homeowners don't have to break the bank when it comes to replacing a roof, which can be made from a variety of materials that can vary greatly in price.
Asphalt shingles are the most affordable roofing material and that budget-friendly price is one reason why asphalt shingles are so popular. The asphalt shingles of today are also durable, which was not always the case.
Ceramic tiles are another roofing material, but these tend to be quite expensive. However, their price has made them quite rare, which might be attractive to prospective buyers when the time comes to sell the house.
Durable and aesthetically appealing, metal roofing is another op-

tion that's popular in areas they get heavy snowfall because snow does not build up on the metal like it might on other materials. The price of metal roofing varies significantly, so homeowners considering a metal roof should do some comparison shopping before making a decision.
Slate tiles are another roofing material, but one that's very labor-intensive to install and, as a result, costly as well. But slate tiles are very durable, in some cases lasting as long as half a century or more, so homeowners who install slate tile can rest easy knowing the roof they install now will likely be the last roof they ever pay for.
Roofing.com is also a great place to learn about the roofing market. What are the going rates for roofers? Where is the market for roofing hot now?



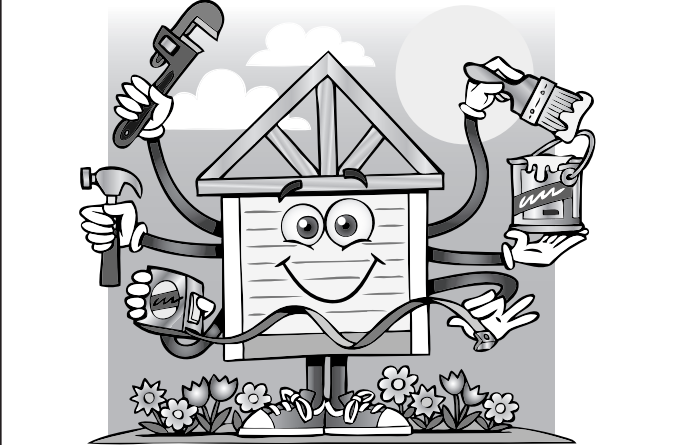
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■ INTERIOR MAINTENANCE

Spring clean made simpler

METRO AD SERVICES
For homeowners, spring cleaning is one of the annual rites of spring. The return of warmer weather presents the perfect opportunity for homeowners to open the windows, let some fresh air in and tidy up after a few months spent cooped up inside while the weather outside was frightful.
But now that spring has arrived, the time to clean up around the house has come. Homeowners about to start on their annual spring cleaning should consider the following before beginning.

Get the right tools
The right tools won't necessarily be a hammer and nails, but cleaning products that can make spring cleaning more efficient. Rubber gloves, cleaning products (preferably natural products that are good for the environment) and enough garbage bags to discard a winter's worth of clutter should all be on hand before you begin cleaning. If they're not, you'll likely need to make a trip to the store while cleaning, which can be time-consuming and prolong the process.

Take some inventory
Many people have no problem buying new clothes, but they do find it hard to get rid of older items. Part of spring cleaning is tossing old items you no longer use, and that includes clothing. Clothing can take up a significant amount of space, so take some inventory on your wardrobe and decide which items you want to keep and which ones you can afford to discard or even donate.

Address the windows
If the last several months have been especially cold or snowy, then you might not have looked out the windows in quite some



STATEPOINT MEDIA SERVICES

With the right techniques, you can make cleaning a cakewalk.

time. Unfortunately, those windows might have accumulated quite the amount of dirt and grime while you were huddled inside. When washing the windows, do so on a cloudy day, as the sun can actually cause streaking. In addition, be mindful of what you're using to wipe down the windows post-cleaning. Microfiber rags typically give windows a great shine without any streaking.

The blinds and drapes will also need to be addressed, as they have likely accumulated some dust over the last few months. Dust

the valance and the frame, and wipe the blinds down with a damp cloth. You can also use your vacuum's upholstery and brush attachments to further clean blinds and drapes.

Tidy up the bed
You likely wash your bed linens regardless of the season. When spring cleaning, toss linens into the washing machine and don't forget to wash mattress pads and bed skirting. While those items are in the wash, flip all the mattresses in your household.

Don't forget the kitchen
The kitchen is not immune to clutter, and it's especially easy for items to overstay their welcome in the refrigerator and the kitchen cabinets. Look for old takeout containers in the refrigerator that have managed to stick around, and throw these out as well as any items that have passed their expiration dates. While items in the kitchen cabinets might not have an expiration date, it helps to remove them from the pantry and then dust and wipe down the shelves. When doing so, discard any items that no longer seem appetizing.

Beat the rugs
Area rugs have no doubt collected dirt and dust over the last several months. Though vacuuming these area rugs might be enough during the year, take advantage of the pleasant weather and take the rugs outside to beat them and rid them of dust and any other particles the vacuum might have missed over the last few months.

Empty, clean the bookshelves
Bookshelves are one the biggest collectors of dust in many homes. Open the windows in the home and then remove books from the shelves. Once the books have been removed, dust the shelves and wipe them down with a damp cloth. And don't forget to dust the books and reorganize titles before returning them to their newly cleaned shelves.

Spring cleaning is something all homeowners must do to keep their homes healthy and clean. Spring cleaning is an annual event at many households, and a few simple strategies can make it go much more smoothly.

■ PEST CONTROL

Distinguishing ants, termites can save home

METRO AD SERVICES
Many homeowners experience termite or ant infestations in and around the home. Differentiating termites from certain types of ants can be confusing, leaving homeowners to guess which unwanted intruder is around the house and how to handle these potentially harmful houseguests.

There are certain determining factors to help individuals tell the difference between these two insects. Ants have elbowed antenna, a narrow waistline and two pairs of wings. The front wings will be much longer than the back wings. Termites, on the other hand, have straight, beaded antennae, a broad waistline, and two pairs of wings that are equal in size.

Both ants and termites have the potential to swarm. This is a method of dispersal to start new colonies elsewhere. Subterranean termites usually swarm in the spring on a warm day. Homeowners having trouble determining which type of insects have invaded their home should consult an exterminator.

Termites can damage wooden structures around the home, so it is important to get the problem taken care of as soon as possible.



■ INTERIOR RENOVATIONS

Couple revamps farmhouse with hint of old, touch of new

By ALLISON EVANS
PRESS ASSISTANT EDITOR
It took nearly a year for Brandi (Hunt) and Todd Clements to modernize Todd's grandparents' 100-year-old farmhouse. Surrounded by agricultural acreage, the picturesque view and family bond inspired the young couple to entirely renovate the Webster County home.

While the house underwent a floor-to-ceiling transformation, including new hardwood and tile floors, designer Mindy Thomas, of Cabinets by Design in Providence, said the kitchen was one of her favorite transformations.

"We used Wellborn Forest cabinetry with a glazed and distressed finish to maintain the charm the home possessed," said, Brandi, formerly of Crittenden County. "We used a blend of stained cabinets with some painted black cabinets to give the kitchen character and personality and large molding to keep in line with the other gorgeous large moldings used throughout the house."

The relocation of the stove, which was inset in the brick fireplace, left a void Thomas uniquely filled with a cookbook shelf created by a local



PHOTO PROVIDED

Brandi and Todd Clements renovated a 100-year-old farmhouse with a touch of modern and taste of old.

craftsman. In another distinct personal touch, the Clements and Thomas worked together to save a kitchen heirloom.

"Todd's grandmother had a cutting board we wanted to save,"

Brandi said. With precise measurements and convenient placement, they integrated the cutting board into the solid-surface countertop, for built-in convenience.

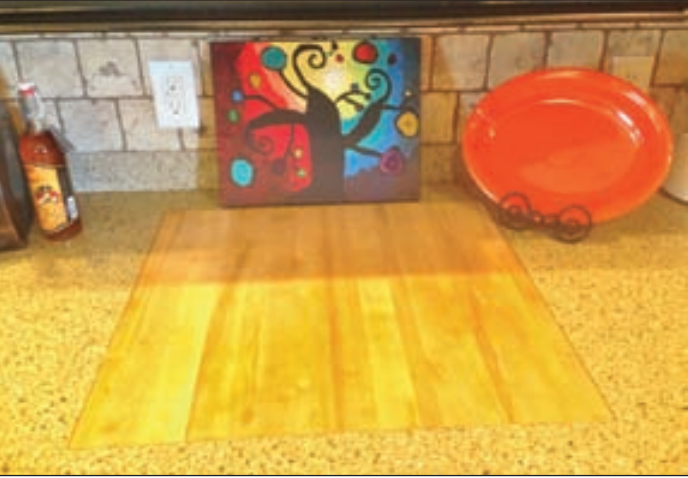


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The Clements incorporated Todd's grandmother's cutting board into the kitchen countertop during renovations.

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■ EXTERIOR MAINTENANCE

Roof may provide signs of wear, tear

METRO AD SERVICES

Replacing a roof is a costly venture few homeowners look forward to. According to Remodeling magazine's 2010-11 "Cost vs. Value" report, the national average cost of a roof replacement is nearly \$22,000, a costly endeavor considering the tenuous nature of the economy. What's more, homeowners who choose more upscale roofing materials can expect to spend almost \$40,000 on their roofs.

Such costs make it no small wonder that many homeowners fear the dreaded diagnosis that their home needs a new roof. While there's little homeowners can do to reduce the cost of a roof replacement, there are warning signs homeowners can look for that might indicate a roof replacement is on the horizon. Recognition of these signs can help homeowners be more financially prepared should the day come when the roof needs to be replaced.

Presence of algae

If the roof has lots of dark streaks and stains clinging to it, that is likely algae, which can grow on the roof for quite awhile. Algae does not necessarily do any damage to a roof, but it does do some damage to a home's physical appearance, as algae on the roof is not very pleasing to the eye. Algae is most often found on the roofs of homes located in climates that have warm, humid summers. If algae is a problem on your roof, spray washing with a mixture of water and bleach can effectively remove it.

Buckling shingles

Like algae, buckling shingles are another unsightly problem on a roof. But buckling shingles are more than just an eyesore, they actually might indicate significant problems. When shingles buckle, that's typically because hot air from the attic is forcing the shingles away from the home. Buckling shingles also indicate that the roof is poorly ventilated, which can take years off the roof's life expectancy while driving up home cooling costs along the way.

Granule loss

Granule loss is typically a byproduct of normal shingle wear and tear that results from inclement weather, such as hail. Older roofs might experience granule loss, but granule loss can also occur on a new roof if a defective roofing product was used. Any granule loss, even if slight, should be addressed, as the side effects of granule loss include a weakened roof and leaking. If granule loss is not addressed, the consequences could be severe the next time a storm occurs.

Mold

Unlike the warning signs already discussed, mold is not visible on the

outside of the home. Instead, homeowners should look in the attic of a home to see if there is any mold growth. If there is, the roof is likely leaking, and the health risks of mold growth in a home are substantial. Mold is not necessarily easy to detect, so a professional inspection might be in order if mold growth is suspected. If a professional determines mold is, in fact, present, then the mold will need to be removed and all options, including a roof replacement, must be considered to keep mold from coming back.

Roof rot

Perhaps the most discouraging sign a homeowner can see on his or her roof is roof rot. Roof rot appears when a roof is in considerable decay and, if not addressed, its consequences can stretch far beyond the roof, damaging other parts of the home thanks in large part to water getting through the roof. If roof rot is either not noticed or just ignored, it won't take long for water to get through the roof and blaze a destructive path through the rest of the home.

Homeowners might fear a full roof replacement because of the cost associated with such a project. But if ignored, problems with a roof could eventually prove far more costly than the price of replacing the roof.

■ EXTERIOR HOW-TO

U.S. spends billions on decks

METRO AD SERVICES

Stats from the U.S. Census Bureau Housing Survey indicate homeowners spend billions annually on improving outdoor living areas.

One of the most popular ways to do that is to add a deck to a home. Decks are beneficial in many ways. Grillmasters love decks because they make the perfect place to set up a grill and a table and cook for family and friends. Those who simply love being outdoors find decks the perfect place to relax and soak up some sun or idle away the evening hours.

But homeowners who want to build a deck should know a few things before that process begins.

■ Permits are necessary. Unless the deck is going to be especially small, you will likely need a permit to build it. Before buying any materials or consulting any contractors, make certain you know which permits you need and how to get them. If the proper permits are not secured before the project begins, you might have to tear down the whole project and start all over again.

■ Decks don't have to go on the back of the house. If the back of your house sits in the blazing sun all day, then it's probably best to build the deck elsewhere, and that's perfectly alright. So long as the property and permits allow, decks can be built on the side of a home as well, and putting a deck on the side might be more comfortable.

■ Decks don't have to be made of wood. It's easy to assume all decks are made of plain wood. However, decks can be made out of a wide variety of materials, natural or synthetic. Pressure treated wood is perhaps the most popular material for decking because it's not very expensive. But manmade materials that are a mixture of recycled plastic and



Proper planning can make that home deck or patio the perfect place for entertainment this summer.

wood bits or sawdust are also popular because they require no maintenance. But homeowners should know that manmade materials can get hot in the sun, which will require those enjoying the deck to wear shoes.

■ Expect to do some digging. If you're going to build your own deck, expect to do some serious digging. Local building codes will dictate how deep you will need to dig for the pier footings, which support the deck's weight. Just how deep you'll dig depends on your climate's specific frost line, but it's safe to assume you'll get a workout in when digging.

■ The deck can have multiple levels. Though many people associate decks with one level, it's possible to have a multi-level deck if you simply don't have enough room to build a deck that will be big enough to meet all of your needs. A multi-level deck can break up those long flights of

stairs while ensuring you will always have somewhere to go to escape the sun on a hot day.

■ You will want to protect the deck. Decks are a costly investment, and you will want to protect that investment. If you're building a wood deck, keep in mind the sun will beat down on the deck for most of the year. You can protect the deck by painting it. Paint provides sunscreen for the deck, stopping the sun from breaking down the material. Once you've finished painting, apply sealant, whether it's oil- or water-based.

■ Don't forget fasteners. Fasteners will hide the screws for aesthetic appeal. But not all woods and fasteners are the right fit, as certain woods are only compatible with certain fasteners. Find out which fasteners make the right fit ahead of time. Because fasteners conceal the screws, they also make it possible to go barefoot on the deck.

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LAWN & GARDEN

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METRO AD SERVICES

One of the best things about the dawn of spring and the return of warmer weather is the chance to get out of the house and get some fresh air. For homeowners, this is the perfect opportunity to assess any damage the previous months did to yards and develop a plan restore properties.

■ Don't jump the gun. The first warm day of spring might seem like a great time get out in the yard and get your hands dirty. But it's best to wait until the grass has completely dried out before getting to work. Raking on wet grass increases the risk of tearing out grass, which can cause bald spots and the growth of weeds down the road. In addition, stepping on the grass while the ground is still wet can compact the soil, which can slow drainage and block the lawn's roots from breathing.

Patience should prevail with regard to mowing the lawn as well. A lawn's roots will not start to grow until the average everyday temperature routinely reaches 40 degrees so mowing too early is both unnecessary and potentially harmful to the lawn. When the temperatures regularly reach 50 F, then homeowners will likely start to see their lawns growing.

■ Remove debris that's piled up. Debris has a tendency to infest a yard over the course of the winter months. Fallen branches, stones and even trash can accumulate in a yard, putting those who spend time in the yard at risk of injury once the warm weather returns. For instance, bits of twigs and pebbles that are blown across the yard during a windy winter can be embedded in the yard, making the yard less of a haven and more of a hazard. Once the grass is dry enough to walk on, walk around the property and remove any debris that's piled up over the last few months.

■ Employ a pre-emergent weed killer. Homeowners who routinely spend their summers agonizing over weeds throughout the yard should consider applying a pre-emergent weed killer around the beginning of spring. It's important to do so around the end of March or early April, when the weeds have not yet had a chance to grow. When applying, follow the dosage instructions provided by the product's manufacturer. Such instructions often recommend a second application right before summer begins.

■ Remove thatch. Once the grass has dried, you can begin to remove thatch that's built up over the winter. Thatch is potentially very harmful to soil, blocking sunlight, air and moisture the soil needs to ensure a lawn looks lush and healthy. Thatch removal does not necessarily need to be an annual task. If thatch buildup is insignificant, it can be done every other year. Just use a dethatching rake to make the job much easier.

■ Aerate, particularly if the yard is a heavy traffic area once the warm weather arrives. If your yard transforms into a child's wonderland upon the arrival of spring and summer, you might want to revive the soil by aerating. When the yard gets heavy usage, it's easy for soil to become compacted, which makes it hard for air and water to reach the lawn's roots. That can eventually make for a less-than-appealing lawn. So if your yard is the place to be come the warmer months, aerate in the spring to loosen the soil and make it easier for the lawn to withstand the months ahead.

No matter how harsh the winter months might have been, spring is a great time for homeowners to restore the property around their homes.



METRO AD SERVICES

Mowing the lawn too early in the spring is both unnecessary and potentially harmful to the lawn.

PEST CONTROL

Keeping your home, land pest-free takes vigilance

STATEPOINT MEDIA SERVICES

Spending time outdoors can recharge the soul and bring the family together. In your own backyard you can find beauty, enjoyment and a place to connect with nature—so long as you make sure to maintain all those beautiful trees and plants.

Whether you have a garden, woodlands or natural landscaping on your property, you'll want to keep your land healthy and free of unwanted pests. And experts say that woodlands need special attention.

"Although trees look strong, woodland ecosystems are particularly vulnerable to natural and man-made dangers that can gradually reduce the health and beauty of your woods," says Mike Burns, forester and program resource manager with the American Forest Foundation.

A U.S. Forest Service assessment released last December predicts that as many as 34 million acres of forestland could be lost in the United States during the next 50 years, and that all regions in the United States will experience increased stress from natural disasters and pest infestations.

Luckily, there are steps landowners can take to help keep trees and woodlands safe from pests:

■ Keep an eye out for changes. On trees, spots of yellow or brown or some thinning needles might be the effects of natural shading on lower limbs—or it might be a disease or insect that's about to spread to other trees.

■ Stay informed about threats in your area. Contact your state forestry agency or state department of natural resources to find out what's bugging your area.

■ Monitor for pests and signs of disease every month or two. Check trees on the trunk, limbs, twigs, under peeling bark and leaves—the most likely places to find injuries. Keep your eye open for things that look out of the ordinary.

■ Online resources can help you become a better steward of your land. If you own some woodlands, consider signing up for the My Land Plan resource, launched by the American Forest Foundation. My Land Plan can help you connect with up-to-date information about pest threats, map your land's boundaries and record changes over time, all at www.MyLandPlan.org. You can explore the website's newly expanded invasive pest and pathogen section and locate professional services available for your needs.

■ If you suspect an outbreak, collect samples of tree damage and any associated pests to accurately identify the problem, which may have more than one cause. Take pictures and notes on your trees' symptoms. Often pictures are enough for an expert to identify the problem and help you figure out what to do next. Next steps can be identified by your state forestry agency or department of natural resources.

■ If you discover an insect that you suspect might be a danger to your trees, seal it in a container and store it in the freezer until you can deliver it to a proper authority.

In the long run, nature might well be invincible, but in the short run, residents may need a helping hand to protect local land to keep trees healthy.

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- 4 anti-scalp gauge wheels
- Cruise control
- Hour meter

\$2,799⁹⁵
MSRP



RZ5424 ZERO TURN MOWER

- 24 hp Kohler Courage V-Twin engine*
- 54" Air Induction tri blade deck
- 3.5 gallon fuel tank
- Adjustable cutting height from 1.5" to 4" in 1/2" increments
- Electric clutch blade engagement
- Optional collection system
- Maintenance-free drive system

\$2,999⁰⁰
MSRP



MZ5222ZT ZERO TURN MOWER

- 25 hp Kohler Courage Pro Series engine*
- 52" fabricated deck with 11 gauge steel sheet construction
- 3 blades
- 5 gallon fuel tank
- Adjustable cutting height from 1.5" to 4.5" in 1/2" increments
- Large 15" high back seat with armrests
- Dual Hydro-Gear ZT3400 drive systems

\$4,699⁹⁵
MSRP



455 RANCHER CHAIN SAW

- 3.4 cu. in. (56 cc)
- 3.5 hp (2.6 kW)
- Chain pitch 3/8"
- Weight 13.2 lbs (without bar & chain)
- Inertia chain brake
- Fully assembled
- CARB compliant

\$429⁹⁹
MSRP

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HODGE SALES & SERVICE

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