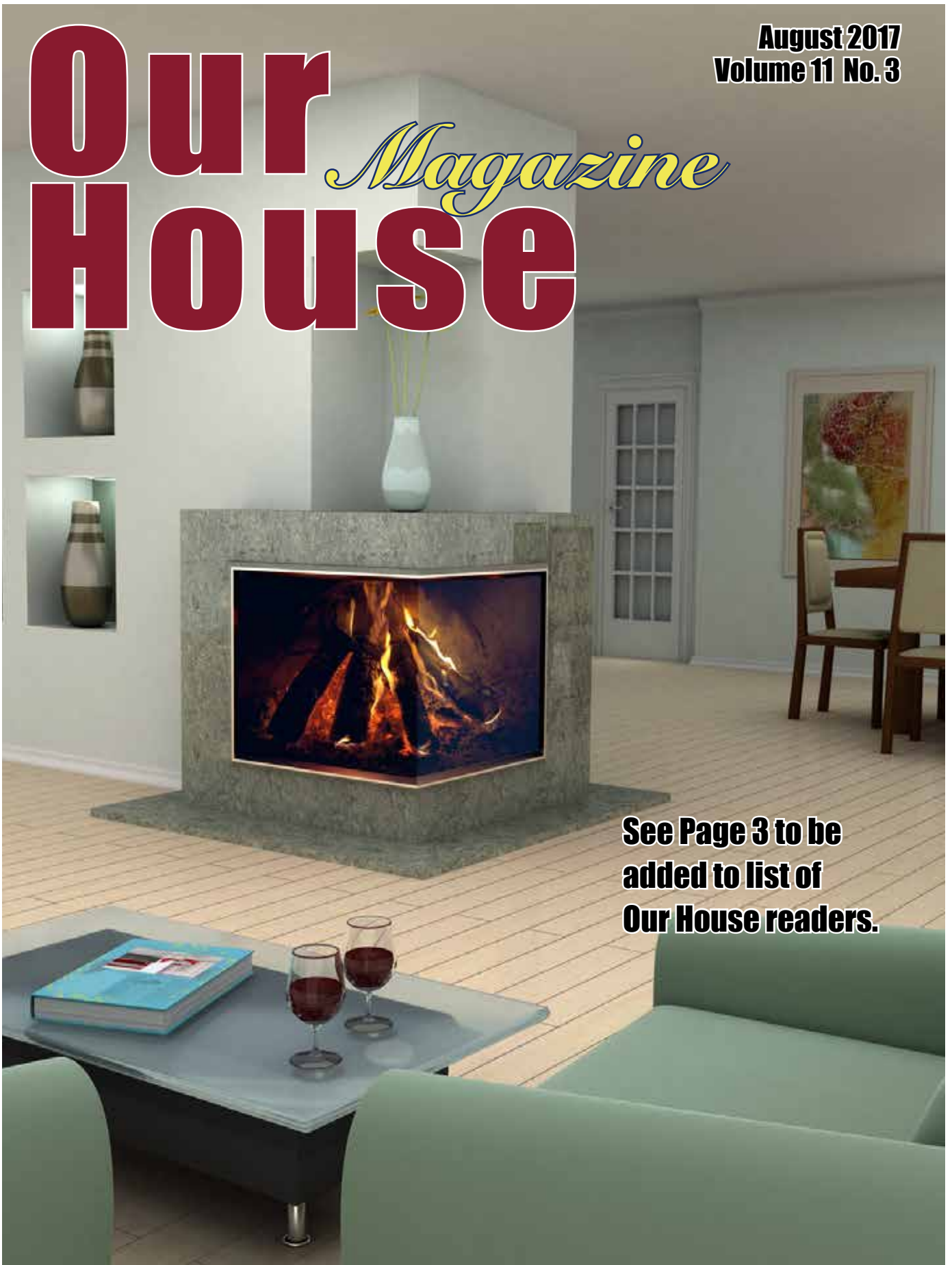


August 2017
Volume 11 No. 3

Our House *Magazine*

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www.ourhousemagazine.net
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 Our House Magazine



Photo by Jan Taylor

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Improvements For Independence



Being safe and comfortable at home is a large part of living well. Home modifications and repairs can help everyone, especially older adults and people with disabilities, maintain an independent lifestyle and prevent accidents.

Many older adults prefer to stay at home for as long as possible, but too often don't think about whether their homes will meet their needs as they age. Making improvements for independence before they are needed is a good way to ensure that a home is ready for aging in place. Forward-thinking improvements may also help prevent falls, which often cause the need for long-term care.

Many changes, such as adding grab bars in bathrooms, can be done without a major redesign or full-blown renovation. Depending on your circumstance, it may also make sense to consider things like widening doorways and lowering countertop heights for someone who uses a wheelchair.

Here's how you can get started:

Home assessment

Before making any changes, assess the entire home. This checklist can help identify areas that might need improvement. Everyone has different needs, but in general, a "no" answer may be cause for action.

- Are exterior walkways and entrances well-lit?
- Is there a step-free entrance to the home?
- Are entrance doors easy to lock, unlock, open and close?
- Does the main floor include a kitchen, bedroom and full bathroom?
- Are doorways wide enough for someone using a wheelchair, walker or service animal?
- Are hallways, staircases, bathrooms and the kitchen well-lit?

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- Is wall-to-wall carpeting secure and in good condition?
- Are area rugs secured to the floor with grips?
- Are walkways free from obstructions and hazards like cords and furniture?
- Do stairways have sturdy handrails on both sides?
- Can bathroom and kitchen cabinets be easily reached?
- Is there a step-free shower entrance?
- Are grab bars available in or near the shower and toilet?
- Do showers have non-slip mats or adhesive strips?
- Will smoke detectors provide visual as well as audio alerts?
- Are telephones and emergency supplies easily accessible on all floors?

Cost and contractors

Minor improvements can cost between \$150-\$2,000, and major renovation costs vary depending on the job. Public and private financing options may also be available.

If hiring a professional, remember to get a written agreement with specific tasks, a timeline and cost estimate. Make sure the contractor is licensed, bonded and insured for the specific type of work.

More information about home modifications, including financial assistance, can be found at eldercare.gov.

From Family Features. Photo courtesy of Getty Images ■

Study Results: Top Remodeling Projects in the Home

What rooms do homeowners choose to remodel the most? According to the 2017 Houzz & Home Report, the answers are the kitchen, guest/other bathroom, living/family room and the master bathroom.

The study, which reports on the frequency of interior remodeling projects among homeowners who renovated in 2016, showcases key rooms in the house where people are choosing to invest their money in upgrades. Study results indicated that 87 percent of the surveyed respondents leaned on professional assistance for their remodeling work, up from 85 percent in 2015.

“Both first-time buyers and long-term homeowners are making the decision to get professional assistance to re-sculpture their home space to make it more comfortable and suitable for their personal needs,” says Roger Murphy, president of Hy-Lite, a U.S. Block Windows Company. “These survey results don’t surprise us. At Hy-Lite we’re seeing increased requests for privacy windows that are suitable for each of these areas of the home--kitchen, living spaces and bathrooms.

“We know that homeowners desire their personal space and style. Many of those homeowners also crave privacy. That’s where decorative glass and acrylic block privacy windows come into play. People are aligning their home styles with their windows. For example, a desire to enhance a home’s arts-and-crafts style naturally leans toward incorporating Mission and Prairie style privacy windows into key rooms in the home.”

Earlier in 2017 Murphy shared news that large 3’ x 5’ and smaller 4’ x 1’ privacy windows were rising in popularity. Sales of both sized windows have been included in key living spaces of the home, including bathrooms and kitchens.

“The trend continues for people either building or remodeling a home to include long, thin 4’ x 1’ privacy windows in showers,” says Murphy. “These windows allow natural light into the shower and can complement the style of a larger 3’ x 5’ window of a similar design over the master tub.

“In kitchens and living spaces, we’re seeing the rise of 2 x 2’ Home Designer Collection windows as being more popular when arranged on a wall. These windows are a style statement unto themselves. They can be staggered on a wall, added to the top areas or clustered together. The size makes them perfect for bringing light into secluded spaces while still protecting the privacy of the homeowners.”

Hy-Lite, a U.S. Block Windows Company, is the leading manufacturer of acrylic block, glass block and decorative glass windows. The company’s privacy product options include acrylic block shutters, accent panels, radius walls, partition walls, door inserts and shower walls. Since 1988, the Pensacola, Florida-based company has been committed to providing residential and commercial construction professionals and homeowners with elegant, affordable privacy window designs. For more information visit: www.hy-lite.com ■

Weather The Storm Wisely



Summer storm season may bring welcome rain, but some storms are strong enough to pack a dangerous punch. Planning ahead for this year's wicked weather can help ensure you're ready to weather whatever Mother Nature throws at you.

One of the most serious side effects of severe weather is the potential for power loss. In some cases, it can be just a nuisance with little more impact than the time it takes to reset clocks. However, when the outage lasts for hours or days, or when you rely on power for necessities like medical equipment, a power outage can be a major imposition.

Make sure your family is ready for any bad weather ahead this season with these tips:

1. Ensure there is a working flashlight in every room, so you can safely navigate no matter what time of day the power fails or where you are. Check the battery terminals for any signs of damage or corrosion, and replace old batteries to give you the fullest charge possible. Also invest in a quality lantern or two, so if you have to hunker down for a while, you can do so with the comfort of some far-reaching light. After all, reading or playing board games is no fun by flashlight.

2. If you have advance warning of a coming storm, unplug devices that are especially susceptible to power-related damage, such as TVs and computers. In the event of storms that crop up suddenly or while you're away from home, it's best to keep major electronics like TVs, computers and printers plugged into a surge protector to prevent damage from flickering power or a surge when the power is restored.
3. Add a backup power source. Portable generators can provide essential power during a sustained power outage. An option like

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the Briggs & Stratton Q6500 QuietPower Series inverter generator delivers plenty of power to keep essential appliances and electronics running for up to 14 hours on a single tank of gas. The quiet, lightweight generator has four GFCI 120V-20A outlets, one 120V-240V locking outlet and two USB outlets for flexibility to power whatever you need most. Learn more at briggsandstratton.com and visit TakeYourGeneratorOutside.com to learn more about safely operating a portable generator.

4. Keep a ready supply of non-perishable snacks and drinks. Once the power goes out, you'll want to avoid opening the refrigerator, which releases trapped cold air and reduces the amount of time food will store safely without spoiling. After most perishables are exposed to temperatures over 40 F for two hours, you'll need to discard them, though a full, sealed freezer can hold its temperature for up to 48 hours.
5. During a storm, keep the family together in one safe location. That way you can quickly communicate if you need to make an abrupt change, such as taking more protective cover. It also minimizes the possibility of injury from making your way through the home in the dark trying to locate family members.

Severe seasonal storms are the norm across many parts of the country. Planning ahead for potential problems, like power outages, can help ensure you weather the storm safely. From Family Features.

NEW PRODUCT:

GEBERIT systems increase accessibility, save water, and offer increased reliability over standard bathroom plumbing hardware. The flexible, adaptable in-wall carrier systems are designed for easy installation, attaching to existing wall framing and supply and waste piping using standard tools. Once installed, the system is practically maintenance-free.

To learn more about Geberit products, visit www.geberit.us.



Our *Magazine* House

Our House Magazine is the area's ONLY local magazine devoted exclusively to providing news and information to local homeowners about maintaining one of their most important assets—their homes. Editorial features interviews and stories about the home building and home maintenance industry, along with local companies who can provide services and products to assist local homeowners.

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Battle Weeds, Leaves and Shrubbery With Tech



The same type of technology used in some of the United States Navy's most powerful ships also powers handheld lawn equipment.

A lineup of string trimmers, leaf blowers and hedge trimmers from Cub Cadet use an innovative technology to power the units called CORE (Conductor-Optimized Rotary Energy). The sophisticated motor technology generates power equal to gas engines and maximizes pound-for-pound power efficiency, compared to its 25 cubic centimeter gas-powered engines.

The technology also features a unique Power-Lok system. This standalone drive unit offers

lightweight, high-performance string trimmer, blower and hedge trimmer attachments. It saves storage space and money with one tool that does the job of three different units.

Printed circuit board technology and magnetic rotors generate concentrated, efficient power and torque that is on par with gas-powered units so the toughest outdoor challenges can be tackled without the fill-ups, fumes or pull-starts of gas engines.

By delivering high-torque performance with no dependence on battery voltage, CORE technology leverages a revolutionary motor design and a responsive load-sensing controller

to deliver power and performance where and when it is needed. It also features zero gasoline emissions and much less noise than gas-powered equipment.

Because the motor consists of lighter weight materials and does not require a gas tank, it is lighter for users to operate.

With longer runtimes than other gasless tools, the technology offers all the power needed for various outdoor projects with nearly 45 minutes of power on one charge. The typical recharge time is 1 hour.

More information is available at CubCadet.com. From Family Features.

Renovations For The Ages



Not every renovation project is intended to make the space look shiny and new. A design that celebrates decades (or even centuries) past can carry the same big impact for a dramatically updated look.

Antique upgrades celebrate the old-timey charm that modern design often ignores. An added benefit to an antique motif: the opportunity to display family heirlooms and treasures from previous generations that blend seamlessly into your home.

In most houses, the kitchen and bathrooms are where modern conveniences are most obvious. The appliances and fixtures in

these rooms offer convenience and function few homeowners are willing to sacrifice for the sake of aesthetics. Fortunately, these tips show how you can capture old-world ambiance while enjoying the comforts of modern living.

Back-to-basics bathroom

Indoor plumbing is arguably the greatest asset of the modern home, but there's no need to sacrifice contemporary function when you take a step back in time with your bathroom decor. A claw foot tub makes for a stunning focal point, and a stylish pedestal sink adds character a modern vanity simply can't deliver.

The one downside, limited storage space, can be easily remedied. A distressed cupboard or cabinet fitted with an antique window pane door is a simple DIY solution, or rely on stacked wooden crates (sanded and finished, of course) for a whimsical tower to fill with towels and other necessities.

In a small space like a bathroom, it can be difficult to evoke just the right impression with fixtures and furnishings alone. That's where accessories can play a transformative role. Rely on historic photographs, vintage

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mirrors and antique curios such as old buckets and chairs to let your creativity run wild. A bucket makes a perfect toilet paper holder and the rungs of a forgotten old chair are ideal for an old-fashioned towel rack.

Old-meets-new kitchen

For a kitchen stylized to honor the past, there's nothing more distracting than modern appliances. Fully capturing the warmth and charm of a country, century or Victorian kitchen requires complementing antique-style appliances. With careful attention to vintage design, a line like Elmira Stove Works' appliances complete the traditional feel of a "vintage" kitchen, rather than detract from

it, as would modern-style black, white or stainless steel.

Fortunately, the "antique" aspect of these appliances ends with the appearance, as the complete line features the latest in cooking technology to ease routine food preparation and meet the high standards of the home chef.

For example, among the features is a full-size, self-cleaning true convection oven with the look of a vintage two-door range. The front panel displaying the "fire door," "oven door" and "ash catch" conceals the full-size oven behind. A matching 1,200-watt microwave features a removable turntable, 10 power levels, turbo-defrost and five-stage programmable cooking

with an optional nickel or antique copper door frame.

The complete line includes a customizable collection of ranges, wall ovens, microwaves, refrigerators and matching panels for dishwashers. To learn more, visit ElmiraStoveWorks.com.

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