

Nuts & Bolts

Volume 29, Number 2
March-April 2011

a newsletter from Home Repair Resource Center

In addition to attending talks on specific topics, you can get one-on-one advice and information at an expanded array of "Advice Tables." The participating companies are all ones that we believe do quality work and can give good information to Fair attendees.

Home Remodeling Fair: Saturday, April 9th at City Hall

Don't miss our annual Community Home Remodeling Fair, which will be held this year on Saturday, April 9th at Cleveland Heights City Hall. Doors will open at 9:30, with presentations from 10 a.m. to 1:30 p.m.

This year's Fair will have a new format. In addition to attending talks on specific topics, you can get one-on-one advice and information at an expanded array of "Advice Tables," where professionals from a variety of specialties will be available for consultations. You'll be able to ask questions

about such things as roof replacement, furnaces and boilers, insulation,



electrical and plumbing work, basement waterproofing, concrete, asphalt, masonry, exterior painting, and replacement doors and windows. The participating companies are all ones that we believe do quality work and can give good information to Fair attendees.

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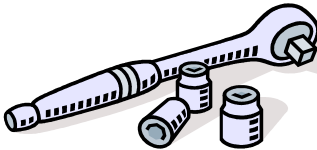
Your repair project can be an on-site workshop!

To volunteer your house as a site for a "hands-on" class this summer, complete the form on page 5 and return it to our office.



Project Repair “wish list”

HRRC Instructor Jim Kunselman is seeking a rolling tool chest (similar to the one pictured) for use in our Teaching Center. Please call us at 381-9560 if you have such a chest you could give to HRRC, or if you have a connection with a local company that has this type of equipment and are willing to help us approach them about a donation.



Go “green” – get your Nuts & Bolts online:

Send your email address to rstager@hrrc-ch.org, with “newsletter address” as the subject. We’ll email your copy, saving printing and postage costs and reducing our “carbon footprint” to help the environment.

Fundraising event with Bremec on the Heights Garden Center

April 17th to May 1st

Mark your calendar! **Bremec on the Heights Garden Center** will once again hold a special event to benefit Home Repair Resource Center. Between April 17th and May 1st, all purchases of materials and gift cards at Bremec’s will result in a donation to HRRC. New this year, Bremec will offer free classes in conjunction with our event, on such topics as rain barrels and rain gardens, plant selection, and proper pruning techniques. Watch HRRC’s website later this spring for more information: www.hrrc-ch.org.

Home buying seminar

HRRC will participate in a Home Buying Seminar, sponsored by Cleveland Heights Relocation Services, on Thursday, April 14th, from 7 - 9 p.m. at City Hall. Professionals involved in the home buying process will provide information about down payment assistance programs, financing options, and what to expect when buying a home.

This free event is open to anyone considering home purchase.

Home Remodeling Fair

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Representatives from the City, the County Health Department, and area banks will also be available, to help you with such things as researching the history of your house, assessing the threat of lead-based paint contamination, and learning what loans and grants are available to help you finance your remodeling project.

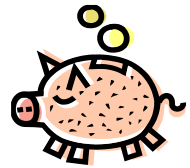
Again this year, you can take advantage of our “Ask an Architect” area. Traditionally one of the Fair’s most popular features, “Ask an Architect” provides opportunities for residents to schedule a free 30-minute consultation with an architect to help prepare for their remodeling projects.

Call (216) 381-6100 after March 21st to register for “Ask an Architect.” Time slots fill quickly.

This FREE event is open to residents of all communities. When finalized, the Fair schedule will be posted on HRRC’s website, printed in local publications, and available at our office.

HRRC’s Financial Fitness/ New Home Buyer Classes

Home Repair Resource Center’s interactive Financial Fitness series will help you develop your money skills, provide you with strategies for improving your credit, and teach you how to protect your home investment. All are scheduled for 6 - 8 p.m. at the CH-UH Main Library, 2345 Lee Road. Call **381-6100** for information or to reserve your spot in these FREE classes:



March	3	Thursday	Power of a Personal Budget
	10	Thursday	Creditworthy Equals Choices
	17	Thursday	Understanding Mortgages & Refinancing
	24	Thursday	Avoiding Mortgage Delinquency
April	7	Thursday	Creditworthy Equals Choices
	21	Thursday	Power of a Personal Budget
	28	Thursday	Understanding Mortgages & Refinancing
May	5	Thursday	Creditworthy Equals Choices
	12	Thursday	Power of a Personal Budget
	19	Thursday	Understanding Mortgages & Refinancing
	26	Thursday	Avoiding Mortgage Delinquency

You can offer your repair project for a summer workshop

Each year, we look for exterior repairs – on the outside of houses, on garages, and in yards – that we can use as projects for our summer “hands on” workshops. Many of the skills we teach help people deal with problems while they are still small, relatively inexpensive, and can be fixed by the homeowners. **Here’s what you need to know about volunteering your house as a workshop site:**

The host pays for the materials used for the repair. (If we’ll be purchasing the materials, the host pays the anticipated cost in advance.) *PR can cover part of the cost for low- and moderate-income homeowners – see chart on page 5.*

The host is also responsible for any preparation work needed (we’ll provide tools and advice) and must participate in the class. During the workshop, we’ll teach repair skills and oversee the job. If the repair cannot be finished during the class time available, we’ll tell you what you’ll need to do to complete the project.

We are particularly looking for good places to teach these repairs:

- **Carpentry repairs:** sites where we can replace support posts, steps, railings, tongue-and-groove flooring, or other parts of wooden porches; straighten and/or repair frame garages; replace a storm door, entry door, glass block basement windows, or one or two double-hung windows (*first floor, please*).
- **Roofs and gutters:** sites where we can replace a “flat” roof on a shed-type garage or second-floor porch; replace a shingled gable-type garage roof; replace gutters and the fascia boards behind them (along a first-floor porch or garage); or snake a storm sewer and install a clean-out on a downspout.
- **Tuckpointing:** sites where we can replace deteriorated mortar between bricks on a foundation, steps, etc. (*enough work for 16-20 people.*)
- **Concrete repair:** sites where we can level a sidewalk or replace a small section of concrete (usually, 1 - 2 sidewalk blocks).
- **Electrical projects:** sites where we can install an exterior outlet; install a light fixture on the outside of a house or garage; or run underground wiring to a detached garage.



We’re also interested in other kinds of exterior repairs – so give us your ideas! (Keep in mind that we select our workshop sites for how well they’ll work for TEACHING PURPOSES, and there are limits to what can be accomplished. We can’t re-roof a house or replace an entire driveway in a two-hour class!)

To volunteer your house as a workshop site, complete the form on the next page and return it to our office, or call us at 381-9560 any weekday morning and describe your repair need. We’ll look at all the sites offered as soon as possible, *continued on page 5*

Volunteer Your Site

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probably in late March (Since we'll be looking at exterior repairs, you won't need to be home when we come.) We're sorry that we won't be able to get back to each person who offers a site, but **we'll contact you if we are interested in using your house** for a class. So, think about the projects you'll be working on this repair season. We're waiting to hear from you!

Low-Moderate Income Guidelines

We have not yet received the 2011 guidelines, but the 2010 guidelines are listed below:

<i>Family size</i>	<i>Gross yearly income</i>	<i>Family size</i>	<i>Gross yearly income</i>
1	\$36,300	4	\$51,850
2	41,500	5	56,000
3	46,700	6	60,150



Summer Workshop Site Volunteer Form

I would like to offer the following repairs for Project Repair's summer classes:

(Note: Please be as specific as possible in your description of the repair you're offering – for example: replace two blocks in front service walk, replace fascia board and gutter on southwest side of garage, etc.)

submitted by: Name: _____

Address: _____

Phone: _____ (day) _____ (evening)

Please check: I do _____ do not _____ qualify under the Low-Moderate Income Guidelines for help with material costs.

Return to: Project Repair
2520 Noble Road
Cleveland Hts., OH 44121



Workshop Schedule

Our upcoming workshops will complete our current plumbing series, and then continue with other interior and exterior projects for older homes. Check out the schedule below!

All classes are open to Cleveland Heights residents. We ask participants to pay a small **materials fee** to help offset the cost of workshop supplies. (*See our website for details, or call us for more information.*) Call 381-9560 to save your spot.

March

Plastic Water Lines

Monday, March 7th, 7 - 9 p.m.

If you want an alternative to copper, two types of plastic water lines have now been approved for use in Cleveland Heights. We'll show you how to measure, cut, and connect each type, and how to ensure your installation will pass inspection.

PVC Drain Lines

Monday, March 14th, 7 - 9 p.m.

We'll discuss how your drain lines function, and how to maintain and update your drain system. You'll learn how to assemble plastic drain pipes, fittings, and traps, and how to operate a drain snake to clear clogged lines.

Faucets & Toilets

Monday, March 21st, 7 - 9 p.m.

We'll show you how to repair those annoying leaks in faucets, valves, and toilets; how to replace a toilet; and what tools to use when your toilet is clogged.

Tankless Water Heaters

Monday, March 28th, 7 - 9 p.m.

Learn all about tankless water heaters (an alternative to the traditional hot water tank) and how to install them.



April



Building a Laminate Countertop

Monday, April 4th, 7 - 9 p.m.

Pre-made counters aren't your only option. Learn how to laminate a wood "blank" with Formica® and install it in place.

Plaster Repair

Monday, April 11th, 7 - 9 p.m.

Learn to repair plaster – small cracks to larger areas. We'll show you basic techniques, "tricks" for a smooth, solid surface, and ways to minimize the spread of lead-based paint dust.

Framing & Installing a New Window

Monday, April 18th, 7 - 9 p.m.

Learn how to cut a hole in a wall, frame the opening, and install a "new construction" window.

Hardwood Floor Refinishing

Monday, April 25th, 7 - 9 p.m.

You'll practice sanding a floor with a flat-plate sander and learn how to complete the process with stain and/or polyurethane. *(We need a site for this class; call 381-9560 if interested.)*

May

Laminate Flooring

Monday, May 2nd, 7 - 9 p.m.

If you're considering laminate flooring (Pergo™, etc.) this class may help you decide which product will best fit your needs. We'll show various materials and how each is installed.



Flat Roof Replacement

Monday, May 9th, 7 - 9 p.m.

Learn how to replace a "flat" roof over a porch or shed-type garage using cold process **modified bitumen roofing**, which lasts far longer than traditional asphalt roll roofing.

Shingled Roofs & Flashing

Monday, May 16th, 7 - 9 p.m.

Learn the right way to replace a shingled roof – minimizing leaking and ice build-up – and replace torn or missing shingles.

Gutters & Downspouts

Monday, May 23rd, 7 - 9 p.m.

Learn how to connect and hang gutters at the proper pitch. We'll discuss sectional vs. seamless gutters, metal gauges, and how to replace rotted fascia boards and rafter ends.



*Free advice
from the experts . . .*

information sessions presented by

Home Repair Resource Center

a community nonprofit organization

Designing & Installing a Deck or Patio

Alex Pesta, AIA, LEED-AP, City Architecture

Adding a deck or patio can enhance the appearance and functionality of your property, but the design should be appropriate to the age and style of your home. Learn what factors to consider in planning your design.

Wednesday, February 23rd, 2011 - 7 pm

Basement Water Control: Interior vs. Exterior

Steve Allen, President, Integrity Waterproofing

Learn what options are available to deal with basement water intrusion, and the advantages and disadvantages of each.

Wednesday, March 23rd, 2011 - 7 pm



**HOME
REPAIR
RESOURCE
CENTER**

HouseMender University sessions are free and open to residents of any community. Sessions will be held at

**Cleveland Heights - University Heights
Public Library
2345 Lee Road**

Reservations requested – call (216) 381-9560

Winter warning

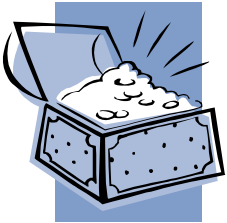
A couple of recent calls to HRRC involved fairly new high-efficiency furnaces shutting down unexpectedly. In both cases, ice had built up in the vent pipe, blocking the exhaust flow. In high-efficiency models, the lower temperature of the exhaust can allow moisture (a by-product of combustion) to condense in the flue, especially when outdoor temperatures drop into the 20's or below.

High-efficiency (or “condensing”) furnaces exhaust the combustion gases and bring in fresh air through PVC pipes to the outside, usually routed through the sidewall of the house.

If your newer furnace shuts down, check these common venting problems:

- Incorrect size of the exhaust pipe. Manufacturers specify the maximum length and number of elbows that pipe of a given diameter can handle.
- Not enough hangers to support the exhaust pipe. If sags develop in the exhaust piping, condensate can pool in the low spots, blocking the vent enough to trigger a furnace shut-down.
- Incorrect slope of the exhaust pipe – down toward the outdoors, rather than back towards the furnace. The exhaust piping should be pitched at least 1/4-inch per foot, to allow condensate to drain freely back into the furnace.
- Vents positioned too close to the ground, where they can be blocked by snow drifts or critters.
- Running exhaust and intake pipes out different sides of the house. The pipes must be next to each other so that the wind pressure is the same on both.

During wintry weather, it's a good idea to check regularly the exits for the exhaust and intake pipes on the outer wall of the house, to make sure they aren't covered by snow or ice. In addition to shutting down the furnace, a blocked exhaust pipe can allow carbon monoxide to build up inside the house.

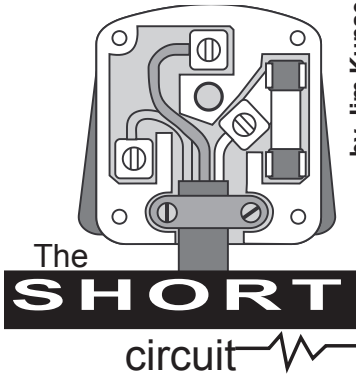


Free to a good home:

The following items – used, but in good condition – have been offered to Project Repair participants who can use them (priority given to low- and moderate-income homeowners):

- Upright freezer, white, manual-defrost; 22 cu. ft. capacity; 32” wide, 72” high, 29” deep
- Refrigerator with bottom freezer, almond, 32” wide, 68” high, 32” deep
- Dishwasher, white, 24” wide
- New-construction window, white vinyl, 41” high, 28.5” wide

Call 381-9560 if interested. Recipient will be responsible for transporting items.



by Jim Kunselman

Living here in north east Ohio, with its periods of heavy rainfall and snow melt, you may have experienced a wet basement and wondered what to do. With the cost of waterproofing jobs currently ranging from \$10,000 to \$18,000, it's a good idea to look hard at why the water is getting inside your house – and not staying outside where it belongs.

First, consider how most basement walls in the Heights area were constructed – usually from hollow structural clay tile, a reddish-brown block much larger than bricks (usually 5” x 12”). Because corner blocks had exposed hollow ends, builders

generally stuffed a lump of mortar into the cavities to keep dirt and water out of the wall. Below the soil line, the exterior of the walls were “parged” (smeared with mortar and then coated with an asphalt liquid) for moisture-proofing. Walls built using clay tile were usually 18” thick and rested upon a concrete footer with drain tile laid alongside. The trench was filled with gravel, and then 24” to 36” of soil. A perforated clay footer drain installed around the foundation ran out to a sewer line in the yard, to carry ground water away.

Over time, this system may no longer work as designed. The parging and/or lumps of mortar in the corner blocks can disintegrate, and the footer drain can become blocked with soil or roots. Silted or root-bound storm drains (from downspouts and driveway drain) can allow water to seep between the joints of the clay pipes along the walls. The soil around the foundation can erode or settle, or a driveway next to the foundation may heave, so surface water lies against the foundation.



Structural clay tile blocks

There are few effective solutions that homeowners can do themselves. Re-waterproofing exterior walls and replacing sewer drains require lots of digging – expensive, and too labor intensive to be practical for most people to do by hand. No coating or sealer applied to the inside of the basement wall has been proven effective in keeping water out for any length of time.

You can keep your storm sewers clear. First, check that water isn't backing up from the sewers in the street. Ask your immediate neighbors whether water is entering their basements. If so, talk to your city's sewer department about correcting that problem.

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The Short Circuit

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If the sewers from your house to the street have become clogged with tree roots, silt, or anything else, a sewer snake is fairly simple to operate. There are many types designed to clear pipe up to 4 inches in diameter, most powered by an electric motor and featuring a flexible cable, 50- to 100-foot long, with a cutting tip on the end. You can get access to the storm sewers through a driveway drain or at the base of a downspout (chip out the mortar holding the downspout in place, and lift the downspout out of the drain tile it feeds into.)

There are few effective solutions that homeowners can do themselves. Both re-waterproofing exterior walls and/or replacing sewer drains require lots of digging – expensive, and too labor intensive to be practical for most people to do by hand. No coating or sealer applied to the inside of the basement wall has been proven effective in keeping water out for any length of time.

You can also divert surface water away from your foundation before it gets there (usually easier than keeping it from coming through once it's there.) If your yard slopes toward the foundation, add a few yards of fill dirt around your house, grade the surface to slope away from the foundation, and cover it with 6 to 8 inches of amended topsoil for plantings. Create another barrier by attaching a sheet of polyethylene (sheet plastic) to the foundation wall and extending it into the yard before adding the topsoil. In some cases, a modified French drain – a trench dug parallel to the wall some distance away from the foundation, containing a drain pipe set in gravel and feeding into your storm sewer or to daylight in the yard – can intercept water that runs toward the foundation wall.

If your driveway comes right up against the house foundation, water can find its way into the gap between the asphalt or concrete surface and the house. Seal this gap with silicone caulk or a rubberized crack filler; these materials should stay flexible when our seasonal freeze-and-thaw cycle causes the driveway to heave.

Finally, check that your gutters aren't bent, sagging or pulled away from the house. A bare area in your lawn just beneath the roof line is a good sign that the gutter is dumping water along the foundation in heavy rains, where it can work its way through the basement wall. Securing the gutters in place will let them contain the water and direct it into the downspouts as they are designed to do.

Whether you do them yourself or contract the work, these low-tech methods will cost far less than the \$10,000 to \$18,000 price of “waterproofing” and will usually solve your basement water problems.

Operating support for HRRC is provided by individual donations, foundation grants, and HUD Community Development Block Grant funds through the City of Cleveland Heights.



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