

COMMENT

The curse of the upstairs bathroom

By Ted Brown
tedbit@hotmail.com



A Ted Bit

You'd think I'd learn.

When faced with a certain task, knowing there is an opportune time and an equally inopportune time to do it— well, the choice should be simple, right?

Wrong. I have an uncanny talent of picking the inopportune time.

We live in a storey-and-a-half farmhouse, with no air conditioning.

Every year, in June, we say, "We should install the window air conditioner before it gets hot."

It's a five-minute task— ten minutes tops.

And every year, we sweat off a couple pounds on the hottest day of the year, to place that unit in the window.

Okay, that's simple procrastination. I've installed it over the years when the weather was reasonable— I just can't really recall when.

That's an annual challenge.

But the past couple weeks, there's been a bigger job.

It's the upstairs bathroom.

I call it the 'cursed upstairs bathroom.'

A little history: back in the 1950s, Dad decided (actually, it was likely Mom decided) that we needed an upstairs bathroom.

He took out a couple walls, re-configured the rooms, and built a bathroom.

Well, actually, he built a room.

It was never finished. It became a walk-in closet of sorts, although my mom used to refer to it as the 'upstairs bathroom.' I think there was a touch of sarcasm there.

A few years ago, I decided I was at an age when I shouldn't have to get up and stumble downstairs in the middle of the night. I decided to 'install a bathroom.' I called in a plumber who roughed in the plumbing. I was left with the tub surround and some drywall work.

Drywall was installed, tub surround installed, and the bathroom was functional. But not really finished...

Those little touches— baseboard, trim, taping.... paint— you get the drift.

The bathroom was unfinished, cuz the downstairs bathroom was redone recently, (by professionals— tile, floor, and drywall.)

Only the two of us used the upstairs one— it's fine...

The final blow— a call from The Sidekick's sister, announcing she and her hubby were flying out of Pearson, and had to stay at our place the night before, and store their car here while they visited Vancouver.

Translation: the upstairs bathroom HAD to be finished.

Back to the 'most inopportune time'— last week, you know, one of THE hottest two weeks we've endured and that was the week to do it.

We ripped out the old tub surround, thinking we'd just replace it. One look and we headed out for drywall.

A day later (and ten pounds of sweat) the drywall was replaced. Time for the surround.

The house being a storey and a half, the ceilings slope on each side of the room, so care must be taken to find a surround that doesn't have shelves in the corners. Cutting on an angle is impossible if there's a shelf in the way.

We found one, and I started the installation in the cool of the morning. (The Sidekick had to go to work that day— she ain't dumb..)

The heat upstairs was stifling, and the only consolation was the master bedroom was a bit cooler with the a/c unit in the window.

Cutting a tub surround on an angle on the floor of your bedroom is not very convenient. There are things in the way, you never have the right tool upstairs, and it's just a royal pain.

But I did it! The Sidekick came home from work, amazed at the look of the bath tub. All that's left is sanding and paint— and it WILL be done before the company arrives.

Of course, that is so long as the 'curse of the upstairs bathroom' doesn't rear its ugly head once again....




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