

# Just once Norm, make a mistake

As the NHL season winds down to the semifinals, (the Stanley Cup finals are probably slated for mid-August) I'm amused by the armchair coaches the day after any key game.

They second-guess every strategy used, or criticize key plays that cost the team the game. Personally, I have limited interest in sports.

My days of coaching from the armchair (or bleachers) are long gone since I retired from coaching ladies fastball with my kids.

I've now become an armchair renovator.

When I can, I catch the home improvement shows on PBS or TVO (living in the boonies makes HGTV on cable out of reach for me.)

Be it *Home Again's* Bob Vila, Norm Abrams and Steve Thomas of *This Old House* fame, or Dean Johnson and his obnoxious co-host Robin Hartl on *Hometime*—I watch 'em all.

From my chair, I supervise the transformation of a totally run-down structure into a veritable Taj Mahal—in six half-hour programs.

I sometimes allow myself to be amazed at the transformation to the point where I've actually become motivated enough to get out the measuring tape, just to see how plausible such a renovation might be at my place—until I realize the full impact (and cost) of the job.

Ya gotta have mighty deep pockets and a summer home to renovate *This Old House*.

What I'd love to see, would be a candid glimpse behind the scenes on those shows.

Let's face it, when *New Yankee Workshop's* Norm Abrams (or 'Nam' to his friends) makes a cut, he never misses. A perfect cut every time.

Pulleeeze... no one is that good.

Norm is the Martha Stewart of home handy-men/carpenters. He's just too perfect. Every job turns out bang on—drawers slide, doors close squarely, and the legs are all the same length.

Just once, I'd love to see him be a normal carpenter, who, after making that miter cut the

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wrong way, actually curses like a freakin' trooper and throws it across the room.

Just once, I'd like the camera to pan to that huge scrap pile behind his shop—there's gotta be one somewhere out there.

Or how about Norm actually having to make do with an inferior tool, instead of owning the state of the art power tool for every damned application known to modern man?

And when contractor Tom Silva on *This Old House* opens up a wall on that 150 year-old heritage home, I want to see some bats fly out to scare the hell outta him.

With the current trend to provide 'virtual reality television' like the *Survivor* or *Fear Factor* series, why not have a little more reality in the home improvement shows?

C'mon Norm, take that hammer and drive a nail in and watch it split the trim on that door jamb—don't make a perfect hit every time.

My all time love/hate session is with *Hometime*, where Dean and Robin take on the impossible at some remote cottage/castle and single-handedly make it into a work of art.

I'd pay money to see Dean miss that finishing nail and blacken Robin's perfect manicure.

But there is one aspect of that show that will never cease to annoy me, as I oversee renovations from the cozy comfort of my armchair.

Will Robin ever pick up the light end of a counter top or cupboard—and NOT grunt?

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