

Home is where the heart is...

...and with dual residences, two are better than one

BY SALLY D. KETCHUM
Special to the Record-Eagle

"Home sweet home."
Uh-huh, except when home is plural — as in having two — or good grief, even three or more, as some retired folks have. Then "sweet" is not always the right word. "Problematic," "troublesome" or "chaotic" may be better word choices. And "nigging" is always the case. Nigging is that condition when small questions constantly bother the brain — and disturb the peace of mind of multiple homeowners.

The first battle is travel, in our case back and forth over the Mackinac Bridge between Michigan's two

peninsulas. Although both are beautiful, they are quite different from one another. So we must consider the plans of others in our travels. For instance, the natural flow over the bridge is north on Fridays and south on Sundays.

The beginning of four-day weekends and the openings of various fishing and hunting seasons are considerations. While northern traffic congests, we might plan to head south, and so on.

Since living in two homes means acting as purveyors of foodstuffs, suppliers of tools and transporters of houseguests, relatives and dogs — not in order of importance — we travel in a caravan. My husband must take the truck for supplies, and I, the good wife, take the mini-van with dogs. Human passengers have a choice.

There are seasonal variations on goods. I have taken basil and oregano seedlings

back and forth so often that by mid-June, the van smells like Interlochen's Giovanni's on a Saturday night. I have also traveled with lampshades, frozen beef roasts and rising bread. Christmas tree ornaments — and one year, the tree — have also crossed the bridge.

And then there's the omnipresent problem I call "Where is the beef?" "Beef" being generic for small radio, iron, the budding begonia or Calvin Klein undies.

The checkbooks, it seems, are always at the "other place." Frustration is not the only result of such misplacement — the worst is lopsided accumulation. Because we forget small things that we seemingly cannot live without (it's tarragon for me, a Barlow jackknife for my husband), we must replace them where we're at. I now have seven jars of dried tarragon up

north, none south and there is an immodest array of Barlow jackknives on the Williamsburg workbench.

We often more or less duplicate tools — we think intelligently — upon purchase. Case in point is the large vacuum cleaner that we call The Super Sucker and the small one, Little Blue. But due to the two-homes syndrome, we are most often on our knees vacuuming a half-acre of Berber with Little Blue and trying to dust the china shelves with the Super Sucker. The latter problem is self-solving as our china supply dwindles.

Clothing is constantly at the wrong address. I have visited a Traverse City funeral home in running shoes and attended our TC church in a sweatshirt proclaiming "906 is God's area code." My husband has been known to stay home from a black tie occasion rather than borrow one from a

neighbor; conversely, he has plowed the northern lane in a velvet-collared Chesterfield, while his L. L. Bean storm coat was hanging in the southern closet.

Mail, whether pleas from the IRS or funds-seeking children, junk mail or cookies, are forwarded, more or less in accordance with the rules of the U.S. Postal Service. The cookies I baked for my husband's May birthday are now somewhere in the system between the two peninsulas. I received a claim ticket of sorts for the cookies in late July, but where do I turn it in?

Weather, a universal concern, is cause for worry and work for us. During a wet and warm spring, the lawns leap into jolly green growth at both homes. Left alone, the entrances to both properties could easily sustain either Sleeping Beauty, a gorilla tribe, or both.

There are benefits to

homes, of course. For instance, I have three driver's licenses. I forgot my purse in Williamsburg, had to obtain a duplicate in the U. P. and a new one came early, before my birthday. Happily, unwanted houseguests (Both the Traverse area and the Upper Peninsula are ideal summer destinations) are easily turned away, since we simply say, "We are at the other place."

However, our really good friends are tenacious and find us anyway.

"Home is where the heart is."

But in the case of our two houses, it is also where the dogs are — hopefully all three, a Barlow jackknife, a tad of tarragon and at least one of my driver's licenses.

Sally Ketchum is a writer with homes in the Grand Traverse area and the U.P.'s Garden Peninsula.

Textured coatings are solid alternatives to house paint

BY DAVID BRADLEY
The Associated Press

Homeowners trapped in an endless cycle of house painting should put down their brushes and sprayers long enough to check out an alternative known as textured coatings.

Textured coatings look like paint when applied to siding but the similarity ends there. Residential versions of commercial coatings last indefinitely, offer UV ray protection, resist fading and can span small cracks.

According to a firm that manufactures home-use coatings, most homeowners aren't aware the coatings are an option. "People paint and repaint their homes every few years because paint doesn't last very long," said Jay Haines

of Textured Coatings of America. "Coatings are their way out of this labor intensive cycle."

Textured coatings contain far less water than latex paints and once applied are five to 10 times thicker when dry. Haines says typical latex exterior paints are two to four millimeters thick and up to 70 percent water. In contrast, textured coatings are 17 millimeters thick and contain 60 percent to 70 percent solids.

This high concentration of solids is key to the durability of textured coatings.

"It's the amount of solids that matter because the greater the solid volume, the longer results last," said Haines. "Consumers don't recognize the high amount of water and low solid ratio in off-the-shelf paint."

According to Haines, most consumers are attracted to the emphasis paint companies place on color choices and ease of application. Many homeowners don't consider the labor-intensive surface preparation and the need for frequent repainting. The very nature of thin high water volume latex paints means that it is easily applied by do-it-yourselfers.

In contrast, the thicker nature of the resins and solids in the textured coating make for a product consumers cannot apply with a brush, roller or standard sprayer. Haines said the heavy coatings require the higher-powered sprayers used by professionals. Such sprayers jet the liquid on at a pressure of 2,600 pounds-per-square inch, nearly double the pressure of sprayers available to homeowners.

Consumers can pick from the same array of color

choices made available in paint products, but pigments are custom mixed at the plant rather than at a local store.

The cost of textured coatings applied to a home is about one-third more than paint. Specialized material and labor account for most of the increase, but reduced homeowner labor over the long term is a trade-off many consumers see as worth the difference.

Textured coatings seldom need reapplication, won't flake, peel or fade, are impervious to UV rays and are warranted, while most paints are not. Some coatings also provide your home with additional insulation.

"For the homeowner who doesn't want to scrape and paint every couple of years, textured coatings are the way to go," said Haines. "These coatings have been around a long time in both the residential and commercial markets."

Caring for wood floors

Many options exist to customize every room of your home, but there is one accessory that can virtually remain the same — the wood floors.

According to the National Wood Flooring Association (NWFA), there are a few steps you can take to determine if your floor needs to be restored to assure many more years of enjoyment.

"If the floor wear is minimal, then a recoat can easily be accomplished in one day," said David Williams, president of NWFA. "Becoming familiar with the history of the wood flooring in a home will help the contractor quickly complete refinishing."

First, examine the wear and tear of the floor to determine if you can simply recoat or if you need to take on a more intensive refinishing process. If the wear is only in the finish, the flooring can probably just be recoated, leaving

behind a clean, fresh and beautiful floor. Wear that extends through the finish requires resanding.

Determine the floor's brand and date of installation. If you know the manufacturer, they can provide the best information on properly sanding and finishing their products.

At the very least, knowing the age of your floors may also help your wood flooring professional determine the floor finish in your home.

Finally, find out the finish of the floor. One way to determine the finish type is to take a scraping, in an inconspicuous place, and rub it between your finger and thumb. If it turns to powder, then it is a polyurethane finish. If it is a wax finish, mineral spirits applied to a white rag will typically rub off the finish and some of the stain.

- The Associated Press



Our Reputation is Difficult to Stain. Nothing Repels Dirt and Stains Like a Gulistan STAINMASTER Carpet.

As America's premier manufacturer of quality STAINMASTER carpet, Gulistan has earned a reputation for making carpet that lasts longer because it stays cleaner.

Thanks to DuPont's Advanced Teflon Repel System, a unique technology that resists stains, your Gulistan STAINMASTER Carpet stays

cleaner because of specially treated fibers that reduce the ability of dirt and spills to stick and penetrate.

Best of all, Gulistan's brand of durable, high performance carpet comes in dozens of colors and a variety of styles including friezes, textures, luxurious plushes, exquisite patterned loops and beautifully finished sculptured effects.

If you're looking for luxurious carpet that's made to last then come in today and select the Gulistan STAINMASTER carpet that's right for your home.



NORTHERN FLOOR & TILE SERVICES, INC.
435 Grandview Parkway • Traverse City, MI 49684 • 231-947-8410
FREE ESTIMATES EASY PARKING

WANTED: GARDENERS
Organic Plant-It
ORGANICS & HYDROPONICS
Northern Michigan's Largest Selection of Organic Fertilizers, Nutrients and Hydroponic Supplies
Hydro-Organics • Indoor/Outdoor Horticultural Products
468 U.S. 31 S. • Traverse City • (231) 943-0385
Just north of Chum's Corners across from G. T. Homes

KITCHEN & CO.
KITCHEN DESIGN
Custom Cabinetry
Creative ideas and budgets to fit your lifestyle.
Traverse City
231-933-4044
Petoskey
231-348-6906
www.kitandco.com

The Decorator
Faux Painting • Floral Design
Sewing
Ann Macheliski
ph: 231.929.8195
www.poshpulp.com

d.m. design inc.
dore m. shaw
ph: 231.275-4013
fax: 231.275-4012

VINYL SUNROOMS REPLACEMENT WINDOWS
For All Season Spectals
4 Seasons Sunrooms Includes:
• 3" Insulated roof
• 4" Insulated Floor
• Gables
• Vinyl Door
• Insulated Vinyl Windows w/full screens
• R-20 Insulation factor
Also Available
3-Season Model \$4,880
4-Season Room \$5,990
Expert Installation Available
20% off all orders placed by Nov. 15th
Vinyl Windows **\$169.00** From Installed
Ask About Our Vinyl Storm Windows Free Estimates With No Pressure!
J & L HOME IMPROVEMENT
(231) 258-4764

Clip and Save Special!
Now Only \$69
Limited time offer... Call for an appointment today!
EXPERIENCED, FACTORY TRAINED TECHNICIANS FULLY LICENSED AND INSURED • EMERGENCY SERVICE

15 Point Furnace Tune-Up and Safety Check

- Check & adjust thermostat
- Check heat exchanger
- Check gas safety control
- Check limit safety
- Check fan control
- Clean main burners
- Clean pilot assembly
- Adjust burner for efficiency
- Adjust gas pressure
- Lubricate motors
- Check and adjust belt
- Check air filters
- Check air temperature
- Check vent pipe
- Check complete furnace cycle

Amana **JP HEATING & COOLING, INC.**
6211 S. Railway Commons • Williamsburg • **267-2000**