

Remodeling home isn't so tough

by SCOTT NEWTON
of The Sandy Post

When Carl Boomhower and his wife, Kathleen, purchased their house 14 years ago it covered 1,100 square feet. Now it's up to 2,300 and he's currently working on a 700-square-foot deck.

A structural iron worker who recently did the entry work at Far West Federal in Portland, he said he always has a home-building project of one kind or another going.

About three years ago he added a 192-square-foot bathroom next to the bedroom, which includes a combination shower and hot tub.

At the time the average bid to hire it done was about \$12,000, he estimated. He did it himself for about \$3,000.

"It's comfortable," he said. "It wasn't built to be lavish or anything."

He said he does his own building "out of necessity. I just know enough to get by."

A polished granite patio and hot tub will be part of the deck. "I hope my wife doesn't end up planting geraniums in it," he said.

Sandy contractors Robert Montgomery Jr. and Larry Marleau both said they are used to doing remodeling jobs where the customer does some aspect of the job, like the painting, plumbing or wiring.

"If they're interested in doing their own work, that's fine," Montgomery said. "We try to coach them through it if they're relatively inexperienced."

Said Marleau, "Family's important, and if they want to use the family then that's OK. They should do that."

Judy Marleau, Larry's wife, suggests people who

subcontract work on a project keep the contractor's schedule in mind. Construction time will be lengthened considerably if it takes "Uncle Harry" a month of Sundays to get the plumbing in, not to mention the inconvenience it may cause the contractor.

People considering adding on to the house should also plan ahead, considering as many options as possible before even getting in touch with a contractor. To get a reputable contractor one should be willing to wait three to six months before work even gets underway.

"Usually if they're willing to wait, they'll be a pretty good customer," Marleau said.

Both Marleau and Montgomery like to guide their customers through the financial maze. "The do-it-yourselfer will often pay 2 to 4 percent more on their loan," Marleau said.

In addition, he said a person, whether hiring the work done or doing it himself, should add 10 percent to the final cost for add-ons and changes.

"A customer sometimes thinks we're prying," Judy Marleau said, "when what we really need to know is if they can really afford the changes they want."

As for the process of getting the proper building permits, "It's nothing to be fearful of," said Montgomery, pointing out that uniform building codes are there to protect people from themselves.

"I don't always agree with the fee charges," Montgomery said. "I think some of them are exorbitant."

Simply put, he said, it's just a matter of checking



Carl Boomhower and his daughter, Sarah, sit in the newly remodeled bathroom of the Sandy home.

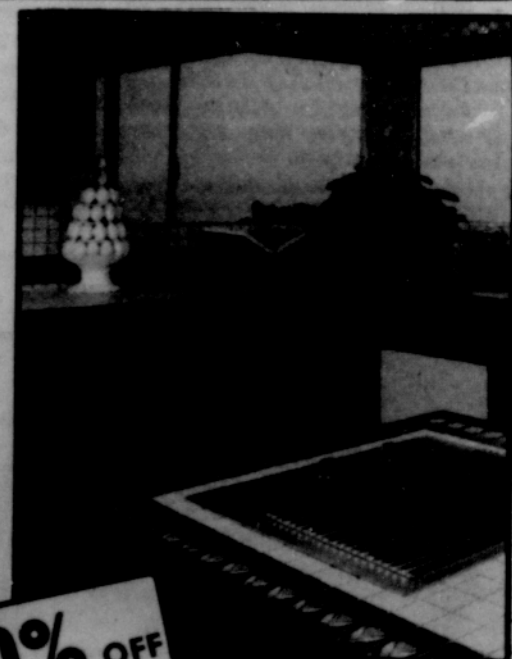
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