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Our Kitchen Remodel

With our current housing market fluctuating between hot and scalding, some homeowners opt to remodel instead of move. If you are contemplating a remodel, then this newsletter is for you! The enclosed items of value provide some high level guidelines for a kitchen remodel as well as garage sale tips (these topics really do go hand in hand!).

The remodeling topic hit home for us because we recently completed a remodel of our own. Everyone has heard the stories of cost and scope overruns and our project was no different. Hopefully we can provide a few insights that will help you with your next remodeling project!

On paper our project sounded simple enough – bring the kitchen down to studs and put in a whole new kitchen and breakfast bar. It is worth mentioning that our home is 58 years old and was remodeled and expanded prior to our owning it. Here are some of the highlights (lowlights, actually) that we encountered:

- **Different cabinet footprints.** Ideally the kitchen flooring goes under the cabinets (e.g. wall to wall), but not in our house. And our new cabinets had a slightly different footprint than the old ones. The consequence? We had to put in ~800sf of new tile flooring which added both time and cost to the remodel.
- **Mystery wires.** The gutted kitchen also revealed some live wires coming up under the sink with no apparent purpose or origination/destination. Add a few hours of electrician time to work on this mystery.
- **Subpanel upgrade.** As with many older homes, we knew we would have to upgrade our Federated Pacific Electric subpanel as part of the remodel. Federated Pacific Electric panels can become fire hazards according to experts, so it is just wise to replace them (it only took us 7 years). Our new panel triples the number of circuits on the subpanel since current code requires a dedicated circuit to virtually every appliance in the kitchen. I think our old panel had 2 circuits, one for the range and one for everything else.
- **Knob and tube upgrade.** Even though our knob and tube was almost pristine according to our electrician, current code required us to upgrade our wiring to Romex. What we didn't realize was that every wire we touched – and we touched a lot of wires with the subpanel upgrade – was theoretically supposed to be upgraded. Luckily we escaped with only having to rewire about half the house! Maybe this was a blessing in disguise though since as part of the rewire the electrician found a couple of live wires that had just been shoved into the wall by a previous owner. Think fire hazard.
- **Expired permit.** Towards the end of the project we lost a little steam and, as a result, our permit expired. The reinstatement fee was over \$700, but a kind note to the Building Inspector got this reduced to \$200.

In the end we did get a great kitchen (and baths, etc.) that we absolutely love. And because we didn't change the footprint of our kitchen, our property taxes should not be impacted at all. Happy remodeling!

Best Regards,

Janie and John Barman

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