

## HOME CALENDAR

**Cranbrook House** in Bloomfield Hills is dressed for holiday tours that will begin at 6 p.m. and 7 a.m. Friday, Dec. 27. The house is the Detroit area's oldest manor home. George and Ellen Booth lived there during the years they built Cranbrook. The Booths were principal players in the American Arts and Crafts movement in the early 20th century. Their home is at the core of the extensive Cranbrook grounds and contains beautiful furnishings and works by world-famous artists. Tickets are \$5, \$4 for students and seniors. Parking is free in the lot adjacent to the house. Cranbrook House is at 380 Lone Pine Road, just west of Cranbrook Road. For more information, call (248) 645-3149. The public may visit Cranbrook House the evenings of the fourth Friday of each month through June. Cranbrook Academy of Art Museum and Cranbrook Institute of Science are also open. Call (248) 645-3000 for times, costs and information about special events at Cranbrook.

**Blood Drive** Blood may be donated 1-4:45 p.m. Monday, Dec. 30, at Arl Van Furniture, 6500 14 Mile in Warren. To make an appointment, call the American Red Cross at (800) GIVE-LIFE. The blood drive is taking place in partnership with the American Red Cross and FOX 2.



Appliance Doctor

Joe Gagnon

The movement by the appliances manufacturing industry during 2002 has never been greater than maybe back in the 1970s - new designs, features and attractions that might just tempt you to get rid of the old one and buy new.

The reason for so much activity can be attributed to the fact that this country has reached maximum saturation point on needed major home

appliances for its population.

The next few years will be interesting as we watch the production figures of American manufacturers slow down from those increasing yearly figures that date back to 1946.

I believe the market has reached its peak and as we level off, watch out for the foreign competition.

Two different companies from Korea and China have

## Saturation point reached on appliances

already hit our shores. Their products have sleek, innovative features that are already catching the eye of consumers and there are rumblings of future price wars between overseas and U.S. competition.

Homeowners are laying out the big bucks for those high end products that are made to last.

Let's take this writer as an example of someone with 10+ year-old appliances in the home.

The refrigerator is in good shape; it only needed one service call five years ago to change the defrost heaters. It keeps food frozen and cold, but not cold enough.

The ice dispenser is very slow compared to a newer model. The ice jams up in the system quite often.

The operating noise level is much louder than I think it should be and I think I just might get another four to five years out of it.

The electric range I have is nice and clean and yet the top burners are all scarred and the drip pans need replacing. The vinyl in the door handle is

starting to yellow and so far, I haven't had to replace any of the very expensive control and modular parts. I do expect something to go wrong in the next few years.

The dishwasher continues to do the job quite well except that it seems to be getting louder with each passing year.

With the kids all through school and working, the next time I need a new appliance, don't you think I'm going to consider a new product that looks good, is tough and is built like a tank? You bet I am, and I know from all the homeowners I meet and their comments, so are they.

I will soon be giving a seminar at a local college of engineering and I will take a copy of this column with me. The subjects are going to be ethics, pride in workmanship, caring for others, and the need to remember how products used to be made in this country. Stay tuned.

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Creating functional and appealing outdoor spaces where homeowners can live and play will remain an important home trend in 2003.

## DECOR

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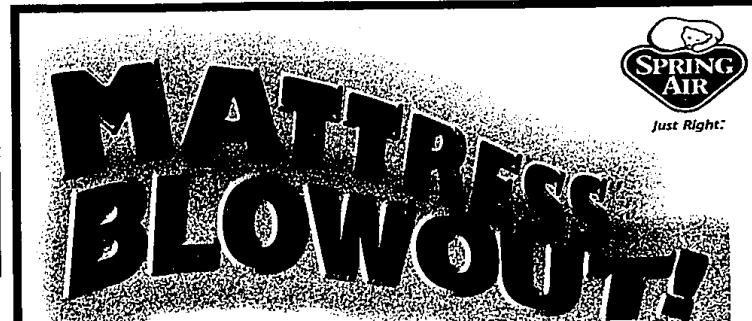
above-counter sinks or vessels in bathrooms.

"With bringing the outdoors indoors, you're mixing elements. You bring slate, for example, into a room and plants, or even a water fountain," said Kallis at Expo Design Center.

Similarly, current interest in

creating functional outdoor spaces will only grow, said Birdsong from Lowe's. "There has been a growing trend to create more outdoor living space. That's still going on with creation of outdoor kitchens, outdoor patios, use of portable fire pits and outdoor heaters."

Homeowners are really looking to create environments outdoors, habitats where they can eat, cook and live."



Howard Dupont, senior service technician for Liberty Total Comfort Systems, Redford, gets ready to visit a senior citizen homeowner during Project Heat.

## CONTRACTORS

FROM PAGE C1

and needed to be replaced. Dupont had a replacement filter for the truck and made the switch - free of charge.

The furnace was in very good shape, he said, and he and ran a battery of tests to prove that it was operating efficiently and safely. He noticed the absence of a CO detector and mentioned that he would bring one out the next week.

He had given his last CO detector to a woman at a previous stop - a home that needed a new furnace. In all, four homes were identified that needed new furnaces. The association, in cooperation with its supplier members, will arrange to donate the furnaces and labor for free.

For more information on these two local contractors, call Airtronic Heating & Cooling at (313) 537-8111 or Liberty Total Comfort Systems at (800) 245-9080.



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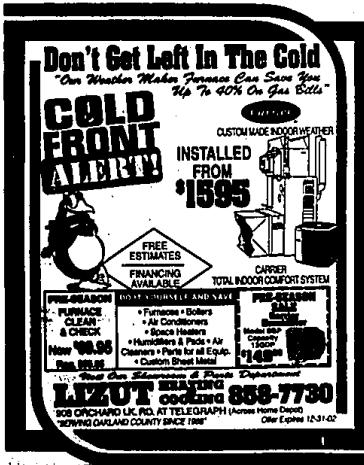
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