

**JUNGLE**  
FROM PAGE C1

coats of magnetic paint on a closet door and the entrance door.

Lisa painted a monkey stand, used as a table in one corner, in another corner stands an elephant.

A jungle-themed green comforter and pillows were made from scraps and remnants. Bamboo leaves cover the windows. Squares of animal print tissue paper were glued to two bulletin boards.

A set of parrot lights, which drape a headboard of the bed, was purchased from Joann's. A leopard rug was bought at Target.

Bamboo stems shoot up the stem of a lamp. A lampshade is covered with fabric, a mix of leopard spots and tiger stripes.

Even wooden letters spelling out Lisa's name are covered with scraps of paper and fabric, "about 80 cents worth," said Marcia.

A vine border was sprayed by Krupa along the top of the wall. "She helped us with that whole room," Marcia said. "She's more creative with I am and she also did the wallpapering."

Wooden paws hung on the wall were ordered through a catalog on the Internet.

And the cost was only \$150 for all the materials for the new look.

"Once we started to put up the wallpaper, it kind of evolved," Valentine said.

"Everywhere we went it just caught our attention, where we'd see a zebra or anything that had to do with a jungle."

"They also worked on Lauren's room, which I am described as 'calming and passive.' Lauren received a cool purple paint color in her room, a futon painted white with colorful homelife pillows to blend in well in the room. A colorful poster on the wall is a simple sheet of wrapping paper."

"The idea was this room could be where she could hang out with her friends, thus the



Lisa Valentine sits in a chair in her jungle theme bedroom.

reason for the futon," Marcia said. "Lauren and her friends can sit on the futon or bed and do their homework, relax and listen to music or read a book. It's a nice place where she can be with her friends. For a teenager, that's important."

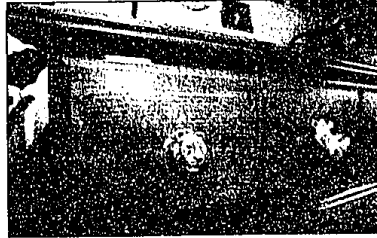
**TEAMWORK**

Lauren also helped with the new look in her room, painting, stamping bookshelves and stuffing pillows.

Marcia's advice? "If you can make it, do it. To do a body pillow would cost at least \$10-\$15 at the store. When you make it with material, we did it for \$3. The kids are both comfortable when you make it their rooms."

For example, Marcia used a cardboard box purchased at a garage sale, then painted it orange, and printed off animals on a color printer that were glued to the cardboard box. Marcia saw a similar box at the store for \$85.

"We did a low budget project from garage sales and clearance racks," Marcia said. "A lot of things we made, that we could adapt to the environment. We checked out garage themes with anything that had



Even the drawer handles on Lisa's dresser contribute to the theme.

african jungle theme. We picked up things cheaply.

The magnetic paint placed on Lisa's door was the real challenge, Marcia said, to ensure plans with photos would stick to the magnetized stripes. "To do the stripes free-hand is difficult for someone without a lot of creativity," Marcia said with a laugh in reference to herself, but the stripes look good in the room, and represent another creative touch.

Marcia, Lisa and Krupa worked on the pillows, then the room was painted, which

took about six weeks time. The room was put together in one day by Marcia and Carol.

"After we had all the wallpaper and painting done, put everything in its place, so she got to see the room," Marcia said.

Lisa said she is glad she helped her mom with the project, saving pillows and painting. "I didn't want to when we started, but I'm glad I did. It's more my room than if my mom just made it."

Kate Amey is a home economist (248) 901-2551

# Maintain your central air conditioning system

The recent blast of snow and ice conditions which caused so many homeowners to lose electrical service created a surge of consumers buying new generators for emergency use. Of these approximately 500,000 utility customers whose lives changed overnight, most would agree that they appreciate their electricity a little more.



**Appliance Doctor**  
Joe Gagnon

Whether you went through the power outage or not, take a look around the house and visualize what electricity does for you. Try reading this column in the dark or setting the alarm clock for an early morning appointment. What about watching your favorite television program or the Stanley Cup playoffs, or listening to your special radio program on weekend mornings? Without electricity, it might remind you of how tough life must have been in the old days and how we seemingly can't live comfortably without it.

There is another time of year which can be even more unbearable without the pure gift of voltage - it's the hottest days of summer. Don't forget about the summer storms which are capable of knocking out power to many homes for several days. It's different than in winter when you can sleep in a cold house by piling on the blankets, but you just can't get comfortable trying to sleep when it's 100 degrees in the house.

Let me get back for just a minute to the utility company who supplies the electricity to your home. That company didn't create the storm, now did they? It didn't plant the trees that broke apart and knocked down the power lines.

Do we not as homeowners

bear some responsibility when it comes to prevention or maintenance? Do you ever go outside and follow the electric lines back to the pole? Your eyes could spot a potential problem.

Many service calls will be necessary because customers don't maintain the unit. That expensive central air system for your home also means you need to show a certain amount of diligence. The condenser that sits outside (that big thing that makes all the noise) needs to be clean. If it is not, the compressor will overheat and will break or will be ruined. I can't tell you how many times a service technician informs a consumer they need to spend \$1,500 to change a compressor on a perfectly good unit. That repair person shakes his or her head and tells the customer "if you would only have kept this clean, this would not have happened."

Please follow these simple instructions. Clear the plants and bushes away from the condenser so that it has 12 inches of breathing space all around it. Take the garden hose with a nozzle and wash it down all over. Rinse it several times during the summer. Make sure that the power is off while you do this maintenance yourself.

Keep reminding yourself that the temperatures in the house and the energy efficiency of your air conditioning system are very dependent on a clean condenser outside.

Changing the filter in the furnace is another critical step in the upkeep of your system. A dirty filter can also cause a compressor to fail by not allowing proper air movement. I am not an air conditioning specialist but my methods were learned from the experts in the field.

Joe Gagnon is host of Ask The Handyman on Infinity Radio AM 1270 B a.m. noon Saturdays and Sundays. You can hear his tips on WWJ 950 on weekdays. You can call him on his show at (248) 356-1270.

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