

# At Home

## ASK DAD



HARRY JACHYM

### Check for leaks before finishing your basement

With winter weather chasing do-it-yourselfers inside, I get many questions dealing with interior remodeling. Basement finishing, and in particular, the perimeter walls seem to top these questions.

There are many variables to basement finishing: A simple coat of latex paint on the poured concrete or concrete block wall will suffice when the basements will be used for storage or occasional living space. If however your plans call for adding often-used living space, look to a more substantial method.

It's essential to verify that there are no water leaks in existing walls. Also check that the surface water run-off is controlled away from the house. Soil conditions will have a lot to do with how damp your basement is. In our area, which is sandy, the natural drainage keeps our basement quite dry, but if you're in heavy clay, dampness will be a natural problem.

It's best to stop the moisture before it reaches the wall. In damp conditions this could require digging around the foundation and applying diversion mats to the outside of the wall. These mats, placed next to the foundation wall, divert moisture quickly to the drain tile. This extensive project is usually best left to professionals.

The next best is to apply damp-proofing inside. I'd suggest a trowelable product such as PakMix Stop Leak ([www.usmix.com](http://www.usmix.com)), available where Sakrete products are sold, or a membrane such as a wall polyethylene applied to the inside. Keep in mind that these solutions still leave moisture in the wall.

#### A good wall system

Once the ground moisture is controlled (if necessary), it's time to build the finished perimeter wall. Probably the best wall system I've seen starts by installing rigid foam insulation (1-inch is good, 2-inches is better) to the concrete walls using foam compatible construction adhesive. Tape the seams (good old duct tape) and put a bead of caulk around the bottom. This insulation system helps keep the warm moist air in the basement from reaching the cool wall thus preventing condensation.

Build an uninsulated 2 by 4-inch stud wall with a pressure treated plate (board) on the bottom. Space this about 1-inch from the foundation insulation. Run any planned wiring and plumbing, then cover the stud wall with a gypsum panel (drywall) and finish. I strongly suggest using drywall on the studs even if your final plans call for wood paneling. The drywall helps the panels lay flat and is fire resistant.

This wall system should keep the basement temperature above the dew point reducing the likelihood of condensation while reducing the infiltration of ground moisture. Complete with ceiling and flooring materials of your choice and enjoy your new living space.

Harry Jachym is a licensed builder, lives in Plymouth, and teaches building trades to high school students.

### Island provides a dining oasis

BY HOMESTYLES.COM  
FOR AP WEEKLY FEATURES

The island kitchen, per se, is not a new concept. But its growing popularity stems from a shift in how homeowners view their dining needs. The formal dining room was once considered a necessity, for those rare occasions when one might have a formal dinner gathering. In hectic - and increasingly casual - modern lifestyles, the formal dining room is little more than a mail room or dumping ground for coats and bags. Why heat and cool space that functions as storage?

The solution to this waste dilemma, as many designers have found,

Please see ISLAND, C2

## Welcome to my garden

Colorful flowers, outstanding evergreens make small space an interesting place

BY MARTY FIGLEY  
SPECIAL WRITER

Diane Salim's garden in Birmingham is so lovely that visitors encouraged her to invite me to see it this summer, and what a wonderful job she has done with this small property where she and her husband have lived for 26 years.

Although we're in the throes of winter there are hints of spring. Just the other day I noticed some emerging buds on my shrubs. A good garden requires planning, and Diane Salim and her husband Uwe Diepholz are experts. Every bit of available space is chockfull of many, many different flowers that enhance the setting. In fact, she says, "If there's an empty space, I haven't bought enough plants."

Stores are beginning to display seed packets, and gardening accessories and tools. It will soon be time to dig in. But while we're waiting, we can look at pictures and be inspired by other gardeners.

Annuals, perennials, vines, fountains, a water garden (with huge koi and goldfish) are used with abandon yet are controlled in Diane Salim's garden. The gray curving paver sidewalk that leads to the front stoop and the abundance of colorful flowers made me

Please see GARDEN, C2



At the gate: Above, Diane Salim at the gate to the water garden with her Belgian sheep dog, Kona. At left, The entrance to the vegetable garden attests to the elegance of this landscape. Top photo, A blue globe spruce and variegated miscanthus grow at one edge of the front garden, while a tall castor bean gets attention at the other.

## HOME IMPROVEMENT

### Homeowners are looking for luxurious accents

LANA MINI  
STAFF WRITER  
lmini@oc.homemag.com

The gridlocked parking lot at the Novi Home Expo show on Saturday reaffirmed that metro-Detroiters have a love affair with their homes. The popular item - anything luxurious.

Large crowds gathered around nearly all of the more than 300 vendors and there was more gridlock around spa suppliers. Tinted glassed encased spas, cedar wood spas, spas accented with pink neon lights, spas that massage, spas that fit four, eight or more, and spas with built-in stereos were featured.

America in a recession? It seemed just the opposite.

Home improvement suppliers said January 2002 was their best January in years and February is expected to be better. In addition to spas, top selling items included new windows and children's murals.

"We sold three times the number of spas here this year compared to last," owner Tim Biele of Master Spas said. "And at the home shows we went to in Philadelphia and Minneapolis recently sales were up 40 percent."

The chill from Sept. 11 is keeping people at home. Instead of warming this winter with a trip to Florida, they're warming with spas that create a vacation atmosphere at home. Biele said sales are so good that Master Spas, of Rochester and Utica, will open two more stores this spring in Novi and Auburn Hills.

Please see SPA, C2



Vacation at home: Spas were the hit at the Novi Home Expo show and owners of Masters Spas said sales are so good the company will open to more stores in April.