



FALL HOME IMPROVEMENT

By **B. Scott Mohr**
Editor

While autumn is most often associated with football games, the World Series, colorful leaves, brisk evenings, bonfires and trick-or-treaters, it's the perfect time to embark upon that home improvement project that you've been talking about for what seems like forever. If hesitant to undertake such an endeavor because your know-how may be in the "lacking department," there's no need to fret ... an abundance of Southside companies are eager to offer their expertise. Whether it's a new bathroom, a deck, a patio, a room addition or a water garden that you're interested in, one phone call can get the ball rolling. But you'll want to call several contractors for pricing and references before hiring anyone. Regardless of whom you choose from the following professionals, their craftsmanship should ensure a well-done job.

General contractors

Don Harris Home Improvement (317-787-3250) has completed more than 3,800 remodeling projects in Indianapolis, including room additions, siding, roofing, porches, replacement gutters and windows, hail and wind storm repairs, garage conversions and much more.

The business was started 52 years ago by Don Harris' father, and that's when Don traded in his paper route to help his father with roofing.

"We provide a high level of customer service, and we work to ensure that you're happy with the finished project," Harris said. "If you have an idea of what you want your project to look like, we'll design and build it with high-quality materials and excellent workmanship."

"If you have had storm damage, we'll provide you a competitive estimate for your repairs and work with your insurance company."

"We have done \$28 million in business since 1974, and we have paid more than a half-million dollars in local sales taxes. We have employed more than 100 people over the years. No job is too big or too small for us. We'll work with you to bring your home improvement from dream to fruition."

Another reliable company is B. Davis Remodeling (317-781-0566), which is owned by Bill Davis. He stresses the importance of checking references and says, "It's the homeowner's responsibility to check on contractors. You are interviewing them for a job. You can check them out on social media," he said, noting that the Better Business Bureau and Angie's List are also excellent resources.

"And make sure your contractor is licensed and bonded in Indianapolis. The city is strict on its requirements, so if a company has those credentials, it is doing good work. Also make sure the contractor gets a building permit. If they don't, something is wrong."

"We use energy-efficient and topnotch products, but I don't believe



Bill Davis

in spending someone's money if it doesn't have to be spent. If the job is done right, there will be a profit. A rushed job never gets done well. We are not just a sign-and-build company. We want you happy today, tomorrow and for the next 20 years," said the 1982 Roncalli graduate. A specialist in bathrooms, kitchens, additions, screened porches, basements, roofing, siding and windows, Davis said he strives for perfection because that ensures the end result is always acceptable. If a company shoots for acceptable, then the finished product is not.

Concrete, masonry work

Hofmann Construction Co. (317-281-6205) has been in the concrete business for more than 30 years, and owner Jim Hofmann treats every job as if he's pouring a slab for his house.

No job is too large or too small for Hofmann, who does custom and quality work, which includes colored and stamped concrete.

He welcomes new customers so he can show them his professional work.

Bob Meek, who's been in business for more than 30 years and owns Meek & Son Construction (317-514-2405), a foundation-to-chimney company, said he believes in getting several references and estimates.

"Don't be afraid to ask for references, and don't settle for a phone number that the company guy throws at you," he says. "It could be a friend of his. There are a lot of people who do good work, but just a few disreputable companies can give us a bad name. We do good work."

Meek says the quality of his work is evidenced by the amount of referrals he gets. "Our work speaks for itself."

His family-operated business specializes in masonry, interior and exterior painting, gutters and pouring concrete for patios.

If your chimney needs to be cleaned, inspected or repaired, one call to Tracy Gibson (317-294-3566) will take care of all your worries.

In addition to cleaning and inspecting most chimneys for \$100, he is an accomplished mason, having been in the trade for years.

Gibson said he offers the lowest prices and fast service.

Excavating services

If it's a topnotch excavating company that you're looking for, English Excavating (317-888-2282) has been satisfying its clients since being founded by Lowell English in 1958.

Now operated by his sons, Mark and Mick English, the company remains committed to the late Lowell English's belief of providing the highest standard of quality and service in the industry.

"We specialize in sewer/water lines and installing and repairing septic systems," said Mick. "We mainly do one-day projects and small commercial jobs. Our goal is to provide our clients with a strong responsive excavation team that knows how to get the job done correctly, on time, within budget and with pride."

"We provide our clients with the best value for their dollar. And it does not stop when the construction project is complete. Service afterward has always been a part of our tradition and commitment."

Drywalling and painting

Dave Nunn, who owns Nunn's Drywall & Painting (317-717-9322), said he takes great pride in his work, and that workmanship is evidenced by the amount of referrals received during his 23 years in business.

While drywall and painting are his specialties, Nunn also builds decks to suit the ever-diverse needs of his clients. "I also seal decks," he said. "I do a lot of handyman work ... set door frames, do framing and replace exterior trim. When I'm painting I often discover that the trim is bad, so I've replaced a lot of trim."

Nunn offers free estimates and emphasizes that he does quality work at reasonable prices. "Sometimes I feel like I work too cheap. I think I'm losing money on some of my jobs," he laughed.

Air conditioning, heating

With Old Man Winter lurking around the corner (but it sure doesn't feel like it) and meteorologists predicting harsh weather on the horizon, you might want to have the phone number of Annee & Matry Heating & Cooling (317-881-9184) handy just in case your furnace goes on the blink.

And with that forecast, Joe Annee is recommending that people get their furnaces checked early this year. An annual inspection can extend a unit's life by several years while cutting heating costs. Filters should be replaced on a regular basis.

Annee said homeowners who have furnaces that are 15 to 20 years old may want to look at replacing them with newer models, which are more efficient and save money.

He founded the company, which offers 24/7 service, with Ted Matry in 1981 at 2839 Shelby St.; it was relocated to 7631 S. Meridian St. in 2004.

"We service residential and commercial customers and work on all makes and models of furnaces and air conditioners," Annee said. "We offer service repair, maintenance, installation, service agreements and duct cleaning to meet all of your needs."

"Being in business for ourselves, we can dictate our practices. We take pride in providing quality service and installation at a fair price. We're not the lowest; we're not the highest, but we are honest."

Plumbing

If you are looking for a dependable plumber, Bob and Steve Starks will say look no further than Starks Plumbing Service (317-767-7512), which was founded by their grandfather, Wayne Starks, and his father, Robert L. Starks, and passed down through the family.

The Starks brothers attended St. Mark Grade School and Perry Meridian High.

Their forte is residential installation and repair work. Services include installing water heaters and softeners, garbage disposals, sinks, faucets, toilets, etc.

"We are an established company that you can depend on," they said. "We strive to treat our customers with respect and leave a positive impression before we leave their homes. We install the same brands and quality products that we have in our homes and stand behind our workmanship long after the standard one-year period. We feel fortunate to be in a trade that we enjoy and find rewarding."

Another professional is Allan's Plumbing (317-752-9077), which has been owned by Allan Danehy since 1966.

"I'm somewhat semi-retired, but I still work on faucets, sump



FILE PHOTO

Steve Cambridge, owner of Indy Shades, cleans blinds with his ultrasonic blind cleaner.

Let him remove your dust, dirt, nicotine, soot, grease, pollen and grime from your blinds.

pumps, toilets, water heaters and softeners, garbage disposals, and I'm pretty handy around bathrooms and kitchens," said Danehy, who no longer cleans drains or offers 24-hour emergency service.

Cleaning sales of blinds

Indy Shades (317-888-2334), established more than 24 years ago by Steve Cambridge, sells Hunter Douglas and Lafayette Interior Fashion blinds and is known for its expertise in the ultrasonic cleaning of venetian, vertical and soft shades.

"This process will make your window treatments look brand-new," said Cambridge, whose shop is located at 360 Market Plaza, Suite 1, Greenwood. "With our specially formulated detergents, we also lubricate the gears and protect the cords. We can accommodate quick turnaround times, and we are very reasonable."

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American furniture



SUBMITTED PHOTO

American craftsmen used solid cherry wood from the United States to make the Tell City furniture at Manor House Antique Mall, 8039 S. Meridian St. The furniture is a true American treasure.

Antiques, vintage and designer furniture and accessories

If you are in the market for quality antiques, vintage and designer furniture and accessories, including lamps, mirrors and pictures (even original works or art by local artists), then a stop at Manor House Antique Mall, 8039 S. Meridian St. (317-888-8887) is a must.

And that's not all you will find. There are collectibles, mirrors, pictures, unique gift items and a wide selection of records covering decades of popular soloists and groups, said Suzanne Modt, who has owned the business since 1996.

"The use of the word mall, even in the secondary market, is to indicate that there are multiple shops/shop owners within a location," she said. "There are multiple shop owners – all local – at my mall, which is truly a business of heart and soul."

"Shopping at Manor House is an adventure as there are no shelves or stockrooms filled with like items. It is about local individuals shopping, transporting, researching, restoring and attractively displaying items in their own shops. My vendors' merchandise spans many decades, and their inventory is always changing. There is something for everyone's budget. We are the history detectives of 'stuff' and never stop investigating and never stop learning and sharing."

"We offer the opportunity to reminisce and to purchase a quality piece from the past, if you desire. We assure you that you will have a unique experience. Manor House Antique Mall is a must see! Please visit us."

Pool City's Hearth Shop

People who assume that Pool City, 940 Fry Road, Greenwood (317-888-3933), carries only pool-related merchandise are badly mistaken. In addition to specializing in Fiberglas and vinyl liner in-ground pools, replacement liners, heaters, pumps and automatic covers, the company also sells fireplaces, fireplace inserts and doors, vented and vent-free gas logs, wood-burning and gas stoves, grills, smokers and fire pits.

"Our priority is making sure our customers receive the best value for their money," said owners Chris and Lynn Newett. "We take pride in offering quality products and exemplary service. If you are thinking about purchasing an in-ground pool, call us to set up an in-home consultation visit. Let us show you how you can turn your backyard into your special retreat."

"As a family business, we understand families. Pool City has more than 40 years of experience building in-ground pools."

Our motto is, "We keep you cool when it's hot, and warm when it's cold."

Lawn mower, tool repair

If you are looking for a reliable person to repair the engines on your lawn tools, including lawn mowers – push, riders or walk behinds – weed eaters, trimmers, edgers, etc., Jack Hall (317-503-0199) is your guy.

"I'm as reasonably priced as anyone, reliable and experienced," Hall said. "In fact, I'm probably cheaper, and I offer a quick turn-around time. If it has an engine, I can fix it."

"And now's the perfect time to service your equipment before you put it away for the winter."



SUBMITTED PHOTO

Ethan Hall, son of engine repairman Jack Hall, looks right at home on this riding mower.



SUBMITTED PHOTO

John Walke uses only quality garage openers and doors.

Garage doors

When it comes to installing garage doors, openers and springs, Garage Doors by John Walke (317-670-8037) is known for its excellent work.

A 30-plus year veteran in the business, John Walke founded his company in 2006 and offers next-day service when repairing doors. The installation of a door with an opener can take up to a week since the door has to be ordered.

"Cloypay doors and Liftmaster Chamberlain openers are the brands that I use because of their reliability," said Walke, who expressed a special thanks to the country's armed forces and first responders.

The bulk of his business is residential, but he does some light commercial work.

Nursery products, pumpkins, ornamental foliage

Heidenreich Greenhouses, 502 National Ave. (317-786-1528), has been a mainstay on the Southside since 1956.

Owner Bill Heidenreich boasts a shop that is teeming with 12 varieties of mums, asters, ornamental kale and cabbage (red, white and blue), pumpkins, corn stalks and bales of hay. Christmas trees will arrive the Friday after Thanksgiving.

"Locally grown plants always prove best," said Heidenreich, who added that fall is a great time to plant grass seed.

His shop, open from 9 a.m.-5 p.m. weekdays, 9 a.m.-4 p.m. Saturdays, is known for its quality merchandise and friendly and courteous staff.

Come springtime, Heidenreich Greenhouses will come to life with beautiful geraniums, rose bushes and lush tropical plants. "We will also have ferns, trumpet vines, clematises, hanging baskets, New Guinea and sun impatiens, 75 varieties of potted perennials, onion sets and 25 kinds of vegetable seeds," he said. There are also tomato, pepper, cucumber and berry plants.

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Jeff George's company truck.

Lawn care, landscaping and hauling

Jeff George has owned Jeff's Lawn & Landscaping (317-523-7921) for three years and has more than 23 years' experience in the business, having worked with his dad and brother for 20 years. "I mow, aerate and oversee lawns and trim bushes; now's the perfect time to aerate you lawn," George said. Aeration involves perforating the soil with small holes to allow air, water and nutrients to penetrate the grass roots. This helps the roots grow deeply and produce a stronger, more vigorous lawn. The main reason for aerating is to alleviate soil compaction.

George also edges driveways and sidewalks, cleans brush and weeds out of fences and does small landscaping jobs.

"I enjoy what I do, and the recent heat hasn't been that bad. The weather comes with the job. If you need some extra time to spend with your family and can't get around to all your yard work, I'd be happy to help out. Just call me and I can give you a free estimate."

If you are looking for a topnotch, full-service landscaping company, you can't go wrong with Kenny Albers Landscaping (317-889-8423). Kenny Albers has been in the business for 39 years, and he got his start with his dad, Charles Albers, who started the family-owned business in 1950.

"I do everything except lawn care," Kenny said. "I install and remove trees and shrubs, and I pour concrete for sidewalks, patios, driveways and ponds. I deliver top soil, and I can resolve drainage issues. I can pretty much do anything when it comes to landscaping."

Kenny noted that he can landscape until the ground freezes, so there's still plenty of time this fall to turn your yard into the showplace of your neighborhood.



Kenny Albers



SUBMITTED PHOTO

Bob Cragen, who owns Cragen's Lawn Service, is known for making lawns beautiful in the fall, spring and summer.

Another leader in the business is Cragen's Lawn Service (317-507-3767), established in 1998 by Bob Cragen as a spin-off of his grandfather's company, Cragen's Lawn Care, which has been chemically treating lawns since 1977.

Cragen might be the most educated man running a lawn care service as he has a bachelor's degree from Indiana University and a master's from Ball State. He has taught at Chatard, Central Nine Career Center and Perry Meridian High School and currently teaches business at Ben Davis High.

His boys, Blake, 15, and Brock, 14, are playing a key role in his business this year. "They are getting older, and they really are helpful," Cragen said.

In addition to mowing, Cragen offers spring and fall cleanups, landscape design and installation, mulch refreshing, aeration, lawn seeding and tree and shrub planting.

A visit to www.cragenlawn.green will showcase all of his services.

Fred & Sons' Hauling & Tree Removal Service (317-626-5973) was launched in 2002 by Don Burns, a lifelong Southsider who enjoys servicing metro Indianapolis. He started his company as a side job but has hired a few full-time employees.

The business, which caters to home owners and real estate professionals and provides quality work at an affordable price, specializes in hauling services, removing junk, cleaning up properties, demolition work, tree topping, trimming and removal and lawn mowing. "The top five items that we haul away are brush piles, books, clothes, couches and old TVs. If you are in violation of a health code, we can help you comply," Burns said. "The tree that we remove most often are the pines. Due to the emerald ash borer, we are seeing an increase in the removal of infested ash trees."

The company has won many Super Service Awards from Angie's List and is a member of ITEX, a nationwide barter network.

Rex Clark (317-513-2553) is a reputable hauler of brush, scrap metal and junk of any kind. In addition, he runs a lawn care business and is handy when it comes to cleaning out gutters and garages, pruning trees and bushes, collecting leaves and sprucing up yards.

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Kenny Albers in his younger years as a landscaper.

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Tree removal and topping

While the Southside has been spared the wrath of Mother Nature's high winds and ice storms for several years, could our luck be nearing its end?

If such a storm does come our way and sends a tree crashing onto your home or yard, you'll want a dependable person to pick up the pieces ... and E. White's Tree Service (317-786-4076) is one of the companies that you will want to get an estimate from.

Offering 24-hour emergency service, Earl White has been in business for more than 30 years. He trims, tops and fertilizes trees, removes stumps, clears lots, does shrub work and sells firewood. He is fully insured and offers free estimates.

"If you want some free wood chips, just call us for free delivery," he said.

There is also Monty Glover, who has owned Glover's Tree Service (317-786-5493) since 1992.

"We basically remove trees and stumps, and we spray a lot of trees for insects and disease," he said. "While companies will tell you that they are insured, they don't tell you that their insurance doesn't cover all accidents that might happen on a job. That's where you could take an unnecessary risk.

"We are insured to cover all accidents, and we provide insurance certification upon request. Be careful who you hire. There are many

unethical people in the tree business who want to make a quick buck. You should feel comfortable with the company you're going to hire. Just call us, and you'll know that you're dealing with a reputable company."

Another reliable tree guy is Danny White, who owns Danny's Tree Service. "The business has been in our family for four generations, and we do it all when it comes to trees. We top, trim, remove and feed them, grind stumps and sell firewood. We also cable forked trees ... that's where the forks are connected by cables so they can't split away from the tree and cause damage to nearby property. This provides homeowners with peace of mind."

White also treats ash trees that have been infested emerald ash borers. "There's a 50-50 chance that a tree can survive, if it's treated soon enough. But you have to treat it annually."

White, who offers 24-hour emergency service and free estimates, is confident that he provides professional work at reasonable prices. "That's why 85 percent of my business comes from word-of-mouth.

"I offer free estimates and discounts to senior citizens, and we do snow removal."

Contrary to popular belief, spring and fall aren't the only times to trim a tree, according to an arborist, who added that most trees can be pruned anytime. However, there is a plus to having trees cut back in early spring and late fall ... there are no leaves to clean up. And some companies will work for a discount when business is slow during the winter.



SUBMITTED PHOTO

Danny's Tree Service landed this job after two other companies turned it down, saying the tree couldn't be taken down without a crane. "We took it down in five hours without a crane" and without incident, said company owner Danny White.

Jeff Cardwell. "Without the support of our customers, we wouldn't be here. As with any business, we can only grow through our commitment to serving your needs."

While this story may not cover all your needs for the project at hand, more contractors are listed in our service directory. These are not the here-today, gone-tomorrow guys; many have faithfully served the Southside for decades.

So, there's really no excuse not to get started on that patio, room addition or concrete driveway ... unless you still want to be talking about it next year.

Your one-stop shop

For the do-it-yourselfers who don't need a lot of assistance with their endeavors, they can turn to Cardwell Do-it Best Home Center, 3205 Madison Ave. (317-788-0008), for most of their supplies. Customers will find building materials, painting, roofing, plumbing and electrical supplies, doors and windows, power tools and much more.

Opened in 1945, the business has evolved over the years, but its commitment to serving customers hasn't changed, said owner

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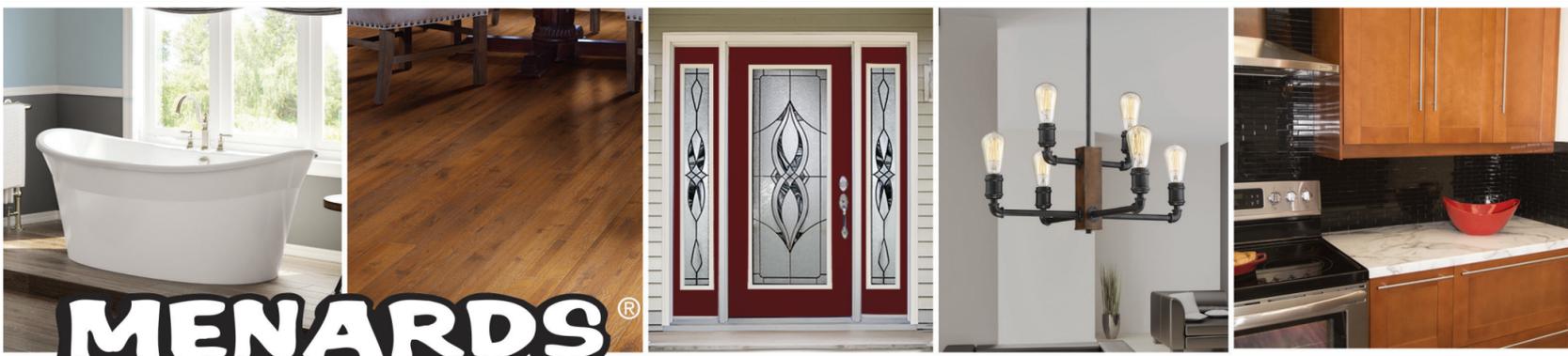
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