

ARTSDAY

Snapshot cities

Photographer William Eggleston hits the road at the Dallas Museum of Art. 8E



"I think because my husband got elected (governor of Texas). I was ashamed — total shame and guilt. I just quit. I have a lot of friends my age who smoke secretly. A lot. Mainly women."

First lady **Laura Bush**, 58, on smoking and how she finally quit, in *People*

INSIDE

Fix a clothing crisis

Don't resort to paper clips and staples for that failing hem. Our experts offer solutions to your wardrobe emergencies. 3E

Help this itchy kitty

Is it allergies, or just tender skin? Dr. Sean Messonnier advises. 9E

Can he look without ogling?

It's one thing to appreciate how nice another woman looks; it's another to make his girlfriend feel inadequate. The Advice Goddess offers help. 9E

THINK YOU HAVE PROBLEMS?

What's a mother to do?

Mom's troubled by her 12-year-old's "serious" relationship with a high school boyfriend. Dear Abby, 9E

COMING UP

Wednesday: Want to learn how to whistle, sound like a bagpipe or make a convincing bark? An expert shows you how. **Texas Living, Kids Day**

Thursday: Who looked best — and worst — on Oscar's red carpet? We have the score sheet. **Texas Living: Fashion!Dallas**

Friday: Check out the more than 300 teens who dressed up for a *Napoleon Dynamite*-themed fund-raiser recently. **Your Voice, inside Texas Living.**



COMING TUESDAY

Drink detective

Thirsty? Don't just grab something that sounds good off the shelf. Check out our guide to healthy beverages. **Healthy Living, Section E**

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Plumbing 911

What to do when leaks, clogs and other problems keep you from going with the flow

By JENNIFER CHAMBERLAIN
Staff Writer

Plumbing problems can make the savviest homeowner feel helpless. They're usually urgent, often messy and can be tough to diagnose. What's more, hiring a plumber can be expensive. How can you be sure you're getting a reasonable price?

The bad news is that many plumbing repairs are beyond the expertise of the average homeowner. But finding a good plumber doesn't have to be difficult if you know what to look for. And asking the right questions can help keep you from getting ripped off.

E-mail jchamberlain@dallasnews.com

What you can do yourself

With a little patience and a few basic tools, there are some jobs you can probably tackle on your own.

"The first question to ask yourself: Is it an emergency?" says Greg Schedler, who has worked in a variety of departments at Home Depot for almost 10 years. He currently works at the west Plano store. "If it is an emergency, I'd get a plumber quickly. If you're not sure how to proceed, get a plumber. If you have the time to do it, you like working in the house, you don't mind getting dirty and wet, you can do it yourself."

Leaky toilet or faucet: If your toilet sounds like it's flushing itself, it's probably a worn flapper valve, which is relatively easy to fix, Mr. Schedler says. If your sink is dripping, it may be the faucet stem. In either case, turn off the water. Then try to identify and remove the offending part and take it down to the nearest home improvement store, where employees can usually help you find the correct replacement part.

"There aren't standard parts for plumbing," Mr. Schedler said. "If you can't get it out, but you have the manufacturer's name, that can help, but if you can bring in the part, that's the easiest thing to do."

Clogged drain: Be careful with chemical drain cleaners, Mr. Schedler says. They can be detrimental to your fixtures or pipes. And you should never use a drain cleaner in your toilet bowl.

"Sometimes the heavy-duty drain cleaners, if you have a nice bathroom sink with very expensive fixtures, it could damage the fixture," he says. "You have to be careful."

There's a reason they call it the plumber's friend — a plunger can be your first line of defense against a clogged drain. If you're using a plunger in a double sink, you'll need to stop up the drain in the side you're not plunging. Pouring a quarter-cup of liquid soap into the standing water or the toilet bowl before plunging can sometimes help also.

For more stubborn clogs, it may help to locate the P-trap or K-trap (where the drain curves under the sink) and remove it, Mr.

SOLUTIONS

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If you aren't satisfied ...

Schedler says. Or you can rent or buy a plumbing snake to try to break up the clog.

"A snake is pretty easy to use," he says. "A lot of people will try to go through the sink. An easier way to do it is to take out that trap under the sink and do it that way. If you're able to do it, usually right outside of the bathroom or kitchen will be a trap; you can take the cover off on the wall, and put your snake through there."

Toilet bowls are fragile, and a regular snake could cause damage, Mr. Schedler says. Instead, you should use a closet auger, which is a specially designed snake for toilets.

When to hire someone

There are some plumbing jobs you probably shouldn't tackle unless you have advanced knowledge. For example, replacing a hot water heater could be dangerous because of the electricity or natural gas involved.

If several of your fixtures aren't draining, you may have a deep drain clog, which could require professional help.

"A lot of the other stuff like installing a dishwasher, if you have more experience, you could probably do that yourself," Mr. Schedler says. "If you have a pipe break in your yard or a sewage break, oh, gosh, get a plumber to do that."

With all the resources available, do-it-yourself projects are easier than ever, it's just a matter of deciding how much time and effort you want to put into it.

"It depends on your inclination, how dirty do you want to get, those type of things," he said. "The advice I would give is: If you run across something you haven't done before, go to the how-to books, go online and find your project, and go talk to somebody in

See **CALL** Page 2E

It's time to enroll for camp

Kids are already filling up the summer programs

By **LESLIE GARCIA**
Staff Writer

Beth Taylor's summer plans always begin with the same question:

"When is camp?"

For the Dallas mom's three daughters, camp has been Camp Grady Spruce since each turned 8 years old. And, yes, Mrs. Taylor has already signed her younger two up for yet another summer session at the YMCA overnight camp. Her oldest daughter will be a junior counselor this year.

"I start planning in February," says Mrs. Taylor, 47. "I need to get it clear in my mind what the kids are going to do. That way, once I get camp set, I know when we can do a family vacation, basketball camp, go with a friend here or there."

Summer isn't as far away as you might think. Three months pass quickly; before you know it, everyone else's kids will be backpacked, sack-lunched and slathered with sunscreen while yours ... well, what harm can eight hours of straight TV do, anyway?

Of course we're kidding. You can still sign your children up for camp. The YMCA day camps are enrolling now, as are many other camps.

And while some registrations, particularly for day camps, continue throughout the summer, the best time to register is now. Some kids have been signed up for months.

"I am amazed that so many par-

See **SUMMER-CAMP** Page 3E

CONSEJOS



Consejos is a bilingual advice column featuring Liliana Gundlach, Catherine Jagers and Daniel Ramirez

consejos@dallasnews.com

Latina resents scorn

Question: Why does the Hispanic community look down on me for not speaking Spanish fluently? I am a Hispanic woman who, like my parents, was born and raised in Dallas.

When others were growing up, they spoke only Spanish at home because they were not allowed to speak it in school.

My parents did not want us to go through that, so we were not taught Spanish at home. The only time I heard my parents speak Spanish was when they did not want us to know what they were talking about.

When I do not respond as well as expected to someone who is speaking to me in Spanish, I am told that I should be ashamed of myself for not knowing my language. Excuse me, but I thought my language was English, since we are living in the United States. Why do they say that?

I would never tell other people that they should be ashamed of themselves for not knowing their native language. And I know that they would not like it if someone told them. "Hey, you should be ashamed of yourself for not speaking English."

See **DONT** Page 3E

DOUGLAS D. JONES/Staff Illustration



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Preventive plumbing

Dianne Villarreal, a master plumber and senior plumbing and mechanical inspector for the city of Dallas, offers some tips for preventing these common plumbing problems.

Burst water pipes: A cold snap can cause a lot of damage to your house. Worse, the damage is not always immediately evident.

"Homeowners truthfully need to pay more attention to getting the outside faucets covered and making sure they try to do their best with keeping the cabinet doors open, keeping some heat on the outside walls to where the pipes won't freeze," Ms. Villarreal says.

Test for a leak: If you suspect you have a leak, your hot water heater can provide a clue, she says. Turn everything off, go to the hot water heater, and if you hear water running,

call a plumber. You've got a water leak." If the leak is in the cold-water lines, you may not know it until you notice a higher water bill, Ms. Villarreal says, but you may still be able to hear it near the water heater.

When the water heater goes: To avoid a costly surprise, find out when the water heater was installed, if possible, Ms. Villarreal suggests. The warranty period varies depending on the model, but most last between five and 10 years, she says. Often there will be a small sticker on the unit giving the warranty expiration date, or you can get the serial number and contact the manufacturer to find out about the warranty.

"If they have a good relationship with their plumber, they can come out and change out that water heater before it bursts, or do some maintenance on it."

To get the most life out of your water heater, she also suggests turning down the heat setting while you're out of town or on vacation, to keep the heater from cycling on and off.

Garbage disposal and drain clogs: Garbage disposals are made to handle soft foods, Ms. Villarreal says. Anything brittle can cause a problem. Even with soft foods, watch how much you put into the disposal. Make sure you give it time to chew up what's in there before adding more, and always keep the water running while using the disposal, she says.

And any type of oil or grease also shouldn't go in the garbage disposal or even down the drain. "It will act like a glue and collect down in the pipe," Ms. Villarreal says.

Enzymatic drain cleaners can also be used to help prevent drain clogs, especially if you cook a lot, says Greg Schedler of Home Depot. These consist of natural enzymes as opposed to acids or harsh chemicals.

"What I usually recommend is getting one of these enzyme cleaners, and about once a month or so, you put about 16 ounces of very hot water through the drain, put the enzyme cleaner in and flush it with a small amount of water to get it down into the pipe," he says.

Tree roots: It may not seem likely, but trees and shrubs can be a hazard to plumbing lines, even when they're not that close to the house.

"In a little time, tree roots, and the roots off of your shrubs will make their way into your pipes, especially when it gets drought time in the summer," Ms. Villarreal says. "Roots can travel

forever."

To discourage water-seeking roots from looking onto your pipes, she suggests pouring one-half cup to one cup of table or rock salt into the toilet or a tub full of water to dissolve it, then flush it down the pipes once a week.

All through the house: Find out where the drain lines and vents are, and where your hot water heater and other appliances drain, so that if you see water leaking, you'll have an idea of where it's coming from.

"They always need to ask questions," she says. "I don't care if the plumber seems a little perturbed. They need to say, 'First off, I'm paying you to be here, and I need to know what this is so that when I see that this stuff isn't working I can call you to fix it.'"

"No one should be intimidated to share their knowledge."

TELL US

Starting and stopping

Every relationship has a beginning, and unfortunately, many of them have an end. But there's a good way to handle each. What are the best and worst pickup lines that you have heard or used? What is the best way to break up?

Write Matt Wixon at mwixon@dallasnews.com.

Share your travels

"Take My Word" is a feature in the Travel section where readers can share their travel discoveries from Texas or around the world.

Please e-mail recommendations for your favorite inn, restaurant or travel attraction to Travel section@dallasnews.com. Put "Take My Word" in the subject line. Include prices, address, Web site and complete phone numbers as dialed from the United States.

Or send your letter to Take My Word, c/o Travel section, *The Dallas Morning News*, P.O. Box 655237, Dallas, TX 75265.

Call a professional if the job's too big

If you're not satisfied

Doing a little bit of homework can save you time, frustration and even money, experts say. But what if you're not satisfied with the work or you feel you've been taken advantage of?

Call the company: "You should always try and work it out with the company on their level before you take it higher," Ms. Richardson says. Some service companies, including Benjamin Franklin, are also registered with U-Win (www.877655uwin.com/), which offers a service guarantee and also provides a resolution process if you're not happy with the service.

Complain elsewhere: Beyond that, you can file a complaint with the Better Business Bureau (www.bbb.org) or the State Board of Plumbing Examiners. "There really are not enough state inspectors in this region to keep the bad guys out," Ms. Richardson says. "You want to use someone who has a good track record, is licensed and insured, and that goes a long way."

Continued from Page 1E

the store. ... If at that time you find it's too big of a project and you don't have time for it, then go out and get a professional."

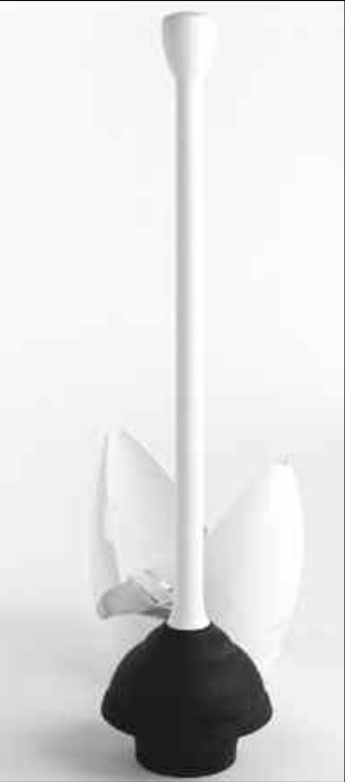
Get educated

Home Depot stores offer classes on a variety of topics. For a schedule of classes at a store near you, go to www.homedepot.com. The Web site also has a projects section where you can learn how to do a project and even print out a list of tools and parts you'll need. Lowe's also has a how-to library (www.lowes.com). And both home improvement stores, as well as bookstores, generally carry a wide range of books on do-it-yourself plumbing.

Toolbox

Here are some basic plumbing tools to keep around the house:

- Plunger. The ones that look like a bell that's closed off at the end work better than the simple bell-shaped ones, Mr. Schedler says.
- Screwdriver (both flat and Phillips)



NATALIE CAUDILL/Staff Photographer

Clogged toilet? Try a plunger first.

- Crescent wrench
- Pliers
- Faucet wrench
- Strap wrench. "Instead of putting your pliers on a shower head, if you use a strap wrench you don't damage your finish," Mr. Schedler says.

Finding help

You've decided the toilet isn't going to unclog itself, and it's time to call a plumber. So you reach for the phone book, right? Not so fast, experts say. "We call the phone book 'Russian roulette,'" says Keresa Richardson, president of Benjamin Franklin Plumbing.

Ask a friend: "The first thing you want to do is ask for a referral from a neighbor, friend or family. ... A company may look good in the Yellow Pages, but that doesn't mean they're a reputable company." If you can't get a referral from someone you know, ask for references from the company you call, Ms. Richardson says.

Are they licensed? Every plumber has to be licensed by Texas State Board of Plumbing Examiners (www.tsbpe.state.tx.us) and should be able to show you their license. Additionally, each company must work under the supervision of a master plumber. If you're calling on the phone, ask if they're licensed, and ask for the name of their master plumber.

Are they insured? A plumber should also carry insurance, both general liability and workers' compensation. "You can ask for a copy of the company's insurance to make sure they're insured," Ms. Richardson says. Otherwise, damage they cause to your home (or themselves) could have to be covered by your homeowners' policy.

How will they charge you? Ask whether the plumber charges by the job or by the hour.

"You want a company that gives you the price up front before they do any work," she says. "Companies that charge you by time and material usually have the least qualified people and the slower people." However, don't expect a quote over the phone, Ms. Richardson says. The plumber will need to see the problem before giving an estimate.

Have they screened their employees? Texas law requires all home repair and delivery companies to do background checks on their employees. Some area service companies also have their employees screened through WorkerCheck (www.workercheck.com), which provides them with an ID badge and posts the screening results on a Web site, which homeowners can access.

When will they be there? When you make an appointment, the plumber should be able to give you a reasonable estimate of when they'll arrive, within a one- or two-hour window, she says.

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STUDENTS, WIN BIG BY DOING YOUR MATH WITH THE MAVS!

Here's your chance to win two tickets to the Dallas Mavericks game vs. the Cleveland Cavaliers on March 26, 2005 at American Airlines Center.

First, answer each of the eight math quiz questions by circling the correct letter on the entry form. Next, fill out the required information on the entry form and ask your parent or guardian to sign it. Finally, mail your entry form to the address on the form.

Your entry must be postmarked by Friday, March 4, 2005.

Winners will be notified through their schools. Ten winners will be randomly chosen from all those who correctly answer all eight questions. Each winner will receive two tickets to the Mavs game on March 26. Quiz answers will be posted on **mavs.com** after Monday, March 7. Log on to see how many questions you answered correctly.

Do your very best! Math matters to the Mavs!

- Last season the Mavericks won 52 games and lost 30 games. What was their percentage of wins?
A. 63.4% B. 57.6% C. 36.5% D. 15%
- The diameter of the rim used in NBA basketball is 18 inches. What is the circumference of the rim?
Hint: C = dπ
A. 28.26" B. 56.52" C. 36" D. 25"
- The year 2005 marks the 25th Anniversary of the Dallas Mavericks. In what year did the Texas franchise begin to play in the NBA?
A. 1989 B. 1999 C. 1969 D. 1980
- Michael Finley has the team's highest free throw percentage at 90%. Based on this statistic, if Michael takes 50 free throws, how many should he sink?
A. 48 B. 90 C. 38 D. 45
- Josh Howard averages 7.1 rebounds per game. Based on this rate, about how many rebounds should he grab in the next 6 games?
A. 43 B. 48 C. 13 D. 35
- On average, Dirk Nowitzki plays 81% of the game. If a game consists of four 12 minute quarters, about how many minutes would you expect Dirk to play?
A. 81 min. B. 48 min. C. 39 min D. 25 min
- What would Jerry Stackhouse's field goal percentage be if he took 25 shots and sank 15?
A. 50% B. 60% C. 45% D. 30%
- The NBA basketball court is 94 feet long and 50 feet wide. What is the surface area of the court?
A. 288 ft B. 4700 sq ft C. 144 sq ft D. 1000 ft

25th ANNIVERSARY

No purchase necessary. Void where prohibited by law. Contest ends March 4th. Entries must be postmarked by March 4. Eligible to residents in a 75-mile radius of American Airlines Center, ages 5-18. Obtain a full set of rules at mavs.com. 10 winners will be selected and will receive two (2) tickets to the Mavs vs. Cleveland game on March 26, 2005.

MATH MATTERS TO THE MAVS ENTRY FORM

1.	A	B	C	D
2.	A	B	C	D
3.	A	B	C	D
4.	A	B	C	D
5.	A	B	C	D
6.	A	B	C	D
7.	A	B	C	D
8.	A	B	C	D

Mail to:
Math Matters to the Mavs
C/O Gina Calvert
Dallas Mavericks
2909 Taylor St.
Dallas, TX 75226

Entries must be postmarked by:
Friday, March 4, 2005

Your Name _____
Your Grade Level _____
Your Phone Number _____
Your Teacher's Name _____
School Name _____
School Address _____
School Phone Number _____
Parent/Guardian Signature _____

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