

Oh, no! Not another construction project!

Ask any person in Jamestown who's ever had work done on their house if the project went well.

First, their eyes will roll. Then they'll try to tell you the story, but they will stammer and turn red before a word comes out. When, and if, they compose themselves, the most likely answer will include the words "nightmare," or "disaster," or "those incompetent jerks."

Construction projects, it seems, always take longer than planned, cost more than what's in the budget and end with both the tradesman and the homeowner pointing fingers and vowing to never speak to the other one again. In fact, I'm convinced that the phrase "punch list," has something to do with what both parties want to do to the other one at the end of the project.

My biggest problem with local contractors has always been trying to get one to show up. In recent years I have called countless electricians, plumbers, and others, and in a great majority of the cases, I never got a return call. In some of the cases I got a return call, but the guy never showed up to give an estimate. Sometimes, I've gotten the guy to come look at the job, only to have him disappear without ever following through.

What do you have to do to spend some money in this town?

Once I hired a roofer to make a repair. He sent me a contract to sign, which I did, but then never showed up to collect the deposit. The next guy I called came to



Flotsam and Jetsam

By Donna Drago

do the repair, but the next time it rained the roof still leaked and despite countless calls, I was unsuccessful in getting him back to give it another try.

When I hired people to reshingle my house, I was lucky enough to get a call back, an estimate and a start date. I thought I was dreaming! It was April; they took my deposit, and then—despite my increasingly desperate phone calls—didn't show up till October. "We decided we didn't want to trample your garden," was the excuse. Yeah, right.

When they did show up, they worked two or three days, then I wouldn't see them for two or more weeks! This, while my house was stripped of its clapboards and leaves were blowing through the living room.

They ended up doing a satisfactory job, but it wasn't good enough to make me forget the insomnia and headaches that I endured for the duration of the project. I hope I'm never called to give a reference for them. But if I am, I will be happy to recommend the pain killers, alcoholic beverages and sleep aids that were required

to put up with them.

All that said, I must say I have had good luck with painters—they must have a different genetic makeup.

I am in the midst of a construction project right now.

Here's the funny part, and no, I'm not kidding. A co-worker gave me the number of a contractor who he recommended to me for my remodeling job. I called him and he was at my house the next day to look at the project. This was in mid-September. I told him I'd like to start the work by December and within a day of looking at his upcoming work schedule, he said how about October?

I said I needed a couple of weeks to get the house ready and we settled on Oct. 13 as a start date.

On that very day, which was a holiday, he was at the house before 8 a.m. and not only that, he had all of his subcontractors there to talk to me as well. Since then, one or more of the subs have been working at the house each day and the project is now more than half complete. Really, I'm not kidding!

Not only are they showing up and working, they are all polite, cheerful and clearly want to do the best job they can. My dog even loves all of these guys.

Finally, for the first time in my life, I have only good things to say about how a construction project is going, and I am sleeping quite well at night. Knock on wood.



Where in the World is the Jamestown Press?

Francis Curren and Jackie Hodgson recently toured the Greek Isles and Aegean Shores on the new Cunard ship Queen Victoria. Here they are in Istanbul, Turkey.

'Christmas Carol' tickets now on sale at Trinity Rep.

Trinity Rep is proud to present the magic and wonder of Dickens' "A Christmas Carol," adapted by Adrian Hall and Richard Cumming.

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rice.

Adult ticket prices for A Christmas Carol are \$25 to \$60, with best prices available for pre-Thanksgiving and post-Christmas shows. Tickets for children, age 2 to 12, for pre-Thanksgiving and post-Christmas performances start at \$12.50.

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