

February 2023

HOME IMPROVEMENT

GUIDE

Learn how Lake Panorama residents transformed their homes and properties into beautiful living spaces.

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PUBLISHER'S COLUMN

Plan those spring projects now

By Shane Goodman | Publisher

Most all of us have good intentions of completing home improvement projects during the cold winter months so we can play in the spring and summer. Then, unfortunately, the holidays and other commitments get in the way. I was able to chip away at a few of the big ones on my list, but I still have plenty to do — and the clock is ticking.



Sound familiar? If so, you may need help from some local professionals. And if you do, we are pleased to offer ideas and solutions from businesses and contractors that may push your projects along.

Maybe you are in the planning stage. That's OK, too, as we all have to start somewhere. Sometimes generating the ideas and making the decisions are the most challenging parts of any home improvement project.

Regardless, we are here to help with another edition of our home improvement guide, packed with examples of what Lake Panorama residents have done to spruce up their properties.

If you are one of the fortunate ones who have your projects completed and would like to be featured in an upcoming issue, please send me a note. We would enjoy sharing your successes, too.

Thanks for reading. ■

Shane

Lake Panorama **TIMES**



111 E. Main St., Panora, IA 50216

8101 Birchwood Court, Suite D, Johnston, IA 50131

515-953-4822 | www.LakePanoramaTimes.com

EDITOR & PUBLISHER:
VICE PRESIDENT:
ACCOUNT EXECUTIVE:
DESIGN MANAGER:
GRAPHIC DESIGNER:
COPY EDITOR:
CONTRIBUTOR:
DIGITAL:
BUSINESS OFFICE MGR:
DISTRIBUTION:

Shane Goodman
Jolene Goodman
Stormy Miller
Celeste Tilton
Jayde Vogeler
Tammy Pearson
Chantel Boyd
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From unremarkable to eye-catching

The Joneses' lake cabin has undergone a series of projects.

When Michelle and Scott Jones bought their cabin at Lake Panorama, they did not envision living there full time. However, when the pandemic hit in 2020, they wanted to have more privacy. They also wanted to be proactive and start preparing for their retirement. And, when people started working from home, they decided, if they had to choose between working in their Waukee home or at their lake property, they would select their cabin. Since moving in and working there full-time, they have added a 2,000-square-foot primary suite. The couple continues to work on finishing the inside after unforeseen circumstances changed their timeline.

Michelle said she and Scott knew from the beginning that the work would take longer than they'd like because "the whole house was going to need updating, as it was tiny, and we have a large family to entertain." Now, nearing the final stages of the renovation, she said, "We will be glad when it's done, and we can finally relax."

Right now, they are working on the primary suite. They have done 99% of the work themselves. They have been inspired by pieces and finishes they've seen while picking dishware at estate sales in their line of work.

"When we see things we like, as far as design, we go for it at our place," Michelle said.

They have been happy with the results thus far, and she said their favorite part of the project is what she's working on now — the main bathroom and bedroom. She said she can already envision it finished.



Scott and Michelle Jones



Michelle and Scott Jones decided that, if they were to spend more time at home, they would prefer it to be at their lake cabin, so they added a bedroom suite and updated the cabin's worn exterior.

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What would a new master bedroom suite be without a walk-in closet?



The new master bedroom features a seating nook with a view and lots of natural light.

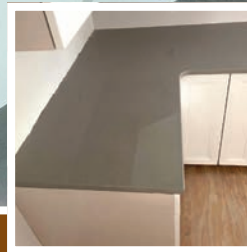
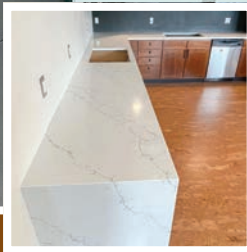
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Michelle’s second-favorite place is “the bedroom corner nook with panoramic windows where we sit each morning while we are having our coffee and watching the wildlife.”

They plan to begin the kitchen renovation next. They want to continue to take it one project at a time, as they have throughout this long process. This approach helps them begin a more manageable retirement at the lake, where they can live and work efficiently and comfortably.

Michelle’s advice for other homeowners is to “take your time. Come up with an idea and let it sink in for a while. The supply chain delays have helped us with that.”



Besides working on their home, Michelle and Scott Jones also keep busy with their large garden.



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The bathroom in the new master suite is spacious and features the modern rustic look Michelle and Scott Jones like.



The new master suite features a shower for two with all the modern fixtures.

While waiting for supplies to come in stock, they’ve spent time in their spacious and plentiful garden that they often share with family and friends. When they are not traveling (for work or pleasure) or renovating, they like to host family and friends, so the additions and renovations have been welcomed.

Michelle describes their style as a dichotomy — a modern yet rustic style. This comes through in the finishes. They are drawn to rustic touches with wagon wheels decorating their entryway to their garden and modern features planned for the kitchen and the bathroom she’s currently working on.

“We are delighted with our updates, and we have no regrets; we’ll finally have everything we’ve been wanting and won’t have to settle.”

And other lake residents are taking notice of their hard work.

“People have been stopping by who were familiar with how the property looked like in the past, and they notice that the property has expanded and improved,” Michelle said. ■



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A better flow

Combining family room and sunroom creates easier access to lake.



A small family room and adjacent sunroom were not functional for entertaining or having guests stay over.

Theresa and Alan “Mac” McConeghey retired at the end of last year, so they have plenty of time to spend together in their new family room, renovated by the team at JRL Builders.



Theresa and Alan “Mac” McConeghey enjoy the new space in their home.

The renovation included demolishing a wall between an old family room and a sunroom and relocating an exterior door. As a result, the room is nearly unrecognizable.

The main goal of their renovation was equal parts functionality and style. The previous family room was relatively small, seating only three people. The layout was a tight squeeze, with a sitting, eating and bar area. The adjacent sunroom (separated previously by an interior wall with windows) was, as Theresa put it, “unfunctional, other than storing a blow-up mattress in there when we had extra company.”



From the bar area, one can seamlessly move to the family room with its fireplace and television and, now, larger seating area. To top it off, natural light flows through the area from the large windows of the former sunroom.

ENTERTAINMENT SPACE



The old stone fireplace was replaced with a modern inset piece that transforms the look of the family room.

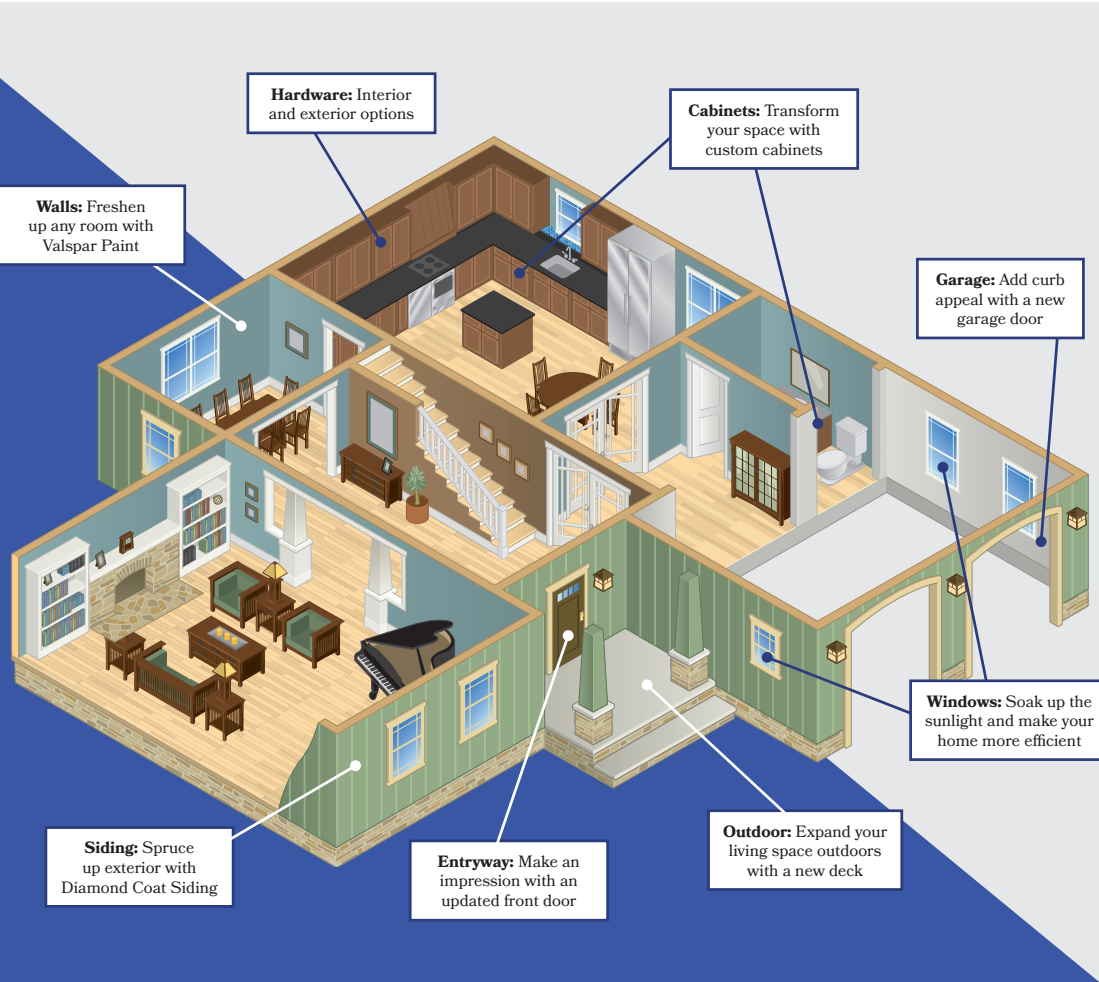
The flow to enter and exit the home to the lake needed to be more fluid, as well. The goal was to open up the space, gain an unobstructed lake view, and provide overall functionality — thus modernizing the home.

The McConegheys wanted the area to better serve



The exterior door was moved to near the spiral staircase to make access to the lake easier from the upstairs and downstairs.

them and their guests, making it more suitable for entertaining. They also wanted to create an overflow sleeping area (a bit comfier and more welcoming than an air mattress), update the fireplace with modern fixtures, and get that “wow factor” when people entered the space.



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ENTERTAINMENT SPACE

Years ago, their son, Alex McConeghey, a real estate agent, connected them with an interior designer named Hal Davis. Hal guided them through several home improvement projects, including this one.

“Both Luke from JRL Builders and Hal understood our need to be economical yet pleasing to the eye. Both worked alongside us to make that happen.”

To begin with, Hal viewed the initial space, brought out samples, and then the couple worked with Luke to identify the best economical solutions. They were happy with the suggestions.

“He was fantastic in determining the best budget-friendly options, then also what items might be able to be refurbished, thus saving us money overall,” said Theresa.

The couple said it is hard to say what they like best about the improvements.



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ENTERTAINMENT SPACE

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With the extra space provided by combining the family room and sunroom, the McConegheys were able to create a bar that is open to the rest of the entertainment space.

“This basement has been completely transformed. It is now a fantastic entertainment area with a welcoming bar, a beautiful family room, a stunning fireplace, and amazing visible views of the lake.”

For the overflow sleeping, the couple decided on a Murphy bed.

“The Murphy bed is great. It saves space, yet it’s beautiful and easily lifts into the wall,” Theresa said.

Everything on their wishlist was checked off, the couple said. The flow of the space has wholly changed. Guests no longer have to go through a sunroom, past the small family room, and around a spiral staircase to get to the lake. Now they can come down the spiral staircase and walk outside.

For homeowners wanting to take on similar home improvement projects, the McConegheys suggested,

“Take your time to think through your ideas before you start. Decide upfront what is most important to you. Then, connect with a contractor who understands and visualizes your wishes while bringing their ideas in.”

The McConegheys stated that having a good relationship with your contractor and staying involved — yet not so involved that you become overbearing — is the key to successful projects. ■



From cramped quarters to show-stopping walk-in shower and added storage

Bathroom remodel provides functionality and style.

BEFORE



An older bathtub that wasn't being used was taking up valuable space in the bathroom and needed to go.

Judy Blin and her husband, Jim, bought their family lake home four years ago. Though the house is relatively new, some fixtures needed updating to increase functionality while simultaneously modernizing it.

The couple has remodeled lake homes before this. In fact, this is the third home they have owned on the lake. But when COVID hit, Judy said her grandkids started spending much more time with them than before since they were less busy with sports and other activities.

The main goal for their bathroom renovation was to improve functionality within the same square footage and footprint. Essentially, Judy and her family wanted the bathroom to look great while keeping existing flooring and other fixtures where possible.

The most significant barrier to functionality was that their shower was small and located directly across from the bathroom door, which was bumping into a glass shower door. This door-to-door situation was unsafe.

In addition, the tub did not meet their needs. It was old

AFTER



The new walk-in shower provides ample room for a bench.

looking, and everyone in the home preferred the shower, so the tub went unused.

The couple hired Luke and his team at JRL Builders to modernize the bathroom and make it more functional for the large family by replacing the old shower with a linen closet and introducing a new walk-in shower with insets for storage, a bench for seating and storage, and rails for safety.

JRL Builders also replaced old toilets and added a

second washer and dryer combo to accommodate the grandkids' laundry. Judy has other renovation projects on her list, but, for now, she said these improvements have enhanced her lake living tremendously.

One of the things she appreciates the most about the renovation is the bench seat at the end of the shower and the insets for storage. She uses the bench to place her towel and lotions, and she said the walk-in feature is more convenient and safe.

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The new shower has handrails and a safer walk-in entry.



The bathroom renovation provided space for a much-needed storage closet in the bathroom.

When it comes to picking out materials for renovations, Judy said, “Over the years, we’ve done so much picking out of materials, it can feel like overload, so it was so nice to trust Luke with my list.”

She suggested to other homeowners, “If you see something you like, go with your gut if you can afford it and like and want or need it. Going back and forth can make you crazy. In six months, there will be something new, so make sure it’s something you like and can live

with for a long time.”

Her second washer and dryer combo is an example of going with your gut when you like something and want or need it and can afford it. She had once seen

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multiple dishwashers at lake homes and thought, “Is that overkill?” But, with all of the time family has spent at the lake the last couple of years, Judy realized having this dual laundry setup is a great convenience. It allows her grandkids to do their own laundry near their guest rooms.

She suggested that, when renovating, consider your family’s unique needs. For example, Judy said she’s so happy that her family can have more room to move around in the bathroom and that they can do multiple loads of laundry at the same time, which comes in handy for lake living. ■

With such a large family and plenty of grandkids visiting, Judy Blin said a second washer-dryer combo has been a good decision.

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Modern space is versatile and requires little maintenance.

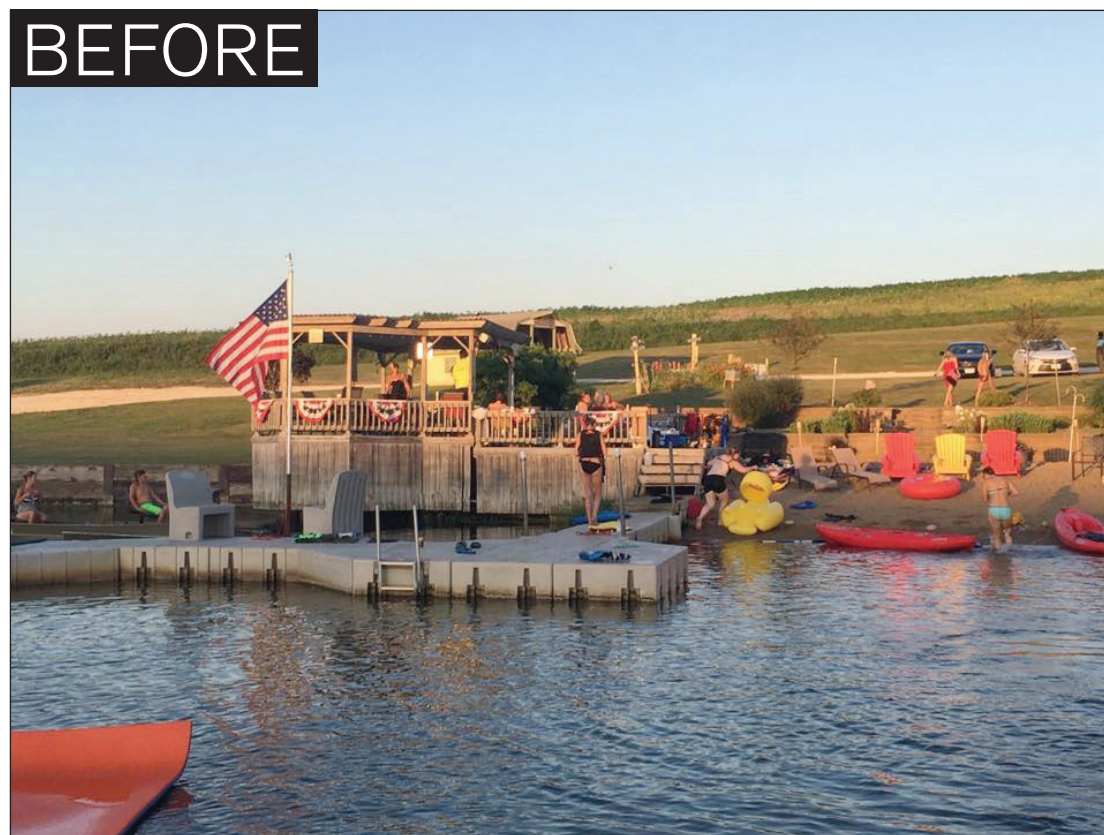


Darrin and Julie Waters Plowman enjoy time lakeside. They decided a pergola would provide more versatile space than the deck they had by the lake.

Darrin and Julie Waters Plowman set out to modernize their water-side space and create a spacious, ultra-functional area that could be a cozy spot for the two of them or a welcoming place for entertaining large groups.

They wanted to enjoy their lakeside property, either day or night, without worrying much about upkeep. They worked with Tyler at Outdoor Odyssey to turn their outdated deck into a pergola. The result is a space that complements the rest of their property and fulfills their wish list.

They envisioned a more modern space with all the conveniences that made it functional and beautiful. The main things on their wish list were the automated pergola and paver patio. The rest of the design was built



A wooden lakeside deck had limited use and required considerable maintenance. The Plowmans decided a pergola with landscaping around it would extend their enjoyment of the lake.

PERGOLA

AFTER



The pergola is decked out with automated screens, a television, an outdoor kitchen, ceiling fans, infrared heaters, a fireplace, outdoor wireless speakers and lighting.

around 800 square feet of outdoor living space, with covered roofing.

To enjoy their space, they included automated screens, a television, an outdoor kitchen, ceiling fans, infrared heaters, a fireplace, outdoor wireless speakers and lighting to bring an ambiance to the area. All these amenities are connected to either an app on their phone or a remote. The wish list was long, but, in the end, the puzzle pieces came together to make the cozy spot for two and entertainment area for many like they had hoped.

Tyler at Outdoor Odyssey listened to their needs and put the pieces together with functionality at the forefront and aesthetics just a little behind. The StruXure automated pergola came with a black and adobe two-tone look, and the Unilock paver products were selected to complement it. The remaining stone, siding and countertops were chosen to match the foundational pieces. The Plowmans decided on the materials out of many available.

The Plowmans said they are enjoying their new setup. Overall, the area is much larger than the previous space and is made to withstand the elements with minimal maintenance. The screens and roofing make it more like an outdoor room — the structure blocks the elements and maintains a cozy atmosphere with the fans or fireplace, depending on the unpredictable Iowa weather. ■

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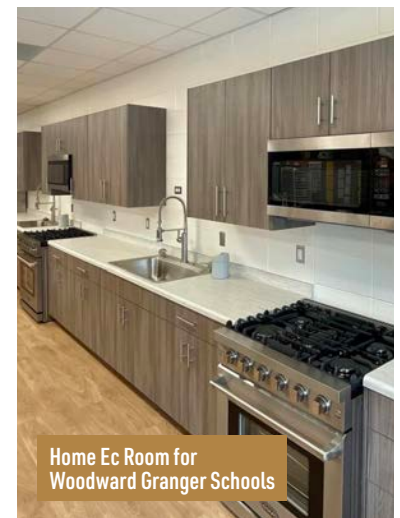
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Fireplace update transforms entire space

Small project makes big impact.

When homeowners Don and Kathy Berryman first purchased their home in the summer of 2022 on Lake Panorama, their existing fireplace was electric. However, they had their hearts set on a gas fireplace with an updated look. They contacted Soap Stone Construction to update the fireplace surround and mantel.

“We wanted a gas fireplace with a stone surround and wooden mantel,” said Kathy. Their vision included leaving space above the beautiful fireplace for the television.

The couple chose a slenderer profile that allows for the coziness of the fireplace without intruding into the living space. They used Eldorado stone — a handcrafted and molded stone made to look like natural stone — selected from Lake Lumber. The mantel was created using a salvaged barn beam, giving it a modern yet rustic vibe.



BEFORE
The original electric fireplace in Don and Kathy Berryman's home was unassuming and failed to make an impact.

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The Berrymans like the ease and look of the new fireplace. Before, the understated mantel with standard tiles gave the fireplace an outdated and forgotten look.

“We love the gas fireplace,” said Kathy. “It is an improvement over the previous electric unit, and the mantel turned out much better than we ever envisioned.”

Although on the smaller end of home improvement projects, the fireplace transforms the room from outdated and drab to a modern farmhouse style. Even the existing fixtures and materials — the woodwork surround, the sconces and the paint — look refreshed with the updated fireplace.

For those going into a home improvement project, the Berrymans advised: “Be flexible and be willing to second guess yourselves. For example, the first stone we selected was much too light. Fortunately, we hadn’t placed the order yet and could still change our selection.”

The Berrymans said they were pleased with their selections in the end. Completing this project could not have come at a better time. They have been enjoying the coziness of their new fireplace during the frigid winter temperatures. ■



The new gas fireplace, with its bold materials, is now the focal point.

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