

February 2021

Lake Panorama TIMES

HOME IMPROVEMENT

GUIDE

Learn how Lake Panorama residents have transformed their homes and properties.

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PUBLISHER'S COLUMN Home improvement FAQs

By Shane Goodman | Publisher



If you have been involved in a home improvement project there are some common themes and questions that you will deal with eventually.

1. “When will this be done?” If you are doing the work yourself, only you can answer that — hopefully. Just remember why you bought property at Lake Panorama to begin with. If it was to do projects and live in a construction zone, then keep swinging those hammers. If it was to relax, then you may want to hire some of the many businesses advertising in this section to do the work for you and provide you with specific timelines, which are essential to any home improvement project.

2. “How much will this cost?” The honest answer is: more than you think. Budgeting the costs for a project is not an easy task for amateurs, and you will likely spend more than you anticipated when you do it yourself. Often times, you may spend more than it would have cost to have a professional do the work for you. Budgets are another essential piece of any home improvement project, so create one and stick to it. Just recognize that your wants and needs may change in the process, and your costs will then, too.

3. “Is this a bigger task than I should have tackled?” If you are asking yourself this, then it probably is. The good news is that most anything can be fixed. So if you and your buddies decided to take on what you thought was a weekend project and you are still facing it a year later, you may want to call one of the local professionals to finish the job for you. There's no harm in admitting that you may have bitten off more than you can chew, and the pros have spent many days “undoing” what do-it-yourselfers thought they could accomplish.

In this Home Improvement Guide, you will learn how local residents worked through these questions and more in taking on their projects. My thanks to Lindsey Giardino for writing these stories and to all the residents who agreed to be interviewed.

Thanks for reading. ■

Shane

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

Shane Goodman
Jolene Goodman
Stormy Baker
Celeste Tilton
Jordan Huxford
Lindsey Giardino
Brent Antisdell
Patrick Clemmons

Kitchen remodel provides ample room

New kitchen cabinets, backsplash and countertop are some of the highlights in the DeBruins' condo.

Before Deb and Scott DeBruin moved into their current condo, they ran into Billy Donovan of Donovan Construction and told him, when they found a permanent residence on Lake Panorama, they'd be contacting him for his help. And that they did.

The DeBruins previously had a different condo on the lake for many years, but since they're now both retired, they wanted to find a home they could live in year-round. They found just the place down from The Port and moved in June 2019. The condo was built in 1997 and needed some updates, the kitchen being one of them.

So, as promised, the couple reached out to Donovan for his expertise and handywork to remodel their kitchen and bathrooms, and his crew got to work in May 2020.

Going into the project, the DeBruins knew they wanted new appliances, countertops and backsplash, but, as happens with many home improvement projects, the scope increased as time went on. The condo came with white cabinets, but after the couple got into the place, they realized they didn't care for the design. Thus, new cabinets were added to the plans. The DeBruins had other must-haves as well, including the incorporation of a more functional pantry.



The old kitchen in the DeBruins' condo was outdated and mostly white.



The DeBruins' new kitchen boasts a large pantry and black stainless steel appliances.



From the kitchen, the DeBruins can gaze out and enjoy a view of the lake.

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KITCHEN



A large kitchen sink and decorative backsplash are some of the DeBruins' favorite new features.



The DeBruins' pantry is both long and tall.

"I really wanted a good-size pantry," Deb says. "And we wanted to move the cabinets up higher than they were, because moving out here full-time and combining from our old condo plus our Des Moines home, I needed space for things that you don't use very often but you don't want to get rid of. So we needed some more kitchen space."

Along with a new double sink, the DeBruins' kitchen boasts a hexagonal tile backsplash that goes all the way up to the cabinets — something it didn't have before. They describe the style of the space as somewhat modern, but not extreme. They replaced the old, white appliances with new black stainless steel, and the countertop has shades of gray and charcoal. A fresh coat of blue-gray paint reflects the lake outside, which they can see from the

kitchen. The only remaining aspect from the previous kitchen is the tile floor.

The kitchen island serves as a gathering space for the DeBruins and their family and friends, and with the deck and lake access right off the kitchen and dining area, it's easy to take the get-together outside.

Throughout the process of remodeling the kitchen and bathrooms, the DeBruins got to know Donovan and his crew and say they were gracious and a great help. Donovan was especially helpful in getting the new reverse osmosis water system figured out.

"They were just good to work with for not only their expertise and meticulous work, but also just putting up with us being around," Scott says. ■



Deb and Scott DeBruin now live on Lake Panorama full-time and enjoy when their grandkids visit.

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A complete remodel brings 1970s home up to date

The Toftelands' three-bedroom lake home went through a total facelift.



The closed off kitchen in the Tofteland home was opened up, and a bar was added to make for a better space for entertaining guests.

“From the ground up” is how one might describe the full-scale remodel process done at Barry and Laura Tofteland’s Lake Panorama home. Or perhaps they’d describe it as “a complete 360.” Both would be fitting.

In 2016, when the couple purchased the property, which sits on the west side of the lake, five doors down from Sunset Beach, they knew immediately that a total renovation would be necessary.

The home was built in 1973, and the interior reflected the era. In 1996, the previous owners added an addition to the front of the house that extended it 10 feet, but, after that, few updates were made to the place, and it quickly became outdated. Dark wood paneling was featured prominently. The white kitchen appliances needed replacing. Carpet covered nearly every bit of floor. The light fixtures were a little too retro. The list goes on.

The place sat empty for a while before the Toftelands bought it, so there were pipe issues and other problems that needed immediate attention as well.

Even though they knew the home would require a facelift, the Toftelands couldn’t pass up the opportunity to take it off the market.

“We really liked the lot,” Barry says. “It’s a double lot that’s fairly flat on the main channel. That was the main appeal.”

After the home officially became theirs, the couple started work on the basement, work which they performed themselves. They replaced the flooring and put a fresh coat of paint on the woodwork, walls and ceilings. The basement is a walk-out and includes one bedroom.

In June 2017, the Toftelands enlisted Donovan Con-

struction to start the process of remodeling the entire main floor. When dreaming up how they wanted their space to look, Barry and Laura mostly designed it themselves but consulted Billy Donovan, the company’s owner, along the way.

When one first walks into the Tofteland home, a long hallway is ahead. Before the remodel, it started at 6.5 feet wide and narrowed down to 3 feet wide because the closet in the nearby bedroom and the entryway closet bumped out into the hallway. Fixing that was an obvious decision. Now the hallway extends 18 feet long and is 6.5 feet wide the entire length, leading into the main living room.

“We removed those closets to really open it up,” Barry says. “Now you come in, and you can see right out to the lake as soon as you walk in the door.”



Barry and Laura Tofteland hadn't originally planned on changing the fireplace in the living room, but after renovation, it was a "Pinterest dream come true."

One of the Toftelands' must-haves when doing the remodel — and a major piece of the project — was enlarging the kitchen area. The original was tiny and could only fit one person comfortably at a time. Counterspace was at a minimum as well. The previous walls nearly touched the vaulted ceiling, so they had those torn down to just above countertop height. Now they can see through to the living room from the kitchen.

The old home also had dark wood beams on the ceiling. The Toftelands chose to keep them but lightened them with a fresh coat of white paint.

Fortunately, the windows throughout the home were in great shape, so they didn't have to replace any. They're large windows that start 1 foot off the ground and go up about 6 or 7 feet, taking full advantage of the view outside. Most parts of the home afford a view of the lake.

"For us, the view of the lake is as much of an interior decorating component as some of the features Billy added," Laura says. "We have a really great view of the lake because of the flat lot and the way the house is set on the lot."



The upgrades to the dated look of the Tofteland bathroom included a double-sink vanity and more modern light fixtures.

WHOLE HOUSE



Lowering the walls around the kitchen provided an open space into the Tofteland dining room so conversation and the view can be enjoyed as one works in the kitchen.

Barry says his favorite aspect of the renovation is the kitchen, as he enjoys cooking and being in the space. Now that it's been opened up and expanded, it's a great spot for entertaining guests, especially since countertop was added to the island to create a small bar area.

For Laura, it's the woodburning fireplace in the living room.

"Billy made a Pinterest dream come true," she says.

Originally, the couple hadn't intended to touch the fireplace, but now it's the main feature of the living room. Because it was functional and worked just fine, they didn't include redoing it in their budget. But when Laura found a photo of a gorgeous fireplace online, she knew an exception needed to be made. She showed the picture to Billy, and he recreated it better than she imagined, adding a wood facade mantel and new stone.

"It's the focal point of the living room for sure," Barry agrees.

As for the exterior of the home, the Toftelands plan to give it the attention it needs this upcoming summer. There's a deck on both the front and the back of the home, and they are surrounded by mature trees.



The staircase has a modern feel now with the renovations of the Tofteland home.

“The previous owners had some landscaping, but we’re hoping to do more outside in the next year or two,” Barry says.

He describes the home as 20th century modern and that the remodel has stayed true to that, noting that the exterior architecture reflects that vibe as well.

What makes the Toftelands’ home so special is not only the complete renovation it recently went through, but also the fact that they’re surrounded by great neighbors and an outstanding community. They’re members of the Panorama West Golf Course and drive up there often in their golf cart, where they connect with others who enjoy the Lake Panorama community just as much.

Now that the updates to the home are tapering off, the Toftelands can relax and enjoy all that the space has to offer. Although the place was previously their vacation home, they now live in it year-round. A couple years ago, Laura’s job relocated them to Malaysia, so they sold their Des Moines home. When they returned state-side two years later in September 2020, they decided to move into their Lake Panorama house permanently.

“It truly is home,” Laura says. ■



The Tofteland master bedroom was brightened up and opened up with the removal of dark wooden doors.



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A home made for gathering

The recent outdoor renovation project at Jeff and Maria Martin's home provides everything from an outdoor kitchen to a firepit.

Growing up in nearby Guthrie Center, it may not be surprising that Maria Martin has had a longstanding connection with Lake Panorama.

Her family has owned a house on the west side of the lake since 1989, and she and her husband, Jeff, have enjoyed spending time there ever since. The family continued to grow through the years, so when the house next door came up for sale in 2017, the Martins jumped at the chance to purchase it.

The couple, who live full-time in Peoria, Illinois, immediately knew some remodeling needed done because they planned to spend a good chunk of time at the lake. In addition to some interior renovations — like adding a master bedroom — outdoor improvements were necessary as well. The Martins took full advantage of the project.

When you walk off their large back deck, which includes a screened-in area on the south side, you arrive at the outdoor kitchen area. Here, you'll find nearly everything you need to whip up a summer meal. There's the grilling island that features a Napoleon stainless steel built-in grill with seven burners and a rotisserie. The surrounding



The Martins spend a lot of time at their Lake Panorama home, so they wanted a dynamic outdoor gathering space.

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The Martins have options when it comes to where to hang out outside.

countertop is Vegas gold granite that complements the Rosetta Hardscapes Belevedere retaining wall block that the free-standing island was built from. The kitchen area also includes a refrigerator and color-changing LED landscape lights in the island, which can be controlled from the Martins' phones.

Step down a few more steps from the kitchen, and you'll be in the firepit area. This gathering space includes a gas firepit and chairs. The couple wanted to include a firepit so they could sit outside during as many seasons as they can. They can enjoy the space earlier in the spring and later in the fall, gathering around the cozy fire.

Whether they're sitting on the deck, in the outdoor kitchen or at the firepit, the Martins and guests can look out to the lake with unobstructed views, which was the point when Wood Duck Landscaping was building each of the areas. They also constructed a wall on the north side of the property because the lots in the area are mostly flat and don't provide trees or ravines between the homes. The wall makes the Martin's outdoor spaces more private without restricting their — or their neighbors' — view of the lake.

Since the project wasn't completed until the tail-end of summer/early fall, the Martins are eager for the upcoming summer when they plan to spend lots of time at Lake Panorama, taking advantage of their beautiful outdoor gathering spaces.

"We really haven't gotten to enjoy it to its fullest extent, since it was just finishing up at the end of last year during the summer, but we're looking forward to it this year," Maria says.

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GATHERING SPACE



The Martins' view of the lake is unobstructed.

And whether they're gazing out at the lake from the deck, grilling burgers at the outdoor kitchen or chatting around the fire, the Martins plan to use the spaces as much as they can, including with their two daughters, who live in Ames.

"We like having a place to land that's closer to them," Jeff says.

With a spot on the lake like theirs, the Martins' outdoor gathering spaces will serve them well for years to come. ■



The backyard features an outdoor kitchen area complete with a grill and fridge.

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Landscape makeover turns outdoor area into a tranquil place

One of the landscape features is a light designed by the homeowner.

When it comes to home improvement projects, David Dahlquist cites an adage, “If you start to paint your house, all of a sudden you need new furniture.” And that’s sort of what happened during the recent landscaping project done at his and his wife Cheryl’s lake home.

The Dahlquists have a unique property — one of the earlier properties built on the lake — with a flat spot, somewhat of a jetty, on their shoreline. The area needed new riprap, and they also wanted a firepit space that would cut into the presiding hill.

Some neighbors to the south of them were doing major work on their shoreline as well, which is how they met Josh Eike at Wood Duck Landscapes. One thing led to another, and shortly after the Fourth of July last year, Eike’s crew got to work on the Dahlquists’ landscape project.



Installing lights was also a priority for the project. They provide an ambient atmosphere at night on the Dahlquist property.



New shoreline riprap and a firepit area are the main reasons the Dahlquists underwent a landscaping makeover.



David and Cheryl Dahlquist

In addition to the new riprap and firepit area, work was done to replace the upper patio surface. The Dahlquists also wanted to make sure that the new shoreline area took drainage into account and was well irrigated. The couple liked the idea of an outdoor lighting system as well, including LED lights on the meandering stone stairs that lead to the shore and around the firepit. The system that was installed enables them to control the lights from an app on their phones.

“It’s a really nice ambiance,” Dahlquist says.

An artist himself, Dahlquist designed the light that sits at the bottom of the stairs. It’s a bollard light with an abstract prairie pattern made from cut metal. He’d been wanting to install the light for a long time, and the outdoor home project gave him the opportunity to do so.

Throughout the project, the priority was for changes to work with the Dahlquists’ existing site and improve access to their two docks. The riprap did so significantly.

As the eye follows the property from the house all the way down to the shoreline, it was important to the couple that the transitions to each area were seamless and



The bollard light that sits by the end of the stone stairs was designed by David Dahlquist himself.

LANDSCAPING

took into account the natural contour of the hillside. The outcome of the project achieved each of those goals.

“I think that it all works together,” Dahlquist says.

As far as planting goes, the intent is to do so in the spring. Eike’s father, Ron, is “the plant whisperer” and will return to the Dahlquists’ place when the weather allows and plant in defined areas, such as the planting beds on the upper patio and above the retaining walls on both sides of the stairs. They haven’t determined what plants will be used yet, but Dahlquist knows he wants something native to the area and colorful. He says the real dimension to the outdoor area will come when the planting happens and everything greens up.

As Frederick Law Olmsted, the renowned American landscape architect who designed Central Park, believed, the most important element to any landscape design is a factor you can barely take into account: time. While the outdoor structures are in place at the Dahlquists’ home, the things that will soften the landscape, things like grasses and flowers, are factors of time.

“I think that time is going to help this project out a lot,” Dahlquist says. ■



The firepit area cuts into the hill at the Dahlquist home.



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New deck and patio ceiling for outdoor-loving couple

Lyle and Paula Hansen try to spend time outdoors whenever weather allows.

Lately, Lyle and Paula Hansen have been spending more time at their Lake Panorama home. Because of this, in 2019, they enlisted Donovan Construction to help with some projects they'd been wanting to do, one of which was replacing the large deck.

The Hansen's home is right on the water, so they spend lots of time outside. During their deck remodel, permanent flooring using Azek decking was installed, as was new Westbury aluminum railing.

Below the deck is a large patio. The construction crew put a ceiling above the patio so the Hansens can sit outside, even when it's raining, which was the main purpose of including it in the project. The ceiling is white and made from a reverse rolled, ribbed sheet metal, which was installed out of level, so, when water goes through the deck, it lands on top of the metal and is directed toward a gutter system.



The Lyle and Paula Hansen home, which is known for the American flag painted on its lawn every Fourth of July, recently had a new deck and patio ceiling installed.

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DECK

The deck can be accessed from the dining and living area upstairs, and the patio is right off of the lower-level living room. On the deck, the Hansens have a variety of seating options, including a high-top table with four chairs, a coffee table and two chairs, and a large table that seats eight. Each area is used regularly, since the couple sits outside often when the weather cooperates.



Lyle and Paula Hansen are from Audubon but are spending more time at Lake Panorama.

“We’re on the main channel, so we’ve got a good view,” Lyle says. “That’s one of the things that sold us on the property.”

Lake Panorama residents may recall the Hansens’ house and deck before. They’re well known for the 15-foot by 25-foot American flag that their son paints on their lawn every Fourth of July.

The Hansens are from Audubon and have a home there, but now they spend most of the spring, summer and fall at their place on Lake Panorama.



Before, the deck had an outdated railing and was in need of new flooring.

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During the deck project, Donovan Construction also added an attached garage to the Hansen's home.

They've owned the home for nine years. In addition to the deck/patio project, they also had Donovan Construction add an attached three-car garage to the home. They previously had a detached garage closer to the road, which still exists, but having their new garage connect to the family room is a huge advantage, they say.

Speaking of the family room, it was part of the renovation project as well. They had Billy Donovan and his crew expand the living area to give them a bit more space.

Paula jokes that her favorite part of the big home project was "the completion."

AFTER



The old garage was a detached one, so the new garage changed the face of the home completely.

Lyle acknowledges that remodeling a home is always an unavoidable mess, but that working with Donovan Construction was a breeze.

"It has to get worse before it gets better," Paula says, "but it's always worth it." ■

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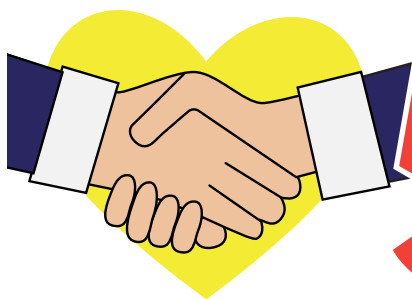
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