

The Salem Leader  
Educationally Speaking  
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### **Routine Maintenance**

The other day at work a few of my co-workers were talking about their plans to buy a house in the near future. I contently listened as they chatted about plans to buy more furniture and where they were looking to buy. This reminded me of my last move from Noblesville to Fishers when I was weighing the pros and cons of purchasing a house versus renting an apartment. Two key things kept coming up:

- A) It's not certain I'll be staying in this area after I graduate. If the sun doesn't start shining at least three days in a row I might be tempted to move out of the Midwest entirely.
- B) What if something breaks? Apartment complexes come with maintenance staff and they're wonderful people. Houses only have me.

Over the years I've become an excellent computer troubleshooter. I can diagnose some computer problems just by sound alone. However, all the time spent with a computer was time I didn't spend with any other mechanical device.

For example, when I moved into my apartment in Fishers the bathroom sink had a slight leak when the water was left running for a few moments. I called the maintenance crew and the guy came and crawled around in lots of different positions, had a bunch of tools and was doing a lot of grunting. I "helped" by handing him a paper towel.

Over the past few weeks I have attempted making peanut butter fudge. Why it's only prepared around Christmas is beyond me. Once I figure out how it's done I'll be making fudge in July. Regardless, after my eighth attempt the fudge was runny and didn't look like fudge at all. So I started dumping little bits at a time down the garbage disposal under the theory, "I have garbage and it disposes of garbage." The seven prior batches I've made disposed nicely – this time though I turned on the disposal and after a large grinding noise it shot water in my face and stopped working. Panic set in as if I was at a murder scene and holding a knife. Except this time something broke and I was holding a pan of half-disposed goo and a spatula. The maintenance guy set a time to come out and I decided it best if I just leave while he worked.

Even more recently the light bulb on my porch burned out. I haven't quite figured out what to do about this yet. The stingy college student in me says, "Your rent paid for that bulb – call the maintenance guys and have them replace it." The manly-man in me says, "It's a light bulb. Replace it yourself." I examined this fixture and it's an odd-sized bulb. I'd have to drive to the Home Depot and ask a guy about light bulbs. Something I'm not up to doing on the basis I don't want to look like an idiot. More importantly, I'd have to walk into the Home Depot holding my blown light bulb so I could get the right thing.

Second, it's held on to the side of the porch wall by a screw that looks rusty. I don't own a screwdriver so that could be tricky. I can't go to the Home Depot without getting the bulb down first. This situation is still up in the air as far as I'm concerned. Luckily I have time to think about it before the spring gets here when I might actually want to use the porch.

Then there are costs to consider when owning a home. I still can't find anyone that knows how I can save on my heating bill. I drive by the gas company every day on my way to work. On the side of their building they have a large post-it note style billboard that says, "Turn it back to 68 degrees!" 68 degrees doesn't cut it for me. What I want to know is can I set it to 71 when I'm home and then turn it back to say 65 when I'm gone?

Granted, houses have extra space than apartments. I still haven't got my living room the way I want it yet. I can't find an end table to match my coffee table in all of Indiana or the Internet. Believe me, I've searched. I have a lamp sitting on two designer cubes I bought at Linens N' Things for \$30. If this is an indication of how much trouble it is to satisfy my interior design tastes then a house will be too much. A good example is the garage. If I had a garage I'd park my car in it. Then I'd put a box of kitty litter and maybe a trash can inside. That'd be it. I'd be the only guy with a garage and no tools. Maybe I should start by buying a screwdriver. Then I could change my light bulb.