

Nothing handier than a handyman

As summer ends and the days grow cooler, for many of us, this signals cottage close-up time. There are often a wide range of duties, from simple cleanup and packing away, to strenuous activities involving heavy items such as floating docks, and a variety of mechanical duties with pumps and boats. As some items are used for the last time, they can be put away for the winter.

Families have different ways of handling these jobs. Several family members may meet for a close-up work weekend. Perhaps those with the time and skill will be the ones to shoulder the burden. One valuable resource may also be a local handyman.

In our case, the resident gardener's dad is retired and loves to putter around and close things up. He and his wife pack away the bedding, put on the shutters and clean out the cup-

boards and the fridge. The leaves are raked, the wood stacked for next year and everything is made secure. Some of the bigger jobs require more muscle.

biggest task. Several able-bodied workers pull, lever, push and winch the floating dock out of the lake and safely on

discovered that Butch could do the many heavy tasks we had to drive hours to do. He had the right tools and machines to do them. Often his fee was less than our combined gas bill and without giving up a Saturday.

Butch is a smart businessman.

He does a good job and charges a modest fee. As the years go by we give him more and more work and his business grows. He can work on his own timetable and group work together by location. Moving from cottage to cottage along

shore for the winter. Some years, we drove three vehicles from three different homes, a total of 10 hours round trip to get the boats and dock out.

Shutting down the water system involves hauling in the pipe and foot valve from the lake and some maintenance on the pump. The small aluminum boat requires two people and now the vintage fibreglass boat with its 50 hp needs to be loaded onto the trailer. Once out of the water, a skilled driver is required to back down the twisting driveway to take it to its winter home.

The floating dock is the

Even before \$1.35 a litre gas, we realized that we had better things to do with our time.

Then we found Butch, the handyman. We soon

one road a day, he spends less time driving and more time at the jobs, increasing his efficiency.

Finding a local handyman for your cottage

Finding a local handyman for your cottage needs can be a challenge

Garden Tools & Projects



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needs can be a challenge. You need to avoid contractors who only do big jobs where they will be at one site for months at a time. A handyman should be able to handle simple plumbing and electrical jobs as well as dealing with boats and docks. Check the local ads, ask other neighbours, and check out building supply stores for referrals. Once you have found one and learned the value of his or her work, don't let them go. Rely on

their work and advice. You will spend more time enjoying the cottage and the close-up rituals without having to worry about the strenuous and technical jobs.

At today's prices, your handyman bill may well be less than your gas bill. It will be time and money well spent.

(Dedicated to the great work and much appreciated help of Butch, our Haliburton handyman.)

We want to hear from

the muskoka sun is always looking for great photos and interesting story subjects.

Do you know someone who has an interesting Muskoka story to tell, a unique family cottage tradition, or a fascinating hobby?

Contact us!

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