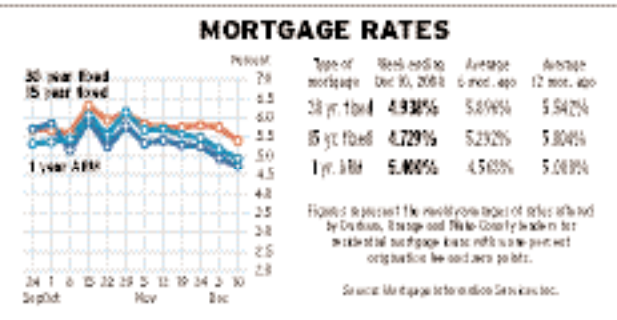


Real Estate

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Local military heros benefit from programs designed to help them get into new, adapted homes or rehab their homes to work for them.



U.S. Navy veteran Ryland Page and his wife, Kelly, are buying a home through the Stanton Homes for Heroes program. The couple's home plans meet all Specially Adapted Housing requirements and Ryland's needs.

CONTRIBUTED PHOTOS

fix in a

By Christa Gala, Correspondent

Returning soldiers often can't live in their homes the way they used to. One local contractor is trying to fix that.



MMIA makes returning soldiers' home safe and workable with repairs and additions such as wheelchair ramps.

Returning home is the sweetest victory there is for a soldier. But when a war veteran is injured or disabled, the house they used to love can become a roadblock to both freedom and happiness.

In January, Mike Dorman, a Coast Guard retiree and local contractor, founded Military Missions in Action (MMIA).

"Our number one focus for the returning disabled is to make their homes so they can live independently at no cost to them," says Dorman, who lives in Fuquay-Varina. "Our second, for any veteran who is disabled and cannot physically or financially take care of a safety hazard in their home, we'll go in and take care of that at no charge."

Before Dorman founded MMIA, he wanted

to make sure there was a need for what he wanted to do. "I went to meet with the VA in Fayetteville and the response I got was, 'Mike, if you do a hundred a month for 12 months you will not catch up.'"

Dorman wasn't surprised. "Look at the numbers. In Vietnam, we lost 55,000. We've only lost just over 3,500 now," says Dorman, referring to Iraq casualties. "However, we have over 33,000 who have returned seriously injured and disabled. We have over 400,000 suffering from post-traumatic stress and over 350,000 suffering from traumatic brain injury. The VA system's not equipped to handle, and this is what they told me, they're not equipped to handle the number of injuries that are returning — both physical and mental."

Dorman recently finished a project for a 24-year-old soldier in Whiteville, who suffered a brain injury in Iraq and returned home to his wife and two young children.

"When the VA called and told me about it I did the site visit," says Dorman. "The ceiling in the master bedroom was black and green from mold and mildew growing on it and the water seepage coming in. Western Cedar Supply in Garner donated 45 squares of shingles and then Tilley Brothers Body Shop in Fuquay-Varina transported them from Garner to Whiteville."

Dorman gathered a group of volunteer roofers and spent two days re-roofing the soldier's house. He also recently finished a wheelchair ramp for a WWII veteran in Fuquay; now the veteran's daughter and granddaugh-

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Homes for Heroes

Nearly a year ago, Holly Springs custom builder Stanton Homes began offering a 3 percent discount to military families. "We put it together in an effort to give back," says CEO Stan Williams.

If a buyer shows proof of either past or current service, that automatically qualifies him or her for 3 percent off the list price. Williams began to wonder if he could do more. "We wanted to take it a step further so we started going to our suppliers and subcontractors and asking them to add to our discount program."

Stanton Homes has already recruited a brick mason, cabinet company, countertop company and others, all of whom offer discounts ranging from \$300 to 25 percent off Stanton's standard pricing.

Two homes in the Homes for Heroes program are under construction. For more information, visit www.stantonhomes.com/Military.aspx.



From left, Stan Williams, CEO of Stanton Homes; Mike Trainer, Block & Associates Realty; Harry Sasnowitz, The Countertop Factory; Tony Durham, Lee Brick; Steve Thorne, Meridian Residential.

HERITAGE KNOLL



Situated on ever-so-gently sloping hills, and bordered to the west by town greenway, the heart of this neighborhood is the families who will make friends, reach milestones, and create memories here.

See the New Home Community profile on page 4F.

HANDYPERSON

Weather stripping may solve window condensation woes

UNIVERSAL PRESS SYNDICATE

Dear Mr. HandyPerson: The storm windows on the upper level of my tri-level home have condensation between them and my regular windows. I don't have this problem anywhere else except the upper portion of my storm door in the kitchen. I am a widow on a fixed income and cannot afford to replace my windows. I've taken some advice from people, which hasn't helped. One person suggested I caulk the inside edges of the storm windows, which I did — and it didn't help. Another suggested opening the windows a little, as the air space between the window and storm window was supposedly "too tight" — to no avail.



Mark HETTS

I am at my wit's end. Your advice would be appreciated. I'm not sure I can make it through another winter of this. — Trudy, Louisburg, N.C.

Dear Trudy: Though he's not sure of weather conditions in North Carolina at the moment, Mr. HandyPerson can assure you that you'll not have to go through this entire winter with similar problems.

When moisture (and thus frost) appears on the inside surfaces of storm windows and doors, it is because small amounts of warmer, more humid indoor air are escaping into the space between the two windows.

Mr. HP expects the advice you got was well-meaning, but it was wrong, maybe even a little foolish, and it contributed to the problem, not solved it. Caulking storm windows in place will make removing them later a miserable, messy task. Opening windows to let more indoor air into the space between window and storm window will only increase moisture and frost on the storm windows.

All you probably need is better weather stripping on your windows and the door where frost forms (but not the storm windows or the storm door). Any local hardware

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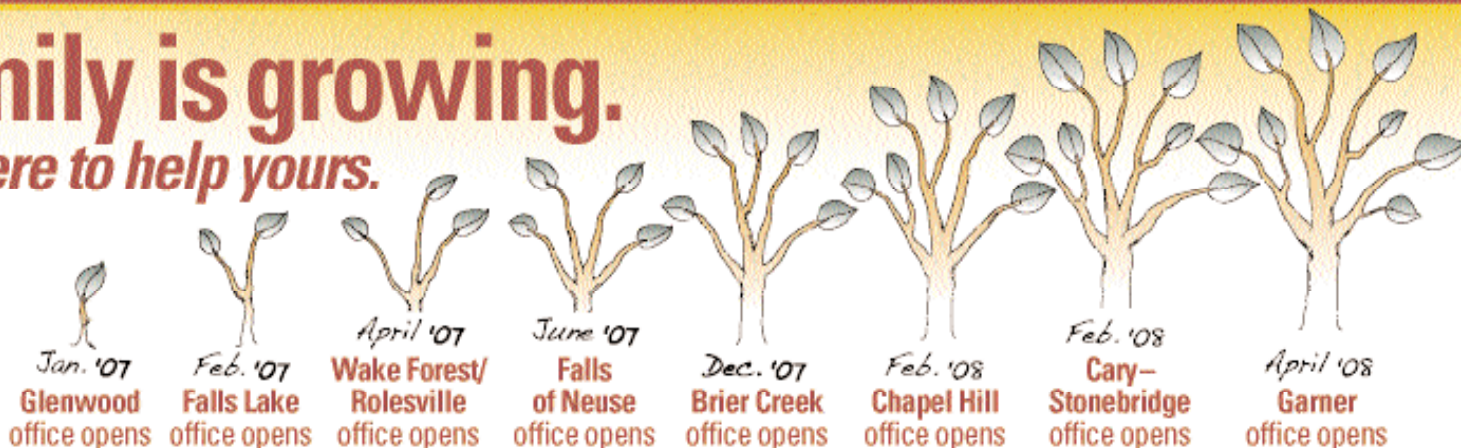
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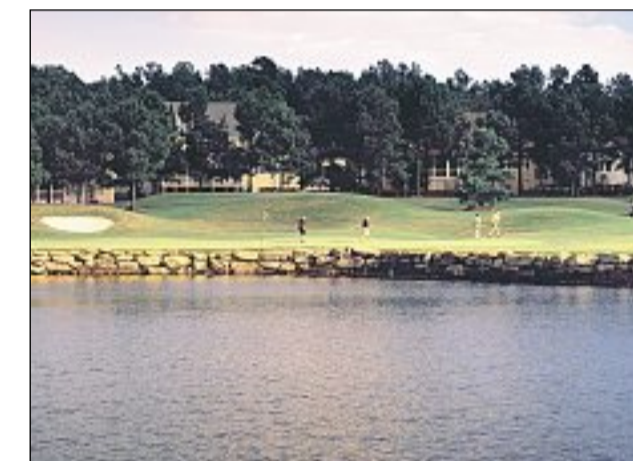
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NEW HOME COMMUNITY

Heritage Knoll — Wake Forest



A warm welcome awaits you and your family at the Knoll, where the abundance of choices — lots, floorplans, and features — will delight you. Situated on ever-so-gently sloping hills, and bordered to the west by town greenway, the heart of this neighborhood is the families who will make friends, reach milestones, and create memories here. The many floorplans offered are designed to function — with flair — for people with busy lives and impeccable taste.



PAID ADVERTISEMENT

HERITAGE KNOLL

BUILDER: Biltmore Homes
DIRECTIONS: From I-540 take US1/Capital Blvd. north, right on Hwy 1-A (Main Street), right on Rogers Road, left on Heritage Lake Road. Sales Center ahead on left just past pool.
NUMBER OF HOMES IN COMMUNITY: 114 homesites
PRICE RANGE: Mid \$300,000s to mid \$400,000s
SQUARE FOOTAGE RANGE: 2,222 - 3,700 sq. ft.
LOT ACREAGE: .22 to .34 acre
STYLE OF HOMES: Many to choose from — traditional, transitional, Victorian and award-winning ranches.
SCHOOLS: Jones Dairy Elementary, Heritage Middle, Knightdale High School
EXTRAS: Pools, lazy river, soccer fields, tennis, golf, biking and walking trails, fishing pond and retail areas.
SALES MODEL HOURS: Mon. - Sat. 10 a.m. to 5 p.m. and Sun. 1 to 5:00 p.m.
CONTACT: Heritage Sales Center at (919) 453-2000.

FIX

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ter no longer need to carry his chair up and down the stairs.

The VA was right. No matter how hard or fast Dorman works, there is never any shortage of projects. But there is always a shortage of money.

"I tell people all the time I think sometimes I understand how the disciples felt when they were standing at the hill looking at 5,000 people to feed with five loaves and two fish. When I showed up in Pinehurst, we had \$2,000 in the bank, and we were able to do \$14,000 worth of work," says Dorman, referring to yet another project. In this case, the soldier, now deceased, suffered from post-traumatic stress disorder and had often ransacked the house, destroying walls and doors, his mind still in the grips of his wartime experiences.

MMIA needs three things equally: money, time and labor. It is not funded by the government. "I talk to any organization, civic group or church group that will allow me to come speak about what we're doing. That's the biggest thing is raising awareness and getting the word out there," says Dorman.

There are surprises too, some better than others. "I never realized how much my life was going to change when I had the calling to do this," says Dorman. "It's very rewarding to me as an individual; it's also a struggle. I went from being a contractor to being a volunteer. With that comes a huge pay cut. But there's a lot of reward that comes with it — just being able to help the people and see the appreciation when we leave is wonderful."

Ammons Pittman GMAC Real Estate broker Susan Tenney and her husband Brian Tenney, an attorney at Tenney & Tenney LLP, have been helping Dorman with Military Missions in Action, networking with builders and helping with legal issues.

"I met with Mike and another committee member through a mutual friend. She felt our goals were on the same path," says Susan Tenney, adding that Brian served in the U.S. Army and comes from a military family. "A door opened very wide during our meeting. Citizens help citizens. Families help families. Soldiers help soldiers. That's what we are trying to do. The veterans deserve this. Their living situations should not be substandard."

This is a cause close to Susan Tenney's heart. She established "Linking Special Needs" (www.linkingspecialneeds.com) in the hopes of helping all families with disabilities and special needs. "I am trying to find homes that have been retrofitted and "link" those homes to families who have the same need. I have wanted to encompass in my real estate business retrofitted homes for all citizens and families, including veterans and wounded soldiers returning from Iraq and Afghanistan."

These days Dorman has a case pending in Hope Mills, a young veteran who's had 32 surgeries, but has nearly lost the use of one leg and has trouble navigating the stairs in his home. With each veteran Dorman meets, his heart breaks open a little more.

"It doesn't matter if you're young or old, Democrat or Republican, rich or poor, we all have a duty to help take care of these veterans who have given so much for our freedom," he says. "We failed the soldiers returning from Vietnam and this time we have the opportunity to get it right."

For more information or to donate, visit www.militarymissionsinaction.org.

HANDY

FROM PAGE 1F

store should have some inexpensive "V-shape" plastic, self-stick weather stripping that can be cut with a scissors and usually comes with good installation instructions. But even if you have to hire someone to do this, it should take only a few hours to do all the upper-level windows and storm door, and it shouldn't break the bank.

Mr. HandyPerson has used this inexpensive, self-sticking "V-shape" weather stripping in numerous jobs in the last four years, and he has been pleased with both the ease of installation and how well it works. After only a few years, he doesn't know about its long-term durability. But even if he had to replace it every five years (this seems unlikely, as his 4-year-old installation job is holding up well), it is so easy to install, it would still be his choice over any of the supposedly permanent metal weather stripping he's used in the past.

Unless your window sashes are badly worn, warped or do not close tightly, weather stripping will solve your problems. If the windows are in such bad shape that the weather stripping cannot seal the gap between window and frame, you may need a carpenter or window person to do a little work on the worst windows. But if they are generally in good condition, Mr. HP is virtually certain you will not need to replace any windows, and you won't have to endure another winter of frosted storm windows.

Dear Mr. HandyPerson: Here's a safe solution to the problem of toilet rings, which you've written about before: A half-cup of white vinegar in the bowl overnight will do it. Or you can use this during the day for four or five hours. You have a wonderful column and sense of humor. — Carleen, Hernando, Fla.

Dear Carleen: Thank you kindly. Mr. HandyPerson used to regard a sense of humor as a positive personality trait, but he has come to understand it as a basic survival skill in a world of such turmoil and confusion.

Mr. HP agrees that vinegar will work in many cases. But it can miss rust and mineral stains that aren't at water level, and some stains are simply too old, thick or stubborn for vinegar. However, he has not found any mineral or rust stains in toilets that can resist a brief exposure to Bar Keepers Friend Lime & Rust Remover, his preferred brand. It's not terribly caustic or dangerous to use, and it's safe for plumbing and septic tanks. Vinegar works in many cases, but sometimes you need slightly bigger guns.