

Gotta Love That Internet

Jim Ruen

Tuesday, September 1, 2009

Whatever did we do before we had the World Wide Web?

When I was growing up on the farm, I could always go ask Truman Austin. He was a neighbor, a fisherman, a fur trapper and hunter, and a farmer.

He could get up in the morning and go down to the creek, catch his limit of trout and be home before 7 a.m. His wife Olga would fix some trout for breakfast and freeze the rest.

Truman was also the neighborhood handyman/welder. If it was broken, he could fix it. Just walking into his shop was like walking into another world with its homemade gadgets and adapted fixings.

Unfortunately, Truman is no longer with us. Neither are a lot of the old craftsmen who seemed to instinctively know what needed to be done. Now I turn to the computer and type in whatever it is I want to know. This is especially true when it comes to household repairs or projects.

My earlier blog this month was on chainsaw sharpening. Type in those two words, and you pull up countless how-tos in print and video. Even if you you've done it before, it is a great way to refresh yourself before tackling a job for the first time in months or years.

One of my favorite project sites is <http://www.instructables.com>. It has a seemingly unending series of projects completed by members. They send in detailed explanations with visuals that make it a snap to follow along and duplicate results.

What I really enjoy is the comments and questions that follow, as members question the project maker about details or offer suggestions for improvements.

It is a great place to get ideas for your own projects, and I've found most of the contributors to be more than happy to answer questions. It's like having the ultimate handyman living next door. No, I take that back. Truman was a lot more interesting, and Olga made great cookies.

« More Shop Talk »