

Wed., Sept. 21, 2005

A LITTLE COMPETITION IS A GOOD THING

We were going to settle for clean wood floors. Worn, faded, dull, but clean wood floors. But we made the mistake of visiting our brothers and sisters from Mt. Zion AME as they were working on their house (the third house down Clairmont from the Church). Mt. Zion had scrubbed their wood floors with a power floor cleaner and then refinished them with polyurethane. They were shiny! They were purty! They were very nice. And they made our wood floors look like . . . Like they really needed to be refinished, too.

Well, if a little competition is a good thing, a little cooperation is an even better thing. Brother Walsh, a Mt. Zionist who has a real estate business, was the man behind the superior floors at their house. He told me as we were working together on the Clairmont house's floors that he put himself through graduate school by rehabilitating old properties. He did everything himself because he couldn't afford to pay anyone else to do it. Now he has folks that do the maintenance for him. But the Mt. Zion House he did himself as a labor of love.

The Clairmont House, also, was a labor of love for Brother Walsh, but also an opportunity for him to teach an eager disciple (yours truly) about refinishing floors. Several of our folks had already done the lion's share of cleaning the floors, which made the work with the electric floor scrubber go all the more smoothly and quickly. Tena Stephens, Nena Thompson and Anne McCoun assisted with the wet mopping behind the scrubber, to remove all the loose dirt. The Middle School boys Ropes Group helped by moving all the furniture, building supplies, and miscellaneous materials off the wooden floors and into the house next door. At 5 p.m. We were planning on settling for dingy and dull. By 9 p.m. We had shiny and restored wood floors.

Depending on how well the first coat takes, we'll either add a second layer or just touch up any thin spots we find tomorrow.

IN THE MEANTIME, please refrain from walking on the wood floors until Friday. Access to the house can still be gained through the kitchen (which has a linoleum floor).

THE ATTIC IS TRASH- AND RAT-FREE

I swear that rat was alive when I was introduced to it on Sunday night. When Tena Stephens and Anne McCoun found it tonight, however, the rodent had already made its way to the big cheese factory in the sky. Tena and Anne cleaned the whole attic, removing every bit of trash (including Chuckie

Cheese). The only thing left is a rather heavy pine twin bed frame, which we'll get a couple guys to bring down from the attic over the weekend.

John Aycock replaced the missing window pane in the door and left a note taped to the window asking us please not to use the new window pane as a key to the house.

Also spotted in the house this afternoon by yours truly, cleaning the Floors in the living room and dining room, and the fireplace, were Janet and Callie Kennedy; Tricia Sale; and Pat DelVisco. Tom McRae and Brad Rouse were out in the yard hauling trash, scraping old paint off the windows, and other various chores. And I'm sure there were other folks that I didn't see. You observant readers out there remember to e-mail me with the names of anyone I left out.

KEEP THOSE CHECKS AND GIFT CARDS ROLLING IN

Gift cards are a nice way to provide for the necessities for the Jaspers. Cold hard cash, on the other hand, is the preferred vehicle for defraying the Church's (and my) expenses related to this project. Some of you brothers and sisters can't give your time and talents to the Hurricane project, for whatever reason. But you can always make a monetary donation. As I mentioned in last night's UPDATE, there are a few things that Clairmont will have to do for these houses that will require skills beyond the capacities of our volunteers.

FORECAST FOR THURSDAY: SLOW AND EASY

It seems counter-intuitive, if our goal is to turn the keys over to the Jaspers on Sunday, for us to take it easy on Thursday, but that's what I'm asking us to do. The wood floors are curing and may very well require a second coat of polyurethane tomorrow. And the sun room is close to, but not yet, finished. So we're going to focus on these two aspects of the project on Thursday, and return full force on Friday and Saturday. I'll spend some time tomorrow planning out the events of the weekend - the biggest challenge being the dispatching of furniture retrieval teams to pick up the remaining pieces of furniture designated for the Clairmont House.

I'd like to move the furniture back into the house from next door on Friday (hey, what a GREAT idea for a TGIF program!!). Donations coordinators Linda Bennett and Alice Scott will also be working Thursday and Friday to "stock" the house with linens, kitchen utensils, etc. Saturday, we'll dispatch four or five trucks to pick up the remaining furniture.

DYING TO DO SOMETHING THURSDAY ANYWAY?

Great! Mt. Zion could use your help. Since they had the foresight to refinish their floors at the BEGINNING of the project instead of at the end of it, they are able to walk on their floors tomorrow. Mt. Zion will be appreciative of our help. They are currently finishing the painting, putting final touches on the yard, sprucing up the exterior of the house and probably on Friday, moving in furniture.

IN TOMORROW'S EDITION OF KATRINA UPDATE

Look for these exciting stories:

- * Polyurethane dries over 12 hours
- * External paint peels; Rouse scrapes
- * Grass continues to grow in yard of Clairmont House

This is your Hurricane Relief Coordinator, Geo. Miranda, signing off.