

Tale of Two Tours

Our House on the Home Tour alias Let's Get Chores Done – Fast!

by Julie Turner

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In May, 1998, our home at 817 North J St. was included on the Tacoma Historical Society Home Tour. Ironically, my husband, Jay, was the one who said, "Yes, we'll do it." I KNOW he didn't consider the many little chores such a "yes" would bring.

We painted things we'd meant to paint for years, rearranged pictures, moved furniture here and there, and cleaned out cubby holes. Then he thought we were done!

However, the biggest eye-sore in our house was the main upstairs bath and I had been urging a re-do on it for years. My chance had come! I insisted on refurbishing the bathroom and he finally said okay.

The centerpiece was to be a 6 ft 6 inch claw-foot tub that needed to come up from the basement to the second floor - - 2 steep narrow flights. He swore it weighed 650 pounds and he wasn't going to do it. I was sure there was a way, because I longed to have a large, deep, cast-iron tub for leisurely soaks.

So, I invited several young sturdy male family members to a lasagna dinner; I said we'd eat after the tub was upstairs. These fellows said, "No sweat!". Ha!

These husky men have weight lifting equipment, and lift all kinds of weights for fun. But when it came time to put that muscle to work, things were different. "But Auntie Julie, this tub is heavy!" they exclaimed. They did sweat moving that tub and they earned their dinner. Jay earned his dinner, too because he did tag along behind giving encouragement. Me, I joined in on "One, two, three heave."

Problems didn't end there. Jay had to find out how to pick this tub up so he could put a new floor down under it. I had to figure how to move it so I could paint it. I painted it green, at Jay's suggestion (only to find out later that he was joking). And the rest of the bathroom is in contrasting colors. It looks good if I do say so myself. We were pleased with the results and happy to be done – finally.

Done! Well, not quite. Two weeks later we had a waterfall in our dining room - - right below the new bathroom. It took that long for a leak to decide to show up and let its presence be known. So, more tear-up and more repairs and more painting - the dining room this time. Now we were done. Let the tour start.

Tour? What tour? We left that day and shuddered when we were told that over 1000 people saw the new bathroom. Was it worth it? Come by the house, see the little plaque by the front door and ask Jay what he thinks. I might even let you take a bath!

And, do try having your home on the tour. You learn a lot about your house, meet new people, and yes, get a lot of chores done.



North Slope Historic District: One of Tacoma's Treasures