

# This and That, Busy Spring Edition



## This And That

It's cherry blossom festival in our nation's capital this week. Trees that survived the erratic winter are preening their all for hordes of gawking tourists who come from near and far to admire the temporary pink flowers. Meanwhile, chaos continues apiece in the Charest household eclipsed only by the magnitude of chaos in our centers of government power.

Winnie and I tend to do a bunch of stuff all at the same time, take a long hibernation pause, then jump back into doing another bunch of stuff again. Our current home improvement project is more of the same. As detailed in a [previous story](#); in January 2016 we embarked on an ambitious home improvement project of replacing all the worn out carpeting in our home with wood flooring. We had three levels of flooring and two staircases of carpeting to replace, and we figured that by starting on January 1 we could be done by April, in time to start boating season.

It was a plan.

By June we finished remodeling the kitchen, a previously unplanned project that became necessary when the new wood flooring made the old kitchen look really old. I also finished up my Teaching English to Speakers of Other Languages (TESOL)

certification program, earning a Northern Virginia Community College (NOVA) certification that I could add to my collection of other highly important documents. We took off the summer for a few weekends of boating and in the beginning of September were ready to start the third and last level of carpet replacement.

Then we discovered a leak in our main floor bathroom. In order to gain access to the piping, we had to tear out the fixtures and one wall. We hadn't planned on remodeling this bath as it was in pretty good shape, but we ended up remodeling anyway. As we were finishing up the work in late October I managed to cut my finger in a table saw accident. Not as bad as it could have been; I didn't permanently lose any body parts, but it did dampen our enthusiasm for home improvement projects for a few months while I healed up.

Winnie had quit her Personal Care Assistant (PCA) job in late September so she would have time to work an income tax preparation course. Course completed, she took off a few months to just enjoy being around the house. By December we were getting restless to finish up our home improvement project.

Finally, in early February, we got back into the last (so we think) phase of carpet replacement, just about at the same time Winnie went back to work. This was also the same time I landed a part-time evening job teaching English as Second Language (ESL) at a private language school. This was something I wanted to do, but also meant that now neither of us had much free time to work our home improvement stuff.

We started replacing flooring in our upstairs hallway, then moved into the smaller of the two upstairs bedrooms. We couldn't just replace the carpeting on account of that was too simple of a project. We have unused attic space over our attached garage, that Winnie wants to use for living space, adjoining the smaller bedroom so we made a door between the

two rooms. Adding the door meant first removing a small closet we didn't need anyway. Really. I also relocated an A/C floor duct after removing the closet, and then built a small dresser into one knee wall. Then we started the flooring.

While Winnie was putting down flooring I was busy in our master bedroom expanding our closet into the unused space under the eaves. This project involved removing existing walls, relocating electrical wiring, new framing and insulation, then putting in several sheets of new drywall.

As of today, the newly expanded closet is mostly completed except for trim work that I'll do after the flooring is down. Next I'll be adding another built-in dresser in our master bedroom to match the dresser in the small bedroom, then we can start the flooring. We finished the flooring and trim in our smaller bedroom, and Winnie is pushing to get the master bedroom finished.

So, Winnie is putting in a couple of hour's home improvement per weekday between her job and taking care of household chores while I'm working 16-17 hour days. We do major construction work during the weekends so Winnie can properly supervise me. The house is in home improvement chaos, and with our present schedules will probably stay in chaos for another month.

The last major project for this year is rebuilding our main staircase with hardwood stairs to replace the nasty wood formerly hidden with carpeting. At which point it's boating season again. I suspect next winter we'll be working on finishing off the attic space we can now easily access. I'm excited.

Happy springtime everyone!