

# What Happened to the Handyman?

When I was young, my parents had a cottage on Hall's Lake in Halliburton County.

A friend had a cottage on Little Hawk Lake and another family a cottage on Boshkung Lake.

In those days, everyone seemed to have a man or couple within reach who fixed things. They would fix a bad electrical circuit, a leaky faucet or a stubborn water pump. You could get your eaves cleaned, and storm windows\*\* hung and they could find and deliver a few cords of firewood for when we used the place at times through the winter.

They'd shovel the snow off your roof, and do any number of small, yet unrelated jobs, being literally "Jacks of all trades".



Whatever became of this form of workman?

I think their children, especially the boys grew up to become General Contractors to Lawyers, or whatever, no longer interested in having a close clientele that always generated income, and who provided so much variety in the work or service they required. However, as we get older, we need help on jobs we once considered as easy as pie. Anything involving adjustable ladders, heavy lifting, flammable fluids, cutting tools or crawling under a cottage air-space is now almost impossible or too risky for older cottagers, especially widows and creaky old men.

This unfulfilled service requirement is not just a matter of convenience. Many people move away, and give up a serene and easy lifestyle in the woods or by a lake, because they can no longer do the work it takes to keep up a cottage property. Also, it gets impossible to find hired help to do these jobs. Some Contractors will do them, but they have to fit the work in with the time-sensitive projects that generate their main income. You will pay contractor prices" when you do find such help. That is only fair trade in this area.

The prototype of this person would be that they left a trade in the Big City and moved to the peace and calm of rural Ontario, preferably close to us. The find themselves wanting to do some work, but not as demanding as it was in the Big City. They could start out with one customer on a job like putting up melting wires on a roof. Then by word of mouth and a business card placed in the local gas station they would gather a steadier, yet not heavy work-load. They would be paid, but that could be negotiated by the two parties on a Job basis, or by the hour: Whatever works.

If there be such a person, in this area, take the opportunity to augment your retirement, keep in touch with real people and be an important person in the community, put out your shingle, or in this case, put some cards out at Kemp's, or the food store, or Hunter's.

We need you.

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\*\* Storm windows – Single pane, glass windows in wooden frames which provided "double glazing" in the winter. These were "de rigueur" long before sealed window units were invented.



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