

VINCENT'S NEWS

The 'Van-Go' Gallery



OWNER'S CORNER

65 Years of Excellence!



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Did you know...

...that in Greece 'Greek Salad' doesn't contain lettuce or beets?

It consists of sliced cucumbers, tomatoes, green bell pepper, red onion, olives, and feta cheese – all very fresh. This was a favorite selection for many meals on our trip to Greece described nearby.

THROUGH MY EYES

Last January I shared in this column about my wife Karen and I bicycling from Bruges, Belgium to Amsterdam in the fall of 2021. We liked it so much that we booked another trip in 2023. This time we went to Greece. It was amazing and we're already planning another trip for this fall.

It's more than just a cycling trip in Europe - it's called a 'bike & barge' trip. Instead of staying in a hotel, on a bike & barge, you have a cabin on a boat for the duration of the trip. At night, you sleep in your cabin, and you eat breakfast and many evening meals on board. During the day, you explore the countryside by bike.

This last trip, to Greece, was our third such trip. And each time it's been a different experience. While

Continued Page 3

"Wherever you see a 'Vincent's Van Go' you know the job will be a work of art."



Karen and I standing in front of our 'Bike & Barge' sail boat on the Greek island of Ermoupoli. It's hard to make out, but the bicycles are lined up on the left in photo.

How to Avoid Sewer and Drain Backups – Part 1

Discovering a backed-up sewer or drain is a terrible experience. It's an unsanitary mess to clean up and always inconvenient.

Typically, sewer backups are caused by the intrusion of tree roots, broken pipes, or material that is flushed down a toilet. Sometimes from a combination of these factors. This month I want to explore some of the causes and what can be done to avoid sewer backups caused by intruding tree roots.

Tree roots are on a mission to find life-sustaining water for the tree, and if there is any breach or opening, roots will exploit it to find

water. For sewers, in some cases the opening for roots is a break in the pipe, but typically the cause is a broken or damaged seal where sewer pipes are joined.

In older homes – and we have a lot of them in southeastern Michigan – the type of piping is a major factor. Most newer homes have PVC (plastic) pipe and unless a pipe or joint breaks, tree roots are rarely the cause of a stoppage. However, for piping materials used before the advent of PVC pipes, blockages from tree roots can be common.

One type of older sewer pipe is vitrified clay pipe (VCP or "crock").

Continued Page 2

Sewer Backups... (Continued from Pg.1)

Not only can crock break over time should the ground move, but an even bigger problem is where these pipes are joined together. While this material is still used today in some areas, the modern practice is to join each section together with rubber joints with stainless steel clamps to seal them. Historically, this was not the case.

However, just because the water starts draining, it doesn't mean that the sewer is 'clean'.

Originally, on a section of crock pipe one end had a hub and the other end was a 'hub-less' straight section. These 2-to-4-foot sections of crock were laid together with the straight end inserted into the hub. Then the joints were typically sealed with a mortar-like material.

Unfortunately, over time these seals will break down and leave an unobstructed path for roots seeking water to invade the pipe. And once this happens, roots will thrive in the water and grow until a blockage forms, consisting of roots and the stuff that is flushed down a toilet.

Other types of piping can also break and allow the penetration of tree roots. We'll explore those next month.



A removed section of broken crock containing tree roots .

Clearing A Sewer Blockage

To clear a blockage typically requires cabling the sewer with a sewer machine. However, just because the water starts draining, it doesn't mean that the sewer is 'clean'. The sewer cable may have only 'punched' a hole through a root mass. And while the water will go down, it may soon plug again when either something plugs the hole again or the roots grow back. And if roots have penetrated one time, they will grow back.

Unfortunately, as roots continue to grow they can expand and become thicker, leading to even more damage to the pipe at the spot of intrusion. Roots have been known to damage house foundations and in a sewer,

What can be flushed down a toilet?

The only thing besides human waste that should be flushed down a toilet is toilet paper. **Sanitary napkins, tampons, and even 'flushable wipes' are a big no-no.** Just because they are advertised as 'flushable' doesn't mean that you should! Flushable wipes don't degrade very well and can clog a sewer line.

they can cause a pipe to break or even collapse. To help you know what is going on in your sewer, I recommend you have us perform a video inspection of your sewer to determine the cause of the backup.

Setting up an annual sewer maintenance visit to repeat the process of cabling the drain can help avoid backups. Next month, I will get into advances in plumbing that allow us to repair a 'problem spot' where roots have found an entrance without having to dig the sewer up. This is the equivalent of a cardiologist performing arthroscopic surgery to put a 'stent' into an artery. More on that in Part 2 next month.

- Daniel Squires

What Our Clients Are Saying...

"Vincent's Heating & Plumbing is the only place to call for your plumbing and heating needs. Outstanding quality service from caring individuals!!"

Stephen Pyryt, East China

Through My Eyes (Continued from Pg.1)

each trip has been good – as I've shared in prior issues - we've come to some conclusions:

- We like trips with guided tours better than self-guided tours - the experience is much richer because the guide provides a lot of history and context for what you see.
- We like trips with smaller groups rather than larger ones – they're more intimate.

I had a lot of curiosity about Greece as I anticipated our excursion. It has such a rich history of its many contributions that it gave to western civilization – philosophy (Socrates, Plato, and Aristotle), democracy (which Greece invented), athletics (the Olympics and the marathon), science and mathematics (geometry, trigonometry, and astronomy), literature, and art and architecture, to name a few. I wondered how so many important concepts and ideas could originate from such a small area of the world to have such a lasting impact on the western world.

We flew into Athens, where we stayed a few days in the center of the city before embarking on our adventure. We had a few days to soak up the history of the region, including a trip to the Acropolis to see the Parthenon. The Bible describes how the Apostle Paul spent time in Greece. It was profound for me to stand on the same hill where Paul addressed the Athenians and to visit places where he had been on a day trip we made to the city of Corinth.

And this was just the 'appetizer' for the main event: sailing to various Cycladic and Saronic islands off the coast of Greece which we biked on. The itinerary deliberately avoided the most popular Greek islands – like Santorini and Mykonos – which are typically overwhelmed by tourists to provide a more authentic experience. I can't overstate how beautiful the Aegean Sea and every island that we visited was. We were

also impressed by the warm welcome we received from Greek people wherever we went.



Karen and I are at the Temple of Aphaia on the island of Aegina.

Greece is very mountainous, and the islands are no exception. And so, regardless of how physically fit the members of our group were, everyone had an E-Bike. And it's a good thing. There was a lot of uphill biking and without an E-Bike it would have been brutal. One day, my Apple watch recorded 3,000 feet in elevation that we climbed. But, of course, what goes up, must come down and I have to admit that the downhill rides were thrilling – not only for the speed but also because these were winding mountainous roads with switchbacks and hairpin turns! We had speedometers on our bikes and at one point I glanced down and saw that I was hurtling downhill at over 50kph or 31 miles per hour! Yikes! But it was a blast!

The sailing was also spectacular and very relaxing. It was a 5-star trip.

And I'll end this month on the topic of 5-Stars: I want to thank you if you've been one of the many who have taken the time to review us and award us 5-stars. It's the reason we have a 4.8 rate over 765 Google reviews and a 4.9 rate over 2,512 Nearby Now reviews. Finally, I wish you the best for 2024!

– Daniel Squires

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Word Search - Tool Time!

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Past issues are available in PDF format online in the Van Go Gallery at:

VHPinc.com/gallery

After the July 2023 issue, the PDF format also has the Word Search solution

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Humor Section



Sal, a New Yorker, is tired of his visiting Texan friend, Tex, always bragging about how big everything is in Texas.

Sal decides to shut Tex up and takes him to Niagara Falls.

They arrive and stare for a few minutes at the tremendous volume of water flowing over the falls.

Sal turns to Tex and gloats, "I bet you don't have anything like that in Texas!"

Tex continues to stare at the falls.

"Nope - we don't," he admits, "But we have plumbers that can fix it!"

Now that's good news!

"Have I not commanded you? Be strong and courageous. Do not be afraid; do not be discouraged, for the LORD your God will be with you wherever you go." Joshua 1:9

New Year Special Promotion

Try Our Plumbing & Water Heater Safety Service & Get a Free Drain Treatment Product Your Choice: Bio-Clean or Total-C

A NEGLECTED WATER HEATER OR FURNACE CAN PUT YOUR FAMILY AT RISK FROM CO POISONING!

- On the Michigan Department of Health & Human Services website, faulty furnaces and water heaters are lumped together as the leading cause of carbon monoxide poisoning in Michigan.
- The Centers for Disease Control (CDC) echoes this concern and warns homeowners against neglecting these appliances. It recommends that **BOTH your furnace and water heater should be serviced by a qualified technician EVERY YEAR to prevent CO poisoning in your home.**

At Vincent's Heating & Plumbing, you can choose maintenance services to provide peace of mind from furnace and water heater risks. Our Plumbing & Water Heater Service (formerly 'Plumbing & Home Safety Service') will make certain you and your family are not at risk from carbon monoxide poisoning, from your water heater exploding or rupturing due to a failed Temperature & Pressure Relief Valve, and more. This service is so comprehensive it takes 1-1/2 to perform everything.

Here is a list of the various water heater safety & maintenance tasks we'll take care of for you:

ALL WATER HEATERS:

- Per **WATTS T & P relief valve inspection guidelines:**

- Perform T & P valve annual safety check to prevent explosions.
- Verify T & P valve installed correctly and for safe discharge.
- Verify T & P valve is rated correctly for the tank.
- Remove T & P valve and visually inspect for corrosion and accumulation of sediment deposits to make sure it will work.

ATMOSPHERIC & POWER VENT GAS WATER HEATERS ONLY:

- Flush sediment from tank to reduce health risks & prolong tank life (*flushed until water is clear.*)
- Perform visual inspection of anode rod, dip tube and tank interior for signs of wear.
- Exhaust vent safety check to prevent CO leaking into house.
- Perform flame safety check to prevent gas explosions.
- Perform combustion testing with cleaning to ensure proper & safe performance.
- Perform safety inspection of all gas fittings to it for leaks.

TANKLESS GAS WATER HEATERS ONLY:

- Perform annual descaling flush.
- Perform safety inspection of all gas fittings to it for leaks.

ELECTRIC WATER HEATER ONLY:

- Flush sediment from tank to reduce health risks & prolong tank life (*flushed until water is clear*)
- Perform visual inspection of elements, anode rod, dip tube and tank interior for signs of wear.
- Remove access panels.
- Visually inspect all electrical connections.
- Visually inspect for signs of copper embrittlement.

PLUMBING INSPECTION

- Check all water line shut offs and emergency stops to verify they will function when needed.
- Identify location of main shutoff and make certain that it works.
- Examine drain lines & water lines for signs of leaking and concerns. (*1-1/2 hours is allotted for visit not including travel time*)

Includes **Annual Descaling Flush** for Tankless Water Heaters
& **Visual Inspection of Tank Interior** For Tank-Type Water Heaters

...continued on reverse side....

In addition to the extensive water heater safety and maintenance procedures, the plumbing technician will also inspect your home's plumbing system to make certain that all your plumbing fixtures, water lines and drain lines are in good order and that there are no problems developing.

- ***Were you aware that cast iron drains that were installed in homes built before the 70's are wearing out and starting to crack and leak as they reach the end of their useful life?***

This is the sort of potential problem that our plumbing technician can 'head off at the pass' so you can be aware of potential issues that are developing before they become major problems. Then there are the plumbing emergencies that come out of nowhere—would you be ready for one?

- ***Do you know where your main water shut-off is? - and - if you do know where it is - does it work?!?***

In addition to the plumbing inspection, we'll show you where the main water shut-off to your house is AND we'll test it to make certain that it will actually work when you need it. And for good measure we'll inspect ALL of your water line shut-offs and emergency stops to make certain that they will work.

- ***With a Plumbing & Water Heater Service visit you can KNOW:***

- √ ...that your water heater failsafe (the T&P Valve) that keeps it from becoming a bomb is working.
- √ ...that the gas to your water heater will shut off rather than dump gas in your home if it doesn't work.
- √ ...that your water heater isn't dumping poisonous exhaust gasses into your home.
- √ ...that there are no faulty electrical shorts or signs of burning on your water heater.
- √ ...that your water heater has gotten the required annual maintenance it needs.
- √ ...that your gas line to the water heater aren't leaking.
- √ ...that a plumbing professional has looked over your home's plumbing.
- √ ...that you will be ready for a plumbing emergency.

Call **(810) 985-7103** to schedule a **Plumbing & Water Heater Service** visit.

Only \$199.20 Regular Price for the 1-1/2 Hour Visit

Ask for the New Year Special Promotion of a Free Drain Treatment Product

See nearby insert for more information on Drain Treatment Products.

Call Monday - Friday 7 a.m. until 6 p.m. Saturday 8 a.m. until 2 p.m.

If you've already had us perform a Plumbing & Water Heater Service recently or it is included with your Enhanced Service Plan, you can save \$25 (50%) on either Drain Treatment Product. Just stop by the office with this insert.

OFFER EXPIRES FEBRUARY 1.

Vincent's Heating & Plumbing Inc.

2650 Oak St - Port Huron, MI 48060 (810) 985-7103 email: sales@VHPinc.com

Wherever You See a Vincent Van Go You Know the Job Will Be a Work of Art!"

Two Great Drain Maintenance Products - Same Great Price!

Now Choose Between a Long-Standing Favorite or our
new 'Premixed Liquid' with a Citrus Scent

Save \$10 Off the Regular \$50 Price of Either Drain Treatment

expires March 1

> 'Tried & true' since the '70's

Keep Your Drains Smelling Fresh and
Flowing Free the Natural Way!

BIO-CLEAN

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| Eliminates costly backups | Reduces build up in tank and pipes |
| Eliminates foul drain odors | Eliminate garbage disposal odors |
| No harmful chemicals | Restores clogged drain fields |
| Easy to use | Minimizes health and safety risks |
| Environmentally friendly & safe | GUARANTEED! |

Regular price \$50 plus MI sales tax



BIO-CLEAN harnesses
natural bacteria and enzymes
to devour all the organic
waste that build up and clog
your drain lines.

> **Premixed Liquid' Drain Treatment with a Citrus Scent!**

Fight Drain Odor & Clogging

Total-C® is a water soluble formulation, containing ingredients that produce a pleasant, fresh citrus scent, which eliminates the source of odors and keeps drains smelling fresh. A small amount goes a long way toward maintaining an odor free atmosphere that all will appreciate!

- | | |
|------------------------------------|-------------------------------------|
| - Fresh natural citrus smell | - Keeps drains free-flowing longer |
| - Treats the whole plumbing system | - Concentrated, makes 32 treatments |
| - Safe for the environment | - No harsh, toxic chemicals |

Total-C® is engineered with 100% natural citrus liquefiers and enzymes that target and digest organic materials. Also combines long lasting drain conditioning bacteria that continues to keep drains free flowing and eliminates odors.

Regular price \$50 plus MI sales



For more information visit www.VHPinc.com....learn more on reverse side...

Attention: Homeowners Frustrated By Messy Sewer Backups Caused By Roots

HOW TO STOP ROOTS FROM GROWING IN YOUR SEWER AND CAUSING A BACKUP - GUARANTEED!



The Root Intrusion Solution

Your home's sewer pipes are built to handle the nasty stuff, but they are no match for tree roots! Over time, sewer pipes can crack or joints can separate causing entry points for aggressive thirsty roots. Once the roots get in to the sewer pipe they can block the flow causing expensive nasty backups or even sewer pipe replacement.

How it Works

RootX® unique foaming action means roots don't stand a chance.

The RootX® product is a two part formula that comes in one innovative container. Once you add water to the RootX formula, the special ingredients create root killing foam that leaves coating on the roots and pipe walls which not only kills the roots but also stops their regrowth for a period of time. Unlike other products, RootX® reaches the top of the pipe where 90% of the root intrusion occurs.

Protect Your Home and Save Money

If roots are allowed to fully grow into a pipe, it can

require mechanical cutting to remove them. Utilizing only mechanical removal of roots can be expensive, hard on your pipes and encourages aggressive root growth. (Think pruning a tree or a bush.) By utilizing an annual RootX® maintenance program through Vincent's Heating & Plumbing, you will save money and be able to flush your toilet with confidence.

Safe For Pipes - Easy on the Environment

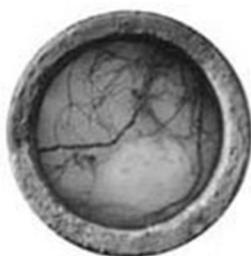
RootX® is effective and accepted for use by the EPA

The RootX® formula has been killing roots for 20 + years. The active ingredient in RootX® is the aquatic herbicide Dichlobenil which is used to control weed growth in residential flower beds and aquatic environments. The RootX® formula also contains surfactants and degreasing agents that strip away the grime and grease on roots allowing the Dichlobenil to penetrate the root cells.

Classified as a General Use Product by the EPA (EPA reg.# 68464-1), as oppose to Restricted Use, RootX® can be used in both sanitary and storm pipe without adversely affecting the environment



Root Clogged Pipe



RootX Foaming Action



Clear Pipe

RootX® is guaranteed to prevent roots from growing and causing a sewer backup for 12 months or you will get a second container

free. Call for details.

Introductory Offer: Save \$10 Off RootX® 2LBS Reg. \$60 Only \$50 +tax

FREE delivery and professional application when combined with a repair service call or maintenance visit. Offer Expires March 1.

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