



# J. Francis Company LLC

GENERAL CONTRACTING AND REMODELING

1410 High Street • Pittsburgh, PA 15212 • phone: 412.322.6407 • fax: 412.322.6425

newsletter

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## Super Trivia Challenge

**Here's your Chance at a \$20 Gift Card!**

Trivia is a fun feature of the newsletter. Each & every month brings a new question & opportunity for **you** to win! The first correct answer emailed to [jean@jfcollc.com](mailto:jean@jfcollc.com) will be the proud winner of a \$20 Gift Card of your choice.

**Question:** In 1621, which of the following foods that we eat at Thanksgiving today was not served?

**Answer:**

- a) Pumpkin Pie
- b) Yams
- c) Vegetables
- d) Stuffing

## Thanks for the Kind Words

*"I want to thank J. Francis Company, LLC for the excellent work that you have*

## November 2007

With Thanksgiving fast approaching we pause to give thanks for all the blessings in our lives. The staff at J. Francis Company, LLC wish you and your loved ones a very Happy Thanksgiving. Read on to learn about licensure for General Contractors/Remodelers in PA (or lack of it) and how to select a General Contractor/Remodeler for your project. We look forward to hearing from you!

### Company Update

#### ***Licensure for General Contractors in PA? Guess Again!***

Every state has unique contractor/remodeler licensing laws or a lack of them. Licensure for General Contractors/Remodelers is currently required in 25 U.S. states. Pennsylvania is not one of them! In Pennsylvania, there is **no** licensure process or certification exam required for an individual or company to declare themselves a "General Contractor" or "Remodeler". Pennsylvania only requires a contractor/remodeler to carry Workers Compensation Insurance if they have multiple employees.

Even in the states that enforce stringent requirements for licensure, the General Contracting field has a high "kill" rate. Nationwide, approximately 50% of General Contractors and Remodelers go out of business each year. J. Francis Company, LLC has been in business 20 years and remains largely referral based for our ongoing success. We are members of national professional contractor/remodeling organizations, including Remodelers Advantage Roundtable (RAR).

### Feature Project

#### **Gameroom Remodel**

**Scope of work:** This gameroom remodel included replacement of all plumbing, HVAC, electrical and extensive carpentry work. The homeowner's goal was to remodel the basement to become a gameroom where their children could play, relax, invite friends over and extend the living space in their home. This 1930's house required the complete replacement of the sewer lines underground, which was discovered prior to framing walls because of a plumbing leak

*completed on my newly renovated & expanded office space on Beaver St. It was a challenging project requiring collaboration on the part of the contractor, municipality, architect & owner. The scope of work included adding a third floor to an existing two story building in the heart of a busy & crowded business district.*

*Effective project management on this job was critical to the initial design, coordination with Borough officials & in minimizing any potential disruption to the business district. As an interesting compliment, the adjacent businesses & residents didn't know that the work was done on top of the building. There were minimal disruptions to the work on the ground level which is amazing given the scope of the project.*

*You took what was a negotiated design/build project & added design features while the work was in progress. For example, salvaging the framing lumber & then using that salvaged lumber to make doors & trim enhanced the interior design. Being flexible with the finish specifications allowed the final stair design to include glass panels & wire roping reinforcing the open feel of the mezzanine. The new mezzanine structure appears as if it was always a part of the building.*

*The office space is striking & tasteful both inside & as viewed from the exterior. In difficult situations where design coordination & project management are critical, I continue to look to you and the relationships that J. Francis Company, LLC brings to the table."*

encountered during demolition. Once the basement plumbing was replaced, the original HVAC duct work was gutted from the middle of the basement rooms and run along the perimeter which created 6 foot 8 inch clear ceilings. This along with lowering the floor four inches, created a comfortable walking height in the room. The room was finished with new stairs, bookcases & trim fabricated by J. Francis Company, LLC. The "Pittsburgh Toilet" in the corner of the room was replaced with a small powder room; original windows were replaced with glass block & new DensArmor paperless drywall was installed which is mold resistant for remodeling below-grade. The laundry equipment was moved to the third floor to suite the lifestyle of the homeowner. This once cluttered basement was remodeled into a cozy, bright, functional living space.

### Before View



### Finished View



Tom McCargo, President of  
Graham Realty Company

## Remodeling Tips

### Prepare Your Home for Winter

**Clean out gutters and downspouts:** Cleaning leaves & debris reduces the likelihood of an ice dam forming. Spray water in the downspouts to wash away leaves and debris. A helpful suggestion is to place gutter screens over gutters. Extreme caution should be exercised when working on or around the roof. Consider hiring a professional for this work.

**Insulate exposed pipes in your home's crawl spaces and attic:** These exposed pipes are most susceptible to freezing. The more insulation you use, the better protected your pipes will be. This helps reduce plumbing emergencies in the wintertime.

**Remove the screens from storm window frames and install storm windows:** Storm windows help reduce the cost to heat your home and prevent windowsills from rotting

**Store firewood a minimum of 30 feet away from your home:** This will reduce fire hazards and the likelihood of attracting termites.

**Check water hoses** on the clothes washer, refrigerator icemaker and dishwasher for cracks and bubbles. Replace hoses that show signs of leaking.

**Be familiar with the main gas valve and other appliance valves:** Family members should be familiar



with the location and operation of valves.

**Clean the clothes dryer exhaust duct, damper and space under the dryer:** Poor maintenance allows lint to build up in the exhaust duct and may cause a fire.

**Test all ground-fault-circuit-interrupter (GFCI) outlets:** GFCI outlets to be tripped and reset once a month. If they do not trip or reset, have the outlet changed by a registered electrician. These types of outlets are required around wet areas such as bathrooms and kitchens to offer protection against shock.

**Make sure all electrical holiday decorations have tight connections:** If possible, use 3-prong plugs and cords. The use of 2-prong adapters, which permit 3-prong plugs to be used in 2-prong outlets doesn't always provide grounding to protect against shock. Unplug decorations when not in use. Use of extension cords should be temporary. To help reduce the chances of overheating, electric cords, including extension cords should never be bundled together or run under rugs and carpet.

**Clean the kitchen exhaust hood and air filter:** Keeping these areas clean of cooking grease will help keep a stovetop fire from spreading.

## Our Core Values

- Caring
- Competence
- Integrity
- Respect
- Timeliness



## Team Update

**Dave Kulesza** (D.K.) has been an employee of J. Francis Company, LLC for 14 years. His favorite type of work is finish carpentry. Dave says, "I have enjoyed the many years working at J. Francis Company and have great respect for John McCloskey". Dave's wife Margie is also a longtime employee of J. Francis Company. Dave has 7 children and 4 grandchildren. Dave's favorite hobbies are fishing, camping and watching Steeler games.

## What's New in '07

### **How to choose a reputable General Contractor**

**Do Your Homework!** Commonly heard questions from General Contractors/Remodelers are: How much will it cost? When can you start and when will it be finished? Are you going to work everyday? While these factors are important, they are not going to give you the qualifying information that is most important when selecting a contractor/remodeler. Start by asking questions about a company's business practices and experience in a similar type of project.

1. How long have you been in business?
2. Will there be a site supervisor assigned for the job?
3. Who will be working on the project? Are they employees or subcontractors?
4. Insurance: Check to make sure the contractor is insured as required by your local and state regulations. Make sure the insurance is current, and the name on the certificate of insurance matches the name of the contractor or their company.
5. References - request a list of past project sample with contact information to verify the solid business practices of the company such as: quality of work, professionalism, communication level with management.
6. What is the reputation of the general contractor/remodeler? Do they show evidence of repeat customers & a recent project history? Can they show a proven track record of staying on budget & on-

J. Francis Company, LLC approaches business with our core values as a guide.

## What Kind of Work Does J. Francis Company Do?

Our Typical Remodeling/Renovation Work Includes:

- Additions
- Bathrooms
- Basement Remodeling
- Classroom Improvements
- Demolition
- Drywall and Plasterwork
- Electrical
- Finished Carpentry
- Flooring
- Gut and Rehab
- Kitchens
- Mechanicals
- Office Build-Outs
- Painting
- Plumbing
- Roofing
- Rough and Trim Carpentry
- Siding
- Space Reconfigurations
- Tenant Build-Outs
- Windows
- Wood and Metal Framing
- and Much More !!

## Referral Rewards Program

***Could You Use \$100.00??***

- For every referral you send our way that becomes a customer, you will receive your choice of: a \$100 gift certificate to the store or restaurant of your choice or a \$100 donation to the charity of your choice in your

time completion schedule?

7. Is the contractor/remodeler a member of a professional building association?
8. Understand Your Contract - pay close attention to the contract you sign before the job begins. This will protect both you and the contractor. Make sure the contract includes not only financial terms, but also explains exactly what will be done, as well as what won't be done. If you and the contractor both understand each other's expectations, you'll both be more satisfied with the project.
9. Are the employees & subcontractors screened for criminal records & drug use?

It's also important to realize that sometimes it's not the answers you get that are significant, but what you don't get. Asking the right questions is not enough. You need to pay attention to your instincts and to what information is missing. Remodeling is an exciting experience but disruptive & stressful. It helps hire a general contractor with whom you can develop a strong, trusting working relationship.



name.

- By referring your friends, clients & co-workers to us for remodeling & renovation projects, you've helped our business grow. Offering these special rewards is our way of saying thanks. To take advantage of our Referral Reward Program, just email to [jean@jfcollc.com](mailto:jean@jfcollc.com) or fax to 412.322.6425 the following contact information: your name & phone number, the name, address & phone number of the person you are referring. We will follow up on every referral.

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Jean M. Krak  
J. Francis Company, LLC

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email: [jean@jfcollc.com](mailto:jean@jfcollc.com)  
phone: 412.322.6407  
web: <http://www.jfcollc.com>

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## Contact Us

### ***Our Mission Statement...***

*"J. Francis Company, LLC exists to provide our customers with competent general contracting services. We emphasize integrity, respect and timeliness in all our relationships. Our goal is sustained growth and profitability by continually exceeding expectations."*

### **Contact us:**

John McCloskey, President:  
[john@jfcollc.com](mailto:john@jfcollc.com)

Dave Myers, Vice President:  
[dave@jfcollc.com](mailto:dave@jfcollc.com)

Jean M. Krak, Business  
Development Manager:  
[jean@jfcollc.com](mailto:jean@jfcollc.com)

John Hoover, Production  
Manager:  
[hoover@jfcollc.com](mailto:hoover@jfcollc.com)

Ed Bittner:  
Estimator/Residential Sales:  
[ed@jfcollc.com](mailto:ed@jfcollc.com)

Toni Shar, Office Manager:  
[toni@jfcollc.com](mailto:toni@jfcollc.com)

J. Francis Company, LLC  
General Contractor  
1410 High Street  
Pittsburgh, Pa. 15212  
412.322.6407 office  
412.322.6425 fax  
[jfcollc.com](http://jfcollc.com)

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## Links

