Friday, May 6, 2022

RAKO STUDIOS

Bathroom doors

I add an entry door to the main bathroom and change a bi-fold closet door to a swing door.

All hail a 2019 Buick Encore compact SUV that will hold 8-foor lumber and let the tailgate close. It was time to add an entry door to the main bathroom. The way it is now, you have to close a sliding door to the main bedroom, and also another sliding door to the hallway that is three feet long that has yet another door to the main bedroom and a door to the second bedroom. That short hallway has yet another sliding door that provides access to the two bedrooms and the bath. To top it off, there is a walk-in closet door that is on the hallway to the bathroom. Putting an entry door on the bathroom itself, all the sliding doors can be open, and the person in the bath still has privacy. I bought solid-core Jen-Weld doors from Lowes, 36 inches wide in case I end up in a wheelchair. They delivered them in a day.

Watching shower tiling videos, I learned a laser level gets the wall square and plumb. I switched to Torx construction screws, and Torx Tapcons.

I pulled off the corner molding, I will probably rip out the drywall between the closet.

The laser level showed this Swanson level was off by 1/2-inch over 8 feet. Junk.

The laser level had dead batteries, It must have been on the shelf for years, or returned.

I exposed the wall stud so the door will fit.

This was before I learned to "unlock" the level so it stabilized true. No instruction, a QR code.

You can barley see the laser on the ceiling. Turns out, this is the wrong way to layout the door frame.

Instead, you put the laser way back where the wall starts, about two inches away from the wall. Then you adjust the laser until it is perfectly parallel to the wall. Now you have a laser line on the ceiling as well as the perpendicular wall. You measure over the same offset distance and you can mark the ceiling for the top plate, the far wall for the vertical king stud, and the floor for the bottom plate.

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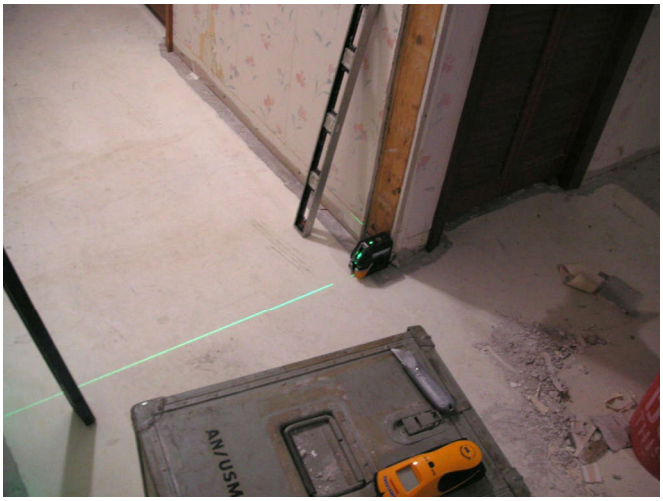
My 40-year-old Craftsman level matched the laser and showed the blue Swanson level was way way off. Worse yet, no apparent way to rotate the bubble to correct it. I will mail it back to Swanson and explain I will never buy again.

Here the laser is showing where the king stud goes on the perpendicular wall to the door.



The Swanson 6-foot junk level is now only used as a straightedge to double check the laser.

At first I just cut out a wall-width, then seeing the Romex, I realized I needed more demo.

So I just tear out all the drywall on the bathroom side of the door..

The Romex becomes detached, and I put in a new stud drilled and with a nail plate.

This is where 4x8' cement board will go and get tiled over.

The laser lets me true up this stud that supports the existing drywall where it meets the door.

This is the goofy hallway with two sliding doors at the far side, with a closet bi-fold too.

I added four studs total, the last one had to be notched to get past the Romex. Toe screwed in.

I figured to get ahead of things and sand the ceiling flat where I will have to drywall tape.

I put in the whole board for the bottom plate, using construction adhesive and Tapcon screws.

I gave up on all three Zircon stud finders and just drilled holes to find the ceiling joists.

In go the jack studs, the header, and a couple cripple studs.

I get the top plate laid in with the help of the level. The king stud will support it at the wall.

After a couple hours, I cut the bottom plate. It is anchored well, two screws per side, plus glue.

The glue is working, good thing I didn't wait overnight. I chisel out the rest and clean it up.

The next day I take on the door hang. Because the framing is true, it's way easier to hang the door. I balance the shims so the trim will be spaced from the hall walls the same on both sides. The laser level made sure the hinge side was plumb. Shimming up the door worked well to get everything where is is supposed to be.

With the laser on, I get the shims perfect, screw in the frame then put a long screw in the hinges. Once the hinge side is true, I can set up the gap on the striker side with those shims. The door sprung open an inch, these Jen-Weld doors are cheap, you need a little more skill, and most of all, patience, to get them hung, keep watching.

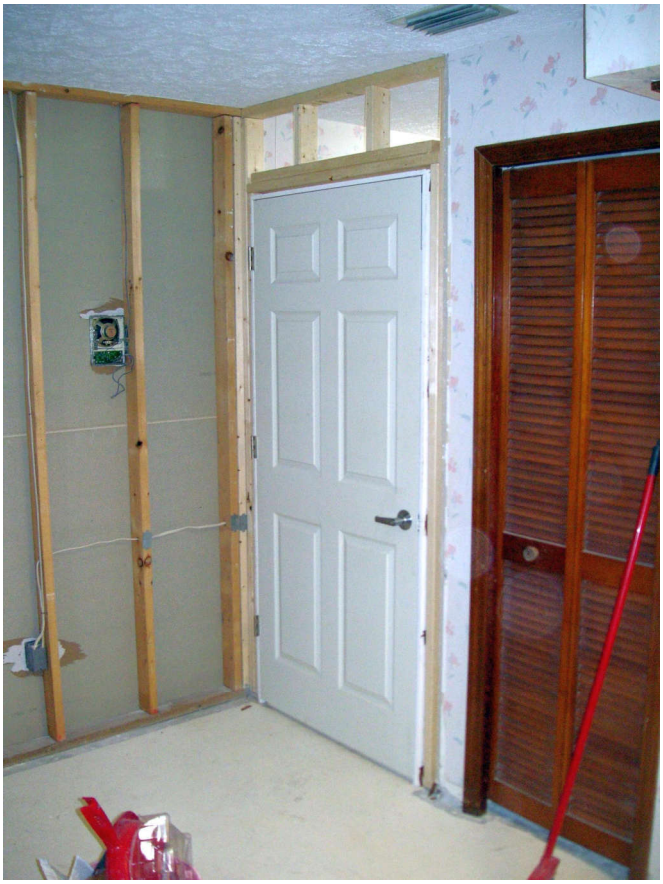
I like these light commercial levers from Home Depot. Schlage, no more Quikset for me. Ever.

Lever style is Elan, brushed chrome, mid-thirty bucks. I will do the whole house eventually.

The Schlage striker plate is longer than the mortise in the jamb. Another chisel job.

The Schlage latch is squarer than the mortise in the doors. A chisel squares off the corners.

The lever would bind up in these thin doors, I left out this metal shield and they work fine.

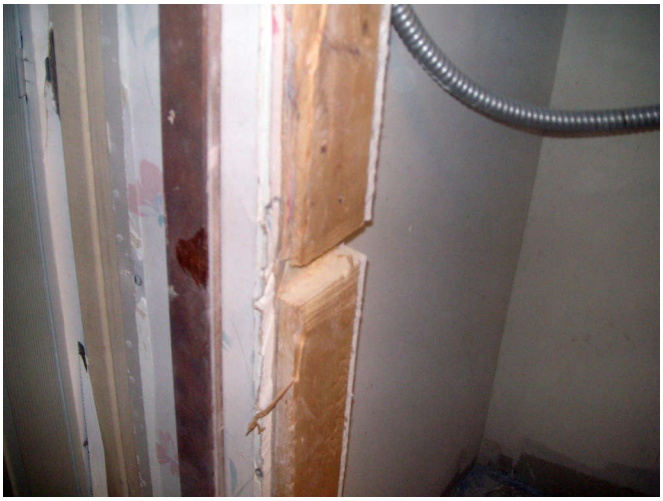


The door is in. I like solid-core doors because they block noise way better, and because their weight means you can just swing them and they have the momentum to close and latch. That thing on the wall is the back of an intercom. I suspect I will tear off all the drywall on the right side wall. I have medicine cabinets there.

Excited by how well the entry door went, I start to replace the bi-fold closet door nest to it.

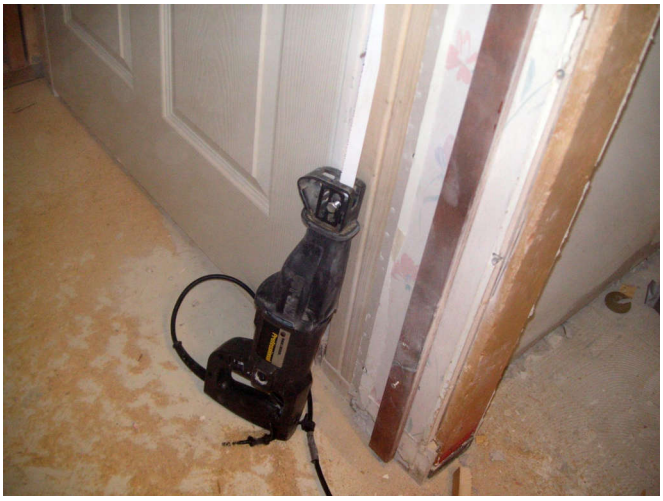
The opening was 1/4-inch too narrow. I nail a guide strip up for the circular saw.

The door and trim goes easy, the drywall needed to come off around the periphery.



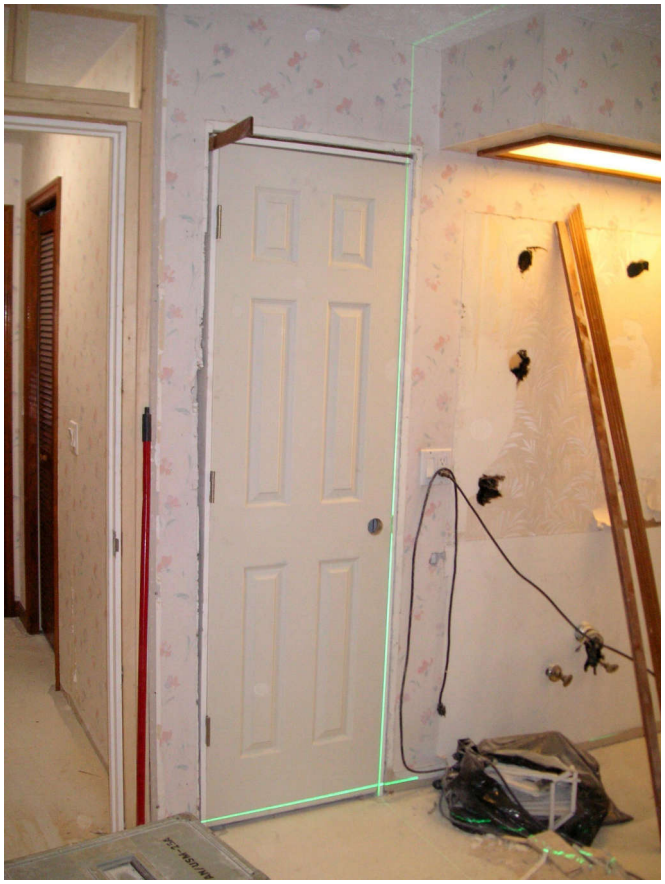
Then I cut the rest of the way with a Sawzall. I worked up and down from this notch.

This is the Jen-Weld 24-inch door that matches the entry door. The cardboard made shimstock.



It's an old Black and Decker corded saw. It has a button to lock on, no lawyers in the old days.

I bought real Milwaukee blades, but dang, they went dull really fast. A new brand next time.

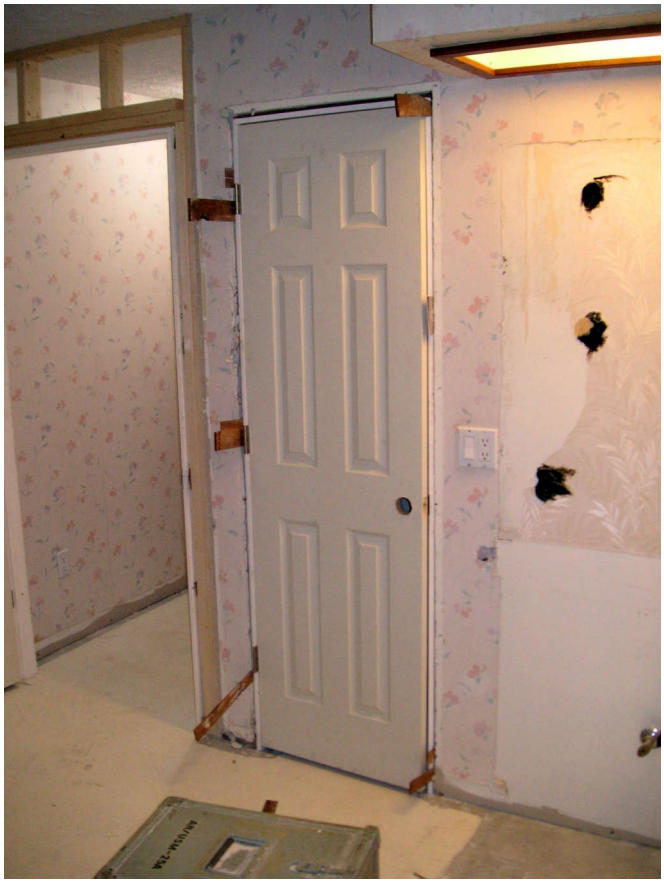


This is the headache I alluded to before. Since the hinge side of the door was all hacked up from the saw, I figured to "hang" the striker side. This all went sideways, and I just could not get the door hung right. I thought the stud where the striker jamb went was true. Wrong. There was no room for shims on both sides.

So I quit for the day, a good thing when you are getting tired, frustrated, and angry. My mentor, Big John Massa taught me that an amateur can get the same results as a professional, it just takes more time. Very true with these DIY (do it yourself) home projects.

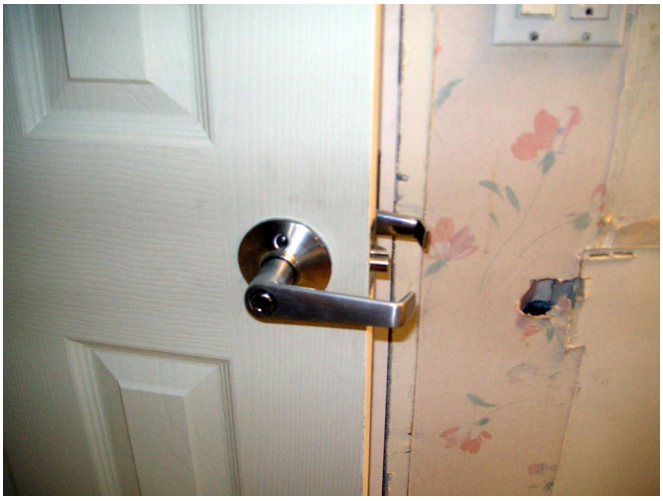
The next day I cleaned the whole area, even vacuuming up the dust. Then I completely unscrewed the door. Now I went about the job from the hinge side. I used the laser level to strike a plumb line on the edge of the hinge jamb. There were some goofy shim setups, and I would have to adjust and adjust to keep the jamb straight.

I put the bottom left of the jamb up against the hacked-up 2x4, since it opened up as it went up. That let me work shims in, screwing the frame, then eventually replacing a screw in each hinge with a long screw. Then I could work the other jamb, shims and cardboard, and finally OK.



There were a lot of shims that needed re-adjusting as I pulled up the screws. The door seemed too wide, and I had to use a screw to open up the frame at the top. The top hinge got loose from hacking around the day before, so I replaced the screws with 1-1/4 drywall screws.

When the door closed OK, I put in the same Schlage latch plate, with a little help from a chisel to square off the mortise corners.



This was a high point in my DIY adventures.

Flip the levers around, and leave out the same shield so the levers don't bind. This will be replaced with a 'passage' style, no need to lock.

Liker the 36-inch entry door, the closet door needs the striker mortise enlarged a bit.

The Schlage levers comes with this plastic pocket to hide the wood under the striker. I will put it in one day, when I am in a more router sort of mood.

OK, the two doors in side-by-side. I think it looks way better than a mystery hallway and a bi-fold door in that 1980s wood grain. You feel safer and more secure when you can see the locked bathroom door. I have to get trim for both doors. I want the trim to match exactly on this side. I will get 2-1/4 inch wide trim, that will fit between the hallway walls on the other side of the entry door.

I have yet another 36-inch door. That one will go in a 5'x5' partition wall around the toilet, which is where I am standing in this photo. Thanks to the laser level, I think I will be able to get those wall straight, and plumb, and true.