

The real fixers of D.C.



LAMPS

When Georgetown designer Susan Beimler locates the perfect antique chandelier for a client, it often needs a part replaced, wiring fixed or a length of custom-made chain. She brings the chandeliers to Artisan Lamp in Cleveland Park. For 35 years, the business has been repairing and restoring table lamps, floor lamps, sconces and other lighting. John Teymourian, one of the owners, says Washingtonians bring in a lot of old European lamps they pick up at auctions or estate sales. The good news is, Artisan will also take on a repair as simple as a new socket, for which the minimum charge is \$15. Minor repairs can often be done while you wait. "We are like an old-fashioned neighborhood store," Teymourian says. "We try to help people with whatever they need."

Artisan Lamp, 3331 Connecticut Ave. NW. 202-244-8900.
www.artisanlamp.com.

A list of tried-and-true experts to repair many things in your home

BY JURA KONCIUS

If a leg breaks off a dining room chair, a puppy chews a hole in the rug, a sewing machine jams or a grandfather clock stills, there are people in the Washington area who can help. Although many things in homes today seem to be disposable, there are still lots of possessions both old and new that deserve to be fixed properly. We called a posse of interior designers, antiques dealers, auctioneers, appraisers and other experts to find out whom they trust for their most important repair and restoration jobs. Many of these recommended companies are neighborhood or family firms that have been doing what they do for generations. "You have to find repair people who have a lot of experience and have worked with many different kinds of objects," says Jodi Macklin, a Chevy Chase interior designer. "And you have to have a level of trust with them."



FURNITURE REPAIR

Georgetown Refinishing and Antique Restoration has been in business since the 1950s, repairing and restoring antiques and other home furnishings. In 2007, the business was bought by Bill and Debbie Schoenbauer, who run Schoenbauer Furniture Service in St. Mary's County, their own fourth-generation restoration business. Bill Schoenbauer says both companies offer free estimates and can usually give a range of prices for work needed just by looking at the owner's photographs. Both companies pick up daily in the Washington area. To have someone come to your home to remove a water ring from a table, expect to pay about \$150 to \$200, he says. To have a basic wood dining chair reglued at their shop costs \$75 and up. Designer Jodi Macklin says she has a great deal of trust in the company, whether it's polishing a dining table or replacing the leg on a chair.

Georgetown Refinishing and Antique Restoration, 30507 Potomac Way, Charlotte Hall, Md. 202 333-3311.
www.georgetownrefinishing.com.



SILVER

Virginians have been taking their heirloom silver tea sets and silver bar trays to Lawrence Miller & Co. since 1968. Designer Victoria Sanchez and her family are no different. "My mom took some of her old pieces here to be resilvered and had things like broken handles repaired," Sanchez says. "They seem to be able to fix everything." The company works on both family antiques and flea market finds. According to manager Tim Shaheen, the charge is about \$35 to repair a fork damaged in a garbage disposal. A scratched medium-size silver serving tray can be buffed for about \$100.

Lawrence Miller & Co., 121 S. Royal St. Alexandria. 703-548-0659.
www.lawrencemiller.com.



CLOCKS

When a store makes house calls for grandfather clocks, you know it's serious about its work. Owner Edward Compton of Ecker's Clock & Watch Shop has been in business about 33 years. His workshop is often recommended by antique dealers and auctioneers. Compton, who grew up in a family of clock- and watchmakers, gives free estimates, and his charges are determined on a case-by-case basis. "When someone presents me with an item to be repaired," he says, "I can give them an idea of how long the repair will take and what will be involved."

Ecker's Clock & Watch Shop, 8010 Norfolk Ave., Bethesda. 301-652-0549.
www.eckersclocks.com.



SEWING MACHINES

The owners of G Street Fabrics know sewing machines: Their family has sold fabric since 1942. When customers need machines serviced, Michael Greenzaid, a co-owner of the business with stores in Rockville, Centreville and Falls Church, has the answers. If the machine is a Bernina, G Street Fabrics can service it; it will cost about \$120 to have a Bernina cleaned and checked out. If a customer has a Singer, Kenmore or any other brand, Greenzaid will send him or her to one of four area Brothers Sew & Vacs. Mike Morris, a vice president of the family firm that started in 1956, says Brothers can repair virtually all brands. The store fixed first lady Rosalynn Carter's sewing machine in the 1970s (she had a Pfaff machine), and it services machines for local theater costume shops. Machines are checked into the "sewing machine hospital" to be evaluated; it's about \$99 to \$159 for a cleaning and tuneup. Estimates are free. Brothers also repairs vacuums.

Brothers Sew & Vac, Rockville, Silver Spring, Washington and Bethesda.
www.brotherssewvac.com.

washingtonpost.com

■ **Chat Thursday at 11 a.m.** Joan Osofsky and Abby Adams, authors of the new book "Love Where You Live: At Home in the Country," join staff writer Jura Koncius for our weekly online Q&A on decorating and household advice. Submit questions at washingtonpost.com/home.



STEPHEN VOSS

Julia Brennan of Caring for Textiles works on the conservation of a 500-year-old Flemish tapestry.

TEXTILES

Julia Brennan restores the treasures that link generations: quilts, coverlets, christening gowns and flags. Her team at Caring for Textiles (formerly Textile Conservation Services) can carefully clean and repair an embroidered pillow or a silk kimono, and has done so for both individuals and museums. "Julia has a scholarly background and is meticulous," says Stephanie Kenyon, owner and president of Sloans & Kenyon Auctioneers & Appraisers in Chevy Chase. "We have recommended her for many christening dresses and old samplers." Brennan, who restored George Washington's silk waistcoat as well as James Brown's 1970s black wool "sex" jumpsuit, has been in the conservation business more than 25 years. She gets a lot of work from residents who are cleaning out their houses and discover treasures they want to preserve and pass on. She charges about \$75 an hour plus materials. Free estimates and evaluations by appointment.

Caring for Textiles, 202-362-1941. www.caringfortextiles.com.

jura.koncius@washpost.com

Questions to ask your repair professional

Some household treasures require the specialized services of a skilled conservator, a professional who is educated and trained to preserve and care for objects. The American Institute for Conservation has a "find a conservator" tool on its Web site, www.conservation-us.org.

According to Eryl P. Wentworth, executive director of the institute, consumers can locate professionals in many categories, including ceramics, dolls, photographs and books.

Here is a list of questions adopted from the American Institute for Conservation that can be used when evaluating a repair or restoration business. Although they were written with professional conservators in mind, they are applicable to many household repairs.

1. What is your background, and how many years of professional experience do you have?
2. Do you have experience working with my type of object or situation?
3. How long will it take you to complete the job?
4. Can you provide references? May I contact previous clients?
5. What security will you provide for my object? Who is responsible for insurance?
6. What are the risks to the object from the recommended treatment?
7. What is the charge? Do you charge for an estimate?

— Jura Koncius