

THE HELPFUL HOME

NEWSLETTER & RADIO LISTENER NEWS

Issue #15

SPECIAL EDITION

Spring 2006

Some information about this newsletter



Here is your new Spring issue of the Helpful Home newsletter, your "gift" from [STONEHOLLOW, Inc. FINE HOME INSPECTIONS](#). I always breathe a sigh of relief when we get to the Spring issue each year, as Spring is my favorite season. I love the positive expectation of the world in bloom and warm weather. Also the beginning of planting, fixing, and repair seasons. Fortunately we made it through a rather mild winter with only one extraordinary 24 inch snow drop, but it was an expensive winter with the jump in fuel pricing. Some of my clients were really worried about being able to afford their heating bills. I continue this year to be running our home inspection business, teaching and managing the Ct school for Kaplan Professional/Inspection Training Associates, producing and hosting the radio show and teaching Realtor Continuing Ed. classes. In addition I will be making presentations in Las Vegas, & teaching in Manhattan and Rochester. So it will be a busy time as usual. This year the school is offering not only Ct and NY certifying courses but we are beginning "weekend" classes to allow adults who cannot get off from work time to take the home inspection courses. At the radio station we have Nick manning the board each Saturday morning and lots of phone calls coming in each week. We'll be participating in the Norwalk Seaport's Oyster Festival again and we are planning a listener's Special Dinner at a restaurant in Stamford. Thanks to Karp's Hardware, Stamford Lighting and Kidde Corp. for lots of prize giveaways...and there are more surprises in the works.

We hope this issue will spark your interest to do some Spring tasks around your home. And we hope it is both helpful and fun reading. I feel that Spring is the time to plan new projects, clean up, and get organized. As in the past we have included photos, helpful tips, and a Spring preventative maintenance list for your home.

If you need an answer to a particular question or a solution to a task... e-mail your question at steve@stonehollow.com. Steve Gladstone



Mel Wilkes, Steve & Matt Gladstone

Let us help you find the real condition of your home...for peace of mind call :

Stonehollow 800-356-9611

Spring 2006 Home Check List:

Spring, so positive and optimistic. Lets talk about some things to do around your home to get it ready for warm weather and spring activities. Spring means things turning green and planting, so getting the gardening tools unburied and readying the lawn mower, edger and other power tools is a good idea. Chances are good if you put it away properly in the fall, things will be in pretty good shape to get started again. But if you just shoved them in a corner it may be trouble. As you know I'm a big one for

preventative maintenance!

Here's our regular "be careful disclaimer"... "if it's not safe for you to do some of these suggestions, or you simply do not understand them...please get professional help! I want your home to be safe, but there's little point if you overdo it, get hurt, or break something. Being knowledgeable enough to know when to ask for help is indeed a sign of maturity. Tackling a job that is beyond your scope can be foolhardy.

Anyway if you're up for these "Spring" tasks let's get going... Let's start with a fun one, check out the gutter cleanliness, probably there's quite a bit of debris in the gutters and possibly clogged leaders. Clogged leaders do not allow the gutters to drain and cause overflowing. Make sure they are intact and flowing well to avoid water coming into the basement. While you are up on that ladder it might be wise to check how winter affected your roof. Roofing can deteriorate without warning and frequent checks both in the attic and on the roof surface can catch damage before water enters and damage leads to mold growth. Are the roof shingles warping and showing signs of crispness? Most roofing can last about 17-21 years. If you do not know what to look for, have a professional roofer clue you in to the telltale signs of roofing that is nearing the end of its life.

When you get those first really warm days it might be a good time to pull the garden hoses out and let the heat un-kink and reshape them. Check the ends for damages and make sure the rubber or plastic gaskets in the female fitting are still soft and pliable. This will reduce leaks and water spraying back towards the home when you install them on the hose bibs.

As with all our seasonal checklists you should check inside your attic for any signs of previous water entry. Look around the chimney, skylights and plumbing vents for stains. Make sure that the attic vents are open to allow excess moisture

to escape. Remember that trapped moisture will encourage mold growth.

You should regularly be checking your smoke & carbon monoxide detectors as well. Did you watch me on "ASK THIS OLD HOUSE" last winter? I spoke about carbon monoxide safety and advised homeowners to plug in CO Alarms near the sleeping rooms.

Spring often means bugs... what can You do to avoid problems ?

Insects will survive us all. Some think the German Cockroach is older than the dinosaurs and will be around long after we are. Regardless keeping Carpenter ants and Termites out of our homes is an annual battle that must be fought. Termites like to eat wood. While they prefer certain species, they will eat anything made out of cellulose (if they are hungry enough). Those of you who enjoy mulch heaped up in your gardens are giving both Ants and Termites the nutrition they desire...that is moisture and ground up wood. When it comes to placing materials around your house think stone, pebbles, marble chips, or ground up tires. Yes, you heard me correctly. There are companies making shredded rubber mulch as a means of getting rid of tires. You can find out more about this product on www.diamondsafety.com. The best way I know to keep termites out of your home is to have a professional inspection each Spring. Many pest control companies will give you a free evaluation. They will also give you a quote on treating your home and for other services. Termites enter the home by building small tubes to keep them moist and out of the sun. The shelter tubes can often be found near entry doorways & steps. When we are doing the structural part of our inspections we tap or bang on the wood to hear if it sounds hollow. The worst is when we find the wood has become so badly damaged that our probe goes right through it. When it's that bad, a carpenter may need to replace structural pieces within your home. Closing your eyes to the damage will not

make it go away! Many homes we inspect have activity that could have been detected and stopped years earlier. Surprisingly Carpenter Ants do not eat wood. They use their mandibles to scratch out areas to nest. They typically forage through a home looking for sweets and tidbits of food and rarely have trouble locating crumbs around kitchen areas. They carry back the food to the nest and invite the neighbors in for a feast! Sometimes following the ants is the quickest way to find where they are nesting. New technology like thermal imaging cameras & listening devices can see or hear the ants munching away in the walls. Not a pretty picture! Other bugs on the spring lineup can be Carpenter bees, ticks and wasps, hornets and bees. Carpenter bees are not usually stinging bees. They do however use their wings to drill a perfect 5/8 hole in unpainted wood usually, and they lay eggs and leave food for the larvae in the nests. If this wasn't enough their natural predators are woodpeckers... yes birds that come a-knocking... and they will beat the living daylight out of your trim boards, siding and miscellaneous areas on your home until they have found the Carpenter bee food. While they tend not to do any structural damage the double whammy of the Carpenter bee holes and the mess the woodpeckers make can be a cosmetic nightmare. Spraying for ticks has proven to be a great preventative strike against having your family become exposed to Lyme disease. Regular spraying especially of the rough areas around your property seems to be a good idea. The spray dries quickly and what is recommended is that toys, play equipment and wheel goods be protected when the spraying is performed. Finally, watch for bees and their cousins wasps and hornets. Many bees will build nests in nooks and crannies that are not in the stream of traffic and when you happen upon them they will send out the attack with fervor. To avoid getting stung you may have to buy long distance spraying insecticide and remember to spray at dusk when most of the bees are in the nest.

Are You Listening?

Tune in WSTC 1400 am and WNLK 1350 am or listen to us on www.stonehollow.com on the radio archive page, and hear us on your computer! Our own Steve Gladstone... sometimes Matt and Mark Gladstone are on the air Saturday mornings on "Around the House" from 8 to 9 am. We discuss home issues, maintenance, and safety. And you can call in. It's fun to listen, and you'll learn how to do things around your home. Tune in each week for trivia questions, prizes, lots of useful home info and we may just have the answer to the question you've wanted to ask.

www.stonehollow.com

e-mail us at:

steve@stonehollow.com



Board Op Nick Evans poses recently...

Over the last few years we've had quite a crew of radio sidekicks, and as our show is the starting place for potential radio stardom, many of our previous employs are now working at larger radio stations, (while we just seem to stay here and watch their rising stars...) seriously Nick brings a sharp memory and great excitement to the show, and we expect him to be stolen away before this issue hits the mail! You'll just have to encourage him to stay on. Nick is handy and likes to create his own Tips of the Week. Nick lives in Norwalk, Ct.

**Call us Saturday 8-9 in the studio at
203-845-3044 for questions & prizes !**



Jim Jaffe from Connecticut Chimney and Vent, LLC. Talking about the recent arrests of some chimney sweeps from New York.

What's the Scam ?

They call and offer you a great deal... "We'll check your chimney for \$40 & make sure it's operating safely". They say they are fully licensed & insured. Jim Jaffe from Ct. Chimney & Vent LLC., warns "watch your wallet!" He knows too many unscrupulous Chimney Sweeps are selling liners & add-on work that may be unnecessary and most of these repairs require a permit. He adds that Technicians must be licensed Heating Contractors to properly hook up your heating system. Always check references & get proof of insurance. Don't hire out of state companies. Always get a second opinion on the need for the work. Remember most chimneys don't need a new liner. These scammers are known for dropping broken tiles down the chimney to scare you. When in doubt, hold off and check with a reputable company. For reliable repairs or advice call Ct. Chimney & Vent . 203-881-2256

Thermal imaging allows a glimpse inside to detect heat loss and water intrusion... We are now offering you an opportunity to experience the newest technology to examine your home. Allowing you to be able to spot areas of substantial heat loss and energy waste. This technology using thermal spectrum analysis and can see heat loss and digitally display the image for a snapshot of your home like no other. It can also find stubborn leaks and

hidden moisture intrusion. Pointing towards reducing the growth of mold & odors. If you would like a thermal scan of your home performed, call us for pricing and we'll get you on the schedule. This may save you thousands of dollars. A typical exterior scan of your house is available for \$500 and can pinpoint where you are losing heat, or where water is getting in.

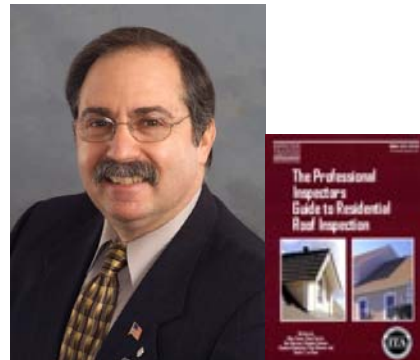
Help Your Friends:

Know someone looking to buy a home? Let them know we'd be happy to help them get the best home inspection services. If we don't serve their area, we will refer a great home inspector who can. We promise to help your friends with the most important purchase of their lives!

For your protection:



Hire an inspector who has lots of experience, technical knowledge, attends annual training & seminars and is a Certified Member of ASHI.



Steve Gladstone, Author

Steve is working on a new book on Thermal Imaging. He has just sent his "Appliance Inspection" book to the publisher, and his book on Roofing (Professional Inspectors Guide to Residential Roofing), with several of the ITA instructors is now available. If you would like to buy the roofing book call Steve at 327-6824 and we'll send it out. \$59.00 plus tax & shipping.

The Great House Project...

As Spring urges us to rise early and move shrubs and plant flowers, the Boss is pictured here doing her favorite activity. What would spring be without flowers and gardens? Sandi looks hard at work spreading new topsoil & hemlock mulch



Landscaper Steve tries a new look without the mustache !

Is Safety On Your backburner?

Homes that have not been inspected for many years can develop leaks, waste energy, grow mold, and develop structural problems from insects, water and rot. Protecting your investment just makes good sense. Call us to make an appointment to have a thorough house check-up. We will look at all the important components of your home & point out safety and maintenance needs. We give you an idea what things can cost and help you to make good decisions about your home. We don't do repairs nor make any referral fees or commissions so you can rest easy that our recommendations are

with your best interest at heart. Don't delay keeping your home in tip-top shape. It's the best investment you can make.

ADVERTISERS: Please let our sponsors know you heard about them on the radio or in the Newsletter.

Sandi Gladstone- Realtor®

Weichert Capital Properties & Estates

If your buying, selling , or just thinking about it...call me for exceptional service and great customer care.

Office: 203-661-5400 www. sandigladstone.com

Cell: 203-536-0498 Fax: 203-661-6703

Karps Truevalue Hardware

Since 1926 633 Hope Street Stamford

Stamford's Hardware Supermarket

203-327-0460 7 Days a week

Great Selection, Personal Service, Friendly,
Professional Do-it-yourself Advice.

Resource Systems

Computer Consultation

Web Design & Site Maintenance

Computer Software & Hardware Troubleshooting

Ed Kivell 203-329-3660

Stamford Lighting Fixture Co.

633 Hope Street Stamford

Lighting up a new world of possibilities

www.stamfordlighting.com

203-327-5444 m-f 8-6 sat 9-4

DeerDefence

The Pinnacle of Protection with steel web fencing

Ask your local landscaper or Call: 203-550-8350

www.deerdefence

All County Pest

Effective environmentally responsible protection for your home and business. 888-327-0259 (toll free)

Associated Water Industries

488 Glenbrook Rd. Water Treatment Service, Pumps, Parts, Water Treatment Chemicals, Irrigation System Parts...324-9561

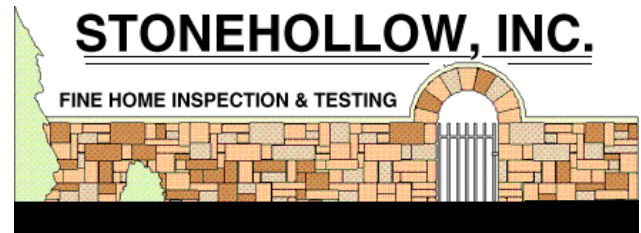
CT. Chimney & Vent LLC

Chimney Cleaning, Repairs & Restoration, Duct

Cleaning, Air Duct Venting Solutions 866-881-2256

Address Correction, Please, If this newsletter reaches you in error and you want it to stop (or you want it in your name) please e-mail us at: steve@stonehollow.com and we will fix it! Thanks!

Did you know...? Mulch and Topsoil are now banging in at \$57 a yard! Keeping your home moisture (humidity level) below 45% will greatly reduce of mold and musty odors. Home safety inspections may save you the cost of a visit to the Emergency room or worse.



The Helpful Home Newsletter is sent to you for free by your home inspector. Please feel free to pass this information on to others. Copyright 2006 HPN, Inc.

**Stonehollow Fine Home Inspection
& Environmental Testing
154 Overbrook Drive
Stamford, Ct. 06906**

**SPECIALISTS IN PRE-PURCHASE
HOME INSPECTION & TESTING**