

# THE HELPFUL HOME NEWSLETTER

Issue #28

\*SPECIAL EDITION\*

Winter 2009-10

## About this newsletter:

Here is your Winter! issue of the Helpful Home newsletter, from **STONEHOLLOW, Inc. FINE HOME INSPECTIONS**. Brrr...Yes a few days ago I had to admit fall was over and Winter was indeed here. While I am ready for the ice and snow I admit it is not my favorite season. If you are into skiing, sledding and all these Winter Sports I'm happy for you, but frankly I could do without the snowblowing, shoveling and such. I'm ready for a trip somewhere warm and if I can't do that I'll be content sitting in front of a roaring fireplace watching the logs burning. So is your home ready for Winter? Last week I spent an entire day picking up sand box toys, cleaning gutters, shutting off hose bibs, going through my outdoor sheds and putting things away for the season. The lawn furniture is neatly stacked, the hoses reeled up and the stabilizer installed in the lawn mower and gas drained out of the weed wacker and its stored away. Needless to say I was tired. The air conditioners are protected from snow and ice and I readied the snow shovels, ice scrapers and found the mittens. This issue we have an avalanche of helpful tips for those of you who wish to stay warm, keep the house costs down and be as efficient as possible. As I write this issue of the newsletter, the sun is pouring in my office window and the temperature outside is a brisk 25 degrees. About 8" of snow is on the yard and the driveway is icy. I hope this newsletter finds you happy and healthy and hope your holidays were a blast of good cheer. If you've already got cabin fever why not try tuning us in on Saturday mornings on the radio or the internet. We try to jumpstart your day with fun discussions and useful information on Around the House with Steve Gladstone from 8-9 am. It's fun! And you know we all need more fun. Steve Gladstone



## Stonehollow 800-356-9611

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



## Winter Helpful Home Check List:

### Exterior Stuff:

**Rooftops: forget it... its too late! Stay off the roof, do not shovel snow off, chipping ice off will only make things worse. Ice dams and icicles are a sign of problems and if your gutters rip off the home you haven't been cleaning them in fall when we warned you about poorly attached units.**

**Walk around your home and look for low spots, basement windows covered with snow and trees and shrubbery that need a good shaking to knock the snow off before they crack from the weight.**

**Have you covered the firewood, is it up in a stand or ring to keep it dry?**

**Is your flue clean, so you can have that romantic fire**

*and not have to call the fire department when it starts to sound like a freight train and the creosote in the chimney is burning?*

*Do you have all the things that might melt or burn taken away from close proximity of the fireplace? Have you placed a fire extinguisher nearby?*

*Hose bibs, spigots, faucets: Better to turn off the water inside then to worry about them freezing in winter.*

### **Safety items:**

*Check batteries on Smoke, Heat & Carbon Monoxide detectors, Make sure extinguishers are charged, and hang them in plain sight. When the clocks changed... you should have changed smoke and CO batteries, if you didn't.. .do it now.*

*Keep combustibles away from heating equipment.*

### **Interior Things:**

*If you still haven't insulated your hot and cold water pipes, now's a perfect time. Basement radiator pipes in a basement or crawlspace lose lots of heat if not insulated. (Remember the Tax incentives...keep all receipts).*

*Harold Topper at Budget Blinds has great looking window treatments that hold the heat in. Call him for an in home demo, he'll do all the measuring !*

*Insulate above the attic hatch or the pull down stairs. A simple foam box above the pull down can save \$\$\$ instantly.*

*How's the hot water? Adding one of these new tankless units near that bathroom that gets hot water 5 minutes after you wanted it is a great winter project.*

*Check in the attic to see how thick your insulation is. Measure it with a tape measure. 4" is poor, 6-8" is typical, 12 inches is great. Insulation is cheap and easy to install in most homes.*



## **Keeping the garage warmer can make every morning more fun to get in the car...Seven Ways to make it better:**

1. *Add a new insulated door. Besides the tax incentives, the insulated doors are beautiful and really keep the cold out.*
2. *New doors will come with better insulated (weatherstripped) molding. Doors won't vibrate with the wind nor move around making noise.*
3. *New gaskets on the bottom of the doors will help seal out a breeze but also keep unwanted little visitors from entering.*
4. *Have your garage door opener tuned up and make sure auto reverse mechanism stops the door if it hits your car or any obstruction...*
5. *Add a photo-eye sensor to stop the door from hitting you or a child or pet that is near the door.*
6. *Place new batteries in the touchpads, on the exterior and if you have an old key switch consider upgrading it for better security.*
7. *Check wheels hardware and opener mounting for loose or missing hardware. Tighten up everything before the opener falls and give your cars roof new yet undesired styling.*



## Help Your Friends:

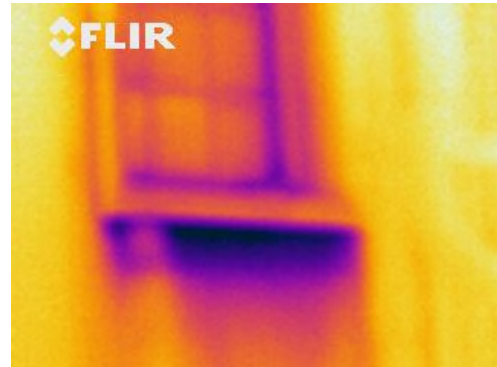
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**We promise to help your friends with the most important purchase of their lives!**

## Energy Audits: Winter believe it or not is the best time for a comprehensive

**audit.** Call us for an energy audit, or if water is entering your home. Thermal imaging can find the leak, or point to areas that are poorly insulated. This Winter we are offering you an opportunity to experience the newest technology to examine your home. Thermal spectrum analysis can digitally display an image for a

snapshot of your home. If you would like a thermal scan of your home performed, call us.



*Steve found a leak below this window even though the wall still looked good..*

**For Your Protection:** Hire only an inspector who has **experience, technical knowledge**, attends annual training & seminars and is a **Certified Member of ASHI**. Like Drivers in CT, NY and MA all inspectors must be State licensed, even the bad ones. Look for more than a license. **Steve & Matt are both Certified Members of the American Society of Home Inspectors Steve was ASHI's National President in 2004.**

**Winter Tips:** 12 inches of insulation (R-38) makes sense in New England... add it to the floor of your attic before it's freezing outside.

Segregate areas of your home that are rarely used. Adjust the heat down in those areas. Add better shades and draperies in rooms that have many windows. This will help keep the heat in.

Use ceiling fans so they circulate the heat back down onto you.

Do not heat your home with ovens & cook-tops. Children can get burned or scalded.

Watch combustibles that are close to fireplaces.

Wear sweaters to keep your personal body heat from escaping.



### *The Great House Project...*

*Sure I'm trying to stay inside and keep warm but one project I am working on inside is making new front gates. I bought the wood now I just have to lay it out and make the new ones. Then in Springtime I'll be able to hook them up to electronic openers and close the open area on my deer fencing. The driveway has always been an issue and the price of iron gates has gotten just crazy. So wood it will be.*

*Last month Matt and I inspected a home that had a magnificent home theatre... man was I envious. Big tv's are one thing but a whole room set aside for a theatre experience was pretty cool. Sandi are you listening?*



*Remember to close the damper **when the fire is out.** Don't lose heat up the chimney when you are done.*

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[steve@stonehollow.com](mailto:steve@stonehollow.com)

### *Home Safety 2009-10:*

*This year we are promoting home safety and annual maintenance inspections. We have a special survey fee for homes less than 2000 sq ft. for \$350. We often speak to senior groups & homeowner's associations to point out the importance of checking your home regularly to avoid termites, environmental issues, leaks and mold. Most of us do not visit our attic spaces or basements often enough to know if a new problem has shown up. These check-ups can nip little problems in the bud before they become expensive issues. Call us at 203-327-6824 and we'll answer any questions.*

### *Some Photos From the ASHI website:*



**Sandi & Kerstin Gladstone- Realtors®**

**NOW AT: Keller Williams - Stamford**

Big changes are happening at Keller Williams Prestige Properties in Stamford with the New Year ! In 2010, Sandi & Kerstin Gladstone will be putting all their combined years in real estate & teaming up to create the Gladstone Realty Group. A full service real estate sales group specializing in exceptional customer care. If you are looking for personal care that should always be part of purchasing a new home, but rarely is, call them at **203- 327-6700**. Anyone purchasing a home with them in 2010 will receive a free home inspection when they are ready to purchase (a value worth up to \$1000). Anyone listing to sell with them, will receive a coupon worth \$500.00 towards a pre-sale inspection to help them to market their home. Sandi & Kerstin will make buying or selling a home a fun experience, and regardless of the marketplace, they will give you service beyond your expectations.

**Keeping Your Home Rodent free in Winter...some tips from AAVON Pest**

- 1. Improve garage door gaskets. Rodents like to squeeze in under garages to get out of the cold.**
- 2. Fill in small holes around your sill plate in the basement or crawlspaces.**
- 3. Add a vapor barrier of 6 mil plastic on the floor of dirt crawlspaces.**
- 4. Re-screen any screens in the attic that**

**are damaged (many vent screens will deteriorate over time).**

- 5. Make sure any gaps around water pipes, air conditioner piping and holes for wiring are sealed with foam & steel wool.**
- 6. Place sticky boards or bait stations in areas where mice are apt to be in the home. Ledges, along walls and dropped ceiling tiles.**
- 7. Have AAvon Pest Control Check your home seasonally. Call 866-AAvon 11**

**Snow Storm muscle aches & safety tips from Dr. Brian Nathanson**

- 1. Stretching and warming up can prevent back and neck pain...**
- 2. Don't take on too much in one session. Do a reasonable amount, then take a break.**
- 3. Dress in layers & don't allow yourself to overheat.**
- 4. Drink plenty of water.**
- 5. Make sure you carry a cell phone when you are out alone**
- 6. Have others be aware you are outside and check on you in case you slip or fall.**
- 7. Call New England Physical Care if aches and pain are part of your daily routine. Dr. Brian is in Norwalk at 203-313-3844**

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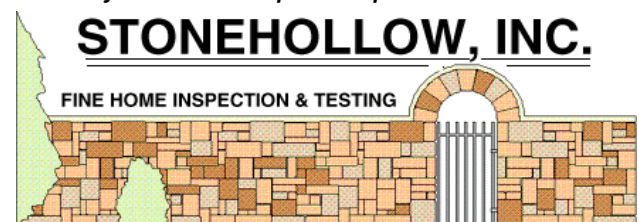
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